

A CASE STUDY

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PATIENT

Profile: Forty-one-year-old physician
Condition: Insomnia and Stress

When rest is elusive, the waking hours are often like a vertical sleep. With dimmed emotions and responses, days become sort of a half life for the sleepless.

After ten years of difficulty staying asleep, pervasive worrying, shakiness and fatigue, a new set of life changes prompted this patient to seek stress reduction training. A daughter with cancer, the approach of his medical specialty boards, and moving his family and practice to another state created a stress level that demanded relief.

He chose an individual treatment program to accommodate his busy schedule and his preference for private, self-paced instruction. A self-described “hot wire for forty-one years,” he often sweated so profusely through difficult surgeries he performed that he clouded his glasses. “Feeling like a bomb ready to blow” he pursued the three-month training at his wife’s suggestion. This man eagerly sought a state of calm which enabled him to sleep and respond to the stresses in his life.

The benefits exceeded his goals for the training. He now sleeps through the night and no longer feels overwhelmed. In addition, he retrospectively understands that he felt depressed and now feels “pervasively optimistic.” He reports feeling “more chipper and socially spontaneous.”

Although he is asymptomatic, he continues to use the technique, (and so does his daughter) to preserve his gains. As he writes from his new home: “The family expects that twice a day, my daughter and I will ensconce in some secluded, quiet spot for a few moments. We’re unfailing about this. I have no doubt that the magic of your coaching has taken me from traineeship to the real thing. . . I can now experience equanimity from within. The practice continues to very helpful to my daughter as well.”

Using the training, he recognized, he says, “a quiet and tranquil inner sanctum, that waits patiently to be remembered.” He maintains that he has found the state of inner calm that he so eagerly sought and is able to call upon it when flooded with tension. It is especially useful to him during surgical procedures. From this state, he notes that he can operate with greater clarity and precision.