

Sweet Dreams

By Lynn Allison

"The dream is an invaluable commentator and illuminator of life. Listen to the wisdom of the dream." – Dr. Carl Jung.

We all dream. Sometimes our dreams are wonderful fantasies we wish would extend to our waking lives. Sometimes, we are terrified by our dreams. But experts say that dreaming, and paying attention to the messages of our dreams, can be life-altering.

"Our dreams, no matter how nasty or distressing, appear to us for the purpose of health and wholeness," says Jeremy Taylor, co-

founder and past president of the International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD). "They speak to us in symbolic metaphors in order to improve and change our lives."

"Dreams are the most powerful tools we have to understand ourselves," adds Lauri Quinn Loewenberg, a Certified Dream Expert and author of *Dream on It: Unlock Your Dreams, Change Your Life*. Loewenberg is a member of the International Association of the Study of Dreams and has appeared on *The Dr. Oz Show*, *The View*, *Good Morning America* and the *Today* show, explaining the meaning of our dreams and

Your dreams can hold the key not only to a better night's sleep but to a better life in general. By using your dreaming mind as a valuable problem-solving tool, you can unlock the mysteries of your subconscious mind.

how to access the knowledge they provide.

"There is a reason we dream at night. It's not random nonsense," she says, adding that many of the greatest ideas and inventions – including the search engine Google and the theory of relativity – were all inspired by dreams.

"When we dream, we think on a much deeper, more insightful level than when we are awake. All our senses are turned off and we can focus entirely on our thoughts. Our mind speaks to us in codes: warning, helping and guiding us through our constantly evolving situations in life."

Psychologist Dr. Marcia Emery is one of the country's foremost authorities on dreams and intuition. Author of the critically acclaimed *Intuition Workbook: An Expert's Guide to Unlocking the Wisdom of Your Subconscious Mind* and *The Intuitive Healer*, she teaches people how to use their dreams to make their lives better.

"Dreams offer unique insight into what's going on in our daily lives," she says. She calls dreams our "inner physicians" that show you how to remove personal blocks, foretell the future and even help with health problems.

Sleep is necessary for the dreaming mind to go into the type of sleep called Rapid Eye Movement (R.E.M.), when dreaming occurs, every 90 to 100 minutes. We typically go through four to six dream periods in an eight-hour sleep. These periods produce vivid dreams. The final R.E.M. period can last as long as 45 minutes.

The people who remember their dreams are said to be more in touch with unconscious memories lurking below the surface and in that sense are often problem solving in their

TIPS TO REMEMBER YOUR DREAMS

1. Reconsider your alarm clock. We awaken more naturally after R.E.M. sleep so if a loud noise jolts you out of deeper, non-R.E.M. sleep, your dreams will be less accessible. If you must use an alarm clock, get one that wakes you up gently. Lie still after waking and let the dream come back to you. Not remembering your dreams in the morning means you probably slept pretty soundly and in addi-

tion, did not give yourself those crucial few minutes to stay put in bed in order to capture the dreams. If you are a pretty deep sleeper and want to be able to remember your dreams, just linger in bed once you finally wake up. That's all it takes, says Loewenberg.

2. We tend to remember dreams that we wake up from, rather than the ones we sleep through. You can train yourself to remember dreams more easily if you lie quietly in bed.

3. Keep a pad or dream journal by your bedside.

You can record your dreams or talk about them with your partner over morning coffee. Even better, says Loewenberg, is to write down your dreams as well as journal of daytime events so you can connect the dots. "You'll see how the angry bears in your dream last night remind you of how you yelled at your husband at dinner."

4. Taylor advises taking a balanced B-complex vitamin to help increase dream recall. In a double blind study, the supplement increased recalls by 85 percent.



Messages From the Mind

dreams. They can sleep more soundly as the detective work is going on during sleep time. However, we have to be careful and not say that dreamers generally do sleep more soundly than non-dreamers, says Emery.

"My husband was in a deep depression and I was feeling worn out," says the recently retired professor, who also appeared on the Dream Decoders TV series. "I was keeping a dream journal at the time and wrote down that I needed help dealing with this situation.

"I dreamed that a handsome man appeared before me and swept me into his arms. I woke up terrified that my dreams were suggesting that I step out with a strange man. But then I realized that the man in my dreams WAS my husband, in his healthy form, and my energy toward him changed. He recuperated shortly after."

Emery has helped thousands decode their dreams and find solutions for their waking life.

"A young woman named Lois had recently moved from Mexico to Canada and kept having the same dream over and over. She dreamed she was on the beach and a huge wave engulfed and nearly drowned her at which point she'd awaken in a sweat. I asked

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her many questions about her life and we concluded that the change of culture was overwhelming or 'drowning' her. At that point I gave her suggestions on how to better cope with the transition and her terrifying dream no longer appeared."

Loewenberg says that we experience an average of five dreams a night that grow in duration, providing we have a full seven to nine hours sleep. As we enter the sleep stage of Rapid Eye Movement or R.E.M., our first dream appears. Usually this is the shortest, around three minutes long. Just before we wake up, we experience the longest dream cycle, about 45 minutes in length.

"Remember that your subconscious mind is talking to you through the dream state, so it's

important to really pay attention to the message," she says. "Don't take the script of the dream literally. Our dreams speak to us in metaphors pointing out ongoing behaviors that need to be addressed or past, unresolved issues. Tune into the feelings and emotions they evoke – not the words."

You can even ask your subconscious to help solve problems through a dream, the expert says.

"If you want a solution to a problem, you say you're going to sleep on it," she says. "What you are actually doing is dreaming on it. As an artist, I regularly ask for inspiration by writing down my intentions before I go to bed. Your dreams will be brutally honest with you."

Emery says that she's passionate about her work because "dreams never cease to amaze me. They know more than I know about myself.

"Although there are universal themes to dreams that date back to even prehistoric times, remember that your dreams are custom designed for you. Look for those golden nuggets in your dreams and go in and get them! Never be afraid because even nightmares are gifts to help us."

Here are the most common dream metaphors and their interpretations:

Dogs

Dogs are the most dreamed about animal because of the characteristics they possess: loyalty and friendship. Because of this, dogs in dreams have come to represent our own loyalty toward someone as well as someone's loyalty toward us. They help make you aware of the positive aspects of your relationships.



life is taking. Crashing is the most common element to the car dream. It often means that some direction of your life has come to a sudden and messy stop. Losing your car or having it stolen suggests you have either lost your "drive" to continue on or you are feeling directionless in some area of your life.

Tornadoes

Weather in dreams is connected to your emotions, because your emotions are the weather of your mind.



The tornado represents worry and anxiety that is beginning to spin out of control. People who frequently experience a tornado dream are often card-carrying members of the worrywart club! These dreams are a reflection of what is really going on inside their psyche and are showing the dreamer that – just like a tornado – worry and anxiety is a destructive force.

Homes

Your home in your dream, whether it is your actual home or an unfamiliar home, is YOU. It is everything about you and how you live. The dreaming mind uses the home in order to show you and your state of mind in the form of a physical structure so you can better understand your own personality. The most common house dream is finding rooms you never knew were there. This is the way



Cars

A car dream can be a commentary on how you are maneuvering through, or how well you are reaching, a particular goal. It can also be reflective of your "drive" or motivation to continue down a certain road. It is always important to pay attention to whether you are the one behind the wheel or not. If you are the driver it means you are in control of the direction your





your dreaming mind is showing you that there is a lot more to you than you are utilizing. If the rooms are neglected then this could be connected to a talent or skill you are no longer using.



Back to school

There are many variations to this dream: you can't find your class, you have to take your senior year all over again or there's a test you didn't know about. The school dream is so common because it is most often connected to job or career. When you get the "back at school" dream, compare the frustration and the problem within the dream to what is going on currently at your job or in your career. You'll be able to connect the dots and find that they are eerily similar!

the beaches of Puerto Vallarta or you're getting it on with the geeky guy - or gal - in the cubicle behind you, it's important to remember that sex, to your dreaming mind, is not about a physical union you want, but rather a psychological union you need! The dreaming mind cleverly uses sex to show what you desire and need

to merge into your own personality. For a woman to dream of sex with an unknown man, for example, may mean that it is generic male qualities she desires, and is working on uniting into her own self and behavior. Sex with a co-worker doesn't necessarily mean you secretly lust for the person but rather that you desire his or her ability to handle clients with ease or perhaps even the need to "come together" with your co-worker on a project or just get along better for the sake of your job.

In waking life sex begins with desire, proceeds to a merger and ends in completion and satisfaction. The dreaming mind uses this same process to help you bring what you lack into your life. The cheating dream rarely means an

your mate is giving too much time and attention to something else when they should be giving it to you. Usually the culprit is work. But it could also be golf, fantasy football or poker games. For men, it could be the new baby. Whatever the case, this dream is showing you that you are feeling cheated out of your time and attention with your mate.

Falling

These are perhaps the most ancient of dreams that may have evolved when prehistoric men had to climb trees to escape prey or to get food. They symbolize insecurity, anxiety and instability in your life. You feel as though you are spiraling out of control. Once you identify the problem you can take steps to solve it. Loewenberg says astute dreamers often seek therapy to help cope with their issues.



Flying

The flying dream can be connected to something in waking life that makes you feel "high as a kite": a promotion, an engagement, reaching a weight goal, for example. It is



because something in waking life has lifted your spirits, and that you have realized your ability to rise above where you were before in life. Celebrities and very successful people get this dream a lot. This is one of the most common dreams that children have. It tends to taper off as we get older.



Death

Death is the end of a life, but to the dreaming mind death is the end of life as you now know it. Death dreams happen when we have changes or endings in our life. We may dream of someone we care about dying when our relationship with them is changing. Parents, especially moms, will dream of their children dying when the child has reached a milestone.

It is the way we mourn the loss of the younger child so that the older child can emerge. We may dream of our own death when we have undergone a major change, when we get married, when we quit smoking or when we divorce. These dreams can certainly be difficult, but they are good for us in that they are helping us to let go of what is no more.



Being Chased

No matter what or who is hot on our heels in a dream, the being chased dream means you are avoiding something in waking life. People who get this dream frequently tend to avoid confrontations, try to get out of obligations or run from their issues in the hope they will eventually go away rather than dealing with them.

Sex

Whether you are dreaming of a passionate tryst with Brad Pitt on



actual affair is going on. It does, however, mean there is a third wheel in your relationship, not necessarily another person but rather another thing. You're getting this dream because you're feeling that

Teeth

Typically, anything having to do with the mouth in a dream can be connected to the way you communicate in waking life. So if you have a dream where your teeth fall out then it is a good indication that you have allowed something out of your mouth that should have remained in there permanently - like your teeth! Certain things are not meant to come out of your mouth! People who frequently get this dream tend to speak before they think and often regret what they say later.

