

Chapter 1-1 Decoding Dream Symbols

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The moment you wake up from a dream, you already know what it means. The answers lie deep within your consciousness where the dream and its symbolism were created, right where you left them when you woke up. The essence of the dreamer's quest is to coax those secrets out into the light of day to reveal dream meaning. This book shows you how to delve into those subconscious depths and retrieve that dream symbol treasure.

Unlocking the Power of Your Dreams

Dream interpretation provides powerful knowledge about yourself that you might not discover otherwise, if you can understand the language of dream symbols. Encoded within dream symbolism you can find clues to what makes you tick, answers that point you toward your ideal life, and insights to help you resolve past issues and move through the challenges ahead. In fact, dream symbolism is so potent that sometimes translating just one dream symbol can unlock the meaning of an entire life-

transforming dream. This book teaches you how to translate dream symbol meaning and use it as the key to unlock the power of your dreams.

A Practical Goal

The practical goal of dream interpretation, as I see it, is to find the value in each dream so you can then apply it to improve yourself and your life. A dream's value may be profound and life changing, or as simple as the realization that eating sweets too close to bedtime can trigger nightmares. Whatever the content of a dream, you can learn from it. So as you explore your dreams, keep the following objective in mind:

Find the value in your dreams.

The Value in Dreams

Virtually every dream offers value, revealing some new understanding about yourself or your life. 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.

Using This Book to Translate Symbols

This dream dictionary presents more than 1500 dream symbols defined for personal growth. You can use it as a stand-alone resource or as an enhancement to its companion book, *The Curious Dreamer's Practical Guide to Dream Interpretation*.

Translating Symbols

If you want to understand what a particular dream means, its individual dream symbols are an excellent place to begin exploring. The meanings of individual dream symbols can provide huge clues about the meaning of the whole dream. For example, once you recognize that an upward staircase in a dream represents an opportunity to "advance upward," it's a short leap to realizing that the dream was pointing to a real-life opportunity for career advancement.

Understanding a dream symbol's meaning requires you to translate its symbolism from the language of your subconscious mind into a language that your conscious mind can understand. When your subconscious mind creates a dream, it chooses particular symbols to tell a story in its own language of symbolism. However, once you're awake, you're no longer directly in touch with your subconscious mind. So, the challenge of dream symbol translation is discovering the meaning that your subconscious mind was "thinking" when it chose each dream symbol (in other words, discovering the symbol's true meaning).

There are many possible ways you might discover true dream symbol meaning. You could simply wake up with an intuitive understanding that you carried over from your dream state. You might catch a glimpse of true meaning as you analyze your symbol, or when you come across it in this book's description of the symbol. You might decide to follow the thread of embedded emotion in the dream symbol back to the original, real-life situation it represents.

There's no single or "best" way to discover dream symbol meaning. In fact, you can choose from many techniques and tips in the remainder of this chapter and in "Chapter 1-2: Jumpstarting Your Interpretation" (p. 17), plus many more in the first book of this series, *The Curious Dreamer's Practical Guide to Dream Interpretation*.

Possibilities, Not Answers

The meaning of each dream symbol in your dream is personal to you, as the dreamer of that dream. Because a dream symbol has no standard meaning in all dreams and for all dreamers, this dream dictionary offers *possibilities* for what the symbol could mean, rather than definitive translations. The symbol descriptions in this book are intended to inspire your exploration process in the hope that your intuition will alert you when you come across your subconscious mind's true meaning of your symbol (read more in "Recognizing Dream Symbol Meaning," p. 17).

Remember that you are the ultimate authority on your own dream. After all, you were there when the dream was created, and your subconscious mind already understands the dream and its symbols.

Learn Dream Symbol Language

Your dream and its symbols speak through the language of dream symbolism. Although that language shares similarities across dreamers, each dreamer's subconscious mind speaks in its own personal "dialect" of dream symbolism. So in this book you'll learn about the "standard" language of dream symbols (to the extent that there *is* a standard one), plus you'll learn how to decipher your own subconscious mind's personal

symbol meanings (your personal “dialect”). The following three sections introduce the primary considerations about personal dream symbol translation to keep in mind as you explore the symbol descriptions in this book.

Personal Meaning

Because dream symbol meaning is subjective and personal to the dreamer, consider what the symbol means to you personally. To help yourself better understand its personal meaning, you could ask yourself:

- What thoughts and feelings come up when I think of this thing?
- How would I describe this thing to someone who has never seen it before? (See also “TOOL: Caveman Explanation,” p. 14.)
- How would I feel about this thing if I actually saw it in real life?
- What would I say if someone asked for my impression of this thing?

Context

A dream symbol’s meaning can be very specific to its context in the dream. So, think about how the symbol appeared in the dream and what that may convey about its meaning. For example, pay attention to:

- Where was the object?
- Was there anything unusual about its location or position?
- What was it near or surrounded by (objects, people, etc.)?
- What was its environment (indoor or outdoor, lighting, mood, weather, etc.)?
- (If an inanimate object) What was happening to it?
- (If a living being) What was it doing, how, where, and with whom?
- How were the characters (including you) viewing or relating to it?
- How did you feel about all of the above?

Look Beyond the Obvious

A dream symbol often represents something beyond its obvious meaning. A rose could represent a real-life rose, but it’s much more likely to represent something else more symbolic (such as a feeling, characteristic, or event). So look beyond your symbol’s literal meaning by asking yourself, “What else could this symbol mean?”

Let Intuition Be Your Guide

As you work toward understanding a dream symbol, the goal is for your intuition to recognize the symbol’s true meaning. The process of reaching that goal is more of an adventure than a linear process. Although this book offers step-by-step tools to enhance your exploration, interpretation isn’t as simple as completing a few steps that automatically lead to

the symbol's meaning. So, allow your exploration to flow naturally, and follow your intuition when deciding the following:

- Which dream symbol to explore first, next, and so on.
- When to use a tool (and which one) to prompt your subconscious mind to reveal the symbol's meaning, and to give your intuition a chance to recognize the meaning when you see it.
- Whether a particular meaning from this book or elsewhere in your mind is the true meaning of your dream symbol.

(For more on intuition as a dream interpretation tool, see "Recognizing Dream Symbol Meaning," p. 17.)

Take the Winding Path

When you start down the path of exploring a particular dream symbol, be willing to persevere even if the path is a winding one. You may not always know which way to go, but your intuition will guide you if you pay attention to it.

Since your goal in symbol exploration is to intuitively recognize the symbol's true meaning, it's a good idea to give your mind a chance to encounter that meaning so your intuition can recognize it. Sometimes the true meaning simply comes forward within your consciousness and then your intuition confirms it. However, more often you'll need to put in a little more effort to discover it. If the true meaning isn't evident, you can use a technique that parades various possible meanings past your "inner intuitive eye," giving it a chance to confirm the true one. The technique can be as simple as mentally listing the meanings you associate with the symbol or reading the symbol's description in this book. You could also use a dream analysis tool that prompts your subconscious mind to reveal the meanings it associates with the symbol, such as "TOOL: Caveman Explanation" (p. 14), or many others in the Dream Analysis Toolkit in the first book of this series, *The Curious Dreamer's Practical Guide to Dream Interpretation*.

The Steps for Interpreting Symbols

The following tools provide two different step-by-step processes for using this dream dictionary to enhance your dream symbol exploration.

TOOL: Dream Dictionary

This technique shows how to use this book's description of your symbol to help you discover your true dream symbol meaning.

PART I: HOW TO FIND DREAM SYMBOL MEANING

1. Choose a symbol from your dream that you want to explore, perhaps the one that stood out the most.
2. Find that symbol in the dream dictionary and consider the possible meanings listed. Notice which (if any) resonate with you intuitively.
3. While keeping the dictionary meanings in mind, consider:

Personal meaning—What the dream symbol means to you, what it brings to mind for you, and feelings it triggers within you. (See more in “Personal Meaning,” p. 6.)

Context—How the dream symbol appears in the dream. For example, in a dream about a bird, consider what the bird was doing, how and where it was doing it, and how you felt about that. (See more in “Context,” p. 6.)

Look beyond the obvious—A dream is often about something other than its obvious meaning. For example, physical events in the dream can represent mental or emotional matters. (See more in “Look Beyond the Obvious,” p. 6.)

4. Using what you discovered in Step 2 and Step 3, explore what the symbol represents on some level of your real life—physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and so on. If a particular dictionary meaning resonated with you, explore it further by looking for more clues in the dream that point to something parallel in your real life.
5. Write your conclusions about the symbol’s meaning in your dream journal, along with any other realizations about the dream.

Examples

The following examples illustrate how you might use this dream dictionary to assist you in discovering the meaning of a dream:

Example A:

In a dream, you watched a giraffe as she tried to eat some leaves high up in a tree, but she couldn’t quite reach them. However, she was determined, and you knew she would eventually reach them....

END OF CHAPTER 1-1 EXCERPT

Chapter 3-2

The Symbols

Abandonment

An issue of trust, integrity, support, or self-support. A feeling or fear of abandonment on some level in your life, including physical (such as your best friend relocating to another state), emotional (such as your partner withdrawing emotional support), mental (such as friends refusing to talk to you), spiritual (such as feeling that God has abandoned you), financial (your parents refusing to help you financially), or otherwise. The idea of being let down, being left behind, or losing someone or something in real life. Abandoning yourself somehow (such as not standing up for yourself).

You abandoning someone can represent: a feeling or fear of letting someone down, breaking a promise, or neglecting a responsibility to that person; an emotional reaction to that person or their behavior; the idea of giving up on someone; a desire to get away from someone or something; abandoning yourself. **See also:** Rejection; Betrayed, Being; Leaving a Person; Breaking Up; Left, Being; Agreement, Breaking an; Helpless

Abduction

An issue of power, control, personal boundaries, authority, or abuse of authority. **Abducting someone** can represent: trying to force your will or motives onto another person; attempting to victimize, manipulate, or take power away from another person. **Being abducted** can represent: a feeling or fear of someone forcing their will on you, abusing their authority, or (especially if the person is a friend or loved one) removing you from your comfort zone; a fear of losing control or feeling helpless somehow in your life. **See also:** Hostage; Missing Person; Taking From; Stealing

Above

Feeling or being above something or someone, or imagining what that would be like. Considering yourself “too good for” involvement with a certain activity or person. Believing that you’re an exception or you’re not subject to general rules (such as feeling “above the law”). Feeling more

advanced or evolved than others. Also consider the meaning of what's below the object that's "above" in the dream. **See also:** Climbing; High; Under; Top

Abscess

Something that "festers" within you (such as a grudge, lingering judgment, or long-term blame of others). Getting rid of unwanted or undesirable things, or detoxing or cleansing in some aspect of your life (such as decluttering your schedule). An attempt at damage control or containment. A nuisance or situation that slowly builds before you're finally forced to deal with it. **See also:** Infection; Acne; Eruption; Skin

Absorbing

Dealing with, finding a solution for, or making something go away. Assimilating or taking into your own circle, space, life, or area of responsibility (as in taking on someone else's responsibilities or letting someone join your group). Receiving or using (as in absorbing information, ideas, or nourishment). Making disappear (as in "cleaning up" a problem). **See also:** Towel; Eating; Cleaning; Dry Up

Abuse

A feeling or fear of (physical, emotional, or mental) abuse, manipulation, someone trying to gain power over you, someone taking advantage of you, or other ill will. Something in your past that was (or felt) abusive. Perceiving someone in your life as hurtful or disrespectful. **See also:** Tormented; Attacked, Being; Attacking; Judgment or Disapproval; Hurt, Being; Weird

Abyss

A huge challenge, obstacle, or "unknown" in your life. A fear. Infinity or oblivion. Something unfathomable or too "deep" to understand. Feelings of overwhelm. Depth of feelings, beliefs, etc. **See also:** Canal; Valley

Accelerator

An accelerator or gas pedal (or something else that feeds fuel to an engine) can represent: Your ability to move forward and make progress in life. The idea of making quicker progress toward a goal. A desire to escape a situation more quickly. **An accelerator that's not working** can represent a perceived obstacle or a lack of empowerment, motivation, or energy. **An accelerator stuck in the "full-on" position** can represent feeling out of control or not able to slow down in some aspect of your life. **See also:** Fuel; Feeding; Fast; Fire; Driving; Starting an Engine; Vehicle; Propeller

Accent

Someone speaking with an accent can represent: The idea of that person (or whatever they represent) seeming foreign or different from you (or from others) in some way. A characteristic you attribute to that person that reminds you of the culture or area associated with the accent (such as a Swedish accent representing a talent at creative design, if that's what you associate with Sweden). *See also:* Language

Accident

Being in an accident (such as in a car or airplane) can represent feeling or fearing: a surprise, a threat, something catastrophic that's out of your control, or things not going your way or according to your schedule. **Being hit by a vehicle** can represent: a wake-up call about something you need to be aware of or change in your life; the idea of a sudden challenge in real life, such as a feared, expected, or imagined change; feeling taken by surprise or blindsided by something. *See also:* Problem; Injured; Hurt, Being; Disaster; Driving; Rear Ended; Failure; Breaking; Destroying

Accumulating

Accumulating, saving, or stocking up on things can represent an actual, desired, or feared: Situation of having plenty or too much of something (such as money, possessions, or love). Shortage of something, or a desire to avoid or compensate for one. Preparedness (or lack of it) for the future. Procrastination or postponing, as in "letting things stack up" while delaying action. Letting things pile up emotionally (such as grudges, blame, or judgments) by not working through them. Hoarding or keeping things for yourself (such as money) or to yourself (such as secrets). *See also:* Increasing; Many; Group; Storage; Shelf; Container; Finances; Money

Ache

A physical ache in a dream might point to an actual imbalance in the body, or it might represent: Physical, emotional, or mental pain, or a person or situation triggering pain within you. A yearning or desire for something. **An ache in a specific area of your body** could represent feeling challenged in whatever area the body part represents (such as a back ache representing feeling tired having to stand up for yourself in a certain situation). *See also:* Pain; Hurt, Being; Injured; Headache

Acne

Putting up with nuisances. Letting things "get under your skin" and bother you (but perhaps not doing anything about them). Repressed anger. The feeling or fear that a situation in your life is "coming to a head" (that some-

thing will soon demand your attention or become a crisis you must deal with). A physical, emotional, or mental reaction to something (such as to a substance, event, or situation). **See also:** Infection; Eruption; Rash; Abscess; Skin; Immune System

Activity

A particular activity or task can represent: That actual activity in your life, or your thoughts and feelings about it. A completely different activity, but with a similar characteristic (such as sitting in a class representing sitting in a meeting at work yesterday). A fear or hope of participating in something similar in real life, or your subconscious mind exploring what it would be like. **See also:** Working; Phase or Process; Task; Event; Activities (the category)

Address

A street address, house number, ZIP code, or other address can represent: A specific location you associate with that address. A specific place that's on your mind (whether or not it has that address). The address number or its individual digits could also have significance (such as representing a friend who has those digits in her phone number). **See also:** House; Location

Admitting

Someone admitting or confessing something can represent: A desire to know the truth regarding that person or a related situation. Suspecting that the person may not be what they seem or may not be telling the truth in real life. A desire for that person to be honest (or a fear that they will be). A desire for peace or harmony with that person, or for everything to be out in the open between the two of you. Wanting or needing to admit something to someone (or to yourself). The idea of honesty being on your mind right now for some reason. **See also:** Confronted, Being; Confronting; Denying; Blaming; Blamed, Being; Confiding

Adoption

Adopting a child or pet can represent: Responsibility, or the desire or intention to take responsibility for or "take on" whatever is represented by whomever is being adopted. Feelings of nurturing, or the desire to love, nurture, care for, or support someone else. **Being adopted (when you weren't in real life)** can represent someone who has taken responsibility for you in real life (or a desire for that); feeling dissimilar from (such as in beliefs or attitude) one or both of your parents; feeling love for or loved by a parent-like figure. **See also:** Mother; Father; Family

Adultery

Your partner committing adultery can represent: Feeling insecure about your ability to hold your partner's interest. A feeling or fear of betrayal (such as by your partner, a friend, God, or yourself). Jealousy about a loved one spending time on something other than you (such as work or a hobby). **See also:** Cheating; Betraying; Betrayed, Being

Adventure

A feeling of excitement, interest, or involvement in your life (or a desire for more of such). A past event that felt like an adventure. An adventurous, exploratory, or curious attitude toward life or toward a certain aspect of it. **See also:** Traveling; Trip or Vacation

Advice or Opinion

Giving advice or an opinion can represent a desire to help, express yourself, or control another person by getting them to agree with you or do things your way. **Asking someone for advice** can represent: feeling confused or not sure of yourself; a desire for help or support; a desire to connect with the person you're asking for advice (or with whatever they represent). **Receiving unwanted advice** can represent: a feeling or fear of someone doing that in real life (or doing it too much or too forcefully); a feeling or fear of disapproval, intrusion, or interference. **See also:** Therapist; Judgment or Disapproval; Right or Wrong; Approval; Attacked, Being; Hurt, Being

After

One event that happens after another event often represents a similar order of events in real life, so look for a parallel series of events, thoughts, decisions, feelings, or other things in your past (especially your recent past). **The order of people or things** can represent real or perceived priority, importance, ranking, or good will (as in one person standing behind another in a queue, or letting someone else proceed through a doorway first). **See also:** Before; Time Passing; Chasing; Following a Procedure; Future; Following a Path; Result; Following (Trailing Behind)

Afternoon

The time frame when the event represented in the dream took place in real life. Productivity. Rest or relaxation (as in an afternoon nap). Sunshine or bright light. Also consider what afternoons mean to you personally, such as how you usually feel and what you do then. **See also:** Time of Day; Sun

Age

Your age in a dream, if different than your current age, can represent a specific time frame depicted (or imagined) in the dream. **Lying about your age** might represent: a wish to be older or younger (or to at least appear that way); a judgment against yourself or your age; a concern about others' opinions. **The age of another person** may provide clues to whom or what they represent in your real life. For example, if you dream about someone who's 95, consider who you know who's that age (or whom you think of as elderly). If the person is someone you know and their age in the dream is different than their real age, this might indicate that you think of them as younger ("young at heart" or immature) or older (more mature) than their actual age implies. *See also:* Aging; Time Frame; Baby; Child; Old Person

Thank You

for reading this excerpt from *The Curious Dreamer's Dream Dictionary*
by Nancy Wagaman.

Ebook at most online booksellers.
Paperback at Amazon.com.

Keep Exploring

To learn more about dreams and access interpretation tools, explore the following additional resources from the author of this book:

Join Nancy's Mailing List

Sign up for occasional dream tips, resources, and news from the author. You'll be among the first to hear when Nancy introduces a new book in The Curious Dreamer series or when she offers special discounts on her books or services.

Sign up here:
<http://eepurl.com/c7VmuP>

TheCuriousDreamer.com

TheCuriousDreamer.com is a free online dream dictionary website with more than 15,000 dream symbols defined for personal growth by Nancy Wagaman. Try the convenient dream analyzer tool by typing a short

description of your dream and then seeing a list of possible dream symbol meanings. Explore DIY dream resources, including meanings of common dreams, top dream symbol categories, and how to program your dreams using focused dreaming.

MyDreamVisions.com

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

Pinterest: pinterest.com/dreammeanings

Instagram: @TheCuriousDreamerOfficial

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.

Praise for This Book Series

Readers have positive things to say about Nancy Wagaman's *The Curious Dreamer* book series:

Reviews of *The Curious Dreamer's Practical Guide to Dream Interpretation*:

"You will become your own dream expert..."

—Lesley Jones (*Book Reviewer, Readers' Favorite*)

"A valuable resource for dreamwork...This book is very practical and deals with the nuts and bolts on dreamwork, as well as how to take care of your tools."

—Henry Reed, Ph.D. (*Psychologist, "Father of the Dreamwork Movement"*)

"Insightful...a great in-depth look into interpreting the content and symbolism of dreams...well-written, well-researched..."

—Amy Shannon (*Writer and Book Reviewer*)

"A fascinating read. I enjoyed learning about dream interpretation and had quite a time analyzing my own!"

—Holly Senecal (*Book Reviewer*)

"Takes the labor out of understanding dreams....made for curious people who want to understand their dreams through a quick and easy reference tool..."

—James Hart (*Poet and Editor*)

"This book is a must for anyone interested in dreams..."

—V. Nunez (*Book Reviewer*)

Reviews of *The Curious Dreamer's Dream Dictionary*

"This is the coolest book I've ever read about dreams!...Very easy to follow and understand."

—Melinda H. (*Book Reviewer*)

“This will be my go-to book from now on whenever I wake up after a dream...perfect informative dream interpretation.”

—*Curious R. (Book Reviewer)*

“This is one of the most reader friendly books I have ever used...explained in terms anyone can follow...If anyone is looking for a very usable book about dreams, this is the book for you.”

—*Marie A. (Book Reviewer)*

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.