

The Art of Sleep

Michael Krugman interviewed by Laurence Pinsard for Alternative Health magazine, France

Who is Sounder Sleep System (SSS) aimed to ?

The SOUNDER SLEEP SYSTEM offers self-healing for anyone who seeks deeper, more restful, more enjoyable sleep without drugs. Since 95% of all human beings will encounter insomnia during their lifetime, this is a vast audience.

If you currently suffer from insomnia, you can use SOUNDER SLEEP to heal yourself right now. If you don't have insomnia, learn the system and begin to practice pro-actively. You'll enjoy deeper, more restful sleep. You'll look better, feel better, and enjoy life more. And when insomnia strikes, you'll know just what to do.

In addition to enhancing sleep, the SOUNDER SLEEP SYSTEM is a great self-help, self-nurturing practice for anyone who suffers from worry, tension, anxiety, or the stressful effects of living in the modern world. It's practical, pleasurable, and easy to learn. I guess if it didn't exist, someone would have to invent it!

Where is SSS taught (yoga studios, hospitals, university, sleep centres...)?

The SOUNDER SLEEP SYSTEM is taught in universities, clinics, hospitals, primary and secondary schools, and private studios. There are currently about 200 authorized teachers in 12 countries. They include medical and therapy

professionals, somatic educators, and teachers of yoga, taiji and qigong, meditation, dance, sports, and other disciplines.

The system is a valuable adjunct to all holistic therapies and self-help methods. Remember, virtually all diseases have the potential to disrupt sleep. And sleep is nature's best medicine. Often, the healing process cannot succeed until the problem of sleep is resolved.

Do some therapists send their patients to SSS sominars when needed ?

Yes. Our teachers receive referrals from many practitioners, including physicians, psychotherapists, and physiotherapists. I have had many physicians tell me that they are sick of prescribing sleeping pills, so they are glad to send their patients to me for the non-pharmaceutical approach. In Germany, we are starting to get reimbursement from some of the big health-insurance companies.

Is there any scientific study conducted on SSS effects ?

There is a study now underway at the University of Oldenburg in Germany, and the preliminary results sound very positive. More studies are planned for next year. In the US, we are going to study how the SOUNDER SLEEP SYSTEM affects "sleep stability." This is a new scientific measure of sleep quality that tracks the degree to which heart and breath rhythms are synchronized during sleep.

From your exeprience, does SSS really cure insomnia ?

"Cure" isn't necessarily a meaningful concept with respect to insomnia. You can get a microbe out of your system, and even develop immunity to it. That's my idea of a cure. With insomnia, the seeds are always there and stressful life events can precipitate a new episode of insomnia at any time. We humans are wired that way.

So rather than a cure, we prefer to say that SOUNDER SLEEP SYSTEM is a practical, effective "insomnia solution". The solution consists of two functional components. The first component consists of uniquely powerful daytime relaxation techniques, called DayTamers, that reduce the stress of life and make your life more peaceful. When your daily life is more peaceful, your sleep is more peaceful.

The second component is sleep-inducing techniques that we call Mini-Moves. These are done right in your own bed to help you fall asleep easily and to recover from awakenings during the night.

Together, these two functional components provide an easy, enjoyable, and highly effective system for overcoming insomnia. With continued practice, it becomes almost instinctive, a part of your spontaneous, natural sleep behavior. You won't even have to think about it!

For people with primary, stress-related insomnia, the SOUNDER SLEEP SYSTEM truly is the insomnia solution. With regular practice of the DayTamers and Mini-Moves, the large majority of our students return to natural, restful sleep within a few days or weeks. In some cases, the results are instantaneous.

For those with secondary insomnia, that is, insomnia caused by another illness—like depression, chronic pain, indigestion, etc.—the system can be a powerful ally in the healing process. Of course, at the same time, the person will be working with their chosen medical provider to eliminate the primary cause of their insomnia. Once they've done that, SOUNDER SLEEP will become their insomnia solution, too.

Any relapse possible ?

Insomnia has a strong situational component, and it is also very sensitive to changes in metabolism, so it may appear at different times of life for different reasons. For example, a woman might first experience insomnia during the stress of university examinations, then again during pregnancy, and later around menopause. Each time, the cause is different. So these are not relapses, per se, but new manifestations.

However, once you have learned the SOUNDER SLEEP SYSTEM, you can use it at any stage of life, any time you feel the need. Following your initial training, you might still experience a difficult night from time to time, but employing the Mini-Moves right away will help you get the maximum amount of rest possible. Over the following days and nights, you can resume or intensify your daily practice of the system to prevent that transitory sleep disturbance from becoming chronic. In this way, you can adapt the system to your own needs. This is a very practical system!

How long does it take to learn SSS enough to be autonomous with it ?

That depends on the person, the nature of their problem, and the quality of their practice. Some people respond after attending one workshop or a brief series of classes, and they never require any further training. Others require more extensive exposure or personalized consultation.

Intention is very important. A person who is dedicated to healing themselves by their own efforts will tend to respond more quickly than others. The key thing is to practice the techniques with enjoyment and an open mind. All the benefits flow from that.

In addition, some of my students keep coming back to the SOUNDER SLEEP SYSTEM purely for esthetic enjoyment. For them, sleep has become an art, and they look forward to their "sleep retreats" as an oasis of beauty, pleasure, and peace in the midst of busy, stressful lives. I am not in accord with the idea that sleep is exclusively a health issue, or simply a matter of survival. Sleep is also a matter of esthetics--if you want to live a beautiful life, your sleep should be beautiful, too!

Which Mini-Move do you like the most / do you practice regularly ?

I love them all equally, as if they were my own children! I practice several different ones every day, and I still discover new ones all the time. The newer ones tend to get more of my attention, however, because I'm still refining them through my own observation and experience. The older ones have already left home and started lives of their own!

Most of our techniques involve small, gentle physical movements synchronized with the natural rhythm of the breath. But one of the simplest and most powerful techniques requires no voluntary movement at all, can be performed in any position, even while driving, and can be communicated in one sentence:

"Take all the time you need for each breath."

If you really practice that sincerely for any amount of time, you will see a big change in yourself. You'll feel more peaceful and tranquil, and your thoughts will be more positive. Even if you only have time to do it for one breath, you will feel a difference. It brings you into the moment.

**Except from Paris, is there any other place in France where SSS is taught ?
Is it or will it be taught in Belgium ?**

For now, I think Paris is it. Perhaps someone will invite us to teach and train practitioners in other parts of France or Belgium. I visit Europe twice a year, and my German and Swiss assistants, Patricio Simon and Janine Holenstein, are always nearby, so we are ready whenever you are!

Will your book The Insomnia Solution be translated to french ?

We have a lot of projects going on now, mostly with audio and video productions. I think that, aside from live training, those electronic media are the best way to transmit the system. We are currently scripting a set of three audio CDs and a DVD, and we will make those available in French--hopefully by Christmas 2008. Please visit the French-language page on our web site at

<<http://www.sounderssleep.com>> for more details and updates in the future.
There you'll also find a listing of our teachers in Paris and in other European cities.