

Tate Van Eck

Mr. Barber

English 10

23 May 2016

Snoozin' for a Cruisin'

"In this life, we have to make many choices. Some are very important choices. Some are not. Many of our choices are between good and evil. The choices we make, however, determine to a large extent our happiness or our unhappiness, because we have to live with the consequences of our choices," stated James E. Faust. On average, a person makes about 35,000 decisions each and every day. Each one of the choices shapes his or her life and the world. One simple yes or no can lead to a butterfly effect of events. Included in these daily judgements is the decision of hitting the hay. The simple choice of whether or not to go to sleep now will not only impact tomorrow but also the next ten, twenty, even fifty years. Making a decision has many different paths to choose from. These options provide different results, some good and some bad. Sleep is an example of these decisions. Getting adequate sleep provides many healthy benefits, but on the flip-side, not achieving this amount can in lead to many misfortunes,

some being life risking. Sleep is a vital component of daily life due to its providing of a longer, healthier, and happier life.

The majority of high school students face the following symptoms: low energy levels, dark circles under the eyes, constant yawning, and nodding off to sleep in the middle of class. Diagnosis: sleep deprivation. Prescription: more sleep. The agony of drowsiness can be cured with more sleep. But, along with more energy, there are many other benefits that may not be as noticeable. For example, receiving at least eight hours of sleep can boost immunity. During a preliminary study, researchers monitored over one hundred and fifty participants and their sleep habits for two weeks. They were then exposed to the cold virus. The participants who received seven hours or less a night were three times more likely to get sick than those who got at least eight hours of sleep. Being sick is no walk in the park. It is a battle with the body that leaves the host sidelined for days. School and extracurricular activities are missed and replaced with drowning in tissues and all of the make-up work given for being absent. Sleep can help a student become more immune to diseases. More importantly, sleep decreases the risk of many serious health problems, such as heart disease, heart attacks, diabetes, and obesity. These

diseases can lead to even more health risks and struggles. For instance, weight gain, caused by a decrease in the hormone leptin, due to sleep deprivation, can increase risks of stroke, cancer, gallstones, and osteoarthritis, to name a few. Teens are already known for being moody during puberty. Add the moodiness due to sleep deprivation on top, and a monstrous creature is created. Less sleep can make every day feel cloudy. Being tired negatively impacts mood regulation. Snapping at parents, bosses, or teachers could result. Furthermore, this behavior could lead to punishments from teachers or parents, and even worse, getting fired by the boss. Snoozing results not only in a happier day, but one without broken relationships. The simple choice of going to bed now can save a teen from a life full of regret, fear, and worry later.

One reason students are up into the night hours is studying. Staying up later to cram in more information for the test may seem beneficial, but ironically, it does the opposite. Staying up late and getting little sleep impairs memory. Therefore, those extra hours of studying fly out the window. After reading the book, *NurtureShock*, Jessica Lahey, author of family blog, Motherlode, admits, "I'm convinced that sleep is the single most important factor in ensuring my children's health and academic

success. Given the choice between one more review session for that French test and a bedtime that will ensure those nine hours, I will always encourage them to choose sleep." Study for the test, but do not lose sleep over it. Schools in Edina, Minnesota shifted their high school start time and students began to catch more shuteye. They noticed the teens were less depressed and more shockingly, their SAT scores rose from 683 in math and 605 in verbal to 739 in math and 761 in verbal, just one year later. In the end, resting will benefit more than the extra studying. Similarly to influencing academics, going to bed aids performance in sports. It provides more energy allowing an athlete to achieve a new personal record. Being more energetic and aware of the surroundings decreases the risk of injury due to fatigue. Sleep heals the body. Sore and tired muscles after a tough practice can be healed and ready to go the next day. Catching little sleep does not allow the body to repair and increases the chances of an injury. But, even when accidents happen, getting an adequate amount of rest will help heal an injury and bring an athlete off the sidelines. With the pressure of college scholarships for both sports and academics, the risks of an injury or a lower GPA cannot be afforded. Simply going to bed can improve performance in sports, academics, and possibly influence the reward of a

college scholarship. One small choice of catching a few hours more of sleep can lead to greater events of success.

Teens are at a critical age. With getting a license and graduating high school, they become more independent and have more responsibilities, sleep being one of them. Parents used to regulate bedtime, but now that teens are older, they have less influence. Teens are going to bed when they want, which is usually much later than their parents would like. This results in sleep deprivation. Coffee and energy drinks are often depended on to provide energy to a tired teen. But, there are other substances teens use to gain energy. Caffeine stimulants and nicotine are consumed by adolescents. These substances can lead to the use of more intense, dangerous drugs. Similarly, teens cope with the fowl moods of sleep deprivation by drinking. They are then more likely to engage in other dangerous activities. Judgement is impaired while drowsy, so teens are more likely to make these poor decisions. Taking part in these activities can risk a teen's future. Underage drinking, substance usage, crimes, and driving while under the influence will be on their permanent records. The possibilities of college, a job, a family, and even a life in general could all

disappear. Staying up a few extra hours is not worth an adolescent's potential. Sleep can save judgement and a successful future of a teen. With a fast paced society, finding time for sleep can be challenging. Late nights are filled with studying for that AP test, finishing that procrastinated project, or watching just one more episode on *Netflix*. The decision, to set down the review packet or turn off the TV and crawl under the covers is not often the first choice made by teens. Although, saying yes to this decision may just save their life. Sleep deprivation leads to a foul mood and, overtime, depression. These intense feelings can lead to thoughts of suicide, and even suicide attempts, some tragically successful. Life is too precious and beautiful. Staying up into the morning hours is not worth a life. Similarly, sleep deprivation leads to fatigue. Drowsiness played a role in many recent and major accidents including the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island in 1979, the massive Exxon Valdez oil spill, and the nuclear meltdown at Chernobyl in 1986. These incidents all could have been avoided if only the culprits listened to their mothers and went to bed. Another accident due to sleep deprivation occurred to a high school student. Gabriel Levine, sophomore at Hunter College High School, was working on his term paper late at night. He had received only three to four

hours of sleep the past few nights. At three am, he headed to the kitchen for a snack. He intended to slice himself a piece of cheese but ended up slicing a piece of his thumb, down to the bone and severing a ligament. It took two surgeries and six weeks in a cast to repair it. In addition, according to the National Highway Safety Administration (NHSA), fatigue results in over one-hundred thousand traffic accidents each year in the United States, seventy-one thousand injuries, and one thousand five hundred and fifty deaths. Over half of these accidents involve those in their teens and twenties. The routine drive to school each morning could turn into a trip to the emergency room or tragically worse, the grave. Also, don't forget your best friend or little brother who was in the passenger seat. One small decision can completely flip the world around. One more episode of *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* or one more race on *Mario Kart* tonight, is not worth risking life tomorrow.

Teenagers are known for procrastinating. Always waiting until the last minute to complete an assignment. "I'll do it later" is a common excuse. Sleep is just another assignment that teens set off until later. Many rely of the weekend to catch up on loss sleep, thinking, "I'll play *Call of Duty* now and sleep in on Saturday." When the needed hours of sleep, during the

week, are not completed, a sleep debt builds up. For example, if a teen receives only five hours of sleep, each night during one week, they would have a sleep debt of fifteen hours. In order to make up for this debt on the weekend, a teen would have to sleep a total of thirty-one hours, the fifteen hours of lost sleep plus the sixteen hours already needed for Friday and Saturday night. Sleeping thirty-one hours in one weekend would be a very difficult task, especially with the daylight and noise of the other bodies in the house. Plus, it would pass the weekend by in the blink of an eye, not allowing time for tasks to get done or fun. Get adequate shuteye during the week and spend the weekend watching a *Netflix* marathon. In addition, catching up on sleep on the weekend does not prevent drowsiness during the week. Staying up late on a Tuesday, planning to sleep more on the weekend, does not avoid the drowsiness on Wednesday. Therefore, the risks involved with sleep deprivation still stand. Health, performance, and even life are still at stake. While sleeping more on the weekend removes the sleep debt, it does not prevent the results of sleep deprivation. Getting adequate rest during the week will avoid both a sleep debt and the effects of sleep deprivation. Another excuse often used by children and teens is "I'm not tired." This argument leads many teens to thinking they can stay up

later and get less sleep because they do not feel tired. Usually outside factors play a role causing the adolescent to feel awake when really they should be going to bed. The use of electronics during the night hours hinders the feeling of tiredness. The bright screen causes the brain to think it is still daytime, and falling asleep becomes very difficult. Similarly, the drinking of caffeine leads to extra energy and more alertness in the evening. Avoiding the use of electronics an hour before bed and the consumption of caffeine late in the day can bring back the desire to go to sleep. Also taking part in some form of physical activity can help burn off energy and make going to bed easier. Late night alertness hinders sleep and thus the overall health and wellbeing of a teen. Therefore, it is important to be attentive to the causes of this alertness and to avoid them for adequate sleep. It is essential to receive at least eight hours every night, no matter the excuse.

Sleep is a critical commodity, for it supplies a more pleasant, satisfying, and risk-free life. It is a healer and preventer of many short and long term health risks. Rest improves the memory and provides more energy during the day, aiding the performance in school and sports. For teens specifically, it leads to a lower risk of using drugs and taking part in

dangerous activities. With the right amount of hours, a teen is more alert during the day, and the life risks, due to drowsiness, decrease. Avoiding the temptations that lead to late nights will throw out every excuse and result in a satisfying night of rest. Going to sleep will end up benefiting a stressed, busy teen instead of hindering them. If life is too chaotic and the chances of catching a full night of sleep are slim, the daily schedule needs to be reassessed. Cutting out unnecessary activities, even just temporarily, can open a window for more rest. Planning ahead, focusing on the task at hand, and not procrastinating will also help provide more time. With the ever advancing technology of the world, even apps have been created to help track and achieve adequate sleep. They provide the chance to play a real life video game and can motivate the user to get a higher score by sleeping more. Trace back the steps of everyday, find the culprits of sleep deprivation, and dedicate time for more sleep. The surprising benefits will make every day flow smoother and allow teens to live to see the days as grandparents, telling their grandchildren of all of the amazing, life adventures.

Works Cited

"Cold and Flu Season - Five Star Urgent Care." Five Star Urgent Care.

N.p., 19 Oct. 2015. Web. 22 May 2016.

Evans, Julie. "7 Reasons You're Tired All The Time." Prevention.

Prevention, 30 Dec. 2014. Web. 22 May 2016.

Feature, Camille PeriWebMD. "10 Surprising Effects of Lack of Sleep."

WebMD. WebMD, 13 Feb. 2014. Web. 22 May 2016.

Feature, R. Morgan GriffinWebMD. "Sleep and Health: 9 Surprising

Reasons to Get More Sleep." WebMD. WebMD, 27 Dec. 2011. Web. 22

May 2016.

Garey, Juliann. "What Happens When Teenagers Don't Get Enough Sleep

| Child Mind Institute." Child Mind Institute. Child Mind Institute, n.d. Web.

22 May 2016.

Gonzalez, Antonio. "How to Be More Productive When You're Tired - The

Gusto Blog." The Gusto Blog. Gusto, 21 Jan. 2016. Web. 22 May 2016.

"How Many Decisions Does a Person Make in an Average Day?" - Quora.

N.p., n.d. Web. 22 May 2016.

"How Much Sleep Is Enough?" - NHLBI, NIH. U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services, 22 Feb. 2012. Web. 22 May 2016.

"James E. Faust Quote." BrainyQuote. Xplore, n.d. Web. 22 May 2016.

Lahey, Jessica. "What Do Students Need Most? More Sleep." Motherlode Blog. The New York Times, 15 Jan. 2014. Web. 22 May 2016.

MacMillan, Amanda. "Teens and Sleep: How to Get Them to Get Enough." WebMD. WebMD, 23 Nov. 2015. Web. 22 May 2016.

Tarkan, Laurie. "How to Help Your Teen Get Enough Sleep." SafeBee. Safe Bee, 15 Apr. 2015. Web. 22 May 2016.

"Tired-lady." A Place for the GodHungry. God Hungry, 30 Apr. 2015. Web. 22 May 2016.

"What Are the Health Risks of Overweight and Obesity?" - NHLBI, NIH. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d. Web. 22 May 2016.

"Why Sleep Is Important and What Happens When You Don't Get Enough." [Http://www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org). American Psychological Association, n.d. Web. 22 May 2016.

Ackerman, McCarton. "Study Finds Zero-Tolerance Drug Policies In School Cause More Harm Than Good | The Fix." The Fixmc. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 May 2016.

"Blogs ." Health Tip: Get Your Sleep – Campus Recreation. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 May 2016.

"Cheese Chef Cartoon." Cheese Chef Cartoon Stock Vector. N.p., n.d.
Web. 22 May 2016.

"Drowsiness Is Red Alert!! A Simple Phrase That Can Save Your Life."
Drowsiness Is Red Alert!! A Simple Phrase That Can Save Your Life. N.p.,
n.d. Web. 22 May 2016.

Gardner/Health.com, Amanda. "TV, Video Games at Night May Cause
Sleep Problems in Kids | TIME.com." Time. Time, 27 June 2011. Web. 22
May 2016.

"No Symbol." - Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 May
2016.

"What Are the Best Apps to Track Your Sleeping Habits - Morning Health
News." Morning Health News. N.p., 29 Apr. 2015. Web. 22 May 2016.

"Why My Kids Don't Play Organised Sport - Kidspot." Kidspot. N.p., 19 Feb.
2015. Web. 22 May 2016.