



Chapter 1-1



Dream Essentials

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Dreams can be sources of powerful, life-transforming information if you pay attention to their meanings. They provide glimpses of yourself and your life that you might not otherwise see: your deepest desires, untapped potential, self-defeating patterns, and opportunities for greater happiness. Locked within your dreams are empowering insights, waiting to be discovered like your own personal buried treasure.

Because dream meanings are individual to each person, you must look within yourself to find true dream meaning. Although you may look to external sources for ideas about possible meanings, ultimately you must look inward and rely on your own intuition to confirm dream meaning. This book shows you how.

Introduction to Dream Interpretation

Dream interpretation begins with a subjective dream—a story. Then, in some mysterious way, you extract some meaning or message from the dream. “Something happens” and you suddenly understand the dream’s meaning. But how?

Taking the Mystery Out of Dream Interpretation

The process of translating dream symbolism into meaning remains mysterious to many of us. Often it’s not even clear where to start when interpreting a dream, especially when the dream doesn’t seem to make any sense. In this book I attempt to take the mystery out of the dream interpretation process by suggesting a practical approach, clearly presented with step-by-step instructions. However, before starting to use it, you’ll need to learn some essentials about dreams and dream interpretation. Here’s how I suggest you use this book to learn this practical approach most effectively:

1. Learn the dream fundamentals in “Part I: The Keys to Dream Interpretation” (p. 1). Key topics including the human consciousness, the roles of analysis and intuition, how to recognize the true meaning of a dream, dream types and what they reveal, which dreams to ignore, and how to enhance dream recall.
2. Follow the step-by-step dream interpretation process in “Part II: How to Interpret Dreams” (p. 71) (summarized in “Quick Reference,” p. 301), and then choose from the techniques in “Part III: Dream Analysis Toolkit” (p. 103) and “Part IV: Dream Action Toolkit” (p. 217) to customize your interpretation and follow-up process.
3. Plunge as deeply into your dream meaning as you wish. The framework presented here enables you to identify a dream’s basic meaning or to explore every juicy bit of symbolism.
4. All the while, keep this goal in mind: Find the value in each dream and use it to improve yourself and your life.

Lay the Foundation First

What you’ll learn in this first chapter will lay the foundation for all of your dream interpretation work later. Learning to interpret dreams is a bit like learning a new language, for which you first need to learn the pronunciation of each letter, the meanings of common words, and the grammar rules before you can speak the language well. Likewise, before you can speak the language of dreams well, you need to understand how dreams tend to speak, how to recognize certain clues in dreams, how to get the most from your dream interpretation, and pitfalls to avoid. So, in this chapter I share insights about dreams that I wish I’d understood when I started interpret-

ing my own dreams as a young person. I share these with you in the hope that you can hit the ground running instead of having to learn the hard way.

What Are Dreams?

There is no single agreed-upon answer about what dreams are or why we have them. Dreams have been described as desires fulfilled, deepest fears played out, playtime for the subconscious mind, a cleaning out of residues from the previous day, stories created by the dreamer to occupy sleep time, random firings at brain synapses, or explorations of nonphysical levels of existence, among other descriptions. Dreams may happen for a reason, or may not. Dream researchers continue to make intriguing discoveries about dreaming and about the brain during dreaming. However, although research has been nibbling away at the mysteries, much about dreams still remains beyond the reaches of science.

Clues from the Content of Dreams

The content of dreams suggests a lot about them, even if it doesn't explain exactly why they occur. During dreams, the subconscious mind often seems to create its own version of a story from the dreamer's waking life or mind. Sometimes a dream is a close-up snapshot of a recent real-life situation, and other times a dream may revisit a long-lost memory or feeling, possibly pointing to some unfinished business from the past. Occasionally, a dream may chase you through the night, threatening you with your worst fear. So, the thread of similarity that runs through many dreams is that they often seem to be related to something that's on your subconscious mind at the time of the dream.

Some dreams convey a clear sense of urgency or importance. Occasionally a dream practically hits you over the head to get your attention. An epic story line, larger-than-life character, or overwhelming emotion might grab you and refuse to let go. Other times, you might awaken from a dream with a strong sense that you need to pay attention to it. So, dreams also often contain cues conveying the relative importance of their subject matter.

Dreamers often report strong emotions during dreams—emotions interpreted as positive, such as courage or pride—or emotions interpreted as negative, such as fear, anger, or frustration. You may notice that you sometimes experience emotions even more deeply during the dream state than while awake. So, these strong dream emotions may indicate a subject matter that is particularly important to you or that you care about deeply—a situation or topic that triggers a big emotional response within you.

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Dreams often portray either something desired or pleasant—or something feared, disliked, or unpleasant. In other words, dreams tend to devote a lot of their content to creating desired experiences, such as positive relationships and having fun—and to undesired experiences, such as missing an exam or forgetting to wear clothes outside the house. So, the nature of dream content may suggest that one role of dreams is to help us figure out how to create more desired and fewer undesired experiences in our waking lives.

A Practical Focus

While science continues to explore questions about the nature of dreams and why we dream, we dreamers are still pondering the meanings of the images that dance across our minds each night. I suggest a practical focus: rather than spending time wondering why you had a particular dream or where it came from, I suggest that your time is better spent finding the value in each dream. If you can find a way to make sense of your dreams so that you can use them in a positive and productive way, why wouldn't you?

Finding the Value in Dreams

I propose an ultimate goal of dream interpretation as “finding the value in each dream,” rather than analyzing just for the sake of analysis. Finding value in a dream means gleaning some useful meaning from each dream that can help you improve your life or your state of being. For example, dreams can point the way out of old patterns and into new opportunity. They can reveal solutions to problems in your personal relationships. Dreams can also suggest changes in your way of thinking that make life a much more pleasant experience. Virtually every dream offers some value, even if it’s simply the realization that you really don’t like spiders or that you currently are craving ice cream.

If you pay attention to your dreams, they can help you:

- Better understand yourself and your needs.
- Get answers to important questions.
- Clarify life purpose and direction.
- Discover creative ideas and visions.
- Help resolve issues from the past.
- Resolve fears and move ahead.
- Identify important health conditions.
- Learn how to reduce stress in your life.

Here's an example of focusing on the value of a dream rather than analyzing just for the sake of analysis. After dreaming about a purple giraffe, you realize that the giraffe represents your sister-in-law. The fact that she

Showed up in your dream as a giraffe provides an interesting insight into how your subconscious mind works. However, this way of thinking about your sister-in-law is not particularly helpful in improving your relationship with her. If you ask yourself, “What is the value here?” and “How can I use this dream in a positive way?”, you may begin to see the true value in the dream. Perhaps the dream is highlighting the way you judge your sister-in-law as too eccentric—the exact judgment that is holding you back from enjoying your relationship with her. If you can release your judgment of her and instead celebrate her gifts and uniqueness, you can create a much more positive experience for yourself (and perhaps also for her) whenever you two interact.

Dreams Are a Window into Your Subconscious Mind

Because dreams provide a connection into your subconscious mind, they offer otherwise rare insights into your subconscious dynamics. A dream can convey feelings, thoughts, ideas, desires, and other psychological factors that may lie buried when you’re awake.

You may be surprised to discover what your dreams reveal about what’s going on within your subconscious mind. Subconscious factors such as beliefs, judgments, fears, and biases have great influence on your conscious mind. These factors can negatively influence your thoughts, behaviors, emotions, and interactions with others—without your awareness. The subconscious mind can be a tough nut to crack (it is subconscious, after all), and so it is especially convenient that your dreams provide a nightly portal directly into your subconscious mind.

In fact, dream interpretation is one of the only ways to get a clear picture of what’s going on in your subconscious mind. When operating without your awareness, the dynamics of your subconscious mind can stealthily sabotage you and defeat even your greatest determination to create what you want in your life.

Dreams Tell You About You

Your dreams are *all you*. They are *your* experiences and are witnessed by *you*. In a sense, they present a pure form of information from your subconscious mind—the hidden part of you that sees and remembers all the details of your daily life, and then plays them back in its own dream language. The subconscious mind is not necessarily an ultimate authority, but it does provide a unique and often useful perspective on your life, thoughts, and feelings—offering a great counterpart to your conscious perceptions.

According to an ancient proverb, “A dream uninterpreted is like a letter unopened.” Think of dreaming as like receiving nightly emails from your subconscious mind providing another perspective on what’s going on

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within your consciousness. Dreams give you an opportunity to learn more about yourself—your desires, motivations, what's holding you back, and much more—and you can use what you learn to transform your life into a more pleasant and rewarding experience.

Dreams Often Represent Real Life

Your journey through a dream often parallels your journey through a part of your waking life—where the characters, events, and feelings in the dream echo the characters, events, and feelings in your waking life. Although the dream elements can represent something beyond their face value, your feelings during the dream are almost always similar to your actual feelings about the real-life situation to which the dream refers. Therefore, your feelings during a dream offer a huge clue to your dream's meaning. (For more about using dream feelings to uncover dream meaning, see "Chapter 3-4: TOOL: Emotion Analysis," p. 116.)

Dream Meaning Is Personal

The meaning of a particular dream depends on the individual dreamer and his situation, perspective, biases, and many other factors. Just as in waking life, your preconceptions help shape your reactions to the events you experience during dreams. In dreams, preconceptions also seem to influence which symbols the subconscious mind chooses to portray elements of real life. For example, if two people witnessed the same car crash, one of them might have a dream afterward in which the cars appear as toy cars crashing into each other on a miniature track, while the other person might dream about two airplanes crashing into each other. Your subconscious mind chooses which symbols to use in telling its dream stories, and your subconscious mind's choices of symbols can be influenced by many factors, including:

- Your personality, perceptions, preconceptions, and experiences of a particular symbol. For example, you may associate bread primarily with your mother because it brings to mind the sandwiches she used to make, while a baker might associate bread primarily with his work.
- The content and context of the particular dream. A symbol could have one meaning in your current dream and a completely different meaning in a future dream. For example, your subconscious mind might use a daisy to symbolize summer because that's the season when daisies bloom, but a few years later it might use a daisy to symbolize love because your boyfriend just gave you a bunch of daisies in real life.

- Your current thoughts and feelings. Your experiences from earlier in the day and your current thoughts can influence your dreams and the way your subconscious mind selects symbols to tell its dream story.

A Dream Can Have More Than One Meaning

A particular dream may contain multiple layers of meaning. The subconscious mind can do an amazing job of creating dreams, and it's sometimes very clever in the way it weaves a dream together. Sometimes several issues or concerns are sort of "stacked together" in a dream, layer upon layer, where one symbol represents two or more aspects of a dreamer's waking life.

One example of a dream with multiple layers of meaning is a dream about trying to walk to work with an injured foot. This dream could represent an actual foot problem the dreamer had in real life at the time, but may also represent the dreamer's difficulty in "moving forward" in his career—since feet play a key role in moving the body forward physically.

Another example is a married woman dreaming that she in a relationship again with her first boyfriend. As described by a client, this dream seemed to express the following multiple layers of meaning that reflected the dynamics within her subconscious mind at the time of the dream:

- The importance of being close to someone and enjoying that kind of close friendship, mutual encouragement, and sharing. Her relationship with her first boyfriend was the first time she experienced those feelings, and so they are strongly associated with him in her subconscious mind.
- A particular need to feel close to someone at the time of the dream, perhaps because of a challenging situation she was dealing with then.
- An appreciation of the positive aspects of her first boyfriend, such as his sense of humor and kindness.
- An acknowledgment that her husband has many positive aspects in common with her first boyfriend, such as a sense of humor and kindness.

Dreams Are Real Experiences Themselves

If you wake up from a dream and say to yourself, "It wasn't real," you are partially correct. Although the dream wasn't "real" in terms of happening on the physical level of your existence, it was real in the sense that it did happen, on some level of your awareness. You experienced it, and your experience of it was real.

Dreams are real experiences—as real as waking experiences—but they occur on non-physical levels. It's possible that the subconscious mind

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doesn't see much difference between waking and dreaming experiences. Both waking and dream experiences engage the mind, trigger reactions, elicit emotions, and occupy your time and energy. For example, encountering a grizzly bear in a dream would likely trigger a similar reaction within you as if you encountered one in real life. In a way, we are just as alive in our dreams as when we are awake. So, in that way, dreams are like a world in which you can experience things you couldn't—or wouldn't want to—experience in waking life. Whether the dream world is real or not, your experiences of it are real.

A Model of Consciousness

In order to understand dreams, it's helpful to first understand the context in which they occur. In other words, every dream is a product of the vibrant, active environment within you at the time of the dream. In this section, I present a model of that inner environment, based on my observations of how it seems to function. In keeping with the practical approach of this book, this is intended as a working model to facilitate dream interpretation and other inner processes.

Your Consciousness Is Your Nonphysical Self

Your consciousness can be described as the collective aspects of your nonphysical self, such as the mental and emotional aspects. In other words, your consciousness is the total of your nonphysical being, including all the different aspects of your inner experience.

Conscious Mind and Subconscious Mind

A basic Model of Consciousness divides the consciousness into two parts: a conscious part (of which you are aware) and a subconscious part (of which you are not aware), as shown in Figure A. The conscious part can be referred to as the **conscious mind**, which includes all aspects of your consciousness of which you are aware. Likewise, the **subconscious mind** refers to aspects of your consciousness of which you are not aware. (Note that the word "mind" in this case is used in a broader sense to refer to all levels of consciousness, not just the mental level.)

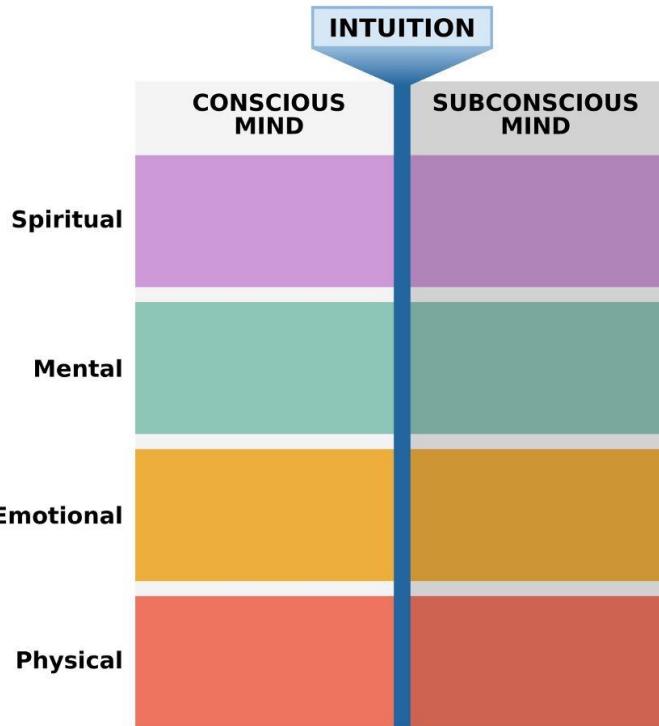


Fig. A. Model of Consciousness

In the model shown in Figure A, the conscious mind and subconscious mind are both involved in the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels—or you might say that all four of those levels extend throughout both the conscious mind and subconscious mind.

The “I” in Your Consciousness

There is an aspect of you who is the “I” in “I am,” the one who is reading this right now. Your “I” is the one who is speaking when you say the words, “I exist.” You might think of your “I” as the one who is in charge within you.

Your “I” exists independently from the emotional, mental, subconscious, and spiritual levels within you, yet it can reside in any of those levels in any given moment. As you go through your daily life, your “I” shifts between those levels. Your “I” acts like a channel selector on a TV, tuning to different “channels” within your consciousness (physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual). In other words, in any particular moment, your “inner TV” is tuned to some “channel” within your consciousness—

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meaning your awareness is focused within that “channel.” For example, when your channel selector is tuned to the “Emotion Channel”—meaning when your “I” is focused within the emotional level of your consciousness—you are feeling or expressing emotion. When your channel selector is tuned to the “Mental Channel”—meaning when your “I” is focused within your mental level—you are engaged in mental activity, such as logical thought or analysis.

Your “I” can shift from one level of the conscious mind to another at will, or even unintentionally—such as when you shift from (mental) analysis of a problem into experiencing (emotional) frustration. Your “I” can also straddle more than one level simultaneously. In the TV analogy, it’s like receiving two different channels at once, blended together. For example, during a bubble bath you might be focusing simultaneously on both (physical) warmth and (emotional) nurturing—or when eating spaghetti you might be focusing simultaneously on (physical) taste and (mental) analysis of what ingredients the sauce might contain.

Consider the example in Figure B, which illustrates how your focus can shift dynamically among different areas within your consciousness:

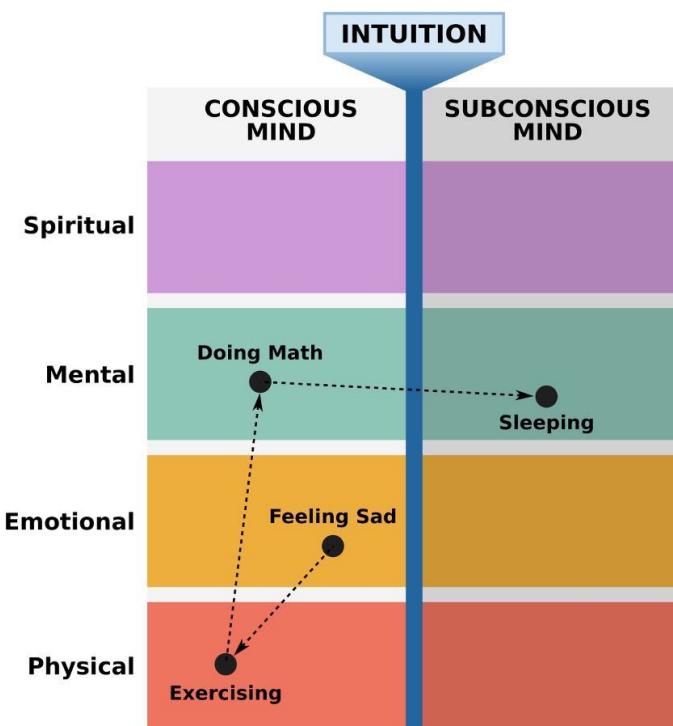


Fig. B. Model of Consciousness: Example

In Figure B, first your “I” is focused primarily within your conscious emotional level when you’re feeling sad because you missed a concert you wanted to attend, then it shifts focus to your conscious physical level while exercising, then it’s focused within your conscious mental level while working on math problems, and then finally it’s focused within your subconscious mental level when you’re asleep and you’re dreaming about solving math problems (shown as “Sleeping” on the right-hand side of Figure B).

Another example in Figure C shows a different sequence of focus points. First, your “I” is focused within your conscious emotional level when you’re feeling afraid of a big spider in your room, then it shifts focus to your mental level while you’re learning to speak Italian, then it’s focused within your physical level while you’re doing laundry, and then it’s focused within your subconscious emotional level when you’re having a scary nightmare.

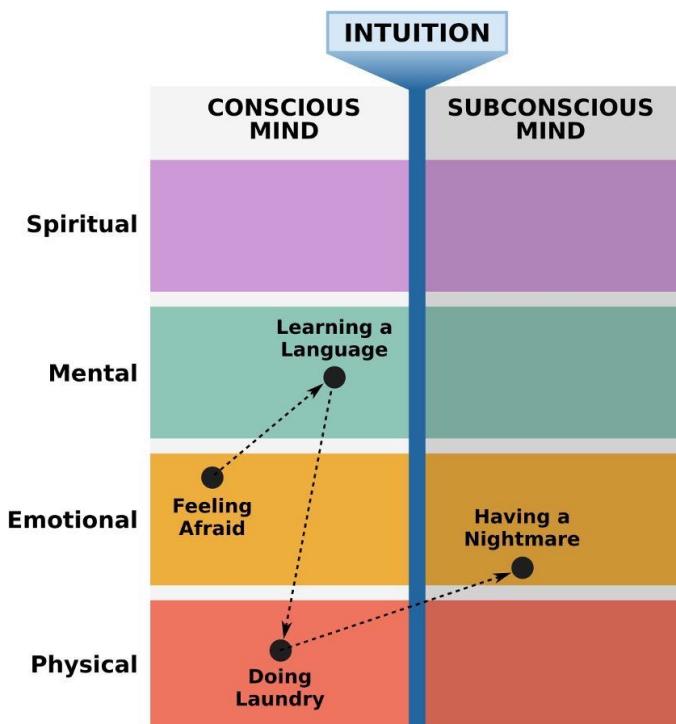


Fig. C. Model of Consciousness: Example 2

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The level in which your “I” is focused—the level within which your “I” is operating—affects the way you experience things. In other words, you might experience a particular situation completely differently depending on the level within which your “I” is focused. Consider an example in which you are introduced to a new woman at work. If you are operating primarily from your physical level, you might primarily notice her (physical) warm, firm handshake and come away with a good impression of her. If you’re engaging primarily from your mental level you might focus on a (mental) grammar mistake she makes and therefore judge her as inferior. If you are primarily focused in your emotional level, the (emotional) adoration in her eyes when she talks about her children might elicit the feeling within you that she is a caring person. If operating primarily from your spiritual level, you might notice the (spiritual) sense of benevolence that emanates from her and how uplifted you feel in her presence. The actual situation contains cues occurring on all four levels, but your state of mind and choice of focus determines which cues you notice—and which you choose to view as important—thereby influencing your experience of the situation and reaction to it.

The “I” aspect of your consciousness is where your personal power lies. From the perspective of your “I,” you can observe and even master the levels of your consciousness. From within your “I” you can become a neutral observer, thus breaking free of mental and emotional preconceptions and other limitations. You will discover the power of your “I” more fully as you work with the techniques in the toolkits later in this book (see “Part III: Dream Analysis Toolkit,” p. 103, and “Part IV: Dream Action Toolkit,” p. 217).

Waking and Sleeping

While you’re awake, your “I” is usually focused somewhere within the physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual levels of the conscious mind, and while you’re asleep your “I” tends to be focused somewhere within those four levels of your subconscious mind. As you recall a dream after you wake up, you bring the dream from the subconscious mind into the conscious mind and store it in conscious memory.

Conscious and Subconscious Influences

You may already be aware of some ways that dynamics within your conscious mind can influence other parts of your consciousness, such as when you consciously decide to love yourself instead of judge yourself, or you decide to persevere through a scary situation regardless of your fear. Likewise, dynamics within your subconscious mind can affect other areas of your consciousness, often without your conscious awareness of their

effects. For example, perhaps you've experienced a situation in which you immediately liked or disliked a person as soon as you saw them—or perhaps you've resisted trying a new kind of vegetable—without really knowing why. Chances are that your conscious mind was being influenced by dynamics within your subconscious mind. Maybe the new person was wearing orange, your least favorite color—and maybe trying a new vegetable subconsciously reminded you of your mother trying to get you to eat mushy, overcooked broccoli. One reason that dreams are such valuable resources is the insight they provide into subconscious dynamics that may be affecting or even limiting you without you realizing it.

Intuition

I think of intuition as a channel that delivers truth, resulting in a direct knowing that is independent of rational thought. Revisiting the TV analogy, intuition is like a TV channel that broadcasts intuitive insights within your consciousness—and like on your real TV, you may not receive a particular intuitive “broadcast” unless your inner TV is tuned to the “Intuition Channel” and you’re paying attention to it. However, in some cases intuitive insights are so strong they seem to override all the channels, creating “Aha” moments that you can’t possibly miss.

Another way to think about intuition is like a river of truth flowing through your consciousness, where the river’s continual evaporation of water humidifying the air is like intuition’s truth permeating your consciousness. You may not always be aware of the river’s humidity in the air, but you can feel it if you pay attention to it. Likewise, you can sense intuitive insights by paying attention to them—by attuning to them. In the case of the river, you can access its water by going directly to the river and standing in it, just as you can learn to tune into your intuition by focusing into it directly (more in “Intuition: The Key to Recognizing Dream Meaning,” p. 35).

A Context for Dream Interpretation

This section presents the heart of the dream interpretation process, including the dream interpretation model on which this book is based. In this section, I’ll explain the key components of my dream interpretation model, how each is important, how each contributes to the dream interpretation process, and how they work together to make it more effective. These components are the nuts and bolts of the dream interpretation process presented in “Part II: How to Interpret Dreams” (p. 71). A solid understanding of them will help you along your way when you begin the process of interpreting your dreams.

The Dream Team: Dream Analysis and Intuition

Dream interpretation is more of an art than a science. You can analyze a dream and generate theories about what it might mean, but theories alone can prove ultimately fruitless without intuition to recognize which of those theoretical meanings rings true. Dream analysis and intuition are both valuable parts of the dream interpretation process, and they work hand-in-hand in the approach that I present in this book.

Intuition is the ultimate mechanism behind understanding dream meaning—experiencing that flash of recognition, the sudden sense of knowing that pervades all of your being. When you awaken from a dream, you may know immediately—intuitively—what it means, when your intuition automatically comes forward with the dream’s meaning and no further interpretation is needed. But intuition may not always be as forthcoming, and it can be drowned out by the other factors in your head—such as your hopes, fears, and ego. This is where logical dream analysis can help.

When you aren’t sure what a particular dream means, using analysis techniques to explore a dream can help trigger a moment of intuitive recognition. The process of analysis essentially parades a series of possible meanings past your “inner intuitive eye,” each time asking it, “Is this the meaning?” and prompting your intuition to respond.

Intuition plays a dual role in dream interpretation. Dreams often have a much deeper—and sometimes completely different—meaning than the obvious one. Intuition is not only important for confirming the meaning and message of a dream as a whole, but it also plays a key role in translating specific symbols from the language of your subconscious mind into the language of your conscious mind. Because intuition is such a key part of the dream interpretation process, a full chapter of this book is dedicated to the topic (see “Chapter 1-3: Intuition: Your Dream Translator,” p. 35). You can also benefit from developing your own ability to access your intuition, for use in both dream interpretation and in your daily life (see “Tips for Developing Dream Intuition,” p. 41).

Dream Interpretation vs. Dream Analysis

The terms “dream interpretation” and “dream analysis” are often used interchangeably. However, for the purposes of this book I am choosing to define these two terms more specifically, in a way that further clarifies the process of understanding dreams. My definitions are not an attempt to redefine any standard definition—but instead, to form a construct that facilitates the process of extracting meaning from dreams. On other words, I’m defining these terms in a way that helps us figure out what our dreams mean.

Dream interpretation can occur in many ways, and in many modes within the consciousness. You might interpret a dream based solely on intuition, or you might focus on it mentally and analyze it systematically, or you might follow the emotion of the dream until it reveals the dream's meaning. Figure D depicts this model of dream interpretation, showing how dream interpretation can involve one or more modes of activity within the consciousness.

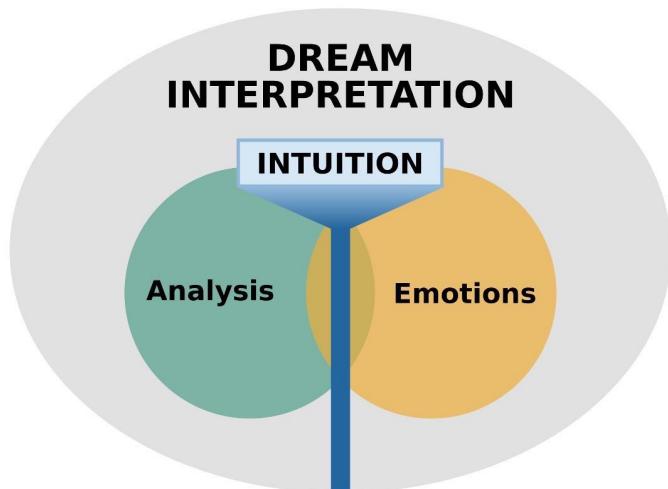


Fig. D. Model of Dream Interpretation

I think of **dream analysis** as an active mental process (driven by the mental level, as opposed to the emotional or subconscious level)—as a systematic examination of a dream, such as a logical assessment of its symbolism and structure—which may involve placing the dream into various frameworks, examining hierarchies of its symbolism, or deconstructing it in order to understand it better. I consider dream analysis to be a mental process, using the mind as a tool in the overall dream interpretation process, applying the mind to examine a dream for clues to its meaning.

I think of **dream interpretation** as the broader idea of assigning meaning to a dream or its parts—including dream analysis (an active mental process) as well as subjective assessment and non-mental elements such as intuition and emotions. This broader way of defining dream interpretation means that it can be active, passive, or both. This definition leaves plenty of room for anything that may happen during the process of discovering a dream's meaning—mental or non-mental. This is important because

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there's one non-mental aspect that's the ultimate key to dream interpretation: intuition. Your intuition is what tells you when you have arrived at the true meaning of your dream. (Read more about the key role of intuition in dream interpretation in "Intuition: The Key to Recognizing Dream Meaning," p. 35.)

So, I think of dream analysis as an active mental process, and I think of dream interpretation as an active or passive process (or both) occurring anywhere in a person's consciousness—mental, emotional, subconscious, or anywhere else.

In some cases, dream interpretation may not involve all of the types of processes just discussed. For example, sometimes you might wake up already knowing intuitively what a dream means. In that case, no dream analysis or any other method of interpretation is necessary, unless you want to dig into the dream for more details about its meaning. However, this kind of immediate knowing doesn't always happen, and so you may need to spend some time exploring your dream before arriving at that moment of intuitive understanding.

In this model, all techniques for understanding a dream—including dream analysis techniques—are applied *in service to your intuition*. In other words, the goal of using analysis techniques is to trigger that flash of intuitive recognition telling you that you've arrived at the true meaning. The dream analysis techniques in this book help you examine the dream, turn it around in your mind, and look at it in different ways—all in the hope of coming across a meaning that your intuition will recognize as the correct one.

Understanding dream meaning—*knowing* that you've arrived at the true meaning of a particular dream—can only be accomplished through intuition. You can analyze a dream all day, but you won't know its meaning for sure until your intuition confirms that you've discovered its true meaning.

Finding the True Meaning

The question that dream interpretation asks is, "What does my dream mean?" In other words, when you set out to interpret a dream, you seek to understand the true meaning that your subconscious mind wove into the dream as it was created. You want to understand the one true meaning of the dream. You aren't looking for what your friend thinks the dream means or what a dream dictionary says it means. You're looking for what it means to *you*. So, in this book the "true meaning" of a dream refers to the accurate translation of what your subconscious mind was portraying in the dream. As you consider different meanings for a particular dream, the true meaning is usually the one that resonates with you, the one that rings true

according to your intuition, the one that your subconscious mind recognizes that it created.

When searching for true dream meaning, one huge clue is that dreams are very often portraying something from your real life or something that's been on your mind. So, as you review your dream, it makes sense to look for parallels between the dream and your current life and feelings. For example, you may notice that a particular feeling you had during the dream is the same feeling you experienced recently in real life (such as feeling abandoned, betrayed, acknowledged, or valued), which may lead you to discover that the dream is retelling the story of that particular situation from your real life.

The primary challenge in dream interpretation is that the subconscious mind often uses symbols to tell its stories—symbols whose meanings may not be obvious to you. Therefore, you may not immediately know how to interpret them. In that case, you have the opportunity to explore further using various dream analysis techniques—such as the ones in “Part III: Dream Analysis Toolkit” (p. 103)—to help translate the language of the subconscious mind into a meaning that you recognize. During this exploration you may come up with some guesses about meaning, or you may consult a dream dictionary that gives you some ideas about possible meanings. However, the goal of this exploration process is the flash of recognition that occurs when you come upon the true meaning, and you feel a “resonance” as if that meaning “lines up” with your entire being. (For more on recognizing dream meaning, see “Chapter 1-3: Intuition: Your Dream Translator,” p. 35.)

Thank You

for reading this excerpt from *The Curious Dreamer's Practical Guide to Dream Interpretation* by Nancy Wagaman.

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PART I: THE KEYS TO DREAM INTERPRETATION

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MyDreamVisions.com is Nancy Wagaman's professional dream services website dedicated to understanding dreams and their meanings. Get a professional dream interpretation from Nancy, and read how her interpretations are helping dreamers. Take advantage of dream interpretation tools, sample dream interpretations, tips for improving dream intuition and recall, and educational dream quizzes.

Social Media

Discover more dream information and inspiration by following Nancy's social media accounts:

Twitter: @CuriousDreamers

Facebook: facebook.com/thecuriousdreamer

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Submit a Dream for Interpretation

You can submit a dream to be interpreted by Nancy Wagaman by visiting her professional dream services site, MyDreamVisions.com, and clicking **Buy an Interpretation**. Type in your dream information, and Nancy will email you a custom dream interpretation exploring dream meaning. Choose the In-Depth Dream Interpretation and Nancy will also include an analysis of dream messages, subconscious thoughts and feelings, any dream

indicators about life direction, and any follow-up actions that may be appropriate, such as steps to resolve issues that came up in the dream.

Clients tend to rate Nancy's dream interpretation services very highly and report that they're extremely satisfied after receiving their interpretation. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, including comments such as:

Wow. I hardly know what to say. Your analysis was incredible!

Your knowledge and interpretations are very inspiring!!

Incredibly insightful in-depth interpretation.

Bravo, Ms. Wagaman!..Thank you for having this service.

WOW!!!!!! All I can say is WOW!!!!!!

I have been working with someone...but your work goes to another level.

Great analysis! Right on target!

Thank you so very much...my mind can rest now.

Such an in-depth and fascinating look at my dream.

About The Author



Nancy Wagaman is a human technologies innovator specializing in personal growth and transformation. Her practical techniques enable people to transform self-limitations and improve their lives. Rooted in science and intuition, Nancy's transformative techniques are practical and easy to use. Nancy began developing human technologies during her early career at Bell Laboratories, and she has also consulted and conducted research for corporate, university, and private clients. Her work has been featured in magazines, radio, and television. Nancy holds advanced degrees in applied psychology and communications, and bachelor's degrees in psychology and biology. She is the creator of *The Curious Dreamer's Dream Dictionary* (TheCuriousDreamer.com) and has written extensively on applied psychology, intuition, and other personal growth topics.