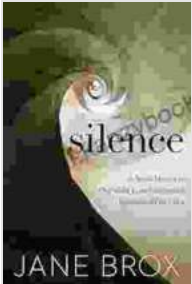


The Social History of Sleep: One of the Least Understood Elements of Our Lives



Silence: A Social History of One of the Least Understood Elements of Our Lives by Jane Brox

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 6013 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 325 pages



Sleep is one of the most important things we do for our health, yet it's also one of the least understood. We spend about a third of our lives asleep, but we still don't know exactly why we need it. Sleep is essential for our physical and mental health, but it can also be a source of frustration and anxiety. In this fascinating social history of sleep, author A. Roger Ekirch explores the ways that sleep has changed over the centuries, from the pre-industrial era to the present day.

Ekirch argues that sleep is not a natural state, but rather a cultural construct. In the pre-industrial era, people slept in two shifts: a first sleep from about 8 pm to midnight, and a second sleep from about 2 am to 6 am. This pattern of sleep was dictated by the rhythms of the natural world. People went to bed when it got dark and woke up when the sun came up.

There was no artificial light to keep people awake at night, and no clocks to tell them when to go to bed or wake up.

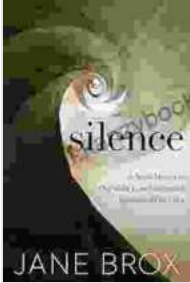
The Industrial Revolution brought about a major change in the way people slept. With the advent of artificial light, people began to stay up later and sleep later. The invention of the alarm clock also meant that people could wake up at any time, regardless of the natural rhythms of the body. This new pattern of sleep, which Ekirch calls "monophasic sleep," has become the norm in modern society.

Ekirch argues that monophasic sleep is not as healthy as the biphasic sleep pattern of the pre-industrial era. Monophasic sleep can lead to a number of health problems, including insomnia, obesity, and diabetes. Ekirch also argues that monophasic sleep has had a negative impact on our social lives. When people sleep in two shifts, they have more time to spend with their families and friends. Monophasic sleep, on the other hand, isolates people and makes it difficult to maintain relationships.

Ekirch's book is a fascinating and thought-provoking look at the history of sleep. He argues that we need to rethink our current understanding of sleep and that we should consider adopting a more natural sleep pattern. Ekirch's book is a must-read for anyone who is interested in the history of sleep or in the importance of sleep for our health and well-being.

Additional Resources

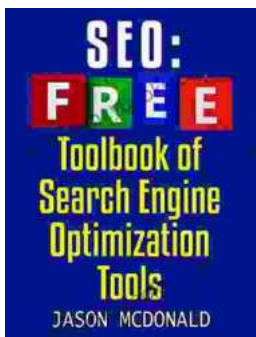
- The history of sleep
- The social history of sleep
- The Social History of Sleep by A. Roger Ekirch



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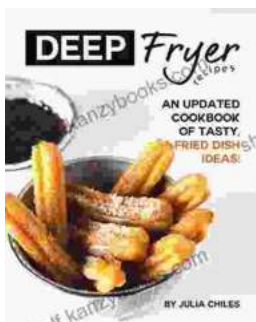
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