

Hey there, beautiful! 🌈 Before you dive in, a quick heads-up: this transcript is a super close-to-verbatim buddy from our podcast, but it's got its quirks! We didn't call the grammar cops on it, so you might bump into a typo or two. But hey, that just adds character, right? 😊 Embrace the wild side of language and enjoy the read! Happy exploring! 🚀



Discovering the Secret to Deep Restorative Sleep

Carmen Hecox: I want you to imagine waking up, totally refreshed, no grogginess, no aches, and definitely know where is my coffee panic? Sounds like a dream, right? Well, our guest, Evalee Gertz, a former professional dancer and founder of Sia Silk, discovered that feeling this good can be as simple as getting quality sleep.

Yes, that's right, sleep. By the end of this chat, you'll find out how the right sleep environment can boost your health, help your body recover faster, and even keep you looking and feeling younger. Ready to hear Evalee's secret deep restorative rest? Let's jump on in. Evalee, welcome to Create the Best Me, this is an honor to have you on the show.

Evalee Gertz: Oh, thank you so much. I'm so excited to be here.

Carmen Hecox: For some of the people that may not know you, could you please tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do?

Evalee Gertz: Well, I am the founder of Sia Silk, and we manufacture luxury silk sleep masks and other sleep aids. I could tell you like my whole story of kind of how I, I started this, if you like.

Yeah. I would love to.

The Journey to Creating the Perfect Sleep Mask

Evalee Gertz: So, I actually was a dancer in Los Angeles for a very long time and a yoga teacher. And through that, I was very, very interested in health and wellness and nutrition and anti-aging, because that all helped me, you know, kind of maintain the competitive edge, especially in the very competitive dance world.

And I was a little bit older for a dancer. So, recovering from injuries, like keeping inflammation down, it's all really important to me. And through all that research, I discovered the importance of sleep and how it's just the cornerstone of all of our health, our well-being, our anti-aging, our beauty.

And so, I got really interested on how to optimize sleep. And that's what led me to wanting to start a sleep mask company.

Carmen Hecox: So, tell me, did you wear a sleep mask before you actually dove in and created your own sleep mask

Evalee Gertz: I did. Yeah. I um, actually have slept with a sleep mask for probably 20 years, but I really struggle to find a good one. I tried pretty much every mask on the market. I have really long lashes and sometimes I would have to have fake lashes you know, for show or whatever and I found that sleep masks would either smash my lashes or I would find cheap ones that had like nice dome, but they were like synthetic material.

They used chemical adhesives, and they would cause me to break out. They would fall apart when I washed them and they just weren't a good experience. And so, I really got interested in specifically silk sleep masks. And I just found the functionality and the fit of most silk sleep masks were really bad. They fell off, they didn't block light very well. They weren't very comfortable. And most of them were really flat and really smashed your eyelashes. So I struggled to find one that I felt like was comfortable and really worked for me. I have a really small head, so I needed something that was adjustable.

So, I, yeah, I got really interested in um, creating one, like filling that hole in the market, finding, you know, solving all the problems that I just found, mask after mask after mask that I tried. And I knew that a sleep mask was really important because, you know, while I was traveling on tour or, you know, I worked a lot of late nights, it seemed like the easiest, biggest impact, most convenient, like return on investment in terms of getting better sleep.

Like there's tons of things that you can do to optimize your sleep, but the one tool that had the biggest impact that was the most affordable and most convenient was a really good sleep mask.

Carmen Hecox: And probably the most healthiest too. Cause I mean, I'm the type of person that I don't like to take sleep aids. And so, if I can find another way of helping me get the sleep that I want to get, I'm, I'm game.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah, I feel similarly. I'm very interested in and kind of more like natural and holistic ways of being at our best, you know, so I agree. I didn't want to take sleep aids. I also found that they had side effects. I didn't like I would wake up really groggy and that would really disrupt my day. It would keep me from performing at my best because I wouldn't feel refreshed. And I think just doing something natural that doesn't have a chemical effect on your body makes a big difference. And there's so, so, so many benefits to sleeping in total darkness. And we can talk about that, but yeah, it was, it just seems like one of the best things you can do.

Carmen Hecox: And that's what I wanted to touch base on because some of us might say, why don't wear a sleep mask?

Benefits of Using a Sleep Mask

Carmen Hecox: I don't have any problems, you know, explain why would someone need a sleep mask? What is the benefit of using a sleep mask?

Evalee Gertz: There's a long list of benefits. Everything from sleeping in total darkness has been shown to reduce heart rate, reduce insulin resistance, which then reduces your risk of obesity and diabetes. It um reduces your risk of heart disease and even depression in adults. It increases your longevity, increases your memory and alertness, and most importantly, it really helps your hormone regulation.

It helps melatonin do what it's supposed to do. It helps melatonin production. So, when you take melatonin or you get light while you're sleeping, it suppresses your natural melatonin production. Melatonin is one of the most important hormones, um, because it helps regulate all your other hormones. And especially for women, it can really help regulate women's, menstrual hormones. So that's a really important one.

And sleeping in full darkness has even been shown to, like, reduce inflammation, which is what most chronic diseases are caused from.

So, I mean, there's just so many benefits to limiting the light in your sleep environment.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah. I remember when I first saw your product, I was very enthused because when my husband and I first got married. I suffer from chronic migraines, and he came, when he went into my bedroom for the very first time, he noticed that I had double, double blinds. I had vertical blinds, and I had the regular blinds and I had them both on the window. And he asked me, why do you have this? Why do you have two sets of blinds? This is ridiculous. And I had to explain to him that the reason why I had this is because I suffer from chronic migraines and when those migraines kick in, I need to have total darkness because I just need to be able to work my way through that migraine.

And so, there were times where I did put a mask on, but it was very cumbersome because I felt like someone put tape over my eyes.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah, I totally understand. I also get migraines occasionally, and the light sensitivity is, it's killer. It's really a thing. And, yeah, I mean, it's really a thing. So, I totally feel you on that. And I agree, like, like I said, I tried so many masks, and it was so difficult to find one that was actually comfortable and actually worked for me. And there's so many different styles. Everybody has their own preferences of what's comfortable, but this is the only the mask that I created is the only mask I've ever found that like fits, that has room for my eyes. That doesn't fall off and really blocks all the light.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah. And that was the other problem I had cause I have a small head, you know, I'd put something on and then before you know it, it's just like, I feel like a pirate because it's a half of it is on and the other half is off my head.

Evalee Gertz: I know exactly what you're talking about. I have the same problem. And I used to like sew them. I used to buy them and then like sew the strap and then that would get stretched out. You have to re sew it. It was just a real pain and it was really important to me to have it be adjustable.

And then we like wrap the strap in silk too. So, the strap isn't like rubbing against your hair. The silk is on your hair, which is good for frizz and breakage and everything too. So, it's extra comfortable in that sense.

Why Silk? The Anti-Aging Secret

Carmen Hecox: So, can you talk about the importance of why you chose silk?

Evalee Gertz: mmmm

Carmen Hecox: And, you know, for health and for your hair and your face.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah, there are lots of benefits to silk, really amazing benefits, but the main one for me was the anti-aging benefits. So not only is silk obviously smoother, so there's less friction, so there's less pulling and, and creasing on your skin when you're wearing it. It also is less absorbent. So it helps your skin maintain its moisture in your hair as well. And if you're putting like expensive face creams on your face then that's going to stay on your skin and not get absorbed as much into the mask or the silk. Um, so that's really helpful. But studies have actually shown that silk, if you like bind a wound with silk, it will heal faster because it's actually shown to speed up the cell turnover of your skin.

So, it really is anti-aging. It really will help combat those signs of aging while you're sleeping. And it's antimicrobial. So, like I said, with the synthetic mask, I would always break out. I have very sensitive skin, and I would break out constantly. And it really helps reduce breakouts because of that.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, cause that's another thing that I'm concerned about because I use expensive lift creams at night to help hydrate my face. And the reason why I don't wear a mask is because I don't want to spend that money for nothing. You know have it come off because a mask took my stuff off.

Evalee Gertz: Absolutely, I totally understand. And if you're using a cotton or another synthetic material, I'm not that cotton synthetic, but you know what I'm saying. If you're using something that does absorb it, that increases the bacteria growth in the fabric because it's absorbing all these creams and then it's moist and then you know, so then that increases your chance of getting breakouts too.

Carmen Hecox: And I don't know if you're aware of this, but when you're going through menopause or post menopause or anything like that, as our hormones are changing, we already have an issue where we might start getting, my husband makes fun of me, he's like, aren't pimple days over? Are you going through puberty again?

Evalee Gertz: I, uh, I'm going through perimenopause, so I also, the, the temperature fluctuations and the hormone, the pimples and everything, it's, it's all, I'm like, what is happening?

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, I tell my husband, he's like, what's that on your face? I'm like, it's a scar. It is a scar because I broke out. Yes, I guess I'm going through puberty again, but, but it's menopause.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah, it's not fair, they don't understand.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, exactly. So, tell me about the padding that is in the eye area.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah, so I created a unique mold for this mask. It's a little bit larger than your average size mask, which is why it has a little bit better coverage. But it's like, pretty much twice as thick as your average mask. Even the ones that are already contoured, the eye cups are larger than standard. The nose cutout is a little bit higher. And the padding is like double the thickness. So, you have deeper cups, extra cushion padding, so it really helps to conform to the curves of your face. And it just feels like you're sleeping on a cloud.

Carmen Hecox: Does that work okay if you're a side sleeper?

Evalee Gertz: It does. I mean, again, everybody's own preference. I am a side sleeper, and I don't have any problem with it. I find it to be really comfortable because it's a pretty low resistance foam, so it like smooshes to my face and conforms.

I've tried other masks that had, you know, higher resistance foam, and I felt like that was uncomfortable because it would like press into my cheekbones. But mine, I don't feel that, but I've had other people be like, it just doesn't work for me and that's, you know, everybody's got their personal preference. And everybody's faces are shaped different too. So, like for me, I get zero leakage, but you know,

depending on the shape of your nose or cheekbones, you might get a little bit and there's just nothing we can do about that.

But most people find it to be extremely comfortable and to be very effective in blocking out light.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, because I was just thinking, you know, like, I don't know if you're like me, but I have a hard time finding the right pillow for me. Because I feel like Goldilocks, it's too hard, too soft, too, it doesn't work. So that's why I was curious about the foam, the eye foam.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah, I mean, that's a really good question and I can relate on the pillow thing. I actually have a neck injury and so I get, I really struggle, especially when I'm traveling and I'm not using my own pillow then I can get like really stiff necks. But actually, find having my mask with me can really help me just get better sleep when I'm in a hotel because it is not as comfortable to not be in your own bed.

Carmen Hecox: Very true. Yeah. And I always, when I travel, I always feel like I wish I would have brought a sleep mask because I'm in an environment that I'm not used to. And I find that sometimes I get a lot of light. And so I like that about that your sleep mask is something that you can conveniently pack and travel with it.

Evalee Gertz: Absolutely, that was huge for me because like I said, I used to tour and stuff. So, I travel really frequently and that was really important to me as well.

And the other thing is like, you know, we have so much junk lighting and light pollution everywhere we go, unless you live somewhere very, very rural and remote, you're going to be exposed to light.

And if you're in a hotel room, you can outfit your house with blackout curtains, but yeah, if you leave your house, one, not only is that expensive, but then you can never leave. And when you go somewhere else, there's really no way to avoid that light. I mean, in hotel rooms, it might be the light on the air conditioner or the smoke detector, or they don't have blackout curtains, or it could be any number of things. Not to mention you're in a strange environment. So, I find having the mask helps me just kind of go into my cocoon and tune in, which really helps me to relax and fall asleep easier. But it also can ensure that I don't have to deal with light.

My husband won't wear one. It just, he finds it uncomfortable. And when we travel, he'll get all cranky cause he can't get all the light out, and I'm like, good night. I don't have that problem at all.

Product Details and Customer Insights

Carmen Hecox: Um What is the longevity of your mask? How long does it last? And how do you care for it?

Evalee Gertz: Well, the great thing about the mask is that it's washable. Um, I generally wash mine once a week or every other week, depending on, you know, how greasy, it gets. It does, you know, absorb some oil from your skin. But I find that the mask with regular, weekly washing lasts at least six months, if not longer.

Obviously washing it with cold water will really preserve the quality of the silk and the foam, you know, will start to break down eventually. And so it won't have as good of contouring over time. But yeah, I think you can go at least six months if you're taking good care of it. Some people could go a year, I guess, but I'm, I'm always like, I want a new one.

Carmen Hecox: And, um, from your experience who are the people that buy your mask? Is it just women or do some men also purchase them?

Evalee Gertz: I actually have a lot of men that purchase them. Because men, travel and men tend to be really interested. I mean, I guess not all men, but some men tend to be really interested in like health and fitness and, you know, they're competitive at work. They're a little bit more competitive in nature in general. So, I think some of them can get really excited about a mask because it can be really helpful for them to maintain their competitive edge and to perform at their best. Because like we said, there's so many benefits to sleeping in darkness and it really is the most convenient and cheapest way to achieve that.

And we have multiple colors. So, I have some like more masculine colors. I have black, I have like a dark red and a navy. So those tend to be really popular with men. But then all kinds of women, women who are into eyelashes and beauty, women who are, you know, young mothers that are needing sleep whenever they can, whenever, you know, they're trying to nap throughout the day or whatever.

People who travel a lot. Nurses who work late nights, like whatever, it tends to be a pretty appealing to a pretty wide variety of people.

Carmen Hecox: And where can people purchase your product?

Evalee Gertz: Yeah, well, we have an [online store](#). So, the best way to get it is just to order it directly from us online. It's also available on [Amazon](#). And we also have social media that you can buy directly from as well. I'll just take you to our online store.

And the great thing about our website, we also have some blogs and other resources talking about the benefits both of the silk and of sleeping in darkness, of benefits of using a mask. And just the importance of trying to improve your sleep quality overall. You know, we live in such a crazy world, our society it's a hustle. We live in this hustle and grind and go sort of society. And you know, I don't think that rest and self-care is really valued enough in our society. So, I really love to go on podcasts like this and talk to people directly and tell them about the benefits of like why you should try to get better sleep and why you should care and, and lots of ways to do that.

I mean, even if a sleep mask isn't your thing, there are other ways to improve your sleep, but like really, trying to make it a priority and take the time to wind down at night and reduce blue light at night which can also stress out your brain and suppress your melatonin production. And you know trying to just have more self-care and take more space for yourself and more grace and more rest because we're all kind of a little bit burnt out and I feel like if we when we're rested and we feel good, we are happier, we are healthier, we're more regulated, and we show up in the world as our better selves, and then we interact with each other as our best selves, and our society benefits from that.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, and I think another, and you talked about this. I remember when I first injured my neck because I ended up having to have two surgeries, two neck surgeries afterwards. But I remember my, the doctor who was treating me, he explained to me the faster way to recover from this injury is you need to get sleep. And he suggested to me, do you want a sleep aid? Because it's, you know it'll expedite your recovery.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah, I mean, I totally agree. Again, like, I'm always wary of sleep aids. I don't tend to do well medication and side effects, so I choose more holistic

things personally, but to each your own. But I do agree that, if you are sick, if you have a cold, if you get injured, that's how your body restores.

That's how your cells regenerate when you're sleeping and when you're in your most rested state. And so, getting as much time in that is so vital to our overall; again, like our anti-aging, our longevity, our cellular regeneration, our healing, our ability to perform, our memory, our alertness. All the things benefit from that and it's hard to get to that most rested state when there's any kind of ambient light.

I mean, our eyelids are actually really thin. They're not actually meant to filter out light. So, um, even if there's like a lamp post outside your window, that could be enough ambient light to actually prevent your body from getting into that fully restorative state. And it actually will signal to your body that it needs to be more on alert. So your fight or flight system won't fully shut off, which then again, creates that elevated heart rate, that increased insulin resistance. And obviously there's all kinds of negative consequences to that.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah. I have a question to ask you. Where did the name Sia, Sia Silk come from?

Evalee Gertz: Um, I don't know. I knew I wanted it to, to have silk in it. And I knew I kind of was looking for like two letters and I just thought it felt really pretty and ethereal. And it just felt kind of luxurious and calming. And that was really what I was going for. I wanted it to feel like a treat, like a spa, like a, like a, you know, just that self-care that, drifting off in a cloud and being at peace. Which is really the energy and the vibe I was going for with this.

Carmen Hecox: I wasn't sure if maybe it was like, you know, a daughter, a mom, grandma, or somebody who just stood there and said, hey, this is your idea. Go for it.

Evalee Gertz: Um unfortunately, no, but I did have a lot of support from my family, creating this and some close friends, they helped me. I like tested out, you know, the branding, the logos and the names on everyone and got everyone's opinions on just like what felt right to everyone. And so that's kind of what we ended up on.

Carmen Hecox: I'm so glad you invented your product because like I said, somebody who has worn sleep masks in the past and have kind of said, you know

what, kind of chuck them because they didn't feel comfortable. They didn't feel right for me. You know, I think your product does hit all the markers on the things that made it difficult for it to feel right for me.

Evalee Gertz: Well, thank you for saying that and I would love to send you one if you would like to try it out. I would be happy too.

Carmen Hecox: Sure. I'd love to.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah. I will send you one. You'll have to send me your mailing address, but absolutely, I would love that. And, I also have some nice like aromatherapy. We have this really lovely lavender oil roll on and it's um, It smells incredible and lavender is really known for de-stressing and relaxing. And it comes in a little bottle that has little amethyst crystals in it. Amethyst crystals are known for, you know, also relaxing and also opening up the third eye and increasing your intuition. So, there's benefits there too. And I also thought it was just like a really pretty detail.

So that's a nice companion product we have. You can dab a little bit on your temples or your wrists to help calm down. Things like that can really help kind of create that bedtime ritual.

We also just came out with a sleep kit gift box. So, it's like a little self-care box and in it we have like some bath salt, some bedtime teas, some lip balm, the oil, aromatherapy oil, and the mask. So, it's like everything you need to get your best night's sleep all in one place. So that's a great way to kind of start to cultivate a nice nighttime, bedtime ritual. Or if you, you know, have someone in your life that needs a little self-care can make a really great gift for that. So, all of that is also available on our website.

Carmen Hecox: You know, when you were talking about that kit, I was thinking that is a perfect gift to give that girlfriend. You know that girlfriend that you have and you don't know what to get her, that's a perfect gift.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah, I love gifts like that too, because it's like, it's like stuff that you enjoy, but wouldn't necessarily want to buy for yourself sometimes. So, when you get something that you're like, oh, this is so lovely, and then it reminds you to take the time to use it, and to like give yourself that self-care that we all need more of.

Carmen Hecox: Great.

Final Thoughts and Advice

Carmen Hecox: Evalee, what is one piece of advice that you would like to give the listener or the viewer who's listening to us right now that she or he could hold close to their heart?

Evalee Gertz: Well, besides trying to get better sleep and investing in good sleep masks, it's really to just have more patience with yourself, more permission for yourself. I feel like, you know, something I struggle with in my daily life, our society, there's so much pressure, there's so much grind, there's so many expectations, and we get really caught up in that. And like I said, we don't take the time to take care of ourselves. We beat ourselves up. We feel like we need to be perfect all the time and all that's really nonsense and it's kind of in the way of us being our best selves. So yeah, I think just to be kinder to yourself and have grace and permission.

That's the one thing I work on the most. So, I think that everybody, maybe, maybe I'm just projecting, but I think everybody could use a little bit more that in your life.

Carmen Hecox: You're absolutely correct. Everyone can use a little bit of more, a little bit more of that in their life.

Evalee Gertz: Yeah.

Carmen Hecox: Well, I will make sure to include all of your information in the show notes and thank you so much for coming on the show. I do appreciate having you on.

Evalee Gertz: Oh, thank you so much for having me. It's just been a pleasure, and I'm really appreciate it.

Carmen Hecox: All right, thank you.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Carmen Hecox: How amazing was that? We just heard how better sleep can do everything from regulating your hormones to improving recovery and that dedicating a little TLC to your nightly routine can have a huge impact on your energy and well-being. If you would like more information, or you want to order your own Sia Silk sleeping mask or grab a kit for a friend or for mom, or maybe a treat for yourself, head on over to createthebestme.com/ep105.

Thank you so much for tuning in. Make sure to come back next week for another amazing episode created just for you.

Until then, keep dreaming big, take care of yourself. And remember you are beautiful, strong, and capable of creating the best version of yourself. Thank you for watching. Catch you next week. Bye for now.