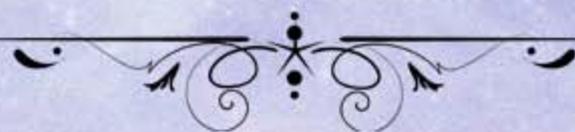


the Art **OF**
LUCID
DREAMING

**THE PURSUIT OF
CONSCIOUS DREAM CONTROL**



Rebecca Turner

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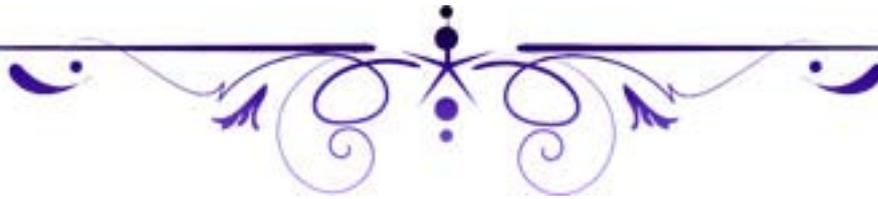
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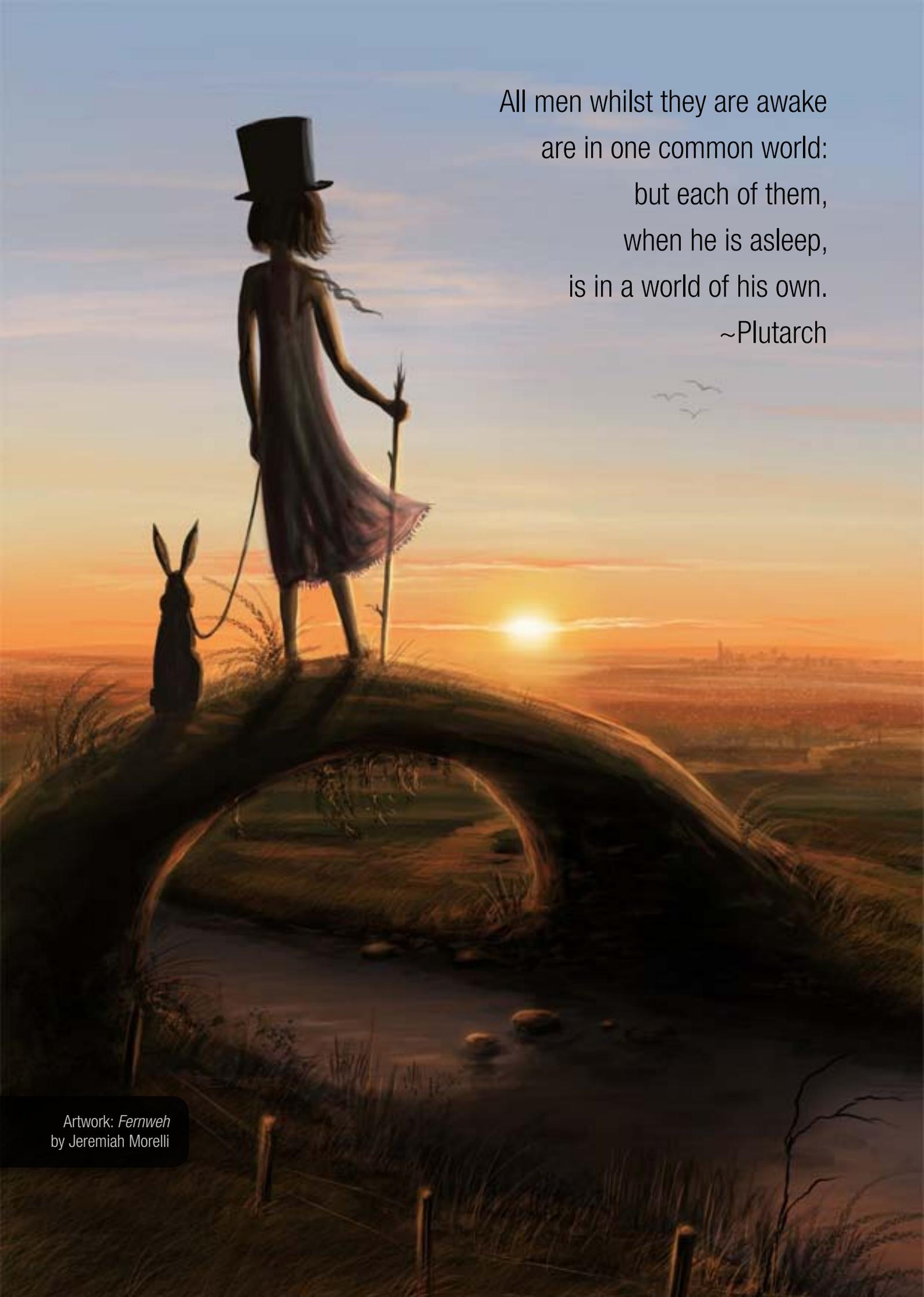


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All men whilst they are awake
are in one common world:
but each of them,
when he is asleep,
is in a world of his own.
~Plutarch



Artwork: *Fernweh*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Introduction



A lucid dream creates a mind-blowing alternate reality where you can fly over breathtaking scenery, teleport to the edge of the universe, interact with other dream figures, and communicate with your subconscious inner self. The applications of lucid dreaming are limitless and I am going to help you explore that infinite potential. That is my promise.

This introduction provides an overview of lucid dreaming as we know it. Bits of it may sound vaguely familiar - but please don't skip anything, even if you think you already understand the concept of dream control. In truth, the lucid dreamscape is widely misunderstood, and I want to ensure you begin this journey armed with the facts - and not the myths. This will help you become a proficient lucid dreamer much faster, and is what makes this my definitive beginner's guide to lucid dreaming.

What is Lucid Dreaming?

Lucid dreaming is the ability to consciously observe and/or control your dreams. Having consciousness within the dreamstate transforms it into a living alternate reality - where everything you see, hear, feel, taste and even smell can be as authentic as real life.

Indeed, the French philosopher Rene Descartes found his lucid dreams were so vivid, he concluded that our waking senses are illusory and not to be trusted! The sheer realism of lucid dreams forces us to question the very nature of our waking reality.

How is this possible? How can our brains create such a solid, lifelike environment from complete fantasy, that is so vivid it could be confused with real life?

The answer is locked away in the secrets of the human brain - and one major clue is the fact that lucidity can occur at a higher state of consciousness (in the GAMMA range) than regular dreaming, and even higher than your level of conscious alertness right now. This is what creates the distinction between distant and fuzzy regular dreams - and vibrant and intense lucid dreams.

So, the basic definition of a lucid dream is this: heightened awareness during dreams. The phrases 'lucid dreams', 'conscious dreams' and 'guided dreams' are used interchangeably throughout this book. They all mean the same thing.

How Much Control Do You Really Have in a Lucid Dream?

With mental focus, a conscious dream allows you to control your own actions as well as your environment and even other dream characters. In fact, if put to the test, there is probably no dream element that is out of bounds. However, this doesn't mean you should aim to control everything in a lucid dream - that would be preposterous when you think about it...

With self-awareness in the dream world, the capacity for dream control is merely a novelty bonus. It becomes possible for two reasons:

1. The dream world is an imaginary creation - it is sheer fantasy, an illusory reality -- so there are no physical laws to stop anything you want from happening.
2. When conscious, the dreamer possesses the clarity of thought to guide their self-awareness through the dreamscape at will.

Many beginners assume that lucid dreaming must equal full dream control but this is a major misconception. Lucid dreaming only means to have consciousness within the dream state. This can imply dream control, or it can imply simply observing the dream world with the clarity of thought enabled by your heightened awareness. Both are very appealing propositions.

However, some expert lucid dreamers despise the fact that it is popularized as dream control. As if lucidity is a mere psychological novelty trick that allows you to fly, have sex, take part in extreme sports and all the other instantly gratifying activities that beginners tend to go for. Advanced dream explorers contend that conscious dreaming is a profound and enlightening state of awareness, and to play it like a video game is a disservice to the grand spiritual nature of this transcendental state.

As the leading lucid dream researcher Robert Waggoner put it, "The sailor does not control the sea" - that is, your consciousness is the ship that navigates through a subconscious ocean. If you truly had to control everything and populate every dream scene with every leaf and blade of grass and wisp of cloud, you would have your hands full just creating and maintaining decent scenery!

So it's crucial to acknowledge that the subconscious mind is a co-creator of this experience and still plays an important role in lucid dreams just as it does in normal dreams. It is quite happy to populate the dream world while we consciously frolic within it. Sometimes that means a bird flies of its own accord, or a dream figure behaves autonomously. That does not mean you have failed to stay lucid. Your simple conscious acknowledgement of the dream world is what makes this state so special.

What Else is Lucid Dreaming Good For?

Non-lucid dreamers may assume there's no point to lucid dreaming without total dream control. But they'd be wrong... The sheer detail of a lucid dream can be enough to leave you dumbfounded and happy to watch the dream unfurl naturally in your super-sensory state. I call this passive lucid dreaming. It enables the dream to evolve directly from your subconscious - only now, you have full awareness of it all. This in itself is an insightful application for lucid dreaming that allows for "live" dream interpretation.

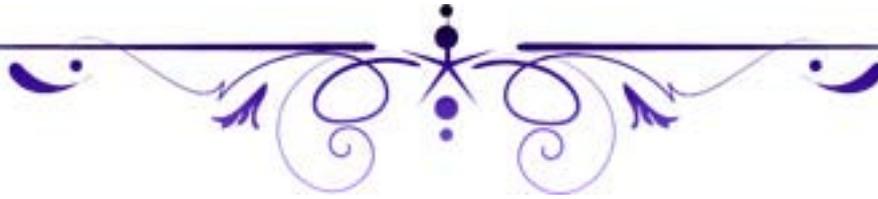
What's more, with just the tiniest element of control, you have the opportunity to directly interact with your own subconscious mind - or soul or inner self or whatever you choose to call it. I have had many one-on-one conversations with my inner self which revealed some compelling insights and provoked meaningful shifts in my waking life perspective. This is also a powerful way to tackle limiting beliefs, overcome long term phobias and change unwanted waking behaviors.

When have you ever been in direct contact with your unconscious mind before? All you need to do is talk to a dream character, or shout out a question to the dream, and be rewarded with the wisdom of your own inner voice which plays out it's answer within the dream. This alone can be more exhilarating than any controlled dream experience based on your desire to seek out the physical thrills of a virtual reality world.

Of course, there are many obvious wish fulfilment applications of conscious dreaming - such as time travel, shape shifting, swimming without oxygen, erotic fantasies, super strength, flying, extreme sports, and anything else you can imagine. These are the reasons most people decide to learn lucid dreaming in the first place. It provides the ultimate freedom from physical reality. And, yes, I will provide you with the rulebook for initiating these fantasies and maintaining them for as long as possible in the lucid dream world.

This will all be possible and more once you grasp the basics of lucid dreaming and learn how to stabilize and manipulate your dreams. But ultimately I want to take you on a journey to explore your inner self in your lucid dreams, because this enables you to overcome your fears, heal deep subconscious wounds, enhance your creativity and problem solving skills, and even meditate inside a lucid dream. This is a most insightful mental phenomenon and there are no doubt more uses for lucid dreaming that people are yet to discover...

About The Author



My name is Rebecca Turner and I have been lucid dreaming for about half my life now. My first lucid experience was when I was 14 years old - before that I had perfectly regular dreams like most people. There was not even a sniff of a lucid dream in my childhood.

The earliest dream I can remember is when I was 4 or 5 years old. I fell asleep in front of the TV one afternoon watching a *Tom & Jerry* cartoon... and I had an exceptionally long, vivid dream about a cat chasing a mouse. Even more bizarrely, the entire dream was in cartoon. I woke up confused, unsure of what had been a dream and what was real. The transition into dreaming was barely noticeable.

Ten years and lots of dreams later, there was that fateful moment when I read about lucid dreaming in a magazine article. Even then, in 1997, it was mistakenly touted as a paranormal phenomenon (and it still is today, although there is solid scientific proof for the mechanism). Lucid dreaming, remote viewing, out of body experiences, psychic mediums, telepathy... they were all lumped into one big ol' mysterious box. And whether lucid dreaming was real or not, I had to try and experience it for myself...



So over the following weeks I studied lucid dreaming and read as much about it as I could. I even did a school project on it. Then, using reality checks and a self hypnosis tape, I had my very first lucid dream. Here is an excerpt from my lucid dream diary (edited for clarity):

"I'm standing in an empty white room, which is completely bare like a new house. The complete lack of detail makes me curious... What is this place? Suddenly, I realize: this is a dream!

The room surges into focus. I become self-aware: conscious of my body and its place in the dream world. I do my reality check and feel my fingers push right through the palm of my hand. I'm lucid!

I am so excited, I run out the door, looking for someone to tell. I find a woman who I don't recognize and shout in her face. 'I'm dreaming! I'm dreaming!' I'm so excited, I accidentally wake myself up."

It was like a light switch had turned on in my head. Suddenly I existed in a new, alternate reality, in which anything I could conceive of came true.

What was this phantom place?

The Alternate Reality Dream World

At first, I was stunned by the realism of my lucid dream reality - and then overjoyed by the realization that I could control and direct my awareness while dreaming.

That year, I practiced more lucid dreaming techniques as well as Out Of Body (OOB) visualizations. Sometimes I had several lucid dreams per week. Other times, I had nothing for months. It was anything but consistent. But when I had lucid dreams... they were totally worth it.

In lucid dreams, I can make conscious decisions and increase the intensity of the dream at will. With my heightened awareness I can see, hear, feel, taste and even smell everything as vividly as waking life. I can create my own scenery, teleport to anywhere in the universe, interact with other dream characters and break the laws of physics.

Here's a beautiful memory of a lucid dream produced by an ancient Tibetan technique today known as a Wake Induced Lucid Dream (WILD):

"As I fall asleep, lying on my back and totally relaxed, I imagine a white sandy beach in my mind's eye. I put myself in the scene and start to place every detail as I become completely mesmerized. After a few minutes, I lose all awareness of physical reality and I 'pop' into the dreamscape. I am asleep!

I'm now standing on the beach in a vivid 3D landscape, my toes sinking into the soft, white sand. I feel completely calm and at peace with myself, without a care in the world. As I look out across the sparkling ocean, I have an urge to soar over the surface, and take a big leap towards the sea...

I pick up speed as I fly over the surface of the ocean like a bird. The water is deep blue and shimmering in the sunlight. I dip my hands in and relish the feeling of the cool water running between my fingers.

I start to hear beautiful music coming from my unconscious mind. There is a man singing to an acoustic guitar, backed by many layers of strings. The music captures the beauty of the dream perfectly. I am in paradise."

In this lucid dream, something special happened. I started out awake in my bed - and then sent my body to sleep while walking my mind directly into a lucid REM state. This is not merely day dreaming, nor visualizing while awake. It is known as a Mind Awake / Body Asleep Technique and is commonly used by out-of-body explorers - or are they, too, lucid dreamers...?

In other guided dreams, I have:

- Spoken with my subconscious mind to resolve inner conflicts
- Teleported across the world to visit other people in my dreams
- Traveled into the distant past and observed ancient man
- Flown high over New York City at night with my partner
- Rocketed through the universe at impossible speeds
- Shrunk myself down and explored the quantum world
- Tunneled into the ground to fall into the sky of another world

It's difficult to highlight my favorite lucid dream because there are so many, and they are incomparable with anything in real life...

But I'm not alone. There are millions of people who have these flights of fancy. A surprising number of children dream lucidly completely naturally, and some go on to have lucid dreams every night as adults. You will never know who these people are until you ask them The Question: "Do you ever control your dreams?" You may be surprised who does!

The fact is, we all have the capacity to lucid dream given enough accurate practice and determination. Everyone dreams - and every healthy mind (of virtually any age) can become conscious within them. That's what this book will teach you. You'll find exact explanations of how to perform a range of induction techniques, and then inspiration and challenges to set your lucid dreaming life free.

So let's begin.

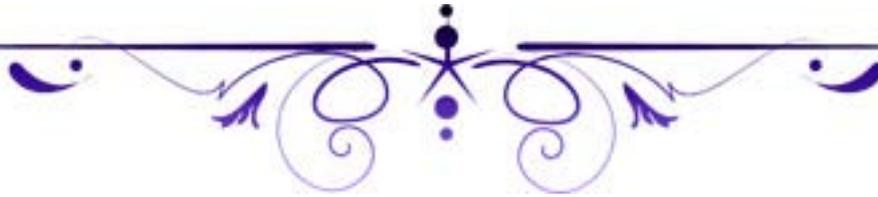


Sleeping is no mean art: for its
sake one must stay awake all day.

~Friedrich Nietzsche

Artwork: *Tree of Light*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Part 1: The Nature of Sleep and Dreams



Before we learn about lucid dreaming, it pays to understand the basic nature of sleep and dreams. In this section we'll blow away the myths and misconceptions and fully grasp the purpose and mechanism of sleep.

For instance, why do we need to sleep at all? What's the primary goal?

Do you know the best time of night to initiate a lucid dream? What are the effects of drugs, alcohol and sleep deprivation on dream sleep?

And why did we evolve the ability to dream in the first place? What is the brain trying to achieve with this hallucinogenic state of mind?

Answering these questions will provide a much greater insight into the nature of sleep and dreams, fast tracking your lucid dream quest.

A History of Sleep and Dreaming

The recorded history of sleep and dreaming goes back to the BC era, when ancient Greeks and Egyptians were the leading technological force.

The Egyptians thought there was meaning behind dreams and they analyzed dream symbols, searching for prophecies from the gods. They believed in three bodies: *Shat* (the corpse body), *Ka* (the living physical body) and *Ba* (the soul).



Ba was often represented in hieroglyphics as a human-headed bird floating above the sleeping body or corpse. According to one expert “...the *Ba* is the person but in another form. The *Ba* could be defined as an individual in an out-of-body state.” Was the *Ba* actually the lucid dreaming consciousness?

As with many Egyptian concepts, the Greeks soon wove this idea into their own culture.

Superstition aside, the Greek philosopher Aristotle actually came up with the first scientific theory of sleep in 350 BC when he wrote: “a person awakes from sleep when digestion is complete”.

Actually, this is not true at all. But Aristotle deserves kudos for trying. The rest of the scientific community would ignore the science of sleep for another 2,000 years... And sleep and dreaming would become one of the most under-researched areas of human behavior.

Circadian Rhythms

In 1729, a French astronomer identified biological rhythms by tracking the stars. The frivolously named Jean-Jacques d’Ortous de Mairan created an experiment that showed Circadian rhythms in plants, causing them to open up during the day and close up at night.

Humans have Circadian rhythms too. Your sleep cycles are controlled by the Circadian clock; an internal timekeeping device that controls body temperature and releases chemicals (neurotransmitters) at the right time. When your brain releases the neurotransmitter adenosine at night, you begin to feel sleepy and your body temperature falls. Similarly, in the morning when the Circadian alarm bell rings, your brain releases other neurotransmitters to wake you up and make your body more alert.

That is why early risers often find it difficult to sleep in: their bodies have already been stimulated with wake-up juice. The fact that Circadian rhythms evolved in the first place tells us that regular sleep is key to our survival.

Sigmund Freud

The history of sleep and dreaming was changed forever when, in 1900, the infamous psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud published his controversial book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud believed that our minds are full of repressed memories and desires. He also believed in a meaning behind dreams - that they hold deeper psychological insights - and he acknowledged the existence of lucid dreaming.

Sigmund Freud suggested there was a psychological need for dreaming - just as there was a physiological need for sleep. Soon after, some important advances in technology kick-started a revolution in sleep research. The history of sleep was being remodeled.

Scientists all over Europe began documenting the physiology of sleep, measuring brainwaves with the EEG machine, and linking Rapid Eye Movement (REM) patterns to stages of dreaming.

Who Discovered Lucid Dreaming?

We have to thank the eighth century Tibetan Buddhists for the first recorded discovery of lucid dreaming. They learned how to control their dreams on their path to enlightenment with Dream Yoga. They used a technique similar to the modern day Wake Induced Lucid Dream, or WILD, to maintain full consciousness while slipping directly into the dream state.

In the modern world, lucid dreaming was first classified in the 1960s by Celia Green. She realized it was a separate state of consciousness and identified the scientific potential. Green was also the first to make the connection with REM sleep and false awakenings.

It was not until 1975 that the British parapsychologist Keith Hearne recorded a set of pre-determined eye movement signals from his volunteer, Alan Worsley, in a lucid dream state under laboratory conditions. Worsley simply looked in different directions in his lucid dream, causing his eyeballs to mimic the action in reality. It was a verifiable communication system, a little like Morse Code.

However, Hearne's research slipped under the radar of the mainstream science journals, and it was Dr Stephen LaBerge at Stanford University who became famous for publishing his own version of this experiment in 1983. LaBerge went on to found *The Lucidity Institute* and remains a leader in lucid dream research and education to this day.

Recent Lucidity Studies

More recently, a German study conducted at the Neurological Laboratory in Frankfurt in 2009 revealed significantly increased brain activity during lucid dreams.

An EEG machine recorded frequencies in the 40 Hz (or GAMMA) range in lucid dreamers enjoying a bit of conscious REM. This is far higher than the normal dream state (THETA range, or 4-8 Hz) and perhaps more alert than you are right now (BETA range, or 12-38 Hz).

The researchers also saw heightened activity in the frontal and frontolateral areas of the brain which are the seat of linguistic thought as well as other higher mental functions linked to self-awareness. It supports the theory that lucid dreaming is a unique state of consciousness separate from any other mental state.

1000 BC - Tibetan Buddhism teaches a form of lucid dreaming called Dream Yoga.

3000 BC - Ancient Egyptians believe in the Ba (soul) which flies outside the body during sleep.

850 BC - Ancient Greeks believe that dreams contain prophecy and binding instructions.

350 BC - Aristotle theorizes that a person awakes from sleep when digestion is complete.

1619 - Rene Descartes notes that because dreams are so real, our waking senses may be illusory too.

1729 - Jean-Jacques d'Ortous de Mairan discovers Circadian Rhythms in plants.

1899 - Sigmund Freud theorizes that dreams contain repressed memories, fears and desires.

1917 - Carl Jung proposes that dreams are a spiritual expression of the unconscious mind.

1880 - Frederick van Eden creates the term "lucid dreaming"

1924 - Hans Berger records the first human electroencephalogram (EEG).

1953 - Kleitman and Aserinsky describe REM sleep and link it to dreaming.

1957 - Dement and Kleitman describe the repeating stages of the human sleep cycle.

1964 - Randy Garnder sets the world record of 11 days for sleep deprivation without any stimulants.

1968 - Celia Green collates lucid dream accounts and identifies it as a unique state of consciousness.

1975 - Keith Hearne proves the existence of lucid dreaming through eye movements.

1978 - Stephen LaBerge publishes his eye movement experiment which validates conscious dreaming.

1976 - Hobson and McCarley propose that dreams are random firings in the brain stem.

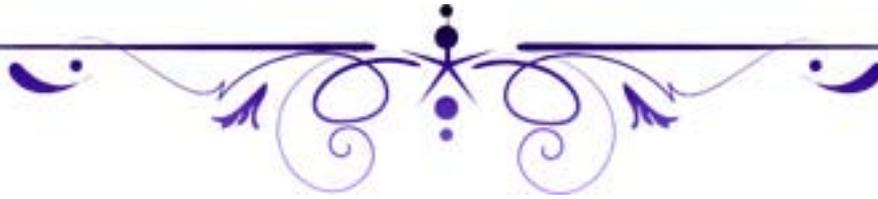
2003 - Stickgold and colleagues publish evidence of sleep's effect on memory and learning.

1989 - Rechtschaffen finds that total sleep deprivation results in the death of rats within 2-3 weeks.

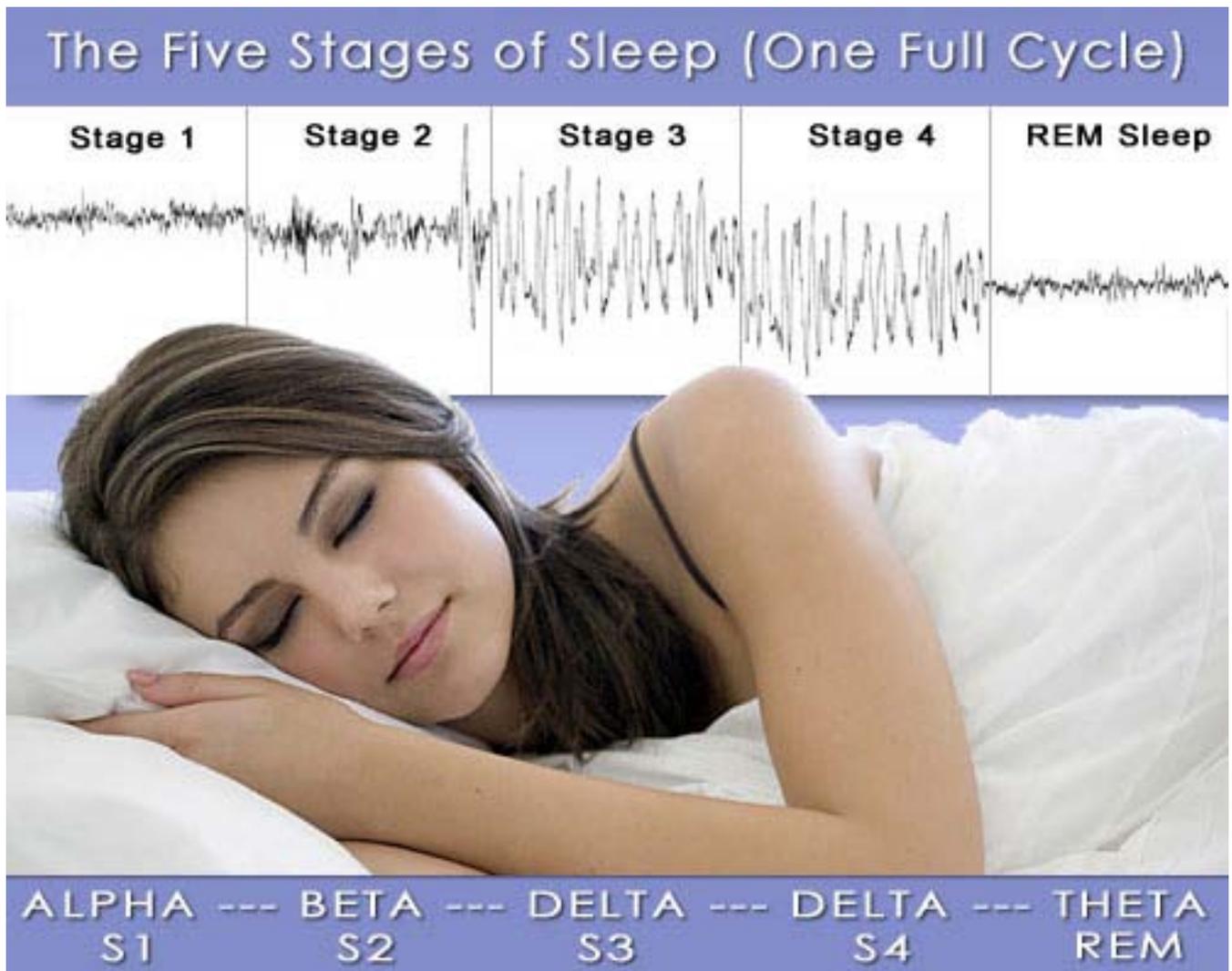
2009 - The Neurological Laboratory shows lucid dreams generating highly active GAMMA brainwaves.

2011 - Scientists at the Max Planck Institute use MRI to record in-dream action of lucid dreamers.

The Stages of Sleep



Each and every night, your brain passes through five stages of sleep. Passing through all these stages takes about 90-110 minutes and marks one full sleep cycle. So, if you sleep soundly for eight hours per night, you should be getting five full sleep cycles:



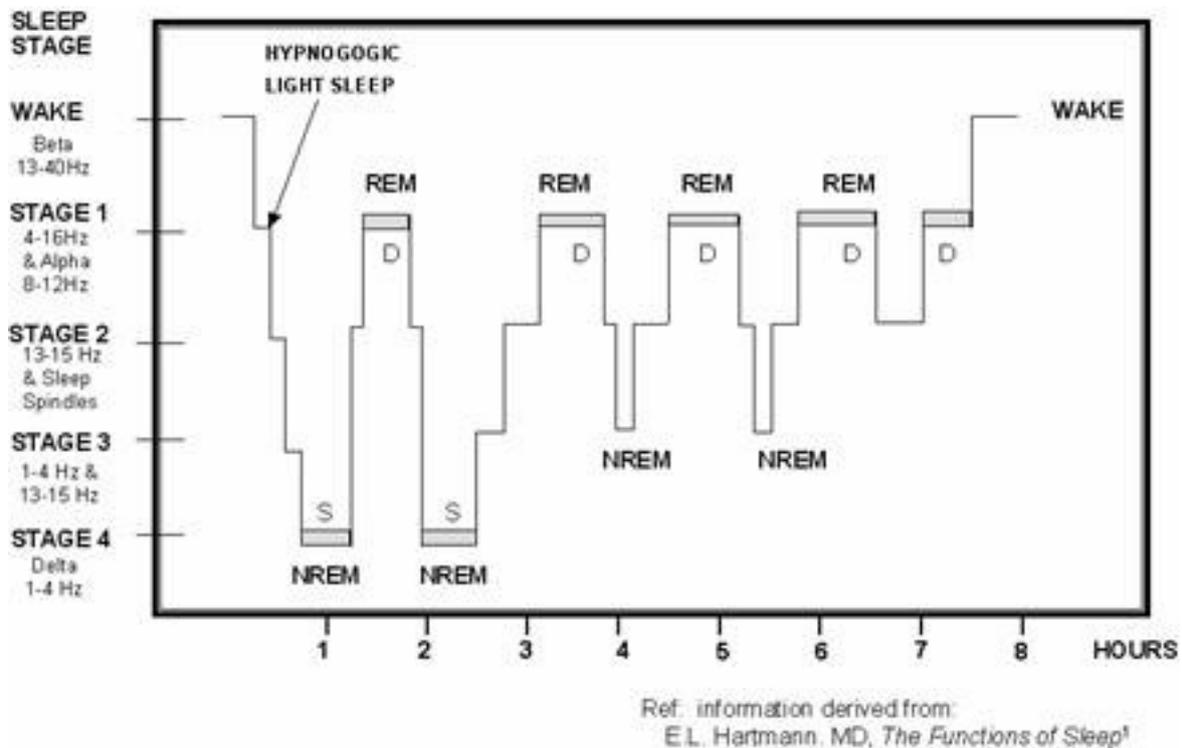
The Five Stages of Sleep

Let's take a closer look at these five stages of sleep:

- **Stage 1** is a light sleep and you are easily woken. You begin to lose muscle tone, causing twitches and hypnic jerks (suddenly jumping awake from a doze). You have hypnagogic hallucinations, swirling light and color patterns which hypnotize your mind into a restful sleep. Stage 1 also marks the loss of self-awareness and most sensory attachment to the physical world. Your brain-wave frequencies descend from ALPHA through THETA (4-7 Hz).
- **Stage 2** is marked by a loss of nearly all muscle tone (sleep paralysis or REM atonia) so your physical body can't act out your forthcoming dreams. Although your brainwaves have slowed further, they do show brief bursts of higher brainwave activity called sleep spindles in the lower BETA range at 12-16 Hz. You spend around half of all your sleep in Stage 2; a light dreamless sleep.
- **Stage 3** is the beginning of a deep sleep, also known as Slow Wave Sleep. It is harder to rouse someone from a deep sleep, but if you are woken you will feel especially doozy and confused for a couple of minutes. Brainwaves have descended to the DELTA range of 0.5-4 Hz, the slowest frequency you'll ever experience. Once again this is another dreamless stage of sleep, however it is also the most likely time for sleepwalking to occur.
- **Stage 4** is the deepest kind of Slow Wave Sleep. This stage replenishes your energy both physically and mentally, and without enough deep sleep (such as when sleeping on a long-haul flight) you won't feel refreshed in the morning. Your brainwaves are now exclusively in the DELTA range.
- **REM Sleep** marks the onset of dreaming. After emerging from the deeper stages of sleep, brain-wave activity returns to the THETA range (4-8 Hz) through BETA (12-38 Hz) and Rapid Eye Movement denotes dreaming. If you are woken from REM sleep you'll dive back into this stage when you next return to sleep. REM sleep is important to healthy brain functioning for many reasons, including the creation of long-term memories. This is also where lucid dreaming occurs, signified by even greater brainwave frequencies sometimes as high as the GAMMA range of 38-90 Hz.

When is The Best Time for Lucid Dreaming?

Your most memorable lucid dreams will mostly occur in the fourth and fifth sleep cycles, where periods of REM sleep become longer and you will soon wake up (which makes dream recall far easier).



The graph shows REM sleep occurring at the end of each sleep cycle. This is your dream time.

If you don't wake up to an alarm, you'll find you often wake directly from a dream, which makes it much easier to remember. When this happens, don't move and just allow yourself to gently re-enter the dream, while thinking "I'm dreaming".

This graph also shows how it's essential for lucid dreamers to get sufficient shut-eye and not miss out on REM sleep by getting up too early. Indeed, the more chances you have to sleep in, the better. This allows extended REM time in the morning, more vivid dreams, and more chances to become lucid.

How Much Sleep Does The Average Person Need?

When you're deciding how many hours to sleep each night, also consider how many sleep cycles that will give you. For instance, a 7-hour sleep will wake you up in the middle of your fifth sleep cycle (assuming each cycle takes 90 minutes). This cuts you short and prevents your fifth REM phase. It's much healthier to wake up after the cycle is complete and in a light Stage 1 sleep of your next cycle.

Do you repeatedly wake up "on the wrong side of the bed" each morning? It's likely your alarm clock is interrupting your final sleep cycle at a crucial point. If you can, allow yourself to wake up naturally each morning. Otherwise, go to bed earlier and give yourself the extra minutes needed to complete the cycle.

So, how many sleep cycles should you aim for each night? Four? Five? Six? It seems that the amount of sleep required differs from person to person, however as a rough guide experts have come up with the following chart based on age:

Age / Condition	Sleep Hours	Sleep Cycles
Newborn baby	Up to 18	12
1-12 months	14-18	9-12
1-3 years	12-15	8-10
3-5 years	11-13	7-8
5-12 years	9-11	6-7
Adolescents	9-10	6
Adults	7-8	4-5
Pregnant women	8+	5+

How Long Do Dreams Last?

We can measure the length of dream time using an EEG machine which reads brainwave activity. Most dreams are directly correlated to REM sleep - to the extent that your real eyes can move and track in the same direction you are looking in the dream.

The brainwave readings tell us that early REM sleep usually only a few minutes. Much of the first cycle is dedicated to non-REM sleep, driven by the need for physical rest. So, these early dreams are often fleeting; you are unlikely to remember them and they're unlikely to yield lucid dreams.

As you sleep on through the night, your REM phases grow longer in each sleep cycle. By morning, your fourth or fifth sleep cycle (ending when you wake up for the day) may allow for 45-60 minutes of uninterrupted REM sleep. It's perfect for lucid dreaming.

Every now and then I hear an urban myth or even a first-hand claim that someone had a dream that encompassed an entire lifetime. Generally, the timeframe of regular dreams are in line with reality, but there is something to be said for the dream-time distortion.

It's always difficult to judge the length of a dream from the first-hand perspective of dreaming it. Whether you're lucid or not, time can sometimes be distorted in dreams - and there are few constants against which you can measure the passing of dream events.

If you feel a dream lasted for days or years, it's just your *perception* of events in the dream that made it seem to last so long. It is very unlikely that your mind actually experienced that time, minute-for-minute, but it is more of a psychological trick giving the impression of a lot of time passing.

This also means you can't really get stuck in dream limbo for 70 years like Cobb in *Inception* ;)

How Long Do Lucid Dreams Last?

Like regular dreams, lucid dreams can last anywhere from a few seconds up to an hour (and possibly even more). For me, a typical lucid dream lasts 10-20 minutes and I don't waste a second of it!

Most beginners find their lucid dream collapses within a few seconds because the emotions of becoming lucid are so overwhelming. However with a few simple dream stabilization methods, you can massively prolong your lucid dreams.

As soon as I learned how to prolong my lucid dreams, it opened up a world of possibilities. My dream world posed a new adventure playground, in which I could travel anywhere and do anything I wanted to with complete clarity and awareness. What's more, these stabilization techniques serve to enhance the dream clarity and my ability to control it, while preventing me from waking up prematurely. With dream stabilization, I have had lucid dreams lasting an estimated 45-60 minutes.

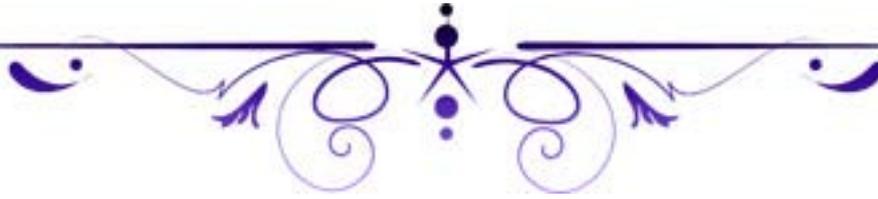
There's a long, long trail a-winding
into the land of my dreams.

~Stoddard King, Jr.



Artwork: *The Magic Gateway*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Why Do We Dream?



Although some of his ideas have now been discredited, Sigmund Freud made some important steps in unlocking the riddle of the unconscious mind. He famously theorized that dreams are the “royal road to the unconscious” and that our mind protects us from disturbing thoughts and memories by repressing them, only to reveal themselves through conceptual form in our dreams. He also believed that we are almost entirely driven by unconscious sexual desire.

Freud split the human psyche into three parts: the Id, Ego and Super-Ego.

- **ID** - Newborn babies are born with only an Id. The Id is a sense of mind that causes us to act on impulse: to follow our primary instincts and ignore the consequences. The Id runs on the pleasure principle - it doesn't care about anything but its own satisfaction.
- **EGO** - As they grow up, toddlers develop an Ego. This is the part of the psyche that allows us to understand that other people have needs, and that impulsiveness can hurt us in the long run. This reality principle makes sure we meet the needs of the Id, without conflicting with the Ego.
- **SUPER-EGO** - By the age of five, we develop the Super-Ego. This is our moral brain, that tells us the difference between right and wrong. However it doesn't make special allowances - it is up to the Ego to decide.

This concept can be demonstrated with The Iceberg Metaphor...

Just like an iceberg, the conscious mind is only the tip. It is a small part of who we are. There is much more under the surface.

Way down below, we have little or no conscious awareness of the Id, which influences all our decisions.

The Ego is free floating in all three levels - both conscious and unconscious - monitoring our behaviors by day.

Every night when we sleep, we disconnect from our conscious tip of the iceberg. The lights go off and we are protected from external stimuli (like noise, temperature and pain) as well as internal stimuli (like emotions and fears). We do this by creating our own internal worlds - our dreams.

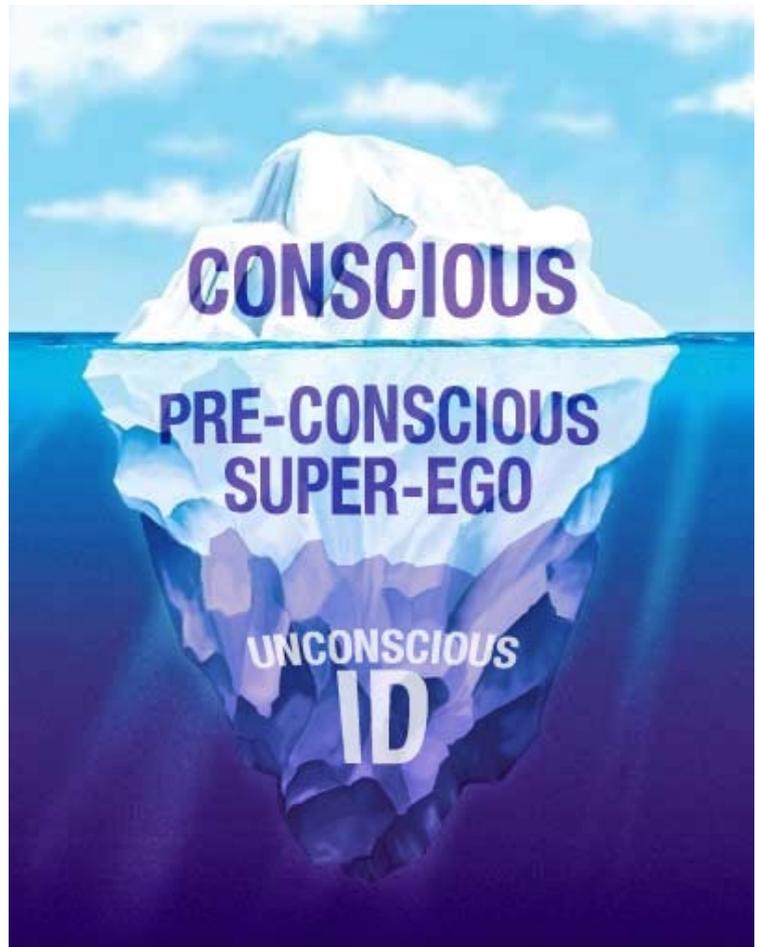
Freud said dreams are a way to express the unconscious emotions arising from the Id - otherwise we would be constantly disturbed by them in our sleep and soon wake up.

So why do we dream? Freud said it was to protect our sleep.

Carl Jung

Carl Jung was Freud's protege and the founder of analytical psychology. He thought he could answer the riddle of dreams; Jung was a great follower of Freud's dream analysis, but he eventually broke away and developed this understanding in a whole new direction.

Where Freud said dreams are objective and retrospective, Jung's theory allowed them to be subjective and prospective. Though he still believed in Freud's work, he became much more concerned with the dreamer's subconscious quest to align his Ego and Self. He believed dreams were outspoken in their message and not wrapped up in heavily repressed subconscious symbology as Freud had us believe.



J Allan Hobson

In more recent decades, John Allan Hobson emphasized the role of neurochemicals in the brain and random electrical impulses originating in the brainstem. However, he does not say that dreams are merely the random firing of neurons - but rather the brain's cobbled attempt at making sense of them.

He later acknowledged the increased activity of the limbic system (a primeval part of the brain which produces emotions) during REM sleep. This served to give the meaning of dreams an emotional basis, rather than a random neurochemical one.

So, does this provide us with any psychological basis for dream interpretation? Was Freud right to suggest that dreams symbolize our repressed fears and desires? Do our dreams contain our darkest secrets just waiting to be unlocked?

Actually, Hobson believes Freud had it wrong. He may even have impeded our scientific understanding of the nature of dreams by propagating such ominous theories. Hobson is all for a psychological meaning to dreams, but just that it needn't be locked away under layers of secretive subconscious meaning.

Instead, Hobson takes a Jungian approach: dreams reveal far more than they hide - and can actually be highly transparent. However, it's difficult to link this conclusion to Hobson's biological explanation for dreaming.

But the theory does make sense. Next time you dream of being chased, isn't it likely that you are - metaphorically - running away from something in real life that's causing you anxiety? And if you dream of being pregnant - for a woman at least - is this a natural expression of your desire to have a baby? With simple interpretive analysis, dreams may not be so mysterious after all...

What We Know Today

Dream research offers many theories - but still no definitive answer to this question that encompasses every aspect of dreaming. Scientists generally seem to agree on this: dreaming is a form of unconscious thinking during sleep that helps us process information and emotions more effectively for when we wake up.

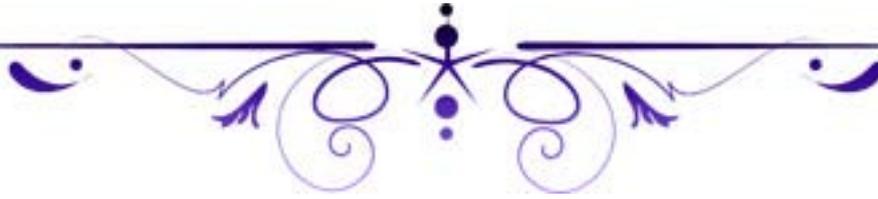
In a way, Freud gave dreams an unfortunate legacy. He taught us to associate them with psychological problems and anxieties. But in reality, most of our dreams are healthy and engaging - aren't they?

Dreams are a mixed bag. Even without a unified theory of dreaming, I find it very useful to remember my dreams, to be able to observe and reflect on what's happening in my subconscious mind. And if you plan to have lucid dreams, remembering your dreams is vital...

A dream which is not interpreted
is like a letter which is not read.
~ The Talmud



Dream Interpretation



Dream interpretation holds the key to many of your subconscious fears and desires. Each and every night, you have access to your own personal psychotherapist who understands you better than anyone else in this world. You can interpret the meaning of your dreams to change your core beliefs, your relationships, your hopes and your future.

Indeed, the more importance you place on your dreams, the easier it will become to remember, analyze and become conscious within them.

Why Are Dreams So Weird?

When you dream, the subconscious mind takes over. Consider the subconscious as being like an inner child; it doesn't know any better. It doesn't use logic and isn't able to plan ahead like the conscious brain. That's why dreams are so weird.

The subconscious makes all kinds of strange connections that don't make sense to the logical brain. But you can interpret those connections and apply their resulting insights to everyday waking life. If you want to interpret your dreams, keep a dream journal and aim to write down at least one new dream per day. This is also excellent practice for lucid dreaming. In your dream journal, underline everything you think might be a dream symbol - such as a pig riding a bicycle, flying to the moon, or a talking baby. These are illogical symbols that have a deeper meaning inside the subconscious mind.

How to Interpret Dream Symbols

The basis of dream interpretation is to identify important dream symbols and translate their true meaning in dreams. Look out for recurring concepts. Breaking a promise is a concept. Running away from something is a concept. These ideas are all based on your past experiences of life and your interactions with the world around you.

Every rule or concept understood by your subconscious was set by your own life experience - you taught it everything it knows. It's like creating a new language; only the translations are based on the world around you and all your experiences since you were a young child.

In dreams, your subconscious shows you how it perceives the world in this conceptual form. It shows you its fears and its desires - but not necessarily as you would expect to see them.

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While the interpretation of these concepts will be unique to you, there will be considerable overlap between different people living in the same culture, who will have shared many similar experiences growing up. This is why dream dictionaries can sometimes provide guidance - or at the very least a starting point. But, equally, you shouldn't take all dictionary interpretations literally, especially when the analysis makes no sense for you or just doesn't feel right.

Common Dream Symbols

Let's look at a common example to give you a sense of dream interpretation at work. Flying dreams often represent your own personal sense of power over yourself or a situation. The subconscious is taking a concept, and showing it to you masked as a dream symbol.

If you are soaring up high and enjoying the landscape below, it is likely that you are in control of your life. However, if you are faltering or falling, your subconscious is telling you that you lack control or are vulnerable in life. Trees, power lines, buildings or gravity may obstruct your flying dream.

If you have recurring flying dreams like this, try to identify who or what is at the root of your fears. What are you afraid of? What can't you control in life? Is someone making you feel vulnerable? If so, take charge of the situation and you will one day soar in your dreams...

Here are 30 common dream symbols and their most likely translations which may help you get to the root of the meaning of your dreams:

1. **Animals** often represent the part of your psyche that feels connected to nature and survival. Being chased by a predator suggests you're holding back repressed emotions like fear or aggression.
2. **Babies** can symbolize a literal desire to produce offspring, or your own vulnerability or need to feel loved. They can also signify a new start.
3. **Being chased** is one of the most common dream symbols in all cultures. It means you are feeling threatened, so reflect on who is chasing you (they may also be symbolic) and why they are a possible threat in real life.
4. **Clothes** make a statement about how we want other people to perceive us. If you dream symbol is shabby clothing, you may feel unattractive or worn out. Changing what you wear may reflect a lifestyle change.
5. **Crosses** are interpreted subjectively depending on your religious beliefs. Some see it as symbolizing balance, death, or an end to a particular phase of life. The specific circumstances will help define these dream symbols.
6. **Exams** can signify self-evaluation, with the content of the exam reflecting the part of your personality or life under inspection.
7. **Death** of a friend or loved one represents change (endings and new beginnings) and is not a paranormal prediction of any kind. If you are recently bereaved, it may be an attempt to come to terms with the event.

8. **Falling** is a common dream symbol that relates to our anxieties about letting go, losing control over a situation, or somehow failing after a success.
9. Faulty machinery in dreams is often caused by your language centers being shut down while asleep, making it difficult to dial a phone, read the time, or search the internet. It can also represent performance anxiety in life.
10. **Food** is said to symbolize knowledge, because it nourishes the body just as information nourishes the brain. Food for thought?
11. **Demons** are sneaky evil entities which signify repressed emotions. You may secretly feel the need to change your own behaviors for the better.
12. **Hair** has significant ties with sexuality, according to Freud. Abundant hair may symbolize virility, while cutting hair off in a dream shows a loss of libido. Hair loss may also express a literal fear of going bald or becoming unattractive.
13. **Hands** are always present in dreams but when they are tied up it may represent feelings of futility. Washing your hands may express guilt. Looking closely at your hands in a dream is a good way to become lucid.
14. **Houses** can host many common dream symbols, but the building as a whole represents your inner psyche. Each room or floor can symbolize different emotions, memories and interpretations of meaningful events.
15. **Killing** in your dreams does not make you a closet murderer; it represents your desire to “kill” part of your own personality. It can also symbolize hostility towards a particular person and the desire to see them suffer.
16. **Marriage** may be a literal desire to wed or a merging of the feminine and masculine parts of your psyche.
17. **Missing a flight** or any other kind of transport is another popular dream, showing your frustration over possibly missing out on important opportunities in life. It’s most common when you’re struggling to make a big decision.
18. **Money** can symbolize self worth. If you dream of exchanging money, it may show that you’re anticipating some changes in your life.
19. **Mountains** are obstacles, so to dream of successfully climbing a mountain can reveal a true feeling of achievement. Viewing a landscape from atop a mountain can symbolize a life under review without conscious prejudice.
20. **Nudity** is one of the most common dream symbols, revealing your true self to others. You may feel vulnerable and exposed to others. Showing off your nudity may suggest sexual urges or a desire for recognition.
21. **People** (other dream characters) are reflections of your own psyche, and may demonstrate specific aspects of your own personality.

22. **Radios and TVs** can symbolize communication channels between the conscious and subconscious minds. When lucid, ask them a question...
23. **Roads**, aside from being literal manifestations, convey your direction in life. This may be time to question your current "life path".
24. **Schools** are common dream symbols in children and teenagers but what about dreaming of school in adulthood? It may display a need to know and understand yourself, fueled by life's own lessons.
25. **Sex** dreams can symbolize intimacy and a literal desire for sex. Or they may demonstrate the unification of unconscious emotions with conscious recognition, showing a new awareness and personal growth.
26. **Teachers**, aside from being literal manifestations of people, can represent authority figures with the power to enlighten you.
27. **Teeth** are common dream symbols. Dreaming of losing your teeth may show a hidden fear of getting old and being unattractive to the opposite sex.
28. **Being trapped** (physically) is a common nightmare theme, reflecting your real life inability to escape or make the right choice.
29. **Vehicles** may reflect how much control you feel you have over your life - for instance is the car out of control, or is someone else driving you?
30. **Water** comes in many forms and can symbolize the subconscious mind. Calm pools of water reflect inner peace while a choppy ocean can suggest unease.

Dream interpretation is not essential to lucid dreaming but the two concepts do tend to go hand-in-hand. Getting to know your own subconscious mind is also a key element of lucid dreaming - and it will help you master trickier aspects of dream control in the sometimes bizarre backyard of your mind.

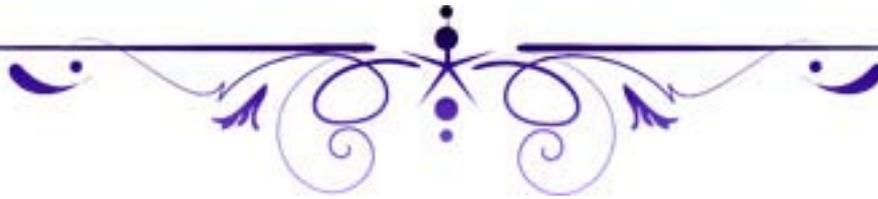
Downwards is the only way forwards.

~ Cobb, Inception



Artwork: *Visiting the Crimson Tree*
by Jeremiah Morelli

The Hypnagogic State



The hypnagogic state is a special state of mind that you've probably experienced many times before at the onset of sleep. Also known as hypnagogia, it induces visions, voices, insights and peculiar sensations as you sail through the borderland state.

If you fall asleep quickly, you may not notice your hypnagogia. But stay aware as you fall asleep and you may see familiar faces, landscapes and geometric shapes take form. Complex patterns flow across your field of vision, becoming almost hypnotic in nature, and with focus these can be manipulated at will. What many people don't realize is this imagery can be used to induce lucid dreams.

What is The Hypnagogic State?

The term hypnagogic is derived from two Greek words: *hypnos* (meaning sleep) and *agogeus* (meaning guide). Later, the term hypnopompic came to being, to describe the same phenomena which occurs between sleep and waking. Essentially these are the same hallucinatory states.

Scientists have linked the hypnagogic state with NREM sleep, pre-sleep ALPHA waves, REM sleep and relaxed wakefulness. There is also a theory that regular meditation can enable you to develop a skill to freeze the hypnagogic process at later and later stages.

Some scientists consider hypnagogia to be meaningless activity of the brain - a way of decluttering and clearing out unwanted junk. Others believe it has more value and is the beginning of the dream state. I've found that, just like lucid dreams, hypnagogic imagery can be consciously guided and interpreted as it happens, opening a gateway to the unconscious mind.

Like dreams, hypnagogic hallucinations can be quite random in nature. Here are some of the most common types you will probably have experienced yourself at some time:

Sights

The beginnings of visual hallucinations occur as phosphenes - seemingly random speckles, lines or geometric patterns that may float around or remain still behind your closed eyelids. When deeply immersed, you can control these patterns at will. First, just focus on changing the direction of the lines. Then *will* yourself to create specific shapes and movements. After that it's not difficult to have the phosphenes form a familiar face or animal. By learning to interact with your visual hypnagogia, you should find it easier to transition the visuals into whole imagined scenes and lucid dreams.

Sounds

Occasionally you will experience auditory hallucinations. The intensity can vary greatly, from faint impressions to loud buzzing noises frequently reported at the onset of an Out of Body Experience (OBE). Auditory hypnagogia range from hearing someone call your name, to hearing the phone ring, to snippets of speech appearing to come from nearby.

I find this kind of hallucination is more transitory and I will only hear a brief few words or have a memory of hearing something just a moment ago. Unlike the visual stuff, the sounds can't really be controlled (in my experience) simply because they're so fleeting.

The Tetris Effect

This is a truly bizarre feature of hypnagogia, where you feel the sensation of physically miming or acting out a repetitive activity from the day before.

As a teenager I worked on a supermarket checkout, and at night I used to have the frustrating phantom sensation that I was scanning food items over and over as I went to sleep. Similarly, waiters and waitresses report having Server Dreams where they restlessly wait tables during their hypnagogia. Chess players claim to see the checkered black-and-white chess board behind their closed eyelids, and boaties have the sensation of being at sea when they go to bed on solid ground.

Remember, though, this is not a dream state; the brain is using a variety of sensory memories to hypnotize you into a sleep state, where the real dreams can begin.

Sleep Paralysis

Sleep paralysis involves the sensation of your limbs going waxy and numb as you fall asleep, or when you wake up. This REM atonia is completely normal and prevents you from acting out your dreams, however most people aren't normally aware of it. If you do suddenly become aware of the paralysis (which can happen during the WILD or OBE techniques) it can be disturbing, but it needn't be. Sleep paralysis is just a small stepping stone away from the land of lucid dreams!

The phenomenon usually passes in a few minutes as you return to full wakefulness or deepen the sensation and step your mind into a lucid dream. Sleep paralysis can be accompanied by loud humming, roaring and buzzing noises. If you are afraid you may inadvertently trigger frightening visual hallucinations but let me reassure you this is all in the mind. We'll look at sleep paralysis in more detail in a later chapter (and how to turn this state into a fantastic lucid dream scenario).

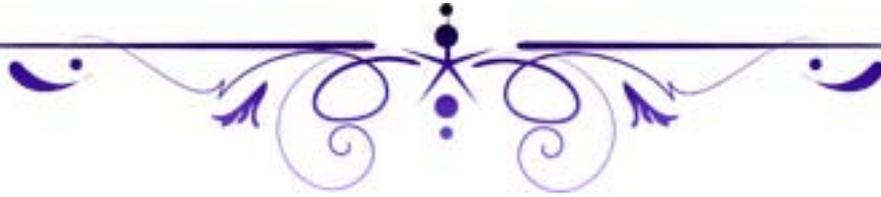
Other Sensations

The effects of hypnagogia don't end there. Some people report fleeting sensations of taste, smell, heat and other tactile feelings as they fall asleep. It's also normal to have changes in perceived body size, or floating limbs; sometimes as I fall asleep or meditate I feel as though my arms are in a totally different positions to reality. This is a great way to disassociate from the real world and focus on your dream world. And we have all experienced the *hypnic jerk* - a sudden jolt back to reality from the verge of sleep, usually accompanied by a vision of tripping or falling (known as The Kick in *Inception*).

There may also be a form of synesthesia at play during the hypnagogic state. Hearing a real-life sound may result in seeing a flash of white light due to some funny cross-wiring in the brain. It's actually thought that we all have some degree of synesthesia in waking life; while most of us may have a spacial recognition of the days of the week in our mind's eye, extreme synesthesiasts see numbers as colors, or taste different foods when they hear certain words.

You'll learn to play with your hypnagogia by practicing meditation and certain lucid dreaming techniques like WILD and OBE exits. For now, see how many different hypnagogic affects you can perceive as you fall asleep tonight and see how you can shape the patterns willfully.

9 Reasons To Lucid Dream



Lucid dreaming offers profound benefits that touch all of us, no matter our culture, beliefs or life circumstances. Ultimately, I think all of these benefits put together would play a serious role in advancing the human race, if only it was something that came naturally to all of us. Before you begin lucid dreaming in the next few days or weeks, here are nine applications for your new dream life.

1. Lucid dreaming creates freedom and escapism.

This is probably the one and only reason most people initially pursue consciousness in dreams - to have sex with their secret crush, to re-enact a day in the life of Jack Bauer, or to fly like an eagle over breathtaking scenery. We all have unfulfilled desires and lucidity is an amazing way to experience them in stunning realism. It is our natural virtual reality headset, our one portal to other worlds where we can temporarily escape this reality and live the life of our dreams... Literally.

If you're not yet a lucid dreamer, think of this escapism as akin to watching a movie or diving into a novel. But here, you are the central protagonist and all the characters, plot twists and epiphanies are profoundly tailored to your needs. An experienced oneironaut can manifest anything they want in a guided dream, or they can let the dream movie play out of its own volition. This gives us both the ultimate power to create any situation imaginable, and the thrill of being presented with unexpected twists and turns produced by our own subconscious.

Many people never get over the need for escapism in lucid dreams. The important thing is to remember - at least every now and then - to reach beyond the novelty value and see the potential of conscious dreaming as it truly stands.

2. Lucid dreaming reveals the power of your brain.

If you've never had a lucid dream, taken psychedelic drugs, or experienced profound meditation, then you are yet to reflect on the nature of human perception and awareness.

Have a look at your surroundings right now. I mean *really* look. Question whether any of it is real. How

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is it that you can see everything in such detail? What processes occur in your brain to make vision possible? What if you trip your information processing abilities, and the things you can see become a little less tangible?

When you become conscious in the dream state, you have an astonishing opportunity to experience a vivid and tangible dream world that is not actually real. It's a total mind trip.

Think about that: in a sleep state, where your body is processing only the tiniest amounts of external stimulus, your internal world is as rich as it ever was. Your brain realistically reproduces a world with tables, buildings, gravity, air, emotions, atoms (in fact anything you can conceive of) and it's very lifelike. While limited to the scope of your subconscious imagination, the lucid dream world is still a shocking place which truly has the capacity to mimic reality.

This special phenomenon, reserved only for those bold enough to delve into altered states, gives us a safe and natural way to explore the depths of human consciousness and perception. It has the potential to alter the way we regard the world around us for the rest of our lives.

3. Lucid dreaming prompts us to question the nature of reality.

In questioning the nature of our perception, it naturally leads us to question the nature of reality - that is, the world as it exists around us. Some New Age philosophies suggest that consciousness creates reality, but I tend to believe it is the other way around. The universe was born first and did rather well for 12 billion years before the little critters on planet Earth developed consciousness. But why did it all happen? Does our very existence spring from another universe? Are we a hypothetical outcome - Schrodinger's living cat? Or is ours the only universe, the only reality, in existence?

These are important theoretical questions but ones which can only really be pondered by stepping outside the box of everyday thinking. And lucid dreaming provides a useful platform. For instance, we can ask:

- Where do our dreams take place?
- Why, when dreams are solely based on our waking experiences, do we let them disobey the fundamental laws of cause and effect?
- What can dreams teach us about the nature of reality?
- How can we use lucid dreaming as a lens on our conscious experience?

Of course we can have no definitive answers, all we can do is theorize. But I think it is very exciting to use lucid dreaming as a tool to do so.



4. Lucid dreaming is a direct line to the subconscious mind.

Eat your heart out Sigmund Freud. Lucid dreamers can literally talk to their own subconscious mind in the dreamscape.

I once had a nightmare, in which I was being flung by a dark pointy figure up and down a narrow hallway. I wasn't lucid at first, although I was conscious enough to feel pain and each smack really hurt. After two or three smashes I had the conscious insight to ask whether I was dreaming. Of course I was. I didn't waste any time; I marched up to the silhouette man and grab him by the shoulders.

"WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME!" I shouted. His aggression immediately turned to sadness and childish frustration. "I can't reconcile this," he said, and shoved a notepad in my hands. He has scrawled the words "be loved, love yourself", referring to a philosophical debate I had been having earlier that day: is it more important to love yourself, or love someone else?

Clearly, my conclusion was at odds with my subconscious. There was absolutely no symbolism required. My inner child was acting out with a massive tantrum - and demanded my attention. Yet it is only when lucid that I have the opportunity to resolve such issues face-to-face.

Instead of fearing the pointy figure or wanting to eliminate him, I now felt empathy for him. He hadn't understood. So I explained my reasons as if he were a child. Draining away both physically and emotionally, the creature left and I woke up in awe of the childish element that arose from my subconscious self.

5. Lucid dreaming is a training ground for real life.

Being a virtual reality simulation, the lucid dream world is an ideal place to practice real life skills - from the perfect flying kick to playing classical piano.

Research has revealed that we can increase our procedural memory for fine muscle movements inside a lucid dream. So, after practicing flying kicks for half an hour in a lucid dream, your kicks would literally be better upon waking.

Likewise, in the book *Exploring The World of Lucid Dreaming* by Dr Stephen



LaBerge, a surgeon explains how, before going to sleep at night, he would review his surgical cases for the next day. Then he would become lucid in his dreams and practice them in precise detail. As a result, he was able to refine and polish his techniques and perform procedures much faster than the average surgeon. He credited his edge to lucid dreaming.

6. Lucid dreaming creates a natural high.

The moment when you recognize that you're dreaming, it creates a rush of excitement. It's when you realize that you are back in lucid land, where anything and everything is possible. This natural high stays with you throughout the dream and on waking. A deliciously memorable lucid dream has colored many of my waking days.

Whether you are a complete beginner or an expert oneironaut, we all relish the state of conscious dreaming and take away blissful new experiences almost every time it happens. Such dreams can be euphoric in nature and create memories and insights that will stay with you for the rest of your life. It's probably one of the best natural highs we are capable of creating, in the same class as jumping out of a plane, or falling in love.

7. Lucid dreaming helps you to grieve.

Often when we lose loved ones, we have the sense that there is some unfinished business. Whether the death comes suddenly without warning, or slowly and predictably, we would all take that opportunity to have another hour with the deceased. We feel they may have messages for us (observations after life is over) and we, too, may have messages for them (unresolved feelings of guilt or anger or simply how much we miss them). So, how do you resolve unfinished business?

I don't believe that spirits contact us from the afterlife. The idea of spirits actually appearing in our dreams is equally unsatisfying for me. However, dreams of the dead do give us much capacity for grieving and healing, even when you accept the deceased are not actually visiting you and it's just a part of your own subconscious. These dreams tend to occur naturally when you are grieving the loss of someone close to you; thoughts of them during the day will filter into your dreams. But if your loved one doesn't appear to you at night, or you just miss them and want to give them a hug, then dreaming lucidly about them is a wonderful proposition.

Lucid dreams offer us the closure we need to overcome our grief and move on with our lives. That's not to say we want to forget. A lucid experience can enable us to consciously visit any period in our past and re-live those memories; playtime with a childhood pet, conversations with a late parent, and intimacy with a lost partner are all ways to grieve and remember loved ones through guided dreams.

8. Lucid dreaming is like taking a creativity pill.

We all know that regular dreams can be a bizarre place of inspiration... and when conscious dreaming, we can actively seek out creative ideas and bring them back to the waking world.

Famous painters like Salvador Dali, William Blake and Paul Klee all created artwork inspired by their dreams. If you're seeking artistic inspiration while lucid, head into a gallery and study the images you find there. They may arise from your memory, subconscious creativity, or a combination of both. But best of all, they will contain elements of your conceptual understanding of the world, which can make for beautiful and baffling interpretations (see Dali's *One Second Before Awakening from a Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bee Around a Pomegranate*, 1944).

Equally, lucid dreams can give way to amazing musical inspiration. Composers like Mozart, Beethoven and Wagner all pointed to dreams as the source of their creativity. Dreams reveal our most creative side because of the free-flow of ideas arising from the subconscious mind, unhindered by the rational conscious mind.

My partner Pete wrote the song *Lucid* in a conscious dream - yet listening to its complexity you would hardly believe this came from a dream. Actually, he told me that the most difficult part of the creative process does not take place in the dreamscape, but in remembering your dreamy creations and reproducing them with the same depth and intensity in the waking world. It is a barrier but I am certain no creative lucid dreamer would give up this magical source of inspiration.



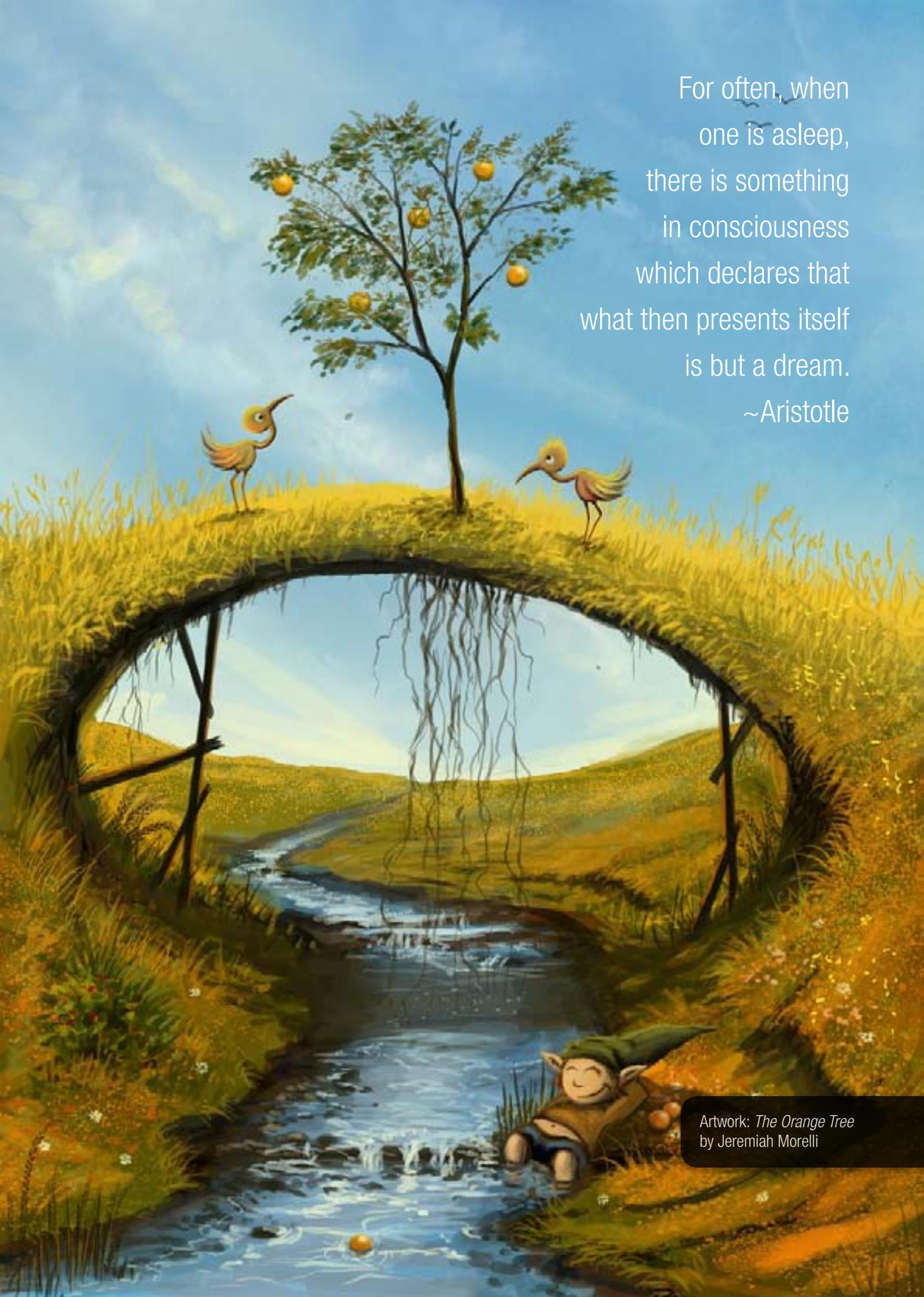
9. Lucid dreaming can advance the human race.

I believe that if every human being became a frequent lucid dreamer starting tonight, our culture, art, technology, medicine, science and even religion would quickly develop in a whole new direction.

Imagine if every inventor suddenly had a breakthrough lucid dream about a new invention? If every artist suddenly began producing subconsciously-inspired artwork? If every scientist could suddenly solve advanced problems that had previously left them stumped?

In short, if we all had access to lucid dreams and used them in a productive capacity, we would tap into greater power within. The entire human race would be enriched as a result, individually... and universally.

For often, when
one is asleep,
there is something
in consciousness
which declares that
what then presents itself
is but a dream.
~Aristotle



Artwork: *The Orange Tree*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Part 2: Lucid Dreaming Techniques



You've survived the theory - now for some practical dream work. This section contains a number of lucid dreaming tutorials which comprise the most effective techniques known to man.

Take this section slowly, absorbing each and every tutorial in detail so you know exactly how to perform them yourself each night. You don't have to master all of them immediately; I suggest learning three techniques at a time. In all, they provide a complete range of mental training rituals to suit everyone and, in one way or another, prime the brain for conscious dreaming.

I don't recommend whizzing through this section and trying every tutorial in one day. If you do this, you're likely to miss important details and may even miss the point of the exercise altogether. The more accurate your lucid dream practice, the more likely you are to experience a lucid dream. So just work on them slowly and perfect each method at a pace you are comfortable with.

The first technique I'm going to really insist you perform now (and during your entire quest for lucidity) is keeping a dream journal. This is a record of all the dreams you can remember on waking and it's the first technique we'll look at. In short, dream recall is essential to any lucid dreamer and a dream journal is just the simplest and most effective method we know.

When you are proficient at lucid dreaming, you will have developed a good sense of self-awareness during the waking day, remember vivid dreams almost every night, and have many spontaneous lucid dreams without much effort. You may also start to dabble in exciting out-of-body phenomena which are vivid extensions of the lucid dream experience.

How To Remember Your Dreams

We know that REM sleep duration and intensity increases towards the morning. So the last few hours of sleep, just before you wake up, are packed with the most dreams.

But what if your dream recall is poor - or you don't yet remember any dreams at all? Here's how to kick-start your dream recall, so you'll be able to remember 1-5 dreams per night.

The 90-Minute Technique

Tonight, set your alarm clock to go off after you've had 4.5 hours of sleep. This should rouse you during a longer REM sleep phase, producing immediate dream recall. Dream experts agree that we tend to remember most when we awaken directly from the dream.

Have a notebook by your bedside and when your alarm goes off, immediately write down all the details of the dream you were having. We'll look at more specifics of dream journaling in a moment.

If nothing comes to mind, it's likely you weren't dreaming, so just relax and lay quietly for a few minutes and think about your next dream.

Now set your alarm to go off in 90 minutes' time. You will enter a new sleep cycle and be woken by your alarm in the middle of a dream. This provides another opportunity for dream recall.

Repeat the 90-minute waking schedule until morning. By then, you will likely have written down four or five detailed dreams!

This is a powerful technique that significantly boosts dream recall. You need only try this a couple of nights to prove just how many vivid dreams you're already having (but you just don't remember). Your efforts to wake up every 90 minutes will be rewarded with clear memories of vivid dreams - and of people, places and plots that you had no idea were running through your head at night.

Dream Supplements

Dream supplements and herbs are taken primarily to increase dream intensity - and one obvious side-effect of this is enhanced dream recall.

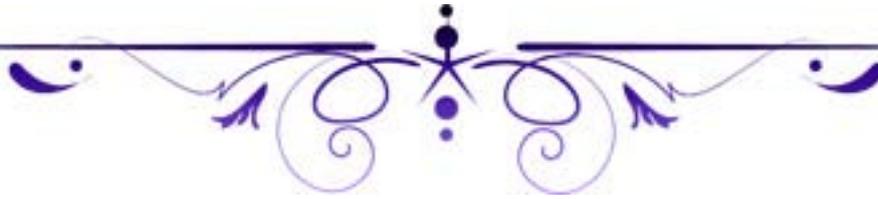
If you try the 90-minute technique and still have trouble remembering your dreams, take a dream herb like Calea Zacatechichi, or a dream supplement like Galantamine, Choline or Vitamin B6. We'll look at these in closer detail a little later.

With supplements, there is no need to set an alarm. Just take your dream pill when directed and enjoy a long blissful night of epic, meaningful dreams.

Even if you already have good dream recall, you may enjoy experimenting with these supplements for fun. I take them from time to time to help produce intensely vivid dreams and receive meaningful messages from my subconscious mind. They can also trigger lucid dreams on demand.

However, if you don't want to take any supplements, that's fine too. This is an optional extra and I would never suggest that anyone *needs* to take a pill in order to become a better lucid dreamer. Experimenting with dream supplements is entirely up to you.

Keeping a Dream Journal



Find a notebook or journal specifically to record your dreams in. Keep it within arm's reach of the bed. Dreams fade quickly on awakening so you need to write them down as soon as you wake. Indeed, if you get up, walk around and start talking about other things, it will cause motor neurons to fire in your brain, which overwrites the memory of the dream. So jot down a few details first thing.

On waking, note down the date and title of your dream. Then write down everything you can remember. Write everything in the present tense (eg "I am walking down the street when a frog jumps out of the bushes"). This helps you remember your dream by placing you in the moment.

Identify dream themes. Think about the location, characters, sensations, sounds, objects and emotions of the dream. Underline key themes that may help you interpret your dream (eg, "the frog is sad because he knows a drought is coming").

Finding common themes and symbols will also help you create lucid dream triggers. Over time, see if you can find any recurring themes, such as running away from something. Remind yourself to become lucid every time this happens. The next time you are running away from something in a dream, you may be pleasantly surprised by flash of lucidity.

You may want to analyze the themes and fully interpret your dream using a dream dictionary or the definitions we looked at earlier. In time you may identify your own personal translations.

Don't worry about spelling, punctuation and grammar. As long as you can read it back later and it still makes sense, you are fine.

Sketch any strong images from the dream. Again, it doesn't matter if you're not an artist and it's messy. A sketch is just to help jog your memory of the dream later on.

When you have finished, jot down any major life issues that are going on right now. For instance, you may be suffering from a broken heart, or perhaps you're stressed about career issues. Over time, you will be able to link your personal dream symbols with these real life issues.

If you became lucid at any point in the dream, write "L" for lucid in a circle by the title. Identify what caused you to become lucid, ie the specific thing that made you realize you were dreaming.

And that's it! Soon you'll have a fascinating journal of dream entries and, more importantly, a richer dream life as a result. This is an essential practice for frequent lucid dreaming so don't be tempted to skip it.

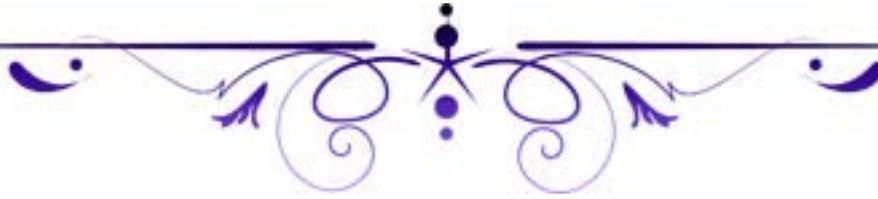


Your world is not real!
~Mal, Inception

Artwork: *Secret Place*
by Jeremiah Morelli

www.morelli-art.com

Reality Checks



Reality checks are a popular way to trigger lucid dreams. They may not be 100% reliable, but they are very easy and habit forming. If you are practicing other lucidity techniques, perform daily reality checks as well for good measure. They will help with “lucid living” (building greater self-awareness while awake) which leads to more vivid and lucid dreams.

To learn lucid dreaming, you must be able to spot the difference between a dream and waking reality. Normally when you dream, you accept it as real life. It’s only when you wake up that you realize something was strange. By integrating reality checks into your waking life, you will soon do them in your dreams. This will snap your conscious mind to realizing: ‘Hey - I’m dreaming!’

How do you know that you are awake right now? You might say:

- Because I can see
- Because I can feel
- Because I am aware
- Because I just am!



Unfortunately, this all applies to the dream world too. That's why seeing, feeling, awareness and knowledge of your existence do not help you become lucid. (Remember that your dreaming mind lacks clarity of thought and can't draw the same logical conclusions as your waking mind.)

In order to recognize when you're dreaming, you need to spark that "Eureka!" moment with a definitive test: *a simple question* combined with a *pre-determined action* that you already know is impossible in the waking world.

How to Perform Reality Checks

My default reality check is pushing two fingers from my right hand into the palm of my left hand and willing them to pass straight through. In waking life, this is discreet and always yields the same resistance. In a dream, my willing the fingers to pass through causes it to happen 90% of the time.

But often, the action is not enough. You need to ask the question "Am I dreaming?" and truly mean it. Look around your environment every time you do a reality check, and consider "Is this real?"

I like to question the solidity of my surroundings. For instance, I might look at a cup on my desk and wonder does that really exist or am I imagining it? Does it go away when I stop looking at it? How about the air - can I see the air? Is it warm, cold, dense, sparse, colorful, invisible? This is how you build self-awareness: questioning your own feelings and perceptions in the moment.

At the same time, you'll perform your reality check of pushing your fingers into your palm. Do this a dozen times a day (leave notes to remind yourself) and allow each check to take anything from a few seconds to few minutes. Be sure to come to a well-informed decision each time. Don't just ask the question and forget about it. Truly mean what you say, and reach a conclusion.

Top Ten Most Effective Reality Checks

Use the finger check if you like, or try out these other effective tests:

Breathing - Can you hold your nose and mouth shut and breathe?

Jumping - When you jump, do you float back down?

Reading - Can you read a sentence twice without it changing?

Vision - Is your vision clearer or blurrier than normal?

Hand - Can you push your hand through a solid surface?

Time - Can you read a clock face or digital watch?

Fly - Can you will yourself to fly or hover above the ground?

Palms - Do the palms of your hands look normal close-up?

Mirrors - Does your reflection look normal in the mirror?

Math - Can you add up two numbers for a correct answer?

For good measure, perform two reality checks each time. If the first one doesn't work (it happens) you have a failsafe. I combine fingers with the palm check.

Sometimes I try to push my hand through the desk or wall. It is a wonderful feeling when you actually can push your hand through a solid object in a lucid dream. Your lucidity makes this feel real - and, naturally, very weird

Why Build Self-Awareness?

The human brain creates neural constructs based experiential learning: patterns of thinking based on our real life experiences. For instance, since you have had the experience of gravity your whole life, you don't need to repeatedly question it. You simply know that you can't will yourself to float or take off.

And so most adults mosey on through life without ever questioning the world around us. We know that the sky is blue, that we can't control objects with our minds, and that walls are too solid to walk through. We become so accustomed to our reality we forget to question it. And this applies in the dream world too.

However, if you do decide to question your reality on a regular basis, it increases your level of self-awareness in the real world. It pulls your consciousness into the moment. And when this becomes second nature in waking life, it will become second nature in dreams too. This becomes our direct line lucid dreaming.

Attaining a good level of self-awareness will not come overnight. But it's a fast learning curve. A beginner's progress could well be exponential. So, pay attention to your surroundings. Study them in detail. And most importantly, question their nature. Do your hands belong to you? How would it look if you had 12 fingers? Can imagine them melting into the furniture?



Have fun with visualizations and tricks of the mind. You're aiming to short circuit your brain and edit programming that has been in place for decades...

Troubleshooting Reality Checks

Due to their popularity, I get a lot of questions about how to do reality checks (and why they don't always work). Here are the most common questions and answers:

How can I remember to do more reality checks each day?

Set up triggers that remind you to perform a reality check, such as: a note on your computer screen, telephone, bathroom tap, schoolbooks, or even write an L for lucid on that back of your hand.

You can also mentally set up trigger points that relate to your day. Do a reality check every time you: walk up or down stairs, hear your digital watch beep, receive a text message, unlock a door, hang up the phone, and so on.

I've been doing reality checks all week but haven't had any lucid dreams. What am I doing wrong?

First, ensure you're doing your checks mindfully and coming to a reason-based conclusion every time. Every check should hold real personal perspective.

Second, make sure you're keeping a dream journal and recording at least one dream per night. You may well have performed a reality check in a dream and become lucid but just didn't remember it!

Third, combine reality checks with other lucid dreaming techniques, such as meditation and dream incubation. They work well in combination.

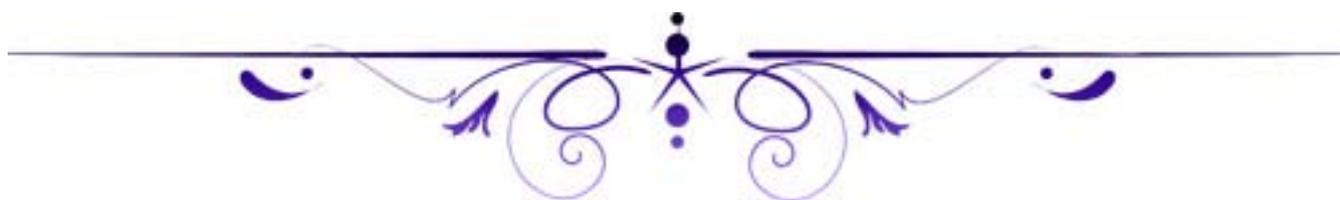
I did a reality check in a dream but it didn't work, I just kept on dreaming. Why did this happen?

The most likely explanation is that you're not performing your waking reality checks with enough mindfulness. When you attempt the impossible action, make sure you're really trying to do it and not just kidding yourself. And when you ask the question - "Am I dreaming?" - be sure to truly ponder that concept. Imagine what a dream feels like, what you would do if you were dreaming right now, and then snap yourself back into reality to compare the feeling.

Occasionally a reality check fails through no fault of your own. You may simply be having a vivid dream that is all too normal to accept as a dream. It's a weird mind space, and particularly common in false awakenings (which is why you should always do a reality check every time you wake up).

The best solution is to perform a second reality checks as a failsafe. If you still can't validate your dreamstate, but have some basic level of dream control, then simply explore the dream until it gives itself away. Something irregular will eventually pop up if you keep pulling at the thread. Full lucidity will ensue.

Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams (MILD)



Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams is a powerful technique created by Dr Stephen LaBerge while he was researching lucid dreaming for his PhD. In order to study his own lucid dreams, he needed to have lots of them at will. This method is the result of his intensive research.

MILD combines two elements we've already looked at in detail (dream recall and reality checks) with two new elements (affirmations and visualizations) which we'll probe further now. As a result, MILD will train you to increase your self-awareness, incubate lucid dreams, and program the content of your next dream including specific lucid triggers.

1. Dream Recall

The first step of the MILD technique is to have good dream recall. This means being able to remember and write down at least one dream every morning. If you can't remember your dreams, then they are probably not very vivid, and so the likelihood of you becoming lucid within them is poor. What's more, if you do spontaneously have a lucid dream, you will not even be able to remember it!

2. Reality Checks

The next step is to perform reality checks as often as you can. You can choose any reality check you like, just be sure that the waking result differs from the dreaming result. By continually checking your waking reality, you are priming yourself for greater self-awareness in dreams.

3. Lucid Affirmations

When you are lying in bed tonight, go through some lucid affirmations in your mind. This is really where the term Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams comes from - you are programming commands into your memory, to be recalled later on in your dreams. Here's how it works.

When you are completely relaxed and your body is still, repeat this phrase over and over in your mind:

"The next scene will be a dream."

Put real feeling into the words as you chant them in your mind. If you feel your mind start to wander, draw it back to the issue at hand. Stay focused and observe any hypnagogia that appears. Repeat the affirmation until you feel like you are about to fall asleep (how long this takes depends on you personally; it may be 2 minutes or 10 minutes). Then proceed to step four.

4. Visualize Your Dream

Now we can begin the visualizations - my favorite part. Only perform this step once you are deeply relaxed and feel you could drop off to sleep quite easily.

Imagine you are back in a recent dream - but this time you are going to re-live the ending differently. Visualize the scene in as much clarity and detail as you can remember, then look for a dream sign. This is some unusual character, location or object which reveals the dream to be mere fantasy; something you wouldn't see in real life. Then say to yourself "I'm dreaming!"

Although you are merely day dreaming at this point, continue to experience an imagined lucid dream fantasy. Do whatever you would do if this were a real lucid dream. You might decide to fly and explore the landscape, or seek out a dream character.

During this process, you will likely fall asleep. That's ok. The primary purpose of Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams is to have your very last thought before you go to sleep be about lucid dreaming. Mission accomplished! Later the same night you have a much higher chance of becoming lucid.

Occasionally, something amazing will happen. Your imaginary day dream world will suddenly merge into a real lucid dream. Your body has fallen asleep but your mind - so captivated by the imagined dreamscape - remained conscious. You'll pop into the landscape and experience the dream with full intensity. When this happens, your MILD attempt has become a WILD (discussed next).

Tips on Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams

During the 1970s, when LaBerge was developing the MILD technique, he found that certain interruptions in regular sleep patterns improved success rates. These included waking up to have sex, vomit or meditate. This led him to conclude that: *wakefulness, interjected during sleep, increases your chances of becoming lucid.*

So in order to have more lucid dreams with MILD, you may want to wake yourself up in the night and bring yourself to full consciousness for a few minutes. No need to induce vomiting! Simply spend 20 minutes reading about lucid dreaming. As you return to sleep, perform the MILD technique.

Another way to exploit this principle is to practice MILD during afternoon naps. I find this most effective if I am a little sleep deprived from the night before, so it's easy to fall asleep during the afternoon. However I don't advocate forced sleep deprivation in general; simply make use of this principle if you happen to be particularly tired during the day.

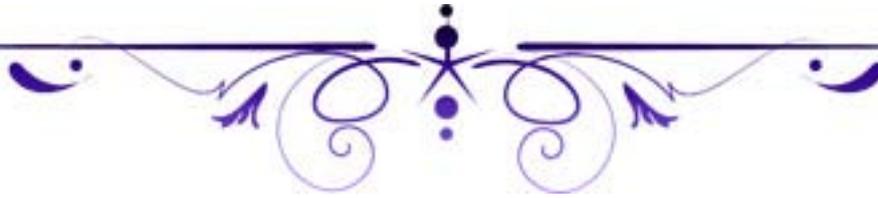
In dreams, we enter a world
that's entirely our own.

~Steven Kloves



Artwork: *Two Sides to Every Story*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Wake Induced Lucid Dreams (WILD)



The Wake Induced Lucid Dream is the most powerful lucid dreaming technique known to man for two reasons. First, it enables you to have a conscious dream at the time you choose. Second, it produces the most vivid kind of lucid dream because there is no lapse in consciousness.

Also referred to as the Mind Awake / Body Asleep technique, it enables you to enter a lucid dream directly from a waking state. This is method if often used by out-of-body explorers and, depending on subtle differences in induction, can either lead to lucid dreams or Out of Body Experiences.

The modern WILD technique stems from practices used in Tibetan Buddhism for thousands of years - an art form they call Dream Yoga. In Buddhism this is one pathway to enlightenment. However, irrespective of your religious views, you can use this WILD technique to have fantastic guided dreams. It is a natural, intuitive method of entering the dream body and many children have figured out this technique on their own, as a simple way to falling asleep and entering their chosen dream world.

I have broken the WILD tutorial down into four parts:

1. Physical & Mental Relaxation
2. Hypnagogic State
3. Creating a Dream Scene
4. Entering The Lucid Dream

The best time to initiate a WILD is after 4-5 hours of deep sleep, when your body is deeply relaxed, your REM cycles at their longest, and your dreams the most vivid. If you are a deep sleeper, set your alarm about 2-3 hours earlier than usual. If you are a light sleeper, simply practice this method when you naturally wake up in the night. Alternatively, you can practice if you are tired and taking an afternoon nap, when your brain will immediately catch up on lost REM sleep.

1. Physical & Mental Relaxation

Think about how you fall asleep every night. We're going to replicate that process with one tiny difference: as your body falls asleep, your mind will stay awake. That may sound like an alien concept to you now, but rest assured it is entirely possible (and becomes easier with practice).

To begin, your body should already be very relaxed and loose. Lie on your back, or whatever position you can lie in for a while without moving. Empty your mind and gaze into the blackness of your closed eyelids. If any thoughts pop up, just observe them - don't interact - then send them on their way.

2. Hypnagogic State

Now lead your mind into the sleepy, half-dream state of hypnaogia. Sometimes you'll wake up in the night and already be in this dreamy state - your body soft and relaxed and your mind drifting back into the dream world without any effort at all. When you catch that cloud - float on it!

(If you are attempting a WILD "from cold" you will need to relax into it, both physically and mentally, with at least 10 minutes of meditation. Soon, the hypnagogia will come.)

Once in the hypnagogic state, you'll see patterns and colors that take over your vision in the darkness. Observe the hypnagogia and go deeper, allowing it to hypnotize you and draw your awareness away from the outside world. The internal dream world will start to evolve now.

Remember to let your body stay soft and sink into the bed, keeping absolutely still and imagining numbness taking over. If you have an itch, scratch it and start over, but otherwise try to stay completely still and relaxed. Silence your inner monologue if it starts to chime in. You may hear hypnagogic sounds - echoes of voices and other sounds in your head. Just relax and enjoy the experience.

3. Creating a Dream Scene

At this point you need to make a judgment call. If you don't feel sufficiently relaxed or ready to drop off to sleep, then stay with your hypnagogia for longer. However, if you feel the dreamstate coming on and feel quite detached from the real world, then you're ready to start the launch sequence for your lucid dream. Making the right judgment makes all the difference between an easy, successful WILD and numerous fruitless attempts. But don't worry, once you know the signals (or absence of signals) that precede a WILD, you'll find it easier to recognize every time. Practice makes perfect.

Now, there are two ways to create a dream scene from this point: visualization or OBE exit.

The Visualization Method

Do you have a vivid imagination? If so, begin to visualize a vivid dream scene in your mind's eye, with as much close-up detail as possible. Explore your surroundings in a calm, peaceful manner and send your visual awareness into the landscape as clearly as possible.

If you are a musician, then you may have a better auditory sense, so instead of visualizing, use your

.....

imagination to create the sounds of your dream. Listen to everything and make the sounds and voices realistic. Likewise, if you are good at sports or working with your body, induce a kinetic sensation such as walking, running or riding a bicycle. In essence, use your strongest sense to fully engage your mind in the desired dream. It may feel like a form of vivid day dreaming but that will soon change...

With your mind absorbed the half-dream state, allow your body to fall asleep altogether: lose all awareness of it and place your mind fully into your new dream body. You should sense that you are no longer lying in bed - but now walking in your dream! When you feel it “pop” into place, your sleeping body is but a distant memory. The feeling is unmistakable - you are now lucid dreaming!

The OBE Exit

Sometimes you may be so swept up in your hypnagogic meditation that your body falls asleep before you have the chance to create a dream scene. Your awareness has nowhere to go but your own bedroom, except now *you are dreaming*. It is a dream bedroom, and you are lying in bed in your dream.

The lack of transition is why so many people believe this is an Out of Body Experience. It literally feels like you are still awake, lying in bed, with the ability to float out of your body.

Here are some clues to help you recognize the subtle transition from waking to dreaming (bear in mind these do not happen to everyone, and the transition may be virtually seamless):

- You may hold on to an awareness of your sleeping body, which is now under REM atonia (sleep paralysis). You may feel like your limbs are going numb, or a lead blanket is moving up your body. Don't fight it. Instead, relax and embrace it because this is the start of your lucid dream!
- You may also experience vibrations, or a very loud buzzing sound. It feels like electricity, or a fast vibrating in your head, and you may even wonder if your head is going to explode. But it doesn't hurt or feel bad at all; it's just a very noisy distraction that means you are on the right track.
- If you become fearful or genuinely believe you are having a true Out of Body Experience (this is all down to perception) then you may well accidentally invite other beings into your dream scenario. They can be menacing, or they can be warm and positive. It really depends on your own projected thoughts and beliefs about the experience. Just remember, if they do appear, you are dreaming.

At this point you can embrace the dream and leave your body. The room will look incredibly lifelike, whether it is your usual bedroom or a temporary sleeping environment like a hotel room. The imagery is triggered by your waking memories and the fact that this is the last place you went to sleep.

This can be confusing to say the least. You may feel like you've just opened your eyes and woken up - so be sure to perform a reality check at this point. Otherwise you may just roll over and go to sleep properly and your lucid dream will be wasted.

4. Entering The Lucid Dream

The final step is to fully submerge your awareness into the lucid dream - and stabilize the dream to prevent yourself from waking up. If you used the visualization method, keep exploring your dream scene with all your senses. Say to yourself "I'm dreaming" and do a reality check. You will know you're dreaming because the whole scene will be 3D and feel like a world of its own. You will have little or no awareness of your physical body, your bed, or the real world.

If you used the OBE exit method, you will need to free your dream body from the distant sense of your physical body which is also lying in bed. This is one of the quirks of OBEs. It's probably caused by the confusion of the conscious brain switching from waking reality to the lucid dream world, while the perceived surroundings remain unchanged.

You may be able to climb out of bed normally - however if the sensation of sleep paralysis is still with you, it will be hard (even impossible) to move your limbs. In this case, try sinking or floating out of your body. Imagine how it feels when you're swinging really high on a swing in the park; that kinetic sensation can free you from your body.

Alternatively, relax and visualize a new dream scene. Use your most powerful sense and engage yourself in the picture. It should be easier to create a dream from here and "teleport" there instantly. Or, if you find you have company in your bedroom, you can ask the dream figures for help getting out.

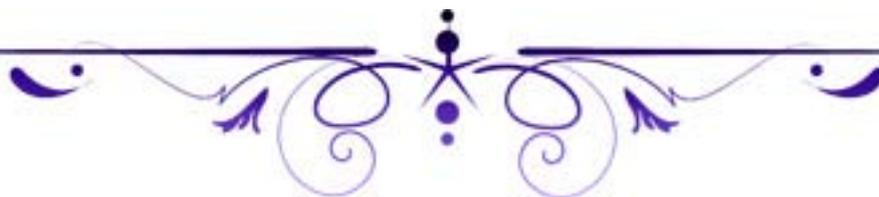
Troubleshooting Wake Induced Lucid Dreams

Learning to WILD usually takes time and considerable awareness of the optimum state. However, once you're in the Mind Awake / Body Asleep state the actual dream creation is deceptively easy. Stick with it, and make it a night-time meditation habit. Even a failed attempt is good meditation practice.

The most common problems I hear are opposite extremes: either people find they can't relax enough, or they can't stay awake long enough to enter the dreamstate.

- **Relaxing your mind and body is essential.** It's just like falling asleep every night - you won't get to sleep tossing and turning, or if your head is full of internal dialogue. To access the relaxed state, begin guided meditation or listen to the Lucid Dreaming Hypnosis MP3. Both will help you to consciously relax and prime your mind and body for the lucid dream state.
- **Hold on to a passive state of conscious awareness.** It takes practice and mental conditioning to stay conscious while your body falls asleep - but it is not as hard as you may think. Practice WILDs when you are relaxed but not completely exhausted. Stay true to the process of visualization and your goal of having a lucid dream. A complete WILD routine need only take a few minutes from start to finish and when used in dream re-entry, can happen in seconds. If you can remain focused for those important seconds or minutes you will succeed.

The Cycle Adjustment Technique (CAT)



The Cycle Adjustment Technique is a really simple way to have spontaneous lucid dreams under the right circumstances. It involves adjusting your sleep cycles to raise your conscious awareness during the early morning REM sleep phases. All you need to do is set your alarm clock. When used correctly, it can generate up to four lucid dreams per week.

This lucid dream exercise was created by Daniel Love, an expert lucid dreamer from the UK. In an experiment involving ten students, the CAT technique taught eight people how to lucid dream in the first two weeks, reporting an average of two lucid dreams. Here's how it works:

Week One

Set your alarm clock to 90 minutes before your normal wake-up time. Do this every day for one week to reset your body clock. As a result, CAT will not give you any lucid dreams in the first week.

Week Two

In week two, return to your normal wake up time (which will now feel like a 90-minute lie in). Then alternate your wake-up time on a daily basis. Normal, early, normal, early, and so on. When you go to bed, set the intention to awake at the earlier time and do lots of reality checks.

As you can see, the Cycle Adjustment Technique is a simple way to learn how to lucid dream. There are no memory cues, visualizations or other mental tricks to rehearse. The hardest part is getting up early and being strict about it. You must stick to the schedule!

So, how does it work? On normal days, your body will expect get up early. Thanks to Circadian Rhythms, you will be stimulated earlier and more likely to become conscious ("wake up") while you are still dreaming. Lucid dreams will likely occur every other day.

An illustration of two small, furry, brown creatures with large eyes and pointed ears, holding hands and standing on a tree branch. They are positioned in the lower center of the frame, looking towards the viewer. The background is a dense forest with large trees and a bright, hazy light source, possibly a window or a clearing, creating a warm, golden glow. The overall scene is dark and atmospheric, with the light source illuminating the creatures and the surrounding foliage.

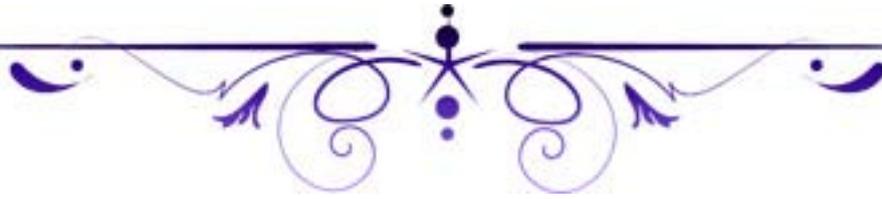
I'll take the dream I had last night,
And put it in my freezer,
So someday long and far away,
When I'm an old grey greezer,

I'll take it out and thaw it out,
This lovely dream I've frozen,
And boil it up and sit me down
And dip my old cold toes in.

~Shel Silverstein

Artwork: *Hand in Hand*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Wake Back To Bed (WBTB)



Wake Back To Bed is a variation on the Cycle Adjustment Technique with one key difference: the results are immediate. You can use this method every day of the week, or just on weekends - it's up to you and your lifestyle.

Step One

Go to bed as normal and set your alarm to go off in six hours. (If you normally only sleep for six hours, set your alarm an hour or so earlier to temporarily delay your longest phase of REM sleep.)

Step Two

After six hours (or less), get out of bed and fully awaken. Engage your brain in any mental activity - reading about lucid dreaming helps to incubate a lucid dream. Stay alert for 20-60 minutes.

Step Three

Go back to bed and relax. If your mind is too alert, listen to The Lucid Dreaming Hypnosis MP3. Use your visualization skills to imagine your next lucid dream as you fall asleep...

This simple technique stimulates your conscious brain at a time you would normally be experiencing REM sleep. When you return to sleep, you will dive straight into REM sleep (called REM rebound) from a conscious state, inducing long and vivid dreams - and potentially lucid ones. Do this technique as often as you like, just be sensible and give yourself enough hours of sleep each day, because sleep deprivation is not conducive to lucid dreaming in the long term.

Guided Meditation



Guided meditation is great for lucid dreaming. It forms part of both the MILD and WILD techniques, and is in itself excellent practice for building self-awareness while awake. This concept is explored in more detail in *The Guided Meditation Handbook*, so this section is to provide an overview at a glance and to remind you that it is an important lucid dreaming technique.

I once shared the concept of lucid dreaming with a friend who already did daily meditation, but had never lucid dreamed before. Once I showed him how to acknowledge his dreamstate, he had a lucid dream within two days. Meditation has prepared his brain for lucidity and he didn't even know it!

What's more, meditation is also highly recommended for:

- Relaxation and stress relief
- Concentration and learning
- Altered states of awareness
- Encouraging abstract thought

Studies have shown a direct link between meditation and lucid dreaming; both help you become more self-aware and reflective. Meditation also leads to a sense of timelessness and being at one with the world. Regular practice will help you achieve profound relaxation whenever you want.

What is Meditation?

People have been entering a meditative state of mind for more than 5,000 years. It is a component of almost every religion. But that does not mean you have to be religious in order to meditate.

The science of meditating stems from psychophysiology - a branch of psychology which studies the effect of the mind on the body. In order to meditate for lucid dreaming, you must develop two opposite skills: focus (a higher degree of mental concentration) and quiescence (a stillness of the mind).

As a result, there are two types to start practicing today:

- **Silent meditation** brings inner peace and insight. It has many depths as you explore deeper into your own awareness. Start with the simple 10-minute breathing meditation below.
- **Guided meditation** brings you closer to visualizing other realms and relaxing when your mind seems too busy to be totally quiet. Start with the routines set out in *The Guided Meditation Handbook* - or listen to *The Lucid Dreaming Hypnosis MP3*.

10-Minute Breathing Meditation

Choose a quiet place. Cross your legs like a traditional Buddha, sit in a chair, or lie down on your bed or couch. Keep your back straight as this will help prevent your mind from becoming sleepy.

Allow your eyes to close naturally and focus on your breathing, without controlling it. Breathe in and out through the nostrils and become aware of how the air feels as it enters and leaves your body.

At first, your mind may be full of chatter and it may feel like things are getting busier. In fact, you are increasing your self-awareness and noticing how many thoughts you really have. Avoid the temptation to follow your thoughts as they occur. Stay focused on your breath going in and out of your nose.

If you realize your mind has wandered, bring it back to calm, focused awareness. If you keep this up for 10-15 minutes, you will achieve a peaceful, quiet state of mind. Your thoughts will be clear and lucid, like a calm lake that has not been disturbed for a long time...

Finding Time to Meditate

When it comes to daily meditation, many people think it's a nice idea but can't imagine finding the time to practice it. This is the first mental block.

Modern life puts huge time stresses on all of us. That can make us miserable - always feeling like we never accomplish what we really want. And this kind of frustrated mindset can affect our health too.

The beauty of meditation is that it actually helps you to focus your mental energy and think more clearly. This allows you to get your priorities straight and get more things done. It is almost a paradox that taking time out for this generates *more* free time in your daily life.

By practicing guided meditation for lucid dreaming, you will enhance your self-awareness and develop a focused mindset. You will improve your visualization skills and become more successful at guided induction. I highly recommend you incorporate some meditation (day or night) into your life.

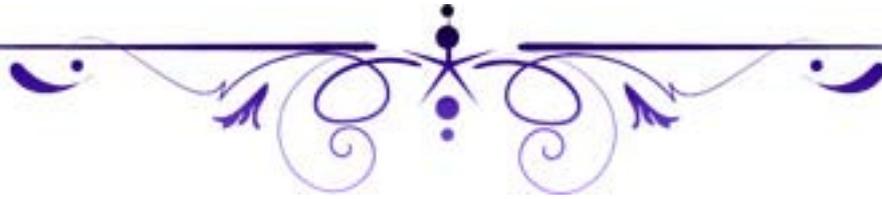
A ruffled mind makes a restless pillow.

~Charlotte Brontë



Artwork: *The Raven's Tower*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Self Hypnosis



Self hypnosis is another powerful tool for lucid dreaming. Like meditation, it draws on the same relaxation response that calms your body, reduces stress hormones, and focuses your mind inwards. However, hypnosis is different from silent meditation because it is based on hypnotic autosuggestions telling you what to perceive and be aware of. It is a more focused form of meditation because we can selectively target it towards lucid dreaming.

The Lucid Dreaming Hypnosis MP3 contains autosuggestions which will help you remember your dreams and have lucid dreams at will. If you haven't listened to it yet, or are unsure about what hypnosis is, the following information should help you understand exactly what's going on.

What is Self Hypnosis?

Hypnosis is the act of sending your brain into a restful trance, in which you are more suggestible than usual. It is not unnatural, evil, or mind control - contrary to many references from the land of fiction. Broadly speaking, during hypnosis your logical brain is silenced, while your intuitive brain is guided towards your ultimate goal: lucid dreaming.

Hypnosis gets a lot of dubious press. Most people are familiar with stage hypnotists, who often make fun of people in the trance state. They convince their victims to perform embarrassing tricks such as flapping around like a chicken or humping an inanimate object.

In truth, hypnosis has much more productive uses. It gives you the ability to shape your limiting beliefs (eg, lucid dreaming is easy when you know how) and change your behaviors (eg, to recognize when you're dreaming). But it only works if you want it to; hypnosis is a voluntary state.

Let's dispel a few more myths about hypnosis.

- **You are self-aware during hypnosis.** The deeper you go, the more you will become immersed in an inner reality. But you are always aware, on some level, of the hypnotist's voice and what you do.
- **You have complete control over yourself during hypnosis.** You may be more suggestible but you still decide what you say and do. You won't do anything that breaks your moral code.
- **You can't get stuck in a hypnotic trance.** Even if the hypnotist were to keel over midway through a session, you would surface from the trance naturally, just like waking from a sleep.

- **Everyone can be hypnotized to some degree.** We all enter unconscious hypnotic trances every day, whether we are watching TV, going through our morning routine, or staring out the window. Some of us are just more willing to go under than others.

Self hypnosis is a less intense state which doesn't require a second person to place autosuggestions. You may be able to hypnotize yourself with your own inner voice. Or you can listen to a pre-recorded hypnosis session (knowing that it's just a recording). During the experience, you will enter a safe, relaxing trance, causing the release of endorphins (the natural happy chemicals) and priming your mind to become suggestible and respond to multiple lucid dream cues.

The Lucid Dreaming Hypnosis MP3

The Lucid Dreaming Hypnosis MP3 is a deeply relaxing recording that contains a mixture of blissful music and hypnotic autosuggestions to guide you into a lucid dream state. This is exactly the same method I used to achieve my first lucid dreams as a teenager.

This particular hypnosis recording serves three functions:

1. **Autosuggestions** - These are hypnotic instructions planted inside your subconscious mind. This is lucid dream incubation at work. The spoken cues include directions like: "Your mind is very good at creating new dreams", "You have the power to create and control your dreams consciously whenever you choose" and "You find it easy to recognize when you're dreaming".
2. **Visualizations** - In the deeper stage of the hypnosis, you will be led into your dream world; a natural wonderland over which you have creative control. You will learn how to visualize in vivid detail - something you will come to use in the WILD technique for inducing lucid dreams on demand. Visualization is also a great skill to have as a lucid dreamer and out of body explorer.
3. **Lucid Dream Induction** - The recording is primed to lead you into a lucid dream state in the event that you feel so relaxed, your body has actually gone to sleep. This could trigger a WILD. Alternatively, you may also find (especially if you are tired) that you fall asleep completely, triggering a DILD. In either case, the recording can induce a lucid dream *while listening* if conditions are ripe. There are some specific autosuggestions designed to prompt reality checks as you listen.

I recommend using this self-hypnosis technique intensely (every night) for one week, then resting for one week. Listen any time you want to unwind and relax. You may find lucid dreams come spontaneously during the intense week or the rest period. Don't expect to have a lucid dream every time you listen - the core purpose is to plant autosuggestions in your subconscious mind which activate while you are dreaming. However, a lucid dream while listening is a nice bonus!

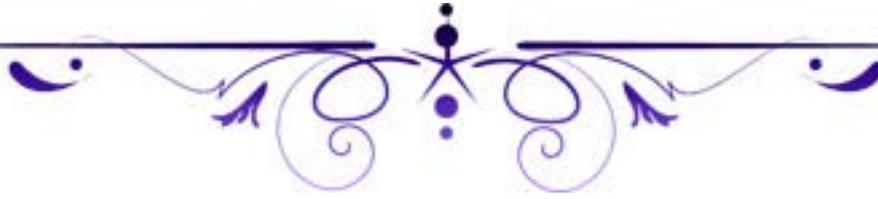
Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast.

~William Shakespeare



Artwork: *Riding The Dragonfly*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Part 3: Lucid Dreaming Supplements



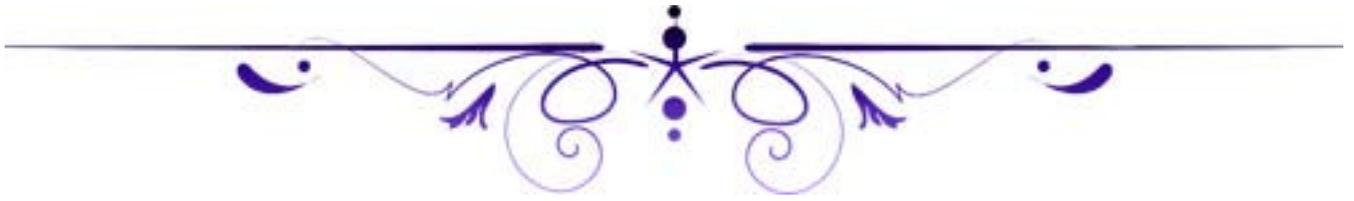
In recent years I have evaluated various lucid dreaming supplements. These are natural, legal dream pills and herbs which can:

- Dramatically enhance your dream recall
- Increase the intensity of your dreams
- Provide a greater sense of meaning to your dreams
- Help you become more self-aware while dreaming
- Trigger highly vivid lucid dreams

Lucid dreaming supplements provide the gateway to lucid dreaming - but it is still you who must step through it. I recommend the following dream supplements to help you understand the remarkable power of the dreaming mind and get a taste of heightened self-awareness while dreaming.



Calea Zacatechichi



Calea Zacatechichi is widely known as the lucid dreaming herb for its ability to induce amazingly vivid dreams. This can significantly raise your level of self-awareness and promote lucidity. It can also be a thrilling experience even if you don't become lucid.

This herb has been used by Mexican shamans for thousands of years. It's also known as The Dream Herb, Calea Z, the Leaf of God and Bitter Grass. You can smoke it, drink it in a tea, or swallow it in capsules to induce highly vivid dreams with intricate plots of other other worlds.

The shamans who made the Leaf of God famous are the Chontal Medicine Men of Mexico. Whenever they want to know the cause of an illness, or the location of a distant person, they ingest these dream inducing herbs. The answers come to them in spectacularly vivid dreams.

My Calea Z Dream Experiences

I began taking occasional Calea Z capsules a couple of years ago. They have a fascinating effect on my dream life - producing highly meaningful and vivid dreams; the kind that you wake up thinking "WOW." They are like no other dreams I'd had before - not even lucid dreams.

As dream herbs go, Calea Z is a good one to start off with, because the effect on waking consciousness is minimal - and it has a way of safely intensifying your dream content and increasing your recall upon waking. These all push you towards lucid dreaming.

I've had lucid and non-lucid dreams with Calea Z; each amazing and memorable in their own right. I've never had any nightmares or negative experiences with it. I always take it in capsule form after 4-6 hours of sleep. This is the ideal time because it coincides with length periods of REM sleep.

Some of my Calea Z dreams have been far removed from this reality. Possibly my favorite experience was when I dreamed I was another person living in an advanced alien civilization. I can still remember how I felt to live in a world of the future - it was reminiscent of an Iain Banks *Culture* novel - and that feeling still runs through me like I have lived another life.

In the dream, time seemed to stretch and I perceived a great deal in what must have only been 30-60 minutes of dreaming. It was a bit like watching an epic movie that spans 200 years in the space of two hours, yet you feel like it lasted longer because so much happens. That's about as close as I can explain it; it was like flashing through someone's life while instantly understanding all that they had

.....

felt and been through during the course of many years. When I woke up, I was mildly stunned to be in this reality. My normal life - without flying cars or skyscrapers that ran into the clouds, without the alien people or the sense of adventure - seemed quite boring in comparison. But I was euphoric at the memory and wanted to write it all down before it drained away. Now, many details of the dream are lost, even after writing it down, but the emotional content stays with me, a feeling I can't redefine.

Other people who take Calea Zacatechichi have reported incredibly realistic dreams, sometimes with complex plots and gripping drama, others with more trivial content but profound sensory intensity nonetheless. That includes people who don't normally remember any dreams at all. Indeed, this dream herb is scientifically found to improve your dream recall, so it's ideal for beginner lucid dreamers who want to get in touch with their inner reality.

How to Take Calea Zacatechichi

There are three ways to ingest the dream herb:

1. **Smoking Calea Zacatechichi** before bed is an option. I haven't tried this myself but I hear a full dose is heavy on the lungs. While you inhale, think to yourself "I will have a lucid dream tonight" then lie down and incubate a lucid dream by imagining what you will do the moment you become lucid. In normal doses, you should feel physically relaxed and perhaps a little bit buzzy, but aside from that there are no other effects. In large doses, Calea Z is a mild hallucinogen. But most of its power is not evident until you're dreaming.
2. **Drinking Calea Z Tea** is only for people with strong stomachs! Also known as Bitter Grass, the dream herb is an extremely bitter tasting tea. Expect to gag and even throw up if you drink it too fast. Having said that, a South American reader told me it tastes like Mate, which despite its bitterness is a popular tea in Argentina and Uruguay - must be an acquired taste. If you choose to go down this route then disguise the taste with lots of honey and sugar... and drink slowly.
3. **Taking Calea Z Capsules** is the easiest way to ingest the dream herb with no risk of damaging your lungs or stomach. This is the only method I've ever tried myself and it's like taking any other pill or supplement. Take 1-2 capsules after 4-6 hours of sleep. It helps if you incubate a lucid dream as you fall asleep... Then just enjoy the ride!

Note: a good source of Calea Z (capsules and dry extract) is [I Am Shaman](#), a trusted online store that sells a huge range of plant extracts and herbs internationally. You must be over 18 to shop there and please remember that, like any supplement or drug, you take it at your own risk.

Galantamine & Choline



There are two highly effective lucid dreaming pills rated as the best way to control your dreams through the use of herbal supplements. These are Galantamine and Choline.

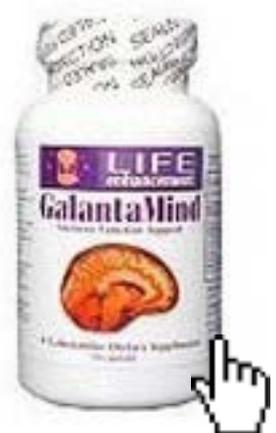
Let's look at these individually and the effects they have on dream recall, dream intensity and the likelihood of inducing lucid dreams.

Galantamine (RD: 4mg)

Galantamine is a natural extract from the Red Spider Lily which improves cognitive function and both waking and dream memory.

The effects of Galantamine were discovered more than 3,000 years ago by the Ancient Greeks, when Homer described its effects on dream recall. It has also been used in China for centuries as a memory enhancer.

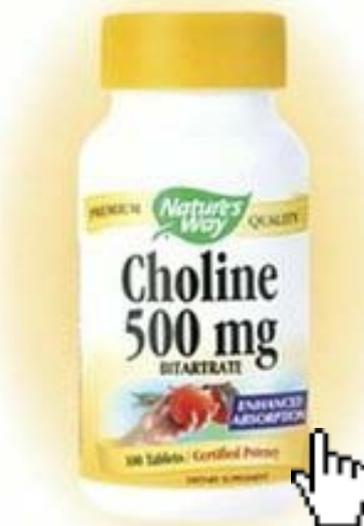
Today Galantamine is used to treat Alzheimer's Disease for its memory-enhancing properties. A common side effect is highly vivid dreams.



Choline (RD: 200-500mg)

Choline is an amino acid found in foods like bananas and potatoes. The brain naturally converts it into acetylcholine, which causes greater awareness in dreams and vastly improved dream recall.

Perhaps the best way to experience a night of memorable, vivid dreams (and a much increased chance of lucid dreams) is to take both pills in combination.



Galantamine and Choline in Combination

Take both pills after 4-6 hours of sleep. That's quite important. Otherwise you may find it difficult to enter a deep sleep required to feel refreshed. What's more, your REM periods grow longer toward the end of the night, so this timing makes the most of your active dream phases.

Taking Galantamine and Choline vastly increases your chance of Wake Induced Lucid Dreams. As you drift back to sleep, you'll be treated to lots of hypnagogia and emerging dreams scenes. Focus your mind by incubating a lucid dream and entering the dream world consciously.

Precautions

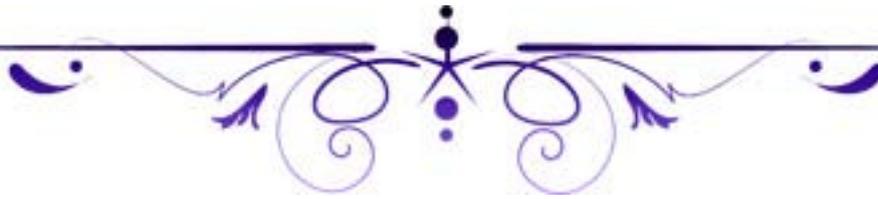
Both Galantamine and Choline affect your brain chemistry, and in rare cases, side effects may occur. These may include sweating, nausea, vomiting - and, in high doses, diarrhea, loss of appetite and weight loss. If you notice any of these effects, discontinue use.

If you suffer from sleep paralysis, Galantamine can also increase the risk of micro awakenings. Indeed, this pill is more likely to create wake-to-lucid-dreams and sleep-paralysis-to-lucid-dreams.

However, if you fall asleep and miss the opportunity to get lucid, don't worry, because you will still embark on a night of highly vivid dreams. There will be further opportunities to become spontaneously lucid in these high-intensity dreams, especially if you are doing frequent reality checks.

Finally, these pills are intended for occasional use only. Trace amounts will remain in your system and a build-up will create unpleasant dream intensity. So, take them sparingly, perhaps once a month or less for some fascinating dream fun!

Vitamin B6



Vitamin B6 (also known as Pyridoxine) plays a key role in brain and nerve function. Healthy adults need just 1.3 mg of Vitamin B6 each day and this can be acquired through foods like:

- Bananas
- Carrots
- Oranges
- Spinach
- Fish
- Chicken
- Liver
- Beans
- Eggs
- Nuts

However, a larger dose of 100 mg will create greater dream intensity. This will promote self awareness in dreams, leading to more opportunities to become lucid and greater dream recall in general.

So, what happens in your body when you take a B6 supplement? Vitamin B6 converts tryptophan into serotonin in the brain, which produces much more vivid dreams. You may wonder why you can't just take a serotonin supplement. Unfortunately, the blood brain barrier won't let it in directly; conversion has to take place in the body.

To boost your chances further, eat foods containing tryptophan around the same time you take your B6 pill, a few hours before bed. Tryptophan-rich foods include:

- Cheddar cheese
- Chicken
- Salmon
- Lamb
- Eggs
- White rice
- Flour
- Milk

Cheese Dreams

You may have heard of "cheese dreams" before; vivid dreams or nightmares seemingly caused by the consumption of cheese. This is no myth. In 2005, The British Cheese Board (don't laugh) carried out a scientific investigation in which participants ate a small 3 oz piece of cheese before bed. They kept a record of their dreams to detect any patterns and see if they really could induce more intense dreams.

Interestingly, 75% of volunteers said they slept pretty well every night and could remember and report their dreams. This led the Cheese Board to conclude that the essential amino acid in milk (tryptophan) was having its effect on the cheese-eaters by normalizing sleep patterns, reducing stress levels, and increasing dream clarity. So if you have trouble igniting vivid dreams, try a bit of cheese at night.

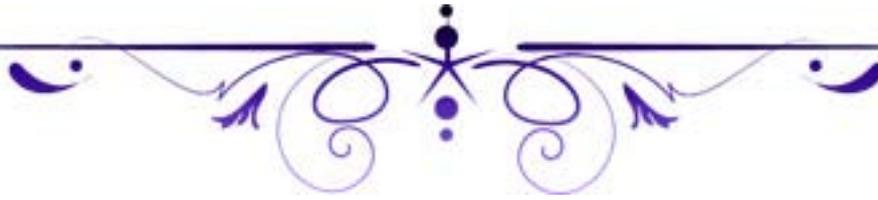
For a dreamer, night's the only time of day.

~Newsies



Artwork: *Dreaming*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Part 4: Lessons in Dream Control



So far we've established numerous ways to become conscious while dreaming. That's the major hurdle - getting yourself into that super-enriched state of self-awareness. The next phase is far more rewarding... Now you're actually experiencing lucid dreams.

The next few chapters address important issues on sustaining and increasing your lucidity, as well as practical tips on manipulating your dreams with sheer willpower. These are the most common obstacles that beginners come across. By telling you about them now I hope to supercharge your new skills as a lucid dreamer and give you much more rewarding experiences straight off the bat.

Levels of Lucidity

There are different layers or levels of lucidity in dreams. Sometimes you will have a vague awareness that you are dreaming, but the opportunity will slip away. Other times you will feel quite lucid but be unable to control the dream, because something is missing - part of you is still struggling with the logic that you are dreaming. When you find blocks like this, the reason is you are not lucid enough and you need to take it up a notch.

How do we draw the line? Some people assume that because they couldn't control other dream figures, they were not lucid at all. Or they fret over their ability to morph the scenery at will. Is there a definitive point where someone can say they had a lucid dream?

Yes, there is. If you have ever had the conscious awareness (or knowing) that you were inside the dream world, then you had a lucid dream. Equally, if you have ever been able to wilfully control parts of the dream world, you were lucid. A lucid dream can last one second - or one hour.

In the philosophy of Tibetan Buddhism, Dream Yoga is known as "apprehending the dream". This simply means becoming aware of the unreal nature of the dream state, and is reflected by either the awareness or control of the dream world. Of course, there is a big difference between a passing awareness of the dream world, and full lucidity. Even though there is no scientific classification of these states (yet), I will describe the levels of lucidity as I see them.

A detailed digital illustration of a woman with short red hair, wearing a white long-sleeved top and brown shorts, sitting on a mossy tree branch. The tree is massive and gnarled, with a large, realistic human eye embedded in its trunk. The scene is set in a lush, misty forest with various plants and small red fruits hanging from the branches. The overall atmosphere is ethereal and dreamlike.

Pause now to ask yourself the following question:
"Am I dreaming or awake, right now?"
Be serious, really try to answer the question
to the best of your ability and be
ready to justify your answer.

~Stephen LaBerge

Artwork: *A Tree Of Many Faces*
by Jeremiah Morelli

A Regular (Non-Lucid) Dream

This is the default dream state, where you are totally unaware that you are dreaming. It may be hazy and illogical - or vivid and highly evocative. Either way, you have no conscious awareness or control, and you automatically accept the reality of the dream world as being completely real.

Non-lucid dreams are created entirely by the subconscious mind. They are usually based on memories and experience, coupled with the unconscious brain's conceptual understanding of reality. Since they are not literal, you can interpret your dreams based on recurring dream themes and symbology. Refer to the earlier section on Dream Interpretation.

A Semi-Lucid Dream

The lowest levels of lucidity occur with a semi-lucid dream, which may involve the realization that you are dreaming. Perhaps something very illogical happens and you question where you are. Or maybe you practice meditation and already have an underlying self-awareness of the dream world.

Once you realize you are dreaming, your conscious brain awakens. At first you may feel quite alien in this new reality and have trouble doing anything that conflicts with the normal laws of physics. If you can't immediately fly in your lucid dream or teleport to an exotic beach location - don't be deterred. You can't do this in real life so your conscious brain doesn't expect it to happen here either.

The good news is, as you explore your lucid dream world you will start to notice little inconsistencies happening in front of your very eyes. This will help you write your new rule book. Encountering higher levels of lucidity is like learning to walk all over again. Soon you will be able to soar above the clouds, run through solid objects and create entire new dream scenes. It is an adaptive task.

A Fully Lucid Dream

To experience a fully lucid dream, you may need to have a number of lucid dreams under your belt. That's how it was for me anyway. While my early lucid dreams were highly exhilarating, in no way did I have the mental competence to keep the dream stable and under my control. First I had to get to grips with staying lucid for more than ten seconds; then it was a challenge to control my immediate environment; then create entire new locales. However, once I mastered each new skill, it stayed with me.

A fully lucid dream means having complete awareness that you are in a dream world and staying highly focused. You understand that it is the creation of your own mind, and that you can manipulate any element at will. Forget this - and your mind may drift. Lucidity can be lost in seconds. Holding on to full lucidity is a mental skill made easier by the focus you learned in meditation. In this clear mental state, you can teleport across the universe at the speed of thought, morph yourself into an atom, or independently summon and guide the actions of other dream figures.

But lucid dreaming is not just about dream manipulation. Anyone who has ever experienced a lucid dream knows that. It is about having intense awareness of the dream state, which is often even more intense than waking reality...

For instance, you can float in the air above a city and observe hundreds of people in the streets below, going about their business. You can take a back seat and allow the dream to be guided by your subconscious mind, while having absolute conscious awareness of your part in it.

This is the real beauty of lucid dreaming; it is your gateway to an alternate reality, where you can observe your own existence in a far richer context.

The Highest Levels of Lucidity

What is the absolute highest level of lucidity possible? Can it be defined, or is it like asking what's beyond the edge of the universe? Don't we have to go there to see it for ourselves?

Modern research is still probing - although we have only been at it for a few decades. Tibetan Buddhists, who have a lot more documented experience in advanced lucidity, believe that the ultimate goal is to attain full conscious awareness, then dissolve the dream state. That doesn't mean waking up. Instead, they aim to remain fully lucid and consciously aware while asleep. Deprived of any physical stimulus from the sleeping body, or any conceptual stimulus from the dreaming mind, they are able to observe the purest form of conscious awareness.

That sounds like an excellent goal for any lucid dreamer.

How To Stay Lucid in Dreams



Now you'll learn how to stay lucid in dreams - transforming a few brief seconds of lucidity (as is normal for beginners) to many long, memorable lucid experiences. I have included a number of dream stabilizing techniques below, based on Dr Stephen LaBerge's famous lucid dreaming experiments and my own personal experiences.

My first lucid dreams were very short - we're talking seconds. I would realize I was dreaming and run around telling everyone about it. This is a common mistake for newbies. You absolutely have to keep a cool head, or you'll just wake up.

So next time you become lucid, immediately perform one or two of these simple dream stabilizing techniques to increase your self-awareness in an instant. This will enhance the conscious clarity of the dream, making it easier to recall your lucid dream intention and explore your new surroundings.

1. **Stay calm** - Don't run around or shout "I'm dreaming!" if you can help it. It's better to get a grip and relax into the experience.
2. **Rubs your hands together** - Movement appears to engage the conscious brain and prevent it from changing to a waking state.
3. **Look at your hands** - Focus on your hands close-up to help you notice the finer details which aren't normally present in a dream.
4. **Demand "clarity now"** - Say it out loud and your dream scene will instantly snap into focus, as per your conscious instruction.
5. **Do some mathematics** - Do a simple arithmetic sum in your head, such as $4 + 4$, which engages the logical part of your brain.
6. **Spin around** - Spinning can help stabilize your awareness of the dream, although it can also make the dream scene go black. Save this for when you have more experience of the lucid dream state.
7. **Fall backwards** - Again, this relies on the principle that movement helps to increase self-awareness within the dream.

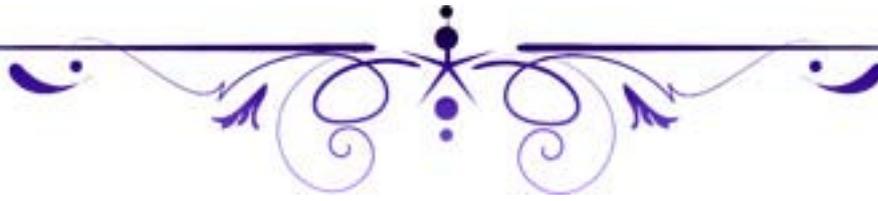
My Longest Lucid Dream

As soon as I learned how to stay lucid for longer, my dream world exploded into life. My conscious awareness of the dreamscape let me to go to new places and perform impossible acts never experienced before. I had incredible conscious dreams that lasted a lot longer.

My lucid dreams can last up to one hour, sometimes as part of an even longer dream scenario. During one particularly long lucid episode I escaped from a nightmare, flew into space and back, traveled through time to an ancient civilization, explored a mansion, passed through the walls, flew over mountains and valleys, played the piano, conjured up a restaurant, and ate delicious food. I was fully conscious the whole time, guiding the dream and letting the dream guide me.

So it really pays to learn these techniques to prolong your lucid dreams and stabilize your awareness within them. Next time you realize you are dreaming, it should be a habit to do two reality checks, then perform at least two of these stabilizing exercises. It only takes a few seconds and dramatically improves the outcome of your lucid dream.

How To Control Your Dreams



Learning to control your dreams is an intermediate phase of lucid dreaming. The first state is merely recognize when you are dreaming - now you can learn the laws of the dream world. This is the really fun part! You can learn how to do anything in your virtual reality dream world using certain techniques and playing with what works best for you. So let's look at some of the most popular lucid dream desires and how you can physically accomplish them.

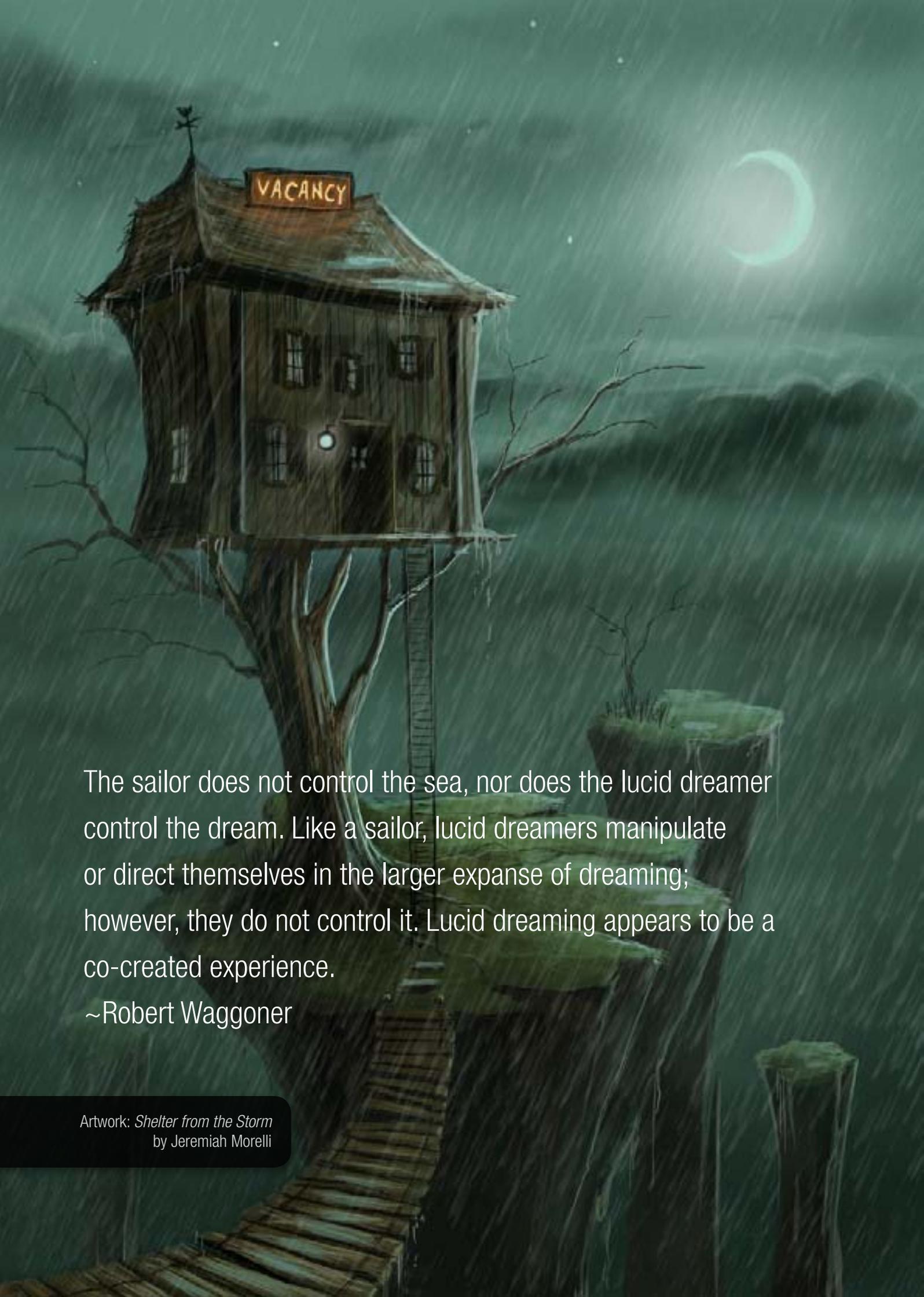
How to Have Flying Dreams

When they first learn how to lucid dream, most people go flying. It's a very common desire and I'm sure every lucid dreamer has done it at some point. However, flying dreams are not always easy to control. It's not normal to fly in real life so when you try to have flying dreams, the conscious brain can have trouble believing it. You might find you can only get so high - or you convince yourself you will fall. This is not a physical problem, but a mental one.

Think of the movie *The Matrix*, when Morpheus asks Neo how he beat him in a virtual reality fight. Was it because he was stronger, faster, or fitter in the simulated world? No. It was because he truly believed he was better. It's the same concept in lucid dreams.

To nurture this belief and convince yourself you can fly safely, start by hopping or bouncing along the dreamscape, gradually allowing yourself to get higher. Remember that it's a dream and you can't get hurt. Build confidence as you learn to defy gravity. With practice, you will soon be soaring above the clouds and flying over cities like *Iron Man*.

If you want, you can use a flying aid. This can be anything from a jet pack to giant wings, or even sitting on the back of a dragon - whatever gives you the mental boost you need to stay airborne.



The sailor does not control the sea, nor does the lucid dreamer control the dream. Like a sailor, lucid dreamers manipulate or direct themselves in the larger expanse of dreaming; however, they do not control it. Lucid dreaming appears to be a co-created experience.

~Robert Waggoner

Artwork: *Shelter from the Storm*
by Jeremiah Morelli

How to Change The Scenery

Making a dream scene morph in front of your eyes can be difficult - mainly because you don't *expect* it to happen. Of course, when it comes to dream control, there is always another way. Here are some methods I use to create new dream scenes, but feel free to experiment and invent your own.

- **It's Behind You** - Once I wanted to eat lucidly but I was in the middle of an empty field. So I applied some lucid dream logic. I simply imagined there was a restaurant behind me, and when I turned around a second later, there it was. I went in and ordered a delicious meal.
- **Dream Doors** - An exhilarating way to enter a new scene is to walk through a door and expect to emerge in a whole new location. Dream doors are well known for their illogical natures. If the new location isn't behind the door as expected, just close it and open it up again.
- **Pocket Portals** - As a beginner, I used to spend ages looking for dream doors, but sometimes there just weren't any around. The simple in-dream solution is to carry one around with you! Just reach into your pocket and pull out a small portal. Then expand it in the air any way you like - and step through it. When passing through portals, mirrors or doors, always visualize your destination on the other side (or ask the dream aloud to supply it for you).
- **Spinning** - I'm not the biggest fan of spinning as it can cause instability (for me personally) but many other lucid dreamers swear by it. When successful, it helps raise your awareness of your dream body, and as a by-product it often makes the scene go black, from where you can imagine your next scene. I have, at times, used the spinning method to teleport across space and time by imagining the location I want to travel to, then spinning to make my current surroundings disappear. When I stop spinning, the imagery solidifies again and I am in a new place altogether.

In all of these scenarios, the most important thing is to truly *expect* the new scenery you desire. Otherwise you could end up in a battle of logic with your conscious brain. Make it a habit to remind yourself "This is a dream" every now and then so you don't lose lucidity. You will soon learn the bizarre subconscious rules of the dream world that make anything possible.

How to Travel Through Time or Space

Time travel will take you to fascinating new places that you wouldn't typically expect. To travel forwards or backwards in time, fly up and up above the clouds so you can no longer see the ground. Incubate the time and place you want to arrive at (for instance say to the dream, "I want to see swamplands in the year 65,000,000 BC!") and descend back through the cloud cover...

Alternatively, step into your own personal time machine. Press a few buttons, tweak a few levers, and listen to the sound of time running backwards outside. Then step out into your new dream scene and explore the world that time forgot.

Both of these methods also work for changing the scenery and moving to a different point in space - whether you want to travel to a new country, a new planet, or a new universe.

How to Find Dream Objects

As you have probably sussed by now, the key to conjuring new content in lucid dreams is expectant visualization and to avoid looking directly at the source of change. I find it almost impossible to consciously materialize objects in front of my eyes while lucid, but I can easily turn around and find things that weren't there just a second before. That's dream logic for you.

Try searching for new dream objects in your pocket, behind you, under a rock, in a drawer, behind a tree, in a box... and simply improvise as you go. If you have difficulty with that, try going to a place where you would expect to find that kind of object in real life (such as a restaurant to find food, or a zoo to find monkeys). Find a way that works best for you logically - whatever that means in the surreal environment of the subconscious dream world. Generally speaking, you will have more success if you are fully lucid, so always heighten the intensity of the dream when making conscious changes.

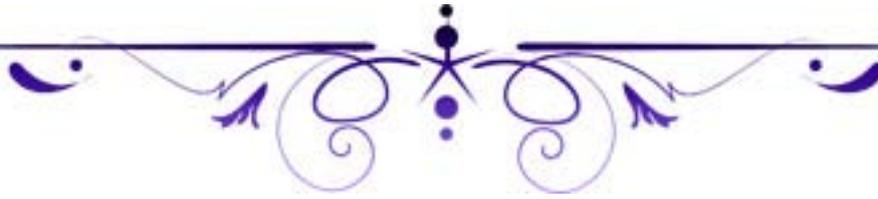
How to Talk to Your Subconscious Mind

While lucid dreaming, you have incredible access to your subconscious mind. You can communicate directly with your "inner self" to gain astonishing insights about your deeply ingrained childhood beliefs and how you automatically perceive the world. It is definitely something worth trying next time you become lucid. Later I will list some interesting questions to pose to your subconscious self.

Once you become lucid, the simplest way to communicate with your subconscious mind is to personify it. Locate a dream figure (human or animal) that you can talk to, and then ask them questions of any nature, such as "What is reality?" or even "Where did I lose my purse?"

You may be surprised by some of the answers you get straight from the horse's mouth. If a dream figure ignores you or refuses to talk, don't be offended. It happens. Just move on to another fine looking fellow and probe him instead. Just remember that most lucid dream figures are acting as representatives of your inner self and so it's a good idea to treat them with respect.

Setting a Lucid Dream Intention



Often, lucid dreams are a lot more rewarding if you consciously plan to fulfil an objective before you go to sleep. This is called setting a lucid dream intention. For instance, as we just discovered, you may decide in advance to talk to a lucid dream figure and ask what they represent. Or you may choose to travel through time to the year 3,000.

Without this kind of planning, lucid dreams can easily fizzle out. Many people find it difficult to think laterally in a lucid dream and are highly focused on the here-and-now. If you don't plan what you want to do in advance, you may end up roaming round the dreamscape looking for fun things to do, but which might not materialize in a pleasing way. You are also more likely to seek out ego-driven gratification like food or sex than use the lucid dream for more enlightening purposes.

Once I was semi-lucid and I hadn't set any lucid dream intention. I found myself in a room full of instruments (I had been in a music shop the day before) and immediately tried to play the piano. But because of my impulsiveness and lack of clarity of thought, I didn't realize that half the black keys were missing. I played my favorite song, but the sound was all wrong. This could easily have become an amazing lucid dream but instead I let the opportunity slip away for lack of a lucid dream intention.

So, after grounding yourself (staying calm), doing a reality check (eg, pushing your fingers through your palm) and stabilizing the dream (eg rubbing your hands together), the next step is to recall your lucid dream intention. And that is only possible if you set one up before you go to sleep...

How to Set a Lucid Dream Intention

This is the simple act of preparing a specific desire before you go to sleep. Let's say that tonight I want to go diving in a tropical coral reef. I decide in advance that, when I become lucid, I'll teleport myself onto a boat over the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. As I lie in bed incubating my lucid dream, I'll visualize myself on a boat in the sun. I'll envisage the ocean being nice and calm and sparkly, and then I'll dive effortlessly into the water, feeling how refreshing it is, and swimming along with ease. I have no trouble breathing underwater as I know in my bones that this is all a dream.

(Regarding the issue of breathing underwater: you may want to wear an oxygen tank or you may be comfortable breathing naturally. It all comes down to your level of lucidity and your state of mind. Occasionally if I'm not fully lucid I'll cough and splutter in the water, because my life experience tells me breathing underwater is impossible. To overcome this, always increase your lucidity when you're going to attempt something impossible and know the outcome ahead of time. Probably the easiest solution is to know that the water is like air; thin and weightless. You can suck it into your lungs - it's all good.)

Now I have my lucid dream intention all set up, I may actually have a non-lucid dream tonight about tropical sea diving, which then triggers my lucidity by association. Or, more likely, I'll dream about something else entirely, become lucid, and then direct my dream to the ocean scenario.

Getting From A to B

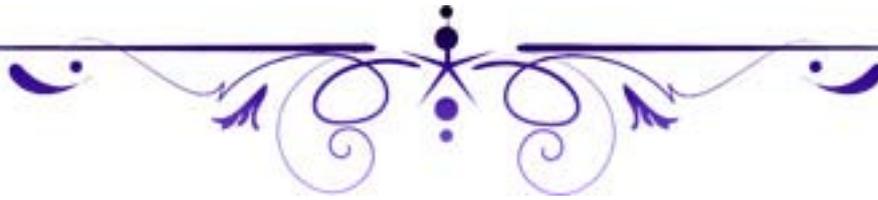
Of course, you don't need to plan every single detail in advance - that would ruin the surprise. Think of it as looking up a route on a map before you take a journey. You need to know how to get from A to B or you'll risk getting lost. This provides you with a helpful guide, but does not predict the entire experience of the journey itself, so there are still lots of surprises along the way. And because you checked your route in advance, you will be much more likely reach your desired destination.

If you do get lost on your way, take it easy. There is no rush to fulfil your lucid dream intention and if, for whatever reason, you can't achieve it, take the pressure off yourself and move on to something else. If you can't find a dream door to teleport yourself - don't panic. You could fly to the sea instead. Or if that's a dead end, create an alternative backup intention to make your lucid dream worthwhile.

My default backup intention is very simple but can lead me to interesting discoveries. Ever the explorer, I closely examine my lucid dream surroundings and increase my lucidity until it's insanely vivid. Then I seek out other dream figures and engage them in conversation; an easy way to get interacting with the awareness behind the dream. Dream figures can be very intriguing and offer fascinating insights into my own subconscious state of mind. Sometimes they can be confusing too, but that's ok, just increase your lucidity and ask them to clarify what they mean.

So if I can't go reef diving tonight I will at least get some cool subconscious insights instead. And know that, whether you want to fly to the moon, morph into an animal, or just follow the subconscious action of the dream - the most fulfilling lucid dreams are usually the ones that achieve something you set out to do ahead of time. Setting the intention is key.

Five Lucid Dream Challenges



Now that you're beginning to have lucid dreams (or are getting close) here are five exciting lucid dream challenges for you to try. Everyone has their own agenda when it comes to guided dreams and I encourage you to explore whatever lies in your heart's desire. However, there are some adventures which everyone must experience! The next five challenges will help you master control over your dream world and spread your wings in this exciting new reality...

Challenge #1 - Fly With Perfect Control

Everyone loves to have flying dreams - it provides us with the ultimate freedom from our real-world physical limitations. Learning how to fly in a lucid dream comes completely naturally for some people. For others, it takes a little practice. I came in the latter group. When I first learned lucid dreaming, I found it difficult to fly because my logical brain kept holding me back. I would often get 10 or 15 feet in the air then falter and fall to the ground. Whatever the cause, this became a learned behavior, so eventually I had to consciously "unlearn" it in my dreams.

As I described earlier, this began by bouncing over the landscape, knowing each time I would bounce gently off the ground, light as a feather, then return safely with no harm done. This made me feel in control of my flying dreams and gave me more confidence of my ability to be weightless.

Soon, bouncing turned to hovering and floating everywhere around the dreamscape at a reasonably safe height, and as I had more flying experiences, I got rapidly better. Within a few lucid dreams I was able to fly to the tops of sky scrapers and challenge my fear of falling by literally throwing myself off! Then I would catch myself mid-fall, hover over to a window ledge and do it again. My dream self felt pretty confident that night! After that it was no problem to fly above the clouds, into space and around the moon. Like everything in my lucid dreams, it was a steep learning curve. I then went into hyperspace mode, flying through the universe at impossible speeds, watching the stars whoosh by.

Challenge #2 - Run Through Walls

Here's another exhilarating lucid dream challenge for beginners. Walking or pushing your body through the wall is not only a great reality check - it's also a great learning experience. By passing your body through physical objects, you will quickly write a new rule book for the unreality of the dream

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Dreaming permits each
and every one of us
to be quietly and safely insane
every night of our lives.
~William Dement



Artwork: *The Raven and the Cat*
by Jeremiah Morelli

world. It will rapidly improve your ability to take control of your guided dreams and get exactly what you want, without any futile mucking around.

First, heighten your lucidity then gently push your hand against the wall and imagine it going right through. Don't think of the wall as a solid object - instead, it's porous and malleable. Focus on how your hand might feel if it simply pushed right through. Your expectation is key.

Once you get the hang of this, it will become easier and easier. The next step is to walk your entire body through a wall or other solid object. Think of yourself as a ghost passing through matter from another dimension. If you keep your eyes open you will see the wall interior.

Sometimes, I find that if I'm only semi-lucid or moving at the wall too slowly, I overthink it and I bounce off it in disbelief. So it pays to be bold and go for it: run at a wall really fast if you like, thinking about how great it will feel when you pass through the other side.

Once I was running through walls in an apartment building on the upper floors of a skyscraper. I sensed I was near the exterior wall and just as that thought struck me, I burst out into the night sky, the ground falling away at my feet. Of course, I was the architect of that moment and it was my expectation that caused me to run right out of the building in mid-air. Equally, it was my new-found confidence in my ability to fly that enabled me to float off into the night, rather than fall to the ground with a splat. So remember - confidence and bold expectations will set you free.



Challenge #3 - Follow The Subconscious Thread

Sometimes it pays to simply explore your dreamscape as it exists, without consciously controlling or changing anything. I've come to call this following the subconscious thread, or passive lucid dreaming. While maintaining your self-awareness in the dream, give up your active control of the dream to your subconscious mind. You are now an observer in your virtual reality world - not a controller.

Look around your dreamscape and explore the scenery. Pick up souvenirs and talk to dream figures, without consciously influencing anything. Allow your subconscious inner self the opportunity to show you whatever it wants and engage in some live dream interpretation. I suggest finding an observation platform - perhaps a cloud or a mountain - and observe the world below. It is quite breathtaking to observe this complex scene knowing it is all taking place effortlessly inside your own head.

Another neat trick suggested by Robert Waggoner in his book, *Lucid Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self*, is to ask your lucid dream a question or give an open instruction. Start by saying "Show me something really amazing!" and wait to see what happens. Your subconscious will react to your request and present a new twist in the dream. We'll look at some more of Robert's dream interactions a little later.

Challenge #4 - Make Day Turn to Night

I stumbled onto this lucid dream challenge purely by accident but it was a great visual experience. It's better for those who feel more confident manipulating the dreamscape so wait until you're fully lucid and aware before trying this one. Remember, expectation guides the whole experience.

Probably the easiest way to turn a day-time scene into night is to turn around or look away from the main attraction and visualize how the new night sky will look before you turn back. This visualization creates an expectation in your mind, and your dreaming subconscious will see to the rest. You are merely giving your subconscious the idea, while it fills in the creative details.

Another way to approach this challenge is to paint the sky with the sweep of your hand, or literally breathe color into the atmosphere. Find a creative method that works for you, and be rewarded with a fantastic new visual scene as a result. Turning day to night also gives you the perfect opportunity to gaze up into the night sky and get lost in the stars - or zoom up there in an instant. It can be a magnificent experience while lucid and I have had many star-gazing dreams that I will always treasure.

Challenge #5 - Eat Your Favorite Food

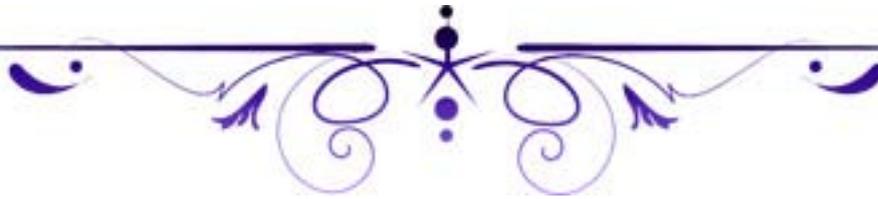
Lucid dream food can be extremely delicious. Chewing and swallowing takes less time and it's all about the flavor and texture of the food. The reason it's often better than real life is because every bite is as perfect as you want it to be. Your dream taste buds don't become accustomed to the flavor either - so each bite can be more mouth-wateringly delicious than the last. And of course, dream calories don't add up so you can eat all the luxurious chocolate-laden desserts you want.



When lucid, seek out a place that you already associate with good food: restaurants, cafes and kitchens. In the right location, you should have no problem finding some really delicious food. I suggest you plan what type of food you're going to try by setting a lucid dream intention beforehand.

As you become accustomed to using the power of expectation, try this: grab a pen and draw your desired food in the air in front of you, however crudely. Then imagine it popping into life and becoming three-dimensional so that you can pick it up and eat it. The dream will take care of the rest. You'll soon see that when it comes to the dreaming mind, there are no limitations on logic!

Lucid Dreaming Sex



In a lucid dream, you can fulfil your ultimate sexual fantasy and it can feel just as real as waking life. Indeed, it's the number one reason why most people desire to learn lucid dreaming in the first place. The question is, are these erotic dreams really all they're cracked up to be - and are beginners capable of them?

Many lucid dreamers have found that it's not all that easy to initiate sex in a lucid dream, and that's because our subconscious has quite a different agenda. For instance, it's quite common to become self-aware in a dream and go in search of a sexual partner - only to find your Brad Pitt or Scarlett Johansson has transformed into an ugly, withered being. It's a real turn off.

Other times, you can lock onto your ideal sexual partner, or use your skills to morph them into someone more attractive, but then find they are completely disinterested in you. They may look straight through you, or walk away entirely. What the heck's going on?

Remember that many dream figures are projections of your own subconscious self, and their mission may not be to have sex with your ego self. Other dream figures seem to be mere autonomous characters which have no soul (if you like) and no particular agenda, and will go with the flow.

Ultimately, you can have lucid dream sex if you identify what motivates the dream figure and, rather than treating them as a sexual object, open up to them and offer a shared intimate experience. Of course it helps a lot if you make yourself fully lucid first - roaming around the dreamscape, half lucid, looking for sex can end up a futile chase.

Indeed, it's a good idea to cultivate healthy interactions with lucid dream figures in general. More often than not, they are meaningful representations of your inner self and they deserve to be treated with respect. If you go around abusing dream figures, be prepared to be sorely disappointed when, at any moment, they have the ability to turn your sexual experience into something quite repulsive.

Are Lucid Dream Orgasms Real?

Let's assume you've made a connection with another dream figure and are having full blown lucid dream sex. What's going to happen? Believe it or not, there have been scientific studies into orgasms during lucid dreams.



I guess I thought the dream-space would be all about the visual, but it's more about the feeling. My question is what happens when you start messing with the physics of it?

~ Ariadne, Inception

Artwork: *The Ladder*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Scientists have found that lucid orgasms can sometimes be accompanied by a real physical response, including increased heart rate, changes in vascular tissue and other muscular reactions. Sometimes, however, it's purely in the mind - although this doesn't make it any less real to the dreamer in their super-sensory environment. There is also anecdotal evidence to show that men who experience a lucid dream orgasm also ejaculate in real life.

The problem many beginners will find is that it's difficult to hold onto conscious lucidity until the critical moment. A sexual lucid dream is highly arousing and beginners will most likely wake up before the experience has even got going. In this way, lucid dreaming sex isn't ideal for beginners. I know that's not what you wanted to hear. But you'd do far better to learn the ropes of conscious dreaming and understand how to ground yourself better so that when sex does happen, you don't wake up.

Is Lucid Dreaming Sex Ethical?

How do you feel about having realistic sex in a lucid dream with someone who is not your real-life partner. Are you actually cheating on them or is it all just a dream?

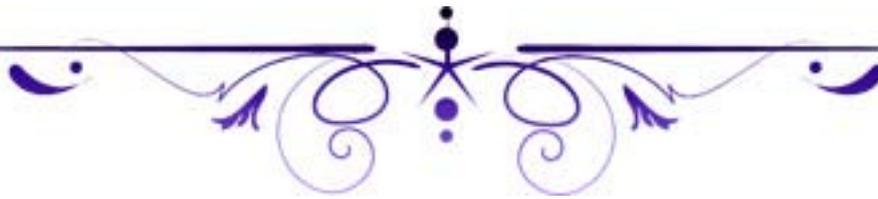
This is a personal issue and I think you should take it into discussion with your partner and make your own minds up. Generally, I feel that it's ok to explore your sexuality in the dream world which has limited tangible connection to the real world. I don't see why we should create restrictions for our partners either - after all, a lucid dream, no matter how vivid, is still "just a dream". The arousal and the emotion of lucid dream sex is not defined by another human being, it's defined by your own mind.

There is only one caveat to this argument, and again, it's a debatable issue but I would like to raise it anyway. Let's say you're attracted to someone you see in real life who is not your romantic partner. Should you release those sexual frustrations with them inside the safety of a lucid dream?

It depends on the circumstances, but having erotic dream sex with someone you have to face in real life may serve to heighten your attraction to them, which wouldn't exactly be fair on your partner. It's akin to fantasizing over someone you know with the underlying desire to hook up in real life. Consider the real-world implications this might have on your relationship - then make your own choice.

At the end of the day, however, sometimes things happen during lucidity which we never expected - nor controlled. Just like regular dreams, our subconscious can dish up some bizarre scenarios and with our rational minds half asleep we just go with it. So don't beat yourself up about sexual dreams that go awry. Indeed, Freud would say you are a perfectly normal human being.

False Awakenings



False awakenings are a curious phenomenon for lucid dreamers and non-lucid dreamers alike. They are essentially ultra vivid dreams in which you are convinced you have woken up in physical reality. They are most likely to happen when you are excited about a big day ahead.

Self-awareness determines how consciously “in tune” you are with your current reality. Lucid dreamers aim to be highly self-aware while awake and while dreaming, for the greatest frequency of lucid dreams. But the modern world is so distracting, most people are not very self-aware at all.

And this comes into play in the paradox of a false awakening. The dream of awakening is highly vivid, suggesting a high level of self-awareness (for a dream, at least). Yet many false awakenings go unrecognized; assumed to be waking reality, there is absolutely no awareness that it’s all a dream.

A false awakening may involve getting up, having breakfast, getting dressed, heading out for work... all the things you do every day on autopilot. It can all appear all too real and solid to warrant questioning its authenticity. Indeed, you will only appreciate *how real* a false awakening is when it happens to you - it reveals the remarkable capacity of the human brain to emulate reality.

Waking Up from False Awakenings

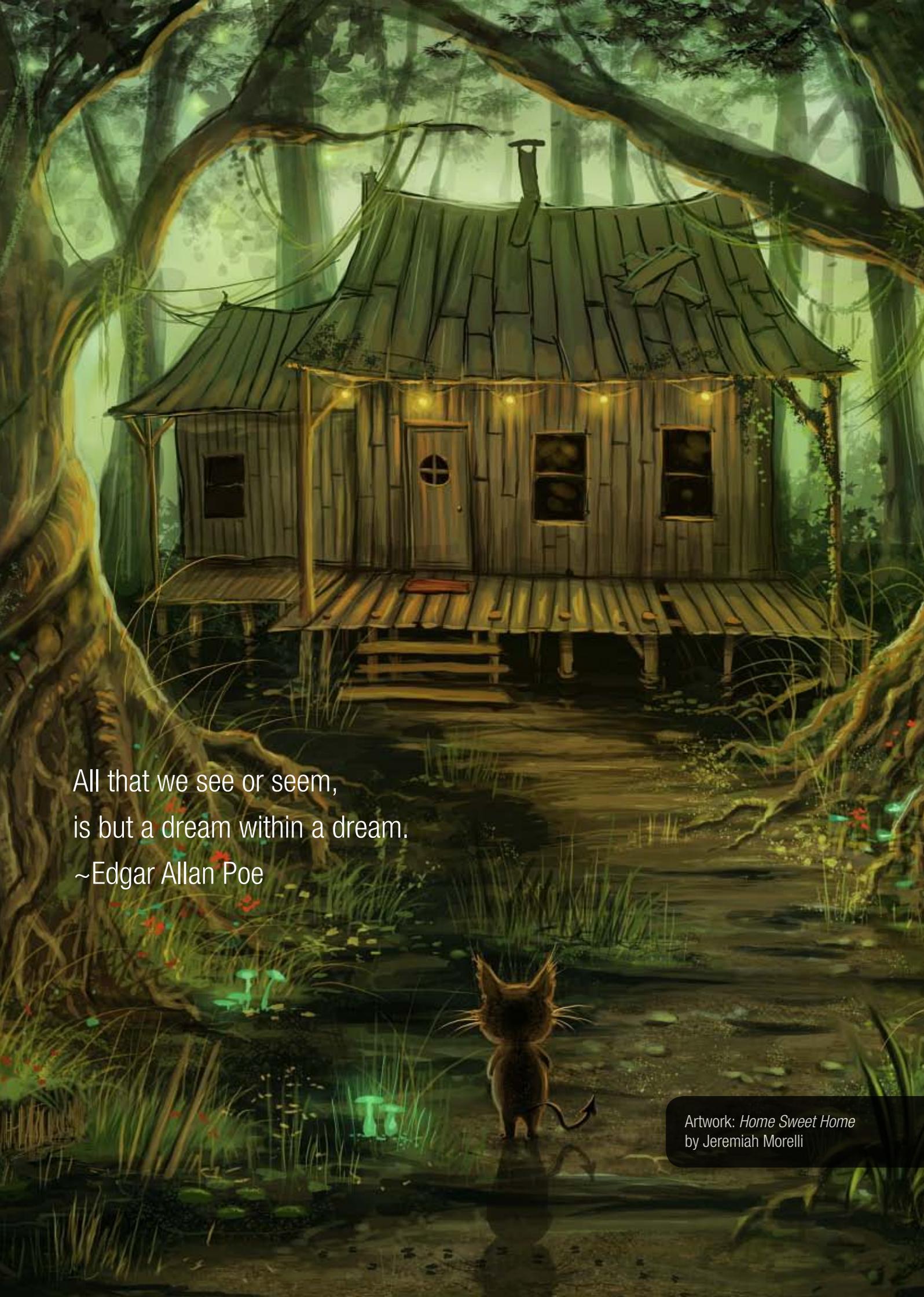
Eventually, you will start doing a more complex task in your dream that draws on part of the conscious brain that is still asleep. Maybe you look in the bathroom mirror, or attempt to read a signpost on your way to work. This exposes the illusory nature of the dream and BAM! You wake up.

Or perhaps not. Some people have multiple false awakenings in succession, doing the same things over and over, never knowing when they have truly woken up. They keep unconsciously rebooting the waking dream scenario... As uncanny as it sounds, if you have just had one false waking experience, you are much more likely to have another. The conditions are already ripe.

I’ve never had multiple false awakenings (as far as I can remember). So when they do occur, I rather enjoy them. Sometimes my false awakenings drag on for several minutes then I abruptly wake up; other times I realize I’m dreaming and become lucid. They most often happen when I am sleeping in a different place, or am excited or anxious about the events of the next day.

In one false awakening, I had the fortune of doing a reality check early on and tried to push my hand

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All that we see or seem,
is but a dream within a dream.

~Edgar Allan Poe

Artwork: *Home Sweet Home*
by Jeremiah Morelli

through the glass window of my bedroom. Yet my reality was so vivid, my brain refused to accept the possibility of it passing through. Instead, my hand bounced off the glass realistically.

I was dumbstruck. Being unable to rationalize what was happening, I clumsily explored my house, knowing that something was wrong but unable to define it. I was stuck in a limbo-like dream world.

Eventually I went into the kitchen and found my partner cooking a roast dinner at 7am. Logic bomb! I instantly became lucid and flew away.

Five Ways to Turn a False Awakening into a Lucid Dream

False awakenings can be very minor (you dream of waking up in the morning, then quickly slip out of the dream and wake up for real). Or they can be long, drawn out affairs. The good news is, they can often lead to lucid dreams if you have sufficient self-awareness.

The key to becoming lucid in this scenario is to remember to perform a reality check every time you wake up - and *be persistent*. If you have any inkling at all that you might be dreaming, trust your instinct. You almost certainly are!

Every morning, do one or more of the following reality checks:

- 1. Reality Check on Waking** - Perform a reality check when you wake up every day. This is will be your best chance of recognizing a false awakening as soon as it begins.
- 2. Use Your Alarm Clock** - Whenever you look at the time, ask yourself "Am I dreaming?" Numbers and letters are notoriously hard to read in dreams because the language centers of the brain are largely shut down. So numbers or words are prone to changing or turning into unreadable symbols after a few seconds. Your alarm clock will expose this.
- 3. Look At Your Reflection** - Since the first thing people do in the morning is go to the bathroom, this is an ideal reality check. Allow yourself a few seconds to examine your face, check that the reflection of the room is normal, and see if you can push your hand into the mirror itself.
- 4. Leave Notes For Yourself** - Written reminders placed around the house (like door handles, light switches and banisters) will prompt you to do a reality check and reveal if you are dreaming. Be sure to acknowledge them every morning - don't ignore them.
- 5. Check During Breakfast** - False awakenings can involve eating breakfast so the moment you taste food or drink in the morning, do a reality check. If you are dreaming, you will suddenly be able to taste the food you are eating with more intensity, which is a wonderful wake-up call.

As a lucid dreamer, you invite more false awakenings into your dreams. This is a great opportunity to have more guided dreams, so seize the moment you wake up and ask yourself: "Am I dreaming now?"

False awakenings can be hard to spot but with practice you will become better at recognizing that curious feeling that *something* is not right with the world...

Escaping From Nightmares



Many of my early lucid dreams arose from moments of sheer terror in a nightmare, which triggered my conscious brain to think: “Can this be real? No way - I must be dreaming!” Knowing that I had control of the dream, I then had two options. I could either take the short cut and shout “WAKE UP!” and blink rapidly, which always caused me to wake up for real. Or I could confront the source of my fear and figure out the meaning of the nightmare in real time.

At first I took the short cut because I was afraid and wanted an easy way out. But as I built more confidence in the dream world, I began to question my nightmare figures and learn some really insightful things about my inner self. You can even teach your children this technique (as children are generally prone to more nightmares than adults) and help them have lucid dreams too.

The Meaning of Nightmares

In the West, the meaning of nightmares is to reveal our darkest inner fears in literal and symbolic forms. We all deal with nightmares at some time in our lives, but few people consider lucid dreaming as a way to temporarily escape from them - or completely resolve them.

The most common nightmare involves being chased - either by a monster, witch, demon, vampire, madman or other fearsome entity. According to dream analysis this is rooted in our ancient evolutionary fear of being hunted by the wild predators.

Other nightmare themes include the death of loved ones, falling, being physically injured, creepy crawlies and being trapped. Some people experience recurring nightmares which signifies an ongoing psychological issue. You are more likely to suffer from nightmares when you are sick (especially with fever), stressed or anxious, having relationship problems, traumatized by violence or taking drugs.

Certain medications can also increase nightmares, such as L-dopa for Parkinson’s Disease, and beta blockers for heart conditions. However they may also raise dream intensity, which causes greater self-awareness and lucid dreams.

All the things one has forgotten
scream for help in dreams.
~Elias Canetti



Artwork: *The Monster on Top of The Bed*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Using Lucid Dreams To Stop Nightmares

If you practice reality checks and are meditating to enhance your self-awareness, you are much more likely to recognize a nightmare when it's happening. Make a note of it now: anytime you are experiencing fear or terror, you are most likely to be dreaming. This realization will shine new light on the nightmare, allowing you to view the whole scenario in context and abandon your fear.

As I mentioned, there are two ways to escape from a nightmare:

1. **Wake Yourself Up** - This is a knee-jerk response but can quickly end a terrifying dream. Just shout "WAKE UP!" and blink hard while imagining your body in bed.
2. **Face Your Fears** - Your nightmare demons are all part of your own psyche, and despite what horror movies portray, they really can't hurt you and do indeed have positive things to offer. When you become lucid in a nightmare, have the courage to talk to your attacker and ask what it wants. If it's a recurring dream, you will very likely put an end to this particular fearsome scenario.

I learned to facing my nightmare fears after reading about it in Dr Stephen LaBerge's superb *Exploring The World of Lucid Dreaming* (a veritable encyclopaedia of wisdom on lucid dreaming). Each nightmare-turned-lucid-dream became a personal triumph for me and nurtured a healthier mentality of dealing with anxiety. Here is an example of an early scenario:

"I'm running around an old, dark house with a group of young children who I feel I must protect. We're being chased by an ugly vampirish creature with long fingernails and gray skin. Every time he catches up with us, he smiles at me sickeningly and then another child goes missing.

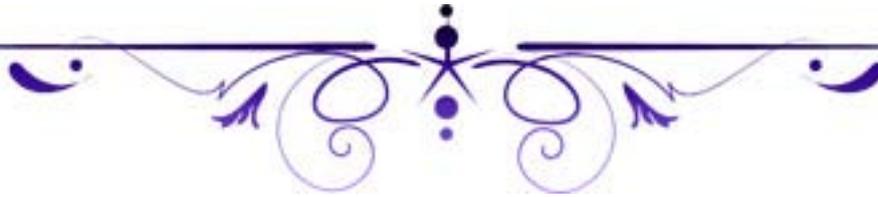
We keep running away but the walls keep moving, creating small hiding places but then exposing us again to the monster. At last, we find a safe hiding place under a dusty old bed. With some relief, it occurs to me that now it's morning and daylight is streaming in. I climb out and dust myself down, remembering how vampires can't come out in daylight. Then I suddenly realize: vampires aren't real - I'm dreaming!

I move into a bright room and there he is, standing awkwardly, like he is embarrassed about the whole thing. I realize I have absolutely nothing to fear, elated that I'm lucid dreaming.

I float through a big window, laughing at him and his stupid ways and he looks ashamed. He doesn't even try to follow me this time. I float out into the sunlight and begin my lucid adventure."

Although there was no major epiphany in this nightmare, it was the first time I confronted the source of my fear and consciously transformed the dream into something positive. On a subconscious level, my demonstration of power over my primal fear of being chased led to a very empowering lucid dream. I believe this feeling took root on a deeper level and helped me feel braver in real life.

Sleep Paralysis



Sleep paralysis is the mechanism which prevents you from acting out your dreams when you sleep. In lucid dreaming, some people (but certainly not all) are more likely to become consciously aware of sleep paralysis as it takes effect over the body. This can be frightening or very exciting, depending on your mindset. Either way it can lead to lucid dreams. Indeed, the state is most commonly linked to wake-induced techniques like WILD, the OBE exit and hypnagogic methods.

This section will help you fully understand the mechanics and the psychology of sleep paralysis so you are well-prepared if you ever consciously encounter it. There are also suggestions for people who regularly experience sleep paralysis against their will and feel trapped and unable to move. Fear not: this misunderstood experience is just a small step away from the world of lucid dreams.

What is Sleep Paralysis?

Sleep paralysis (or REM atonia) begins as you fall asleep. It blocks the brain signals that tell the muscles to move, so when you start dreaming, the signal to walk around is not literally interpreted by your physical body. This is vital to keep you out of harm's way and ensures you get a good night's sleep.

You don't typically notice sleep paralysis happening because your mind and body are already drifting away. Your mind is either totally unconscious - or focused on an emerging dream. And when you wake up in the night, the sleep paralysis switches off in time with your conscious awakening. However, sometimes this mechanism fails and it creates a sleep disorder known as Isolated Sleep Paralysis (ISP).

ISP is an involuntary state. You will already know if you suffer from it; lucid dreaming will not burden you with this as a sleep disorder. In a typical episode, you wake up during the night and find you can't move, causing an immediate sense of panic. This panic triggers disturbing hypnagogic hallucinations, culminating in sights and sounds of an evil presence in the room. As your heart races, a figure approaches the bed, reaches towards you and tries to strangle you or sit on your chest.

This type of experience has been documented around the world for hundreds of years. In Japan, they call it "kanashibar". In Newfoundland, it's known as "the old hag" who visits you in the night. In China, they know it as "ghost oppression". It's no surprise that native folklore shapes the nature of sleep paralysis

hallucinations. In America, it was only after flying saucers were popularized that people reported vivid alien abduction experiences, where aliens paralyzed and probed them in their bed at night.

This all tells us that sleep paralysis is a common human condition, and the hallucinations can be shaped and molded based on your expectations. What's more, sleep paralysis is an event on the sleep-wake border, and can be used as a gateway to brilliant lucid dreams.

How To Stop Sleep Paralysis

If you ever find yourself experiencing involuntary sleep paralysis and want to end the state quickly, here's what you can do to minimize your fear and snap out of it sooner:

- Relax your body into the paralysis - don't fight it
- Think peaceful, relaxing thoughts and sing in your mind
- Wiggle your fingers and toes if you can
- Move your eyes and look around the room
- Focus on breathing deeply and moving your mouth

Once your brain recognizes that parts of your body are awake, it will shut off the paralysis mechanism and you will return to full wakefulness. For more information on dealing with ISP, I recommend Ryan Hurd's breakthrough work, *Sleep Paralysis: A Guided to Hypnagogic Visions and Visitors of The Night*. Ryan is a lucid dreamer and long term sufferer of ISP and has considerable insights to offer.

Sleep Paralysis and Lucid Dreams

Despite the dreadful image you must now have of sleep paralysis, I want to show you the other side of the coin. Because for lucid dreamers, sleep paralysis is NOT something to fear and avoid. It is actually a transition phase that we'll use to have amazing lucid dreams. And, no, you don't have to confront the old hag - indeed, many lucid dreamers will never experience any kind of hallucinations whatsoever.

Instead, our approach will be deliberate, calm and controlled. We'll use it as a stepping stone to dreamland and we won't loiter in a place of fear and unknowing.

When you enter sleep paralysis deliberately, it is with a specific goal in mind. You are focused on your own internal dream world. The paralysis is simply a sign that it's working. It's a phase that can pass in seconds and often you won't even feel it at all. What's more, you are going in forearmed with the knowledge that it's just an illusion, enabling you to overcome any fears you may have.

You may notice sleep paralysis coming on during a Wake Induced Lucid Dream attempt, particularly if you choose the OBE exit technique. (You may just skip straight past it, that's fine too!) But there is one essential thing to do if you notice your body becoming paralyzed in bed.

RELAX...! You are about to have a lucid dream!

With relaxation, you'll come to realize the paralysis is not a problem - certainly nothing to fight against. Don't even try to move as this will throw a spanner in the works. Just sink into the bed. Then move your focus beyond your physical body, and begin visualizing a beautiful dream world.

Some people (and this is just a fraction of you) will encounter other entities during sleep paralysis. I've had one or two brief moments with these "others" but nothing terrible ever happened. The first time I saw a bizarre angry face hovering at my bedroom door. I couldn't move but somehow just accepted the presence. The face rushed in towards me and just as it was about to hit my face, it disappeared.

These entities can appear very realistic, like a devil or a grotesque man, or completely unrealistic, like a cartoon character. However, in the setting of your own bedroom it can appear very "real".

These hallucinations aren't always negative, I should add. People also see ghosts, spirit guides, religious icons, or aliens - and they feel blessed to have had a visitation from some other worldly being.

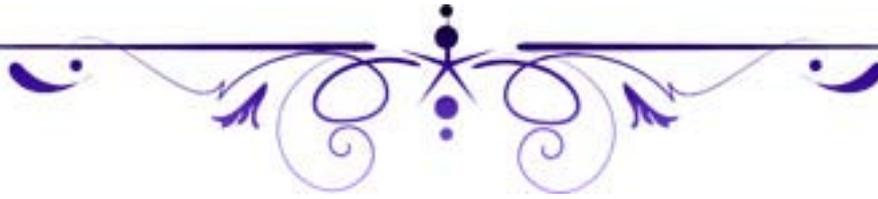
By this stage, of course, you are dreaming and deep into the paralysis. This may be a hard pill to swallow but as a lucid dreamer I know that the human brain is very capable of creating a perfect replica of a real-world bedroom. So, knowing that it is all an illusion, you can now take control of its direction.

The accepted treatment is to pour feelings of love towards the imagined entity. Pretend they are just a big softie underneath the surface and they need a massive hug. This lifts your own mood, dispels fear, and transforms the creature into a helpful dream figure.

When they react to your will, ask them to help you out of your body and go on a journey to someplace fun. They will free you from your paralysis (sometimes by giving you a hand out of bed, pulling your feet or helping you hover out like a traditional OBE) and can even become your personal dream guide.

What a way to start a lucid dream!

Part 4: Inspiration for Lucid Dreams



Having entered the heady world of lucid dreaming, you probably have a lot on your “to do” list. Flying, sex, food, time travel, super powers, subconscious communication, connecting with the divine, meeting your future self - I’m sure you have plenty of ideas, whatever your agenda. However, if you would like some inspiration from an experienced lucid dreamer, I can certainly give you a gentle nudge in the right direction.

10 Things to Ask Your Lucid Dream

Interacting with your lucid dream is a really fun way to gain insights from your subconscious inner self. Earlier I mentioned Robert Waggoner’s exciting method of interacting with the lucid dream: just shout out any question and receive an answer from the awareness behind the dream. The answer may be written on the wall, spoken to you by a dream figure, or a new dream scene may materialize with the information you were seeking. Remember in the lucid dream world, there are no rules.

Here are 10 things Robert suggests to get your lucid dream interaction started:

1. Show me something hilarious!
2. Show me something amazing!
3. Let me feel unconditional love!
4. Let me feel pure and total confidence!
5. Show me this lucid dream from your perspective!
6. Let me feel my body’s optimal health!
7. Show me how to have more lucid dreams!
8. Show me myself in 10 years!
9. Let me see my childhood pet!
10. Show me how to resolve this problem at work!

This is a limitless experiment so, while setting the intention, try to think up your own questions too. The interaction can provoke all kinds of unexpected results - including intuitive predictions about the future (based on your subconscious knowledge) and memories you thought you had forgotten.

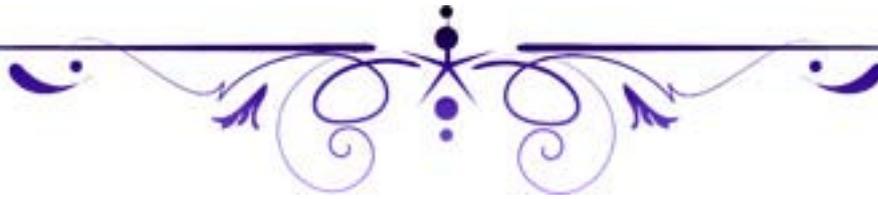
Most importantly, the answers given by your dream self aren't filtered by your conscious mind, which can often get bogged down in logical thinking and overlook the creative value.

I have asked many things of my lucid dreams. Sometimes, nothing happens, so I raise my lucidity and say the question again. I have no expectation of what will happen next, which makes the outcome very special. You are virtually talking face-to-face with your inner self.

On my first attempt, I shouted "Show me something hilarious!" Nothing happened for a few seconds, then the next thing I saw was a giant, multi-colored furry ape walking down the street towards me with a funky gait. This out-of-the-blue image was hilarious and I fell into fits of giggles in the dream.

Later, I stood alone in a field in my lucid dream and shouted "Show me something amazing!" The sky lit up then, and turned into a brilliant orange sunset. I saw a giant woman appear in the sky, with long brown wavy hair and orange robes. She was full of bright light. She didn't say anything but I got an awesome sense of power and felt like this was a projection of my own inner self.

Interview with Robert Waggoner



Robert Waggoner is a leader in lucid dream research and kindly agreed to share his philosophies of what it truly means to become lucid in dreams and how we can probe the conscious dream world further.

Robert is President-Elect of the *International Association for the Study of Dreams* (IASD) and a summa cum laude graduate of Drake University with a degree in Psychology. For the past seven years, he has co-edited the quarterly journal, *The Lucid Dream Exchange*, and recently launched a remarkable book titled *Lucid Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self*.

Enjoy the interview.



Why are you interested in lucid dreaming?

Robert: Lucid dreaming was like my own, personal ‘magic kingdom.’ Flying through the sky, playing with dream figures, creating adventures - it felt fascinating to do this while aware in the dream state. Lucid dreaming became a free ticket to a kind of Hogwarts School of Wizardry. As I learned the principles of how to move and manipulate the dream state, my adventures really took off.

Over the years, I began investigating lucid dreaming’s potential deeply. Through experimentation, I realized lucid dreaming could be used to get ‘unknown’ information; apparently from the deeper part of yourself or some kind of collective unconscious. Moreover, lucid dreaming could be used to explore deep spiritual concepts, focus healing intent on your body, seek out telepathic and precognitive information and learn about the nature of reality (from the unique perspective of being aware in the dream state). In my book, I take lucid dreamers to these deeper aspects of lucid dreaming, and show them how experienced lucid dreamers approach these topics successfully. It’s simply mind blowing.



Dreams are more real than reality itself,
they're closer to the self.

~ Gao Xingjian

Artwork: *The Mushroom Road*
by Jeremiah Morelli

What was your first lucid dream like?

Robert: My first incubated lucid dream gave me a glimpse of the wonders. I was reading Carlos Castaneda's *Journey to Ixtlan*, and began suggesting to myself each night, "Tonight in my dreams, I will see my hands and realize that I am dreaming." After three nights of doing this, I was dreaming of walking through my high school hallway, when suddenly my hands appeared right in front of my face. I thought, "My hands! This is a dream. I'm dreaming this!"

I felt pure awe. Everything around me 'looked' real, but I knew it was a dream, a mental creation. The students looked real, the walls of the hallway felt real - I existed in an alternate reality, a mental projection, while consciously being aware of it.

Then something wild happened. I stepped out of the hallway next to the administration building, when the dream began to feel shaky. I realized that I needed to look back at my hands to stabilize the dream (as Carlos Castaneda suggested). Looking back at my hands, I suddenly felt my awareness become a speck of light, floating through my palm prints and finger prints, which now appeared as giant flesh colored canyon walls, towering above me. Aware, it felt wonderful to have this microscopic view, as I floated along, just a speck of awareness. Then suddenly, I bounced back to my original viewpoint, still lucid. I decided to try flying, got off the ground and became too excited - and then woke! An epic adventure - and it was just the beginning.

Can you tell us about your book, *Lucid Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self*?

Robert: After thirty years of lucid dreaming, I felt no one was telling the story of lucid dreaming's fantastic depth. Lucid dreaming is so much more than expectation and mental models. Through the unexpected and surprises, you see that it's a path to the broader awareness of our larger psyche.

In *Lucid Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self*, you will read how experienced lucid dreamers have taken lucid dreaming to a whole new level. Using techniques and various mental approaches, you will learn how to construct a more stable, longer-lasting lucid dream, and use it as a platform for personal investigations and experimentation. Already, I am getting emails from people saying that reading my book has ignited their lucid dreaming. They are having more lucid dreams, and using them for incredible explorations.

So this book reaches out to those lucid dreamers who are ready to go deeper - whether beginner, intermediate or advanced - who want to experiment with the larger awareness accessible in the lucid state, and its practical uses to benefit your life. And this book is for those who want to explore the big questions of life, consciousness and the nature of reality. In many respects, this book ushers in a kind of Lucid Dreaming 2.0- the next stage of the lucid experience.

In the book, you recommend that lucid dreamers interact with the “awareness behind the dream.” This can have bizarre and unexpected results. What have your lucid dreams shown you and who or what is creating this experience?

Robert: Back in the 1980s, I was part of a lucid dream explorer’s group, headed by Linda Magallon (author of *Mutual Dreaming*). Each month for three years, we had lucid dreaming experimental goals to accomplish. During one of these experiments in which we were ‘to find out what a dream figure represents,’ I had an unusual lucid dream. I very politely asked the dream figure, “What do you represent?” when a Voice boomed out a partial answer from the area above the dream figure! I asked my question again, and then the same Voice boomed out a more complete answer.

Well that Voice startled me, and made me wonder, “Is there an awareness behind the dream?” So after a while, I began lucidly shouting out my questions or requests to this “awareness behind the dream” - and it answered. Sometimes, it would change the dream completely and ‘show me’ the answer, while other times I would hear a response. This unseen “awareness” seemed much more knowledgeable than any dream figure - in fact, I came to see it as the larger Self that Jung hypothesized.

To understand what this awareness can show you, I devote a chapter to in my book. Most incredibly, asking this awareness to let you experience ‘concepts’ - spiritual concepts, esoteric concepts - some of these have tremendously expanded my mind. And in many cases, my conceptual experience would be later confirmed by reading ancient or obscure texts about that concept. Inventors, theorists and even theologians could use this approach to gain insight into concepts beyond their knowing, when lucidly aware (an idea that Jane Roberts called the ‘dream art scientist’).

Later when Castaneda’s *The Art of Dreaming* appeared in 1994, he talks about the ‘Dream Emissary,’ an unseen awareness who answers questions honestly in lucid dreams and apparently has access to deep, unconscious layers of information. This seemed to re-confirm some of what I had already experienced.

There are some skeptics who believe in lucidity, but maintain that true dream control is an illusion. In your book, you reconcile that fact by pointing out that lucid dreamers direct their awareness in the dream - but ultimately “the sailor does not control the sea.” Are you redefining the concept of lucid dreaming? And who or what is creating the lucid dream environment around us?

Robert: The sailor does not control the sea, nor does the lucid dreamer control the dream. Like a sailor, lucid dreamers manipulate or direct themselves in the larger expanse of dreaming; however, they do not control it. Lucid dreaming appears to be a co-created experience.

If lucid dreamers control it, then they would lucid dream for hours, instead of losing their lucidity or collapsing the lucid dream within minutes. Also if they controlled it, the lucid dreamer would have to stop and make everything appear, once they flew through a wall into a new room. Obviously, some deeper part of the psyche controls what appears when they fly into a new room; it happens without the lucid dreamer’s conscious involvement.

This is important as you go deeper into lucid dreaming, since conceptually it’s a game-changer. Once we understand that we direct the lucid dream, but do not control it, then we can investigate the

larger dreaming or the dreaming outside-of-me and my thinking - aka the big picture. If you think you 'control' the lucid dream, then there is nothing to investigate. Conceptually, you are locked inside the prison of your own assumptions. My book tries to help lucid dreamers break free of limiting assumptions, and approach lucid dreaming more thoughtfully. One piece of that conceptual freedom involves understanding that no sailor controls the sea, and no lucid dreamer controls the dream.

[What significance do you attach to dream characters in your lucid dreams? Who controls their behaviors? What motivates them?](#)

Robert: First, you'll notice that I call them 'dream figures.' When we call them dream characters, our language predisposes us to view them as fictions, like TV characters or characters in a novel. Perhaps some may be, but as Carl Jung pointed out when talking about his dream visitor, Philemon, "...there are things in my psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life."

Consciously aware, we can interact and discover the more aware dream figures. Then we realize that different types of dream figures exist. While some may be symbols and nothing more, other dream figures appear to have conscious awareness. As the gestalt psychologist, Paul Tholey observed fifteen years ago, some lucid dream figures seem conscious before the lucid dreamer becomes conscious, and also appear more conscious than the lucid dreamer. Not all, but some.

Many lucid dreamers have reported telling their dream figures, "I am dreaming you. You are nothing but a projection of my mind." - only to hear the dream figure respond, "How do you know I am not dreaming you?" Through conversations, we learn that dream figures possess knowledge beyond the waking self's, and can rationally defend their belief in their own awareness.

A dream figure may be a part of my psychological makeup, much like a cell in my kidney is part of my physical makeup. On its level, it is important and responding to its environment. However the kidney's environment or the subconscious environment is not the waking-self's environment, so it seems too early and too provincial of the waking-me to say 'who' controls them, or 'what' motivates them when I consciously look into their environment. All I can say is that when lucidly aware, you see clearly that dream figures vary in their awareness, responsiveness, ability to manipulate the dream and themselves. What motivates them, or how they perceive their environment and their relation to it, may give us insight into the subconscious activities of the self/Self.

[Have you ever asked your lucid dreams for specific information about the future?](#)

Robert: Many times. Occasionally, I get interested in a topic and will pursue it lucidly for a year or so. In my book, I detail a number of lucid dreams in which I lucidly sought out precognitive information. And you know what? The information seemed often very accurate and very clear.

Actually, the potential here for scientific experimentation is enormous. For thousands of years, people have mentioned their belief in precognitive dreams, but science rejects the anecdotes - usually because the dreamer makes no 'prediction' but only shows the dream after the fact or retro-cognitively.

.....

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on,
and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.
~William Shakespeare



Artwork: *Rainy Day*
by Jeremiah Morelli

Jeremiah Morelli

Lucid dreaming would end those scientific complaints, because the lucid dreamer and scientific researcher could develop the experiment beforehand; then the lucid dreamer could become aware in a dream and seek out the experimental information, and provide it to the scientific researcher upon waking and before the event.

Lucid dreaming could revolutionize the field of para-psychology. Similarly, it could provide insight or evidence to support theoretical physicists and many of their views on space/time.

For lucid dreamers who want to try this, I suggest that they conceive of a precognitive experiment while waking and one that does not require an answer with lots of memorization (since it can be hard to remember all the details exactly when going from the lucid state to the waking state), then perform it in their next lucid dream. Once lucid, they may need to announce that the answer will be discovered when they open a book, or walk into the next room, or pick up a phone, but normally, an answer will appear if you expect it to and provide a place for its materialization.

In my book, I have a wonderful story of a college student who questioned whether it was possible to get unknown information in a lucid dream. It took him two attempts, but he succeeded.

[Have you ever met a "real" person inside a lucid dream and been able to validate their presence in the mutual dream?](#)

Robert: On page 182-3 of my book, I relate one of those incredible lucid dream meetings which I would scarcely believe it, except it happened to me.

Here's what happened: I became lucidly aware, and then see my friend, Moe, walk into the restaurant/bar. I go up to her and try to convince her that we are dreaming - I hold her as we levitate to prove 'this is a dream' - but she still has that look of an unfocused person (actually, in these cases, lucid dreamers say the other person acts almost drunk, like they can't focus or function). Finally, I get frustrated and shove a 'peace sign' right in front of Moe's face, and say, "Moe, do you see this? Every time you see it, it can make you become lucid!" Then I decide to wake.

I never mention this lucid dream to Moe or anyone. Months later, I'm on a business trip in the Bay area, and call Moe to see if she is free for lunch. I get to the restaurant, and stand outside waiting for her. As she comes walking up the sidewalk, she steps up to me and shoves the "peace sign" right in front of my face!! I feel stunned. I ask, "Moe, why are you doing that?" And she replied, "I don't know. Just felt like it." Over lunch, I told her my lucid dream, and how the peace sign that I gave her in the dream state, she now gave it to me four months later in the waking state. We both flipped.

In my book, I have an entire chapter on mutual lucid dreaming. While rarely achieved, people seem to be meeting telepathically or merging their dream environments in some lucid dreams. I suggest some scientific approaches to studying this.

What does this say about our current perception of reality?

Robert Waggoner: Lucid dreaming gives us a unique subconscious platform from which to perceive and experiment upon the waking world. From that unique platform of conscious awareness in the dream state, we have a revolutionary tool that can radically transform our perception of this reality. To understand ‘this’ reality, it may help to see it consciously from another perspective (that of being consciously aware in the subconscious). Moreover, the capacity to experiment lucidly and validate the findings has tremendous value for the Western scientific approach to understanding the truer nature of reality.

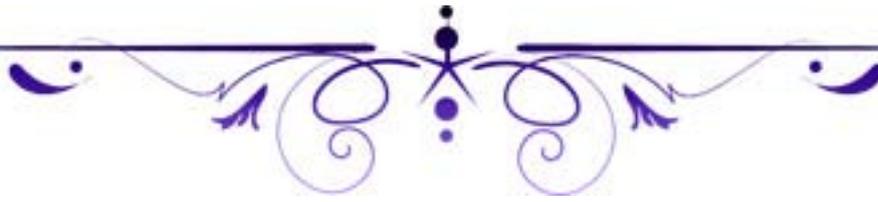
The Buddhist yogi, Naropa, considered dream yoga (a system of inquiry that relies on lucid dreaming) one of the six paths to enlightenment. In *Lucid Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self*, I tell how after 20 years I sought to go “beyond” lucid dreaming - beyond expectation and belief, beyond feeling and memory, to the source of lucid dreaming and its information. Without realizing it, I began to have experiences that sound very similar to what dream yoga leads to (non-dual experiences of clear light). I had no framework to place those non-dual experiences, until I heard a talk three years later on dream yoga (so it was not something that I expected to happen as I went “beyond” lucid dreaming). I felt like I had bushwhacked my way into something that another tradition had already built a path to - I just did it my way.

Whether we take an Eastern path or a Western path to conceptualizing reality, lucid dreaming offers insights either way.

As Albert Einstein said, “The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.”

Lucid dreaming is a gift that if used intelligently and insightfully can bring us to a new level of awareness. My sincere hope is to assist lucid dreamers and society in that journey to greater awareness.

Final Thoughts



You have reached the end of this book and I hope, by this point, you have experienced your first lucid dream... and maybe several more. If you have not yet reached that landmark then I assume you are a very fast reader and should probably retire into a quiet corner to do some meditation and start prepping your mind for the big journey ahead.

Lucid dreaming can be a life changing event. Once you get that first taste of lucidity it will force you to alter your perspective of everything - of waking reality, your human brain, and your inner self. A few seconds of conscious dreaming can do that. Imagine what you will discover during the weeks, months and years to come as a lucid dreamer.

So I urge you to keep up the good work and keep pushing for greater self-awareness - both in the waking world and in the dream world - as one always leads to the other. Like all skills worth having, lucid dreaming is one that, if left unused, will fade into the background and be forgotten. If you want lucid dreams you will have to work for them. Lucidity is a prize, a reward for our efforts to focus inwards and learn more about our internal worlds. And it is definitely a prize worth having.

I hope you have found this guide to be helpful in your quest for your first lucid dream. We have learned about the nature of sleep and dreams; the language of the subconscious; powerful ways to induce lucidity; methods of dream control; and ways to communicate directly with the inner self.

This book covers a large proportion of my own applied knowledge of conscious dreaming. As a result I have experienced a vast array of lucid phenomena first-hand - but there is still a lot to learn. The applications of lucid dreaming do seem limitless and I will be forever poised to delve deeper into the world of lucid dreaming. I urge you, too, to never stop exploring the amazing potential accessible within.

On that note, I suggest we all go away and write down our next lucid dream intention - to play piano like Mozart, to think like Einstein, to create art like Dali - and to let those deepest wishes unravel inside our vibrant lucid dream worlds tonight.



Free your mind.
~Morpheus
The Matrix

Artwork: *The Strange Road*
by Jeremiah Morelli

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