

WAKE UP TO SLEEP

**A guidebook to awaken your day,
and transform your night**



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Draft • For Founding Members

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INTRODUCTION

Why We Wake Up to Sleep

Most people approach sleep as a problem to solve.

They try to control it, optimize it, hack it, or force it into submission.

When that doesn't work, they assume something is wrong with them.

Eric started working with me believing exactly that.

He was a successful mid-career fabricator who built large concert and theatrical structures—someone used to solving complicated problems under pressure. If something failed during a show, hundreds of people and millions of dollars could be affected.

His work required constant vigilance: anticipating failure points, scanning for problems before they appeared, and staying calm when the stakes were high.

Life had also given him reasons to stay alert. Over the years he had watched people he loved disappear or change in ways he couldn't control.

During the day, that vigilance made him excellent at his work.

At night, the same system refused to shut down.

His mind would begin reviewing conversations, anticipating tomorrow's logistics, and scanning for problems that hadn't happened yet. None of it felt emotional or dramatic.

It felt responsible.

Wake Up To Sleep starts from a different premise.

Sleep isn't a task. It's a relationship — with your body, your nervous system, your mind, your purpose, the people around you.

Strain that relationship and sleep suffers. Repair it, and sleep tends to come back on its own, without force.

“Sleep is not a task-- it’s a
relationship.”

SLEEP MYTH

Sleep is something you can perfect through effort, tracking, and control.

That's the optimization mindset, and it's everywhere. "Life-hackers" and sleep-optimization influencers have built entire followings on a quiet, insidious message: you're doing it wrong, try harder, optimize everything.

For capable, conscientious people — the ones already running on vigilance — that message doesn't help. It feeds the exact thing keeping them awake.

I call the alternative the Sleep Integration Method™. It doesn't ask what should I do differently. It asks what does my nervous system need to trust rest again.

PRACTICE PRINCIPLE

Integration asks not “What should I do differently?”
but “What does my nervous system need to trust rest again?”

Sleep integration means learning how to live in a way that supports rest: regulating the nervous system, aligning rhythm with biology, working with the mind rather than against it, and restoring trust inside the self.

Sleep integration is not about doing more.

It is not about optimization.

It is about doing what is true, sustainable, and coherent.

I didn't arrive at this work from a place of stability. I've been through periodic homelessness, the loss of my faith, the rupture of my family, the end of a marriage, businesses I built and watched close, and more reinventions than I can count. Those experiences shaped my respect for what the nervous system is actually capable of — and how little it responds to being lectured at.

Most of us aren't short on information about sleep. We're short on regulation. We live inside a constant field of alerts, comparisons, and unresolved stress, and over time the nervous system adapts the only way it knows how: it stays on guard. Sleep becomes collateral damage.

Taking back control of our nights requires a shift in consciousness.

“You are vigilant—and vigilance
usually has a history.”

Warrior Consciousness

Reclaiming sleep starts with a shift in how you relate to pressure — what I call Warrior Consciousness.

Not a warrior of dominance or toughness. A warrior of steadiness: someone who can stay present under pressure without bracing, collapsing, or reacting on autopilot. Someone who can tell the difference between their core self and the protective parts that formed years ago to keep them safe.

warrior's note

If you've struggled with sleep you're not broken.
Your nervous system is working hard to protect you.

Building that capacity means knowing yourself — your values, your triggers, your boundaries — well enough to act from them instead of around them. It means taking responsibility for your emotions and reactions instead of outsourcing them to circumstance.

In a world engineered for distraction, that kind of self-possession is harder to come by and more necessary than ever. A lot of people are running on chronic arousal, day and night, without knowing it — disconnected from themselves, their purpose, each other.

Warrior Consciousness is the antidote.

It's a discipline, not a mood.

warrior's note

By reclaiming Warrior Consciousness, you stop just
surviving and begin truly thriving.

This book and the Wake Up To Sleep App exist to help you rebuild that capacity, one morning at a time — mindfulness, embodiment, emotional regulation, self-awareness — until your relationship with sleep starts to repair itself.

The Wake Up To Sleep Journey

Wake Up To Sleep isn't a checklist. It's a developmental arc, and each phase builds a new capacity, stabilizing the nervous system and restoring trust step by step.

It starts with **Wake Up** — learning to see your own patterns without judging them. For most people, the hardest part of sleep isn't the night itself. It's the unconscious machinery of effort and fear running underneath it.

From there it moves into **Being**, grounded in Buddha Practice — mindful awareness of your internal parts, so your attention can rest instead of monitoring everything.

Then **Breathe**, grounded in Budō Practice — regulation through breath, posture, rhythm, movement. The body learning safety by doing, not by being told.

As that stabilizes, the work opens into **Belong**, grounded in Attachment Practice — because sleep is relational. It depends on whether your nervous system feels held enough to actually let go.

From belonging it matures into **Balance**, grounded in Sage Practice — relating wisely to thought, effort, and imperfection. Perspective instead of struggle. Discernment instead of control.

And finally, **Integration** — living all of it, until sleep stops being something you manage and starts being something that just happens, because of how you live.

Each phase corresponds to a practice module in the Wake Up To Sleep App, where these capacities are trained experientially rather than explained conceptually.

warrior's note

We don't start by fixing habits.

We start by training the capacities that make change sustainable.

These aren't steps you check off once. They're capacities you keep returning to.

Practice, Not Theory

Understanding this doesn't retrain your nervous system.
Experience does.

During my Misogi breath-purification training, my teacher Chimon Sorkin Sensei shared a Zen saying:

“You cannot wash off blood with blood.”

The mind can't resolve its own agitation using the same machinery that created it. Thought doesn't untangle thought.

This is why Misogi and Zen practices put so much weight on posture and breath instead of explanation — change the body's state, and the mind and spirit reorganize on their own.

Wake Up To Sleep works the same way. We're not trying to think our way into sleep. We're retraining the nervous system through breathing, embodiment, and repetition — teaching the body what calm actually feels like, until it doesn't need reminding.

This book gives you the orientation and the language. The App gives you the lived practice — short, repeatable, without turning your life into a project. Together, they're one system.

A Question to Carry

As you read, hold onto this:

Where does your nervous system work hardest to protect you?

You might see it in your sleep. Or your relationships, your work, your body, the way your mind rehearses tomorrow before you've even gotten there.

If sleep has been a struggle, you're probably not lazy or undisciplined. You're vigilant — and vigilance almost always has a history, even if it doesn't look the same at every age.

I've seen it in Eric, whose vigilance sharpened when his best friend survived a severe brain injury in a car crash — another reminder of how fast the people you count on can disappear or change.

I've seen it in Dustin, twenty-seven, who can fall asleep anywhere out of sheer exhaustion but can't actually power down — the kind of tired that never quite resolves into rest.

In Susan, who leaned on sleep medication for years to manage the anxiety of watching her husband's Parkinson's progress, before she found her way back to trusting her own body.

And in Denise, an elder in her community facing a possible cancer diagnosis with a steadiness that had nothing to do with certainty and everything to do with regulation.

Different ages, different pressures, same underlying pattern: the nervous system learns to stay on guard, and when that becomes permanent, sleep is what gets sacrificed.

You'll meet people like this throughout the book — myself included — all working on the same capacity: meeting pressure without becoming it.

None of us solved sleep by optimizing it. None of us tracked our way there. There was no hack. What actually worked was steadier nervous systems — and sleep followed, on its own timeline.

This book is about retraining vigilance into steadiness. The App is the practice ground for doing it.

Research Notes — Foundations of Wake Up To Sleep

Insomnia as Hyperarousal, Not Deficiency

Modern sleep research increasingly frames chronic insomnia as a condition of hyperarousal, not insufficient sleep drive. People with insomnia often show elevated physiological activation and heightened threat-monitoring, especially at night — which is exactly why "trying harder" tends to backfire. (Riemann; Bonnet & Arand)

Cognitive Arousal and Nighttime Wakefulness

Trouble sleeping correlates strongly with cognitive arousal — rumination, worry, mental rehearsal — at the transition to sleep. The research suggests the problem isn't the thoughts themselves, but how identified with and reactive to them we become. (Harvey; Ong)

Safety as a Precondition for Rest

Neurophysiological research shows the nervous system prioritizes safety before it allows rest. Where threat is present — real or perceived — sleep becomes biologically incompatible. Practices that restore a felt sense of safety support the autonomic shift sleep onset requires. (Porges; Thayer & Lane)

Morning Regulation and Nighttime Sleep

Stress physiology and circadian research suggest nervous system orientation earlier in the day shapes nighttime arousal. Training regulation and breath in the morning — rather than only intervening at bedtime — can reduce sleep disruption without targeting sleep directly. (Spiegelhalder; Meerlo)