

Announcer:

Bulletproof Radio, a stage of high performance.

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. One of the things that you're probably not doing enough of right now is resting, and that's because, well, coronavirus, pandemic, riots and stuff like that so a little bit stressful. And I don't mean sleep which is a major thing, all the stuff you've read about sleep hacking and collagen before bed and raw honey, those are my original post from a long time ago.

Dave:

So, I'm all about the sleep didn't use to be, but there's something called rest which is different from sleep and something that I've had a big challenge with probably for my whole life, at least that's what my wife will tell you.

Dave:

And stress and anxiety have been high for all of us for months and maybe you're not having COVID dreams. Maybe you're able to sleep but you probably aren't resting. So, I found someone today to bring onto the show to talk about ways you can figure out what rest you're not getting and better yet, because well, we are biohackers after all. It's quantitative measurable way of doing it.

Dave:

And because I'm talking about is Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith, who's a board certified internal medicine physician, work-life integration researcher, speaker and now best-selling author. She's been on Dr. Oz, Fast Company, Psychology Today, well-credentialed and she's talking to us from Birmingham, Alabama where she practices.

Dave:

Doctor, what do you like to be called, Dr. Dalton-Smith, Dr. Sandra, what's your-

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

You can just call me Sandra. That's fine.

Dave:

All right, Sandra. We'll just go with that. I should've asked you ahead of the show, but sometimes I'm just ... We can talk over 20 minutes and I'm like, I never got your formal title.

Dave:

Well, welcome to the show. I'm so excited to have someone who's going to talk about Sacred Rest, which is the title of your book.

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

Yeah, so thanks for having me.

Dave:

All right, Sacred Rest. Pretty interesting title. Why did you go with Sacred Rest. I love it, by the way, but what does that mean?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Well, I think that's the thing. My approach to health and wellness really comes from two aspects. I love bringing in the science and I love also bringing in the spiritual part of it.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Well, I think that's the thing. My approach to health and wellness really comes from two aspects. I love bringing in the science and I love also bringing in the spiritual part of it, seeing in how they work together. And so for me, when I started looking at this whole concept of rest, I wanted to make sure that I covered both aspects of that.

Dave:

Like the best work I've ever seen out there, it usually comes from someone who had to deal with it. The best functional medicine doctors are like, "Yeah, I was pretty sick. And my medical doctor thing didn't work out so well for me, and the antibiotics failed so I had to roll up my sleeves and actually heal." Why did you get into rest? You look burn out or what was your spark to get going?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Yeah, absolutely. That was the reason. I wish I could say I woke up one day and just really had a desire to research rest. But it wasn't that simple. I burned out about 10 years ago. And I was at a point where really, I knew that I wasn't getting enough sleep. That was obvious. But then, when I started trying to get more sleep and it wasn't solving my fatigue, all the tests came back normal. There wasn't anything wrong with my thyroid or any part of my lab work. Then, at that point conventional medicine really wasn't giving me a lot more answers.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

So, I started looking at what is it that's really tired, because fatigue isn't just about the physical. And so, I was trying to fix it with getting more physical sleep and that wasn't the solution that I really needed. For me, it was one of the other types of rest that was deficient then, and that just took me down a path of studying of what types of rest are out there.

Dave:

This is new information for me. By the way, that's not something I say that often because I read a lot, and I research stuff and I write books and I definitely learned that sleep doesn't matter if it's garbage sleep. So, I basically just say sleep doesn't matter because, whoa, what a waste of time.

Dave:

So, I finally got over that. I said, all right, it's valuable. I just want to get the best sleep I can get. And now, you're coming along saying, "Well, maybe you're getting enough sleep. Maybe you're not. But even if you're sleeping, you're not resting. And that kind of pisses me off.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I can totally understand. Because as I've worked up for my stuff, I'm a high achiever, workaholic, goal-setter type A, enneagram 3 type personality and that was my approach really too at rest. I'm like I'm a person who likes to get stuff done. Give me something to do and let me go do it. And the thought that I couldn't really be at my highest ability and my best self because I wasn't resting, that wasn't something I wanted to hear either.

Dave:

Now, you've identified seven distinct types of rest, and some of them I'm familiar with, and some of them are new ideas for me, which is cool. You have a survey. It's at RestQuiz.com?

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

Yes, that's correct.

Dave:

Just to make sure I remember the URL that I used. And I would like you to walk listeners through what these types of rest are and also, I wonder how you know these are real. What's the science behind it? So, give me the rundown of these seven types.

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

Well, I'll name the seven at first. Three of them are pretty well-known and pretty common to most people. These are the physical, the mental and the spiritual. These three most of us have heard of and have some idea that we need. The four that-

Dave:

What's a spiritual rest? I don't think I know that one. The physical, I get it. Mental, I kind of get it, but spiritual rest? What is that?

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

It basically boils down to the rest that we receive when we understand that the world kind of is a bigger place than just what we are experiencing. It has to do with a sense of belonging. It goes into that feeling of community, of really understanding that there is something bigger than just your small portion of existence.

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

And I think for many people it's helpful because what happens with that is that you don't always feel so alone even when maybe you don't have family with you or you're not in a situation where you're in a relationship with someone else. You know that you belong to something bigger. I call it kind of the greater humanity experience that many of us need to feel, because when we don't feel that, we have this feeling that, "Well, my life doesn't matter. I don't really matter in this existence."

Dave:

I get it. It actually is relaxing to have a mission and to have a reason for being here and to realize that you're a small part of something bigger. And if you're lacking that, it's inherently stressful but a lot of the time you wouldn't know that it's inherently stressful because you don't think any of that stuff is real. I

had to go through that transition being a hardcore engineer into, "Oh, yeah, doing something for a reason."

Dave:

And no one has ever explained it the way you have here to me, but as I think through it, yeah, it is relaxing to just be like, "Yeah, it's a part of big thing and I'm just doing my part." Okay. And that's what you mean by spiritual rest. And then emotional rest, you said there's physical and there's mental. Everyone knows stop thinking about stuff. Stop doing stuff. Emotional rest versus spiritual rest, give me the line between those two.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Well, emotional rest has to do with your ability to be vulnerable and authentic with other people. I look at it like this, for many of us we have these personas that we portray, these images that we give out to the world. And there's a stress associated with performance that there's associated with just being professional. I mean as a physician myself, I oftentimes think about the emotional unrest that I feel when I'm in an ICU or ER setting where maybe something traumatic is happening. Well, I'm a physician. I'm not going to burst out into tears. That's not professional and that doesn't benefit the patient.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

But there's a stress that comes with that in holding back what feels authentic, real and vulnerable. And I think it's important for people to realize that many of our lives live under that stress, maybe not in the same sense as mine as a physician but if you are the head of a company and there's something stressful going on in the workplace, you can't just kind of blowup and have a moment necessarily in front of your entire staff. You're trying to maintain that level of professionalism.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And unfortunately, for many of us, we take that into our personal lives from our professional lives. So, there's never a time that some people are ever truly authentic and vulnerable and open to share those emotions so they never get that emotional rest of just telling their truth.

Dave:

And that's particularly rough on people in leadership positions or in the public eye. They tend to get less emotional rest just because there's fewer confidants.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Absolutely, and that's the group that I am usually asked to come sit with. I'm usually asked in the companies to sit with their C-suite staff whenever there's this increased risk of a really burnout is what they're discussing. But it's lack of engagement, decreased productivity, worsening examples of creativity within the organization. When they start seeing these areas of this business kind of flux and have a decline, that's when I'm called in and they're calling it something else but really what it is, is burnout. It's professional burnout. And they're needing some of these types of rests. They really get to that point of being as good as they could possibly be.

Dave:

It seems like emotional rest might be harder for everyone these days just because anything you say ends up on social media and you're having some sort of a feeling or a problem but it's not politically correct problems. I'm just not going to say anything because I don't really feel like I want to share that, like the amount of attention people get. I think the technical term is shitty drunk.

Dave:

If you're under 25, it's actually substantially lower than in all of history, because I don't want that to be on social media. So, people are actually self-censoring more. Does that self-censorship because someone might take a record of it, does that actually cause a lack of emotional rest?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

It makes it harder. It increases the risk for that emotional rest deficit. I think for most people that it really have to ... It boils down to, do you have someone in your life that you trust with that level of authenticity and that level of vulnerability. It really can't be on social media and it can't be kind of like a team effort. It can be 10 people that you're doing this with. It's usually that one or two trusted friends that you really know have your back. They're not trying to put your information out for everyone to see. They're that confidant that you know you can let them in on your deepest darkest secrets and you're still accepted.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

The part of emotional rest that gets very difficult and that I tend to see a lot in professionals is when it gets to the level where it's affecting people to the point where they don't feel like their life has worth. So, we're seeing suicide and depression and those types of things when emotional rest gets to a climax. And the problem with that is, if no one knows that you are down or depressed or anxious, then intrinsically, you start feeling like something is wrong with the true me, that I can't really let people see who I really am. And that's a very toxic situation to be in and that kind of increases the risk of some of these greater levels of mental health diseases.

Dave:

Wow. What's the fix for that?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Really just making sure that you understand that you have a place to release that. And it could be a counselor. It could be a coach. It could be a trusted friend. It doesn't necessarily have to be someone that you have a relationship with like a family member or spouse. Many times it can't be that person because you don't feel comfortable kind of fully revealing all of what's going in your life.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And so, I think it's great to have counselors and coaches that you're working with that you can have that level of openness with. I know as an internal medicine physician, I also found it very interesting that, yes, people would be coming to be for their physical body issues. I mean I'm an internist. I'm not a psychiatrist, but in those moments, they're pouring out all of their psychiatric issues and I think because they knew they had physician-patient confidentiality in play in those moment.

Dave:

Do you think that's why they used to have the Catholic confessional, you go in there and kind of pour out whatever you want and no one is going to judge you? Was that just a way that the church was establishing this type of emotional rest for people?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I definitely think it's a type of emotional rest because to know that you're able to let that out, just think about it, if you're always holding that in, then a part of you starts thinking that it's not safe to let anybody really get close enough to know the real me because I'm always having to keep a part of me hidden from the world.

Dave:

Yeah, it's a big problem with social media. I think it amplifies it terribly so it drives exhaustion. So, you've had like hundreds of thousands of people look at RestQuiz.com, so you have good data here. Is that sort of the worst lack of rest? We haven't gone through all seven, but what's the one that people are most lacking?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

That's a huge one, emotional rest. Mental rest is a huge one. The one that I think that I get the most emails from, honestly, there are people saying to me they're most surprised about would be creative rest.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

The one that I think that I get the most emails from, honestly, there are people saying to me they're most surprised about would be creative rest. And I think because most of us when we hear that creative rest, we're automatically thinking of musicians and artists and writers, people who have a creative outlet as their way of life as being the only people who would need creative rest.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

But really, creative rest is an issue for anyone who's innovative, who's having to think outside of the box. I see it a lot in people who are entrepreneurs or in marketing or PR. They're constantly having to think of new ways of doing things. So, they're creative just within their career and for those people, what they start seeing is that they have a harder time coming up with new ideas. They lose their motivation and their inspiration. And that's what creative rest does. It actually helps you to be able to be inspired, to be motivated again.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I think probably the easiest example of creative rest for most people to identify with is if you're someone who, when you're around bodies of water or maybe at the mountains or at the beach or in the woods just outside in nature, and you get this experience where you feel better. You can't explain it. It's like you can't put a specific thing on it and say, "Well, this is what happened that's why I felt better."

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

But you know you feel better in these settings. That's an example of what creative rest looks like, is the rest that comes when we allow ourselves to experience beauty whether that's natural beauty or it could be manmade beauty like art or the symphony or going to a museum or something. But you're letting

that really awaken and create something inside of you, and that helps with that inspiration we need to be able to do the other innovative things in our life.

Dave:

This is a really different take on rest, and as you say these things, I'm sort of applying them. Clearly I'm an entrepreneur. I'm also, being an author, I sort of have to write a book every year or two, partly because I like to learn and think and discover new ways of doing stuff and see what I think the future is going to be but also just the act of writing, it's a creative act.

Dave:

And then if I don't get to cook every now and then, I get all pissed off because I wrote a big cookbook and created a diet, people lost a million pounds, et cetera, but it's because I like to cook and I know how the elements are supposed to go.

Dave:

And if I don't get to do either of those, yeah, it's actually more stress. So I never thought of those things as rest. But they actually are even though it's also work.

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

Yeah, and I think that's important and it's a great point you make because I think that's where people really get confused. We automatically start thinking about rest as either the cessation of activity, we're not just going to do anything or we attach it to sleep, which is just one of the types of ... It's a type of physical rest but it's not a type of some of the other rest.

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

But rest really is about restorative activity. What are the restorative activities you do to help pour back into these seven areas to counteract the ways that you pour out within your day to day life.

Dave:

That is definitely giving me a pause for thinking about that, and I think a lot of listeners are in that same boat. You also have sensory rest in here, which I absolutely love. What is sensory rest? How do you define it?

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

Well, sensory rest is when you undo some of the ongoing sensory input that we normally have within our day. So, that can look in many different ways. I think for most of us, it starts with really understanding where your senses are being attacked within your day. If you're on the computer all day, if you're listening to a lot of different background noises. It could be the telephone from the other people in the office or it could be your, since we're working from home now, it could be your kids in the other room talking and laughing.

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

It can be the bright lights from your computer screens or just from your office space. It could be the smells in the room. It could be your kid ... If you're a parent of small kids, it could be from touch from them wanting to hug you and sit in your lap. There are so many ways that we experience sensory input

and many times leading to sensory overload because we don't do things to downgrade our sensory, the amount of sensory input that we're receiving.

Dave:

That one has been so life-changing for me. Listeners already know I started a company around that called TrueDark. We have patents on glasses that filter certain frequencies especially ones for sleep. I can go all day long because I actually reduce the sensory input into my eyes. I can still see but there's excess blue light that's not even good for you.

Dave:

And at night time, you'll never see me without the darker colored ones with the gradient lens thing that I designed because I sleep way better because I'm just cutting out extra sensory inputs and you could say it's resting. It's also just not wasting energy on filters. And then noise-canceling headphones when you fly and all that stuff, it has totally changed how I show up after an eight-hour flight. I'm like, "Oh, I blocked the light. I blocked the noise. I do everything I could," and then on myself versus this drained version of myself.

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

That's such a great point. And not just drained but for many people, they're an angry version of themselves because all of that is just keeping them kind of overly stimulated. And they don't understand why is it I'm so just easily outraged? And a lot of that is from that excessive sensory input that they're getting all day long.

Dave:

I went to Tibet to learn meditation from the masters. I run a neuroscience, meditation meets no science company and I will say you put me under bright poorly designed LED lights all day long and I still want to punch people. It's not very enlightened of me, but man, it hurts. And then finally, like God, somebody make it stop.

Dave:

And okay, so that rest is important and that's why TrueDark, the glass company, we just launched a new light bulb. Same kind of a thing. But also I'm reading this book from Daniel Brown who was just on the show. He's 40 years in the Harvard faculty. He's translated books from cave yogis, from the 1300s talking about how I just go into a cave and I meditated for 20 years and I come out enlightened."

Dave:

And those are like the instruction manuals for enlightenment translated by a Harvard guy. I guess, [inaudible 00:20:18] be real. But caves, I love caves. Caves are there because there's nothing going on. I fasted and meditated in a cave for four days, it was great. No one bothered me except the little bees that kept buzzing around.

Dave:

So, I'm saying maybe that kind of rest is lacking in everyone. You live in big city, how would you ever get this? Is there a place to go in a big city?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Well, you know what? There are some, and I don't know if every city has this but a couple of cities I've gone to have this sensory deprivation tank. And I've always kind of been like, "Oh, okay, that sounds a little woo-woo."

Dave:

Have you tried it?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I did and honestly, it was a little terrifying to have your senses completely taken away for ... I'm used to sounds and lights and even someone who practices getting sensory rest. But I have to tell you, after about 10 minutes, once the panic of kind of being in complete darkness and silence, it kind of wore off. It was amazing.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

It was so relaxing and I think it was one of the few times I really feel like that my mental space got the clearest that it'd ever been because I think that most of us, even when we're not aware of it, we're always thinking about kind of how our senses are feeling, kind of what's touching us, what's on us, what sound am I hearing. It's just our subconscious kind of automatically protecting us in that way.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And so, it was one of the rare occasions where I truly felt like ... I mean it was almost like a spiritual experience. It was so beautiful to be in that complete darkness and complete silence.

Dave:

When you say it was kind of terrifying, can I share a little story about floating for the first time? I don't think I've ever said this on the air. Maybe 12 years ago, floating was not ... I wouldn't see float tanks in most cities but I was in Las Vegas and I googled around and said, "I've been wanting to try this for a while. I hear there's one here."

Dave:

So, I find some kind of a sketchy thing on, maybe it was pre-Yelp, whatever. And they're like, "Oh, we'll just send our son to pick you up at your hotel," or something. And the guy is like 45 minutes late and he pulls up in his sleeve tattoos and his car is really sketchy like something from Breaking Bad.

Dave:

And he is a lot like Jesse from Breaking Bad. And I realized he can't find his own house, he's high as a kite. I'm like, okay, I'm going to go into a float tank and something is not right here. And you get in there and it's like a homemade tank that's kind of like a coffin.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Oh, no.

Dave:

It's really, really sketchy. I'm sort of like, "All right, I have committed to doing this. I'm just going to do it. Like what are the odds they'll lock me in here and kill me?" And so, I'm having all these kind of dark thoughts and I go in. And like you said the first time, I felt like I'm falling the whole time. And so it's terrifying at first and I'm actually not falling, and then you realize all the muscles that are all tight that you didn't realize were tight, and it's pretty transformative. So, I put one in my house. I have one downstairs.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Oh, wow. I would love to do that. But I agree, when people ask me about it, I always tell them start with actually just enjoying some silence and darkness within your own house because if you are someone who always has the radio on, always have the notifications on your phone, always surrounded by bright lights and then you throw yourself in one of these tanks, it's just not going to be a good experience the first, at least, 15, 20 minutes because your body is going to go into fight or flight. It's like this is not good.

Dave:

I had a journalist, who shall remain nameless, come out to my house. And the Upgrade Labs up here has been covered in Outside magazine, I think WIRED and Men's Health. It's been not enough that I'm not saying who it is. And the guy is like, "Okay, I'm going to try this." And he goes into the float tank. I said, "Just do it for an hour." It's what most people do at their first time.

Dave:

And he comes out after 10 minutes, he's like, "I think that was an hour." And he was clearly just really rattled and he'd never been alone with his own thoughts like that, and it was kind of funny. And so, that wasn't a thing for him.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

He should try it again, [crosstalk 00:24:24].

Dave:

Okay. So, sensory rest is a big deal. And I would say eye pads maybe, not that Apple iPads but the little cushions with bamboo particles in them or something on your face. Noise canceling headphones, warm blankets, stuff like that, that alone can just be ... Or complete darkness in your bedroom instead of little blinky lights at night ... All of those are core to me showing up the way I do in the world. And I'm just realizing, "Oh, yeah, those are all kind of forms of amplifying my sensory rest whenever I get a chance."

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Yeah, and it is huge. I think for most people, that's what they don't get like both of us we're mentioning. This thought of rest is actually playing a role in who I am and how well I'm able to think new thoughts and come up with new ideas and dream bigger dreams and then really do all the things that most of us want to do. We are constantly focusing on the work and the effort required for the work.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

But I'm one who I want to be able to do great work without being exhausted at the end of doing that great work. I want something left at the end of the day so that I'm smiling, I'm happy, I have something to bring home to my husband and my kids and I'm not bringing the exhausted version of me. I'm

bringing still the version of me that's able to serve them to the best of my ability. And that's what rest does.

Dave:

Okay, that's cool. Now, here's the \$10,000-question. You just introduced seven kinds of rest for people. Before, they probably thought they just needed sleep or maybe sleep and a yoga class. So you just increased everyone's stress levels because now like, "Oh, my goodness. I'm not getting the right kind of rest. I must be a bad person."

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

I know, yeah.

Dave:

It's like we have orthorexia for people like, "Oh, my goodness, I'm not eating the right kind of foods." Now, we have restorexia which you just invented on the show. How do people know, "Okay, I should focus my rest investment. I'm going to focus today on one of these seven kinds." How would you go about knowing which is the one that you need the most?

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

Well, honestly, that's where the quiz came from. My intention wasn't initially to do a quiz, but when I sat down with patients and sat down with clients, that was the number one question. People would say, "Okay, now I need all seven of these things." And they would just add something else to their to-do list, seven extra things to their to-do list, and that is not the purpose.

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

Really, it's a matter of looking at where are you pouring out the most in your day, because for most of us the area where we're pouring out the most is likely to be the place where we're going to become more deficient, especially if we're not doing any specific intentional restorative activities to try to get back what we're pouring out energy-wise in that area.

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

And so, for those who ... That's kind of difficult because you do a lot of things in your day, that's where RestQuiz.com came from just to be able to give people a quick glimpse of, "Oh, this is the one or two that I need to focus on." And so rather than just trying to get any kind of rest, they're getting the rest that they need in the area that they're having the biggest deficit.

Dave:

Okay, I like that. And what is it, about 25 questions I'm guessing?

Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith:

No, it's intense. I tell people it's one of those considered a mini-appointment with me because it asked quite a few questions. It takes about five minutes, 10 if you really are going to over-analyze. I always say choose the quickest question that looks correct and move on with it to get the most accurate answers, really. That's what you should do. And then you get an assessment at the end that gives you a ranking on the seven types of rest, and the one with the highest score is the one with the highest deficit.

Dave:

So, I'm just going to stack rank it for in about five minutes. I found on quizzes like this that you pretty much, you go with the first answer. The whole over-analyzing it gives you less accurate results and every one of those-

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Absolutely.

Dave:

I've done a lot of these enneagram you mentioned earlier, a lot of these personal development tests. And then we actually do those as part of the neuroscience company that I run. And I'm like, "Look, guys, just stop thinking. You just go with whatever your gut is. You can't get this one wrong." And they're like, "I'm studying for this test." I'm like, "You can't fail a test of you. It's personal assessment."

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Exactly. You can't fail it. It's just an ability for you to see where you're at. And I think that's probably the most powerful part of this. Once you're able to identify what kind of tired you are, then you're able to make sure that you're being intentional of getting the restorative rest you need in that area. Because the problem is, if you're just trying to fix all rest with sleep, if you have an emotional rest deficit, there's no way sleep can help that. There's just no way because it's not letting you be able to express those feelings with anyone.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And I think that's important. Sleep might help a little bit with sensory because your eyes are closed and hopefully, it's quiet in whenever room you're sleeping in. But if that's the only time you're getting sensory rest, then you're not going to be ... As you mentioned, you're not going to be energized. You're going to be drained all day and you're definitely not going to be a happy person because you're overly wired by all the sensory input.

Dave:

Well, some of these questions don't make a lot of sense. "I often find myself apologizing for my actions even if I'm not in fault." Okay, what does that have to do with rest? I'm not getting that connection here.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Yeah, that's the thing, these questions ... Every question was very intentional and it's very sneaky. So, I'll give you this one because it's really tapping into if someone has a people-pleasing personality, or a tendency towards people-pleasing because those people tend to have a higher number, a higher risk I should say, of an emotional rest deficit.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

They have very weak personal boundaries because they don't want to be confrontational. They don't want to make people feel bad by not following what's going on and they have a tendency to, "Oh, I'm sorry," even when it's not nowhere near their fault. They're kind of sneaky questions to get to some of the psychology behind why people are more prone to some of these types of rest.

Dave:

So these are more like symptom feelings. Some of these, I would not intuitively tie this in like, "I feel uncomfortable talking about my desires and goals." What does that mean? I need more creative rest? But you're doing some sort of weird math thing with conjoint analysis or something in the back end. I know your tricks, you conjoint analysis people. I went to business school. I know what you're talking about.

Dave:

So, it is a cool thing. Now, I kind of asked earlier but now I'm just going to go, okay, stack rank based on the data set. And granted, the people come to your website, so you go to RestQuiz.com and you're already self-selecting someone who, so it's not a random sampling of people. But you go there, of the people who decided to go there, give me like an order. Number one, number two, number three, number four in terms of which kinds of rest people need the most. I want to know the secrets.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Yes. Number one has always consistently been mental rest. That is number one. It jumped up even higher after COVID. I had a large flux of people come in after COVID. It has consistently been the highest one. Following that has been emotional and then following that has been social. Those are the top three.

Dave:

So, mental, emotion, social. What about the other ones?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

As far as how they fall out?

Dave:

Yeah.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

The one that tends to be the lowest has always been physical. And I think because we all know we need physical rest. We all know that we need sleep, and I think that that tends to be the lowest as far as the one that people have a deficiency in. So, the ranking as you see, it's mental, emotional, social.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And then following that is a tie normally between sensory and creative because I find that it kind of jumps back and forth. It was creative before COVID, then it's sensory. I'm not sure exactly what that means since but sensory seems to be kind of making a comeback some type of way since COVID. And I think probably because so many of us are home and on our computers and not in front of real-life people anymore.

Dave:

And also you replace your commute where quite often you're alone. So if you're commuting for 45 minutes, that can be thinking time.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

That's true.

Dave:

And alone time. And yeah, you could have some mechanical vibration but there's no one pestering you, and you're not allowed to text in your car because no one will ever do that. So, some people use this as an excuse to not text in their car and so you're like, "Wow, no one is allowed to bother me. I'm allowed to not respond," so it's like your own little cave.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I guess that's true. I hadn't thought about that. But, yeah, for some reason it's climbing since all of this has been going on. And then spiritual usually is the one right above physical. So it's interesting because everyone is not considering themselves a spiritual person, or a religious person I should say, but most people have some connection to that that they understand kind of intrinsically whether they're practicing any specific religion or not.

Dave:

So you talk about a specific religion, another question here, I struggle with the concept of God. I'm like, come on, that must be a spiritual rest question, right? Do you have people who are like arguing?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

That's really interesting because one of the big things with spiritual rest is some of the people who already do spiritual rest type activities are some of the people who don't believe in any kind of specific religion. I have a friend who every time we have our conversation about anything religion-related automatically says, "Well, I don't believe in any of that. But I do believe in mankind and the goodness of man and the kind of the core goodness of people in general."

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And when we talk about what spiritual rest is, it's about belonging and kind of seeing a greater good, we automatically connect on that even though we have completely different religious type belief. So, I think it's very interesting. It's just being able to, I think, connect to that kind of core community of humanity.

Dave:

That's fascinating. So, the shift is real from COVID. Let's move into ... Okay, what do I do about these? We'll go in order. So, mental, does it mean that I should do the episode I've wanted to do forever, "Hey, guys. Here's a one-hour episode of silence. Just listen to this."

Dave:

I've seriously been talking, for five years I want to do that episode, and I never do it because I know people will just get all mad at me. Really, just listening to nothing and see what's in there. So, if you're listening, that's a bonus episode that you don't have to download. Just turn it off and then come back an hour. But you probably won't. Aside from that, what do you do?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Well, that's the thing. For mental rest, it depends on how it's approaching you because for a lot of people, they just can't get their mind to shut up, just turn off long enough to be able to get to that quiet space. I sometimes think about it like a river and most of our minds are like the river with a pebble dropped in. It's just ripple after ripple after ripple, nonstop waves going all the time. And we really want that at some point for that to kind of get still.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And I think one of the simple ways of doing that for most of us who are not fans necessarily of prolonged meditation is to try to think about how to focus the mind on a single thought. There's a big push about being present. And I think for sometimes, that's hard to do because it's like, well, what does that look like and how do I quantify it?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And so, something I have my clients and patients do, think about something that you're trying to be present in. Let's say you're on vacation and you're trying not to work which is hard to do. And you're with your family, and you're trying to be present but you can't figure out how to do that. If you pick a word and that word may be family, or it may be love, or it may be calm, you pick some word that is meaningful to you and every time you try to think about work, you bring yourself back to that one word.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And I always love for the word to be situated or related to whatever it is you're trying to be present with. So, if it's a family vacation, it may be family. And so, you're bringing your thoughts back to that one word and in essence training your brain not to be disobedient and kind of jump around on every thought that comes its way, every idea that hits it in that moment and keeping on track with really what you're trying to focus on.

Dave:

I didn't tell you I was going to do this, but I didn't want to spoil it ahead of time. I just filled out my quiz results and sent them in during the episode because I didn't want to spoil myself ahead of time. So, we'll see if it comes back in time so I'm going to ask you specific questions so that I can poke holes in it. I didn't want to plan it ahead of time. All right, I'm going to check my inbox right now. Let's see if it's opened.

Dave:

It says, "Dave, you failed the test."

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

You can't fail it.

Dave:

It doesn't say that. It hasn't come through yet. But I'm going to keep one eye on that. I hope it will come up while we're talking. So for people sitting in home, you're packed together in COVID, COVID times that focusing on that one word, sort of having a mantra is what that word really is, and just retrain the-

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

That's helpful. And then if it's at that time because a lot of people do this before they go to bed. You're ready to go to sleep and your head is going through your to-do list for the next day or you are thinking about conversations you had earlier in the day and kind of what you wish you had said. I think it's helpful to even consider doing just some brain dumping, kind of having a notepad or a journal or just a post-it note honestly, something to write those thoughts down on, just to kind of get them out of your mental space so that they're not floating around and you're not just allowing them to just linger there.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And then it kind of gives the brain permission to let it go because as long as you keep ruminating over a thought, it's not going to let you really get into some of those deeper levels of sleep because your brain is trying to hold onto that bit of information. Honestly, even at the expense of you sleeping, it will try to keep that thought present in the forefront of your mind all the way into that next morning just because it really wasn't placed in a concrete place where the brain could just let it go.

Dave:

And so, it really is programmable, then you just said that and it goes, okay. All right, my results came in. What would you predict from talking to me? I want to see if your x-ray psycho-vision is-

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Well, I think you probably have that ... I don't have psycho-vision unfortunately. But I think you probably have the sensory rest component completely down. So, I would imagine that and physical were very low.

Dave:

You nailed it. It was number two from the bottom.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Okay. I figured that probably sensory and physical, I would imagine, would've been very low.

Dave:

Surprisingly, physical is at the very top.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I can't believe that.

Dave:

Yeah, I'm a little surprised too.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I would not have guessed that for you. Well, in the back of my head, it starts making me wonder, is it the passive physical rest or is it the active, because there's actually two types of physical rest. There's the passive, which is the sleeping and the napping, and the active, which are more things related to lymphatic, circulation, muscle, kind of muscle relaxation, those types of things. So, I'm curious actually which one was probably the one that was pushing that.

Dave:

What else would you predict based on our conversation?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

Probably mental. I feel like you probably spend a lot of time researching and studying and your mind is always going, going, going.

Dave:

Yeah, mental is number two for me. So you're totally accurate. So you can pick this up just by looking at someone?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

It's not just how to assess their day to day activity, it's really where do you pour out your energy in the world. Where is it that you are showing up and pouring out, that's the place that you need to be poured back into and kind of be really mindful of doing restorative activities in those areas.

Dave:

Do you ever like walk down the street and just be like, "Physical, mental, spiritual?"

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I really do started doing quite a bit of that when I'm talking to patients because it's really funny as an internist, people come and they want the magic bullet pill that you can give them and just make them feel amazing. And I know I'm a traditional medicine physician but I'm not into throwing pills at people. There's a time for medicine and there's a time for lifestyle change. And more times than not, it's the time for lifestyle change.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And so, it's really interesting to me when someone sits down and they're telling me how tired they are and we do the test and the tests are negative. There's nothing I can find wrong with them that needs a pill. And then I tell them that this is something that I recommend, that you do these lifestyle changes to start feeling better in these different areas.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

And it's funny to me how many people get mad, I mean just mad because it's like, "No, I want you to help me." And it's like, "That's what I'm trying to do." But if I gave them the pill, they'd be like super excited because the pill is going to fix it all.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I think that's what I tend to find more often than not, that when someone is talking to me and I'm like, "That sounds like this type of rest deficit," and they don't want to hear about that. They just want, "Just give me the pill. Just knock me out if I need physical rest. Give me the sedative or whatever it is to make it go away."

Dave:

Do you know about the Xpill? Have you heard of that?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

The Xpill? No, haven't heard of that.

Dave:

My friend, Robbie Richman, came up with this. And it's a little purple pill in a little glass vial with a stopper and a little outline on it. And you can write on the outline what the pill is. And it's just placebo and it's designed to be a placebo. And you have a little setting of intention, because the body responds so powerfully to a pill that you can say, "I'm going to put rest in the pill." And then the patient does a little ceremony [inaudible 00:42:49] the rest. Then they take it like, "There, I got my rest." And they actually feel better. And he's done clinical studies and everything.

Dave:

So, it's a fascinating idea. So when you have that person who just has to have a pill, you're like, "You know what? You don't need a prescription for this one. It's a special pill." And you can just put whatever you want in there. Of course, that will just piss him off even more, but I'll tell you it works. It totally works but only for the right kind of person who's going to actually try it.

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

I love it.

Dave:

I thought you would. All right, well, I really appreciate the quantitative nature of this. I think you've got a large enough sample size, even though I think your quiz came out after your book, right, or at the same time?

Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith:

It came out around the same time because the whole research was way before there was ever a book, the initial research with patients and then the quiz came out after that.

Dave:

With the quiz though, you must have just an amazing amount of data, probably more data than anyone else here. So, I think this is fascinating because in your book, you talk about these types, and now you can say, "Well, okay, what shifted as a result of COVID, result of people staying home?" And I think for anyone listening to this, if you're sitting in ... Well, I would say sitting in your car like normal, but you're probably not sitting in your car unless you're sitting in your car because it's providing you sensory deprivation and it's in your garage. By the way, that's good strategy.

Dave:

But if you're sitting with noise canceling headphones on trying to create tunnel vision so that you can work at home in a relatively chaotic environment, knowing the changes in the type of rest you need or even just having this map which is something that I didn't have to count all of those things as rest, I think it's really meaningful. And so thank you for doing the work and then doing the quiz to do enough

research. And again, it's RestQuiz.com and we don't have any financial affiliate or any of that kind of stuff. I just think it's a cool idea.

Dave:

And so if you're listening, go check it out. And you should also read Sacred Rest if this makes sense to you. It's not about sleep. I love sleep hacking. It's something different and it's something that I find noteworthy and I think you will too. Thanks for listening.