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Think Outside The Box

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The Help of Fragrance

Liya Panayotova, Psychologist, liyap.com4.5K reads

Our senses are very powerful; they allow us to build a realistic understanding of the world. What we perceive, with the help of our senses can make us experience a broad spectrum of emotions. Some sensations, like smell, can trigger our memory and take us back, even for a brief moment, to another place and time.

Sometimes it's the smell of fresh flowers that makes us think of playing outside when we were kids. Perhaps the scent of a particular perfume reminds you of a loved one and makes you smile. Plenty of people love waking up to the smell of fresh coffee, and sometimes, merely the scent of baked goods can trigger hunger.

The banner features the Explorable logo at the top center, with the text "EXPLORABLE" in a large, bold font and "Quiz Time!" in a smaller, cursive font below it. Below the logo are three quiz cards, each with a different image and title:

- Card 1: Image of red roller skates on a wooden deck. Title: "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2".
- Card 2: Image of a fan of colorful pencils. Title: "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2".
- Card 3: Image of a Ferris wheel at sunset. Title: "Quiz: Flags in Europe".

At the bottom right of the banner, there is a call to action: "See all quizzes =>".

The Power of Smell

One of the most powerful properties of smell is that we learn to associate it with our past experiences, and we are therefore compelled to experience certain emotions. Since one of our objectives here is that you become able to reprogram yourself and associate sleep with a pleasant, relaxing time, using a bit of aromatherapy can go a long way.

Also, when you smell something you like, you breathe in more deeply, and your body slightly relaxes, as a consequence.

Is It Enough?

It's important to note that the help of fragrance alone, won't be enough to make you fall asleep instantly, rather than toss and turn. However, it will help you relax, if used correctly.

The same is true for everything you've learned to practice so far. Naturally, you won't fall fast asleep by just cutting down your caffeine intake, by shutting the blinds, relaxing, or imagining a serene setting.

The key here is combination and persistence - when you combine all of the elements and practice them consistently, you will create a comforting environment for yourself, where it is easy to get a good night's sleep. With time, your brain will become conditioned and associate all these things with sleep, which means that you'll get some much-deserved rest.

Soothing Fragrances

Without any further ado, here are some fragrances that have been known to have soothing properties:

- Chamomile
- Sage
- Lavender
- Jasmine
- Vanilla
- Rose
- Apple

What is more, some scents have been known to stimulate or energize the body, so while you can choose any other scent you enjoy, try to avoid these in your nightly routine:

- Citruses, such as lemon and orange
- Rosemary

- Basil
- Ginger
- Peppermint

Can Scents Do the Job by Themselves?

While some swear to the efficacy of aromatherapy, on its own, there aren't any scientific studies, which prove that scents alone are enough to soothe you or help you fall asleep. However, scent does influence our nervous system, and so you can combine conditioning with a pleasant, calming scent, to achieve quality results.

The way to do that is by incorporating a smell, into your other relaxation practices, such as progressive muscle relaxation or guided imagery. You can also carry a scent with you, and give it a whiff, whenever you feel happy and relaxed. It will take some time, but this way your brain will learn to associate that scent with peacefulness, and you will, therefore, become conditioned to feel more at ease, and have an easier time falling asleep, whenever you smell that aroma.

How to Apply Aromas

If you have never dabbled in the art of aromas before, you may be wondering how you'd possibly be able to incorporate unusual scents, such as chamomile or lavender, into your life. Here are some ideas on how to do it with ease:

- Choose your favorite calming scent and buy its essential oil. Just apply a small drop on your wrists and rub it a bit.
- Another way to go is to put a drop or two on a cotton ball and place it on your bedside table, or near your pillow.
- If you're unable to find a particular essential oil, or if you don't feel comfortable with the idea, buy soap with that fragrance instead. Take a quick relaxing bath a couple of hours before sleep, or simply wash your hands with it right before going to bed.
- Have a cup of tea. You can enjoy a warm herbal tea and make that part of your relaxation ritual.

You can come up with your ways to incorporate your chosen aromas into your life, but always make sure you combine with positive stimuli and emotions so that the technique can eventually help you relax.

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