

KATE RAMSAY AND THE A#D COACHES WELCOME YOU TO OUR STAYING IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER.

In this our summer edition for 2017/18 you can read in **Learning Moments** about the health and productivity reasons for getting 8 hours sleep every night, and for working intensively for no more than 4 hours at a time. In **Did You Know?** you can read that science is showing women are the stronger sex, and about a new service Kate is offering for carers. We close with a Hymn to Carers by Michael Leunig.

Learning Moments

(i) On sleep

Kate writes: I am once again citing articles from the Guardian Weekly in this Value Adding. First an article headlined 'Sleep should be Prescribed', written by Rachel Cooke in the 13/10/17 edition. Cooke interviewed sleep scientist Matthew Walker who told her that he believes we humans are in the midst of a "catastrophic sleep-loss epidemic". Cooke:

The evidence Walker presents is enough to send anyone early to bed. Without sleep, there is low energy and disease. With sleep, there is vitality and health. More than 20 large-scale epidemiological studies all report the same clear relationship: the shorter your sleep, the shorter your life. To take just one example, adults aged 45 year or older who sleep less than six hours a night are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke at some stage as compared with those sleeping seven or eight hours a night.

In terms of productivity, Walker's research reveals that sleep loss costs the UK economy over A\$40bn a year in lost revenue, or 2% of its GDP. Given this he encourages companies to reward workers who commit to 7-8 hours of sleep per night because their productivity, motivation and creativity will rise.

So why have we become so sleep-deprived? Walker:

First, we electrified the night. Light is a profound degrader of our sleep. Second, there is the issue of work: not only the porous borders between when we start and finish, but longer commuter times, too... And anxiety plays a part. We're a lonelier, more depressed society. Alcohol and caffeine are more widely available. All these are the enemies of sleep.

Added to these factors, we in the developed world have stigmatised sleep with the label of laziness. These days

people seem to wear 'busyness' as a badge of honour, and one way we express this is by proclaiming how little sleep we need. However Walker's research shows that getting too little sleep significantly raises the risk of Alzheimer's disease (as well as of cancer of the bowel, prostate and breast). And he adds that both Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher used to brag about how little sleep they needed, and then died of the disease.

So what can we do to get a good night's sleep? Walker again:

First avoid pulling "all-nighters" either at your desk or on the dance floor. Second, start thinking about sleep as a kind of work, like going to the gym. And we should go back to thinking of midnight in terms of its original meaning: as the middle of the night.

For more, see Walker's book 'Why We Sleep' (published by Allen Lane) but don't let reading it get in the way of a good night's sleep.

(ii) On rest

If you haven't been convinced by the need for 7 – 8 hours sleep a night to maintain your health and improve your productivity, a recent edition of the Guardian Weekly's regular column by Oliver Burkeman tells us that we need to reduce our hours of work as well. Burkeman quotes from a book by Alex Pang called 'Rest – Why You Get More Done When You Work Less'. Pang explains that the human brain works most creatively for a maximum of four hours per day:

Charles Darwin worked for two 90-minute periods in the morning, then an hour later on; the mathematician Henri Poincaré from 10 am till noon then 5pm till 7pm; the same approximate stretch features in the daily routines of Thomas Jefferson, Alice Munro, John le Carré and many more.

Pang argues that we humans are rhythmic creatures and that the part of the cycle that involves not taxing our minds is as important to our productivity as those times when we are focused on whatever we're doing. In fact he concludes that in any remotely creative job, team members need regular breaks. A leader who denies them this will cause a reduction in the team's quality of output.

And in case we think this is a relatively new phenomenon, Burkeman concludes his article with research from half a century ago showing that even hunter-gatherers only toiled for three to five hours a day to keep everyone fed.

So do yourself a favour, turn off those screens and get outside for a stretch and some fresh air and sunshine.

Did You Know?

(i) Women live longer

Our regular readers will know that we at AnD are committed to improving the status of women in the workforce. We were therefore delighted to read in the 23/06/17 Guardian Weekly Angela Saini's article headlined 'The weaker sex? Sorry gentlemen'. Saini writes that women are superior to men in both longevity and coping with trauma. In her book 'Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong (published by 4th Estate) she writes:

Beneath our skin, women bubble with a source of power that even science has yet to fully understand.

Saini quotes Steven Austad, an international expert on ageing, and chair of the biology department at the University of Alabama. Austad has been studying one of the best-known but under researched facts: that women live longer than men. His longevity database shows that all over the world and as far back as records have been kept, women outlive men by around five or six years. In fact in a tally maintained by the global Gerontology Research Group, today, 43 people around the world are known to be living past the age of 110. Of these, 42 are women.

Study after study show that women have a higher resistance to almost all the major causes of death and have a more robust immune response. However there is currently little research to explain the biology of this.

A job for a woman perhaps?

(ii) A new service for carers

Kate writes: Because I longed to talk to others in a similar situation when I was caring for my dying partner but didn't know where to find them, I've created Carer Chats to fill this gap for others.

As the attached brochure explains, Carer Chats is a confidential one-on-one free telephone service to provide carers with a safe sounding board where they can share the loneliness and emotional highs and lows that are frequently associated with the carer's role.

A client whose husband has Motor Neurone Disease endorses Carer Chats in this brochure:

I look forward to Kate's calls. I tell her things that I don't share with my family because I don't want to worry them. It's a terrific service and I highly recommend it to others who, like me, are caring for someone they love.

So if you're one of the 2.8 million volunteer carers of a loved one in Australia and would like to know more, contact Kate on 0418 164 260 or at kate@andconsulting.org.

And To Close

Michael Leunig's Hymn to the Carer:

Care is the cure.

It is slow,

It is raw,

It is pure.

It is simple and bare.

It is real.

It is bold.

It is there.

Nothing is newer

Or older,

Or wiser,

Or truer.

Care is the cure.