Walter Buboltz: Sleep Tight, Sleep Right – Season 1, Episode 5

Amy: You're listening to Beyond 1894, a podcast where we hear from Louisiana Tech University scholars, innovators, and professionals on their personal journeys and the impact they are making in the world around them. I'm your host, Amy Bell, and my co-host is Teddy Allen.

Amy: Teddy, how did you sleep last night?

Teddy: I slept great. I'd had to stay up till 3:30 the night before last traveling and got up at six. So last night at 8:30, boom, out like a rock. Got up at 5:30 this morning, but that's eight or nine hours of sleep.

Amy: Yeah. Do you usually get eight or nine hours of sleep?

Teddy: No. And I need to talk to Walter about that. As I was listening to Walter, I was convicted that my sleep hygiene needs some soap and water. I gotta do better on.... I get up at the same time every morning, but I go to bed at different times. And Walter will tell you that's really not healthy. That probably explains a lot about my condition.

Amy: What is your condition?

Teddy: I guess sleep deprived? It's just not sleep deprived. I don't sleep right. But Walter talks about, you know, your diet, your attitude about sleep. You got to turn your brain off. That's pretty easy for me. I don't have to ratchet down the volume a lot on that, but he made me think I think I'll feel better if I sleep properly.

Amy: Yeah.

Teddy: Walter's from just a little bit above New York. Where the city that never sleeps. So how odd that he would end up being like a mastermind of sleep hygiene. But he is. I learned a lot by listening.

Amy: Yeah, I get a pretty good eight hours of sleep every day. I don't necessarily wake up at the same time. But I learned a lot of other really good things from Walter during my conversation with him.

Teddy: People ask me how long I've been working at Tech and I always tell them ever since that day that Dr. Guice found me sleeping at my desk. That's the day I started working. Anyway, it's better to sleep at home on your own time than at work.

Amy: For sure. Or in school, in class.

Teddy: Have you ever had to take a nap at work? Just like a 20-minute nap?

Amy: When I was a social worker? Yes. Yeah.

Teddy: And sometimes you have Harry Truman, one of our wonderful presidents at the end of WWII and into the Korean War era, the early ‘50s. He knocked it out for about 15 minutes a day at noontime. He’d say, “I'm done.” 15 minutes, take a little nap. Bam, back on the job. Refresher. I'll talk to Walter about that. See if that's good.

Amy: So, Walter Buboltz is a psychology professor in the Department of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences in the College of Education. For the Counseling Psychology program, he is a Director of Training. One of the things he researches is sleep quality and sleep hygiene, like we just have talked about. He explains what sleep hygiene is how to increase the quality of your sleep, and what he's currently researching. He also gave several tips to college students on how to balance the demands of this stage of life and getting good sleep. So ready to hear that?

Teddy: Absolutely. Let me take a little nap and then I'll be ready.

Amy: So, are you from this area?

Walter: No

Amy: Where are you from?

Walter: I grew up just outside of New York city, about 60 miles North in New York city. And then I left there when I was like 18 to go to college. And so, I went to upstate New York to college. Then I went out to Michigan for a while, started at Michigan state, and I went back to New York to get my master's. Then I went out to Ohio to Kent state to get my doctorate, and ended up at the university of Utah for a year doing my internship before I came here to Louisiana Tech. And I've been here for the last 25 years now.

Amy: And did you get all those degrees in psychology?

Walter: Uh, yeah, they're all in psychology. Uh, one's in community psychology as well, but they're all in counseling psych. Um, so yeah, I've been focused on this for over 30 years. When you put it all together and all the education and training and stuff.

Amy: So how did you get to Louisiana Tech?

Walter: They had an opening. They just started the doc program the year before I came here. They got approved from the state. They were taking their first-class in. And actually, one of my advisors knew the Dean here, and said they're looking for somebody to come in and help out with their doc program, and take it to the next level, and get it accredited, and do all that stuff. And I said, that's kind of what I'm looking for--to teach and work in a doc program. And so, I came, and it's kind of like water under the bridge now since it's been 25 years. And I was director for a while. I gave that to another person, then I was director again. I've given it up again. Um, which is not unusual that somebody is director and gives it to other people as we rotate and do different things and have different interests that we want to work on in our kind of academic careers

Amy: For sure. And how did you start studying sleep hygiene?

Walter: It's actually really funny. Um, I had never had any real interest in that area per se. I'd always had a health psych bent. I actually was doing groups for people that were struggling with

heart attacks, afterwards, and how to deal with your life and having to change your lifestyle and everything else. And one of my students who's actually now a department head at Yale, about 20 years ago, said, “You know, I want to look at students' sleep. And I think it's kind of a cool thing.” And he really wanted to be in health psych, so he started doing it and we didn't have anybody who was an expert. So, I said, “Well, I'll help you out the best I can.” And that started it all.

Walter: And so we started working together looking at college students' sleep, and how it worked, and what it was impacting. And then he developed a program to try to improve college sleep. And then, of course, he graduated, and left, and moved on. We stayed in contact doing research, and that started this whole process now that I’ve been looking at sleep. Primarily with college students and how it impacts all the different aspects of their life from academic performance to health-related stuff, to eating behaviors, to cognitive performance. We've been kind of working on that based on student interest and what I have time to do for the last 20 some years.

Amy: Yeah. And so, can you give us the definition of sleep hygiene?

Walter: Basically, sleep hygiene is learning the proper way to sleep, the best habits to use when you're going to sleep. And kind of a, how do you alter your lifestyle to try to get, um, the proper length of sleep, as well as quality of sleep. A lot of people think that you just need to get eight hours a night of sleep, and that's the recommended thing. But eight hours of good sleep is what we’re shooting for. Not eight hours of just being in bed. If you're tossing and turning, you might as well not be in bed sleeping anyway. So, we kind of look at length and quality, and most people are now focusing on, you know, six hours of really good quality sleep is better than eight hours of poor-quality sleep.

Amy: Wow. And what is good quality sleep?

Walter: Going to bed at the same time every day, which is basically sleep hygiene--teaching people that. Maintaining a kind of a set schedule so that every night you go to bed roughly the same time. You wake up at the same time every day, including weekends, which people are like, “I need to catch up on my sleep.” No, you need to get up. If you get up at six o'clock during the week, you get up six o'clock on Saturday and Sunday as well. Um, making sure your environment is conducive for sleeping. What's your actual temperature? Some people like it a little colder, or some people like it a little bit warmer. What's the bed like? Is it comfortable? Not comfortable? Does it create too much heat? Because it's a foam bed and some people do that. How the pillows work. Ambient noise in the room. If you've got roommates, are they making noise at midnight, and you're trying to sleep?

Walter: If you exercise at 10/11 o'clock at night, that's not good for sleep cause you're going to try and go to bed at 11 o'clock. You're just getting back. “Oh, wait a minute, I need to take a shower. I've been hot and sweaty.” That wakes you up. And it may take three to four hours for your body to get back to sleeping. So, if you want to work out, work out at five/six o'clock at night.

Walter: It also takes into account: when do you eat? A lot of people, especially college students, you know, they're up late trying to study, whatever. They're eating food at 9/10 o'clock at night. That’s literally telling your body to stay awake. So, sleep hygiene would say you don't want to eat any food about four hours prior to when you want to go to sleep. So, if you're planning on

going to sleep at around 11 o'clock, you really shouldn't need anything after about seven o'clock at night.

Walter: And then that also triggers, next is related to: what do you drink? Um, drinking a lot of coffees, seven/eight o'clock at night, you know, it's full of caffeine, which is a stimulant. It isn't very good for sleep. Uh, so we tell people, you know, watch what you drink come six/seven o'clock at night. And so, then people go, "Oh, I'll just drink a bunch of water." Well, you don't really want to drink a bunch of water either cause then you're going to wake up a couple times to use the bathroom during the night, and people don't realize those types of things are going on.

Walter: So that's kind of what sleep hygiene is--is doing that stuff. And then we can add other aspects to it. If you're the type of person that sits in bed at night going, "Okay, now what am I going to do tomorrow? Okay, I gotta get up. I got to go take care of this. I've got to run to the cleaners. I need to get food. I got to study." Your mind is just going. So, we can say/add some cognitive aspects to it to shut your mind down. So, that's conducive to then you falling asleep at night, and getting a good night's sleep, and feeling rested in the morning, and not tossing and turning for an hour and having what they call sleep latency, which is the technical term for insomnia.

Amy: Okay. And I feel like there's a lot of people that I know that have insomnia. So, what can you do when you, when you do have insomnia?

Walter: Well, first you need to learn to shut your brain down. And that's where therapy comes in. And there's, um, cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia, which is teaching people techniques and ways to shut that brain off at night. Um, you can also learn basic relaxation techniques. People forget about those things that we get taught early on. How do you distress yourself? Works the same for slowing your mind down. You know, focusing on an image. Um, visualizing being on a beach, and being comfortable, and you can hear the waves in the background. You're much more likely to drift off into sleep and not keep repeating, "Okay, what's the shopping list? What do I got to get done? Oh, I've got to get the oil changed." That stuff just will actually keep you up all night long.

Amy: Have you found anything super surprising to you when you're studying sleep hygiene or when you've been studying sleep hygiene?

Walter: Um, one of the real surprising things is literally people can learn it, and they'll tell you, "Here's the rules: So, go to bed at the same time, do this, eat properly, exercise." Yet nobody follows it. And so, the way the measures are done, we look at what's called sleep hygiene knowledge: Do you know it? And then sleep hygiene application. And college students know how to get a good night's sleep. Nobody does it. Yeah. And so, one of the questions we've been asking is trying to figure out: Okay, if this is something you know, but you don't do it, what prevents you from actually doing it?

Walter: And they also know that: if I get a good night's sleep, I'll do better in classes, I'll be healthier. They know all that stuff, but they don't apply it. So, we are starting to try to figure out what prevents college students, and maybe what prevents almost all adults, from getting a good night's sleep. When you literally know it's really good for you, and how you're going to perform the next day, and may have more free time the next day. Because what normally would take you an hour to do if you're awake and had a good sleep normally is now taking you three. Well,

you could have two hours to do whatever you want the next day. But no, they just are not doing it. So that's one of the things we're starting to look at.

Walter: And what seems to be coming out a little bit is actually technology. People are really hooked on: Got to check my Facebook; got to do all this stuff that we didn't have 20 years ago. And so that seems to be preventing them from maybe getting good sleep, and following through, and doing that stuff. We're not sure. But that's what some of the research is trying to indicate at this point.

Amy: Yeah, I mean, I think that in every stage of life, there are reasons people probably choose not to get enough sleep. Like, if a mother and father's like waking up in the middle of the night for their baby, like that's probably a reason why they're not getting good sleep. Or like college kids: It's one of the first times they're not, you know, being supervised by their parents, you know?
Walter: Yeah. They're having fun.

Amy: They're out having fun. Making new friends.

Walter: Sure, sure. One of the things we know is, you know, the human body can adapt to short period changes when it comes to sleep. Probably everybody's experienced that, you know, "I stayed up to one o'clock. I normally go to bed at 11." It's okay to do that once in a while. Our body can adjust to it, and we, people talk about, you know, we'll sleep later in the weekend to recoup. Other people argue we never really can recoup that. What we get concerned about is people that do short sleep or poor-quality sleep day in and day out for months at a time, years at a time. There's kind of this accumulation of problems. So, if you're one of those people, like, "Eh, it's midterms week," which is typical. Stay up a little bit later the few nights studying, not a problem.

Walter: It's a problem when you get into that habit of going to bed at one o'clock and getting up at five every day and that's your schedule for the four years you're in college. You're actually deteriorating. Almost every aspect of your body. Immune system is going down, so your health is going down. Your ability to concentrate, to focus, is decreased every day. You're probably eating more, which means you're putting on more weight, which some people say that's maybe where some of the freshman 15 comes from--is poor sleep and not having those good habits. So, it's not good if you do it long term, but that once a quarter, once every couple of months, having a day or two where you don't get a good night's sleep, it's not a problem whatsoever.

Amy: Yeah. And so, that makes me think of people that work the night shift. So, what are the consequences of working the night shift or getting poor quality sleep?

Walter: It varies from person to person a little bit because everybody's got their own intrinsic weaknesses about their body, psychological health, and stuff like that. But in general, we know that, you know, poor sleep, which being on a night shift is out of sync with the world. We have rhythms in our body that are set up, the circadian rhythms, that are 24-hour rhythms. Roughly a 24-hour clock. So, it's about 12 hours of light, 12 hours a day, and that's what starts going to sleep and triggering all those things. And then it triggers in, you know, the melatonin increase, which is at a peak when you first fall asleep. And then the tryptophan that contributes to that as well. So, it's kind of the internal clock that starts the cycle of wake and sleep and stuff like that. And they are basically reset by light and dark. And so basically, when it's dark out, we're supposed to be sleeping. Then we're able to override that a little bit to stay up later because we have artificial light and stuff. But people on third shift, or even second shift, they're basically

getting out of sync with the way the world is. And so, their body's trying to go to sleep the whole time they're actually at work.

Walter: So, the long-term impact of that is decreased health, in terms of the immune system is not as good as fighting disease. So, they tend to have more colds, the flu, easier. There's some research on they have more higher chances of cardiac disease and cancers and stuff like that. Now this isn't, “Oh, I had a week where I worked third shift.” This is long term typically for people. Um, they also tend to be harder to concentrate and stay focused. They have more accidents on the job, uh, which is probably not good in certain fields. One of the things I've done some work with is nursing and I, I'm not sure I want my nurse to be really tired at three o'clock in the morning doing medication or doing treatments. Somebody has got to do it, we got to work it. But are there ways to maybe alternate, or do different schedules, that would help with that?

Walter: Um, you name it, it is literally tied to sleep. So the big one that most people focus on is of course physical health. And we do know that this takes a toll, but it's also psychological health. There seems to be higher incidence of depression and anxiety for people that don't sleep well, that are on different shifts. Um, if you really want to look for it and find it, you can pretty much find it. Sleep somehow relates to all of it. Okay.

Amy: I feel like a lot of people believe that the younger you are, the, uh, I guess, the stronger you are or the more capable you are of getting less sleep. Is that true?

Walter: Uh, maybe, that might be a myth. We haven't been able to find that research wise. Um, now we do know that when, when we look at our older samples, they tend to have a little higher incidence of medical problems. And it's hard to tell: Is that because of the sleep or is it because we’re just getting older. And the body, you know, from the day we're born, is already starting to break down. Um, the interesting fact is we did one study comparing college students in the 18 to 22 to 40 to 45-year-olds in terms of just general health, and college students were about the same as 40 or 45-year-olds.

Amy: Wow, OK.

Walter: And so, we don't know for sure if that's just because of poor sleep. Or is it just college students in general are just not as healthy. Or we're not as healthy as we think we are when we’re younger and stuff like that, which is kind of an.... We figured it'd be, some people have problems in college, but not in general having the same complaints and stuff like that.

Amy: Yeah, maybe they have other bad habits that balance out.

Walter: It may actually be, you know, sleep and all the other bad things we do as college people.

Amy: So, what kind of advice would you give to college students?

Walter: It's really hard. Because, I know, having been a college student for many, many years and stuff, it's a unique experience. It's kind of its own little culture for those four or five years that you were a student. You want to take advantage of everything that college life has to offer, and get involved in things, and kind of figure out your place in the world. But at the same time, you still have to get through college and make sure you get the good grades, and study, and do all that stuff. So, I think the first thing I tell them is, you know: balance it. You don't want to try to cram everything you possibly can. You have a whole life to do some of those things. Maybe?

Which then would give you more time to go, “Okay, can I make sure I have a decent schedule? That I get reasonable sleep?” Knowing that, “Hey, something really good is happening this weekend in Ruston or on campus. I may want to stay up a little bit.” It's okay to do those types of things.

Walter: I think the other thing that's good for students to learn, related to this: finding out whether you're a morning person or an evening person.

Amy: What do you mean by that?

Walter: Uh, some people are much better cognitively, attention wise, early in the day. And other people feel more comfortable in the afternoon or evenings, where they're at their peak alertness and that. You can kind of pay attention to yourself, and if you're a real morning person, plan your life in the morning. If you're a college student, take morning classes. If you're an evening person, where you really hate the morning, don't take an eight o'clock in the morning class. You're going to probably miss it half time cause you're gonna want to sleep, or you're not going to be paying attention. Move your schedule around a little bit. It's okay to alter it a little bit. The problem becomes, you know, we don't have classes at 2:00 AM in the morning, when some people really would like to take classes. And that's where the nursing issue and the third shift people come in. And that's their life, and it's totally out of sync with the regular one.

Amy: And what about napping?

Walter: Long as they're less than 20 minutes, you're okay. If you nap longer than that, you may bump yourself into deep sleep, which will mess up the cycles for later on in the night and everything else. So, kind of relaxing, kicking back, closing your eyes, catching a few Z's--you're actually asleep, but you're in the light stages of sleep--is not too bad. Most people don't get into deep sleep. It usually takes 20 to 30 minutes. So, long as you cut the nap short, it can be refreshing for many people. If it's more than 30 minutes, if you go into deep sleep, then it causes a problem later on at night of trying to get into your regular sleep cycles.

Amy: Okay. I think a lot of us have heard of REM sleep, but don't necessarily know what it is, or the importance, or any of that. Can you explain a little bit of that for us?

Walter: Actually, REM sleep, rapid eye movement sleep, is a period of state, it's a stage of sleep, it's more than a period, where actually, our eyes are really moving really quickly, and that's how we tell if somebody is actually in it at first. But at that point, once we enter that stage of sleep, the brain activity, the EEG, when we watch somebody's brain, looks exactly like they're wide awake. Even though we’re sound asleep, our brain is functioning like it's awake. It actually paralyzes us because we've dreamed during that stage and everything and we don't want to be running around in our bed or getting up in that. Now, of course, there's some disorders where that doesn't work. People have heard of sleep walking and everything else, so that part doesn't work.

Walter: So, REM sleep is that active period where our brains really going, just like it's awake, and it's believed to be, and research indicates, that's the period of sleep where we literally consolidate information from the day. Where we reprocess stuff, we go over things that we've put into our brain for the day. It kind of takes the important stuff and works on it more. The stuff that we don't think is important, it kind of pushes out. And so, that really helps them with memory and learning, is making sure we get a good amount of REM. And unfortunately, if you sleep really short, your amount of REM sleep per night is decreased, which means that it may

be harder for you to learn and consolidate memories than somebody that sleeps seven or eight hours a night.

Amy: What does the brain consider important?

Walter: Well, that's the interesting question. We don't exactly know, but when they do the research, um, this isn't my area of research, but they'll look at, you know, teaching you something the day before, stopping you from getting REM sleep or letting you get REM sleep. People that get REM sleep can learn that thing much better than people that don't get the REM sleep. So, they did one study where they taught people French the day before, and they prevented some people from going to sleep and getting REM. They couldn't really remember anything. The people that got to go to sleep and got REM sleep could speak some French the next day. So, they're not sure what we consider important. Probably like anything else with it, half of probably what we think is important in our brains processing, probably really isn't that important. But some of it is considered important, and so it gets re-processed and stuff like that. So one of the nice things you can tell students is: if you really want to learn something better, study it, make sure you get a good night's sleep, and REM, it'll actually reprocess it, some of it during that night, which then leads to better retention the next day and use of it.

Amy: Okay. And has the average sleep quality of Americans changed over time?

Walter: Not much in the last 20 years, but it's decreased prior to that. So, back in the twenties and thirties, the average person was getting about eight hours a night. College students were a little bit less. And it progressed up until about the mid-nineties where it got to about six hours, six and a half hours for college students, and about seven, seven and half hours for the typical American, depending on the age group you're looking at. Uh, and it's kinda stayed right there now for the last 15 or 20 years. Um, and maybe we've hit the point where if we go any lower, we just won't be able to function at all. Uh, so there may be a set point of we can't go below that. We also have to take into account, um, we're older as a society. And the interesting thing about that is as we age, we actually need less sleep. We don't know 100% why, but the national studies for the CDC that look at what's the recommendation, we literally get less and less. So, in our seventies, we only need about six hours a night to feel refreshed and everything.

Amy: Okay. Wow.

Walter: Yeah. Which is really…. One of the theories is that they're not working or not doing as much. They don't need as much sleep. They're not as physically active because of the body getting older. So, they may not need as much. But yeah, we literally slowly get less and less as time goes by.

Amy: Okay. And so, you said that you started doing this research when one of your students who wanted to research it, but since then, why have you kept up the research?

Walter: Uh, it's interesting. I think it's a real…. As I start to find answers out with my research team, we start looking at it, uh, we can start looking at how do we help people live better lives. I liked the idea of maybe living longer lives and healthier lives. Uh, cause I've, over the years, been more interested in health psychology than some of the traditional psychology, thinking of mental health, of mental illness, uh, looking at more how do we just help people live better lives and stuff. And so this was one way of like, this is really interesting. It's got huge implications and we can literally teach people how to do this.

Walter: Uh, I've worked with nurses over the year at the local St Francis Medical Center. Helping them nurses deal with being on second and third shift and how to adjust a little bit and do that stuff. And helping people learn how to sleep better so they study better, they get better grades. So, I look at it, it's real rewarding knowing that I'm hopefully impacting not just a few students in a classroom, but maybe impacting a ton of people across the country, across the world, that are learning how to do these things which are actually beneficial for them. So, it just kept my interest up.

Walter: Uh, and I think it's also kept student interest up, and they realized they like it. So, I've got anywhere from, you know, two or three students a year to five or six really looking at sleep, its impact on different aspects of life. And some now have actually broken out, like how does it fit into the work world? And employers are looking at, it's like: If you're not getting a good night's sleep, and you're coming to work, you're not a very good employee. And we're paying you. We want you to be on your top of your game. And so, that gets into those weird things of what can your employer tell you to do when you're not at work, and how do we do that? So, we have some students looking at, you know: How do they work in office cubicles and office space? And how does that relate to if they've had a good night's sleep or a poor night's sleep? And what's the best environment for doing that?

Walter: I did a study with another faculty member here looking at reading comprehension and reading ability. Well interesting enough, if you get a bad night's sleep, you can't read as well as if you had a good night's sleep. So that has implications for just education and getting through college. Maybe if you're not doing that stuff. So that's kind of really kept my interest in it, um, over the years and keeps it going.

Amy: And where is your research going now? Like what are some of the new things that you're looking at?

Walter: Uh, one of the ones that, um, I've got a couple of students on, that we're really looking at is how sleep impacts eating. That's become a huge trend. I think the latest numbers, 30/40% of adolescents meet the obesity guidelines in the United States. So, we started looking at where's this coming in? And there was some anecdotal evidence from actually Europe that poor sleep is related to obesity and weight gain. So, we started looking at that. So, that's one area that's kind of really going right now.

Walter: The other area that I'm, we're, really focusing on, too, is the impact of technology on sleep. Um, you can look back 30/40 years ago. What did you do at night? We had cable television with a few channels. A lot of people were in bed. They read books, whatever, eight/nine o'clock at night. Now we're getting to the point where we're becoming a 24/7 society, and people are interacting with technology, and screens, and the lights. And how does that impact? Is that really messing up how we sleep? Is it altering our patterns? So, we're really looking at those types of things of: how much is that impacting it and do we need to curtail it a little bit? Maybe with younger people, so they can set, there's times for getting a good night's sleep. Especially when your brain's not fully developed, is it having a huge, much more impact of not sleeping and stuff? So that's kind of the two big areas that are going right now.

Amy: What are you finding so far?

Walter: People that engage in a lot of technology sleep a lot less. We have one study literally where people would wake up in the middle of night to answer text messages. They could not shut themselves down.

Amy: Oh wow.

Walter: And it made us think of, you know, we talked about families and moms with infants, now it's almost like they treat their cell phone like a newborn. Other noises don't bother them, but if that cell phone goes off, or their particular tone, they have to get up and check it two, three, or four o'clock in the morning. And it's clearly messing up your sleep, then, if you're getting up two or three times to check your cell phone.

Walter: So, our recommendation is, you know, put it on silent at midnight. But then people are like, “Oh, I'm gonna miss something important.” And the way I look at it, and some of the other people I work with, it's like 30 years ago we dealt with it without cell phones. Without this technology, life went on, we got our good night's sleep. And maybe we just needed to realize that, yeah, at midnight to six in the morning, at least, we have to shut it down because it's detrimental to your health that you're not getting a good night's sleep.

Amy: And I remember you telling me about research that you're doing about pets that sleep with you.

Walter: Yeah! One of those little offshoots that just caught my attention being a pet owner and having dogs that sleep in the bed. Um, there's always been this debate of, you know, do dogs and cats in the bed hurt your sleep or do they make it better? And there's also now research that, you know, people that are pet owners live healthier and longer and better lives. So, we were just sitting there one day talking about like, that's kind of interesting, you know, dogs in bed mess up your sleep, which would mess up health. But yet, then there’s other studies that say people that have dogs are healthier. So, we are like, “Let's look at it.” And you know, is it really true that dogs in the bed really mess up people's sleep or not?

Walter: So, we put the story together. It's out now. You can go find it. It's up on the web, to get people to do that. And hopefully what we're going to find is that, you know, at least for my own peace of mind, too, that, you know, if you've got a dog that sleeps in a bed, it really doesn't mess your sleep up that much. Which would mean it's beneficial then having pets around and letting the dog sleep in the bed and stuff like that. But we won't know for sure until we get all the data collected. But it should hopefully turn out the way I want it to turn out, so I don't have to tell my dog, “You can't sleep in the bed anymore.”

Amy: Would you? Would you do that to your dog?

Walter: No, I probably wouldn't. And most people, you know, 50% of people that have dogs, let them sleep in a bed, probably wouldn't kick them out either. But maybe we could work on taking people... making sure the dog sleeps down by your feet. Or start looking at, and that might be the second part of the study, is: In bed? Or where are they in the bed? As well, and stuff. And it may be even just larger breed dogs take up more of the bed, or tell people, going, “If you're in a queen bed and a dog's in there, get a king size bed, if you can, so there's still enough room for you to sleep and stuff.”

Amy: But you could have a dog that really likes to cuddle.

Walter: You could! And, well, that’s the interesting part. That's why we do research. Sometimes you try to figure out all the answers and stuff like that.

Amy: That’s good. Do you have any last things that you'd like to say? Or like, you'd like to inform everybody about?

Walter: I think, really, just be cognizant of how you are sleeping. Many people don't realize it. You know, “I'm not feeling good the next day. I'm feeling tired,” and that is because they're not getting a good night's sleep. And if you pay attention to it a little bit, you can be aware of you're not getting good night sleep, and then make some changes to actually get a good night's sleep. And those changes are not overwhelming that you have to make, total redo my whole life. No, it’s: change a few things here and there, and you'll feel much better the next day or for the rest of your life potentially.

Amy: Yeah. Well, it was great having you on the podcast. Thank you so much for being willing to do this.

Walter: Oh, thank you. Not a problem. Not a problem.

Amy: Thank you for listening to this episode of Beyond 1894. If you liked what you heard, please rate and review us. It will help others find our podcast. If you would like to find details about the episode, check out our show notes. To find our podcast webpage, go to 1894.latech.edu/beyond. If you have suggestions for future episodes email us at 1894@latech.edu. We would love your input, so tell us what you would like to hear!

Amy: Beyond 1894 is produced by the Office of University Communications, with help from The Waggoner Center and The School of Music, at Louisiana Tech University. Dave Norris is the executive producer. I, Amy Bell, am the producer and chief editor, and Teddy Allen and I are co-hosts. The sound engineering for this episode was done by Jensen Gates and the music featured was arranged by Kaelis Ash.