



Better Sleep Council Survey – Key Takeaways

May 12, 2015

SLEEP – WASTE OF TIME OR WELCOME RESPITE?

In a survey conducted in April 2015, the Better Sleep Council revealed that Americans are conflicted about sleep. A large majority understands that sleep is necessary to recharge, restore and refresh; however, when asked about their feelings toward sleep, their answers become more complex and polarized. The survey shows that the way sleep is framed influences the way people feel about it. When asked about how important sleep is, few view it as a waste of time. But negative feelings become more prominent when people are told how much of their lives are spent asleep.

Survey Details: Conducted in April 2015 with a statistically representative sample of U.S. adults (18+); a sample size of 1,000 yields a confidence interval of 95 percent +/- 3.1 percent. Age groups: Millennials (18-34), Gen X (35-54) and Baby Boomers (55+).

Americans understand that sleep is important

Q1. What does sleep mean to you? (Select only one.)

It's necessary to recharge/restore/refresh	62%
It's my favorite part of the day	14%
It's necessary but elusive	9%
It's a personal indulgence	6%
I don't think about it	5%
It's a necessary evil	3%
It's a waste of time and I'm missing out on things	2%

- About two-thirds (62%) of all respondents believe sleep is necessary to recharge/restore/refresh
 - > The older you are, the more significantly you feel that way – three-quarters (75%) of respondents 55+ (Boomers) said this (Gen X: 59% and Millennials: 51%)
 - > Also, respondents with no children (65%) felt this significantly more than those with children (56%)

Q2. If you can't fall asleep at night, what are your go-to strategies to get some shut-eye? Select all that apply.

Watch TV	50%
Read a book/magazine	34%
Take a sleep medication	24%
Drink herbal tea/warm milk	20%
Take a bath	16%
There's no hope	10%
Other (please specify)	10%
Get a new mattress	6%
Get new bedding	6%

But negative feelings become more prominent when people are told how much time they spend asleep

Q3. You will sleep for about one-third of your life. How does that make you feel about sleep?
(Open-ended question)

I like/love sleep; good/great/OK; grateful; restful; escape	33%
It's needed; it's needed to recharge your body, stay/look younger, healthy, reset your mind	24%
Wasted time/waste of my life; too much time lost; lose one-third of your life; depressed/sad; hate it; bad	15%
I don't get that much/enough sleep; makes me want more/better sleep	10%
Important/more important; make the most of it; valuable; crucial	8%
Indifferent; doesn't matter; nothing you can do about it	8%
I should sleep less; wish I had more time; wish I didn't need so much; that's a lot of sleep/time spend sleeping; very time-consuming; seems like too much; crazy; wow	7%

- About one-third (33%) of all respondents had very positive feelings about sleeping for one-third of their life – they love sleep and it makes them feel good about it.
 - > *"I love sleep – it and I are very good friends and I couldn't think of a better way to spend one-third of my life than snuggled into my mattress."*
 - > *"I like sleep. I think it's refreshing and a worthy cause. Even if I'm not asleep I prefer to be in bed and cozy anyway."*
- 24% felt sleep is necessary and needed to recharge your body– but this was significantly less in the West (15%) than the general population, and significantly higher with Boomers (27%) than Gen X and Millennials; also significantly higher with respondents who had children (24%) vs. no children (16%)
 - > *"It's still necessary. Sleeping will help us to perform well at our job, help us to get good grades and help to make good decisions in our life. So, yes, we have to sleep one-third of our life to be able to live it fully."*
 - > *"It's important for mental and physical health and revitalizes our bodies overnight. It makes me a little sad we spend that much time, but I realize it's necessary."*
- 15% of all respondents felt very negatively about it and felt that time was wasted
 - > *"Screw sleep! I have stuff to do!"*
 - > *"Sad. What a waste of valuable time."*
 - > *"It's disappointing that I will be spending such a large portion of my life asleep. It makes sleep seem even less appealing."*
- 10% feel they don't get that much sleep and would like more
 - > *"I wish it were true – insomnia never lets me sleep."*
- 8% felt it gave much more importance to sleep – women felt this way (10%) significantly more than men, as did the Millennials (12%) more so than Gen X or Boomers.
 - > *"It reminds me of how important sleep is."*
 - > *"Sleep must be very important because there is hardly anything else that you will even spend close to that amount of time on."*

- 8% were indifferent
 - > *“It’s just how we function.”*
 - > *“It is needed so I’m indifferent.”*
- 7% were surprised by the statement and felt that was a lot of time; however, they weren’t negative about it
 - > *“That’s a lot of sleep!”*
 - > *“I wish I could get less of it but still live a long, fulfilling, healthy life.”*

Q4. By the time you are 60 years old, you will have slept for roughly 20 years. How do you feel about that? (Select only one.)

I need to make it more of a priority than I do right now	28%
I can’t believe I’m about to waste 20 years of my life	24%
I wish I could sleep for 12 hours a day	23%
It makes me want to never go to sleep again	9%
Other (please explain)	16%

- More than one-quarter (28%) of all respondents feel that that need to make sleep more of a priority than they presently do (consistent across age/gender)
- About one-third (33%) feel that they may be “wasting 20 years of their life” and “never want to sleep again”
 - > Millennials (30%) are significantly more likely to feel they are wasting 20 years of their lives than Gen X (23%) or Boomers (21%)
 - > Millennial males (34%) are significantly more likely to feel they are wasting 20 years of their lives then both Gen X males (18%) and Boomer males (20%)
- Almost one-quarter (23%) wished they could sleep for 12 hours a day but this is significantly lower with the Boomers (12%) than the Millennials (24%) or Gen X (30%)
 - > Respondents with children (30%) were significantly more likely to feel this way than those with none (19%)