

Look past your husband for the cause of insomnia

Q: My husband and I have been married for 11 years and have a fairly good relationship. Our problem is our sleeping patterns. My husband is self-employed and nocturnal. He schedules his business appointments in the afternoon, and then works on his computer until the wee hours of the morning. I have a high-pressure job, while I am required to be at work early to attend meetings with clients. I can't fall asleep until my husband is in bed, and the house is quiet. When I've spoken to him about my concerns, he says "it's your problem." How can I get my husband to respect my needs and come to bed at a decent hour?

A: It sounds like you're experiencing a classic case of disturbed sleep, better known as insomnia. Insomnia can have many causes and sorting out the reason you can't sleep can be tough. Here are a few places to start:

■ Depression is an overlooked cause of insomnia. Are you experiencing additional symptoms of low self-esteem, weight gain or loss, flat feelings, or loss of interest in things you used to enjoy? If so, undiagnosed depression could be your culprit. A therapist who specializes in mental health issues

can determine if you are clinically depressed. They may suggest an anti-depressant medication, in addition to therapy, to facilitate sleep and treat depressive symptoms.

■ Stimulants and depressants in our everyday diet can disturb our sleep-wake cycle. Caffeine in coffee, colas, and chocolate give us energy and pep us up. Being keyed up in the evening, we look for a way to "relax." Alcohol is often a choice because it can bring us unconsciousness, but the sleep is not rejuvenating, and we wake up feeling tired. Try eliminating caffeine from your diet as well as alcohol to allow your normal sleep cycle to kick in.

■ Many people think that they are too tired to exercise, but moderate exercise has been shown to increase restful sleep. Often our brains feel worn out because our jobs are mentally taxing, but our bodies are not physically tired. Start a regular routine of moderate exercise three times a week, alternating between aerobic activity and muscle building exercises such as weight training. Your brain and body will both feel tired at the same time, and restful sleep can come.

■ Try going to bed at approximately the same time every night, avoiding naps during the day, eating late meals or watching TV late into the night. The key to natural sleep is in patterns. Try keeping track of your sleep-wake patterns for the next week, working to regulate your times of rest.

■ Stress is a common thief of sleep. Assess the areas in your life where stress is present but likely



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to pass (work stress, death in the family, a move to a new home.) Compare those to long-term difficulties that will require some type of change on your part. Insomnia is your brain's way of trying to resolve your problems even when you're lying down! A therapist can help you assess your stress level, help you develop adequate coping skills, and steer you toward resolution. You want to be sure how to get your husband to respect your sleep needs. You could try separate bedrooms, but finding the solution for your insomnia could be a better solution for you both.

Karen Wister M.A., L.L.P., is a psychotherapist at the Counseling Center in Bloomfield Hills and a Lake Orion resident. Her e-mail is Wister@core.com.



Award winners: On Wednesday May 15, at the downtown Farmington Library, the Farmington Branch of American Association of University Women presented their annual Community Awards to Oakland University, Womencenter at Oakland Community College, and Boys and Girls Republic. Pictured from the left: Julie Vulaj, Oakland University, Maryjane Peck, Boys and Girls Republic, Pat Isham, Education Foundation Chair Farmington AAUW and Arlene Frank, Womencenter at Oakland Community College

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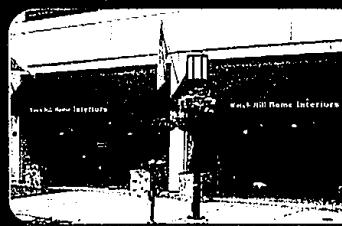
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(It would take a section of this newspaper to list everything!)



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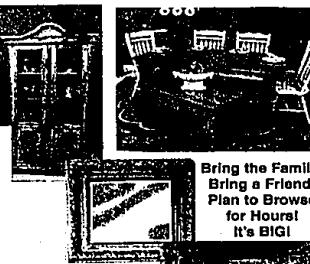
by Kurt and Mia Voparil

Why this historic sellout?

First of all, we want to assure our customers and friends that Watch Hill Home Interiors is not going out of business. We plan to be here to serve you for many, many years. However, we have elected to close our store at 330 East Maple forever, and to consolidate our entire business in our Warehouse/Showroom location at 645 South Eton. We believe we can give even better service in a single Warehouse/Showroom location. Approximately \$1,000,000 in exclusive furnishings and accessories will be liquidated to achieve this consolidation, nothing will be held back. To facilitate this liquidation, it will take place in both locations.

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