

## Why are benzodiazepines so effective?

**Dr. Dhossche:**

People ask a lot, “How is it possible that somebody who does not respond, you give them a hypnotic, a sleep medicine, and they wake up, they start responding?” So my answer is, well, their unresponsiveness is an expression of extreme stress and anxiety. It's a freezing response, so we have to unfreeze them. So how do we do that? With the most powerful medicine that we have for anxiety, which is a benzo, I think, or a barbiturate or a sedative. And we unfreeze them with the sedative so they can respond again.

So that's my answer these days to explain the paradoxical effect, right? You have a non-responsive, semi-comatose patient that comes to life. The Lazarus effect — when they're stuporous.