Can’t Help It

My sleepwalking ranges from harmless to inappropriate. Occasionally it can even be dangerous -- like wandering around outside my hotel room nude. While I am sleepwalking, it’s difficult to wake me up. No matter what I do, I never remember doing it until after people wake me up -- if then! When someone wakens me, I feel groggy and disoriented. Naturally, I felt uncomfortable once I am aware where I am, who I’m with or how inappropriately I had acted or dressed while I was 'somnambulating' asleep.

I sleepwalk within a short while of falling asleep, and usually walk around for a half hour or so, unless someone guides me back to bed. Though sleepwalking in adults is rare, it runs in my family. My parents were both sleepwalkers, especially my mother. Until it happened to me, I was not even aware I did it. I did not know I was a sleepwalker, too!

Lack of sleep, fatigue, or noisy interruptions seem to trigger to my sleepwalking episodes. Sometimes these can be predictable, and most often now they occur while I travel. One of the most embarrassing aspects of sleepwalking is when people don’t know it’s a medical problem, they think instead that it’s exhibitionist behavior. As you can imagine, nothing could be more distressing than to awaken and find yourself in a hotel lobby nude, or worse, in the bar after midnight surrounded by men!

While I’m asleep, I also talk and act clumsy, but I’m hard to awaken. Although my eyes are open, I just don't see. If people try to wake me, I’m dazed and don’t respond. I sit up and go through repeated motions, like rubbing my eyes, fussing with my pajamas (which hopefully I’m still wearing) or trying to do whatever I was up to do.

Sometimes I think I’m in other places altogether -- like the shower -- when actually I'm not. That’s the problem. In several instances, I’ve even been guilty of doing something inappropriate. Once I peed in an outdoor pool shower, another time in a hot tub, thinking at the time it was the toilet. I even masturbated once while people were watching, talking to myself thinking I was bathing alone! All the while, I was unaware of my surroundings or that other people, including men, were watching me. I'm not sure the people watching knew I was asleep. You can see, if the people watching me don’t understand or realize that I’m asleep, I’m very vulnerable. Once some men tried to assault me, and that was what it took to awake me from my torporous sleep.

To help you understand, I’ll tell you some stories about events that happened to me. Some are funny, yet some are not. Fortunately I live with a man who understands me, tolerates me and helps me with my condition. I don't know how I'd survive otherwise.

Story 1: This is not sooo funny but it happened in college where I lived in a coed dorm freshman year. The day before classes started, I got up to pee, went outside our room, opened the front door of the dorm and strolled across the street naked at 4 AM. I almost got killed. The dorm mother was just coming in to work and saw me, so she tried to wake me up, telling me that I was sleep walking. But I guess she couldn't wake me up, so she just guided me back into the dorm lounge area on the main floor, threw a blanket over me and turned out the lights. I woke up naked with a bunch of guys trying to peek underneath my blanket while I was sleeping naked! I had to try to get back to my room with all them harassing me for being drunk (which I wasn’t), trying to pull off my blanket. If she hadn't come in time, I think something really bad might of happened to me. As it was I was totally humiliated before I had ever even started classes my freshman year.

Story 2: One night, I was sleep walking and woke up laying on a kitchen floor in a big puddle of beer. Just to let you know, I'm not a drinker -- I’m allergic to beer, so with a large amount of yuck sitting next to me, drinking was crazy. But I must have drunk the beer, because when I woke up -- or should I say, when they found me I had peed my PJ bottoms and thrown up on the floor. It would have been okay, except that it was at a slumber party with some girls. The boys in the apartment next to ours were the only ones who had been drinking beer, and I was in their apartment, passed out with my jammies halfway down on the floor! (I have no idea what happened at their party. They swore to god they hadn’t abused me or anything, just let me in while I was wandering around dazed!)

Story 3: Another time I was at a hotel in California, in a room on the top floor. At the bottom of the building was the parking garage. So I sleepwalk out of my room, go down the elevator to the floor where the garage is. Then I ran around screaming, "Where is the bathroom! Where is the bathroom?!" Then I ran from the top floor of the garage (L1) to the bottom (L3), pulled down my PJ bottoms and peed all over the concrete pavement next to the car by the stairwell. Then I ran off screaming, "8133! 8133! 8133! " -- the number of the room I was in at the time. The next morning three guys come up to my hotel room and showed me a video of me running around naked and peeing. The security camera in the garage caught the whole thing on tape! I was like OMG?!!! What happened? Give me that tape!!! All they wanted to do was make sure I was okay, but boy, that tape sure embarrassed me. (Two girlfriends were with me at the time, who got to hear the full explanation.)

Story 4: Another time I was with by brother at another hotel. We were traveling together on a trip, and were rooming on a high floor. I woke up in only my pajamas top (I swear I went to sleep wearing my bottoms) outside our room, with the type of door locks that lock on closing. I couldn’t sleep in the hall since people would see me, so I had to go down to the lobby in only my top, and ask them to call up to my room. My brother had to wake up, say that I was actually staying in our room and come down and get me. Worse, he didn’t bring my bottoms down when he did! So I had to walk up naked past all those who awoke from all the commotion, too.

Last Story, 5: The first time I stayed with my boyfriend in a motel in Florida, I woke up naked outside the patio to our room. Fortunately, we were on the ground floor. From the desk clerk’s description, I had walked around to our little patio outside our room naked, and slept outside for most of the night. (He was Indian and was so shocked he didn’t know what to do!) I had actually taken my pillow with me. Maybe I was planning to camp outside. I can only guess I was sleepwalking in the hall, and got locked out again.

These stories are all pretty crazy, but the older I grow, the better they get. The problem is I don’t seem to be growing out of my childhood disorder, and now I’m 23 and mature. Fortunately, my family and boyfriend understand, but sometimes I’m beside myself. I’ve seen a doctor, and even been under a treatment called 'scheduled awakening.' Should I go on -- do you want to hear me tell some more?