

BEYOND THE STARS

MINDSET & SLEEP



Beyond The Stars
Jade Sleep Nanny

INTRODUCTION

I wrote this guide for many reasons. I know from experience how hard it can be as parents with our mindset. We worry & overthink - a lot. And then there is the Overwhelm which comes so easily with so much going on around us.


Not only that - then we have the Mindset around our little one's Sleep. We all know sleep is so important, for them and us. And again, we can overthink this too. So, when working closely with families around their little ones sleep, I always offer additional Mindset coaching with this.

I believe our thoughts and feelings count for so much, and can also directly affect our beliefs - again even around our little one's sleep and habits.

This guide is here to give a background on Mindset and applied lightly alongside sleep. Both topics I am exceptionally passionate about helping others with.

While this is only a small document in the grand scheme of things - please do reach out if you'd love further support!

PSYCHOLOGY AND SLEEP



Sleep, Rhythms and our minds. There are lots of useful theories that help us as parents understand behavioural sleep with our little ones, and the impacts. When we understand the psychology behind it, it can help clear our minds and explain why we often make changes to our baby's sleep habits.

For example;

Associative Learning - Making new associations between events and the environment.

1. Classical Conditioning (Pavlov, 1897) - A child unconsciously learns through repetition to associate the bedtime routine with winding down before sleep. Actions leading to this also becomes classical conditioning, rocking/feeding to sleep.

2. Operant Conditioning (Skinner, 1898) - A child learns that procrastination and misbehaving before bed gets longer with the parent. Reinforced by the parents continued responses. But the parent has learned that "giving in" is less stressful and the cycle continues.

This helps us understand the behaviours behind many sleep challenges, although there can be various reasons why our children are struggling with sleep!

Sleep is Restorative Energy

Sleep is how we conserve our energy. It is restorative. If we think of our sleep like a "tank of sleep" - when this is diminished we are running on empty. There is little restorative sleep and energy, we become overtired, more irrational and less able to think clearly. When our sleep "tanks" are full - we sleep better, better rested, restored energy and ability to function better cognitively. And the same goes for our kids too

This is why when we sleep poorly, we instantly feel the physical effects - we feel sluggish, tired and unfocused.

Sleep Helps Our Bodies Regulate
In many aspects, our circadian rhythm, our immune system, and metabolism. Poor sleep can result in weight gain, and poor immune system which means sleep is also vital for our physical health as well as our mental health.

*"A well-spent day
brings happy
sleep."*

Leonardo da Vinci, Italian Polymath



OUR MINDS

Our brains need time to zone out, relax and take in the events of the day. We need time to be creative (do you always find the best ideas come when you finally turn off from everything else and let your mind work on its own?)

Having that time not only helps us sleep better when the time comes, but it helps us be reflective, responsive, better parents, friend and partner.

But sometimes it is hard to shut off. For many of us, laying down at bed at night is the only "shut off" time we get - which is why our minds then move so rapidly processing everything it needs to now that it finally has the chance.

If you have a busy lifestyle, the chances are our mind is running at super speed, with a super long list of things to think about. This impacts our ability to sleep when we finally get to that stage of the night.

Likewise, responsibilities and worries can equally do the same. When we have the responsibility of others, children, people who rely on us, our worries can become more present at this time. If there are external events, worries and anxieties - our brain often uses this time as a chance to finally let our brain process all of these feelings. Some of which may be hard to process, which is why we mask it during the day but giving our brain the space it needs at night-time brings all these thoughts forward.



THE CRIES

Read The Cry: Consider why your baby is crying. Are all of his or her needs met such as being fed, clean, warm and well? Crying is communication for your baby. It could be a need, it could be a want. What is it that your baby is REALLY trying to say?

Respond Right: If all needs are met and you know your baby is just saying: 'I'm tired and I want to be asleep but I don't know how' How can you help your baby get to sleep without entirely doing it for him or her? **HINT:** This will differ depending on developmental stage and temperament

Consistency: When your baby wakes and cries out in the night, respond to this consistently so the he or she becomes familiar with how to resettle (with your assistance at first) and knows what to expect. If sometimes she gets a feed and sometimes she gets taken into your bed, she won't know what she wants or needs and will just cry harder and longer for whichever outcomes desires each time.

Wake Up Cries: If your baby naps for 30 minutes and wakes crying or wakes early in the morning crying and you know it's not hunger, it's likely that he's not finished sleeping and just wants to get back to sleep. It's really hard to do and he's crying for you to help him do it - Not to get him up!



THOUGHTS & BELIEFS

Theory - thoughts, actions & beliefs

Thoughts in themselves come from ideas, beliefs or expectations.

Childs thoughts & behaviours are often influenced by parents thoughts & behaviours and vice-versa.

e.g. child thinks he can't get to sleep, feels frustrated, cries, misbehaves. Parent thinks he is behaving badly and gets angry and frustrated.

Another example would be - baby is overtired and cannot fall asleep. Parent believes they aren't tired and keeps them awake, and the thoughts impact that behaviour of keeping the little one awake.

Thoughts Create Feelings -> Feelings create behaviour
-> Behaviour reinforces thoughts ->



ROUTINE TRIGGERS

What in the day can trigger and alter the mindset?

There can be many reasons why we lose our focus, become angry and frustrated. Nothing can frustrate a parent more than a child who refuses sleep! Figure out your trigger point, that will highlight the area that needs most focus as work.

Mindset Challenges & Obstacles?

Write them down. What are the biggest obstacles in your mindset. And do they correlate with the impulses and reactions with our babies sleep? Do we believe "they'll just never sleep"? Or is it the countless attempts when your brain is only thinking "how much longer can this take?!". These are perfectly normal feelings, please push the parent guilt aside. Dwelling on this will not help us going forward, instead we can see the need for change and also implement some calmer measures to help us also.

" Don't try to be perfect. Life isn't, no one is. Use mistakes and mishaps as an opportunity to grow and teach. There is such a thing as happy accidents. And love, love love and listen, listen, listen!" Teri Hatcher

SELF TALK & SELF BELIEFS

The way in which we talk to ourselves counts for so much.

Set time - even if it 5 minutes before bed to brain dump & reflect.

Getting up 10 minutes earlier in your day to start the day right, tell yourself the right things and how the day will go sets the tone for the whole day - even if you've had a rough night!

In the moment of stress and frustration - count back from 5 to 1 - change the thought to a positive one. This is a really simple and effective tool to change in how you react and think about thoughts and actions. Whether it be negative self talk in your head, or a response to something during the day - counting back and changing that thought helps massively.



CONSISTENCY

The Power of Consistency - This is something I talk to families about DAILY. Alongside the mindset with parents, the consistency when carrying out sleep changes with our little ones is equally as important.

- Like with any goals - Consistency is essential to create new habits/lifestyle changes. For example - even going to the gym, needs to be consistent to see results. Making changes to new learning habits with our little ones is exactly the same. This doesn't mean it has to be harsh in any way, but keeping to the same boundaries and rhythms during sleep settles will help in so many ways.
- Intermittent Reinforcement - confuses the child when something is allowed one time and not at another. Encourages them to push boundaries and not understand the routine/boundaries in place.
- Babies thrive on consistency. The reason they also push boundaries is to feel that they are secure and we can be true to our word and provide that secure attachment following through.
- Babies learn from a very young age, that if they know there is still a change in routine to come (co sleeping come a certain time in the night) - they will hold out for it. And the cycle continues.
- Consistency also helps us as parents, it gives us focus and structure.

AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations are a self-help strategy used to promote self-confidence and belief in your own abilities.

Your brain sometimes gets a little mixed up on the difference between reality and imagination, which can be surprisingly useful.

Creating a mental image of yourself doing something — like acing a nerve-wracking interview or conquering your fear of heights by bungee jumping — activates many of the same brain areas that actually experiencing these situations would.

Regular repetition of affirming statements about yourself can encourage your brain to take these positive affirmations as fact. When you truly believe you can do something, your actions often follow.

An affirmation like “I can remain calm even when I feel annoyed” might guide you to a habit of deep breathing or grounding exercises when you start to feel yourself getting frustrated.

Here’s what they can do:

- improve your mood
- boost self-esteem
- increase motivation
- help you solve problems
- boost optimism
- help you address negative thoughts

Start with "I" or "My"

Keep them in the present tense

"I am patient"

"I am a good parent"

"My day will be filled with positive thoughts"

"I can manage my worries and fears around ..."

EFFECTIVE PARENT TIPS

- Breathe! To oxygenate the brain & think about the response and the message you want to communicate.
- If you need to leave the room for 10 seconds to take a deep breath before starting again, do it. It helps your brain focus and get back on track.
- Try not to respond with the instinct emotion/irrational response (limbic/chimp part of the brain) - this is harder to be rational when you are sleep deprived.
- Respond to a child's verbal and non verbal cues with consistency.
- Positively reinforce behaviours you want to see more of with praise & reward.
- Form and stick to reasonable boundaries
- Avoid intermittent reinforcement - inconsistency in responses, something being allowed one time and not another.
- Prepare for things to get worse before they get better, but you can be more resilient than the child with suitable and reassuring responses.

SELF CARE

- CATCH UP ON SLEEP WHEN THEY SLEEP WHERE POSSIBLE
- ASK FOR HELP
- MAKE A TO-DO LIST - IT MAKES YOU FEEL MORE PRODUCTIVE TICKING EVEN 3 SMALL THINGS OFF A DAY
- GOOD MEALS
- FRESH AIR
- LESS TIME SCREEN SCROLLING

GOAL SETTING

Goals are important as we make any changes, but we also have to allow these to align with our core beliefs and visions.

1. The first step - is to write down your Gratitude and grateful feelings around these first. There is nothing worse than writing goals down, and then feeling you won't meet them and bringing negative emotions. Gratitude fixes all of this, so practice some simple Gratitude Statements for every step of your progresses! You can't feel grateful and negative at the same time! So this helps us reach our goals more positively and effectively.
2. You don't need a detailed plan, just a next actionable step!
3. Find a goal buddy - whether that be a partner, friend or family member. We are most likely to achieve our goals (x10) with support and accountability.
4. Review your goals often to keep in alignment with them. These may change in time too, and that's ok!
5. Be Clear & Realistic, they can be as small or as big as you like but a clear vision is better than a muddy one.

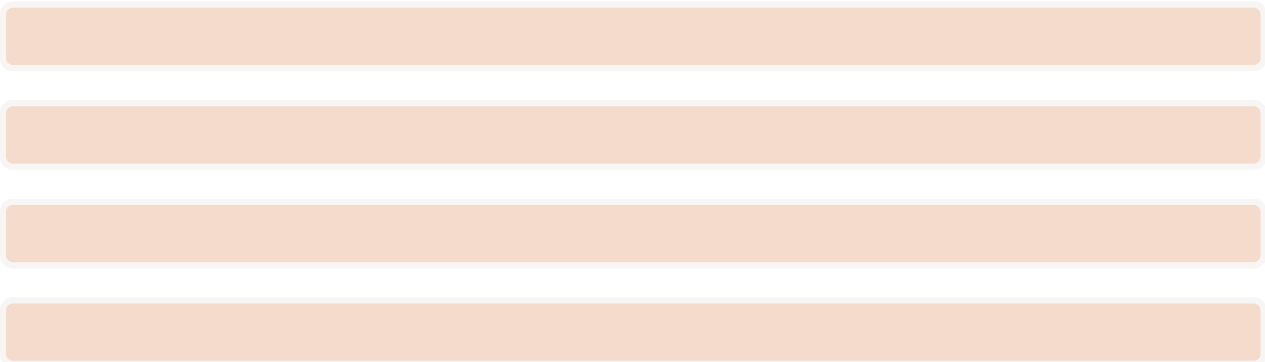
Focus Areas -

- Sleep Goals:
 - Mindset Goals:
 - Daily Goals:
 - Lifestyle Goals:
-
- How are you going to get there?
 - How do they align?
 - Make an Action Plan
 - Take Action

GOAL ACTION PLAN

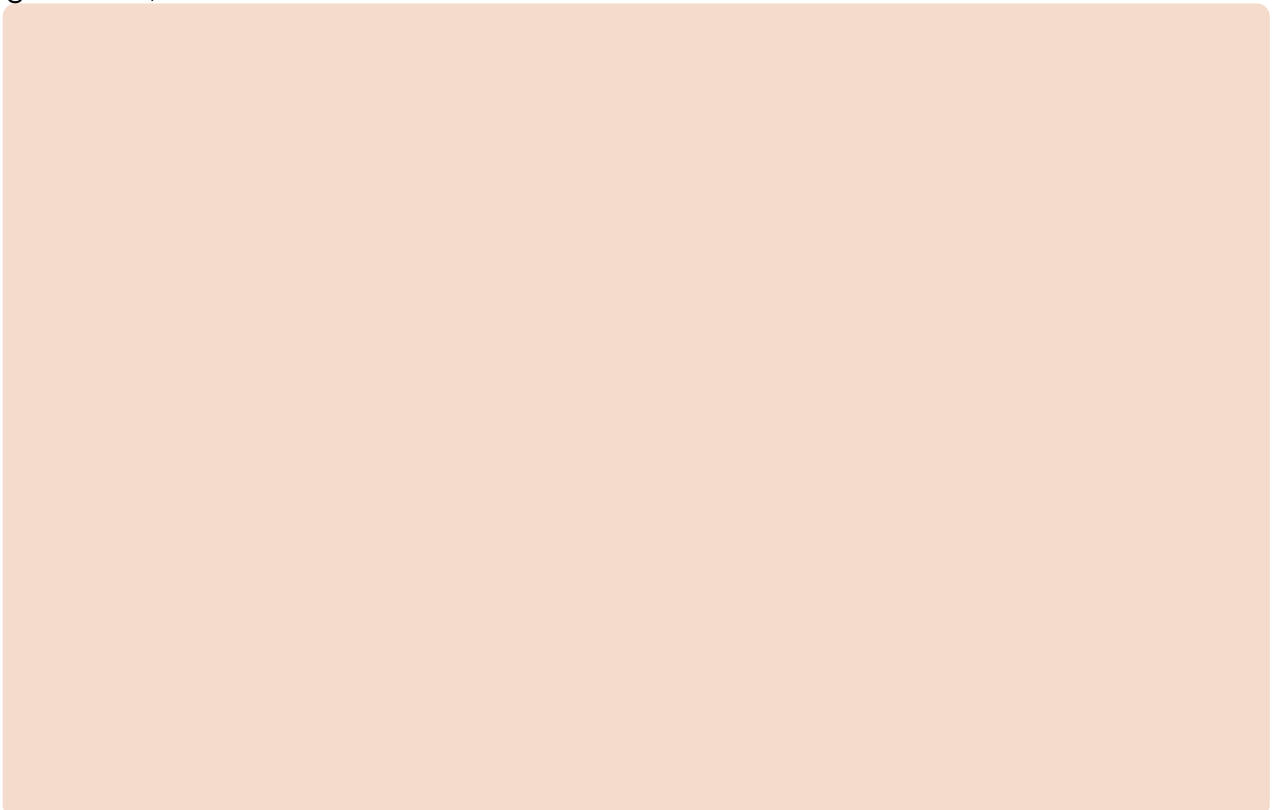
What are my key challenges when it comes to sleep

Is it falling asleep? Frequent awakening? Struggling to get back to sleep in the night/ early morning?

Four horizontal orange bars with rounded ends, stacked vertically, intended for writing answers to the question above.

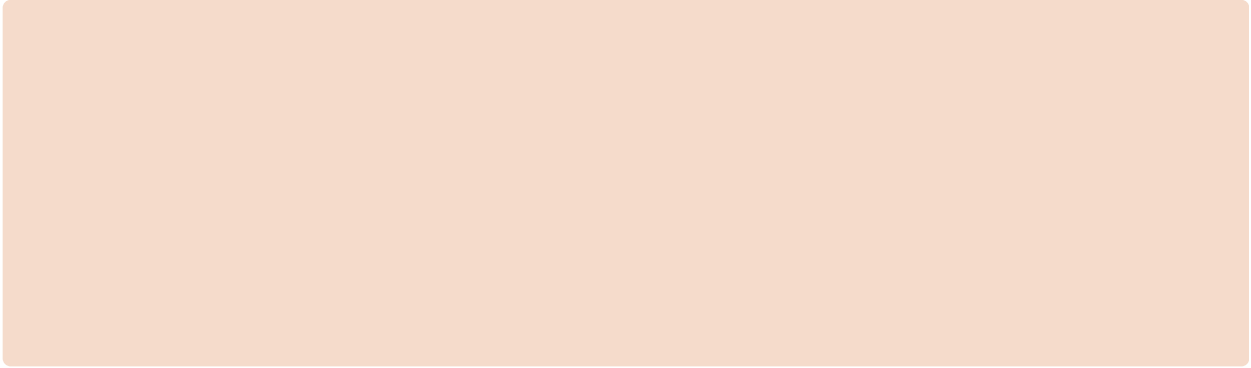
My Mindset Goals

What changes would you love to see? Or aspects to implement? E.g. daily gratitude, affirmations.

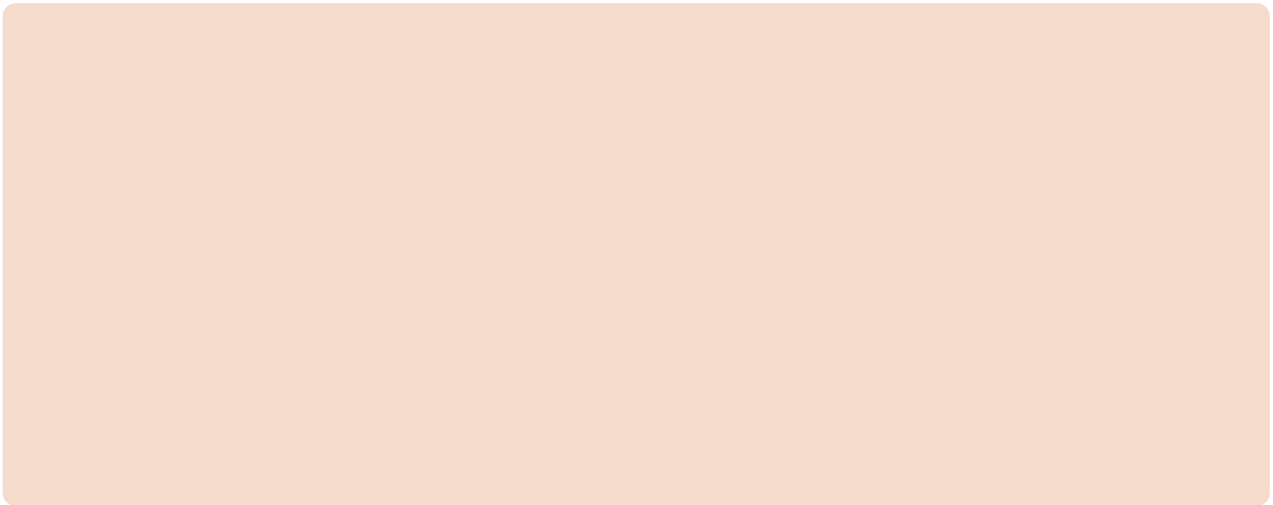
A large, solid orange rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for writing answers to the question above.

GOAL ACTION PLAN

What are my ultimate "Sleep" goals?



How am I going to get there?



How will it feel once my goals are met? How will my life change?

