



From dream incubation to keeping a flashlight pen by your bedside, Arianna Huffington walks you through your darkest hours

# SLEEP, YOUR SUPERPOWER

The power of dreams ...and why you should record them

Those who have integrated dreams into their lives have found that the “otherworld” of sleep has become more real — something to be welcomed rather than resisted. For me, it is way more than just feeling recharged. There is also a sense of freedom that comes from less attachment to daily battles, successes, failures, and illusions. My daughter Isabella has a recurring dream that beautifully illustrates this. She is a living stop sign, forcing people to come to a complete stop before moving on with their lives. And instead of dissolving when she wakes up, the dream takes on new relevance when she revisits it during the day, reminding her to pause, reflect, and keep all the demands of her life in perspective.

There are some simple steps we can take before we go to sleep to reinstate dreams to a central place in our lives and experience firsthand why they matter. After we put our devices aside, wind down, and let go of the day, we can learn from the practices of ancient temples and do a modern-day version of dream incubation. Synesius of Cyrene, a Greek bishop living around the year 400, called dreams oracles, always ready to serve as our “silent counselor.” And dream incubation is a process of preparing our consciousness to receive guidance from our inner counselors. It can be about big life decisions, but also about anything that we want more clarity and wisdom around, however trivial it may seem.

I love how the Rubin Museum in New York, which houses Asian art, brings dream incubation into our modern lives. It hosts an annual “Dream-Over,” where participants spend the night sleeping among the artworks. A Tibetan Buddhist teacher leads a discussion about the significance of dreams in Tibetan culture, and in the morning “dream gatherers” start a conversation about what everyone



**He (Donald Trump) displays all of the symptoms of chronic sleep deprivation—inability to process simple information, emotional instability, outbursts of anger, mood swings and regurgitation of incomprehensible pablum**

—Boston Herald

dreamed of.

I asked Mary Hulnick, the chief creative officer of the University of Santa Monica, who teaches dream incubation as part of the Spiritual Psychology course, for specific steps to facilitate the process. She suggested asking ourselves these key questions before going to sleep: “In what area of your life would you like to receive guidance? What question do you want answered?”

Word your question carefully and precisely, write

it down, and focus on it as you drift off to sleep. Ask that the answer to your question be given in a way that you can recognize and understand. Set an intention to remember your dreams. Then go to sleep. When you awake, and this is very important, remain totally still — do not move your body. This allows you greater access to your dream — better dream recall. Once you have your dream secure in your mind, your first movement is to get your pen and paper and begin writing any dreams or parts of dreams that you recall. Sometimes you’ll have and recall a dream the very first night that you ask your dream incubation question. Sometimes, you may find that you need to ask your question for several nights. I encourage you to be patient and let go of any pressure or attachment to receiving a dream.”

If I wake up in the middle of the night, even if I have not asked for specific guidance in any part of my life, I write down whatever I remember from my dreams with a pen that has a flashlight attached to it. I find that when I don’t turn on the lamp on my nightstand, it is easier not to lose the thread of my dreams. When you wake up in the morning, if you want to remember your dreams, don’t grab your cell phone the moment you open your eyes and become inundated with news, texts, and emails. Before letting the outside world in, taking a momentary pause and a few deep breaths can help you recall more of your dreams.

Reprinted with permission from the Penguin Random House. ₹599. Available at Starmark. Details: 64550262



## SLEEP MATTERS

A throw pillow in Arianna Huffington’s bedroom states, ‘Sleep your way to the top’. And the editor-in-chief of The Huffington Post lives by it — by sleeping eight hours a day, that is. The author of 15 books — including 2014’s bestselling *Thrive* (which tries to redefine success) — had got her wake-up call when she’d collapsed in 2007, to wake up later in a pool of blood. Her doctor’s prognosis: exhaustion. Now an advocate for slumber, her newest book takes us behind the science of it, and explores why the lack of it affects our lives and how we can court it every night. Here is an excerpt from *The Sleep Revolution*.

## VERSE CORNER



ILLUSTRATION: VINEETH PILLAI

# Ultraviolet

Iris, heather, mulberry, orchid  
All stand by a pool of gray  
The gray moves the way lava does;  
Large waves of unexpected sorrow

Dove, pebble, silver, smoke  
All weep and watch silence unfold  
The gray whimpers the way dying flowers do  
Counting moments;  
Waiting, waiting, for the wind to blow

It’s her first day in this garden of mediocrity  
Pale blue shadows cover dark red secrets  
The grays and the reds guard pillars of loyalty  
Every step she takes seems like a mistake

She’s different, she can tell  
She’s not one for hollow laughs and unintelligent mumbblings  
She feels one with the grass beneath her feet  
Water flowing, singing a song  
The rhythm so similar yet somehow so different

They were not ones for silence either  
Their constant scanning screamed their disapproval  
Flinching words which did not dare make their way  
Died on their lips, dyeing shades of infamy

The walls watch  
Amused at her repulsion towards them  
The floors writhe  
Longing for her scent

She chooses the grass over the floors  
She chooses the glass over the walls  
She chooses to dance and paint her scars  
She refuses to let her story die within four walls

They watch her story  
The beginning of her art  
They call her Ultraviolet  
She makes oceans creak apart

Chaos runs in her blood  
Calm knows no home in her  
They called it madness  
But it is only technicolour chaos



Do you hear a song when it rains? Or do you see a world in a pebble? Is there a poet in you willing to come out? If yes, pick your pen and send us your poems. The selected ones will be published in our column every Tuesday in ‘Bookworm’ section. Rush your entries to: [cityexphyd@gmail.com](mailto:cityexphyd@gmail.com)

— Simran Gilani, student,  
The Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad