



# Why I Love Rest. Finally.

Karen Brody

I was raised at a time when women began flooding the workplace in suits, and sometimes even ties, to rise to the top. The top of what, I was never quite sure, but I remember riding to school in fifth grade on a New York City bus, filled with working women and the smell of their expensive perfumes, and deciding that I wanted to be on top too.

My expectations of myself were always high. I made my decision about where I wanted to go to college based on reputation — what school would get me to the top the fastest — instead of based on my gut instinct, which would have been determined by what school sang to my heart. My path was clear; I needed to work as hard as I could and be successful.

I wish I could say I had my mother to blame for this pressure to be the poster of a hard-working woman, but she did not buy into this idea at all. When I was tired from over-studying, she told me to stay home and take a day of rest. Most times I did, but instead of staying in my pajamas all day savoring the rest, I made myself a to-do list of what I would accomplish while I was at home resting.

It took several burnouts from stress and a pattern of panic attacks to finally give me the slap in the face

I needed. I was in my third year of college, on anti-anxiety medication and felt exhausted to my core. I told everybody, even joked, that all I wanted to do was sleep — but that was also the farthest thing from my mind. Sleep? What was that?

I woke up the day I entered a yoga studio thinking that I would take a bendy-stretchy class to achieve my goal of getting back into shape after having two babies. As I walked up to the receptionist I heard a woman leading a guided meditation and I peeked into her room. Twenty-five women were lying down, blankets over them, looking like they were taking the best nap of their lives. It was called yoga nidra — the Sleep of the Yogi — a form of yogic sleep. I ditched the idea of the bendy-stretchy yoga class and immediately signed up for the yoga nidra class. Something was telling me I needed this.

For the next year, I took a yoga nidra “super nap” every Friday at noon. The results were shocking. Quickly, I began to feel more energy and more focused. I then started receiving what I now call “soul whispers” about a piece of writing I was wanting to complete. I thought I was writing a book, but my soul whispers told me I needed to write a play. So that year I wrote a play. By the end of the year, my nervous system now



so deeply relaxed, I knew it was time to go off the anti-anxiety medicine. With the help of a healer, I was off and never had another panic attack.

All of this came from getting deep rest with yoga nidra. We forget that rest is a remedy and that when we put out energy — into our babies or books or businesses — we have to put energy back in. I never understood this basic principle of rhythm, but I do today. You will not stay balanced if your every day is about making it to the top. Eventually, in some way, everyone will crash and burn — even the extroverts. Maybe it is a failed relationship, not burnout or panic attacks, but when any car runs all the time, it is going to run out of gas. That is common sense, right? But we forget.

Dr. Rubin Naiman, a sleep doctor, says that “Rest is a universal and critical ingredient in virtually all approaches to healing.” Let’s not forget this remedy. Our lives depend on it.

What I love about yoga nidra meditation is that it is so simple — you lie down, listen to a guided voice

and then do absolutely nothing. It re-teaches us how to rest, because many of us have not only forgotten that rest is a remedy, but we also do not know how to rest anymore. When we lie down, our thoughts increase and we cannot fall asleep, or get back to sleep. We need to learn rest today.

It is an act of bravery to rest. I did not know this when I was riding that bus with the working women all dressed up and smelling great. Today that smell turns me off, because today I know the consequences of rising to the top without a break. But in a culture of “do more” and feeling as a woman like you are falling behind if you stop, it is going to take *daring* to rest if women, and men too, are to start feeling better.

Maya Angelou said, “When you know better, you do better.” More and more it is clear that rest is a remedy for our modern world.

Let’s do better and dare to rest. 



Author Karen Brody can be found at [www.DaringToRest.com](http://www.DaringToRest.com).