

DECODING THE DREAM

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The first level:

Problem-solving something that is on your mind in the present. Finding the mirror is exactly like doing a puzzle. You try one piece. If it doesn't fit, you take it out and try another. I call these *points of entry*.

How To Solve the Puzzle:

ONLY YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR DREAM MEANS!

You will "click" or have an "Aha!" when you have hit on the meaning, because you have thought of it before! This process is like a dance. You investigate with a series of questions that are related to what went on *INSIDE* the dream, and then each time you come *OUTSIDE* the dream and pose the same question, this time in relation to your waking life recently. There are 5 main *points of entry*.

1. Feelings:

INSIDE THE DREAM

-How did you feel in the dream?

-Now, thinking back, did you notice any changes in feelings as the dream progressed?

Example:

-In my book I discuss a Picnic Dream in which the dreamer described how good she felt at the beginning of the dream being at a picnic, and then some ants crawling around started to make her feel uncomfortable. By the end of the dream she woke in a panic as the number of ants had grown considerably and were swarming the area. She was trying to push them away with her hands. So there was a progression of feelings and more importantly they pointed to an escalating situation.

OUTSIDE THE DREAM

-What situation do you think happened recently that made you feel in a similar way to the way you felt in the dream?

-Is there an event that occurred recently in your life in which you started out feeling one way, and then progressed to another feeling?

Example:

-What about the woman who was playing with a puppy on the table who she thought was so cute and so fun, and then suddenly the dog made all over the table, and she found herself covered in you know what. So this, as opposed to the Picnic Dream, was an instant rather than a gradual change.

The dream mirrored how she loved her job when she started it, and suddenly a new boss was appointed who was abusive and made her feel like you know what.

2. Action:

INSIDE THE DREAM

- What was the action in the dream?
- Were you running?
- Were you standing still?
- Was someone chasing you?
- Were you in a car traveling too fast or too slow?

OUTSIDE THE DREAM

Example:

-Can't run?

Questions: What do you think might be going on in your life that is making you feel like you "can't run away from" it? Or is there something going on in your life that you *have* been running away from that maybe your higher self *doesn't want you to* run from!

You might phrase a third question by asking if there is anything that is making you feel stuck?

-Can't speak?

Questions: What do you think might be going on in your life that is making you feel like you "can't speak up"? Is it that you are afraid to speak? Or is there a situation in which, you feel like you aren't being heard by someone?

-Can't hear?

Questions: Is there someone in your life who is trying to tell you things you just don't want to hear about? Or is there someone in your life who is telling you things you just don't want to know about? What about you hearing about something, and yet you just don't feel you understand what you are hearing? Like a situation you are having trouble relating to.

3. Play on words and Puns:

Notes: You must listen very closely and when taking notes, write down exactly what the dreamer said *in their words*, not yours. When having trouble finding what situation your own dream is mirroring, write the dream down and you will see your own language right there in front of you.

INSIDE THE DREAM

-Did you notice or hear any puns or play on words as the dreamer recounted their dream?

Example:

-A woman who said while describing her dream, "There were snakes all over the floor. I couldn't put my foot down!" She was having trouble "putting her foot down" in a situation with her husband.

OUTSIDE THE DREAM

-What do you think happened recently that mirrors the expression you used in describing your dream?

Example:

-A young woman, who dreamed she had three weeks to live, helped solve the puzzle of the dream, when while describing the dream, she heard herself say, "I thought I was going to die!" The question here is, "Has anything happened lately that's making you feel like you're going to die? It helped her connect to her exams being three weeks away and the language she uses to express herself when she is feeling pressure.

4. Symbols, Metaphors and Characters:

Notes: LIKE A COMPUTER'S DATA BASE, our unique and sophisticated use of symbols and metaphors are very specific to match exactly what we want to say to ourselves.

Symbols:

INSIDE THE DREAM

Examples: a bridge, a fork in the road, a ghost, a hospital

Questions:

What was your interaction or experience with the symbol like?

For example, were you in the hospital?

Is it a particular bridge that you know?

OUTSIDE THE DREAM

Questions:

Does your experience with the symbol in the dream remind you of any similar experience in waking life recently?

What comes to mind when you think of a bridge? Were you at that specific bridge with a certain person? Is that why that bridge appeared in the dream?

Gayle Delaney would ask you to describe the symbol as if having to describe it to an alien who has never seen or heard of that symbol. She would say, "Define the church. What is a church? What is its function?"

Example: Here's another point of entry:

Gerry dreamed of a huge church that was in the same neighborhood as the house he grew up in. This church is a huge landmark in his city, and as a child was a place he was not allowed to go to himself.

The church appeared in the dream, he decided, to link him to the way he was feeling in his current situation. The church reminded him of his childhood, and while the church was in the neighborhood, it was on a busy street. He would not have been allowed to stray that far away from his house, as there was traffic there. Added to that, being Jewish, the church held such a fascination and curiosity about the unknown; representing something illusive: something he longed to see but felt he didn't "belong".

The questions are: What is making you feel fascinated and curious about? Is there anything or anyone that seems illusive? Unreachable? Is there some situation in which you feel you don't quite belong? Some area you feel you are not allowed to go?

Here is the mirror of his current experience, and why it is so important to listen to the language the dreamer uses: Gerry, never having slept with anyone else in his life, was married to the same woman for 30 years. While he was happily married and *faithful*, (notice the pun) so would not consider cheating on his wife, the new receptionist in his office was sparking fascinating thoughts in Gerry's mind. So the thought of having sex with another woman contributed to the same illusive feelings that he had as a child living near a church he longed to see but "wasn't allowed to stray" to as it was a bit "too far away from home", and also felt he didn't "belong".

Metaphor:

INSIDE THE DREAM

Dictionary says:

1. A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another.
2. Something used, or regarded as being used, to represent something else; emblem; symbol.

Example: In what I call my "Kneeling Dreams" I was literally walking around on my knees, and the image was a metaphor for my having difficulty standing up to my brother! How did I solve the puzzle? While recounting the dream to him, after I said to my husband, "I couldn't stand up", he responded by asking, "Why? Who are you having trouble standing up to?" There you have an example of both metaphor and play on words.

OUTSIDE THE DREAM

Questions:

What situation happened recently that makes you feel like you can't stand up?

Is there someone who you are having trouble standing up to?

Is there a situation in which you are laying low? Trying not to be noticed?

What does kneeling make you think of? Eg. Praying? Does it make you think of doing up your shoelaces?

Characters

INSIDE THE DREAM

A little later when we discuss finding solutions and strengths in the dream, you will see that I often look to the characters in the dream as possible solutions to the issue. But in trying to uncover or decode why you had a certain dream last night, characters can hold clues as well.

Examples:

1. In the same dream example I just cited, I found myself in the final dream of that series, kneeling in the office of a man whose name is Neil! I was able to hook into it being my brother who I was having trouble standing up to by the simple response to asking myself the question, "What is the first thing that comes to my mind when I think of Neil?" The answer? Neil is a friend of my brother's.

2. One woman dreamed about The Talk Family. Now, she hadn't seen the Talk Family in 8 years, and anyways it was the children of that family that she knew when she was at camp, not the parents. Once she had analyzed the dream, it turned out that she had used The Talk Family, to link her back to camp, which was where she had first met her boyfriend. And her waking life situation was that she needed to "talk" to her boyfriend about something that was bothering her, and that she had been holding back.

OUTSIDE THE DREAM

Emotional memory of anything that has ever happened = a thing, a person, a room, a place.

Questions:

Who is this person?

Where do I know him or her, from?

What are their character traits? Is she selfish? Giving? Assertive? Shy?

What comes to my mind when I think of him?

Who in my life this week has been behaving in a similar way?

Is it me who has been behaving like them?

Note** When looking for a solution, I would ask the dreamer if the personality trait they describe is a way they might consider approaching their current situation?

5. Plot or Story:

INSIDE THE DREAM

Question: What is the plot or storyline in the dream?

Example: Lisa was driving her car, and changed lanes without turning on her signal light. She was stopped by a policeman who gave her a ticket for \$118.00.

OUTSIDE THE DREAM

Question: What do you think happened lately, a situation in which you feel there is a huge price to pay?

Is there some issue you have changed your thought or direction on?

THE SOLUTION OR STRENGTH IN THE DREAM

Level One

1. The obvious or direct solution literally pictured in the dream

Obvious: the action, or lack of it! eg. the piglet

Direct: Elias Howe and his sewing machine

2. Sometimes a discussion of what possible move to make next = outside the dream in waking life.

eg. the tornado dream

Level Two: Life-changing solutions

Tools to investigate what solution or strength appears in the dream:

1. Feelings:

Do you think the feelings you experienced in the dream fit the way you would normally feel if the dream situation really did happen to you in waking life?

2. Action:

Do you think your response to the dream situation in the dream fit the way you would normally respond if it happened to you in waking life?

Is the dream there to point you to an under reaction to your current situation? What about to an over-reaction?

3. Play on words and Puns:

The link you used to help you connect to your current situation sometimes gives you the “answer” to or material you need to begin the solution-finding process. Eg. The piglet dream.

4. Symbols, Metaphors, and Characters:

What is the end of the sentence “I always...” for you?

All the parts are you. You are born whole.

Well, you don't have to 'always' anything anymore! You can choose how you want to react or respond to each different situation life throws you.

Is a characteristic of someone in the dream a behavior you might want to apply to your current situation?

5. Plot or Story:

Other deeper points of entry:

Freud:

Can you think of a story from your past in which you felt in a similar way to the way you feel in today's situation? Or is it a situation similar to the story in the dream?

What is the story you thought of? What was the ending to the story? Do you agree with the ending? If not, what do you think would have been a more appropriate ending? Do you think your new ending can somehow apply or suit your current situation?

What is the teaching the memory has for you in your current situation?

Jung:

Can you think of a story you know from a book, a movie, a television show, a fairy tale, a bible story, or any story you know that reminds you of the story in your dream?

What is the story you thought of? What was the ending to the story? Do you agree with the ending? If not, what do you think would have been a more appropriate ending? Do you think your new ending can somehow apply or suit your current situation?

What is the teaching the story has for you in your current situation?

Another solution note:

Polarities (either/or) issues? Is there a polarity present in the dream because your unconscious is asking you to move somewhere closer to the middle ground on an attitude or opinion or behavior you have?

The Goal

-CHOICE=POWER

How do you want to react?

RE-OWN! PRACTICE (THE GYM)

IF THIS WERE MY DREAM

You can use these points of entry when working with a dreamer in the form of a question:

eg. "If this were my dream, I'd be focused on this aspect of the dream, or I would be asking myself...."

1. Feelings: What is going on this week that's making me feel this way?
2. Action: What happened that made me react like this? Or who in my life reacted like this?
3. Play on words and puns: Who am I having trouble standing up to?
4. Symbols, Metaphors, and Characters: Who in my life is behaving like this character in the dream? Is it me?
5. Plot or story: What happened recently that's similar to this story?