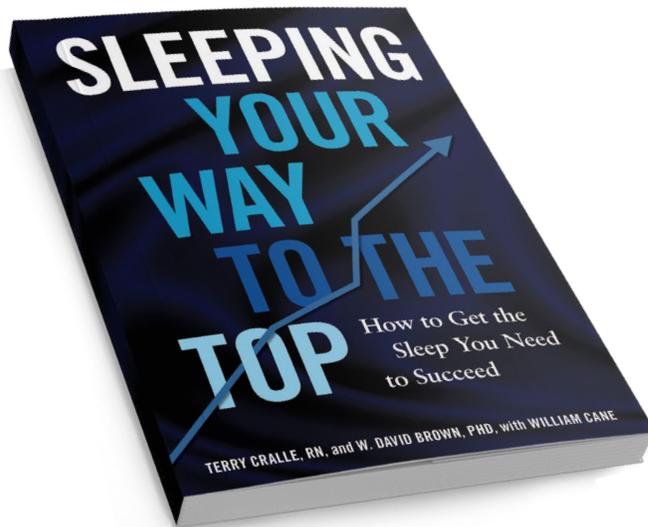


AN INTERVIEW WITH TERRY CRALLE, RN

By Brendan Duffy, RST, RPSGT



TERRY CRALLE, RN, CLINICAL SLEEP EDUCATOR AND AUTHOR OF *SLEEPING YOUR WAY TO THE TOP: HOW TO GET THE SLEEP YOU NEED TO SUCCEED*.



Yes... that is the title... and if the randy “cheekiness” of the title caught your eye and got your attention that was the goal according to the co-author, Ms. Terry Cralle, RN. The other authors are her associates, W. David Brown, PhD, and William Cane.

I had the pleasant experience of speaking with Ms. Terry Cralle via phone about her books (she also is the author of a children’s book on sleep entitled *Snoozby and the Great Big Bedtime Battle*.) As an RN, Cralle became enamored and thoroughly engaged in sleep medicine after an assignment involved her in an insomnia clinical research study. She was introduced to a world of sleep that she never had thought much about before and had not received much training on in nursing school. Like many of us that are “sleep geeks” she caught the “sleep bug” and eventually opened a 4 bed sleep center.



BRENDAN DUFFY, RST, RPSGT

Brendan Duffy, RST, RPSGT is the Coordinator/Manager of a six bed AASM accredited sleep disorders center at St. Charles Hospital in Port Jefferson, N.Y. With almost 20 years of sleep medicine experience, he enjoys speaking and writing on various sleep topics especially sleep as it relates to athletic competition and performance.

Her book *Sleeping Your Way To The Top: How to Get the Sleep You Need to Succeed* is a great read for sleep technologists and patients alike. Even though it was released this year, parts of it were written years ago. The first chapter, strangely enough, is entitled *Trumping Sleep!* It speaks about Donald Trump and his comment in a *Daily News* interview that sleep is a waste of time. She states in the book that perhaps he is one of those rare individuals that require little sleep. These types can get by on 5 hours or less per night. It is also noted in the chapter that some studies have suggested that short sleepers may suffer from hypomania, a mild form of mania marked by racing thoughts and few inhibitions. His quote, “If you want to be a billionaire, sleep as little as possible,” is the opening quote of the book. In light of the election results, it will be interesting to see if Mr. Trump changes his view on the value and health benefits of a good night’s sleep!

Other chapters in this entertaining overview of many sleep topics include such areas as what is normal sleep, the American society view of sleep and how we need to explain to the masses that sleep is a very important component of health, a section on dreams and what creativity has occurred during dreams. Paul McCartney wrote *Yesterday* after it came to him “fully formed in a dream.” Stephanie Meyer, the previously unpublished writer of the *Twilight* series had no interest in vampires but was inspired via a dream about a vampire that was captivated by the scent of a common girl.

With other information on sleep in relation to sports performance, work, ethics, travel, and even the proper accommodations and environment to obtain refreshing sleep, and an overview of the various sleep disorders that are treated, this book is full of fun information for both patients and sleep technologists.

During our phone interview, as we discussed obesity, diabetes, and several other health conditions that are associated and influenced by sleep, Cralle stated, “All of these health conditions that we are treating — we should start with treating sleep. We are looking at it backwards. Sleep should be treated as a vital sign.”

As for the book’s risqué title, I teasingly commented to Cralle about how difficult it would be to read this book with that title if you were a commuter on a New York subway! She laughed and stated that, “The goal was to get some attention and the title seems to have done that.” And isn’t that what we are trying to do with the subject of sleep? We are trying to get some attention for the third of our life that goes unappreciated and misunderstood in many ways, sometimes even within the medical community.

As Cralle said ... “Sleep is critical to good health.”

I related a story to her about a psychiatrist that underwent a sleep study here in our Long Island sleep center and became so interested in what was involved and how the symptoms could be misconstrued and misdiagnosed as other diagnostic findings that he left his New York employment to go work in an out-of-state sleep center. Before he left New York, he stopped by the sleep center to say goodbye. He left us with this message ... “After learning all that is involved in sleep disorders and the symptoms, I fear that I may have written several scripts for anti-depressants that could actually, or probably were, for symptoms caused by untreated sleep disorders.”

Cralle and I chatted about the influence and detrimental effects that electronics are having on teenagers and adults alike, and how we need to make them understand that the constant sounds, lights, and even anticipation are robbing folks of hundreds of hours of sleep. We discussed how many folks spend more time and concern about recharging their phones than they do about recharging themselves each night. We have all sorts of docks and cradles for the phone and we even have nightly rituals of how we put the phone “to sleep” — yet we spend far less effort on our own nightly rituals. As I found from my work with athletes, cell phone use is a big issue for them as well. She agreed that the hours lost, which are so vital to an athlete’s recovery, are an important area of concern. She noted that the “cellphone can be standing in your way of where you want to be. You, as an athlete need to not let lack of sleep stand in the way of your lifelong dreams and your performance.”

Towards the end of an hour long call that flew by much too fast, I asked Cralle what book was her favorite sleep book and she stated unequivocally that she was a big fan of Dr. William Dement and loved his book *The Promise Of Sleep*. She relates in her book how she felt like a nervous schoolgirl when she had a chance meeting with Dr. Dement at a conference and could hardly speak! She writes in her book about how he compared wake time to putting bricks in a backpack on your back and that each hour we are awake we add two bricks; and that it requires one sleep hour to remove these two bricks from the backpack. Without appropriate sleep time, one becomes overcome and burdened by the weight they are carrying around! This is the weight of sleep deprivation. And eventually it will slow you to a halt!

In closing, I asked her what she felt about the future of sleep for sleep technologists ... “I think the sleep technologists will have a ton more opportunities. On so many levels I am just so excited to see the field of sleep open up to a broader audience. I think there are so many things they can do because their knowledge is incredible. They know so much about sleep and they work with these people one-on-one. I just think there is a lot of potential and I applaud them for what they are doing. I think the rest of the world needs to know more about the work they do and how much they truly know about sleep. Whether they are going to schools or community events, they should share their knowledge because they do have a wealth of important knowledge.”

If you want to read a fun book that incorporates broad content and sleep comments about Babe Ruth, Mick Jagger, and even the Dalai Lama, I highly recommend this book from our fellow sleep medicine colleague. Nurse and Clinical Sleep Educator, Terry Cralle is not only a great author, who had information in her book that I had not seen anywhere else — such as the condition of local sleep, but the book is just plain fun if you are a sleep technologist or a curious sleep geek. Pick up a copy or two for your sleep center or for home reading! ❖