

Episode four of the Right2Education podcast! With the long and dark winter nights, it's really very easy to feel super tired, and we all wish we can stay in bed just that little bit longer. But maybe there's a magic to the morning that we should not miss out on! In this episode, we take a look at the benefits of waking up early, and see whether it's best to be an 'early bird' or a 'night owl'. You can listen [here](#), and read the transcript below!

Hello everyone and welcome to another episode of the Right2Education podcast! I hope that you are all doing well and staying safe. Winter is definitely here in Amsterdam now! The weather is super cold, the nights are very long, and the strong winds feel like a wall of ice! But, even though the weather isn't so nice, the great thing about Amsterdam in the winter-time is all of the wonderful lights! I love walking around the city at night with a big warm coat and seeing all the displays of colourful lights hanging along the side of the canals - it really turns the city into such a beautiful and magical place!

After the previous episode, I was delighted to receive a message from Housseem, one of the listeners of the podcast. Housseem was very interested by the topic of the previous episode where I talked about the problem of plastic pollution, and he wanted to share his own experiences on the subject. Here is what he wrote:

"Hi Benji. My name is Housseem. I really enjoy listening to the Right2Education podcast and it is really great for helping me to practice my English. When you talked about sorting and recycling waste I thought it was very interesting, because where I come from the plastic is recycled, but you don't do it yourself. When you throw away your garbage, you put everything in the same bin, and then the garbage is all sorted by other people who are paid to do it for work. But here in Amsterdam, I know to sort the plastic, and also the paper and the glass, into different bins. And now that I know how dangerous plastic pollution is, I'm really very careful! I can't wait to hear what you talk about in the next episode of the podcast!"

Thank you very much, Housseem for your message!

With the winter mornings, I find it more and more difficult to wake up early. The sky is still so dark when my alarm goes off, and it's so cold that I don't want to leave my nice and warm bed. I always tell myself to stay in bed a little longer, I always say "just one more minute". Because I find it so incredibly cosy under the blankets, and I feel really very comfy. And then, before I know it, I've fallen asleep again and, by the time I wake up I'm so late that I really have to rush to get ready, and I find myself running out the door feeling really very stressed. And it always seems to be like this. When we are growing up, we have to wake up early to go to school. And when we are adults, and we have jobs, we often have to wake up early to start these jobs as well. But, because everyone seems to prefer to sleep in late rather than waking up early, because everyone enjoys having a lie-in, everyone likes to wake up late, we always seem rushed in the morning, we always seem in a hurry. It seems we don't like to wake up early. When the weekend comes, and we don't have to get out of bed for work or school, most of us will stay in bed and get some extra sleep!

So with all this hurrying, every morning, feeling stressed every day leaving the house, I started to wonder what I could do to feel less pressured, to feel as though I had more time. What

changes could I make to help me feel less stressed, how could I feel as though I had more time, as though I was more in control of my day and able to do the things that I want to do?

Daily life can be very stressful, and it can be very tiring. In the modern world, we are always using technology, we always seem to be nearby a screen. Our phones and computers are constantly throwing information at us, and we sometimes use them so much, we are sometimes surrounded by screens so much, that it feels as if we cannot escape them. And this can make us feel really very drained, it can make us feel really very tired. And, because we often feel so tired, because we feel as though we have no energy, it is very easy to feel as though we do not have the time to do the things that we want to do. It can feel as though we do not have control over our lives, as though we do not have the strength to organise our day, we do not have the power to choose to do the things which we enjoy.

It is very common to find different suggestions for how to recover this feeling of control. Because so many people experience this feeling, and because so many people want to escape from the feeling, almost everywhere we look we can find a different method to regain a feeling of control, to once more be in control of our lives. There are suggestions to try meditation, to go on a spiritual journey. And there are suggestions to simply try disconnecting, to stop using technological devices. There are really so many techniques that we can try so that we can try and regain a feeling of control, so that we can be able to do the things that we want to do, so that we can feel as though we have enough time to do the things that we enjoy.

But maybe there is one solution which is even more simple than you might think! Perhaps there is a way to recover a feeling of control, a way to feel as though we have more time in the day, to feel as though we have enough time in the day, which is so simple, so obvious, that we don't even think about it! Maybe there is a solution which is free, which is really very simple and easy, and one that we can apply immediately - we can start feeling better straight away! Can you guess what the solution is? Do you maybe know already how we could regain a feeling of control over our lives?

The answer is to wake up one hour earlier! By waking up just one hour earlier in the day, we can escape the feeling of being stressed and hurried, we can feel more relaxed throughout the whole day, and we can feel more in control of our lives. And we can start to do the things that we enjoy, we can find the time to do the things that we want to do!

Now, maybe some of you listeners are already early birds. In English, an 'early bird' is a phrase that we use for someone who likes to wake up early, for someone who doesn't find it very difficult to wake up early. So, maybe you are already an early bird. For these listeners, I know that I do not need to try and convince you. You will almost certainly already know all the benefits of waking up early, you will already know why it can be so great to wake up early in the morning, and you will already be familiar with all the advantages.

But for the others, for listeners who do not like waking up early - and I think this may probably be the majority of listeners - waking up early is something which can be very difficult to do, it is not really something that you *like* to do. For these listeners, it may even seem almost impossible to wake up early, it may seem impossible to try and start the day earlier. But that's what I want to

talk to you about. I want to try and show you why waking up early can have great benefits for your daily life, to show you how it can really improve your feelings, how it can really make you feel great! I want to share with you the magic of the morning. And hopefully, by sharing some reasons why it can be really great to follow this advice, why it can be really great to wake up just one hour earlier, I can let you recover a feeling of control over your life, I can help you to feel as though you have time to do everything you want to do, and maybe you will be able to tackle every day with a bright smile!

Now, before I begin, I want to make it clear that this is of course not the best solution for everyone. Waking up early does not work for everyone - after all, we are not all made the same way, not everyone is supposed to wake up early! But everyone can give this method a try, everyone can see if this method works for them. And if it doesn't work, if it is too difficult, or it is not having good consequences, you can simply stop waking up early! There's nothing to lose from trying it out! If it doesn't work, you can simply and easily return to waking up like you do right now! So why not give it a go? Why not see if you can give your day a boost? Well - are you ready to hear about the magic of the morning? Then let's go!

In English, there is a proverb that says "the early bird catches the worm". A proverb is a short saying or phrase that shares a piece of advice - often they are metaphorical; this means that they mean something other than what they literally say, they mean something more than what the words simply suggest. So the proverb "the early bird catches the worm" means that those who start the day off early will gain an advantage, by beginning early, you have a better chance for success.

And there are many examples of successful people who follow this proverb, many people whose lives seem to support the saying. There are many successful entrepreneurs and many company directors who famously wake up early and begin their day very early. For example, Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, wakes up at four thirty in the morning - that's really incredibly early! And for many of us, it seems crazy to think about waking up this early in the morning. So why does he do it? What are the advantages to be gained from waking up so early in the morning?

The moment that we wake up in the morning is a moment when we have total control over the day. The day has not yet started, we have not yet been assigned tasks and responsibilities, and we can decide what we are going to do with the rest of the day, we can decide how we are going to approach the rest of the day. So the way in which we approach this moment when we wake up, the attitude that we take towards this moment in the morning, how we spend this first part of our day, can have really very big impacts on the rest of our day, it can set our mood for the rest of our day.

And if you wake up one hour early, it can have really great consequences for the rest of your day - by allowing you to feel in control of your day, by giving you time so that you do not feel pressured and rushed, and by giving you the opportunity to develop a good mood, waking up one hour earlier can have an amazing impact on your entire day!

By contrast, if you wake up late, it can have really negative consequences for the rest of the day. It can mean that you are late - late for work, or late for school - and it can leave you feeling rushed and hurried and stressed, and put you in a really very bad mood for the whole day.

So, maybe through waking up one hour earlier, you can improve your whole day, you can develop a really great attitude which will have really great consequences on the rest of the day. But what should you do with the extra hour to make sure that you can experience these positive consequences? How should you use the time that you gain from waking up earlier?

There are two main options for how to spend this extra time. One option is to take the time for yourself. This means that you use the time to do the things which you enjoy, to do the things which are important to you. Rather than doing anything urgent or doing any work or tasks, you use the time to do something which you want to do, you do the things which you maybe usually do not feel as though you have the time to do. For example, you might spend the time doing some meditation, or some exercise, or doing some reading - reading a book that you have wanted to read for a very long time, but you have never found the time to do so. Or you might do another hobby. For example, you might do some creative activities, such as painting or drawing or playing a musical instrument - but if you do this, be careful to think of the neighbours! If you decide that you want to spend the time playing the trumpet, your neighbours might not be too happy with all the loud noise so early in the morning! If you wake up early, if you get up just one hour earlier, you will have the time to do all these things that you enjoy doing, but you never seem to have the chance to do, you always feel too busy to do.

And you can also use the time to do some practical daily activities which are important to you, to be productive in a way which is important to you. For example, you might use the time to learn a language! You can use the extra hour to learn a bit of English - you can listen to a podcast, you can watch a TV show in English, or watch a YouTube video in English. You can use the time to make sure that every day you can spend some time to practice your English.

Another approach to using this first hour of your day is to spend it doing the most important things in the day. If the first thing you do in the day is something really very important, then you can start the day with a great success. And this is a great way to put you in a really good mood for the rest of the day, it is a really great way to make you feel really very confident about the rest of your day, and you will be able to continue spending the day attacking all the tasks you have to do, you will be very efficient throughout the rest of the day, you will finish all your tasks really very quickly. In the morning, our brains are usually very fresh and rested, and we can think very clearly, we can concentrate more easily on important projects. So we can use this time to send an important email, or to finish a presentation. And if you wake up early in the morning, you can have the time to plan your day well, you can organise the day well, and you can know exactly what you have to do and how you are going to do it. And then you can start to tick things off your 'to-do list', and before you know it, you'll have finished all your important tasks!

What do we have to do to wake up earlier in the morning, how can we wake up early and use this magic hour? It is not easy for everyone to do! A study made by a university in Germany found that only around ten percent of people are morning people - this means that they naturally find it very easy to wake up early in the morning. By contrast, twenty percent of people are 'night owls' - this means that they function best at night, that they work best late in the evening, their brain functions best late in the day.

But the rest of the population, the other seventy percent of people, don't fall into either group, they do not fit into either category. This means that the majority of people have a regular sleep cycle - they do not wake up super early, and they do not stay up super late at night. And this means that, for the majority of people, waking up early can be a real challenge, it can seem like an almost impossible thing to do. But in reality, it is just about adapting your rhythm, it is just about finding a new rhythm for waking up, about teaching your body a new rhythm where it wakes up early. And to do that well, to do that effectively, is just a matter of following a method, a matter of how you go about adopting a new rhythm, how you go about changing to a new rhythm.

To change your sleep rhythm, it is first important to know how many hours of sleep you usually need. We are often told that we need eight hours of sleep every night, that eight hours is the magic amount of sleep that we need. We are told that this is the amount of time that it takes for us to be completely rested, the amount of time that we need to have a fully charged battery. But, in reality, there is no magic number that works well for everyone. Some people need more than eight hours of sleep, others need less. So the important thing is to find out how many hours of sleep YOU need to feel rested, how much sleep you need to not feel tired for the rest of the day. And then, when you know how many hours of sleep you need, you will know what time you need to go to sleep. It's really just some simple maths. For example, maybe you usually wake up at seven, and your goal is to wake up at six. You want to try to wake up one hour earlier - this is enough time to do the things you enjoy without rushing, enough time to do all these activities without feeling pressured or feeling stressed. It lets you take your time. So you want to try waking up one hour earlier, you want to try waking up at six in the morning. And maybe you need eight hours of sleep. So you can know that you have to go to sleep at ten pm.

Now, it's important to note the difference between 'going to bed' and 'falling asleep'. Sometimes, we might go to bed, but we don't actually fall asleep, sometimes we might lie in bed for hours without being able to fall asleep. And you want to make sure that you get all the sleep you need to. So it is also very important that you know how long it usually takes you to fall asleep. And this way, you can be sure to get all the hours of sleep that you need. When you know how long it takes you to fall asleep, you can go to bed this amount of time before you want to actually fall asleep. To find it easier to fall asleep, it can also be very useful to have a ritual for calming down and relaxing when you are in bed, a method to help you fall asleep, a way to empty your head so that you don't think about the problems from the day. For example, you might do some reading, you might do something that changes your ideas and lets you forget all your problems. A lot of scientists also recommend not to look at screens for at least thirty minutes before you want to fall asleep. This is because the light which is emitted by electronic devices can be very bad for our sleep, the light from the screen makes our brain think that it is still daytime, and it makes it very hard for us to fall asleep.

Another important piece of advice for adopting the habit of waking up early is to wake up early also at the weekend. At the weekend, you want to try and wake up a maximum of only one hour later than you usually do during the week. If you wake up much later than usual at the weekend, then when Monday comes it will probably be very difficult to return to a rhythm of waking up early. And then you will lose all the benefits of waking up early. So it is important to try and carry on waking up early even at the weekend.

Now, this is all very easy to say, but to really make it a good habit, the most important thing is repetition. To become really very good at something, to make something into a good habit, it is important to do it regularly, to practice it regularly. And the best way to make sure you are able to stick to this new rhythm is to start changing slowly, to make only a small change, to not make a radical change. So, if it is your goal to wake up one hour earlier, it is good to try to first wake up only fifteen minutes earlier, to try waking up a quarter of an hour earlier. This is not too big of a change. And so it is not too difficult to do.

But it is also very important that you find an activity that you are still able to do in these fifteen minutes. Because that means that you will still be able to see all the benefits of waking up early. Otherwise, you might think that waking up early doesn't have any advantages, you might think that those fifteen minutes are really just wasted. And then it will be really very easy to return to your previous rhythm.

And then, when you are used to this new rhythm, when you are used to waking up fifteen minutes earlier, you can try waking up another fifteen minutes earlier. And you can repeat this until you have arrived at your goal. And, in this way, you can avoid making a radical change which is too much of a shock, you can avoid making a change which is uncomfortably big, which you cannot adapt to. And then it is much more likely that you will succeed!

But, remember, not everyone is made to wake up early! Waking up early is not natural for all of us! There are so many articles always telling us to wake up early, so many stories of successful 'early birds' that sometimes it might seem as if it is impossible to be successful without waking up early! But, of course, it depends on the person! If you like to go to bed late, and wake up late, this does not mean you cannot still be incredibly successful, this does not mean that your habits are bad! The most important thing is to find a rhythm that suits you! And once you have found the best rhythm for YOU, you will then easily be able to find a feeling of control over your life. You will be able to know how to structure your day, you will be able to organise your day, and you will be able to make sure that you always have the time to do the things that are important for YOU.

If you have the feeling that you never have the time to do the things that you want to do, and if you are someone who always wakes up very late, it might be interesting to see what happens if you try waking up one hour earlier every day, it might be interesting to see what impacts there are from making this change. And if it doesn't work for you, then you can easily go back to your old rhythm, you can know that your old rhythm was probably more natural for you, and you can use that knowledge to know the structure of your day and organise it to make sure that you always have time for your own important activities.

So, I hope that I have inspired you to experiment with a new rhythm of living, to try waking up an hour earlier, and to see if it has any big changes on your life! And if you do try it, please feel free to let me know how it goes by sending me an email through the Right2Education email address - I would be really super interested to know if it works for you! Next time, I'll be back with a brand new topic for you. But for now, that's all from me! Thank you very much for listening! Stay safe, take care, and until the next time!