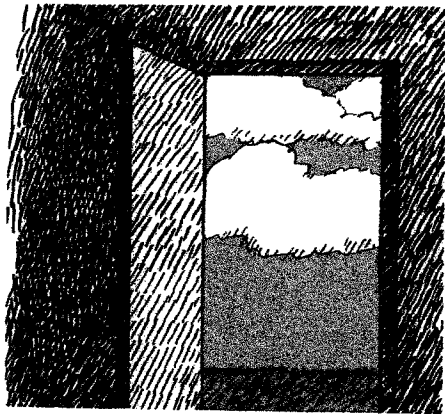


YOU'RE IN CHARGE

A Guide to Becoming Your Own Therapist



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Foreword by Virginia Satir

CHAPTER 6

ON DREAMING

God created the dreams to point out the way
to the sleeper whose eyes are in darkness.

—Ancient Egyptian text

Sigmund Freud said that dreams were the royal road to the unconscious. Fritz Perls called them the royal road to integration—meaning, a method of reclaiming previously disowned parts of the personality. Kilton Stewart described an uninterpreted dream as being “like an unopened letter from God.” And according to Edgar Cayce, dreams are visions that can be crystallized. People have been fascinated with dreams and have regarded them as significant since ancient times. Remember how Joseph saved himself from a long term in jail and got himself established as Pharaoh’s steward by his successful dream interpretations, first for the Pharaoh’s butler and baker, and then for the Pharaoh himself?

With this long-standing historical interest in dreams, it’s intriguing to me that the hard, scientific data on dreams came only in the last half of this century. In 1953, Aserinsky and Kleitman, working in the department of physiology at the University of Chicago, observed that sleeping subjects have periods of rapid eye movements (called REMs in the trade) and that these REM periods are associated with dreaming. Subsequent research, as

reported by William C. Dement, established that everyone dreams (although not everyone remembers those dreams), that a typical adult will have four or five dream sequences per night (or 20 per cent of sleeping time), that people taking barbiturate sleeping pills, idiots, and senile people dream far less, and that premature babies spend up to 75 per cent of their sleep time in REM-sleep.

Dreaming is somehow essential to the organism. Subjects in a dream laboratory were awakened at the beginning of each REM period, allowed to go back to sleep, and always obtained their full baseline quota of sleep for the night. They were deprived only of their dreams. By the fifth night, when they were having 20 to 30 aborted REM periods per night, they had become tense, anxious, and irritable during the day and found it increasingly difficult to concentrate. A control group that was awakened as frequently during the night (but during non-REM or nondreaming periods) did not develop these symptoms. The experimental group's symptoms disappeared when they were permitted their normal sleep, and for the first few nights their REM periods were four times their normal frequency.

So the data are in and conclusive: We all dream and our dreaming provides some necessary function.

There are still still a few people, however, who swear that they don't dream because they have never recalled having a dream upon awakening. And many more recall their dreams so infrequently that they believe that they must dream less often than other people.

The data on dream recallers (i.e., people who recall at least one dream per month) compared to the nonrecallers are interesting. Goodenough and others found that the nonrecallers have more rapid REMs and make looking-away type of eye movements (almost as if they don't wish to see what's happening during the actual dream itself). They also tend to be more inhibited, more conformist, more self-controlled, and more apt to deny or avoid unpleasantness and confrontations in their daily lives than the dream recallers.

If you are a nonrecaller and want to join the ranks of the dream recallers, it's not too difficult . . . if you really *want* to remember them and agree to be in charge.

Setting the Intention to Remember your Dreams

Make a contract with yourself to write in your dream journal (or your regular journal) when you wake up.

Say to yourself just before you fall asleep: "The first thing I do when I wake up, I'm going to write down my dreams."

And do it. Have your journal by your bed, with pen inserted at the page where you wish to start writing. If you wear glasses, have them within easy reach also. When you awaken, write down whatever you recall. Even if it's only a fleeting impression or feeling. Even if it's only four words. "I'm in a meadow," for example. Resist the voice that says, "You didn't remember enough to be worth recording." That's a saboteur subpersonality speaking. Possibly the act of writing down, "I'm in a meadow," will elicit more details about the meadow and some action in the meadow. And even if those four words are all you get, don't berate your unconscious—thank it, and ask for a fuller recall next time.

Even if you have absolutely no recollection of a dream, sit up gently and start writing: "Alarm went off. I have no recollection of dreaming. I feel _____," or whatever. Something *will* emerge if you maintain this discipline.*

Until you are an experienced dream-recollector, I would advise you to set only the intention to remember your dreams. For if you also set the intention to remember to make a long distance call before 8, or to check to see if your teenage son is home, or to put out the garbage, you will likely wake up with the set to go into action on the second intention, and your dreams will quickly slip away.

You might also have a dialogue with your "absent" dreams.

* You could also use a tape recorder if that would be easier. Some people, however, find that the intellectual effort of figuring out which buttons to push wakes them up completely and the dream vanishes.

Dialogue with Absent Dream

First, as yourself, talk to the vanished dream. Tell it how you feel about its unavailability. Tell it what you want from it.

Then be the dream. Perhaps as the dream you will want to defend yourself, or to attack the dreamer, or to tell her how she avoids remembering you. (I don't want to write your scenario for you; let it develop with several back-and-forths.)

Or there's a third technique that I've used in workshops, and which you could use in your friendship circle.

Dream Invention

Invent a dream that each person in your group might have had. Then work on each of these "dreams" as if it were your own truly-dreamed dream.

Probably, however, most of you do remember a fair number of your dreams—possibly one a night, possibly one a week, maybe one a month—and are wondering what use can be made of them.

Along with Fritz Perls, I see the dream as an existential message from the dreamer to himself, a statement about who he is and what his life situation is like.

I would first suggest a very literal, common-sense approach to the dream. Frequently our dreams serve to remind us of the contents of the day, which we had noticed only subliminally, possibly due to the press of a large input of competing stimuli.

A dream of someone wearing platform shoes (before they were in style) helped me to realize that I hadn't been wanting to notice how self-important and grandiose that person (my then lover) was behaving. Dreams concerning foods or your body should first be examined quite literally as possible messages from your body to eat (or to avoid eating) these foods, or to examine or to take particular care of certain parts of your body. The psyche seems to know when a disease process is beginning, before it becomes manifest in actual somatic symptoms. So your dreams, properly interpreted, can be an early-warning system of possible future illness that can then be averted.

Your dreams can give you other kinds of warnings, too. I once had a dream concerning a young woman, whom I was seeing, who was afraid that her father would murder her. My dream went like this:

She hides from him in my home. He finds her there, shoots her, and leaves. I pick her up, put her in my car, and race to UCLA Emergency. I try to blow my horn, it doesn't work, so I drive in erratic zig-zags to alert the other drivers and get through the traffic quickly. A policeman stops me. "Thank goodness, you've come," and I tell him the situation. He puts on his siren and precedes us through the traffic, clearing a path.

Obviously, there are many elements in this dream that bear working on: my relationship, therapeutic and otherwise, to the girl who gets shot, the would-be murderer, the policeman, also my need to be a heroine! However, the part that struck me most forcibly when I awoke was how frightening it had been to undertake that drive with no horn, and how foolish I had been to drive my BMW for over a month with a non-functioning horn. So that day I had the horn repaired. Now, I had known that my horn was not working. What I was ignoring was my anxiety at driving a car with no working horn, just because I felt that I was "too busy" to get it fixed.

A very dramatic example of a warning dream is given by Kathleen Jenks in the narrative of her personal growth through a Jungian-oriented self-analysis of her dreams. Early in the book she relates this dream, which she had one month after she first made love with Rob:

I was invited to a house filled with girls, plain-looking but pleasant. Each had once been Rob's lover—some went as far back as his high school years. Three were pregnant . . . It was appalling that he had had so many girls and had left them in such states . . . Then something very weird happened. They had to be sure they all had the "mark." They held up their hands and I was puzzled. I looked at them and was shown diagonal cuts across one or two of each girl's fingers . . . I said I didn't have this and one of them took my hand and looked at it closely. The cuts were there—very small and very slight. Then I remembered that he had scratched my hand one night . . .

Unfortunately, she chose to ignore the obvious message of the dream, and continued with her doomed infatuation with Rob.

The Metaphorical Meaning

If, however, you examine the dream for its literal message and find none, then it's time to approach the dream for its metaphorical meaning.

I see dream symbols not as an attempt to conceal or censor, as Freud claims, but as a picturesque shorthand used by the psyche. This shorthand is always idiosyncratic; there's no standard Gregg or Pitman translation. In fact, beware of therapists, friends, spouses, or dream experts who try to tell *you* what the symbols of *your* dream mean. By all means, listen to any interpretations; they might suggest a meaning that will ring true for you. But reject any proffered interpretation that doesn't resonate with you. Only *you* can decode your dreams.

Here are some suggestions to help you with your search for the cipher:

I. According to Fritz Perls, each part of the dream represents a part of the personality that has (possibly) been disowned. So take on the personality of each person, each object, each element in the dream.

Working on Your Dream

Be that person or object or element. Describe yourself. "Tell us your story," as Fritz Perls used to say.

What are you doing in the dream?

What are you feeling?

What are your relationships with the other dream figures and with the other objects in the dream?

What do you want?

Have dialogues with other parts of the dream.

It's useful to do this out loud. It's also useful to do it with an audience, a therapist or an objective friend who will feed back her perceptions of qualities that you might miss! The volume or quality of your voice, your posture, a twisting of the handkerchief, a tightening of your throat, a clenched fist, your general mood.

You can also do it silently. It's useful to write out the dialogue.

And as you enact each part, be alert for the emergence of associations to your current life. Or to the book, TV program,* or conversation right before bedtime that you didn't have time to process. You will usually experience an "ah-ha" sensation when the right fit is made.

How do you know where to start working on your dream or which elements to identify with? There are no rules. You can identify with each and every part of the dream. For instance, if I had wanted to work on my heroine dream in this metaphorical way I could have been the murderer, the young victim, the policeman, the heroine, the automobile, the emergency room of the hospital, and the non-functioning horn.

* Every morning during the week that *Roots* was screened on TV, I made at least one association to the episode of the night before. And I heard many *Roots*-related dreams from people that week. The effect of *Holocaust* was equally remarkable.

Be sure to include those parts of the dream that seemed most vivid, and where you felt the most emotion. Here's a checklist of parts of the dream with which you can identify:

- A. Be the landscape or the environment, which could include a house, or the air, or the rain, or a desert, etc. Fritz once asked a man who had had a dream of riding a horse in Central Park to be the bridle path, and the man immediately replied, "What, and have all those horses shit on me?"
- B. Be all of the people in the dream. If they are strangers, see if they remind you of anyone who is important in your life.
- C. Be any object that links and joins, such as bridges, telephone lines, highways, and railroad tracks.
- D. Be any unusual element, such as a safety lock that is on the *outside* of your car door, or a flying cat, or an object that mysteriously disappears only to reappear.
- E. Be any interesting and mysterious object, such as a wrapped package, an unopened letter, or an unread book.
- F. Be any powerful energy object, such as a tidal wave, or an automobile, or an electrical generator.
- G. Be any religious objects from a crucifix to a statue of Buddha.
- H. Be any object (or person) whose left side is different from its right side. Be the left side, then be its right side. Possibly have a dialog between the two.
- I. Be any two contrasting objects, such as a new carpet and a worn carpet, or a young woman and an old woman.
- J. Be anything in your dream that is missing. It could be something you have lost in your dream and for which you are actively searching. It could be a missing part of a signpost. Or a half-written word on a notepad. ("Promis" on a scrap of paper was the beginning of "promiscuous" in one man's dream.)

Sometimes there will be an important missing object in your dream that you don't realize is missing. This is where that therapist or objective friend can be useful again.

Lucy worked with me on a dream that had two segments: a woman being wheeled into surgery on a gurney and then the same woman waking up in the recovery room. I asked her to be the surgeon and reenact the missing scene between the two fragments. In doing this Lucy realized that the dream was about her recent hysterectomy and she did some much-needed grief work for her uterus (which was another missing part).

If someone has a dream that includes the Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, he may need some outside help to make him realize that there is a planet missing from his solar system. Someone with his "head in the stars" may find it hard to see the obvious, which, of course, is Earth. It would be very useful and enlightening for such a person to identify with Earth for a change!

II. Be alert for any puns or colloquial expressions. These days a dream of a loaf of bread may be a dream about money. Or it may conjure up the need for "a jug of wine and thou" to be complete. It's your dream, so only your associations are valid. Ann Faraday has an excellent chapter in *The Dream Game* on the many puns she has collected from her subjects. A dream of her own contains two puns: A man in long white underpants shoots her down with a machine gun. The meaning of this dream occurred to her later that day when she was waiting to appear on a radio talk show with Long John Nebel and suddenly recalled some gossip about his hostile treatment of guests. She had repressed this information so her unconscious was sending her a warning that a man in "long johns" might try to "shoot her down."

III. Notice any numbers that appear in your dream (house number, number on a roulette wheel, someone's announced age, the price of an object, etc.) Explore your associations with those numbers.

IV. Notice how you are feeling when you wake up from your dream. This feeling-state—fear, joy, sadness, anger, frustration, puzzlement—may be your best clue as to the meaning of the dream.

V. Notice the colors in your dream. Any particular associations to these colors? You might want to draw certain parts of your dream. If there is a very special color in your dream, see if you can match the color exactly.

VI. My suggestion for finding the message of the dream (if it doesn't become apparent as you work on it as described above) is to have a dialogue with the dream. Ask the dream (or the Dream Sender within you, who sent you the dream) what message it has for you for your continuing growth. Then change places. Be the Dream Sender. Tell your Self what message you have to deliver.

If you emerge with a long, rambling statement, my hunch is that you are avoiding a shorter, pithier sentence that could be an inducement to action. I sometimes ask people to reduce their messages to a few words that could go on a poster, and then suggest that they make the posters and hang them on their walls at home. Here are some of their products:

**Give yourself a CHANCE.
Give yourself the TIME.**

**Cross the river
where you are.**

**The bough may break,
but the tree will stand.**

**Don't tie your ship to a
single anchor (or pin your
life on a single hope).**

VII. When you have finished your work on your dream, translate it into some kind of action that can be undertaken NOW. As in the work with fantasies, this is necessary to be grounded.

If your dream tells you to take some time for yourself, then plan precisely how you can cut back in your busy work schedule. If the Dream Sender urges you to cross the river now (instead of walking toward a possible "better bridge" downstream), then plan when and how to take the action to which the dream was metaphorically referring. If your dream is warning you not to tie your ship to a single anchor (and is really saying, don't let your accounting practice depend on one single large client), then realistically see what you can do to enlarge your clientele and then make those actual moves.

VIII. You might want to start a glossary of your own dream symbols and their very special and private meaning for you.

Nightmares

Nightmares are especially important dreams to work on. They are sometimes caused by two warring subpersonalities within you. When you discover the conflict and find some way to reconcile their diverse needs, there will be much energy released for whatever it is you need to do.

People frequently wake themselves up from a nightmare just before the ending. They are either perched like Pauline on the edge of a cliff, with the ground crumbling beneath them, or tied to a railroad track with an express train thundering toward them, or at the steering wheel of a car whose brakes have failed, careening down a steep hill, or . . . If this happens to you, try this gestalt technique: Finish the dream. Continue the action in your imagination.

Finishing an Interrupted Dream

Put yourself back into the dream.

Feel the same frightening feelings.

Continue the action.

Bring the dream to a genuine—not interrupted—ending.

One of the several unfortunate consequences of taking barbiturates to sleep (and becoming addicted to their use) is that when people cut back rapidly on their sleeping medication, they experience "REM sleep rebound," or a dramatic increase in the number of dream sequences per night. Some of these dreams may be terrifying nightmares.*

Senoi Dreamwork

If by any chance, *while* you are having the nightmare, you realize that you are dreaming, by all means continue the dream action. Don't say, "Oh, thank God, it's only a dream," and permit yourself to wake up. Confront your attacker—the robber, tidal wave, tiger, or whatever—and don't run away. He may capitulate when he sees your new show of strength or cleverness, and become a "paper tiger"! Or you may have to fight him to the death. If this latter is the case, know that you may call on your friends—or a fairy godmother—to help you. (After all, anything is possible in a dream.) Better yet, perhaps you can make him into an ally. It's important that you emerge unharmed. In the confrontation that you permit—knowing that nothing can harm you—you can learn some very valuable lessons.

*To prevent this, users of large amounts of sleeping pills should cut back at the rate of one therapeutic dose every week or ten days, with the goal of eliminating the pills and the pill-induced insomnia completely. Abrupt withdrawal, or the "cold turkey" method, can be quite dangerous. In addition to the severe nightmares, convulsive seizures are a possibility.

This dream technique is called "Senoi dreamwork" after a tribe in Malaysia that was studied by Kilton Stewart and H. D. Noone in the 1930's. They noted the tribe's cooperative philosophy of living, the virtual absence of "mental disease" and the great attention paid to dreams. At breakfast each day, the children were encouraged by the elders of the tribe to tell their dreams. They were then instructed how to confront the demon-attackers the next night and exhorted always to advance and never to retreat, calling on dream images of their friends for help if necessary. If the dreamer did not conquer the evil spirit and convert him into an ally, then that spirit would be joined by even more hostile spirits until the poor dreamer would face overwhelming odds.

If a child had a dream of falling and woke up frightened before the fall was finished, he was told to relax and enjoy himself the next time he had such a dream. "The falling spirits love you. They are attracting you to their new land." The child was further instructed to discover and bring back something beautiful or useful to the tribe from this new land. It might be a new dance, music, a tool, or useful knowledge. Thus a dream that started out as an anxiety dream of falling was transmuted to a joyous one of flying, and creative discoveries were made. Senoi dreamwork was virtually unknown before Tart reprinted a Stewart article in 1969. Therapists then started experimenting with Senoi dream workshops and discovered their effectiveness. However, in 1976 Peter Bloch from the BBC visited the tribe to report on and possibly film their current dream practices. They found no trace of "Senoi dream sessions" among the Senoi, past or present!* This little-known finding does not invalidate the usefulness of the technique, especially with repetitive dreams.

Repetitive Dreams

Any dream that is repeated over time, albeit with some variations, is a signal of some important unfinished business. Once you have decoded the dream, then its reappearance can alert you to whatever is triggering that dream in your current life.

Let me describe a recurrent dream that I had for about thirty-five years. It began when I was fourteen and started high school.

*Thanks to Dreams Unlimited and Elizabeth Lowe for bringing this to my attention.

Unlike junior high school, we now had a different class in a different room each period. And unlike any normal high school, our schedule changed each day, so that if Monday I had French first period, English second period, Geometry third period, and History last period, on Tuesday it would be English, Geometry, two others, History and French. Wednesday, the schedule would be Geometry, two others, History, French, and English. Confusing! So we had our weekly schedules written in the front of our notebooks and pasted in our lockers. In my original dream . . .

I can't get my locker open, my notebooks are all inside the locker, and I can't remember what class I'm supposed to be going to. I wake up in a panic.

From a simple anxiety dream prompted by the stressful situation of a new and confusing school, the dream got more elaborate through the years. I might be in college and suddenly remember at the end of the semester that I had registered for some esoteric course on Horace or Molière (courses that in real life I had never even considered taking). I've got to find someone in the class and quickly ascertain what material has been covered so I can cram for the final exam. The dream would be a clear signal that in my waking life I was venturing into a new and confusing territory, possibly taking on too much, and was definitely afraid of failing.

Peggy had a recurrent dream:

I am straightening up a livingroom, dusting, putting things away. Then through an archway I see a young couple lounging on a bed in the next room. They look as if they would like to make love, and their eyes seem to tell me to turn out the light and go away. I pretend not to see them and very deliberately continue to fuss around in the livingroom. I wake up feeling very sad and lonely.

When I had her dialogue with the young couple, they quickly became her parents. It emerged that Peggy had slept in a bed in a corner of their bedroom until she was ten years old. Until she worked on her dream, she had never dealt with her feelings about witnessing her parents' lovemaking or her power (by fussing around about going to sleep) to thwart their pleasure together.

*Lucid Dreams**

A lucid dream is a dream in which the dreamer is aware that he is dreaming. He has access to the memories of his waking life and can evaluate situations and make decisions based on such information. Many people have been deliberately developing this ability to dream with awareness and are finding, as did the Senoi, that when you master a situation in the dream world, you achieve equivalent mastery in the waking world.

As an example: I haven't had my high-school-locker type of dream for several years now. In the final version—

I have two days to find my classroom and my classmates before finals. Otherwise I will get an *F* on my record. I go to the registrar's office to try to locate the classroom, but it is closed . . . locked! At this point I realize I am dreaming, and the whole situation becomes hilarious. I think, let them give me an *F*. I've got a Ph.D. and don't need to bother about grades and records any more, and I'd much rather go to the beach than study for some stupid final in French literature. And so I go to the beach and body-surf and then meet some friends and we eat supper around a campfire and have a great and joyous time.

Since that dream, the world's concepts of "success" and "failure" have been quite irrelevant for me, in contrast to earlier years. That subpersonality who was so concerned with "what will people think" no longer bothers me.

Learning to be conscious during your dream life seems to me to be part of a program of becoming totally conscious and being self-observant at all times. I imagine that the truly liberated person would be someone who has achieved this goal of total consciousness, and his thoughts while asleep would be as accessible to him as his thoughts while awake.

The Dream Sender

In addition to learning to remember your dreams, you can also learn to dream specific dreams on demand. If, for instance, you failed to get the message from a dream, you can ask the Dream Sender to give you a dream that will explain the first

*A term coined by Frederick Van Eeden to describe hundreds of such dreams he experienced and recorded between 1898 and 1912.

dream. Just as in remembering your dreams, it is necessary to set the intention:

Asking for a Certain Dream

Say to yourself just before you fall asleep, "My dreams tonight will explain last night's dream. And the first thing I'll do when I wake up is to write down those dreams."

You can also ask the Dream Sender to let you re-dream a certain significant or satisfying dream.

A very important use of your Dream Sender is to ask for a dream that will give you an answer to a specific question or help in making a certain decision. A couple of years ago I had a very bad cold while I was staying at a temporary home in Germany. I was to leave the next morning to do a workshop in Poland, a twenty-four-hour train trip away. I had vacillated in my decision-making about whether I should cancel the trip and the workshop. When I went to sleep that night, I asked for a dream that would tell me whether I should go or stay. I woke up in the middle of the night with a hideous attack of coughing and dashed for the bathroom a long hall away. As I was sitting on the toilet I remembered I had intended to have a definitive dream. At first I felt I had lost it, then I remembered something about being in a group of people and speaking German. My Critic subpersonality got very annoyed at this point. Not only was this not my definitive answer dream, but also it sounded like one of what I call my "show-off" dreams. So I angrily said to myself, "Jan, you know you don't speak German. If you were really speaking German in that dream, I'd like to hear you reproduce just one sentence of dialogue." And then the one word "bleiben" popped into my head. I knew I had heard the word, but I couldn't think what it meant. I was on my way to look it up in the dictionary when I remembered the situation in which I had heard it, and realized it meant "to stay." This was too powerful a message for even the most adamant stage-trooper to

ignore, so I cancelled the workshop and stayed in Germany. And fortunately so, because the next few days I was far too sick to be traveling or working.

Your Dream Sender is a very creative person and can be helpful to you in your waking life in a variety of ways. There are innumerable inventions and artistic creations that were initiated by dreams. Elias Howe had begun to despair of designing a sewing machine that would work until in a dream he saw his sewing machine needle with the eye at the *bottom*, rather than in the middle or at the top—as in his models that wouldn't sew properly.

August Kekulé had been wrestling with the problem of how to conceptualize the benzene molecule. There weren't enough hydrogen atoms to satisfy the valence of the six carbon atoms when they were placed in a straight line (which is how organic compounds had been arranged up until this time). He fell asleep. "The atoms flitted before my eyes . . . wriggling and turning like snakes . . . One of the snakes seized its own tail and the image whirled scornfully before my eyes. As though from a flash of lightning I awoke: I occupied the rest of the night in working out the consequences of the hypothesis. Let us learn to dream . . ." And this is how Kekulé conceived of arranging the atoms of the benzene molecule in a ring, a discovery that was the foundation of the chemistry of dyes and pharmaceutical compounds.

Raymond de Becker reports many other instances of dream-inspired creativity. Niels Bohr conceived the model of the atom from a dream about the planets revolving around the sun. Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Goethe's *Faust, Part II*, and Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* were inspired by dreams. And the works of Mozart, Schumann, Wagner, Tolstoy, de Quincey, Poe, Saint-Saëns, Van Gogh, Heine, Voltaire, and La Fontaine were influenced by their dreams.

Otto Loewi received the Nobel prize for a discovery that was the result of a double dream. He had been puzzling about how the nervous system affects the heart beat. During a dream he "discovered" the principle of chemical action on the nervous system and designed the experiment that would demonstrate it. He scribbled some notes and went back to sleep. However, tragedy! Next morning he couldn't decipher his notes. The following night he slept very fitfully, but in the middle of the night

he redreamed his solution. This time he didn't take a chance on writing notes, but went straight to his laboratory to start the experiment.

I discovered this ability to ask the Dream Sender for a definitive answer dream when I was about thirteen, possibly because I had so many adult responsibilities at that time and needed some seemingly "outside" and grown-up advice. So I was quite surprised some years later to learn that the deliberately induced dream was an ancient and respected practice in many cultures, such as those of Greece, Rome, Egypt, China, Iran, and India.

From the Sixth Century B.C. to the Sixth Century A.D., the Greeks and Romans practiced *dream incubation*, or going to a sacred place in order to receive a useful dream from a god. The dreamer might ask for divine instructions for a problem in masonry, or a remedy for sterility, or for a diagnosis and cure of other ailments. He would go to one of the several hundred temples of Aesculapius; there he would chant with the priests, abstain from wine, sexual intercourse, and certain foods that were believed to hinder dream production, and do some ritual bathing for purification. Then, after having been invited in a first dream by the god, he would spend the night in the *abaton*, lying on the bloody skins of the recently sacrificed sheep and oxen with only the writhing (though harmless), sacred snakes of the temple for company. With all this preparation and expectation it's not surprising that he would have a significant dream. Evidently many healings took place. Stelae found at Epidaurus describe the diseases of seventy patients and the dreams that cured them. If, however, the pilgrim had an obscure dream, he could go to one of the local entrepreneurs in dream interpretation. At Memphis, the plaque over one such shopkeeper's door read: "I interpret dreams, having the god's mandate to do so."

A contemporary psychologist has revived the incubation ritual. Just as the temples accepted only those people whom the god had first advised in a prior dream, so also Henry Reed waits for people to seek him out rather than asking for volunteers.

The Islamic people continue the practice of the induced dream, but not in temples. They call it "istiqâra." A person with a difficult problem recites a special prayer recommended by Mohammed and then goes to sleep expecting to receive the answer or solution in his dream. This is done by the traveler on the eve

of a trip, the author before writing, or the statesman before an important policy decision. It is alleged that Dr. Mossadegh, the prime minister of Iran, decided to nationalize the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company as a result of such an induced dream in 1950. A shining apparition said to him, "This is not the time to rest, arise and break the chains of the people of Iran."

Individuation Dreams and Their Symbols

Individuation is Jung's word to describe the process by which you become the definite and unique being that you in fact are. There are two growth processes needed to accomplish it.

First you must rid yourself of the false wrappings of the *persona*, which is Jung's term for your facade, social roles, and games. Many of the exercises and suggestions given so far in this book—journal writing, the Evening Review, subpersonalities, disidentification exercise, self-observation, and gestalt dreamwork in particular—should help you to discern your *self* (who you really are) as distinct from the social roles that you play in the world.

You need also to come to terms with the primordial images (or archetypes) of the *collective unconscious* so that they will no longer be able to influence your behavior. These are myths and symbols that, according to Jung, seem to be universal for all people in all cultures and in all historical periods. Unlike the personal unconscious, whose contents were originally conscious but then were forgotten or repressed, the contents of the collective unconscious have never been conscious and were not personally acquired, but are a racial inheritance. Examples of such archetypes are the eternal child, the witch, the mother, the hero, and so on. It could be a mythological figure of which the dreamer has no conscious knowledge. For instance, a woman came to the first meeting of one of my dream classes with a dream in which there was a teacher named Minerva. The student disclaimed any knowledge of mythology, yet further work on the dream demonstrated that she expected me to be very wise.

Jungian analysts believe that some people (especially people in the second half of their lives) have dreams that demonstrate this process of individuation. The beginning of the process will be heralded by dreams containing floods, earthquakes, holocausts, or similar symbols of psychic transformation.

Next will occur dreams about the *shadow* or the dark side of humanity and himself that the dreamer has rejected, condemned, or ignored. In dreams, these rejected characteristics are projected on another person, frequently a "black man." Jung felt that it is essential for all of us to re-own this universal shadow. According to his biographer, Laurens van der Post, he believed:

The individual who withdraws his shadow from his neighbour and finds it in himself and is reconciled to it as to an estranged brother is doing a task of great universal importance.

The persecution of the Jews by the Nazis and of Blacks by Whites are two hideous examples of the shadow unchecked and permitted expression on a national level.

The concept of the shadow is not a Twentieth Century or even a Nineteenth Century discovery. Plato wrote in *The Republic*: "Even in the most respectable of us there is a terribly bestial and immoral type of desire, which manifests itself particularly in dreams."

To work on your own shadow, be sure to identify, gestalt-style, with every sinister figure in your dreams. (You created this person in your dream. And every evil deed that he performs there is of your invention.) If you don't own this evil as part of your psyche, but continue to self-righteously condemn it in others, a sad and strange transformation occurs. *We tend to become what we condemn and oppose.* I suspect this is the meaning behind the New Testament injunction to "resist not evil." One of the tragedies of our history is that so often groups who wish to promote social justice conceptualize the group in power as the enemy and evil. By the time they have succeeded in overthrowing the "enemy" they have acquired all of his characteristics.

The shadow can also be a friend whom you secretly despise or envy. And it will be your flip side. If you are sexually liberated, your shadow may be someone whom you perceive as "prudish." If you are a jet-setter, expect a prosaic stay-at-home clerk-typist. Or if you maintain voluntarily a 60-hour work week, your shadow may present itself as a "bum" waiting in line for his unemployment check!

Men can expect to have dreams of their *anima* and women of their *animus*, which according to Jung are the archetypes of their unconscious and unexpressed feminine and masculine parts. Anima examples are the mysterious unknown woman, Dante's Beatrice or Liv Ullmann or Barbra Streisand. Animus examples are the dashing Arab, the mysterious stranger, the knight in shining armor, Robert Redford or Paul Newman, or frequently a group of men.

See what your anima or animus is doing in your dream. Imagine doing that activity yourself. We cannot be whole until we have reclaimed the opposite-sex side of ourselves. The man needs to reown his gentle, nurturing, artistic side, rather than projecting it onto his anima (whom he may pursue fruitlessly in his waking life). The woman needs to reown her aggressive, logical, thinking abilities, rather than always casting these onto her animus and onto the men in her life.

As the individuation process moves along, there may be dreams containing progress symbols such as voyages, highways, forks in the road, or wading across a stream from one bank to another.

Some archetypes that are sure to emerge in dreams are those of the "wise old man" and the "wise old woman." They symbolize that you are about to withdraw your projection of wisdom from your outside mentor—Plato, Christ, Swami Muktananda, your dissertation chairman, Einstein, Bertrand Russell, or whomever—and give it to the guru within.

Finally, you can anticipate having some dreams that seem to denote pure energy or the unity of all life. I'd rather not suggest illustrative examples here, but let you dream your own.

If this section on individuation dreams has caught your interest, I'd like to suggest that you do some reading about myths and symbols. At the end of the chapter is a reading list that will help you to fathom the force and usefulness of individuation dreams.

Mandala Dreams

A mandala is a perfectly balanced design whose center is particularly important. They are typically circular but they can also be square. They are frequently used in the East, especially Tibet,

as objects for contemplation. The design is constructed to encourage the viewer to focus on the center and to ignore the outer designs.

Jung was very intrigued with mandalas and studied them in many cultures. He found that his patients often had mandala dreams at that point in time when the Self emerges as the center of the integrated psyche and also at times of psychic dissociation and disorientation when some "self-healing" is needed.

Here's an example of a mandala dream:

I'm walking in the woods when I come to a very large cleared area that is square in shape, with four very tall pine trees marking each of the corners. As I move into the cleared area I step over a large, long log that is lying across my path. I notice that it is joined by two other logs which are joined by two other logs which all together form a pentagon. In the center of this pentagon is a small circle of dark rocks, some of which are carved in interesting shapes. Then I see that these rocks must have once contained a campfire. I go over to examine the area to see if there are still any live embers. I hear a roar behind me and realize that the forest is on fire. I look around and see a circle of red and yellow flames leaping above all but the highest four trees. I know that I must stay in the safety of the pentagon and the rock circle until the fire has burned itself out.

List of Suggested Readings on Myths and Symbols

1. Raymond de Becker, "A Kaleidoscope of Dream Images," in *The Understanding of Dreams and Their Influence on the History of Man*. London: Allen Unwin, 1968, pp. 301-346.
2. Manly P. Hall, *Studies in Dream Symbolism*. Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1965.
3. C.G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*. New York: Doubleday, 1964.
4. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1956.
5. Joseph Campbell, *The Mythic Image*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.
6. Edith Hamilton, *Mythology*. New York: New American Library, 1940.
7. Maria Leach, editor, *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folk Mythology and Legend*. Conklin, N.Y.: Crowell, 1972.
8. Alan Watts, *The Two Hands of God*. New York: Macmillan, 1969.
9. Edward Edinger, *Ego and Archetype*. New York: Penguin, 1972.
10. Frieda Fordham, *An Introduction to Jung's Psychology*. New York: Penguin, 1966.
11. J.E. Cirlot, *The Dictionary of Symbols*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1967.