



Dreams

It must be made clear from the start that anyone who is interested in remembering and understanding their dreams is free to do so. You are not required to possess any psychic abilities, or prestigious degrees! Interpreting dreams can be done by anyone willing to simply learn how. It is not very hard to do and does not require much of your time, nor is there any really intense study to do. The method I am about to outline for you is perhaps one of the easiest and most effective ways to remember and interpret your own dreams. As you follow this outline you will grow more effective in time, as practice increases your success rate rather dramatically. There is nothing spooky or ritualistic to do; in fact I believe you will find it quite logical!

Just like learning to drive a car or tie your shoes stays with you, this too will be something that in time you will be able to do quite naturally. Dreams are a vehicle in which your mind communicates ideas, warnings and health issues. Sometimes they even communicate the future! By using this technique and following a few simple rules, even the most stubborn "I never dream (grumble)" types can do it. Just bear in mind that your own perceptions take precedence over any definitions in dream dictionaries. The dream dictionary that I wrote and is now available online contains only the most common generic definitions. Your own perceptions are always better.

Dreams are not a way to avoid facing your difficulties, in fact you hit them head on. You can choose how you want to use this new tool anyway you wish. You can use your dreams as a passing sort of entertainment, or you can elect to use them regularly as an aid to you in your journey through life.

The First Step, The Tools You Need...

If you are seasoned at dream interpretation I know you heard this before... Get a notebook! (Groan) Lots of you do not like the idea of writing down everything you dream about, but unfortunately it is necessary. No, this is not unique, but I have never found a system of remembering or interpreting dreams that did not include this step. There IS an alternative, and it is what I use. Get a small mini cassette recorder to keep by your bed like the notebook, only you speak into it instead of writing in the notebook. This takes some getting used to, and may disorient users of notebooks, but it is superior in this regard:

- You can speak faster than you can write.
- More detail, less work scrawling in the dark, so you can say more.
- Later, you can analyze your tone of voice.

- Speaking requires less concentration so your recall is better.

Thought you were going to get out of writing, didn't you? Not a chance! You still need the notebook because later on you need to transfer the stuff from the tape to the book so you can analyze it and make notes. But this way is much easier and more effective than sticking with the notebook only.

Keeping a notebook beside your bed, or the handy recorder, is not enough. Before you go to sleep, you must give yourself the suggestion that you will remember your dreams when you wake up. I would not be too terribly concerned about recording unimportant dreams when you occasionally wake up in the middle of the night. Dreams are like plays. They go through several rehearsals then in the end give you a finished product. When a dream is important enough to write down from a middle of the awakening, you will feel it in your bones and you will know to record it. Now, with notebook (or recorder) by the bed, you are ready for the next step.

The Proper Way To Sleep...

As with everything else in life, there is a right way and wrong way to go about sleeping in a manner that is productive in dream recall. Relaxation is a must. And following good, steady sleeping habits is also a must. There is something called "sleep debt" that occurs when you regularly do not get enough sleep. When you build up your sleep debt, you sleep so deep it is almost impossible to remember your dreams, so follow regular habits. Before you leap into bed, hell bent on remembering your dreams, take a moment and review these preliminary steps:

- Relax yourself completely. This can be done with nothing more than peace and quiet. If you choose, use your favorite relaxation tapes, or just some peaceful music. (Pre-set to turn off by itself)
- Pay attention to the main issues on your mind. As you start to go to sleep, pay attention to the main theme, or train of thought, running through your mind. This will give you a clue as to what your dream may end up being about. Also, keeping your mind on what you want to dream about is a good way to dream about one particular issue. Don't over concentrate though, or it will keep you awake.
- Give yourself a suggestion to remember your dream. You must want to remember your dreams in order to do so. Giving yourself a suggestion is simple. Just keep in mind, and randomly bring to surface a little thought like "I will remember my dream". Don't just think the words like a child reciting, "I will not write on the wall", but mean it, and feel the conviction.
- Plan on waking up slowly and peacefully. Being rocketed out of bed by a big dog landing in the middle of your chest and licking your face is NOT the stuff that dreams are made of! (I speak from experience) Try to wake up naturally. Regardless of what anyone may have told you, it is a fact that adult human beings NEED a minimum of eight hours sleep in order to be fully rested. Some, in fact must really need more. Not getting enough sleep is the number one reason for not

remembering your dreams! Don't overdo it either, or the reverse will be true. A good rule of thumb is you should wake up naturally without an alarm clock and without someone (or something) waking you.

- Your health is very important! Take your vitamins and minerals every day! Eat a well balanced diet. Poor nutrition is also an extremely common cause for failure to recall dreams.

Keeping these steps in mind (and following them) will kick start you to remembering your dreams. These steps are the key to remembering your dreams, if you practice ALL of the above, you WILL sooner or later start to remember them. (I am betting "sooner")

Interpreting Dreams: Basic Themes...

Identify the main "theme" or "concept" of the dream. Perhaps the most important thing about dream analysis, identifying the basic theme, sets the tone for the interpretation. It is done like so: First, write down the dream (or record it). Look at the dream from a different perspective. Take away the details and look at it as a whole. Here is an example:

You have a dream of a beautiful hall with shiny marble floors and incredible works of art on the walls. The pictures are framed in solid gold. There are flowers in the corner, and they are breathtaking. The ceiling is cathedral style, with graceful arches with ornate carvings. You get the distinct impression that you are alone, and in charge of its upkeep. You hear a faint scratching sound from the other end of the hall. You hurry down there and zero in on the sound. To your horror, a mouse is chewing on the corner of a magnificent painting. You realize if you do nothing at all, the work will be rendered worthless and ugly. But you know if you catch the mouse you can save the painting since little damage has been done. You aren't certain you can get the mouse in time. You wake up feeling disappointed, you do not want to see something so important to you destroyed.

So here is the theme when you take away the details: someone sees something precious being senselessly destroyed. There is a chance to put an end to it, if acted upon quickly.

If you had this dream wouldn't it be much clearer with a theme? Creating a theme is very easy and usually only requires common sense.

Lets do one more: the Bible is rich with dream interpretation examples...

In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. (From the Book of Genesis 40:09-11)

The theme: something good comes to fruition. This something is refined, and given away. As anyone who cares to look up this passage can see, the meaning was that the King would restore the Chief Butler to his former position in three days. A theme is NOT the whole interpretation, as you can see. But it does point you in the right direction. For instance, "something good comes to fruition" (i.e. he gets his job back). This "something is refined, and given away" does not seem to fit, however we don't really know from the passage whether or not changes to his job were required, or if he held his job long afterward. Add the symbolism that Joseph used, and you get "3 day--3 vines" "pressing grapes into Pharaoh's cup--preparing to serve Pharaoh" "Giving the cup to Pharaoh--returning to the service of Pharaoh as he had in former years." The symbolism Joseph used was very logical! Add to it a theme, and it fits perfectly! This was a tough example as this dream was a prophetic dream and they are rare. I only used this to show you two very important things:

1. Themes help you find the big picture.
2. Themes alone are too vague to be useful as a whole interpretation!

TIP: The secret behind themes is taking away all the details, names, things places, etc. and leave ONLY the action. As you can tell, that does give a great clue, but not the whole. So do not stop on your journey of dream discovery after you master dream "theme interpreting", as it will not be complete.

Interpreting Dreams: Theme-to-life...

Match the theme or concept to a specific area of your life. First off, MOST dreams are NOT prophetic. To instantly assume this will lead to many misinterpretations! Your dreams are usually selfish, meaning that they are about you specifically, a good 90 percent of the time. With that in mind, you should be able to tie in the theme to some particular area of your life. Here is a good tip: When you ask yourself, "What specific area of my life is this dream about?" as opposed to asking, "What's this dream mean?" you will arrive at a conclusion faster. Always assume, at least to start off with, that the dream is about you, and a message to you. Since you made the theme, you should be able to place it into some aspect or condition present in your life. A real good sign that you thought up the right area of your life it is addressing is when you get that "Ah Hah, THAT'S IT!" feeling. Sometimes, if it is a bad dream, the feeling is more like "oh no, that's it!" Either way, when the connection is made, you feel it and you know.

If you were indeed correct in finding the theme, then finding the area of your life it fits into should come quite easily. How exactly do you go about matching the theme to an area of your life? If you had the first dream (the one about the beautiful hall) and you decided that the theme was: someone sees something precious being senselessly destroyed. There is a chance to put an end to it, if acted upon quickly.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What element in my life seems very precious to me? (Search for the ah-hah feeling)

- Is there a possibility that it could be damaged or hurt in any way?

Note that if you had that dream, found the element in your life that was precious to you, and you know it could be in danger, yet you do not see a solution, your mind does! Re-examine the situation and the solution might just reach out and grab you! If it were hopeless, the dream would have been different. Sometimes your sleeping mind can arrive at conclusions far better than our normal thinking processes. As you can tell, theme-to-life is best done through emotion. Only by examining your own emotions as you try to fit the theme into a given situation can you know you hit the mark. Our lives are sometimes so complicated that we may have so many things going on that could fit the theme, our emotions are our best clue to pin pointing the exact application. Emotions are a very good clue to the dream itself. Pay strict attention to your "emotional state" while in the dream. For example if you were happy through-out the "hall" dream, it would have a far different meaning than if you were sad or anxious!

Interpreting Dreams: Universal Symbols ...

You've developed good sleeping habits. Then you got on a regular schedule of taking your vitamins and minerals. You learned how to relax, and you are dedicated to writing things down or recording them. Giving yourself the suggestion to remember your dreams, you are now doing so quite frequently. Themes come easily and you can fit them into your life accordingly. Are you done? Somehow you don't think so, as you seem to be missing a large part of the picture. The details. This is where symbols come in. Symbols in a dream are actually the elements that make up the details. Even specific actions are sometimes symbols (such as falling). In the dream above about the hall, the pictures, ceiling, arches, paintings and even the mouse, are all dream symbols. All the little details mean something. Symbols, for the most part, are a very personal thing. Meaning that a "dream dictionary" may not necessarily have the correct definition to the symbol in your particular dream. Why? We associate meanings differently from one another at times. For example, I might associate a candle with pain, hardship and poverty if I spent enough time with no money living in the dark and lighting my home with a candle. But, I might associate a candle with God, if the only time I ever see one is in church! Two dramatically different definitions of the same thing. When you read a dream dictionary, it is usually not bogus; it simply gives the most "common" definition for that particular item. If you were unaffected by any items in your life, then the dream dictionary definition would most likely be valid. However, there are a certain amount of symbols that seem to always mean the same thing for people all the time. These you would do well to write down, memorize, or at the very least bear in mind while interpreting your own dreams. Why exactly these symbols are universal is a mystery to a certain extent, though I am sure there is a good reason.

Animals

They symbolize our own traits, good and bad. When you see an animal doing something in your dreams it usually represents a bad trait, as it is far easier for us to accept and watch an animal doing something negative than to take the credit for it ourselves. Here is a good example: a woman on a diet really wants to lose weight but is prone to binge eating. She has tried and failed many times, but this time has resolved to change. That night in a moment of weakness, she eats a big slice of cake & a bowl of ice cream. That night she

dreams of being on a farm on a cloudy day. She watches in disgust as a big manure covered pig eats and sucks non-stop at her slop. The woman is astonished and ashamed when she noticed what the sow was eating! (Cake and ice cream). It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out what that dream means, or what the animal symbolized! Her dream was telling her she would feel as good about herself as she felt about the pig if she didn't control her eating better.

Automobiles or vehicles

Vehicles that you ride in usually reflect two things; the direction you are heading in life, and your body (the thing you travel or "ride" through life in). This might vary if you are a mechanic or designer of vehicles. Over exposure to a specific vehicle type may easily change the meaning. The condition of the vehicle might give you an idea of your health. Driving an old beat up car down a muddy road on a stormy night might be considered a bad dream! However flying a Lear jet through blue skies with a song in your heart and the wind at your tail would be a rather good dream.

Children

A child represents to most of us, something new, different and joyous. Using this logic, it is easy to see why a child represents a new phase in your life or a new project. How well the child gets along and fares in the dream is an indication as to how well what it represents is doing. Also, a child symbolizes innocent parts of yourself sometimes, and at other times, immaturity and childishness. It all depends on the theme and emotions used in the dream.

Clothing

When you're in different moods you tend to choose different clothing, so clothing, for this reason best symbolizes your mood or state of mind. They also signify attitude. We wear clothing for all sorts of different reasons including work, dating, play and social occasions. Attitudes and moods are similar to clothing in this regard; they are the camouflage we hide behind, our face we put on for the world in various situations. Take a look at what you, or other people in your dream, are wearing to get even more clues to the dream's meaning. Also, a commonly overlooked clue is seeing clothes on a clothesline or lying around. It would be a good idea to take note as to what style and condition the clothes are in.

Death

The most feared dream symbol! Nearly any dream you have that refers to death, dying or attending a funeral, or the like, pertains to change. Most all the time this change is very dramatic and major. It can be change in your life attitude or emotional balance. These types of dreams can also symbolize confronting fear, usually of death or change. Most of us will agree that death is the ultimate change, and many people fear it. Death dreams generally indicate big changes and should never be ignored. Another possible symbol of a death dream is a threat. Most death dreams are about major change and not about literal death so

don't panic if you have one. Just patiently go through the analysis process, and make sense of it.

Buildings

The building in a dream usually points directly to a specific area of your life. Dreaming of being in an office complex, or factory can pertain to your work environment. It does not need to specifically pertain to your exact line of work. In other words, an office worker dreaming of a loading dock still can relate the dock to work, because that's the association made in his mind. A bathroom may pertain to your general health and hygiene habits, and a kitchen might be about your eating and nutrition. What you associate different locations to mean in general, usually points to what the dream was getting at specifically. To dream of your childhood house, tends to be a reflection of your life today. A dream about your childhood home is important. You should always write down and deeply interpret dreams of your childhood dwelling. Dreams of great buildings like cathedrals and large churches usually indicate the dream has a great meaning, and should be taken seriously, as well as any applied association.

People

People most often portrayed in dreams are actually reflections of your own personality traits. These traits are ones that you need to enhance & develop, or if negative, work on eliminating or reducing. You should immediately ask yourself, what traits do I like, and what traits do I dislike in the characters I dream about? Then look for those traits in yourself. You may be very surprised to find they match! People in dreams work most commonly to reflect, or mirror important aspects of your personality. It's a good idea to check that association.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Dreams are very efficient. Meaning, they can address multiple issues on multiple topics in one story line! A dream can warn you of health concerns, point out personality flaws (or strengths) and solve a current problem all in one dream! Some dreams are worthy of repeated analysis, and just because you can come up with two or three interpretations, does not mean that only one can be right, in fact they could all easily be right.

Interpreting Dreams: Personal Symbols...

All symbols in a dream create some sort of reaction in you. Look for the symbols that get the most reaction, they are usually keys. Since all symbols are not universal, in fact most aren't, you need to decide if the symbol has a personal meaning or not. Here is an example: a knife might symbolize happiness to a woman who dropped the knife on her wedding day, and if it was a big joke because it stuck handle up in the floor. This is associated with joy because it was humorous at the time and was a fond memory she shared with her husband. However, another woman might cringe in fear over dreaming of a knife because a knife-wielding thug attacked her in her teens. There are countless examples that could be given, but I think you get the picture. So how do you know what something means in a dream? How do we readily decode the symbols? There are several methods, let's explore:

Association

A traditional psychological method of looking at something and taking note of the first thing it reminds you of. After you think of something it reminds you of, do it again with the next association. For example: I say "Cat", you associate "dog". Then I say "dog", and you associate "fire hydrant". I say "fire hydrant", you say "Fire". You see how it works? You have been lead (in this example) from cat, all the way to fire, two unrelated subjects! You can play this game with yourself with your dream symbols until something "clicks" and you get the ah-hah feeling.

Amplification

Instead of associating, you list what each symbol means to you. Different from the association method, amplification can sometimes work where association falls short. For instance, I dream of a candle, instead of associating, I make a list of what a candle means to me personally. For example: a candle means happiness, love, romance, mysticism and light. Though it seems similar to association, it varies because you are approaching it from a different point of view.

Symbol defining is very easy, and you know when you hit the mark by the ah-hah feeling. There is one factor you should also keep in mind, and that is the laziness factor. You must devote some time and thought to the analysis of your dream to get a clear picture. If you go about it in a half-hearted way, you will get bad results and feel disappointed. If you rely solely on dream dictionaries to do your symbol defining you will have lost quite a bit of the meaning your dreams were trying to share. There is a dream dictionary online, but it is only to be used when no personal symbolisms can be found. It is my hope that you will try to define as many of your own symbols as possible.

Conclusion...

I hope this phase of Dream Central has provided you with some useful information. Keep visiting, we will be adding more chapters later!