

## Feeding Courage not fear: Week 9 Counselling

There's a story of the two wolves in the Cherokee Culture in which a grandfather teaches his grandson an important life lesson, which I want to link to facing fears.

The short version of the story is that there is a battle between two wolves inside of us. One wolf can represent our fears, insecurities, etc and the other wolf can represent courage, faith, determination etc. **The wolf that wins the battle, is the wolf that you feed!"**

What better time than now to focus on starving fears, and feeding courage and confidence...

Here are a few ideas on how we can put this into action:

1. Use logic to make a worry less powerful, e.g. logic is when you think about what is really true instead of what you're afraid might happen; logic is knowing that even if something that's a little bit bad does happen, you can get through it.
2. Try to "contain your fear." Meaning, schedule a worry time or time to focus/ plan around what is worrying you. (about half an hour a day). Then the rest of the time, try to "switch the channel in your brain" to doing what you need to and should be doing. Try the worry box idea shared previously.

See the next page

For night fears...



## What about co-sleeping

(parents who co-sleep with their child)??

### Helping your child NOT DREAD THEIR BED...

A few important reasons for children to learn to sleep in their own beds:

1. Better quality of sleep for the child and parents
2. Increases your child's confidence
3. To learn the important trait of independence (easier adjusting to school trips, sleepovers, and times when parents aren't around).

According to Psychology Today: Co-sleeping may have seemed like a good idea at one point, but over time it's anything but restful and, in fact, it creates additional [stress](#) for the entire family. Recent studies indicate that near-epidemic proportions of children are co-sleeping with parents today. According to [Parenting's](#) Mom Connection, a surprising 45 percent of moms let their 8- to 12-year-olds sleep with them from time to time, and 13 percent permit it every night.

Read the full article by clicking on the link below

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/savvy-parenting/201403/the-impact-chronic-co-sleeping-older-child>

Here are a few initial steps to help get started:

1. Discuss the importance of changing this behaviour with your child. Emphasize parents' needs to improve their own sleep, your daughter's bedroom being her happy, safe, comfortable space. Work out your own plan that your child will feel comfortable with. This may take some tough love and persuasion (and a belief/conviction on your part that this is in your child's best interests).
2. Expect some resistance and be prepared to offer lots of encouragement and motivation towards your daughter becoming more independent. The goal is for each family member to sleep in their own beds every night.
3. Develop a special bedtime pattern:
  - **30 minute night time activity**- where your child is gradually winding (or quieting) down, lights low, do relaxing and peaceful things, no electronics. Choose 2 ideas like look at the stars, puzzle/board game, bath, draw or colour in a picture, read a book, chat quietly.



- Bedtime pattern: **Shift** (10 minutes)- help your child come up with her own way of getting ready for bed after the nighttime activity, e.g. saying goodnight to your pets on the way to the bathroom, giving her teddy a hug. This activity should be the same every night.
  - **Snug** (15 minutes): this is the activity (once your child gets into bed) to help her settle down for the night. Snug activities help her feel safe and cosy. She can e.g. snuggle in her bed alone, cuddle with a parent, read or listen to a story, tell about her favourite part of her day, write in her journal. It must be quiet and peaceful, no electronics. Choose the same snug activity every night. Once falling asleep goes better, you can switch between 2 or 3 different snug activities. Let your daughter come up with her own ideas for how she can feel safe and comfortable in her own bed. Discuss and plan this beforehand.
  - **Snooze** (about 5 minutes): this activity happens as your daughter finds her favourite position and closes her eyes, e.g. kiss goodnight, gentle back rub, whispered I LOVE YOU. Depending on which step your daughter is on (see below), you will then leave her room quietly or sit near her. No further talking or communicating.
4. Discuss with your daughter which step she is normally on, on the list of falling-asleep alone steps as indicated below:
- Step 1: Falling asleep in parents' bed
- Step 2: Falling asleep in your own bed with your mom or dad
- Step 3: Falling asleep in your own bed, with your mom or dad sitting across the room
- Step 4: Falling asleep in your own bed with your mom or dad staying somewhere near your room
- Step 5: Falling asleep in your own bed with your mom or dad anywhere in the house.
- \*Aim as soon as possible to move to the next step\*

Examples of some self-soothing activities (to help you fall asleep and/or fall back to sleep):

1. **Fluffy cloud** - imagine you are lying on a large fluffy white cloud that lifts off the ground. You can really use your imagination to go to any dream location, e.g. unicorn world.
2. **Circle breathing** - close your mouth and take two slow breaths. In through your nose and out through your nose. As you continue to breathe, imagine your breaths travelling in one nostril and out the other.

In real life, you will be breathing in and out through both nostrils. In your mind, imagine the breath going into your right nostril and out your left nostril. The reverse the pattern.

3. **Stretch and sink**– Lie flat on your back with your legs straight and your arms down at your sides. Point the toes of your right foot, and stretch that leg as far as you possibly can toward the foot of your bed. Concentrate on making all the muscles in your leg *s-t-r-e-t-c-h* downward, as if that leg were growing longer than your other leg. Count to five in your head. Flex your foot so that your toes are pointing up and back toward your head. Count to five again. Relax your right leg and let it sink comfortably into the bed. Now point the toes of your left foot and do the same thing. Do the same thing with your right arm, and then your left arm. Stretching and sinking your body into your bed while taking slow deep breaths.
4. For busy minds– **remind yourself it is now sleep time**. Tomorrow you will take care of tomorrow's business. Picture a worry box, where you are locking any worrying thoughts away for the night. You don't have to worry now. You have earned some sleep– a good break after your day.
5. **Switch your brain channel**– if you still have thoughts popping into your head, think of these thoughts as just a bunch of pictures on your brain's TV channel. You have the remote, you can flick channels and choose what you would rather be watching on your brain TV.

A few closing comments:

There is no pressure to rush through any of the steps. Take this at the pace of your child and work with them, with lots of encouragement and praise, especially when you can see that she is really trying.

Remind yourself and her that your home is a safe, comfortable place. She may like it if you check in on her sleeping before you go to bed, but discuss before hand that you won't want to wake her up. You will just quietly check in. At any time during the night, if she does wake up, she can try to fall back to sleep on her own (try some of the ideas discussed or come up with her own ones). If she really can't get back to sleep and needs to call out or come to you, walk her back to bed, sit quietly with her until she falls back to sleep. Try not to make a big fuss or get too upset. She is learning and retraining herself to get used to sleeping in her own bed. Please be patient, even though this can be tiring. Keep the longer-term goal in mind.

SLEEP WELL, Collegiate girls and families!

You are most welcome to email me at  
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if you need any further emotional assistance.



Love Mrs Blandford