

Anna: Sleeping habits and Marriage. This is Stay Happily Married: Episode number 239.

Announcer: Welcome to Stay Happily Married, your source for weekly updates on the latest tips and advice to build a happy and healthy marriage.

Anna: I'm Anna Riley, and I'm your host today. Welcome to the show. Are your sleeping habits affecting your marriage? We all know sleep is important for our health, but how many of us really take into consideration the effects that a lack of sleep can have on not only our physical health, but our mental and emotional health as well? For couples dealing with sleepless nights or night consisting of less than sound sleep, life and managing a marriage can be a little more difficult. What many people don't consider is that there are many different types sleep disorders that can ultimately affect your well-being and the well-being of your spouse. Today, we're talking with Brent Brando, director of operations for the Parkway Sleep Health Center in Cary, North Carolina. According to him, sleep, or a lack thereof, has more of an impact on our daily lives and relationships than people might think. With a little diligence though, every problem can be fixed. Welcome to the show Brent. I'm so glad you could join us today.

Brent: Thank you for having me.

Anna: So, if we're talking about sleep and how important it is for someone's health in general, then I'm assuming it would be important in, sort of the health of a relationship. How important is sleep for an individual person just for normal daily functioning?

Brent: Well I'll tell you, sleep is your strongest need. You cannot go on without sleep. One of the biggest myths you hear people say is, "Oh, I haven't slept in days." That's not true. You literally cannot go on without sleep. During sleep, it's the restorative process of your brain. Memories are consolidated. It's an essential part of mental and emotional health. We have people here at the center that are suffering from sleep problems. It's taking a great toll on them in a lot of different ways.

Anna: So, it's interesting that you said it's not only for your physical health, but also your emotional and your mental health. In that sense, maybe a couple comes in and they're having some marriage issues, relationship issues. Is there a chance that maybe there's something that could be related to sleep? Have you guys seen that here before, like that could be an issue that someone's dealing with?

Brent: Absolutely. That happens all the time. In fact, we always joke here that the spouses are the best referrers.

Anna: Oh, yeah.

Brent: Meaning that, you especially hear it with sleep apnea. One of the major warning signs of that is snoring. So it's something that's annoying. It takes its toll on a marriage. You know if you lay beside your husband every night and he's snoring, keeping you awake. It takes a toll. But, the thing to keep in mind is that it's a serious medical condition. Someone that has serious sleep apnea, it means that they stop breathing they wake up gasping for air. It goes beyond something where it's just annoying. It goes to where

you're actually concerned for your bed partner's safety, for their overall health. So that could take a huge emotional toll on a couple and put a lot of stress on their relationship. If you're not getting enough sleep, it affects every aspect of your life. Not just your personal relationships, but also at work. If you're not doing great at work, maybe you're not getting that big raise that you want to get and now there are some money problems going on. There are a lot of ways it can trickle down and really hurt a marriage.

Anna: Right. I heard somewhere that the main things that sleep affects were, if you're not getting sleep, is mood, memory, and concentration. So, I'm assuming that if those are the things that are really affected when you're not getting sleep or you're not getting good sleep; and those are definitely things that could start to affect things within a marriage or a relationship even.

Brent: Most definitely. If you're always in a bad mood and you're always forgetting things, there's definitely not going to be a good recipe for a good relationship.

Anna: That's a combo for disaster. Yeah! So, here at the sleep center, have you guys had people who come in, a married couple, a man and a wife, so there's certain situations where maybe the wife says, "Oh my husband has some sleep issues. He's snoring." I know you kind of touched on sleep apnea, so what if they don't know or what if they do know that the person has sleep apnea and it's not necessarily about the annoyance of being woken up, but do you see people that might, their sleep is affected because they're stressed out worrying about that other person? Maybe they have like anxiety because they are worried the other person will have a major issue in their sleep?

Brent: Absolutely, and it's a well warranted concern for people that are suffering from severe sleep apnea. The snoring is a warning sign, but what's going on is they actually stop breathing. The reason they're waking up gasping for air is because their brain is saying, "Oh my God, you're going to die! So, wake up right now!" They wake up for just a brief instant and then they're right back to sleep. So the person that's having the even, they wake up and they probably don't feel very rested. It's because they don't get a good quality of sleep. They may think they got a good quantity, but the quality is poor. So, to them it's like, you know I didn't get a great night sleep, but you know how bad could it really be. They say you're freaking me out, you stop breathing every couple of minutes and I can't sleep because I think you're going to die. That's something we see all the time. The wife and husband or bed partner or whomever says, "You've got to come in here and get checked out because if you don't get fixed, I'm going to kill you. You're making me nervous."

Anna: Right. So, that's interesting, you kind of touched on the quality versus quantity. Is that something that you guys address here at the sleep center? There is a difference in it's not necessarily just about people saying, "Oh, I just got four hours of sleep last night." So there's a difference between the amount getting versus-. OK. I should start over. Maybe someone is getting eight hours of sleep. That doesn't necessarily mean that they're getting good sleep, or that it's meaningful sleep.

Brent: No. You hit the nail right on the head. Another interesting thing is that there's this myth out there that everyone needs eight hours of sleep and that's not the case. Some people

do just fine with six hours. Some people need nine. It all depends on the individual. The time when you need to come and address a sleep problem is when you don't feel rested; you're exhausted. We run into it all the time where people say, "I sleep for eight hours, but I can't function. I'm just exhausted." There are eighty-some different sleep disorders out there. The ones that you hear about the most are insomnia, narcolepsy, restless leg. Obviously, we've talked quite a bit about sleep apnea, but there are lots of different things it could be out there. There are a lot of things that go on while you're sleeping. The thing is you want to come in and get it checked out and see someone who's boarded in sleep medicine, someone's who's got the experience to help you out. It's hard, you really can't diagnose yourself when you're sleeping. You need to have someone else do it for you.

Anna: So now, like you were saying, the amount of sleep a person needs is not always the same it could be different for each person. Say one person in a relationship, if we're going to get back to that, one person might need six hours and they're good. They get good sleep for six hours and they're fine and the other person maybe requires nine. Sometimes that seems like that could create a mismatching of sleep cycles, as far as the relationship goes. Do you think that that's OK and that there are ways to work around that for a relationship?

Brent: There are definitely ways to work around that. It's one of those things where people always say what are [inaudible 8:55] for granted? I hear that all the time. The one thing that we really stress is having a good nighttime routine. I think that definitely translates to couples. [Inaudible 9:09] When you lay your head on the pillow, you're going to sleep. [Inaudible 09:14] The only thing we hear all the time how one person wants to go to sleep immediately as soon as they lay down they go to bed. The other person wants to watch TV, play on their iPad, or mess with their iPhone. Those kind of things, first of all, it's a bad sleep hygiene. By sleep hygiene I mean the things that you do on a routine basis to help you go to sleep. You shouldn't be bringing anything else into room with you. When it's time to go to sleep, it's time to go to sleep. If you're not tired, don't go to bed. If you're not tired, read a book, watch a little TV, whatever you need to do. If you're not tired, don't lay there looking at the clock tossing and turning keeping somebody else awake. Go to bed when you're tired.

Anna: Right, totally. So, it sounds like sleep is a thing that a lot of people, well everyone needs it, obviously. If people have issues with sleep, it's not completely uncommon. I guess a lot of people have issues with sleep, like you were saying; there are eighty-some different kinds of sleep disorders. So, I think the ultimate thing here is that sleep something is important and if it's not being dealt with properly, if you're not getting the right amount of sleep, if you're not getting the right amount of sleep, if you're not getting good sleep, if you happen to have a sleep disorder and things like that. If they're affecting your mood and your memory and your concentration then they can also start to affect your relationship. But I think that the main thing is that for places like you guys at The Sleep Center, there are ways to help people. Right? There are ways to fix the problems?

Brent: Absolutely. That's the thing for people to kind of prioritize the things they want to deal with. For some reason people always want to put sleep down there toward the bottom.

I think it's great you guys are doing this series. It affects every single aspect of your life. Your professional, your social life, the effects are wide-sweeping. So, it's really important that you get it addressed. If you have sleep issues you need to have it taken care of.

Anna: Definitely. So, would you suggest people if they know that they have some sort of issue just call in, make an appointment, and going from there, seeing what you guys can do to help them?

Brent: Absolutely. When someone comes to our center, they come in and it's not your regular doctor's appointment. It's not 10 minutes and you get the boot. It's a good 30-45 minutes. It's very in depth. We're really going to talk about your sleep history, maybe keep a sleep diary. It's really going to get to the bottom of when you're sleep.

Anna: That's good. Well, you guys heard it here. If you have sleep issues or you know that you have them or your spouse has them, you guys can come to the Parkway Sleep Center. Get those things addressed. Get them taken care of. Get it all figured out. Get a good night's sleep. Have a more positive happy relationship. Well thanks Brent. I'm so glad that you could talk with me today and be on the show.

Brent: Thank you for having me. I appreciate it.

Anna: Absolutely. To find out more about the Parkway Sleep Health Center and all their sleep studies and clinics, you can visit their website at [www.parkwaysleep.com](http://www.parkwaysleep.com) or you can call 919-462- 8081 to schedule an appointment. Thanks for joining us today and I hope you'll join us again next week. For more information about this show and future episodes visit us at [Stay Happily Married dot com](http://Stay Happily Married dot com). I'm Anna Riley. Until next time, stay happily married.

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