

CHOICES

Scenario 18

Bed or binge?

Every night you head off to bed at around 9 o'clock.

"Don't stay up late!" calls your Mom.

"I won't."

You get into your pajamas.

But the temptation is too strong.

You scroll through your social media posts. You look at all the photos your friends have put up. You reply with likes, and add in comments. You laugh out loud, and get furious with some of the silly things people say.

By this time it's 10 o'clock and you feel too wired to sleep.

You go online and look at Youtube videos. Your favorite stars. The cat videos. The dog videos.

Suddenly, it's midnight.

"Must go to sleep..."

When you finally get into bed, it's close to 1.30 AM.

"Wake up, sleepy head!"

It's 7.30 AM and you have to get ready for school.

All day you feel like your head is full of cotton wool.

The teacher asks you a question. You haven't any idea how to answer. Your mind has gone blank.

The teacher says, "You look awfully tired. Are you getting enough sleep?"

After school, when you get home, you fall asleep.

What's the matter with you?

What should you do?

A You realize that you have to go to bed at a sensible time. You turn off all devices at 9.00 PM.

What next?

The next day, when your Mom wakes you up, you smile.

"I had a great sleep!"

At school, everything falls into place. You know all the answers.

The teacher says,

"You're doing so well. Great to see. Congratulations."

"How was school?" asks your Mom.

"Fantastic."

"You seem different. Much brighter. I'm so pleased."

Think about it

Medical authorities have recommended that kids between the ages of 6 and 12 need 9 to 12 hours sleep every night (Centers for Disease Control).

Why?

Because sleep is the time when the body repairs itself. It's the time when it grows. Less than 9 hours a night puts a child at risk – obesity, poor mental health, problems with thinking, and some quite serious diseases.

In one big study, an incredible 57% of kids in upper elementary did not get enough sleep on school nights.

As for why you miss sleep – social media is probably one of the worst uses of time. Although there are plenty of positives, overuse of social media can lead to spending too much time online, being subjected to online bullying, and particularly for girls, feeling bad because you don't measure up to the high standards of models and influencers.

"Sleep is like the golden chain that binds our health and body together."

Do you want to look at another scenario involving social media? (Go to 20)

Do you want to try the scenario again? (Go to 18)

B You say to yourself, "Mom is being mean. Why won't she let me sleep in?" And you continue as before.

What next?

The next day, you stumble again in class.

The school is so concerned it calls your parents in.

"There's something not quite right," says the counsellor. "How about sleep?"

"Oh, definitely into bed at 9 every night."

"And do you go straight to sleep?"

You look down.

"Not exactly."

The truth comes out.

"There's nothing wrong with this young person that proper sleep won't cure."

"You won't take away my cell phone, will you?," you say later in the car.

"No. But ... you must promise not to use it before bed. And lights out at 9 o'clock. OK?"

"Good idea. And all that stuff was making me feel bad anyway."

Think about it

If a parent said, "Lights out at 9.00 PM and I'll be in to check soon after," would you feel they couldn't trust you?

They often want to give their kids some freedom - but the deal is that the child has to do the right thing.

This situation is about both the temptations of the online world, and the need for a balance between entertainment and something vital like sleep.

Too much TV, too much social media, too many influencers, too much online surfing – all are dangers. And at night, especially so.

Do you want to look at another scenario involving parents? (Go to 9)

Do you want to try the scenario again? (Go to 18)