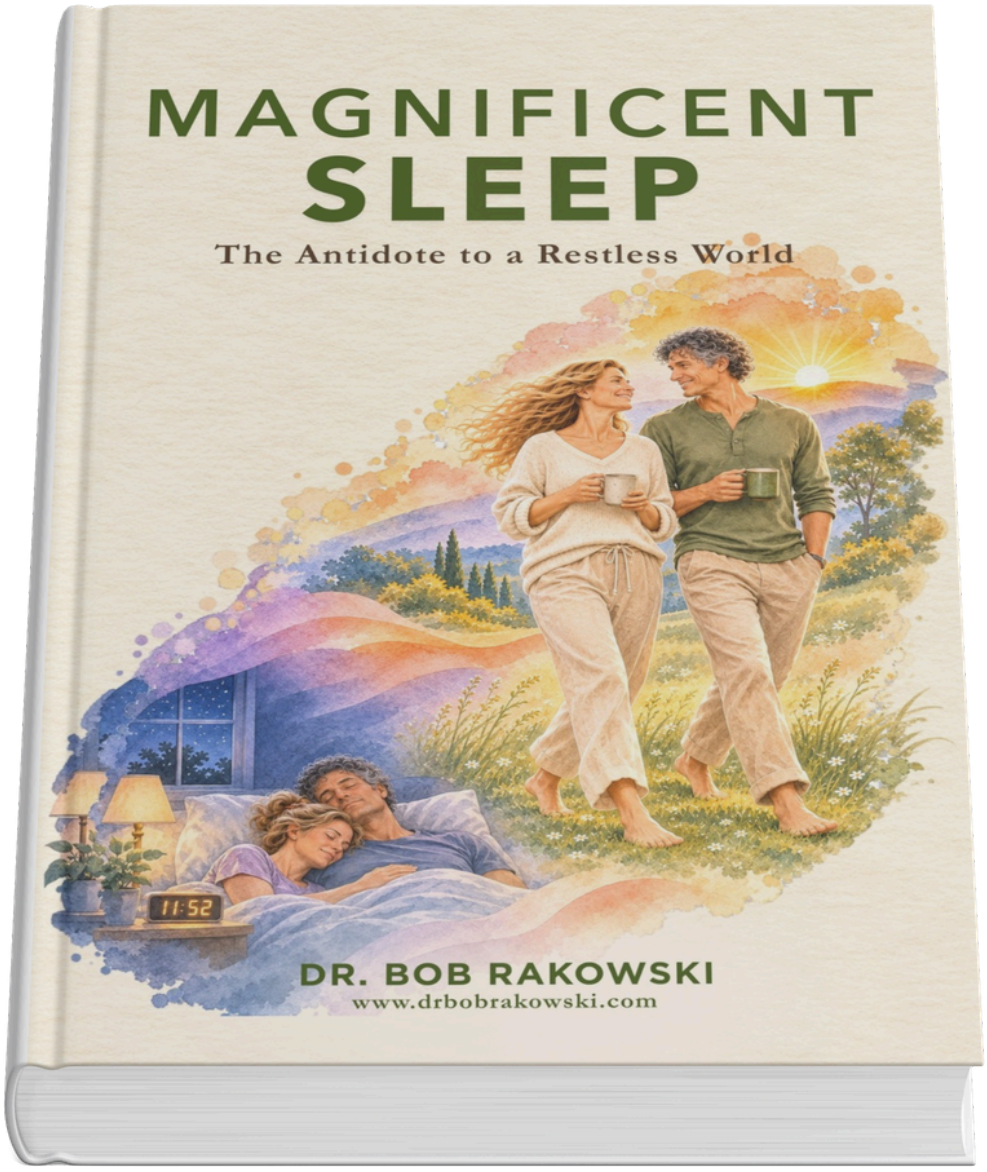


CHAPTER 1: SLEEP STARTS IN THE MORNING

This free chapter is shared with you by Dr. Bob Rakowski.
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For educational purposes only. Not medical advice. If you snore loudly, stop breathing during sleep, or fall asleep while driving, that deserves a proper look, and please do not drive drowsy. Book a consultation with Dr. Bob, in person in League City, Texas, or online, wherever you live, at DrBobRakowski.com/contact.

1

SLEEP STARTS IN THE MORNING

A GREAT DAY STARTS THE NIGHT BEFORE.

"Lose an hour in the morning, and you will spend all day looking for it."

RICHARD WHATELY



Eleven fifty-two at night.

The house is quiet. The room is dark and cool. You are in bed, phone in hand, thumb scrolling through one more video you will not remember tomorrow. You put it down. You close your eyes. And you are wide awake.

You did what the articles told you to do. No coffee after lunch. A warm shower. You even bought the pillow from the commercial that promised to change your life.

So what went wrong?

Here is the twist. The problem did not start at 11:52 p.m. It started at 7:10 this morning.

That was when you woke to a glowing alarm in a dark room. Then you walked to a dim kitchen. Then into a car with tinted windows. Then into an office lit like a parking garage at dusk, eyes locked on a screen. You came home to a television. You went to bed with a phone. From sunrise to midnight, your eyes never saw the sky. Your brain never got a clear message that the day had begun. So tonight, it has no idea the day is over.

Now picture a different day. You step outside with your coffee and feel the morning on your face. You take a brisk walk. You work near a window. You do something that matters to someone. By ten o'clock, your eyelids are heavy, and you did not have to try.

Same person. Same bed. Different morning.

Richard Whately, an English archbishop, warned that if you lose an hour in the morning, you will spend all day looking for it. He was right. But he left out the second half. You will spend all night looking for it too.

We have all heard that a great day starts the night before. That is true. Lay out your clothes, plan your top three tasks, and go to bed on time, and tomorrow goes better. But the circle runs both ways. A great night starts the morning before. The two halves of your day are holding hands. Let go of one, and you lose the other.

Most people try to fix their sleep at bedtime. That is like trying to fix a late flight by arguing with the gate agent. The gate agent did not make the flight late. The schedule was set hours earlier, in another city, by people you will never meet.

Your sleep works the same way. The schedule was set this morning. You just were not there for the meeting.



So let me trade you a better question for the one keeping you up. Stop asking, “Why can’t I fall asleep tonight?” Start asking, “What did I tell my brain this morning?”

The quality of your nights follows the quality of your questions. Ask a better one, and better answers start showing up.

THE SCIENTIST WHO TURNED ON THE LIGHTS

Every great discovery begins with someone who refuses to accept the obvious answer.

In the early 1980s, the obvious answer about the human body clock went something like this. Plants reset to light. Hamsters reset to light. Birds reset to light. But humans were different. We were social animals. The leading view held that our clocks were set mostly by social cues. Meals. Work schedules. Alarm clocks. Other people.

Light? Light was just something we used to see by.

A young Harvard physician and researcher named Charles Czeisler was not convinced. He had studied shift workers who could never quite adjust. He had seen travelers whose bodies stayed in one time zone while their suitcases arrived in another. Something more powerful than habit seemed to be at work.

So his team did what good scientists do. They stopped arguing and started measuring.

They brought volunteers into a laboratory where every variable could be controlled. When people slept. When they woke. When they ate. Most

important, exactly how much light reached their eyes, and exactly when.

Then they did something bold. They gave people carefully timed doses of bright light and tracked what the internal clock did in response.

The clock moved.

Not a little. A lot. And here is the part that changed the field. The clock moved according to the timing of the light, independent of when the volunteers slept. The light schedule outranked the bed schedule.

In 1986, Czeisler and his colleagues published their findings in *Science*, one of the most respected journals in the world. The message was simple, and it was revolutionary. Light is not just something we see by. Light is a signal. It has a dose. It has a timing. When you get both right, it resets the master clock that runs your sleep, your hormones, your body temperature, and your energy.



Think about what that means for you. The most powerful sleep medicine on earth costs nothing. It has no side effects when used wisely. It arrives on schedule every single morning.

And most of us never take our dose.

64 Cups of Coffee a Day!

When I read the number on his intake form, I assumed it was a typo. Sixty-four cups of coffee. Per day.

It was not a typo.

Mark was a real estate agent, and a busy one. Long days. Late closings. A phone that never stopped ringing. He brewed eight pots of coffee every day, and he drank every drop. Coffee was not one of the things he drank. It was the only thing he drank.

He did not come to see me about the coffee. He came because he could not sleep.

So I asked him a simple question. Had he considered that eight pots of coffee might have something to do with it?

He had considered it. He just did not know what to do about it. His job was demanding. His hours were long. In his mind, the coffee was the only thing keeping him sharp enough to close the next deal.

Here is what I saw. Mark was not just a coffee drinker. He was a man running on borrowed energy. He woke up tired because he slept poorly. He drank coffee to fight the tired. The coffee kept him wired at night. The next morning, he woke up tired again. Round and round.

Fixing this was not rocket science. But it did require breaking the loop in the right place. And the right place was the morning.

Mark agreed to a simple plan:

- Morning light. At least 10 minutes outside in the first light of the day, while exercising. As a bonus, he agreed to walk barefoot in the grass.
- Screens off early. No screens for the last hour before bed.
- One schedule. A consistent bedtime and wake time, with a full 8 hours from the time he went to bed until the alarm rang.
- Less coffee. He agreed to cut back.

Within six weeks, Mark was down to four cups a day. Not sixty-four. Four. And he was sleeping better, with more energy than he had felt in years.

Mark did not have a coffee problem. He had a morning problem. The coffee was just how he was paying for it.

Stories like Mark's used to surprise me. They do not anymore. After more than three decades in practice, I have learned that many people who call themselves insomniacs are not broken. They are simply under-lit. When the morning signal is missing, the body borrows energy wherever it can find it. Coffee. Sugar. Screens. Give the clock real light, and the need to borrow starts to fade.



FOUR RULES YOUR CLOCK NEVER BREAKS

Stories inspire us. Principles change us. A story tells you what happened to someone else. A principle tells you what will happen to you. Here are the four unchanging rules behind this chapter.

1. Your clock is set by light, not by your alarm. Your alarm clock wakes your body. It does not set your clock. Deep in your brain, just above the spot where your optic nerves cross, sits a cluster of about 20,000 nerve cells called the suprachiasmatic nucleus. You met this master clock in *Magnificently Connected*. Its most important input is not your phone, your calendar, or your boss. It is light coming in through your eyes. Your eyes are not only cameras. They are also clocks that report the time to your brain.

2. Morning light starts tonight's countdown. When bright light hits your eyes in the morning, your brain marks the start of the day. In most people, melatonin, the hormone of darkness, begins to rise roughly 14 to 16 hours later. Get bright light at 7 a.m., and your body starts preparing for sleep somewhere around 9 to 11 p.m. That is not a coincidence. It is a countdown. Skip the morning signal, and the countdown starts late, drifts, or never gets a clean start at all.

3. Indoors is a cave. Your eyes are fantastic at adjusting, which is exactly why they fool you. A bright office feels bright. To your clock, it is twilight. A cloudy morning outside is typically many times brighter than a well-lit office. A sunny morning can be a hundred times brighter or more. Mohamed Boubekri and colleagues compared office workers with and without windows. Those

with windows slept an average of 46 minutes more per night. Forty-six minutes. From a window.

4. Consistency beats intensity. One perfect sunrise walk will not fix a chaotic week. A clock learns from repetition. Wake at 6 a.m. on Monday and 10 a.m. on Saturday, and you have flown your body across four time zones without leaving your house. The goal is one wake time, seven days a week, give or take about 30 minutes. Boring? Absolutely. Boring is how clocks stay accurate.



Setting	Typical light level (lux)
Sunny morning outdoors	10,000 to 100,000+
Cloudy morning outdoors	1,000 to 10,000
Well-lit office	300 to 500
Typical living room at night	50 to 200

Figures are approximate ranges. Real values vary with season, latitude, time of day, and where you stand.

THREE WAYS TO SEE THE MORNING

Truth looks the same from every honest angle. In this book, we look at each principle three ways. Theology asks what God designed. Philosophy asks what the wise have always known. Science asks what we can measure. When all three point in the same direction, you can build your life on it.

Theology: Let There Be Light

The first words God speaks in the Bible are these: “Let there be light: and there was light” (Genesis 1:3, KJV).

The earth was without form, and void. Darkness covered everything. And the first thing God spoke into that darkness was light.



Here is something easy to miss. The sun does not appear until the fourth day. Light came before the sun did. Only then was the sun given its job: to mark “seasons, and days, and years” (Genesis 1:14, KJV). From the very beginning, light was designed to be a signal.

Every morning, that first creation plays out again in miniature. You wake in darkness, your mind still foggy and formless. Then light breaks through, and the day takes shape. Light first. Everything else after.

Jesus lived this rhythm. “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35, KJV). Up early. Outside. Quiet. With God.

Every morning is a fresh start, written into the design. Light returns. The clock resets. You get to begin again. That is good theology. It is also good physiolog y.

Philosophy: The Wisdom Came First

Benjamin Franklin printed a little rhyme in *Poor Richard’s Almanack* in 1735. You know it. “Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and

wise."

Franklin could not have explained the phase response curve. He had never seen a hormone test. But he had watched people. He knew that the way you begin a day shapes the way you end it. Whately knew it too. Neither man needed a laboratory. They only needed to pay attention.

Philosophers have always understood that a life is built from days, and a day is built from habits. The historian Will Durant, summing up Aristotle, put it this way. "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

Robin Sharma built an entire movement around one simple idea: own your morning, elevate your life. Jordan Peterson has pointed out that one of the first questions worth asking anyone who is struggling is surprisingly simple. *Do you get up at the same time every day*? Not because the question is clever. Because chaos in the morning tends to become chaos everywhere else.

Science: Your Eyes Have a Second Job

Here is what the research shows, step by step.

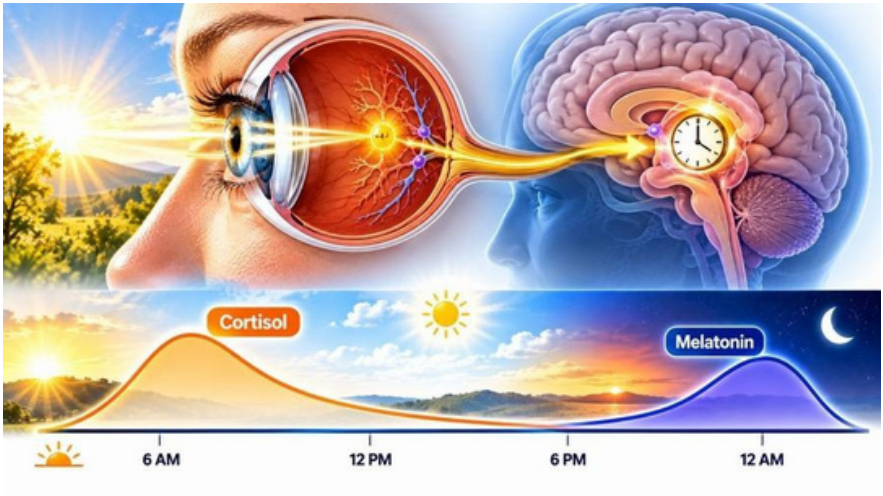
Step one: a special sensor. In 2002, David Berson and his team at Brown University identified a special class of cells in the retina. These cells contain a light-sensitive pigment called melanopsin. They are not built for seeing shapes or colors. They are built for one job: measuring how bright it is and reporting that to the master clock. They are most sensitive to the blue part of the spectrum, which is exactly what a morning sky delivers in abundance. Hold onto that blue detail. In Chapter 3, you will see what happens when that same blue light shows up at the wrong time of day.

Step two: timing matters. Light does not affect your clock the same way at every hour. Scientists map this with something called the phase response curve. *Bright light in the morning pulls your clock earlier*, so you get sleepy earlier tonight. Bright light late in the evening pushes your clock later, so you get sleepy later. Same light. Opposite effect. The only difference is the time on the clock.

Step three: the morning surge. Within roughly 30 to 45 minutes of waking, your cortisol rises sharply. This is called the cortisol awakening response. Cortisol has a bad reputation, but this morning rise is healthy. It is your body's ignition system. A strong, well-timed morning cortisol peak is followed by a lower evening level, which helps open the door to sleep. A flat or delayed

rhythm tends to leave people dragging in the morning and wired at night. In my clinic, that pattern shows up far more often than most people would guess.

Step four: real-world proof. In 2017, Mariana Figueiro and colleagues measured the light exposure of office workers during real workdays. Those who got more circadian-effective light in the morning fell asleep faster at night and reported better sleep and better mood than those who spent their mornings in dim light.



Put it all together and the functional medicine principle becomes clear. Before we reach for a pill to force sleep at night, we look upstream for the root cause. Very often, the root cause is a morning spent in the dark.

In *Magnificently Connected*, you read about campers in Colorado whose clocks shifted after a week of natural light. This chapter shows you how to get that same benefit without packing a tent.

THE STREETLIGHT OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW

Before I was a doctor, I was trained as an electrical engineer. Engineers love one thing more than coffee, and that is a well-designed control system. Your sleep is one of the finest control systems ever built.

Consider the streetlight outside your house. Every one of them has a small sensor called a photocell. It does not care what the city clock says. It does not check anyone's calendar. It reads the light. When the light fades, it switches the lamp on. When the light rises, it switches the lamp off.

Now imagine someone tapes a piece of cardboard over that photocell. The streetlight gets confused. It may burn all day. It may switch on at noon. Nothing is wrong with the bulb. Nothing is wrong with the wiring. The sensor simply is not getting a clean signal.

Your melanopsin cells are your photocell. Spend your mornings indoors, behind tinted glass, under dim bulbs, and you have taped cardboard over your sensor. Then we blame the bulb and wonder why the light comes on at the wrong time.

Part	Streetlight	Your Body
Sensor	Photocell	Melanopsin cells in your eyes
Input	Ambient light	Morning daylight
Controller	Switching relay	Master clock in your brain
Output	Lamp on at dusk	Melatonin and sleepiness at night
Common failure	Covered sensor, lamp on at noon	Indoor mornings, sleepiness arrives late
The fix	Clean the sensor	Give your eyes bright light early

Give your photocell a strong, clean signal in the morning, and the switch flips on time tonight. This honors your magnificent design and is a great step towards creating or enhancing your magnificent life!



People sometimes ask me why sleep is my number one non-negotiable of the Magnificent 7. Here is why. Every other habit gets easier when I sleep well. I eat better. I think more clearly. I move with more energy. I am kinder to the people I love.

I have also learned that my night does not begin when my head hits the pillow. It begins the moment my feet hit the floor.

Now, a confession. I am an early riser. In winter, I am usually up two to three hours before the sun. Even in summer, I beat it by about an hour. So I do not get to step out into sunshine the moment I wake up. Most mornings, the sky is still black.

I do not waste those dark hours. I start with the basics. I brush my tongue, then my teeth with a clean toothpaste. Then I swish with organic coconut oil for a deeper clean. I hydrate with pure water, then with a cup of super clean, reishi-infused coffee. Then I move. I work on my posture and my breathing. Nothing fancy. Just a body waking up on purpose instead of by accident.

Then I keep my appointment with the sun. When the sky starts to turn from gray to gold, I step outside, usually barefoot in the grass. Some mornings it is a walk. Some mornings it is just standing in the yard with a cup of coffee, watching the day arrive. I pray. I give thanks. I set my intention for the day. I welcome the light with gratitude. Then I let it do its divinely designed work.

I almost never set an alarm, unless I have an early flight or appointment. I do not need one. My body wakes me on its own, because the sunrise keeps my clock set. I rarely miss that appointment. When I do, the rest of the day reminds me how important it is.

I also use a sleep tracker to measure my total sleep, deep sleep, and REM sleep. The numbers tell a clear story. My body gets all or nearly all of its deep sleep before midnight, and often before 10 p.m. That is no accident. Deep sleep comes mostly in the first few cycles of the night. When your clock is set right, those cycles start early, and you get the most restorative sleep while most people are still watching TV.

This daily routine does something that no supplement ever has or could. It tells my body what time it is. It tells my mind what matters. And it sets up tonight before today has even started.

Here is the bigger reason. I do not rise just to get through the day. I rise for my family. I rise for my patients, who are trusting me with their health. I rise

for a purpose that is bigger than my comfort. And yet this disciplined routine gives me both comfort and the energy to contribute.

You have a reason too. Maybe it is your kids. Maybe it is your business, your church, your team, or a dream you have not told anyone about yet. Whatever it is, it deserves the best version of you. And the best version of you is a rested one.

Rise with a reason. Then go outside and let the light remind you why.

Everything in this chapter comes down to one sentence. Write it on a sticky note. Put it where you will see it tomorrow at sunrise.



The Sleep Law: Your morning sets your night.

YOUR FIRST MAGNIFICENT MOVE: THE SUNRISE LIGHT LOG

Knowledge is not power. Applied knowledge is power. So here is your first move.

For the next seven days, track your mornings. Each day, give yourself a score from 0 to 10 using the simple guide below. In *Magnificently Connected*, the Magnificent Day Clock helped you see the shape of your whole day. The Sunrise Light Log zooms in on the most important hour.

How to Score Your Morning (0 to 10)

- Wake time (0 to 3 points): 3 if within 30 minutes of your target. 1 if within an hour. 0 if more than an hour off.
- Outdoor light in the first hour (0 to 4 points): 4 for 20 minutes or more. 3 for 10 to 19 minutes. 1 for under 10 minutes. 0 for none. On cloudy days, aim for the longer end.
- No glass between you and the sky (0 to 1 point): 1 if you were truly outside, not behind a window or windshield.
- Sleepy on time that night (0 to 2 points): 2 if you felt naturally sleepy near your planned bedtime. 1 if a little late. 0 if wide awake.

Day	Wake time	Minutes outside	Sunny or cloudy	Sleepy at bedtime? (Y/N)	Score (0 to 10)
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

What your weekly average tells you: 8 to 10 means your morning signal is strong. 5 to 7 means you are close, so pick the lowest category and fix it first. 0 to 4 means you just found the easiest win in this entire book.

A few safety notes. Never look directly at the sun. If you have an eye condition, or take a medication that makes you sensitive to light, talk with your eye doctor first. If you live where mornings are dark much of the year, ask your clinician about a light therapy box.

No Sun? No Problem.

> *Some mornings the sun is not up when you are. Maybe you start work before dawn, live far north, or work the night shift. Your clock still needs its morning signal. The good news is that it responds to bright light from any source, as long as it reaches your eyes at the right time.*

Light therapy box. This is the best-studied substitute. Use about 10,000 lux for 20 to 30 minutes within the first hour after waking. Place it 16 to 24 inches from your face and off to the side. Do not stare into it. Choose one that filters out UV light.

Light glasses. These wearable devices let you move around while you get your dose. They are convenient, but the research is thinner than for light boxes.

Dawn simulator. This alarm lamp brightens slowly before you wake. It makes mornings gentler, but it is too dim to replace real morning light.

Move and eat on time. Morning exercise and a consistent breakfast time also help set your clock. They are weaker than light, but they add up.

A few cautions. Timing matters as much as brightness. Bright light in the evening pushes your clock the wrong way. If you have bipolar disorder, use a light box only under medical supervision. If you have an eye condition or take a medication that makes you sensitive to light, check with your eye doctor first.

Real daylight still wins. Even a cloudy morning outside is usually brighter than a light box, and it is free. Use a substitute when you must. Step outside whenever you can.

Start tomorrow morning. Your free Sunrise Light Log and Sunrise Check-In are waiting at DrBobRakowski.com/sleep.





You got the light right. Your clock is set. Your countdown started on time.

So why are you still wide awake at midnight?

San Diego. The winter of 1964. A 17-year-old high school student named Randy Gardner set out to stay awake longer than any human on record. For a science fair.

By the second day, he struggled to focus. By the fourth, he was irritable and confused. By the eleventh day, a researcher asked him to count backward from 100 by sevens. He stopped at 65. When asked why, he said he had forgotten what he was doing.

Something was building inside his brain, hour after hour. Something only sleep could clear.

It is building inside you right now.

THE SUNRISE CHECK-IN

Check each box before 9 a.m. Five checks make a magnificent morning.

□ I got up within 30 minutes of my target wake time.

□ I went outside within the first hour after waking.

□ I spent at least 10 minutes in daylight (20 or more if cloudy).

□ I checked the sky before I checked my phone.

□ I spent a quiet moment in prayer, gratitude, or reflection.

Tonight's question: Did I feel sleepy closer to my planned bedtime than I did last week?

The Sleep Law: Your morning sets your night.

Free printable version at DrBobRakowski.com/sleep.

Keep Reading

You just read Chapter 1, Sunlight. Nine more chapters are waiting: the sleep pressure that builds every hour you are awake, why darkness is a nutrient, how to build the bedroom cave, the 30-minute wind-down, what the 3 a.m. wake-up is trying to tell you, and the 7-Night Magnificent Sleep Reset that puts it all together.

Earn your rest, and your rest will earn you everything else.

Get Magnificent Sleep on Amazon

Your Free Sleep Workbook

Every tracker, audit and Daily Check-In from the book, ready to print. Start with the Sunrise Light Log tomorrow morning.

DrBobRakowski.com/sleep