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# Dreams Speak

But what are they really saying?

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*This book is dedicated to my beautiful family and friends,  
and to everyone who has shared their dreams with me.  
Without your support and contribution, this book  
could not have been written. Thank you.*

First published 2009

Exisle Publishing Limited,  
P.O. Box 60-490, Titirangi, Auckland 0642, New Zealand.  
'Moonrising', Narone Creek Road, Wollombi, NSW 2325, Australia.  
[www.exislepublishing.com](http://www.exislepublishing.com)

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National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication

Author: Duckett, Therese E. (Therese Eleyne), 1952-  
Title: Dreams speak : but what are they really saying? / Therese E. Duckett.  
Edition: 1st ed.  
ISBN: 9781921497377 (pbk.)  
Notes: Includes bibliography.  
Subjects: Dreams. Dream interpretation. Subconsciousness.  
Dewey Number: 154.63

ISBN 978-1-921497-37-7

Text design and production by Island Bridge  
Cover design by Christabella Designs  
Author photograph by Greg Karlake  
Printed in China through Colorcraft Limited, Hong Kong

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For reasons of confidentiality, the names of people  
whose dreams are described in this book  
have been changed.

*Dreaming is the psyche itself  
doing its soul-work.*

(James Hillman)

*May God us keep  
From single vision and  
Newton's sleep.*

(William Blake)

*Dream big, live bold.*

(Frank Genghis)

*What do we do, we dream time people  
When our daily work is done,  
When hurrying, scurrying masses leave  
Us standing, in a world just made for one?*

*Do we sit and stare at walls,  
With blank unseeing eyes,  
Or gaze through slotted slitted windows  
At those never ending stretching skies?*

*Do the lonely hours of darkness  
Flee endlessly on mangled tangled wings  
As we hold our breath for morning  
And the people that it brings?*

*Or do we savour for just  
A little while, the loneliness  
The tranquil warming glow of solitude  
That delicious taste of onliness?*

Mary Ellen Smith (my mother)

# Introduction

We all dream. The skill, however, is to remember our dreams so they can support us through our life journeys. If you cannot recall your dreams, something may be interfering with your ability to do so, such as stress, drugs, trauma, illness or sleep deprivation. However, one of the most common reasons why people don't remember their dreams is that they are simply not seen as worthy of being remembered, and thus the dream muscle is not allowed to develop. The *intent* to remember our dreams validates them and allows them to increase in frequency and meaningfulness. When dreams are exalted they begin to work with us, guiding and helping us on our life journey. The ancient Greeks and Egyptians recognised the important principle of dreaming intent when they built their many dream temples for the purpose of healing.

The fact that we all dream has been demonstrated by the extensive research into Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep where dreaming mainly occurs. We all have around 90 minutes of REM sleep every night, which has been shown to be conducive to our psychological health. Studies have shown that when we are deprived of REM sleep we can experience emotional stress or mental illness and hallucinations.

Dreams are one of our great human resources but sadly have not been given the recognition they deserve. Often they have been relegated to the realm of imagination – as if imagination were a bad thing. How many times have you been told that 'it was just your imagination working overtime' or 'you always were a dreamer', as if imagination and dreaming were inferior states. Throughout most of our Western world, children are taught to invalidate their imaginary worlds in favour of their practical one. Yet imagination is the beginning of everything. A book cannot be written unless it is first dreamed or imagined. The house that you live in was imagined before it was built. The great psychiatrist Carl Jung believed that nothing existed unless it was first dreamed.

This book has been written not only to validate your dreams, but also to exalt them so that they become a wonderful ally in your life.

In Part One, some dream theories are explored to provide the basis for this book. That is, we will explore what dreams are, where they emerge from, how they contribute to our physical, emotional and spiritual health and how you can develop your dreaming muscle more.

In Part Two, emphasis is given to the Personal Unconscious Mind and the dream symbols that often emerge from this part of the unconscious mind.

In Part Three the Collective Unconscious Mind is explored, as are the archetypal symbols that are the expressions of this ancient, universal mind.

I began writing *Dreams Speak* after seeing the book and its title in a dream, and was then guided by further dreams or the dreams of others as to its direction. I am therefore very grateful to all the wonderful people who contributed their dreams and provided examples of how dreams work, as well as how they can facilitate the healing process.



# Dream Theories

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Chapter

1

# Our Multiple Minds

*Mind is in the imagination,  
rather than the imagination is in the mind.*

(Hillman, 1983, p. 7)

Ted was driving his bus into his future when he happened to see two people he knew standing on the side of the road. He knew he should ignore them and just keep driving but decided instead to turn back and see if they needed a ride. However, when he turned the bus around everything suddenly became very foggy and he had difficulty seeing the road ahead of him. The bus was suddenly blocked by two large creatures: a black serpent, which was so large it was coiled around itself, and a red-green dragon/snake with many small heads. The large red-green dragon/snake managed to get one of its heads into his bus and a struggle then ensued between the dragon and the bus with the dragon's head spilling all over the bus. Ted woke up with the thought that he would have to clean up his act (the bus) before he could continue on his way.

Ted had been struggling to overcome a drinking problem for many years when he had this dream. He felt that he was now finally strong enough to overcome his addictive behaviour. It was the first time he had felt he could do this even though he had been having extensive counselling for a long time. Why did he now feel he could finally do something about his problem? What was different? It was only a dream after all. Ted had the

sense that the dream was profound and that he had reached some sort of turning point. And he had! At some level he had faced one of his dragons. He had not destroyed it at this stage but he had confronted it, causing some damage to it. When we dream of archetypal images such as dragons, other mythical creatures and superheroes, we are getting in touch with the deepest part of our human Collective Unconscious Mind. This is the 'Universal Mind' that links us all to each other and contains the energy of our total history as human beings. Dreams are one of the ways we are able to reconnect with this Collective Mind and therefore able to connect with the power contained within it.

This book has been written to provide some understanding, albeit a very small understanding, of the mystifying terrain from where dreams emerge. That is, in the realm of the unconscious mind. It is important to point out, at the outset, that the unconscious mind cannot ever really be understood through the conscious mind, or ego. We may get a glimpse of the wealth contained within this vast reservoir of innate wisdom through our dreams but it is, after all, only a glimpse. Nevertheless, that mere glimpse may sometimes be just enough to bring about the most powerful insights or changes to our attitudes or lives. Thus, this book is not an attempt to dissect the unconscious as such and kill its very mystery, but rather an opportunity to share my limited understanding of this wonderful reservoir of energy that both contains us and is contained within us.

Some of the important questions that steer this book are:

- Why do we dream?
- Where do dreams come from?
- How do we recognise the nature of our dreams?
- How do we recognise our important dreams?
- In what way do our dreams contribute to the Collective Unconscious Mind or Universal Soul?

## What is consciousness?

For indeed our consciousness does not create itself – it wells up from unknown depths. In childhood it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep from an unconscious

condition. It is like a child that is born daily out of the primordial womb of the unconsciousness. (Jung, 1969, p. 569)

As human beings we are experiencing many lives at once. We have an outer life that other people can witness as we go about our daily routines. Reality occurs for each of us as our senses and our brains co-operate to provide meaning for our experiences. These experiences are then stored in our memories so we know how to behave, enjoy ourselves and survive in the world. We also have an inner life that nobody else sees, let alone understands. It is subjective. Another person may catch a glimpse of our inner life now and then but, for the most part, we experience that life totally alone. We are aware of our inner lives through our thoughts, feelings and intuitions. We can also reason as to why we have these thoughts and feelings because they make sense to us in the context of our own experiences. These thoughts and feelings in turn influence how we live our outer lives. Both the inner and outer lives interact with each other even though they are qualitatively different.

A third life is also being lived and interacting with those other lives, only we are not aware of that life. It is for this reason it is often described as our unconscious self. This life can coexist with our outer life except we are not aware of it doing so. It might manifest when we find ourselves sabotaging experiences that we enjoy, or being fearful of starting a relationship that we want, or mistrusting somebody when there is no reason to mistrust them. It is the doubt under the thought or the sense under the feeling. It is this part that mostly determines how we see the world and act within it, even though we are not aware of doing so. It is this life where our greatest danger and also our greatest power lies. In his book *Body Language*, Allan Pease gives credence to the power of unconscious messages in our communication when he states that words account for only seven percent of the total impact of a message, while 38 percent is conveyed by the tone of our voices, our inflection and other sounds. The greatest part of any message (55 percent) is conveyed non-verbally. And it is the non-verbal (unconscious) aspects that mainly influence how we feel about the person we are communicating with.

Over the last one hundred years or so, psychologists like Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung have done much to validate the mind and provide a terminology that has helped others attempt to further navigate its wide frontiers. By defining a structure for our minds that includes both our

conscious and unconscious minds, they have paved the way for others to challenge, refute and scientifically test their theories. This in turn has allowed new theories to be developed and thus new ways of perceiving ourselves.

While there is still no agreed definition of consciousness, it is nevertheless often described as being our 'selective attention to ongoing perceptions, thoughts and feelings' (Myers, 1989, p.193). Moreover, the state of consciousness has often been separated from the state of unconsciousness as if they were dichotomously opposed to each other. Michael Barbato (2002), who has done considerable work with dying people, has refuted this dichotomy, stating that:

if we accept consciousness to be a state of awareness in which we assimilate information, process it and respond appropriately, then unconsciousness, by definition, should be a state where there is no awareness, no processing of information and an inability to take appropriate action.

In his own research, Barbato showed this not to be the case and that anaesthetised or comatose patients still assimilated and processed information with similar brain rhythms to that of the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) state – where dreaming predominantly occurs. It has also been shown that the 'brain is more active during the phases of REM sleep ... than during ordinary waking consciousness' (Barbato, 2002, p.134).

Other research has shown that in sleep we move through five stages of consciousness, including REM sleep. Each of these five states has a distinct brainwave electrical activity, physiological responses and resultant behaviours. For example, in deep (NREM) sleep, the sleeper is virtually immobile and very difficult to arouse due to muscle paralysis, and there is no eye movement. Moreover, sleepwalking, night terrors and bed-wetting happen mainly at this level.

However, to describe consciousness in terms of brain function alone results in limitations in our thinking about ourselves as human beings and prevents us from arriving at more appropriate theories. Our mechanistic theories, which have dominated science since Newton formulated the law of gravity, need to be challenged because they are not providing the answers to our different questions. Newtonian physics, which is based

on the premise that the universe and we human beings are solid objects that can be described objectively, is of no use when it comes to exploring alternative conscious mind states. It does not account for the different states of awareness experienced by all those people who have had near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences and comas.

There are also many types of dreams that cannot be explained by our conscious brain alone. For example, prophetic dreams cannot be explained by our memories. Lucid dreams, in which the dreamer is conscious of his or her dreaming consciousness, is another example. Lucid dreaming is a very advanced type of dreaming that relies on the co-operation between the conscious waking mind and the different levels of consciousness during sleep. How does lucid dreaming fit our existing dream theories? Thus, in order to understand our dreams and give them validity, we need to look at consciousness differently and the state of *unconsciousness* as a type of consciousness in its own right.

Furthermore, we cannot forget the Universal Consciousness that we tap into when we sleep. Spalding, in his classic series, *The Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, highlighted the importance of sleep in providing us the opportunity to access this Complete Conscious mind:

In sleep the consciousness becomes completely universal. It becomes knowing, with all attributes alert. That is why we can often do in our sleep what we cannot do when we are awake. We submerge it because of our outer activities during the day ... Sleep allows that complete consciousness to come into function. That is why psychoanalysis lays stress on the dream state as being superior to the waking state when used rationally and in its own right order. (1976, p. 83)

In addition to the five qualitatively different states of consciousness that exist in sleep, other states of consciousness have been shown to exist. These include:

- Transitional states that occur between sleeping or waking.
- The consciousness associated with meditation and deep relaxation.
- Altered states of consciousness, which include mystical experiences, near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences and the deathbed vision.

- Lucid dreaming.
- Drug-induced states of consciousness.

Thus it becomes apparent that we need to enlarge our existing view of consciousness and unconsciousness as states of awareness and unawareness. We also need to include the many and varied states of qualitatively different types of awareness.

## Consciousness and energy

There is another important consideration. It has been shown that we, as human beings, vary greatly from one another in our multiple levels of consciousness, depending on the degree to which our energy systems, our auric fields, have developed and are balanced. Kirlian photography was instrumental in showing what mystics and clairvoyants have always said: that every living organism is surrounded by an energy field that continually interacts with the universal energy field. As Brennan states:

Modern science tells us that human organism is not just a physical structure made up of molecules, but that like everything else we are composed of energy fields. We are moving, out of the world of a stable solid form in a world of dynamic energy fields. We too ebb and flow like the sea. We too are constantly changing. (1988, p.19)

Our energy fields comprise:

- Energy bodies, which include our ethereal body, our emotional or astral body, our mental body and our spiritual or causative body.
- Chakras, or energy systems.
- Nadis, which are our energy channels.

Each of the energy bodies has its own vibrational frequency – that is, it is a qualitative level of consciousness. Our resultant awareness of any phenomenon is dependent both on the *degree* of frequency of that energy body and the *ability* of the chakras to receive, transform and distribute the various forms of *prana* – the vital energy force sustaining all life. Prana is received through the *nadis*, or energy channels of the body. For example, the etheric body (the closest layer to the physical body) vibrates at a slower rate than the spiritual body and provides totally different functions.

The concept of consciousness is complex and diverse, as everything that exists is said to have a consciousness. Thus, when we dream we could be tapping into several levels of 'consciousness', rather than operating merely at an 'unconscious' level. Moreover, the particular state/s we tap into might have their own language and experience.

## Our unconscious mind

Having established that the dreaming consciousness is but one of the many types of consciousness with its own means of expression, it is important now to explore the unconscious mind. One cannot explore this subject without touching on the theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, whose influence on psychological thinking has been so profound over the last one hundred years or more.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jung and Freud began to challenge and change the meaning of mental illness, thus leading to new ways of treating it. Instead of simply describing the symptoms of mental illness and then compiling statistics for patients, both psychiatrists wanted to know what inner processes were occurring in mentally ill people. For example, they believed that neurotic symptoms, hysteria, certain types of pain, and abnormal behaviour were, in fact, *symbolically* meaningful. They believed that the symptoms manifested were just one of the ways in which the 'unconscious' mind could express itself. As Jung wrote:

I realised that paranoid ideas and hallucinations contain a germ of meaning. A personality, a life history, a pattern of hopes and desires lie behind the psychosis. The fault is ours if we do not understand them. It dawned on me then for the first time that a general psychology of the personality lies concealed within psychosis, and that even here we come upon the old human conflicts. (1961, pp. 148-9)

Psychoanalysis was devised to facilitate the process whereby the unconscious contents of the mind could surface to consciousness through dreams and free association. Their 'talking' therapy was considered extremely radical at the time, yet formed the basis of most of our current therapies today.

However, Freud and Jung differed in their interpretations of what the unconscious mind contains and how we deal with those contents. Freud believed that we unconsciously seek to protect ourselves from knowing

what lies beneath and use all sorts of defence mechanisms to achieve this state of denial. He believed that our dreams collaborated in this denial process through symbols that hide their true meanings for us. The dreaming process was associated with illness rather than wellness.

Jung, on the other hand, believed that we have an unconscious urge to become more whole, or individuated, and the contents that emerge from the unconscious are there to aid that integration process. He saw the contents of the unconscious mind as dangerous only when there was an energy imbalance between the conscious and unconscious minds, or when we fail to acknowledge the existence of our unconscious impulses, thus letting ourselves be dictated to by them. Jung personally chose to face his own unconscious impulses, which existed for him in the form of fantasies, and embark on his own hero's journey. He believed that we are continually operating from both our conscious and unconscious minds at any one time. It is just that we are not aware of doing so:

We all see, hear, smell, and taste many things without noticing them at the time, either because our attention is deflected or because the stimulus to our senses is too slight to leave a conscious impression. The unconscious, however, has taken note of them, and such subliminal sense perceptions play a significant part in everyday lives. Without our realizing it, they influence the way in which we react to both events and people. (1978, p. 20)

In terms of the unconscious mind, Jung described the Personal Unconscious and the Collective Unconscious as being qualitatively different in their content and expression: the former holds our personal unconscious beliefs, expectations and behavioural imprints, while the latter contains our historical, cultural and human imprints. Each has its own means of expression: the former through symbols known to the dreamer, the latter through archetypal images and motifs that are universal. For the most part, we are unaware of the powerful contents, resources or energy contained in these two states of unconscious minds – particularly the Collective Unconscious Mind – unless, of course, we choose and are able to access them. Dreams are but one of the many ways this access can occur. Other means of access are mandala work, doodling, creative work, etc.

Jung defined ideal mental health, or individuation, as the integration of the different states of consciousness. Integration allows the powerful energy



contained in the unconscious to be released and flow in a more balanced way to the conscious mind and *vice versa*. Energy must also flow from the conscious mind to the unconscious mind. The foundation of psychoanalysis lies in the premise that the unconscious mind is the storehouse for our psychic energy.