

# Dream Network

Since 1982

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*a Quarterly Journal Exploring Dreams & Myth*



## **Overcoming addictions: Can our dreams help?**

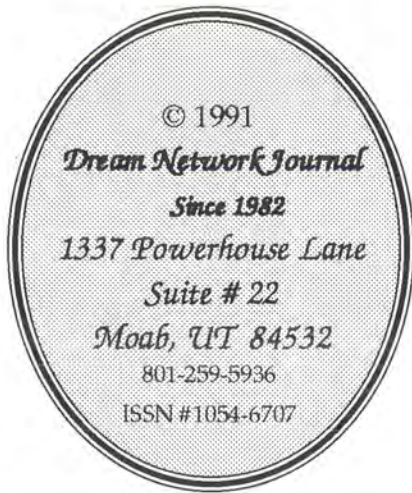
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# Statement of Purpose

Our *genre* is self help; our *purpose* is to disseminate information that will assist and empower us in taking responsibility for our emotional and spiritual well being with the help of dreams & myth. Our *goal*: to demystify dreamwork and assist with the integration of dreamsharing into our culture in whatever way of integrity is shown and given to us.

We believe that dreams are agents for change and often reveal important new insights about the life of the dreamer, both personal and social. To remember a dream can mean we are ready to understand the information that has been presented; to enact the dream's hint brings personal empowerment.

We seek to provide a balance and to give all voices and schools of thought an opportunity to be heard. There will be times when a particular area of interest will be given greater emphasis than another because of the limited space in the *Journal*, and what is surfacing that is of particular interest to the readership. The emphasis will change over time to allow for a wide range of ideas, opinions and areas of interest to appear. We ask our readers to indicate the areas they would like us to address in future issues.

## Editorial Policy

We encourage readers to submit articles - preferably with complementary graphics or photos - and letters to the editor which will serve as stimulus for more sharing and as learning tools for our readership. We invite *questions* and accounts of personal experience involving dreams and personal mythology... ranging from workable methods and transformative experience... to informal sharing, synchronicity, or insight gained in groups or therapy.

DNJ reserves the right to edit all material submitted for publication. Typewritten double-spaced manuscripts are essential, preferably on Macintosh or compatible disks. Reproducible black and white original art work is requested; photocopies are acceptable. Please include SASE with submission and/or request for guidelines.

We invite you to 'throw out a net' for dream groups (forming or needing new members), dream related research requests, and to notify us of upcoming dream related events or books which would be of interest to the readership. (See page 56 for Forthcoming Issue topics, page 58 for Classified Policy)

Theme for 1992

## GENDER

Focus for Winter:

How do dreams help us heal the wounded feminine?

What are the *new* feminine figures in women's dreams?

How are feminine qualities expressed in the dreams of both sexes?

What is the *new* relationship to the masculine side? In children's dreams?

In our Elders dreams?

How can we nurture the positive feminine?

Lifeline: Nov. 30, '91

Note regarding the Questions & Focus suggested for upcoming issues:

Everything about dreams is unpredictable and we recognize that suggesting a Question or Focus around which to sculpt each issue has the potential for disallowing a current synchronistic or transformational dream experience, an inspiration, a breakthrough or burning issue-- which may be powerfully on your mind--and DESIRES to be written, drawn, or committed to poetry.

Conversely, this publication (and editor) asks for parameters; we are limited space-wise, and choose not to wander all over creation in it--yet another paradox. It is difficult to know which priority is primary and which secondary.

Let it be agreed that if you are inspired share your experience or insight regardless of whether it 'fits' within the suggested 'Question' or 'Focus'. Given the overall synchronicity which guides this work for us as dreamers, it will undoubtedly complement the issue as a whole.

Deep Gratitude

## Three Perspectives on Dreams and Addiction:

Since our last issue, one of the most valuable individuals and friends I have had the privilege of knowing, died. In connection with the theme for this issue, David Forlines orchestrated a drug and alcohol prevention program by re-introducing *culture* - which over the course of the past five years has reversed the nearly debilitating substance abuse problem for many Northwest Coast Native tribes. His work and example positively influenced more individuals than I can begin to imagine.

This issue is dedicated to him; may he choose to return to us soon.

It has been an education as well as a pleasure collaborating with Deborah Hillman and Valerie Meluskey for this issue, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to each of them. To each contributor, thank you for being willing to engage in the contemporary ritual of sharing your experience with us; we are indebted. It is our hope that each of you reading the precious experiences given will be deepened; please pass it on to others who may benefit.

It is relevant that this fourth and final issue for 1991 - during which *Interdependence* has been our annual theme - focuses on dreams and addiction. What more compelling social, emotional and spiritual challenge faces the majority of people in the world today? You might say nuclear war or waste, crime, AIDS, overpopulation, the environment. Yet, are not all of these overwhelming concerns rooted in addiction of one kind or another: power, legal and illegal drugs, sexuality, greed, control, as examples? Those whose notion that working with the information presented in our dreams is impractical or irrelevant....an activity (or pastime) for those interested in the metaphysical, occult or the new age....will, we hope, develop a healthy respect for the profound value of dreams after reading this issue.

In the 1940's and 1950's, there were few movies in which our superstars - models for millions - did not perform most scenes with a drink in one hand and a cigarette in the other. (I recently saw a cartoon that pictured an enormous hall set up for a national convention for Adult Children of Normal Parents (ACNP). There were three individuals in attendance.) Today, "addiction" has become a prominent cultural metaphor as well as a living nightmare. It is a personal, cultural and political profit motivated war full of suffering, fear and death that we - above all other wars - must win. But before I get carried away in what could only become abstract rhetoric and blame, I will refer to a statement of one of the most effective spiritual politicians in our century, Mahatma Gandhi, who said: "The only devils in the world are the ones running around in our own hearts, and it is there the battle must be fought." When asked "How are you doing with the battle?" He replied: "Not very well. That's why I'm so tolerant."

In *When Society Becomes an Addict*, Anne Wilson Schaefer defines addiction as "any process over which we are powerless. It takes control of us, causing us to do and think things that are inconsistent with our personal values and leads us to become progressively more compulsive and obsessive." "In addiction," she says, "we do not have to deal with our anger, pain, depression, confusion or even our joy and love, because we do not feel them or we feel them only vaguely." She cites the four elements in addictive systems as being control, dishonesty, denial and perfectionism. I would add lack of self esteem and spiritual confusion.

Overall, I agree with her definition and it seems to follow that we need to develop socially acceptable - or if not acceptable, available - ways for dealing with these emotions. Since the 60's a plethora of "paths" have been developed for achieving just this and - though countless numbers of people have been healed - still, we are surrounded.

Tribal societies and the great ancient civilizations allowed for the expression of these emotions via countless year-round ritual and ceremonial activities which were, in fact, *away of life*: the enactment of their mythologies. Today we have Mardi Gras once each year in New Orleans and therapy. This is an intended exaggeration but by analogy both can be seen as only substitutes for the real thing, not available to most for personal, geographical or monetary reasons.

The strategies we have developed for overcoming our predominant cultural tendency toward addiction are highly controversial and often loaded with contradiction and hypocrisy. No 'foolproof' system or program - legal, spiritual or humanistic - has yet emerged. For instance, it is taken as a matter of fact in recovery program circles that most 'addicts' will be in treatment not twice, but several times before full 'recovery'. Why? Perhaps part of the problem is the universally accepted and assimilated term *recover*. We don't need to recover (to cover again or repress)...we need to reclaim the body/soul connection! Though the dramatic worth of Anonymous programs cannot be disputed, it is being argued that the programs themselves become addictive, and are being challenged in such recently released books as *The Real Thirteenth Step* by Tina Tessina, Ph.D. (Jeremy Tarcher, L.A. CA '91), and *The Truth About Addiction and Recovery*, by Stanton Peele and Archie Brodsky (Simon & Schuster, N.Y., NY '91). Both argue for developing self confidence and self reliance beyond - and even without - the Twelve Step programs.

Little has been written about how our dreams might help, Jungian therapist Marion Woodman being our most prolific guide. At this relatively early stage of exploring dreams and addiction, we can ultimately only pose more questions along with Catherine Knapp (*Hard Places and Rocks*, p. 15) and Wayne McEwing (*One Dream at a Time*, p. 9). However, it is clear that

dreams worked for Henry Reed (p. 13); his experience also helps us to see that overcoming addiction is a process which does not always happen overnight. Except (always the exception!) when the lucid dream experience provides the impetus for change experienced by Alex in Jeremy Taylor's article (p. 11). There's more, so much more that we may focus another issue on addictions again in the near future.

Meanwhile, let's work on becoming addicted to truly caring for ourselves, one another and the Earth. It's about time, now!

Partake, network! and please share your response with us.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hugs and welcome to Deborah Jay Hillman and Jeremy Taylor for joining our Council of Advisors.

H. Roberta Ossana

The invitation to be a guest editor of this issue came at a fitting time. Dreams and addiction was already a theme for me in the form of two different projects. First, I had recently participated (in October of 1990) in a five-day co-inquiry into the meaning of addiction. Sponsored by Lifwynn Foundation, this multi-disciplinary group conference explored the nature of addiction as a contemporary social issue. Our method of inquiry focused on group process to highlight "addictive" tendencies among us, and dream work was included as a means of exploring the healing potentials of various practices. During the conference Montague Ullman led an experiential dream group. He observed that by learning to own one's projections, in the way his method teaches, we can better avoid "addictive" ways of relating to one another.

The 19 participants in the Lifwynn conference never reached consensus on the meaning of addiction. A major unanswered question was whether all things are potentially addictive. Does "addiction" describe all manner of obsessions to which we are prone, or should it be confined to particular attachments? I had a dream during the period of preconference planning which captured the sense of gloom

and despair I associate with addiction. In the dream I'm climbing a winding flight of stairs past a seemingly endless series of cave-like recesses. They're uniformly ominous, dark and grim, and lurking in their niches and craters are malicious young boys. I quicken my step in the hope of escaping, but the caves are a never-ending presence. With an overwhelming sense of despair I think, "This must be the hell of addiction."

There is a striking parallel between my dream and some of the imagery I later discovered in Linda Schierse Leonard's *Witness to the Fire*. This personal account of the relationship between addiction and creativity asserts that addiction can bring one face-to-face with one's darkside, one's destructive capacities, one's sown inner demons. My dream occurred not only in the context of planning the Lifwynn conference, but also as I contemplated a new research project on dreams. (In this issue I briefly describe what is now a study-in-progress on the role of dreams in the lives and work of substance abuse professionals.) In light of both the Lifwynn project and the study I was planning, I'd been thinking about what we might learn from dreams concerning the metaphor of addiction. My preoccupation with this question helped to "incubate" my dream, which links addiction with a tormenting kind of imprisonment. This seems to be a common image for the experience of addiction, in terms of both cause and effect.

Using dreams—one's own and others'—to help explore the meaning of addiction is just one aspect of the relationship between dreams and addiction. In addition, as several authors in this issue attest, dream work is a helpful tool in the personal journey to overcome addiction. We can also look at the role of dreams among professionals—both clinicians and researchers—working in various areas of the substance abuse and addiction field. And although this issue touches only on the personal and social aspects of the topic, the connection between dreams and addiction has a physiological component, as well. For we know that alcohol and other drugs can disrupt the sleep cycle, altering the very nature of dreaming.

Deborah Jay Hillman

To live in a physical body on a physical planet gives us the opportunity to live with *substance*. Given a portion of creative energy to use however we will to use it, we constantly experience the results of creative and destructive uses of this energy in the physical realm. In this sense we are all familiar with *substance abuse*.

If we have some universal understanding of life on earth as a realm natural to substance abuse and habitual behavior, we can be compassionate and honest in our investigation of the pain and unconsciousness that leads to addictive behavior, accompanies it, and spreads in its wake to others that happen to be in close range.

The very drives that lead to compulsive behavior are generally those of pleasure, excitement, and comfort. These are positive desires. Apparently, the more our need to be happy to be alive was not met as children, the more we continue to seek this satisfaction. Pia Melody defines child abuse as any behavior less than nurturing or that shames the child. As a result of abuse or experience that prevented us from flourishing or being free to be authentic, we develop our defenses of suppression, repression, minimization, denial, dissociation, delusion and other creative responses. Here is where dreaming comes in. In our dreams we will meet up again with our true feelings, desires, values and traumas—every disowned facet of experience precious for recovery of our wholeness. Our dreams blare out the truth and dunk us fully clothed in our masks into the waters of truth. Learning how to work with our dreams leads us away from playing life as victims, to transforming powerlessness into creative action.

Consider what addictive behaviors and slipping mean in dreams: drunkenness, speeding, shooting up, binging, etc..... These are usually ways of avoiding some pressing reality or false attempts to satisfy healthy human needs that one despairs of meeting. We all deserve to enjoy life. Addictive behaviors lead to anti-life—neither loving the earth nor being in touch with heaven. But our dreams visit us daily with our truth, with a grand overview, and even a sense of humor. Enjoy yourself! We have a spiritual imperative to enjoy life—honestly, not through aberrant behavior. To give and receive love, to enjoy and appreciate life, a challenge to all levels of our being.

Valerie Meluskey



## Responses

### BRINGING DREAMS BACK TO CHRISTIANITY

Thank you so much for sending the Winter 1991 issue of DNJ. That was very thoughtful of you and deeply appreciated by me. Father Wahl's article signals what is really happening. So many Christians are being led by the Spirit to act as the wise Scribe that Jesus spoke about—bringing out of the storehouse of tradition the old as well as the new. And tuning into dreams is rooted firmly in our Christian tradition.

I have conducted a seminar each week for men and women—mostly men—on dreams and spiritual growth. I began it with fear and trepidation. I was pleasantly surprised to find most if not all very much open to listening to God speaking in their dreams. Also I find understanding dreams helpful in my work as spiritual director, as well as with a group of middle-aged men who meet with me once a month to probe their dreams in an atmosphere of prayer.

I just love DNJ. Again, thanks for your kindness and for editing this fine Journal.

*Father Joseph Sedley, C.P., West Hartford, CN*

♡ PRAISE ♡

I have received the DNJ for years and have noticed the changes and improvements over time. The last issue, V10 #s 2&3 was outstanding! I loved the improved layout, quality of images and articles, as well as the new section for Dream Educators. This journal is invaluable to any dreamworker and I support the entire operation wholeheartedly.

Bravo and keep up the good work!!

*Rosemary Watts, LA, CA*

I love DNJ! I admire the genuine scholarship that goes into it. It is involved with the wonder of life--it is not occult. I feel the magazine is a contribution to the uplifting of mankind--it is important! I appreciate the sincere exploration exhibited. It contains a wealth of dream information on every page.

*Bonnie Langhaar, Urbana, IL*

I have just received my first issue of the *Dream Network Journal*. I am delighted! I feel like I'm home. I knew at once that I wanted to submit an article, and I'm working on that now.

*Marianne Marple, North Whitefield, MA*

### ON DREAMS and ADDICTION

I have just received my very first copy of DNJ, and I want to say that having already devoured the contents of its pages, I'm thrilled with what I have found! There are two issues I wish to address. The first on "On Dreams and Addiction." I have recently completed a treatment program for drug rehabilitation. I cannot directly answer the questions posed in the journal, but can say that in the last couple of years before I finally admitted to my addiction and addictive personality, I had dreams about my addiction that were very powerful. When I look back I can see they were speaking very clearly to me about the effects the addiction was having on my life, and about the obsessiveness of my addictions. I can say that these dreams, coupled with other events in my life, brought the full impact to consciousness and were ultimately responsible for my finally seeking help. During treatment, I had a dream that my ex-boyfriend offered me drugs; I refused and walked away. I was very grateful for this dream because it told me of my sincere desire at a deep spiritual level. It told me that I truly did want to change my life, that I could move on beyond my addiction and obsessiveness. There are many dreams I've had that I do not understand, but the dreams that are clear and understandable cannot be ignored. If I choose to ignore them, I am only lying to myself.

The second issue concerns the Dream Educator's Network. Being a new subscriber, I do not know much about this, but I can say that the reason I subscribed to this journal was because I want to be educated about dreams and their meaning in my life. Since I was a young child, I have had very clear dreams and can still remember some of them since that time. Above all else, dreams have been consistently a strong presence in my life and at this time in my recovery. I am grateful for this realization. I want to study dreams and hope that, in whatever context it is done, I can become a part of the DEN as a student.

I am very happy to be a subscriber in the hope that this journal will place me on a path blessed by my Higher Power and will lead me to a place of understanding and interpretation of dreams for myself and others. I am grateful.

*Suzanne D. Stanford, Ontario CANADA*

♡ MORE PRAISE! ♡

Thank you for *Dream Network Journal*! Dreamers are certainly in need of networking. I am a dream consultant and teacher and am so glad to advise my fellow dreamers to pick up an issue of the Journal. Your perspective is both logical and mystical.

Just what we need!

*Sherry Healy, Ellicott City, MD*

## GODDESS GE



The image I received of the earth goddess Ge was for me a rather illuminating experience, a religious one. I saw this image in a dream in 1969, and the great green featureless face frightened me. I felt as if this strange being who had intruded into my consciousness knew everything about me. The figure, its feet trailing off into space, appeared in cosmic proportions, the lucent hand appearing to be a moon, or a planet, coming over the horizon of the body. I immediately knew it was a figure, even though abstract, but I had no idea who. It certainly didn't fit any image of a paternal God. At that time, I sent it to a friend, Sally Bailey of Portland OR, who stated that she felt it was something wonderful that had been lost in antiquity. Neither of us, then, were the least bit familiar with Greek mythology, our American educations having been lacking. I saw this figure again in a flash in the mid-seventies, while awake, at which time I recorded it in pastels for preservation.

In 1983, I began writing a story which I had placed in the Archaic period of Greece (600 BC). Upon doing research for this book, I came across a passage in a text saying that members of the Orphic cult believed the universe was elliptical in shape and that Ge/Gaia, the triple-headed earth goddess, was at its center (the center of the Orphic egg). I had seen—both in 1969 and the mid-seventies—this figure inside a cosmic-blue egg. Astounded, from this moment on, I labeled my vision Ge.

Upon traveling to Delphi in 1983, I saw there in the Delphi museum some figurines of a reclining figure. They were very small, in a case on the second floor. I immediately thought of my vision and sensed they were of Ge. Excited, I hurried to get museum personnel to inquire about these unlabeled artifacts. A young man who worked there followed me upstairs and when I pointed, with curiosity, to the figurines, he appeared surprised as if wondering why I would concentrate on such insignificant pieces when the museum housed such famous treasures as the Naxian sphinx and the Charioteer. He answered my inquiry with obvious indifference and amusement saying, "Oh, we've found a lot of those in the Cave of the Sibyls. We don't know who they represent." Thanks to my vision I knew who they were, but I remained silent.

Bonnie Langhaar, Urbana, IL

## ARE WE TOO INCLINED TOWARD JUNG?

I want to register my reactions to the last issue. It was well orchestrated and the articles were excellent. There is something, however, that keeps gnawing at me: the tone, as I experience it, seems largely Jungian and geared to the level of spirituality his writings inspired. I have a great deal of respect for Jung's writings on dreams which I regard as far more relevant to an understanding of dreams than were Freud's. Jung's work, however, was not oriented to a hard-nosed assessment of social factors and the role they play in our lives and in our dreams. I don't know if you have access to the early issues of the DNB under Bill Stimson's editorship. Bill was tuned into this aspect of dreaming in a very sound and relevant way as well as being open to all other aspects of the dream.

Perhaps my concerns are not well-grounded, but I'd hate to see the DNJ become a layman's guide to spirituality through a one-sided application of Jungian thought. To do justice to dreams and myth one has to explore both inner and outer reality. Read this as a healthy critique, as I'm well aware of the superhuman job you've done in resuscitating the DNJ and bringing it to the high level of professionalism it now displays.

Montague Ullman, M.D. Ardsley, NY

*Dr. Ullman's critique is well taken, though I do not agree that Jung's work is not relevant to social factors... particularly his theory on shadow, I believe that the process of bridging Jungian theories and perspectives into mainstream dream work and social issues - in lay language - is where one challenge lies. Our primary commitment, however, is to the spirit which initiated this publication and Bill Stimson's vision of bringing dreams 'home'. Please review our Statement of Purpose (p. 3).*

*Given what could appear to be an overtly 'Jungian' theme for 1992 - Gender - and Dr. Ullman's keen and welcome criticism, I particularly ask those of you inspired to submit articles throughout the year to engage in helping to disarm the battle of the sexes.... from your experience. There is an unprecedented metamorphosis occurring as regards the innate qualities and social 'roles' ascribed to male and female at this time... a time of opportunity for us and for future generations. Jung - and Jungians - are invited to contribute but the ordeal began long before his time. It will be an exciting and challenging year!*

*It already is.*

*(Editor ♡)*

### *Dream Network Journal*

*...invites your opinions, comments and ideas. You are encouraged to respond to any and all material we publish. We do reserve the right to edit responses for reasons of clarity and space.*

# *In Response to the Questions:*



Artwork by Derric Keegan

*How have dreams been meaningful for you or someone close to you  
in dealing with addictions?*



# One Dream at a Time

## Dreams & Recovery

by Wayne McEwing

*I*f addiction is the great teacher, the great lesson for all of us is humility. First and last, addiction teaches us that we are human and with our humanity comes knowledge of our limitations. Our willpower, which the world promised us would be our greatest ally, turns out to be both a liar and a cheat. The breaking open of humility comes from the first time we ask for help from another person who has faced the same bloodied stone wall, or from some source of power larger than our despair.

The addict in recovery knows as few others do just how precious any glimpse of clarity or guidance can be. Every day life depends on it, so when I sit down to work with the dreams of men and women facing their addictions, we waste no time.

The people I work with who are in Twelve Step programs are beginning to develop the tools they need to work and to love. They may not be applying them consistently yet, but at least the Twelve Steps and slogans of Anonymous programs provide them with what I call peasant wisdom: a flexible, common-sense set of suggestions on how they can start living their lives to their own satisfaction.

I know that before I began the program nothing in my over-educated and supposedly "successful" life ever spelled out these basics. It is not surprising that when I look back at records of my Jungian analysis, most of my dream-time was devoted to painstakingly groping for lessons like: "Easy does it," "Live and let live," or "One day at a time." Unfortunately, my analyst at that time found all the vivid, seductive images of addiction fascinating and since we shared no common language about recovery, we had no way of recognizing the inner messages of health.

Today I am not so easily fooled. Today I look as squarely as I can at images of addiction in my clients' dreams and - like dragons measuring the enemy - the addictions look at me.

I have learned that they are embarrassingly obvious once the conscious denial that protects them is removed. In food addiction, for instance, people come in week after week intensely ashamed that once again they had dreams of eight dozen chickens deep-fried in fat and vats of melting chocolate chip ice cream. Some weeks they simply cannot bring themselves to talk about the number and intensity of their food dreams. Finally they are forced to admit that conscious awareness hasn't changed what is going on inside them every night. They are powerless over the content of their dreams. At this stage it feels both to me and to the dreamer as if the addiction is flaunting its autonomy, establishing its identity with a new energy.

*F*or the dreamer, these dreams can take on the quality of nightmare. For those who have any question about which addiction or combination of addictions they are facing, each one comes across with a brutal clarity. Although I know of no study that documents large samples of characteristic dream themes for various addictions, from my experience I am not surprised when sexually addicted clients report dreams of being tied down and dismembered by chainsaws. Similarly, those addicted to obsessively controlling behavior dream of being raped and abused by brutal police and wolf-eyed Nazis.

Just as the process of recovery in Twelve Step programs involves a searching and fearless moral inventory of behavior, we can dare to search these images for clues as to the exact nature of the addiction with which we are dealing. In the case of the food addict's dreams, we can start to look in more detail at why and how some of the food is contaminated, and what dream figures are offering it. Frequently dreamers encounter figures from their Twelve Step meetings making suggestions that are sometimes supportive, sometimes untrustworthy. The issue of what information to trust becomes increasingly complicated, and finally the dreamer begins to realize that the "addiction" is formulating questions that are, I believe, impossible to answer without help.

For several of my clients addicted to food, night after night, week after week, their dreams pose one variation after another of the

quintessential question: "How much is enough?" Thriving ecosystems will die if the dreamer doesn't find a way to stuff food through the closed glass container. Meat has probably been left out too long but it seems a pity to throw it away. Food on a grill looks delicious, but a portion of it is reported by strangers to be contaminated. A friend in recovery offers a plate of shimmering white fish, barely cooked and possibly contaminated with mercury, which he caught and brought back as a special gift from the Artic. (For these dreamers, the question of whether they are actually hungry never comes up in the dream.)

The variations seem endless. Like a Zen koan, the questions will not go away and refuse to be resolved. The whole person is stymied, stretched and humiliated. Slowly, endlessly, the dreams grind on, a study in non-movement. Slowly the dreamer begins to accept the reality of defeat, to acknowledge that his or her own resources are not enough to solve the maddening and increasingly complicated riddle.

Eventually, in the dream's time - not the dreamer's, a *shift* occurs, and trustworthy help appears for the first time. Without explanation, choices become possible, decisions can be made that just a few nights before would have been unthinkable. By the next night the glimmer of hope may be undermined, discredited, *but it does reappear*.

The trick at this stage is for both of us to keep aware of the change, often silently, with bated breath; to resist the urge to capture it, to do something about it. Like a long-awaited breath of fresh air, the shift can sometimes feel so natural when it does come that it is easy to overlook. Only by patiently staying with the dream sequence will we watch it strain, falter, subside...and eventually gain strength.

As we take part in this struggle, it is natural to want consciousness and sweet reason to win out. What is all too easy to forget is that we

are dealing with an addiction. What has been proven time and again - and what we all want to disprove "just this once" - is that reasonable medical and therapeutic solutions alone are never enough. As we get smarter, the addiction gets smarter as well. As our powers increase, the subtlety of the disease does too.

I believe we have to do this dream work in a context, a context of meetings, sponsorship, program literature and the full network of support necessary for men and women in recovery. Without it, our bashful encounters with health can, and often do, turn to searing defeat in an instant.

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"Eventually, in the  
dream's time - not the  
dreamer's - a shift  
occurs and trustworthy  
help appears....."

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Dream work, in my experience, doesn't lead to recovery. What dream work does do is allow for "conscious contact" with the mysterious forces of recovery at work in each of us. It allows us to look at the struggle from a more all-encompassing point of view, to see the strengths and weaknesses of both the individual in recovery and of the addiction itself. It even allows us to consider that those strengths and weaknesses might be identical.

Sharing the dreams, meditating on them alone and with others is just another tool we can put to use. Fortunately, living with dream, like living with sobriety, is something that can be learned by watching others and working diligently at it.

One of the most gratifying parts of my work is to watch clients discover how much at home they are with their dreams. Finally, these individuals in recovery have found

a place where they can experiment with life in safety. They are allowed to be outrageous, to test the outermost edges of their human limitation, to feel (sometimes for the first time) the exhilaration of play. They can be both in control and out of control at the same time.

No wonder their affinity for dream work is so strong. Again and again, to enter both the world of recovery and the dream world, my clients and I have to go through the same helpless, excruciating moment of not-knowing. In both worlds, words, ideas and images are not what they first seem to be. What at first appeared meaningless suddenly carries great richness of meaning; what might have seemed important deflates before our eyes. Just when we think we have something figured out, we discover that the opposite is also true.

In both worlds, we learn that change and growth are the presiding spirits of the place. Any rigidity or resistance to change on our part is bound to get us stuck in some very serious trouble. The ground rules are clear. Just as the addict has final responsibility for his recovery, the dreamer has the final word on his dreams. Like a sponsor in a twelve step program, my job is to be present, to listen, to give support, to speak from my own experience, but not to fix anything or to give advice. We both have to acknowledge that ultimately neither of us is in charge. Dream work, like recovery, is a spiritual process.

This seems a simple enough concept, but it certainly isn't easy to talk about. Most of the work on dreams by the great analysts, theoreticians and researchers in this century has been aggressively, self-consciously "scientific." Any other approach is looked on as unprofessional; probably dangerous and irresponsible as well. (For a long time Twelve Step recovery from addiction was looked upon in the same way.)

If the spiritual perspective is missing, the power of dream work is limited to the human skills of the dream worker and the client. It is comforting to remember that even a man of the stature of Carl Jung finally had to declare one of his alcoholic patients a hopeless case and that in so doing he precipitated a chain of events completely beyond his control that led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous. At the risk of sounding like a quack to his contemporaries, Jung had the courage to admit that he was powerless in the face of addiction and the vision to suggest that his patient's only hope of recovery might be some sort of life-changing spiritual experience.

Today, every time two people in recovery sit down together with a dream, they quietly reaffirm that hope. Talking about it, reasoning things out together, applying the lessons and traditions of recovery, they begin to release the power caught fleetingly in the dream.

In this process, trust in the dream and in our ability to find a way to honor it in our conscious life is more important than theory or technique. Fortunately, we are free to draw on whatever part we wish of the dazzling wealth of knowledge amassed over the centuries - in particular in our own century - about dream contents and the structures inherent in our minds and personalities.

This approach to dreams probably needs no title, but as a short-hand for explaining what we do, I call it Twelve Step Dreamwork. Like recovery, it can be learned, it can be shared, and it can shed light on exactly where we are at any point in our lives, one dream at a time. ♪

*Wayne McEwing, a dreamworker in Boston and Newburyport, MA, is currently working on a book entitled Twelve Step Dreaming. Address correspondence to: 2 Melrose St. - 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02116*



## *Puff the Magic Dragon*

### **Kicking the Smoking Habit: One Lucid Dreamer's Experience**

by Rev. Jeremy Taylor

Any dream in the midst of which the dreamer has the clear thought, "Oh, I get it! This is a dream," is said to be "lucid." In a lucid dream, the dreamer recognizes the true nature of the experience as it is taking place. In the lucid dream state the "awakened" dreamer can generate amazing insights and release extraordinary creativity. Old habits can be transformed, creative energies can be mobilized and directed, problems can be solved and transcended, denials and repressions can be raised to consciousness and withdrawn, and confusing feelings, emotions and intuitions can be clarified and harmonized.

All of these marvelous things are also accomplished by remembering and working with ordinary, non-lucid dreams. In lucid dreams, however, this healing work is sometimes woven dramatically into the dream itself, radically and "magically" extending the range and possibility of dreaming experience.

For example, a man (I will call him "Alex") dreamt:

*I am fleeing from a frightening, fiery dragon through a scorched and charred and still smoldering landscape. I run and run, until the magical moment of realization that this is all a dream! I suddenly "get it" that my terror and the pursuing monster and the whole scene are simply things that are happening in my dream. At that point, I turn and face the dragon and demand to know what it is doing, chasing me around and terrorizing me like this in my dream.*

*The fire-breathing dragon stops and replies telepathically "I am your smoking addiction!" As the monster "speaks" I have an ironic appreciation of how appropriate and even funny it is for my smoking addiction to appear in my dream as a "fire-breathing dragon."*

*In that moment of lucid realization, the dragon suddenly seems to change. It doesn't really look any different, but its "expression" seems to change. It isn't so scary any more.*

*It begins to look winsome, almost charming-- "Puff, the Magic Dragon." It's more like a big, old, familiar, friendly family dog than a menacing, deadly fire breather.*

*My lucidity allows me to look even more closely at the transformed monster and I see clearly that there is nasty, sticky, brown slime covering its entire body, and that the noxious smoke is oozing and sputtering from every orifice, even from around its eyes and from under and between its scales. I smell this awful, rancid, repulsive odor coming from it. My revulsion returns and in the dream I look at it and say with all my heart, "Get away from me! I no longer want you in my life!"*

When he awakened, Alex was amazed to discover that he no longer craved the sensation of smoke in his lungs. Perhaps even more importantly, the desire for the instant and reliable sense of "companionship" that smoking had always given him was also gone. He has not gone back to smoking since the dream.

By creating such a compelling image combining both the negative and positive elements of the addiction, his dream allowed Alex to recognize these previously unacknowledged dynamics with full emotional awareness. The "fire-breathing dragon" suddenly appears like a "big old familiar friendly family dog." Alex's decision, "I no longer want you in my life," was made in such a way that it "stuck." That is because it was made with full consciousness, directly in the face of the "old friend" with full emotional awareness of the "comfortable, reliable relationship" he was giving up.

As the dream symbolically depicts, a crucial part of Alex's addiction to cigarettes was emotional. It was centered in a preconscious fear of loneliness. One of the reasons that it had been so hard for him to quit prior to the dream was the illusion of control "lighting up" provided when feelings of loneliness appeared. His failure to consciously recognize and appreciate this dynamic component of his addiction also appears to have been the main stumbling block to "kicking the habit."

Another implication of the lucid dream thought that the addiction is "like a...family dog" is that his smoking habit may have been unconsciously fostered in his family of origin. During childhood, Alex may have been predisposed to smoke addictively by watching and being emotionally drawn into parental and sibling substance addictions and denials. In any case, the illusory emotional security that smoking provided had to be consciously acknowledged before it could be consciously relinquished. Without becoming conscious of these previously hidden emotional dynamics of the addiction, Alex's desire to be free of his noxious smoking habit could not lead to decisive action.

In my experience, such instances of spontaneous lucidity in dreams occur most often in association with corresponding moments of "lucidity" in waking life. When a person realizes that his or her true circumstances are in fact substantially different from what he or she had always supposed, then that person is likely to experience a spontaneous lucid dream. In such a dream, the true nature of the sleeper's experience—i.e. that it is really a dream—is consciously recognized in a way that reflects the sort of realization about what's really going on in waking life. Most often, this

happens when a person withdraws a set of habitual projections in a waking-life situation.

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*"As Alex's dream suggests, dreams can also provide a venue for withdrawing denials and self deceptions... and thus for overcoming addictions."*

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An addiction is any habitual activity that insulates a person from full, conscious experience of his or her feelings and emotions. Addiction can involve various substances and emotional/sexual encounters, but for some people, prayer and good works also serve an addictive purpose. It doesn't matter what the activity is, only whether it functions to diminish the conscious impact of feelings and emotions. Dreams, because they come in the service of health and wholeness, point to the true addictive nature of even the most "laudable" behaviors when they serve this emotion-denying purpose. As Alex's dream suggests, dreams can also provide a venue for withdrawing denials and self-deceptions....and thus, for overcoming addictions. Ψ



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# From Alcoholic to Dreamer:

## A Personal Story

by Henry Reed

*Editor's note: Henry Reed edited the Dream Network Bulletin in the mid-'80s. We welcome him to these pages once again and are honored to share his special story.*

It was a good friend, an artist whom I held in special esteem who first introduced me to the value of dreams. He shared with me how his dreams were enriching his life. He told me, for example, how he had first seen his inexpensive but beautiful oceanside studio in a dream and then located it in a town after some searching.

It was 1968 and I was preparing for my PhD research examinations at U.C.L.A.. Reading about dream psychology at that time I learned that our oft-forgotten dreams were regarded as a natural, necessary and regular part of the sleep cycle, but the specific value of dreams remained undetermined.

A few psychologists claimed they could deduce insights into a person's deep personality structure from dreams, as if dreams were meaningful symptoms. Back then, having dreams interpreted was like a proctological exam: only the doctor could read the signs, the patient wouldn't really want to look for oneself, and it was something done in private, as it was somewhat embarrassing.

While I had been studying dreams as a clinical phenomenon of ambiguous reputation, my artist friend was actively engaging his dreams as an extension of his creativity. He introduced me to the work

dreams as an instrument of guidance, as if having an internal compass to point the way, had an irresistible appeal for me. It was on such a note of inspiration that I finally dedicated myself to seek my dreams. I wanted to overcome my amnesia for them.

As a New Year's resolution I began: I bound together a sheaf of papers into a handmade journal and covered it with some attractive material. I wrote a dedication prayer in the journal, asking that through dreams I might be able to see through the fog of my life. I wanted to connect with any meaningful life plan that might be within me. New Year's Day, 1969, was to be the first day of my new life!

I awakened that next morning without recalling any dreams. I tried the day after, but with no luck. I kept my journal by my bedside every night, night after night, but still with no success. It was disheartening but I persisted. Beyond my abstract, intellectual curiosity about dreams, I had good reason to persist. I had personal

need. I was a troubled person, searching for something that would allow me to feel good about myself, something to give me a sense of direction and a new lease on life. I was 25 years old at the time, in the seventh year of my career as an alcoholic. I didn't know it, but the effects of the alcohol were making it very difficult for me to remember my dreams.



Artwork by Henry Reed

of Edgar Cayce, who suggested that if you or I were to make an active attempt to become involved with our dreams, we would become the best interpreter of our own dreams and would be led to know how to receive the dream's help. What a different perspective! My friend's stories of his dreams were exciting and gave me a sense of great new possibilities. Being able to use

It wasn't until sometime in March, over three months later, that I finally did remember a dream. I almost didn't remember it! I was already out of bed, groping in my closet for a shirt, when I remembered something about a flying goat. Aware that it wasn't an ordinary memory, but perhaps something of a dream, I sat back down on the bed and it gradually came back to me. I wonder how different my life might be today had I not been given a second chance to remember that dream. Here it is:

*I am camping in a tent on the land of an Old Wise Man. This land is his special sanctuary and I feel very grateful to be here. I am standing in the barnyard face to face with the Old Man. His deep eyes fix my gaze and I feel his presence quite strongly. I then notice behind him a flying goat! Yes, indeed, this place is special, and magical. The goat flies back and forth, a few feet off the ground, around the barnyard, then flies off into the barn, not to be seen again. Then to my left I see a haystack, and lying there an empty bottle of wine. I realize that someone has been there sneaking a drink. I say to the Old Man, "Hey, look at that!—there's a drunk on this property, sneaking around to drink. We've got to find him and get rid of him, kick him out! He doesn't belong in such a special place as this." But the Old Man faces me patiently, his deep eyes penetrating my innermost self, and replies, "Henry, that man is a guest of mine, and was invited here long before you arrived. I put that wine there myself, to lure him in so that I can feed him." I look back at the haystack and see an empty jar of mayonnaise and an empty bag of potato chips. Potato chips and mayonnaise, I wonder--what kind of food is that? I guess my image of a wise man would have him serving health food. But my presuppositions are brushed aside, for in the presence of the Old Man's generous acceptance of the drunkard, as mysterious as it may seem to me, my own self-righteousness sticks out in embarrassing and shameful contrast. I feel exposed and can't look the Old Man in the eye anymore. I wander off back into the forest to return to my little round tent.*

This first dream proved very important and from the moment it was first recalled, it played upon my waking mind. Was the goat a symbol of my astrological sign, Capricorn? I wondered. There was a drunk in the dream--could that relate to my own drinking? As I asked myself questions I couldn't answer, I was discovering just what it is like to puzzle over the meaning of the images in a dream. I couldn't make much sense of my dream, but one thing stood out: the face of that Old Man and my feelings while talking with him. His intentions for the drunkard seemed very puzzling to me, but clearly my own attitude was inappropriate--my feeling of shame over being so righteous and uppity was a vivid memory from the dream. The idea that the Old Man purposefully left wine for the drunkard as bait suggested to me that perhaps there was some purpose or meaning to my problem drinking that I just couldn't see. Yet the food being left for the drunkard--potato chips and mayonnaise--seemed so peculiar that I had a hard time accepting that it might make any sense. The question of meaning was left unresolved. But I no longer felt quite comfortable being so judgmental about my drinking. This reaction was my first clue about getting help from dreams. A meaningful interpretation of the dream was not available. Instead, it was the natural, emotional effect of the dream upon me that proved important.

The impact of the dream upon me was that I tried to be acceptant of my drinking and continue my quest for dreams. The former was much easier

than the latter. I still found dreams hard to recall. I wasn't able to record another dream until July, and after a whole year, I was only on page three of my dream journal. I graduated from U.C.L.A., accepted a faculty position at Princeton University, and continued to recall only an occasional dream. That next summer I took a vacation and devoted myself exclusively to remembering my dreams. I would sleep late and then spend at least an hour when I awakened to recall as much of my dreams as possible. It took me that much work to catch on to how to recall them!

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"...that moment came of 'bottoming out'. I sunk into the despair of the truth: I knew that I would never voluntarily quit drinking--I loved it too much! I felt totally helpless and sullenly contemplated my future as an unredeemable drunken bum."

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While I continued to record my dreams, my drinking began to create problems for me I couldn't ignore. I suppose my story as an alcoholic is typical: repeated confrontations with the problems brought on by my drinking were met with repeated vows to quit drinking. These vows would then be quickly forgotten as my compulsion got the better of me, until finally that moment came of "bottoming out." I sunk into the despair of the truth: I knew that I would never voluntarily quit drinking--I loved it too much! I felt totally helpless and sullenly contemplated my future as an unredeemable, drunken bum.

One night, feeling very lonely and sorry for myself, I drank myself to sleep, only to find myself awake a few hours later, lost in uncontrollable sobbing. My crying was the carryover of this dream:

# Hard Places & Rocks

by Catherine Knapp

**D**uring the course of my anoxeria\* and addiction to caffeine a detached, disembodied voice tormented me. I allowed it to take control, even identified with it, and became reduced to a physical, mental and spiritual ghost. Dreams were the only area in my life outside the voice's control, and in sleep a twin self appeared. Interaction between me/the voice and this other self in dreams revealed, during the times that I was willing to listen, a complex personal mythology. Dreams began to concisely describe the roots behind my pain. A selection of these dreams is presented in an order that is non-linear, yet which most nearly approximates my psychological experience.

While my double leads me out of addiction to other ways of being, a parallel movement occurs between the disembodied voice and dreams. When the power of this disembodied voice diminishes (as the others within gain strength), when the addictive force no longer holds, when we finally ask, honestly wanting to know, isn't the continual response of the psyche/universe amazing?

Why would a person exist mainly on caffeine? Why would she dissolve her flesh and even bones with a wish to disappear? Is it escape she desires? Is it painlessness, invisibility, spirituality, death? Why does she maintain an unruffled facade behind which a wire is stretched so tight it roars? Why does a person do this to her self?

*A doctor says my double will die soon because she has been cut off from the world and not allowed to feed on it. (4-1-83)*

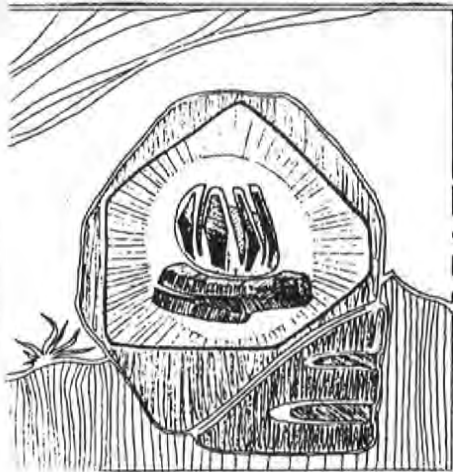
Who is the addict trying to silence, starve, suffocate?

*I am two women. One is dunking the other in water which is slowly putting out her life force. I leave the situation to find wood to start a fire, feeling that the fire will restore her. I light some small sticks and hope it works. (7-30-85)*

If a life has been set-up, ordered, without space for this other self, how does one make room?

*In a museum shaped like an ear, there are sculpted figures lying on the floor. As I step over one, she reaches up and grabs me - she will not let go. Someone says, "Your shadow found you!" (5-16-87)*

How does one cope when the addiction, the only sweetness/high/illusion/forgetfulness/pleasure/submersion, turns poisonous?



Declan Westcott

*Catherine Knapp, a sister dreamer and subscriber shares with us this series of dreams and the provocative questions they evoke for her.*

*There is frequently more wisdom in asking the right questions than in knowing the right answers; likewise, the answers are often in asking the right question.*

*Trying to turn on a light, I touch a snake's head and it bites me. The poison will kill me unless I dilute it. This can be done by paying attention to the poison as it travels through my body. Or if She will willingly be bitten by the snake also. (11-24-88)*

Who does the addict hold hostage in her self, concealed in fear and anger? Who is this hope remaining in Pandora's box, in the substance of the addiction?

*Someone introduces me to a woman who lives in a pond. She has a face with features covered by skin. She looks like an embryo. She feels colors through her skin. (1-6-82)*

When it becomes alive, as a force or being beyond one's control, what is the addiction's message?

*A bundle is precious to me. I keep it hidden under the bed and don't know what is in it. Someone threatens to reveal its contents and finally cuts it open. There is a being in there. It is my death; it is personal, related to me. (3-8-88)*

Has the addict been enacting a fearful, fascinated dance with death all along? And when the sting hits, when the poison of the addiction explodes....?

*My double stands waiting. I come and stand opposite her. Between us our disembodied hands pull the entire image apart - it splits like an egg. (12-22-87)*

At the other side of an addiction does the void ever end? Does one find any kind of satisfaction?

After disintegrating, how do we exist?

*I am watching my double, naked, sitting on the ground. She opens her legs and out of her falls a small pile of rocks. The rocks begin smouldering, smoking and each rock's center burns out so that they are all jagged rings. I put them on my hands and arms, and over my head like jewelry. Soon I see a small rock hill with short shrubs and grasses, and I know this place is home. (2-8-88)*

How do we exist?

*I visit a museum in the mountains but am disappointed by the sense that nothing changes. Moving on, deeper into the mountains, I come to a place where light patterns of many subtle colors/textures move and transform. It is as if the mountains are composed of these light patterns, and I am too!*

*By realizing this, I am beginning to feel.*

(712-91)\|



Artwork by Catherine Xiapp

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## "15 Simple Guidelines"

by Dick McLeester

When we look at the broad culture we live in, one sees considerable misinformation and fear regarding dreams mixed with honest curiosity and excitement. Collectively, we are babies when it comes to understanding the language of our dreams; most people do not understand how to share dreams with others in a way that will be a positive experience, one from which they may learn something new. Sharing in dream groups is an excellent way to turn this around in a safe, confidential environment.

If we are to have any effect in educating the broader public, we can help by learning and practicing the simple rules that might make sharing dreams a safe and positive experience, anytime, with anyone. The following guidelines were drafted to serve this function. I originally put them down on paper when a local group organized a community theater piece called *Dreamdance of Ata*, inspired by the novel *The Kin of Ata*. Suddenly, 100 people in the area began gathering in 12 groups to share dreams. While their task was to look for good theatrical material from each group, for many this was a new experience in dream sharing. It seemed an intriguing idea, yet one that could have disastrous results if there were no guidelines to follow.

The following is my response.

**1) Dreams are private experience.** No one has to share any dream unless they feel safe and make the decision to comfortably do so;

**2) Confidentiality** Dreams are not material for idle gossip. Remember that the dreamer has taken a big risk opening up and sharing their inner world with you. Act with sensitivity and caring both in the dream sharing process and afterward.

**3) Always tell the dream in first person present tense,** as though you are experiencing the dream right now. This helps you to connect with and re-experience the dream, as well as

making it much easier for others to listen. I suggest you write it down in this way as well. This may take an effort at first, but makes a big difference in the long run.

**4) Be as expressive as possible** in the telling of the dream, showing the movements and emotions of the dream whenever you can. Really ham it up so as to bring it to life for the listeners.

**5) Save any "foot notes" about the dream and its relation to waking life for before or after telling the actual dream.** This enables the listener to hear the dream itself and avoid confusion between the dream and any commentary about its relation to waking life.

**6) When listening to a dream, actively LISTEN!** Our task is to see how well we can hear and experience the dream. We must never interrupt the dreamer. Many people are poor listeners, and dream sharing challenges us to improve our active listening skills.

**7) Once the dream is completely told, listeners can express appreciation and curiosity about the dream.** Don't worry about what it might "mean" or how it relates to waking life. Just look for a deeper experience of what is really going on. Ask good questions, ones that invite more description of the dream and its experience.

**8) The dreamer is the leader.** The fact that it is their dream should be respected at all times. Other group members are encouraged to give the dreamer lots of space and encouragement to say what is understood or is puzzling, or what they would or would not like to do by way of exploring their dream.

**9) The dreamer does not have to discuss anything they choose not to.** Whenever someone shares a dream, they are sharing more of themselves than they realize. At times it will happen that an issue comes up after we have looked at the dream for some time which is embarrassing or difficult for the dreamer. If this happens, the dreamer is encouraged to say so and request that the session end at that point. Or the dreamer may wish to look at another part of the dream or push ahead even though it is difficult.

The choice is theirs and always respected.

**10) Never tell anyone what their dream means.** You never know anyway. When you feel that you do know, at best you know what it would mean if it were *your* dream. Even if it is true for them as well, you rob them of the chance to discover it themselves. Try to frame an open-ended question instead that encourages them to describe what the dream would be for them.

**11) After spending time with the dream itself, we can ask "bridging questions"** about how the dream might relate to the dreamers waking life. Give the dreamer plenty of time to tune in to their body and intuition for the answer to questions asked, to note the "aha" or tingling experience of things falling into place.

**12) When the dreamer makes new discoveries, follow their lead.** Build on the connections they make.

**13) Respect mystery.** Do not get caught in the feeling that everything needs to be understood and interpreted. We need to become comfortable with the unknown, which will continue to bring us gifts. Learn patience.

**14) Try and always end the sharing asking if there is anything new that has been learned which can be acted upon in waking life.** If at any point the dreamer seems overwhelmed by new discoveries, ask them to focus on small things they can do to act on this in their waking life. This grounds the energy in the waking task and the overwhelmed feelings dissipate. Remember: change takes time.

**15) Remember where you are when you tell or ask to hear a dream.** Our culture is quite anti-dream in many ways. Many people have been hurt and have received misinformation about their dreams. Few know how to really listen to someone else's dream. Don't be surprised when others do not welcome the opportunity to share dreams. Share these guidelines with those with whom you would share dreams, so that it might be a positive process. ♪

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# Why Precognition\*?

\*Previous knowledge; the supposed extrasensory perception of a future event

by Peggy Specht

When I began an intensive study of dreams and their meaning in 1975, one of the first things I identified was an apparent tendency to dream precognitively. Recounting my first precognitive dream to our Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) group, I did so hesitantly, almost apologetically, feeling they'd laugh at my suggestion that it *could* be precognitive. I'd heard too often the alternative explanation unfailingly trotted out by psychologists and psychiatrists that its quite likely you've subliminally accumulated all this information which your subconscious then correlates into "the most probable result." Well, I'm ready to admit the possibility this *does* occur in many instances since the mind is known to register masses of detail subconsciously that can often be recalled under hypnosis. However, after repeated precognitive dreaming which incorporated data I couldn't possibly have registered at any point along the way—except occasionally by telepathy (a frequently-suggested and provocative alternative!)—I decided to set aside any and all skepticism and accept precognition as a fact. This decision was heavily reinforced when others of our A.R.E. group also reported such dreams.

The big puzzle about precognition is of course *how*? It's here that the nature of *time* comes into it. Precognition—if we accept the concept of *simultaneous time* in contrast to *sequential time*—is not so much knowing about something *before* it happens, as *selecting one probability*

out of a vast panorama of probabilities that already exist and investing it with special *significance* for ourselves by manifesting it in our physical, waking reality.

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"In the past, we have tended to view persons who experience precognition as exceptionally gifted."

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In the past we have tended to view persons who experience precognition as exceptionally gifted. I prefer to think of precognition as a natural function of the relationship between sleeping (dreaming) reality and waking reality; something we all make use of, albeit in so many cases, unknowingly. Once alerted to the potential of precognition in dreaming, however, we can soon become more conscious practitioners.

Ultimately, over a period of ten years, during which I've met constantly with one or more groups of dreamers, *precognition in dreams* has proved to be the most consistent and widespread phenomenon experienced by the majority of those dreamers. In view of this, one must conclude that such precognition serves some purpose.

Previous writers and researchers, in dealing with precognition, have concentrated on the isolated—seemingly co-incidental—instances of premonition of disaster such as fires, accidents, earthquakes, explosions, earthslides and so on. Massive air disasters, for example, have been dreamt about "ahead of time," too often without enough precise detail to avoid them.

Unfortunately, this emphasis on the disastrous has tended to obscure the fact that the vast majority of precognitive dreaming seems to deal with relatively mundane, personal details of everyday living—the receipt of a letter, an unexpected meeting, the spontaneous purchase of a new hat by one's spouse, an argument with a neighbor. This suggests to me the possibility that in sleep and dreams we habitually *preview*—perhaps even *select*—those experiences we'll manifest in waking hours. After examining various alternatives in dreams, we decide which one to live through physically.

We are all familiar with the dreaming *psyche* as critic and judge *after the fact*; but conceivably the equally, if not *more* important role of the *psyche* is to select, write, produce, direct and perform in one's daily life—if one is to go by the amount of precognition that takes place in dreams.

This, to me, is the *prime significance of precognition*; not merely to alert the world to the potential *big disasters*, but to guide one through the small perils and pitfalls, the ups and downs, the decisions, the crises and triumphs of one's intimate personal life, one's relationships and life's path.

If I am correct in this assumption, it would seem feckless of so many of us to pay such scant attention to our dreams. Wouldn't it behoove us to listen a little harder to the *one* authority who seems to understand us better than any other, our *dreaming psyche*?

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# *The Role of Dreams in the Lives & Work of Substance Abuse Professionals:*

## A Research Report<sup>1</sup>

by Deborah Jay Hillman

**T**his report describes a study-in-progress on the role of dreams in the lives and work of substance abuse professionals. Earlier this year, I began a series of exploratory, open-ended interviews with pre- and postdoctoral fellows and staff at an organization I call Substance Abuse Research Associates (SARA). In addition, as a postdoctoral research fellow at SARA, I'm able to be a participant-observer of dream discussions among colleagues. SARA is a non-profit research and training institute in the Northeastern US with a focus on the social, cultural and behavioral dimensions of drug use. Various workshops and mini-courses designed to develop practitioners' skills are offered by SARA's training division. The research unit conducts a variety of government-funded studies on the individual and social impacts of drug use, including the problem of AIDS.

When I began my inquiry into the role of dreams among professionals in this setting, I wanted to explore such questions as: How significant are dreams in conversations between researchers and clinicians, on the one hand, and informants, subjects, clients, and patients on the other?; How do professionals in this field view dreams, and how have their attitudes toward dreams been shaped?; How does working in the areas of substance abuse, AIDS, and addiction affect the professional's own dream life?; What can be learned about the social and cultural aspects of drug and alcohol use by considering the ways in which these behaviors are reflected in dreams? The purpose of the study is twofold: to explore the signifi-

cance of dreams in the substance abuse field and to examine the role of dreams among a group of American professionals. Since insight into how people actually view dreams is useful for those who teach dream work, such research can be applied to various aspects of dream education. Envisioning ways to make dreams more important, in any sphere of activity, takes knowledge of current beliefs and practices, as well as imagination.

Relatively little has been written about dream work and the actual use of dreams in connection with substance abuse. Even less has been written about dreams in the American workplace. The first such account to be published is Mary Dombeck's (1991) anthropological study of dream telling and professional personhood among American psychotherapists. Barbara Tedlock (1990) has also looked at the role of dreams in professional life—in this case, among field-working anthropologists. I share with Dombeck and Tedlock an interest in my subjects' experiences with dreams from the standpoint of their professional lives.

My conversations about dreams occur in a setting that is racially and ethnically diverse and that includes both social scientists and clinicians. No one I've talked to was familiar with the dream work movement, or with dream groups, but several have expressed considerable enthusiasm for dreams. They welcome a chance to talk about dreams since, for them, such discussions are rare, and in varied terms they describe their appreciation of the dream world. "It's not like this (subject) is a chunk of my

normal discourse," an anthropologist said. "If you hadn't interviewed me about this, I wouldn't know how I thought about dreams."

Several people have voiced a split between the "private" realm of dreams and the more "public" domain of their professional lives. A predoctoral fellow, whose dissertation concerns teen-agers' attitudes toward sex, drugs and AIDS, had not seen a formal role for dreams in her work. "Dreams have always seemed such a personal thing," she said, "that I've never thought of them as being more in the public arena." But she could see "now that we're thinking about it, that [dreams] might be a great way of tapping into adolescents' feelings."

Similarly, an AIDS educator in SARA's training division began to reflect on how he might use dreams in his workshops. Though they play a prominent role in his private therapy practice, in training sessions he had never mentioned dreams "in any way that would be evocative for the trainees in terms of counseling a person with AIDS." Still, he thinks it would be "fascinating" to make dreams a formal part of training. "Where trainees, for example, would bring in dreams," he said, "I think it would really energize the training a lot. It would be very interesting. Then there's lots of cultural variation among people that we train, and that would be interesting, too, to [compare the dreams]."

A project director addressed the issue of dream telling among colleagues. "I think dreams are thought of as private and very personal," she said, adding that to change the situation would take a major transformation in the "politics of work." She recalls three dreams about the workplace and they all had to do with "liberating changes" in the structure of her job.

The role of dreams in professional life has three dimensions to consider: the actual use of dreams in one's work, the influence of work  
(Continued on page 25)

# Storytelling and Sobriety:

## Dreams Vs. Drugs <sup>1</sup>

by Stanley Krippner

Curtis Colliver was a 24-year-old substance abuser when he entered a residential treatment program and began keeping a dream diary. Once he finished the 28-day program, he shared three dreams from his diary with me that took place at approximately weekly intervals:

*(1) I get out of prison and run into some people who smoke crack. I buy some and leave it on a table. When I return, a group of men are smoking it. They give it back and I go off looking for a place to smoke.*

*(2) I am in a bus station with two older men. One man is shooting speed. I say that I want some. He gives the other guy a shot first. He pulls the needle out and then puts the rest in my arm. I am thinking that it is going to be way too much and that I will overdose. When he put the needle in, it looked like a hook going into a worm and reminded me of a worn out vagina eating up a penis. I waited for the taste in my mouth and death—but they never came. I looked at him with surprise and disappointment.*

*(3) I go into a doghouse and find a gorilla who is a crack dealer. He tries to sell me a block of coke. He breaks off a piece, spilling some on his chest and flicking it onto the floor with his finger. I put some in a pipe and put it to my mouth. I am thinking about losing my sobriety and decide not to smoke.*

On one level, the dreams reflect his involvement with crack, speed and cocaine. At another level, they represent three stages in his personal growth, moving from blatant use in the first dream, to concern over the consequences in the second dream, to maintaining sobriety in the third.

In our discussions, Curtis retold the dreams in the following way:

(1) I get out of the treatment center and run into some of my crack-smoking buddies. I buy some but am not sure if I want to relapse so I put it aside. When I come back, a group of crack dealers have started to smoke it. They know that if I see them smoking, they will hook me again. So they give me what is left over and I take off looking for a place to smoke where people from the treatment center won't find me.

(2) My life is in transition and I am with two speed dealers. One of them is shooting speed. This is an inducement for me to want to use it, but he gives the other guy a shot first, knowing that the dealer will make me want it even more. He pulls the needle out of the other guy's arm and puts the rest of the speed in my arm. I am thinking that I don't have tolerance for it anymore and that I will overdose. When he put the needle in my arm, it looked like he had me hooked on his bait. It also reminded me of the almost sexual comfort I got from drugs, a sexual seduction which

should be worn out by now but which is still eating up my vitality and destroying my manly resolve. I waited for the characteristic taste of speed in my mouth and the death I knew was coming. But they never came. I was surprised but also disappointed because "ego-death--forgetting my identity and therefore, my problems--is one of the drug effects I enjoyed most.

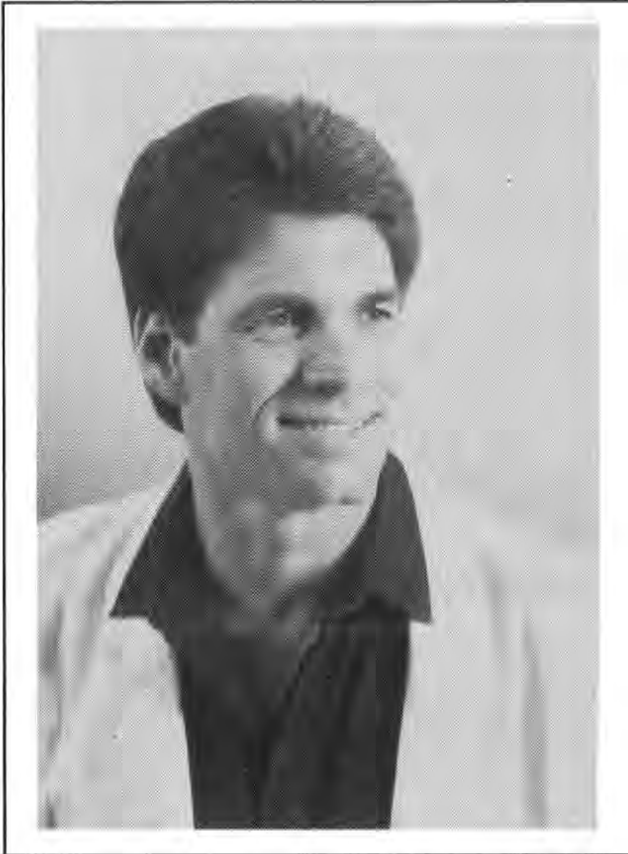
(3) I'm in the doghouse because I'm tempted to use drugs again. The crack dealer is a real animal and I don't dare turn him down. He tries to sell me a block of crack. He breaks off a piece, spilling some on his chest and flicking it onto the floor with his finger--demonstrating to me that he has an abundant supply, that there's always more where this block came from. I put some crack in a pipe and put it to my mouth. But I realize that I would lose my sobriety so I decide not to smoke. This is the first time I can remember that I ever took responsibility for myself in a dream and am not passive and powerless.

I have found this dreamworking technique to be simple yet useful. The dreamer simply retells the dream as if it were a story about his or her life (Krippner & Dillard, 1988). The dream story can be written or expressed verbally. Sometimes it helps for each story to be given a title. The dreamworker can ask simple questions about the content of the story, e.g. "What emotional feeling did you experience when you decided not to smoke the pipeful of crack?" "What would you do or

# How Mythology Got Personal

## Part Two: The Archaic, Magical & Mythical Epochs

by David Feinstein



Part one of this three part series (V 10 Nos. 2&3 p..29) provided the foundation for exploring the four epochs through which we have evolved over time on our collective mythic journey. Here, we will look at three of these four mythological 'Epochs'. Part three (in the next issue) will conclude this study.

### The Archaic Epoch

Some three million years ago, human-like creatures were making tools and walking on two legs. Ken Wilber portrays humanity's earliest eras as involving no sense of self separate from the experience of the body; the first stages of human evolution were "dominated by physical nature and animal body." The earliest humans were immersed in the subconscious realms of their biological existence in what anthropologists have termed a *participation mystique*. They did not experience themselves as separate from their surroundings. Self and world were "basically *undifferentiated*, embedded, fused and confused". Wilber speculates that out of this primitive unity, with no capacity for verbal representation or true mental reflection yet developed, there could be no experience of anxiety (fear of that which is not present), no real comprehension of death, and thus no existential fears.

Sagan has wondered if "the Garden of Eden is not so different from Earth as it appeared to our ancestors of some three or four million years ago, during a legendary golden age when the genus *Homo* was perfectly interwoven with the other beasts and vegetables. These {Eden myths} all correspond reasonably well to the historical and archaeological evidence". Neumann noted that this period, which is represented mythologically as the uroboros (a serpent biting its own tail), "corresponds to the psychological stage in man's prehistory when the individual and the group, ego and unconscious, man and the world, were so indissolubly bound up with one another that the law of *participation mystique*, of unconscious identity, prevailed between them".

The Archaic Epoch roughly parallels the infantile "sensorimotor period" hypothesized by Piaget. During this period of their development, children are unable to differentiate between themselves and anything else in the world. They do not distinguish between inner and outer, between stimuli that come from their own bodies, such as hunger, and those that come from the outside, such as light. If we may speak of cultural myths at all during this period, we would call this the dreamlike *era of a unified, primordial bodymyth*. Consciousness was fully identified with the life of the body--the two were isomorphic. Instinctual impulses and conditioned responses functioned without competition from "higher" mental processes in motivating these protohumans. Reality was structured primarily around the pleasures, the pains, and the perceptions emerging from one's biological self. Thoughts regarding the aspects of life that concern mythology, such as identity and purpose, were direct and concrete. The life of the body was the life of myth. As Freud once noted, the ego is "first and foremost a body-ego".

## The Magical Epoch

It was probably not until 200,000 years ago, with the Neanderthals, that the ability to clearly differentiate between oneself and one's environment began to emerge, although the ability may not have become fully developed, according to Wilber, until as late as 10,000 B.C. Adam and Eve's mythical "Fall" and departure from the Garden of Eden may be likened to the shift to this epoch. Human beings "fell" from their close identity with nature, and "fell" into self-awareness with its accompanying anxiety, guilt, pain and vulnerability. Houston has speculated that the infant, after birth, may recapitulate the Archaic Epoch "in some thirty months equivalent to" that whole stage of humanity's development. And then the Fall, the realization that there is a dividing line between self and the rest of the world robs the infant of his or her innocent sense of omnipotence. The most elemental personal myth, constructed from the Eden-like peace of the embryo's unity in the womb, is rudely shattered with the first taste of the fruit from the tree of knowledge, the dawning of self-consciousness. According to Houston, as individual consciousness arose, myths of Paradise and the Fall developed, which she has interpreted as the "widespread nostalgia for the integral world of the childhood in man".

Wilber explains that out of the "almost 'paradisical' state of dreamy immersion" in the world of nature came the awakening of a highly individual awareness and a 'loss' of a primitive slumber". He uses the mythological image of the Typhon, half man and half snake, to represent the epoch. Typhon, son of Gaia, the Greeks' Earth goddess, had separated himself from the Earth but his mind and body were still unified. While people of this era were no longer totally immersed in nature, events in

dreams were considered to be as real as waking experiences, and artistic images were accorded the same validity as the objects they represented. The animal paintings found in Paleolithic caves are thought to bear silent witness to the magical rituals used to insure success in hunting, in which art and object are fused.

Reality in this era was patterned after the recognition of "me" and "other," and it was experienced in the trance-like relationship of the newly-emerged self to the world. Wilber emphasizes that during this period, the self, while distinguished from the natural environment "remains magically intermingled with it". The self has become differentiated from the environment in these early stages of mental evolution, but it is still embedded in and undifferentiated from the body, it is still a "bodyself." While the distinction between person and environment has come into being, the boundary is still fluid and porous. Subject and object, image and reality, are not yet fully differentiated in this era. People are at the center of their world and magically intermingled with it. An object was treated as the same as the image of it, a word the same as what it represented, a dream the same as the events it portrays. A man dreaming would not think of the dream as a construction or a symbol, but rather as something which actually occurred in the "other world." Studies of traditional cultures suggest that he might be compelled to retaliate for the harm done, though his revenge might also take place in a dream or other symbolic form. To manipulate the symbol, according to this magical logic, was to affect the object symbolized. Wilber elaborates:

"That magical world, primitive but real enough, which in us moderns has been relegated to the state of dreaming, was apparently conscious in our remote

ancestors. As Freud put it, "What once dominated waking life, while the mind was still young and incompetent, seems now to have been banished into the night."

In the child's development, the *Magical Epoch* roughly parallels Piaget's "preoperational period." Four year old children are typically embedded in their perceptions, but are no longer at the mercy of them. Children at this stage cannot distinguish between image and reality; they cannot easily be consoled by being told "but it's only a dream." They believe that if they make a wish, it will be granted—and they are upset when this logic proves to be faulty. In a similar manner, humans in the *Magical Epoch* were convinced that their rituals brought back the sun when it disappeared during an eclipse, or that their sacrifices prevented earthquakes and other disaster.

This epoch, in which consciousness is not as differentiated as it will become in subsequent mythological expressions, might be thought of as the *magical era of mythic participation*. The self had emerged from its environment and was magically participating in its newly discovered world, but this involvement was laced with magical beliefs that blurred the relationship between inner and outer life in self-aggrandizing ways. In this stage, the primitive mythology of the clan or the tribe defined the nature of the magic that permeated life, and it dictated how individuals would participate in that magic. The mythic structuring of reality at this time was still bound by the body, it still antedated cognitive thought, but an external world was now recognized and responsibility for events could be assigned to it. the foundation of a mythology that separates self from other had now emerged, but the far-reaching implications of its development were yet to be realized.

## The Mythical Epoch

Where the development of the oppositional thumb made possible the use of complex tools, the ability to conceptualize the difference between "self" and "other" prepared the way for such cognitive abilities as delaying one's responses, planning for the future, and becoming aware of death. By the time of the Cro-Magnons some 50,000 years ago, the brain had increased in size, become reorganized neurologically, and sophisticated forms of language had emerged. According to some informed estimates, however, language sophistication reached its full influence only as recently as 10,000 B.C.

At that time, according to Wilber, cognitive abilities had expanded so that people were able to anticipate the future more accurately, and thus plan and farm for it. "Still close to the lilies of the field, mankind took no extended thought of the morrow, and therefore neither toiled nor tilled the earth". But when tribes that had once subsisted on hunting and gathering began to settle down and cultivate crops, the anthropological evidence is unequivocal that they "sustained the most prodigious mutation in consciousness that had yet appeared". The world of agriculture is the world of *extended time*, of making preparations for the *future* harvest, and gearing the actions of the present toward important *goals*. The farmer had to learn how to control, postpone, and sublimate instinctive body-bound activities for the benefit of the crop. With language, the verbal mind could differentiate itself more definitely from the physical body. People began to understand that the word is not the object for which it stands. The physical world could be represented and manipulated through mental symbols. All the requirements for developing sophisticated mythologies had become available. The hard-earned knowledge and deeper insights of the elders could now be represented in myth and carried to new generations by means of story and ritual.

In Wilber's scheme, language was the major psychological vehicle for this new development in consciousness. He presents evidence showing that humankind possessed no truly developed language during the magical era, and was thus structurally incapable of projecting into the future or of organizing itself in large membership communities. But "because language transcends the present, the new self could transcend the body. Because language transcends the given, the new self could see into tomorrow. Because language embodies mental goals and futures, the new self could delay and channel its bodily desires". With language, people could rise above "the prison of the immediate" and envision long-term goals. "From this point on, humanity would be able to reproduce itself not just physically (food) and biologically (sex) but also culturally (mind). For the reproduction of the human mind, generation to generation, is an act of *verbal communication*".

In this Mythic Epoch, personal mythologies closely mirrored the mythology of the culture. Individuals had not yet fully developed the mental capacities required for self-reflection. This period resembles the child's "concrete-operational" stage in Piaget's schema. The 10 year-old child is able to categorize concrete objects and make simple inferences. More objective than the preoperational child, these children are still unable to consider meanings outside the concrete world or to contemplate on the design behind the phenomena they can observe. Human beings in the Mythic Epoch were able to engage in social learning but were not able to reflectively establish much perspective on what was being passed down to them. If a person violated a taboo or other norm of the group—even if the infraction were due to some unusual and unavoidable situation—the person typically would be punished, and there would be no question in anyone's mind that the punishment was justified. Without the capacity for self-reflection, the individual is not yet capable of questioning the

social code, nor would the group be in a position to make allowances for extenuating circumstances. Ashley Montagu noted that "in non-literate societies the acts of the individual are believed by everyone to have consequences for the group as a whole; hence, the individual tends to regulate his conduct by the recognition of his social responsibility to the group".

With the development of language and of community relationships that in some ways transcended the powers of nature, mythology came into full bloom, and the results can be observed in the stunning mythic tales of such areas as ancient China, Crete, Egypt, Greece, Guatemala, India, Mexico, and Peru. As the verbal mind climbed out from the body, the accumulated wisdom of the group as communicated by myth, gave structure to the mind's extraordinarily flexible capacity for defining reality. These myths were carried to new generations via language as well as other cultural forms such as art, ritual and religious and civic practices. The individual's emerging sense of self took the form prescribed by the culture's mythology. During this era, the cultural myths that structure reality were all-important and all-pervasive. In this pre-rational, *pre-personal era of cultural mythology*, the society's mythology reigned supreme.  $\psi$

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## The Twelve Steps and Dreams

By Valerie Meluskey, Ph.D.

The twelve step programs are spiritual programs with a universal welcome to people of all religions and to those with no religion. Open meetings are available to anyone seeking a safe place to listen and be heard while facing challenges of addiction or recovery--regaining emotional and mental health. A danger of many recovery therapies is emphasizing the psychological at the expense of the spiritual. What is the difference?

The spiritual perspective views life experiences as chosen opportunities for becoming stronger and wiser and more loving—whether these experiences are positive or negative-- no matter *how* negative. The psychological perspective usually focuses on what has gone wrong--or right--how cause and effect operate. Both approaches are valuable. Intellectual understanding of our personal history deepens self-knowledge, but only action will stretch our capacity to live a more functional and fulfilling life. The spiritual level of functioning offers choice: that we always have the choice to respond creatively and nobly. Here is true power.

The twelve steps originated with Alcoholics Anonymous, and have been adapted by many other groups desiring to create a similar format. The first step defines the issue, whether it be alcohol, narcotics, gambling, debt, overeating, love and sex, emotions, relationships with other people, or even creativity. There are also programs for adult children of alcoholic or dysfunctional parents, and for spouses or family members of alcoholics or those with one of the other addictions. The first step states: "We admitted we were powerless over \_\_\_\_\_ and that our lives had become unmanageable."

Although even my first client, back in 1976, was a member of AA and one of my early weekly dream workshops was comprised of eight

members of AA, I was not aware of the intimate workings of the twelve steps. My first experience of the twelve steps in CODA meetings last year has shown me how closely these steps harmonize with my personal spiritual path of working with dreams. Each of these steps is a useful gem for dream students.

Along with the first step, I admit freely my constant need for spiritual awakening--confrontation, prodding, reminding, encouragement, and teaching. I need help from a source wiser than my ego or the egos of friends and teachers. Even spiritual wisdom from another does not have the same impact on my life as personally getting in touch with the wisdom of my heart and soul.

Asking the right questions opens the way for others to discover their own truth. To teach others my perception of their dreams or life experiences can rob them of discovery. If I respect their boundaries, I will more likely be inquiring rather than interpretive, expressing genuine interest in them rather than in myself.

We become whole—healed—by remembering and creating ourselves. Turning our will over to our higher power or personal higher consciousness is much safer and more effective than turning our lives over to other human beings. Ultimately, no dogma, religious institution, or government is as responsible for our lives as we are. In the final showdown, we must answer to ourselves.

Reviewing dreams gives us the opportunity to make "a searching and fearless moral inventory." Dreams can be blunt in their messages, or obscure and seem meaningless. Once we know how to reach into the heart of dreams and learn their meanings, we cannot help but have deep respect and awe for their power to portray the truth. If the form of a dream is convoluted, the dreamer's behavior or thinking is likely to be similarly confused on the issue the dream is addressing. Styles of dreams may be fragmented....are you feeling fragmented? They may feel ominous and be direct warnings--might it be a

good idea to question impending danger? Dreams may take us into the realm of the mystic and mysterious--have you been seeking higher wisdom? How our dream presents its message reflects us and gives us additional information.

If you share your dreams with others, you "admit the exact nature of your wrongs" and learn how you are measuring up to your ideals. You may be doing something "right" also. The gradations of right and wrong, the more subtle moral and creative issues are revealed. Sharing outwardly with others increases our ability to become conscious about what is going on, sometimes well hidden inside of us until we share. For fifteen years, people have been saying to me, "I thought I knew what this dream meant--I didn't realize how much more was here."

Being "entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character" follows the dreamer's willingness to act upon the spiritual realization that his or her life is out of alignment with ideals of love, or creativity. After all, dreams are about how we are living our "waking" lives. Unless we apply the insights we gain from our dreams, we are ignoring our higher power. God can only remove defects of character if we participate in their removal.

Humility precedes surrender to spiritual healing. This means getting our egos out of the way so that we can be open and trusting. The ego part of us never feels safe because it isn't. We relinquish our ego defenses to entrust our care to some "higher power" which seems to be outside us, even though it resides deep inside us. We recognize how we (on the ego level) are impatient, mean, petty, spiteful, jealous, greedy, lazy--what are those seven deadlies...?

The step of making amends to others takes an unusual twist in the way I teach dream work. When the people we know appear in our dreams, we get insight into familiar and unfamiliar aspects of them. When there is a breach in the relationship, dreams can give tips for reconciliation. When someone is demonstrating



talent or admirable behavior, we can compliment them. Often, simply sharing the dream in a responsible manner can enhance a relationship. The responsibility comes in when we realize that every character in a dream is also portraying an aspect of us—whether positive or negative. It is this level which confounds many people. They are often amazed when they learn how the outwardly reflected universe of dreams gives them priceless information about themselves. The next step is realizing that how we perceive others generally tells us more about ourselves than about them.

The issue of codependence developed as a result of the awareness of those in the programs dealing with addictions who realized their need to deal with underlying psychological issues. The central issues of codependence are healthy intimacy and boundaries in our relationships. A healthy relationship cannot develop with isolating walls of remoteness, lack of communication, and withdrawal of nurturing. Conversely, invading another's privacy, constantly directing and advising (nagging?), and smothering with demands for emotional response also create unhealthy relationships. Our dreams dramatize how we are relating on all fronts.

Codependence distorts our innate awareness of oneness with all of life. Knowing this while dreaming—that everything and everyone is you on the deepest level—gives us the ability to function without fear and separation. Addictions and dysfunctional behavior disempower us and remove us from our source. An addict loves his or her habit more than any human being, more than life itself. We are our brother's keeper; we are affected by our brother's suffering and failure.

Each of us has inherent sacred power and the free will to discover personal power and divine connectedness. It is possible for this precious discovery to continue throughout our lives. twelve step programs assist this process. Dreams assure it. ♪

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(HILLMAN: Cont'd from p. 19)

on dreaming, and the extent to which dreams are discussed in the workplace. My conversations have touched on all three aspects. The picture emerging from the interviews and informal conversations has less to do with "substance abuse" than with exploring how a group of professionals thinks about and uses dreams. The fact that they're substance abuse professionals, however, is not unimportant since the nature of their work affects their experiences with dreams. One researcher wonders why he doesn't dream more about his work, since he feels the stress of interviewing drug-abusing offenders.

Dreams play no official role in the research and training at SARA, yet for some of the research fellows and staff, they hold a place of importance. Sometimes this extends into aspects of their work lives but generally they view the workplace as inimical to sharing dreams. Except for an anthropologist who shared with me some dreams he collected in the field, none of my informants has told me a dream concerning substance abuse. The question of exploring the cultural aspects of drug-related dreams now seems to me to be a separate study. ♪

<sup>1</sup> A longer version of this report was presented at the Eighth Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Dreams, Charlottesville, Virginia, June 29, 1991.

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(KRIPPNER: Cont'd from p. 20)

say if the gorilla tried to force you to smoke the crack?" In addition, the stories can initiate the discussion of crucial issues: the desire for ego-death in the second dream could lead to a discourse on what has been called "a caricature of the transcendental state" (Kiley, 1988, p. 15) and a discussion of better ways to fulfill one's spiritual needs.

In the 12 months since completing the treatment program, Curtis has only relapsed three times, once with marijuana, once with cocaine and once with alcohol. He continues to work with his dreams. One day he told me that he remembered a dream in which he relapsed and felt very depressed because he thought this might presage a relapse in waking life. However, I told Curtis about the Choi study in which 83% of the alcoholics who had been sober for more than one year had dreamed about relapsing at least once, as compared with 37% who had not been abstinent for a year. Although there are several possible interpretations for this finding, the data themselves were reassuring to Curtis. Like the subject in Choi's study, Colliver did not enjoy the drug experience in his dream. In fact, the dream preceded Curtis' current period of complete sobriety.<sup>2</sup> ♪

1. This article originally appeared in the ASD Newsletter, Vol. 6, No. 5, Sept/Oct 1989. It is reprinted here with the author's permission and the addition of an author's note.

2. Author's note: Curtis is still sober. This is quite an accomplishment, given the relapse rate for cocaine addiction. He dreams about addictive drugs from time to time, but the frequency is less.

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*I am amidst a crowd of people. We are looking up into the sky. It is night and yet the sun is up and acting strangely. Rays of light shoot out in all directions across the sky. An eerie tension unites the crowd and the sky.*

*Out from the sun flies a glowing object. As it descends from the sky it appears to be a dove. The dove flies overhead, then zooms right down to me and nestles in my chest. I cry aloud, releasing tears of joy and relief, "Somebody loves me!"*

Afterwards I felt calmer inside, and felt as if there might still be hope. Again, it was the emotional impact of the dream, not any interpretation, that proved helpful. Feeling I might be worth saving, I decided to seek psychotherapy. I remembered a Jungian therapist whom I had heard lecture once before. When I had questioned her about my dream of potato chips and mayonnaise, her intriguing reply was, "The wine is the spirit." When I called for an appointment, I learned that her schedule was full, and it would be over a month before we could meet. In the meantime, I began to attend meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I was in for a surprise at these A.A. gatherings. While among my friends and peers, who were confounded by my drinking, I felt the loneliness of a stranger in a strange land, and I made no sense to myself. At the A.A. meetings, however, people spoke a language that I immediately recognized and understood, and I felt myself reflected in their stories. By my third meeting, I accepted the fact that I was alcoholic. Even though I didn't know how I would ever stop drinking, I was nevertheless strangely relieved. I realized that all the guilt trips and other torments I had suffered were not an expression of my individual personality, but instead were an expression of the personality of alcoholism. I likened it to a person unknowingly caught in a whirlpool, who feels scared and guilty for always spinning around in circles. But when the source of the predicament is realized, the feelings of foolishness and guilt are relieved, because when you're caught in a

whirlpool, you're going to spin around helplessly—it's not your fault!—until you are released.

One day soon thereafter, on my way home, I stopped by the liquor store to pick up my evening's ration. But when I grabbed for a bottle, something inside me hesitated. I couldn't do it. I didn't understand what was happening, but finally I left the store empty-handed, thinking I would return later. But I didn't return. That evening, a mood of sadness descended on me, because I realized I couldn't drink anymore. I was surprised and somewhat put out. I hadn't yet decided to quit drinking—what was going on? I tried to make sense to myself about how I was feeling. I remember explaining to someone that I felt as if I were standing on the edge of a cliff, wanting very much to jump off, but realizing that there were plants back home that needed watering—who would water them if I jumped? Longing to jump into that bliss of release, but reluctantly accepting the responsibility of being needed at home, I sadly returned. My drinking career had ended.

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**Yuk! Potato chips and mayonnaise! So that was the meaning of that perplexing image in my first dream!**

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But how? By whom? I hadn't decided to quit. I never would have done that! I didn't want to quit, ever. So what had happened? I didn't know. All I knew was that drinking was no longer an option for me and I felt sad about it. By then I had begun psychotherapy, and when I told the therapist what had happened, she did not seem at all surprised. She encouraged me to continue going to A.A. meetings. She surmised that I had been able to let go of drinking because I knew, at an unconscious level, that what I was seeking in booze would be found through our work in psychoanalysis. Maybe she was right. Only years later would I better understand what she meant. But at the time, at the beginning of therapy, at the beginning of my strange new career as a non-drinking alcoholic, I was a mystery to myself.

Much later I was to discover a garbled entry I had made in my dream journal just before my drinking disappeared. In this dream I am at my grandmother's house, and I find a bottle of whiskey in the kitchen cupboard. I push it away, saying to myself that such stuff shouldn't be left in the reach of little children. Perhaps this dream, which I only vaguely recalled, represented an inner decision. In any event, it is the closest I have ever come to finding any act of "will," anything resembling a "decision" to quit drinking. Actually, I experienced my quitting not as something I did myself and could be proud of, but as something that happened to me, something I found out about after the fact.

Meanwhile, my research on dreams continued. I had learned from that first experimental class that it was hard for the students to maintain their interest in dreams without being able to interpret them or otherwise find some meaningful way to interact with them. Interpreting dreams was still very difficult for me so I searched for some alternatives. I had become more interested in Jungian theory, and came upon a book by a Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Meier, "Ancient Incubation and Modern Psychotherapy," about the cult surrounding the Greek god, Asklepios, who performed healings during the dream state. Sleep sanctuaries were created in his name, such as at Epidaurus. People with illnesses would sleep in these temples and have dreams that healed their afflictions. These dreams did not need interpretation, for the dream experience itself was the curative factor. Dream incubation appealed to me as it confirmed my own feeling that the dream must be sufficient itself to accomplish its purpose. I made arrangements to spend my sabbatical leave from Princeton at Dr. Meier's laboratory, the C.G. Jung Sleep and Dream Laboratory, in Zurich, Switzerland. There we explored many different types of experimental designs for studying problem solving in dreams. Returning to Princeton, I supervised student projects in my laboratory trying to implement some of these ideas. Inwardly, however, I felt dissatisfied with this research. Then I received an invitation to conduct

dream experiments at the youth camp run by the Association for Research and Enlightenment, the non-profit organization developed around the work of Edgar Cayce. Contemplating an outdoor setting for dream research among people predisposed to value their dreams inspired me and gave me the necessary impetus to design an experimental ritual of dream incubation.

On my way to camp I developed a plan to gather the campers together and tell them stories of the wonders of Asklepios, and speculate about the possibility of dream healing today. Since in the ancient days, a person could not sleep in one of the sanctuaries without a prior dream of invitation from Asklepios, I would tell the campers to watch their dreams for signs that they were to undergo dream incubation. Only those who had such a dream should consider going any further. For a sanctuary I bought a tent, an esthetically pleasing, dome shaped tent that would become the "dream tent."

The design for the incubation procedure, briefly, was to engage the participant, the incubant, in a series of activities that would place that person in roughly the same frame of mind that must have existed in the ancient Greek pilgrim who was seeking a healing in one of the sanctuaries of Asklepios. The incubant was to imagine someone for whom they had tremendous respect as a healer or wise person, and to imagine the tent as a sanctuary located somewhere the person thought would be full of healing vibrations. I would then engage the person in a day of role-playing activities, in which the person would dialogue with their healing figure concerning the problem for which they sought help. That night, the person would sleep in the tent to have a helpful dream. That was the plan.

I arrived at camp, erected the tent, but when the time came to approach the campers with my plan, I got cold feet. I felt guilty and inadequate. Who was I to propose such an experiment? Things such as incubations were essentially initiation mysteries, processes that were handed down from master to initiate.

I had not been initiated by anyone. It felt like I had made all this stuff up. I decided that the best thing to do was either to take down the tent, or if I left it up, to indicate simply that it was a fun place to sleep if you wanted to get away from the crowd and focus on your dreams.

I felt disappointed and depressed over my decision. But then, out of the blue, I remembered a joke I used to tell when I was a kid. It went like this:

There was a man with a terrible illness. He had scabs all over his body and these scabs were filled with puss. Every few days the man would peel off his scabs and put them into a bag. Then he would drain off the puss into a jar. Then we would store both of these in his closet. One day, a friend came to visit, wandered into that closet, and got himself locked in. It was three days before the man happened to open up the closet door. When he did so, his friend came stumbling out of the closet, saying, "Thank God! I would have starved if not for those blessed potato chips and mayonnaise!"

Yuk! Potato chips and mayonnaise! So that was meaning of that perplexing image in my first dream! I was dumbfounded to have this long-buried memory suddenly pop into my mind at such a critical time. It had been over three years since I had had that dream, never understanding the reference to the strange food the Old Man was providing the drunk. Now, for some strange reason, I had recalled this childhood joke which obviously was the source of that dream image. I could then recognize, from my studies of symbolism, the significance of the image: it was a reference to the mystery of the homeopathic principle as declared by the Oracle of Apollo, "the wounder heals." It is the notion that an illness itself brings its own cure, that there is something in an illness that heals, if you will but incorporate it into your life. In my dream, the Old Man used booze as a lure to teach me the secret of the healing power of woundedness.

I could see, from what booze had taught me how his trick had worked. The spirits of alcohol came to rescue me from a one-sided existence. I realized that my life had been dominated by the intellectual pursuit

of power as a means to deny my basic dependency upon factors in life beyond my personal control. When I reflected upon my "reasons" for drinking, I recalled that I always felt that life was too "concrete," and that I was always "scraping my knee" against its hard realities. Just as I had rejected the necessity of suffering, and had avoided it, so had I rejected the value of the Old Man's "food." I bit the bait on drinking, however, and found it, at first, to be a protective lubricant. But in time, the drink brought me face to face with my wounded knees, made me acknowledge the inescapability of my dependency, and made me give proper recognition to the importance of its spiritual basis. Finally, I had to accept the food, too. Rather than continuing to attempt to conquer life through power, like the willful captain of a motor boat, after quitting drinking I had gradually come to feel more comfortable as a skipper of a sail boat, utterly dependent upon the spirit of the winds and the moods of mother nature. I had come to be grateful for my alcoholism as an affliction of the "gods" that only they could relieve, and thus for an initiation into the way of the spirit and the power of surrender.

These surprising discoveries cleared away my inhibitions, and I went ahead with my plan. I announced the availability of the tent and began a program of research that was quite successful in demonstrating the continued operation of the miracle of dream incubation.

Looking back, I see that the synchronistic timing of my recall of the old childhood joke, giving meaning to that critical image in the dream, coincided with the moment that the dream, and my original petition that led to the dream, were about to be fulfilled.

Getting help from dreams can be as simple, and as profoundly mysterious, as falling asleep to awaken a changed person. Even if we don't realize it for some time, it happens, naturally, every night. At least, that's what alcoholism taught this dreamer.

This article is adapted from Henry's book, *Getting Help From Your Dreams* (Inner Vision Publishing, \$9.95), and is reprinted with the author's permission.

## ...ABOUT OUR LOGO

We are becoming widely distributed throughout the country, and it becomes imperative that we choose a logo. The past three issues have displayed those logos which gained broadest appeal in 1990. Here, we present all which have been used on the cover and proposed thus far.

Please 'VOTE' for your choice NOW!



The Journal's theme for 1992 will be **GENDER** with a goal of identifying how dreams and myth can help clarify and resolve gender differences.

Spring Issue will focus on

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# Networking ♥ ↔ ♥ Groups

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Dream consultation & education. Contact ROBERTA OSSANA, M.A. 1337 Powerhouse Lane Suite #22 **Moab, UT** 84532 Ph: 801.259.5936

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## Contacts for New Explorers

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DECEMBER PRAYER

*For every winter elk  
broken off from the herd  
alone, as December snows  
begin to fill the basin,  
ears bowed to the wind*

*For every blackbear who wakes  
midwinter to the steady  
gnaw of hunger,  
the fall's scant forage not enough  
and two months to the thaw*

*For every ragged coyote  
red-stained track  
through the crusted snow  
carrion long gone and the mice  
all safe in their burrows*

*For you  
brothers and sisters, for whom these months  
are a long and bitter night--  
may you find in your going  
some door, and through it*

*Down the tangled gametrails  
of existence:  
a place where all the different paths may join  
where we might*

*Sit down to this poem  
together, our many tongues  
one*

by Tim McNulty



Susan St. Thomas

*Dream Network Journal*  
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