

# Thinking Like A Therapist

**“I love a good nap; sometimes, it’s the only thing getting me out of bed in the mornings.” (George Costanza, *Seinfeld*)**

Americans have always had a secret affair with napping. We love to do it, but hate to admit it. The whole idea of napping seen as sloth seems to be another outdated leftover from the Puritan age. Guilt and napping are so intrinsically tied in our culture, we have become a society of sleepyheads. After all, nobody wants to be “caught napping.”

**This leads me to ask-**

**How can you convince yourself to take a nap “guilt-free”?**

- A. Take the *scientific approach* by relying on the well-researched benefits of napping.**
- B. Take the *historical approach* by following the examples of “great men” who have been “nappers.”**
- C. Take the *multicultural approach* by embracing the traditions of other cultures.**
- D. Take the *intuitive approach* by “listening to your body” and working with its rhythm rather than against it.**

**If you answered-**

- A. Correct.** Researchers have found, in a multitude of long-term studies on the effects of napping (some as long as 25 years) in industrial and post-industrial nations, that the outcome is clear—“for 92.5% of workers, an afternoon nap increases their productivity *and* their creativity and problem-solving skills.” This shows that we not only get more done after a nap, but our work is better, too!
- B. Correct.** In his book, *The Art of Napping*, Boston University psychologist and author William Anthony reminds us that some of history’s most important figures, including Leonardo DaVinci, Napoleon, Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, Einstein and President Kennedy were all prodigious and productive “nappers.” Following in the footsteps of great men is a great way to end up at the same destination.
- C. Correct.** Can you say *siesta*? In yet another book on the subject, Professor Anthony writes in *The Art of Napping at*

*Work*- “Siestas aren’t ingrained in the U.S. culture, and napping usually is equated with laziness in the hard-charging corporate world.” Dr. Marvin Wooten, sleep specialist at Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, believes we must confront this cultural bias. He writes-“The guy... who doesn’t take time out for a siesta in his culture is probably the guy who is extremely driven and under a lot of pressure, which could increase heart [and other health] risks.”

**D. Correct.** Antonia Will, Ph.D., head of the MW Institute for Chronobiology, introduced her landmark study, *Sleep cycle distortion through industrial work hours and its effect on productivity and just general crabbiness* at the Circadian Rhythm Kings Conference. In it, she writes- “We studied behavioral, pharmacological and immunochemical techniques to understand how daily rhythms in mammals are regulated by photic (light) and non-photoc stimuli. We were equipped to record locomotor activity, drinking, feeding, body temperature and sleep in laboratory rodents, the closest thing we could find to modern-day workers... Look, every other animal on the planet naps—humans have *not* evolved past this basic need. People are not getting nearly enough sleep at night, and it’s causing them to be less effective at work, not to mention the health problems (which also lead to increased costs for business). The modern day work system is not designed around the actual physical needs of our bodies. Coffee breaks, yes. Napping, no. Artificial stimulant vs. real rejuvenation? There’s something seriously wrong there. So my study proposes a new part of the workday: *naptime*. ‘Morning’ people probably need their nap around noon. ‘Night’ people probably need it around three or four in the afternoon.”

How does it feel to live in a world where everyone is right? Such a wonderful world could not have been created if I had not just taken a nap.