A good night’s sleep can make us more empathetic, more creative, better parents and better partners, according to Aric Prather, a psychologist at the University of California, San Francisco who treats insomnia and is the author of the new book “The Sleep Prescription.” Sleep can help us manage stress; it can make us competent and capable and better able to take on the day. But Dr. Prather says we too often view sleep as an afterthought — until we find ourselves frozen in the middle of the night, our thoughts racing, fumbling for rest or relief.

Some people might reach for a supplement or sleep aid. A 2013 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey found that one in eight adults with trouble sleeping reported using sleep aids. But Dr. Prather said there are simple steps we can take throughout the day and night to get better rest, which he outlines in the book, out Nov. 1 from Penguin Life. “It’s not something you do,” he added. “It’s something that comes to you.”