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Lucid Dreaming



Dawning of the Clear Light

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LUCID DREAMING DAWNING OF THE CLEAR LIGHT

BASED ON THE EDGAR CAYCE READINGS

by

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A.R.E. PRESS

VIRGINIA BEACH

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ISBN 87604-086-5

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INTRODUCTION

Although the term "lucid dreaming" is relatively new (Green, 1968), the experience to which it refers is ancient and universal. Though not necessarily identical to the following experiences, lucid dreams have been called by such diverse names as dreams of knowledge (Fox, circa 1938), out-of-body experiences (Carrington and Muldoon, 1929), astral experiences, and dreaming (Castañeda, 1972). Lucid dreaming is simply *the experience of becoming aware that one is dreaming while in the dream*.

At first glance it might appear that the Edgar Cayce readings failed to mention this curious phenomenon. But we must remember that the readings spoke in terms that were current and relevant at the time. Hence in order to determine the position of the readings on lucid dreaming we would do well to examine the references to astral and out-of-body experience.

For decades prior to the time of the Edgar Cayce readings, Western metaphysical and occult literature had been discussing astral projection and out-of-body experience. However, the one-sided approach which characterized these early writings was one of trying to determine *where* the soul or entity was going. Underlying this approach was an emphasis upon the possibility of *physically* leaving one's present circumstances in the body and the world. In these writings there was a tendency to regard the environment of the out-of-body experience as actually existing somewhere in time and space.

The term "lucid dreaming" represents an entirely different orientation to the same experience. Instead of implying that a person is physically escaping the confines of the body, this orientation focuses upon the fact that self-reflecting consciousness is functioning without the apparent mediation of the body; thus it leaves open the possibility that the dreamer has transcended time and space. Consequently, all that is left to really talk about is the dreamer's own state of self-conscious awareness during the experience, which has been termed "lucidity."

Of course the lucid dreamer then tends to make conclusions about *where* he may be (e.g., out of the body, on the astral plane). But these conclusions are mere speculations and can lead to all kinds of intricate systems describing the *physical* process of the soul's leaving and re-entering the body. This avoids the possibility that the "projector" is within *himself*, and that this other world which he sees is an outgrowth of his own past attitudes and experiences.

The readings discussed astral and out-of-body experiences on many occasions. Two significant principles emerge from the readings which conform to the more recent approach to these experiences: (1) When an entity is "absent from the body," it is present with what it has built through past thoughts and experiences; and (2) The place of this "meeting" is within self. The following excerpts illustrate these two principles in greater detail:

Q-3. What governs the experiences of the astral body while in the fourth dimensional plane during sleep?

A-3. This is, as has been given, that upon which it has fed. That which it has builded; that which it seeks; that which the mental mind, the subconscious mind, the subliminal mind, seeks! That governs. Then we come to an understanding of that, "He that would find must seek." In the physical or material this we understand. That is a pattern of the subliminal or the spiritual self.

5754-3

Q-19. In 1934, during my last surgical operation when I was thought dead, I traveled out of the body to California, to realms of light. Where did I go really and what was the meaning and purpose of the experience?

A-19. This was a coordination of experiences the body had seen in the experiences of others; correlated with the edges of more than one experience to which the body had been subjected or subjugated in other experiences. As to place—within self. As to conditions—the many experiences of the entity, both mental AND spiritual, in the various realms of consciousness.

As to its worth within self—the awareness of the universality of consciousness as may be obtained in the one light, that is ALL light. [author's italics]

2067-3

As we can see from the above excerpts, the readings present a sophisticated approach to astral and out-of-body experience which corresponds to the more modern lucid dreaming approach. Instead of attributing objective qualities to the "astral plane," the readings state that the experience unfolds according to what a person has built. Likewise the lucid dreaming approach regards an "astral" experience as primarily a *dream* which originates within the individual, with the important exception that the dreamer is *conscious* during the experience.

One of the aims of the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc., is to encourage and undertake research in the various spiritual and parapsychological areas mentioned in the readings.

This booklet should be read as a report of research efforts made by myself and several other A.R.E. members. Our research data are experiences that arose spontaneously in working with concepts of attunement from the readings. In reporting this research I have also attempted to discover principles suggested by the reports I have collected.

As one of the researchers in the area of lucid dreaming, I must say that although this booklet represents an attempt toward an objective analysis of the subject, it necessarily entails considerable speculation. It is simply too early to make conclusive statements about such a complex phenomenon. Hence this booklet should be regarded as a *preliminary* investigation and an invitation to further research.

It is important to realize that although the readings repeatedly emphasize the importance of practical application, they are surprisingly encouraging toward seekers of inner experience. For example, in the many statements on the subject of astral projection the readings gave one significant warning: First determine the ideal in the pursuit of the experience.

Allow self to go out of the body if and when it has learned to surround self with the influence of the Christ Consciousness . . .

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Other than this essential requirement the readings did not question the value of the experience, but rather regarded it as a faculty which could be developed for positive ends.

As to how this may be used constructively—this would be like answering how could one use one's voice for constructive purposes. It is of a same or of a similar import, you see; that is, it is a faculty, it is an experience, it is a development of the self as related to spiritual things, material things, mental things.

Then as to the application of self in those directions for a development of same—it depends upon what is the purpose, what is the desire. Is it purely material? Is it in that attitude, "If or when I am in such and such a position I can perform this or that"? If so, then such expressions are only excuses within self—in any phase of an experience.

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The purpose of this booklet is to examine the effects of consciousness (lucidity) upon the dreamer and the dream environment. Utilizing examples from A.R.E. members and from my own dream journals I hope to show that lucidity offers a valuable tool for

creatively interacting with the dream, and allowing the dreamer to rise above a vague perception of his inner nature. The importance of an ideal as a motivating factor during the lucid dream will be discussed thoroughly. (Appendix)

In addition, I hope to demonstrate that lucidity represents a profound approach to all of life which values the qualities of responsibility, unattachment, forgiveness and discernment. And most important of all, this study reveals how lucid dreaming may lead an individual through various recognizable stages of the enlightenment process until there is the beginning of wholeness and the dawning of the clear light.

Chapter One A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

*. . . Its light gleams like oil tonight when I am alone
On the last night, also will it shine.* Octavio Paz

Before I begin relating the development of lucid dreaming in my own case, I just want to say from the outset that one of the most fundamental realizations I have had in working with lucid dreams is that they, as well as the illuminatory experiences which can accompany them, *are as accessible as we wish and allow them to be*. The sole purpose of this account is to bring to your attention the potential of this type of experience in your own dream-life.

Lucid dreaming, or the experience of becoming conscious while in the dream state, first came to my attention in a dream early in 1972. Like many persons who have had such an experience, I was deeply impressed with its significance. The dream had such an effect that it seemed to change the direction of my life at the time. It continues to be a source of strength even now, four years later. It is as follows:

“It seems that I have come home from school. I become aware that I’m dreaming as I stand outside a small building which has large black double-doors on its eastern side. I approach them to enter. As soon as I open them, a brilliant white light hits me in the face. Immediately I am filled with intense feelings of love.

“I say several times, ‘This *can’t* be a dream!’ The interior resembles a small chapel or meeting room. It has large windows overlooking barren land like the Great Plains. I think to myself that this is somehow *real* in a three-dimensional sense. Everything is amazingly clear and the colors brilliant.

“No one is with me, yet I feel that someone needs to be there to explain the sense of purpose that seems to permeate the atmosphere.

“At one point I walk holding a crystal rod (or wand) upon which a spinning crystal circlet is poised. The light passes through it and is beautiful.” (Sparrow, 1972)

Upon awakening, I remember lying in my bed bewildered, wondering why the experience had been given to me and what I had done to deserve it. Although these questions proved to be unanswerable, I did recall a significant experience the previous day which seemed at the time to relate directly to the dream.

I had embarked on a two-hundred-mile trip to attend my brother's graduation from Air Force flight school. I planned to stay the night and return home the next day. As I drove through the rocky plains of central west Texas towards Del Rio and the distant Mexican mountains, I suddenly realized that what I was doing was for the love of my brother. I further realized that unselfish acts had been a rarity in my life; I was humbled by this. For a long while afterward, I dwelt in this feeling and watched the sun gently sink behind the mountains in the west. The play of light upon the stark landscape kept awake the feeling of love within me.

Since this first lucid dream, I have noticed on several occasions that lucidity has arisen following an experience of love or deep rapport with another person. Sometimes when I experience this kind of contact during the day, I am able to sense that a lucid dream is imminent. On these days, I try to retire earlier than usual in order to allow the experience time to unfold.

After my first lucid dream it was months before consciousness again emerged in my dreams. I had not begun to cultivate the faculty or to attribute any particular significance to it. Yet the memory of the Light and the luminous feelings associated with it left me with an intense desire to re-experience its transforming effects.

Meditation and dream-work became a part of my daily regimen soon after this first lucid dream. About six months later, after meditating one night with a friend, I had a strong feeling that an important experience was awaiting me in sleep. After sharing the impression with her, I said goodnight earlier than usual and went home. Before going to sleep I moved my bed so that I would be able to see the stars through my bedroom window. This ritual seemed to enhance the feeling of expectancy. I went to sleep and had the following experience in the early morning:

"I *feel* that I am waking up. I realize that I've been hashing through many ideas and problems. As I lie in my bed with my eyes closed, I suddenly realize that *there's no reason why I shouldn't experience the Light!* I feel a complete lack of the usual feelings of unworthiness. It's as if a problem has been solved by the long period of self-reflection.

"As I wait expectantly, a warmth begins to fill my body. Although my eyes are closed, I sense that a white light

is shining through the window and entering my solar plexus. It rushes upward until a warm brightness fills my vision. I feel deep love and surrender, and wish that some of my friends could experience this also.

"After the Light subsides, I bound out of bed and go searching about the house for the Master who made the experience possible. But I see no one. Then I awaken."

(Sparrow, 1972)

Since I was not aware at the time that I was dreaming, this experience cannot be considered by definition a lucid dream. Yet because the relationship between the Light and the awakening of lucidity has been so pronounced in subsequent dreams, I feel that this experience should be included to provide a comprehensive picture of the development of lucid dreaming. Also, the dream reveals a common characteristic of many "pre-lucid" dreams—a "false" awakening. This is when the dreamer *thinks* he is awakening from sleep only to discover later upon actual awakening that he was still dreaming. Sometimes lucidity is triggered after the false awakening when the dreamer finds himself in another place or in unfamiliar surroundings. Thus, although the false awakening does not necessarily result in the arousal of lucidity, it seems to represent a growth in that direction.

When lucidity began to arise with increasing regularity in the following months, I soon noticed that it emerged predictably after a deep or fulfilling meditation. It became clear that when my devotional life was intense, lucid dreams would arise as a concomitant. This relationship became more pronounced when I began meditating for fifteen or twenty minutes during the early morning hours (from 2:00 to 5:00 A.M.). As I would return to sleep, dreams of amazing clarity as well as brief periods of lucidity would occasionally ensue. I have often thought that if a person would diligently practice meditation in the early morning hours *for the purpose of attunement*, lucid dreams would be the natural result. But I must admit that when I have meditated in order to *acquire* a lucid dream, I have failed consistently. The unpleasant result has been that my dreams have admonished me repeatedly because of such questionable motives! I am slowly learning to tread gently.

Except for rare occasions when I have passed into a lucid dream without a break in consciousness, most of my lucid experiences have begun with a "normal" dream in which something unusual has arisen to convince me that I am dreaming. The situations in the dream which have provoked lucidity with the greatest frequency are of two basic interrelated types. The first and perhaps most common stimulus

during the initial stages in the process is a stressful experience in which I have been confronted with a threat in the form of a person, animal or unknown force. In this type of dream the desire to escape usually results in aborting the stressful dream. But sometimes the stress is alleviated through the arousal of lucidity. In this case, the dreamer is catapulted into greater awareness *out of apparent necessity*. The fear itself seems to encourage the development of lucidity as a coping mechanism which enables a creative interaction between the dreamer and the feared situation. Undoubtedly, the resolution of such dreams can have a profound healing effect in the dreamer's waking life, as well.

An example of this type of lucid dream is as follows:

"I am being pursued in the area of my freshman residence by a group of men. As I run fearfully through the neighborhood, dodging in between houses, I become aware that I am dreaming and that the fear is unnecessary. I realize that I have a choice to go to meet my pursuers or to meditate. I feel a need to return and work through the conflict. So I try to fly to the area where they are located. I will myself upward until I am high above the earth. But before I get to the place, a pleasant vibration courses through my body, and I awaken."
(Sparrow, 1974)

This dream and others of a similar nature reveal a very important principle of lucid dreaming, especially as it relates to the confrontation of fear or problems. The principle is: *once lucidity arises, the dreamer may actually release himself from confronting a problem on its own level*. In the above dream I chose rather to return to confront my attackers in order to reconcile the conflict. This, of course, may be valuable and necessary at times, and leaves the dreamer with an exhilarating sense of having overcome a fearful situation. From my experience, however, lucidity is a fragile faculty, especially during the beginning stages, and can be quickly submerged by an over-confident exercising of it in relation to dream images, as is suggested in the above dream.

A strong case can be made for the need to regard lucidity as an opportunity to *cooperate* with or *forgive* the dream elements rather than an opportunity to exercise control over them. The importance of this approach is evident when we regard the dream as having two discrete parts—the symbolic *content*, and the dreamer's *response* to it.

Since we possess a limited understanding of the workings of the unconscious, we would do well to approach it with an attitude of

healthy respect. Whenever we speak of changing the dream *content* according to our momentary desires, we are opening the possibility of violating the organic composition of our inner natures. Yet this does not render lucid dreaming necessarily destructive. On the contrary, the lucid dream presents a unique opportunity to alter and improve one's *responses* in the dream which can thereby facilitate a creative and growing relationship to the dream content. It is unfortunate that at this time when lucid dreaming is being introduced into the popular literature, there is such an emphasis upon the manipulative capacity of the dreamer. Such an approach to this potentially powerful experience is likely to replicate man's regrettable "master-slave" relationship to nature and the physical world, and only lead to a false sense of triumph.

Another situation which has apparently stimulated lucidity in my own case has been the presentation of a novel or incongruous element within the dream. These anomalies can be observed in normal dreams as well, but are overlooked with regularity. Examples of such incongruous events are—a familiar person who looks different; a familiar scene which reveals an obvious flaw; or an event which violates known physical laws.

The following two dreams illustrate this type of lucid dream:

"I go to visit Ann whom I haven't seen for months. When I enter her office, she seems very aloof which is unlike her. Also, her face looks different. I realize that it isn't she at all and that I am dreaming. Immediately I drop to the floor and begin meditating, and awaken soon afterward."

"I am on a high hill above a lake, searching for Indian artifacts. It seems that I am being told about the culture which existed in the area during primitive times. I am told that the Indians were very advanced in the art of stone flaking (i.e., tool making).

"I go atop the hill and find three beautifully crafted stone trowels or knives. *I realize that they are too fine to be real*, and I must be dreaming.

"Taking the stone trowels, I sit down to meditate facing east and stick the trowels in the ground, one at a time. I repeat, 'The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost.'

"At this point Alta walks by. I ask 'Do you know that we are dreaming?' She laughs. So I direct her attention to the three stone objects on the ground. In their midst items of silverware begin spontaneously to appear—first a fork, then a cup. I look at her face. She is puzzled, seemingly on the

verge of 'waking up.' I take the items away and other objects appear. We begin to laugh as the process speeds up. We are inundated with beautiful silver objects. Then I awaken."

(Sparrow, 1974)

This type of lucid dream resembles the first except that the anomaly or inconsistent event in the dream lacks a threatening quality; it is merely at variance to what the dreamer knows to be true or possible. Oliver Fox calls this distinguishing awareness, which begins to arise with greater frequency once it occurs, the "critical faculty." This awareness is essentially the *recognition of inconsistency*. The development of such a faculty has constructive but painful implications for the waking state. If through the development of this "critical faculty" we are able to attune ourselves to every inconsistency in our attitudes and actions, we have surely begun to traverse the difficult path to self-understanding. It may even be possible that *lucidity occurs to the degree one is able to recognize inconsistency during the waking state*. If this is true, it is probable that as we work with lucid dreaming we also begin to encounter daily problematical opportunities which encourage and even *necessitate* the extension of the qualities of lucidity into our waking life. We can expect to become more objective and unattached, as well as more cognizant of the purpose behind our immediate experiences.

The following quote from Carl Jung in his commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower* discusses the challenge of growing self-awareness:

"The way is not without danger. Everything good is costly, and the development of the personality is one of the most costly of all things. It is a question of yea-saying to oneself, of taking oneself to the most serious of tasks, of being conscious of everything one does, and keeping it constantly before one's eyes in all dubious aspects—truly a task that taxes us to the utmost."

(Wilhelm, p. 95)

Since the inception of lucidity into my dream life, the lucid dream has clearly evolved in a specific direction—toward a closer relationship to the inner Light. Many times has it presented itself, but never have I received it fully. I have begun to regard lucidity as a platform within the dream upon which I can become receptive to this Light. During the first lucid dreams, I was not aware of this opportunity. But gradually, a light began to appear in my dreams which I at first mistook for a bright star, the moon or the sun. Usually bright white in color, it would suddenly appear hovering above me and increasing in intensity. One of the first such dreams is as follows:

"I am thinking or reading something about earthquakes. A friend calls me to a window (in an unfamiliar house) and excitedly tells that 'the sun has a blue flake on it!'

"I look out the window. A white sun is about 30° above the northern horizon. I notice that it has a bluish tint to it, but think that's probably due to a retinal after-image. I think, 'If I am dreaming, then that is the Light, not the sun!' In order to test this, I try to enter into a meditative state. But then I decide that I'm not dreaming, *though the sun has increased in size.*"

(Sparrow, 1974)

As a result of such dreams, I soon decided that whenever I became lucid in a dream, I would pray for the Light and seek to enter a meditative state. I have since found that failure to do so usually results in premature awakening or in being eventually distracted by the dream environment to the extent of being re-absorbed in the normal dream consciousness. An excellent example of how the dream environment can distract the dreamer is in the following dream of a young man:

" . . . Aware that I am dreaming I find myself in an area from which four tunnels branch. I intuitively know where each leads—memory, intellect, emotions and psychic.

"I am tempted to go down the path to memory because it includes not only memory of this life but of all my lives as well. Again intuition comes to my aid, and I choose the tunnel to the psychic. There I know I will find the tools that will help me investigate the other three realms in a proper manner. I enter the tunnel, and it becomes very dark. But I can see a bright point of white light ahead of me in the distance. After a while I become aware of eerie lights ahead of me off to either side of me and the feeling that if I look at them I will go crazy and I should keep my attention focused on the white light ahead.

"Suddenly I come out of the tunnel, and see that my goal is an orb of white light which at the time I think is the moon. I become aware that there is great beauty all about me; but I should concentrate on going to the moon and not look to the side. Finally I can't resist any longer and look upon incredible beauty. I find that I am weightless and can fly. I go soaring off among clouds outlined in silver, colorful comets and a plentitude of stars. After a while I recall my goal to reach the moon and to discover my psychic powers. I look around and it is nowhere in sight . . ." [The dreamer awakened soon afterward.]

(L.M., 1975)

The practice of prayer and meditation in the dream has allowed me to focus my attention on what I truly desire to encounter without being distracted by the unlimited possibilities which may arise in the lucid dream. Prayer and meditation have seemed to *consolidate* what can be a fleeting experience. Yet more important, the attitude of receptivity engendered by this practice has invited—in the case of many dreams—an immediate presentation of the Light.

Recently I was astounded to discover that this practice of seeking the Light through the lucid dream has been described in ancient Tibetan manuscripts and can be read in translation in *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* by Evans-Wentz. In the chapter entitled “The Doctrine of the Dream State” (Evans-Wentz, 1958, p. 215), the adept is admonished to become aware of the illusory nature of the dream images *while in the dream!* There are various physical and mental exercises given to enable the adept to achieve lucidity. One of the goals of this process is to carry the waking consciousness into the dream and vice versa without a break in consciousness. The primary purpose for establishing this continuity of consciousness is to allow the dreamer to begin to realize that the environment of the waking state is a self-created dream *as well*. This recognition leads the adept to the second and most important phase of the lucid dream which is meditating on the *Reality* behind the dream images. This stage of the lucid dream during which the dreamer may enter an illuminated state is referred to in the Tibetan text as the “Dawning of the Clear Light.” It is a stage in which the dreamer turns his attention to the Source motivating the dream images.

For some reason an individual seems to become more accessible to illuminatory experience when meditating in the dream state than in the waking state. It is as if the barrier between the person and the Divine becomes transparent, revealing the Luminosity which has been so effectively obscured by unfulfilled experiences, guilt, and reprehensible thoughts. As the desires and fears inherent in this subconscious barrier are forgiven or accepted, the dreamer then may come face to face with the Divine.

I have found that when the Light makes its appearance in the lucid dream, the preceding events usually fall to the wayside. Whereas the initial dream may have been an important preliminary experience, the presentation of the Light seems to represent the essential culmination of the dream process. The dreamer has thus far accrued a great deal of independence and response-ability which has accompanied the emergence of lucidity. Yet as the Light becomes visible, the dreamer realizes that the independence and the interests of self must be relinquished if the Light is to approach and become an inner

experience. The pre-eminent demand placed upon the dreamer as he stands at this threshold is to *surrender*.

I have found this to be an extremely difficult thing to do. The difficulty is illustrated in the following dream:

“I am outdoors and see a light in the sky. I am told that I must turn my head away if the light is to descend upon me. I am aware that I am dreaming. I bow my head. The ground around me begins to be illuminated by the brilliant orb. I begin to be afraid as it nears me. I look up, and it withdraws into the sky. The process is repeated, but I fail to overcome my fear. I awaken.”
(Sparrow, 1974)

Usually when I am desirous of the illuminatory experience, I fail to realize that I am asking for a supremely humbling experience. This is easy to forget when my thoughts are turned to the beauty and joy offered in the experience. But as I stand at the “threshing door,” when all of my fears rise up to thwart the imminent union, my faith usually proves inadequate. This theme is repeated in the following dream:

“I enter a church and know that I am expected to speak. The congregation is singing hymn #33 from a red hymnal. While they go through the usual preliminary exercises, I decide to go outside to gather myself. I am worried and afraid because I don’t know what I will say. I sit down in the grass and suddenly come up with a topic which feels right—‘The Way of Surrender.’

“At this point I look up in the eastern sky and see a large orb of white light many times the size of the moon. I realize that I am dreaming. I yell out in joy knowing it is coming for me. As soon as I do, the Light withdraws into the sky as if it is awaiting a more appropriate response on my part. I know that I must turn my eyes away and trust. As I do, the Light descends. As it approaches, a woman’s voice says, “You’ve done well reflecting this Light within yourself. But now it must be turned outward.’

“The air becomes charged and the ground is brilliantly lit. The top of my head begins to prickle and be warmed by the Light. I awaken.”
(Sparrow, 1974)

The message in the dream seems to be two-fold: the concept of surrender becomes the key to inner illumination *and* creative expression in the world. The following excerpt from the Edgar Cayce readings reiterates this message:

. . . though chosen as a channel, thou of thyself may do nothing. The Spirit of the Christ working in and through thee will bring the fruits of the Spirit in the experience of those that thou would lead to the light. 281-19

I have found it difficult to surrender to something which seems so overwhelming and totally "other." Yet I have discovered that by affirming a spiritual ideal I have been able to choose a "mediator" between myself and this overwhelming experience—a mediator who does not lessen the experience but who lends human and tangible qualities to it. As I have invoked this mediator in my waking prayer and meditation, He has become the strength through which I have been able to surrender to a powerful and transforming inner experience, as represented by the following dream:

"I am with Alan (a close friend) and we are both aware that we are dreaming. We begin flying crisscross patterns through a large new auditorium as if we are preparing it, and consecrating it. We actually interpenetrate each other as we simultaneously pass through the center of the room.

"At one point I see him standing in a doorway at the back of the auditorium, talking to someone standing behind the door. I know that it is Jesus! Anxiously, I walk through the door and look toward Him. At first I am only able to see a bright white light. But then the light abruptly changes into the clear form of the Master . . ." (Sparrow, 1975)

The clarification of the mediator is a major step toward creative lucid dreaming. It brings with it protection, companionship and personal guidance. Without it, communion with the Light lacks the essential ingredient of humanness; it provides no clear bridge to lucid living.

It is hoped that through this account the reader has gained a sense of the accessibility of the lucid dream. In my opinion it is very close to all of us—and the Light it promises, only a step further. The obstacles which prevent its coming are our own beliefs and constricting self-concepts. Yet perhaps all that is needed is for us to show the least amount of willingness in order for the gift to be bestowed—and for the dawn to come.

Chapter Two LUCID DREAMING AS AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

"In the face of this enormity of forces and challenges, what is man tending to do? He seems to be trying to keep himself as unconscious as possible and succeeds with remarkable versatility."
Dorothy Berkeley Phillips
(from *The Choice is Always Ours*)

The Normal Dream State

One way to describe an individual's experience of dreaming is that it is a state in which he finds himself more or less subject to a script he does not seem to have written. Strange and unfamiliar symbols and scenes intermingle with the commonplace. All the control that the dreamer might have mustered during the day is usually conspicuously absent. There is something curiously similar between the normal dream state and the consciousness of primitive man. In the dream, an individual possesses what seems to be a conscious identity, but rarely does it dawn upon the dreamer that things in the dream could be other than they are. The dreamer does not question the necessity of the experience or what could be done to alter the circumstances. Self-reflection is rarely present in the normal dream state. When situations arise which would be recognized as absurd by the awake person, they are consistently accepted without question by the dreamer.

Carl Jung describes the consciousness of primitive man similarly:

"Before man learned to produce thoughts, thoughts came to him. He did not think—he perceived his mind functioning."
(Jung, Vol. XI, p. 46)

In the normal state of dreaming, an individual does not *dream* in the sense of it being a willed or chosen activity. Instead, it is an experience which comes *to* him, which happens *to* him.

Another characteristic of this level of consciousness is a lack of fine distinction between the dreamer and the images of the dream. It is quite common for the dreamer to be observing a person in his dream at one moment and then to be identifying with that person in the next moment. This process of merging with the dream symbols is closely related to the concept of confluence, a state in which an individual experiences the dissolution of the boundaries between himself and the world. According to Jung, this state of consciousness is a predominant characteristic of the primitive psyche as well as the early stages of childhood. The individual is an open system, merged with the surrounding environment, having no sense of boundary between himself and the world. When an individual is confluent he becomes dependent upon the environment. This manifests in the dream as a susceptibility to the influence of the dream images. In this state the dreamer's capacity to respond as an individual decreases. To put it another way, his *response-ability* decreases as confluence increases. In Gestalt psychology, confluence is regarded as a neurotic defense when it is excessive because the individual "cannot tell what other people are. He does not know where he leaves off and others begin" (Perls, p. 38).

The concept of boundary is very important to our understanding of lucid dreaming. As we begin to consider the first stages of consciousness and self-reflection in dreams, we will observe the beginning of a well-defined "contact boundary," or a distinction between the individual and the dream environment (Perls, pp. 15-24).

Many psychologists would question the value of moving out of the normal dream state into a state of lucidity. After all, the normal dream has proved to be a storehouse of information about the inner workings of the personality, as well as being a therapeutic experience. Admittedly, the *dream* is of obvious value; however, the aspect which is of questionable value is how the individual *responds* to the dream, while in it.

Most of us make a major error when seeking to understand our dreams. This error consists of failing to separate the symbolic message, or the dream, from the subjective response in the dream. Once again we encounter the importance of establishing a boundary between the dreamer and the dream world. When we fail to do this, we usually end up interpreting the symbolic message in terms of our subjective response to it. This error is identical to projection, that is, the tendency to impose the attributes of self upon the environment. So, as we place importance upon the awakening of consciousness in dreams, we are not undermining the importance of the symbolic content. Instead, we are concerned with improving the *relationship* between the dreamer and that content so that there will not be a

confusion between the two. In order to understand the *dream content*, we must understand who *we* are first of all. When this is accomplished, we are able to have a sense of identity strong enough to set ourselves apart from the influence of the dream images.

Before primitive man could learn to understand the events in nature, he first had to evolve a mechanism for self-reflection, or the ego. This process gradually set him apart from the outer world. He was in a sense born—expelled from a once protective unconscious into a state of growing independence and volition.

Similarly, in order for us to understand fully the dream content during the dream experience, we must move out of a state of confluence, or identification with the dream, into a self-reflecting, independent state. There is much resistance to this in all of us, as Carl Jung points out:

"The Biblical fall of man presents the dawn of consciousness as a curse. As a matter of fact it is in this light that we look upon every problem that forces us to greater consciousness and separates us even further from the paradise of unconscious childhood." (Jung, Vol. VIII, p. 389)

The normal dream state can be seen as an indicator of man's childlike subjection to images in his psyche which he himself has created and subsequently rejected, as well as preconscious elements which lie within him and are unable to emerge because of his lack of understanding. In both cases he fails to assume the responsibility of consciously owning these elements *by refusing to first set himself apart from them*. It seems paradoxical that in order for man to integrate a rejected aspect of himself, he must first see himself apart from it. As long as the division between an individual and a rejected aspect of himself remains vague, reconciliation can never occur. Awareness must illuminate the problem until it is starkly defined; otherwise, the problem will continue to be nurtured by the unknowing individual. He must move out of an *unconscious* relationship with it into a *conscious* confrontation.

As consciousness emerges in the dream, the dreamer is accomplishing an objectification of the dream image. The image gradually loses its autonomy and becomes more subject to the will of the dreamer.

Perls makes this comment about dreams:

"You prevent yourself from achieving what you want to achieve. But you don't experience this as you're doing it . . . but some other power that is preventing you." (Perls, p. 178)

As we emerge as conscious individuals in the dream state, we begin to learn how we prevent ourselves from achieving what we want, and that the "other power" which has been thwarting us is ourselves in a multiplicity of guises.

The Initiation of the Lucid Dream State

As lucid dreams begin to occur within the life of an individual, they are likely to be rare and short-lived. Erich Neumann describes the infantile ego similarly:

"Just as the infantile ego . . . feebly developed, easily tired, emerges like an island out of the ocean of the unconscious for occasional moments only, and then sinks back again, so early man experiences the world."

(Neumann, p. 15)

Since conscious desire for such experiences plays a small role at this early stage, the apparent causative factor in the dream is usually a fearful, highly absurd, or incongruous situation. We must be careful in assuming that a particular factor is *causing* lucidity to arise. Actually, the most we can objectively say is that certain factors such as emotional stress or the awareness of incongruity in the dream only *accompany* the emergence of lucidity. Because the dreamer experiences these factors as causing lucidity to arise, however, we will discuss them as if this were true.

A common example of what provokes the initial lucid dream state is a stressful dream in which the dreamer is fleeing from an animal or person who seeks to do harm to the dreamer. When the dreamer is confronted with this stressful situation it seems to force him out of a confluent relationship with the dream, and encourage self-reflection. He can no longer afford a lack of distinction between himself and the influence of the feared object. An example of this is shown below:

"I am being pursued in the area of my freshman residence by a group of men. As I run through the neighborhood, dodging in between houses, I become aware that I am dreaming and that the fear is unnecessary . . ."

(Sparrow, 1974)

Here we find that the desires of the dreamer and the situation at hand have become so radically different as to erect a psychological differential or boundary between the dreamer and the dream world.

The primitive ego could very well have been stimulated into being under similar circumstances. For example, modern research has shown that the circadian rhythm is an important determinant in

man's behavior and largely governs his periods of wakefulness and sleep (Luce, p. 8). The consistency of this biological rhythm depends upon the consistency of day length. Thus, the circadian rhythm is one example of how the human organism is unconsciously in confluence with nature. As long as the length of day remains consistent, there is little differentiation between man's inner experience and the events in the outer world.

Yet, there are instances in which the daylight periods alter considerably, such as during a solar eclipse. When this happens there arises a forced differentiation between man's inner experience of day and the outer phenomenon of darkness. During irregular events, such as solar eclipses and natural cataclysm, confluence could very well have been difficult to maintain. At this point, primitive man may have perceived brief moments of separation from the outer world.

Carl Jung says, "There is no birth of consciousness without pain" (Jung, Vol. XVII, p. 193). This pain could be described as the *irritation* which arises when man's basis for dependence is removed, and in which his inevitable separateness from the world becomes evident.

During the first stages of lucid dreaming, there seems to be a resistance to move out of the normal dream state. Rather than realize the existence of an incongruous element in the dream, the dreamer usually rationalizes it as being something else. An example of this is as follows:

"I am with two friends outdoors, looking at the night sky. I notice that there seem to be two moons, each not full, but about one-half or three-fourths full. I decide I must be dreaming, but I think that it's too real to be a dream. I don't want to say anything about there being two moons because, if I am mistaken, it would be a laughable mistake . . ."

(Sparrow, 1974)

Incipient consciousness does not appear to be easily accepted by the dreamer. There is the greatest resistance to its full expression in the dream, especially during the early stages of lucid dreaming. Similarly, Erich Neumann describes a period in the evolution of the primitive ego in which the desire to remain unconscious and merged with nature is the predominant urge:

"So long as the infantile ego consciousness is weak and feels the strain of its own existence as heavy and oppressive . . . it has not discovered its own reality and differentness . . ."

“Man is not yet thrown back upon himself, against nature, nor the ego against the unconscious; being oneself is still a wearisome and painful experience, still the exception that has to be overcome.” (Neumann, p. 16)

It could be argued that the development of consciousness is a natural process, and that in time everyone would begin to experience greater consciousness in dreams as well as in the waking life. Jung implies this is not so:

“Nature cares nothing whatsoever about a higher state of consciousness; quite the contrary.”
(Jung, Vol. VIII, p. 394)

Likewise, Neumann says:

“The ascent toward consciousness is the ‘unnatural’ thing in nature; it is specific of the species man.”
(Neumann, p. 16)

Thus, when lucidity initially arises in a dream, it is often seen as contrary to the “natural” dictates of the dreamer. This impasse can be overcome when a stressful situation arises in which the dreamer no longer finds it advantageous to believe in, and identify with, the dream content. The desire to grow in consciousness in this case is apparently always preceded by the *imperative* to grow.

Although emotional stress seems to be the predominant stimulus in the emergence of lucidity during the early phases, another factor begins to emerge, especially after a conscious desire has been in effect to have such experiences. Oliver Fox refers to this process as the arousal of the “critical faculty,” and believes that it is fundamental to the attainment of lucidity (Fox, p. 35). An example of this critical faculty is illustrated in the following dream:

“I am on a high hill above a lake, searching for Indian artifacts. It seems that I am being told about the culture which existed in the area during primitive times. I am told that the Indians were very advanced in the area of stone flaking.

“I go atop the hill and find three beautifully crafted stone trowels or knives. *I realize that they are too fine to be real*, and that I must be dreaming . . .” (Sparrow, 1974)

The critical faculty which begins to emerge in the dream state is a faculty which becomes more and more attuned to the occurrence of novelty and incongruity. As it begins to function, it begins to question the apparent reality of incongruous elements in the dream.

A single, inconspicuous item may be the key which is grasped by this critical awareness. It appears that the more experiences an individual has had, the more subtle the awareness of incongruity becomes. For example, the dream below occurred years after the dreamer began to have such experiences:

“ . . . walking through the woods toward our cabin, I look down at my feet and see that I have on a pair of new boots. I laugh because *I have no new boots*. I realize that I am dreaming . . .” (Sparrow, 1974)

These unexpected anomalies in the dream which stimulate the faculty for self-reflection can be seen as analogous to the unusual events in nature which perhaps stimulated the ego’s development. At this point it is possible to speculate that the very inconsistency of nature which man curses so vehemently makes possible the arousal of self-reflection in the primitive psyche. This inconsistency of nature resists the identification which man seeks to maintain with the world, and throws him back upon his own resources. It is a frustrating marriage which man has found to be difficult to sustain. Consciousness appears to emerge as a means of insulating the organism from the inconsistency of nature, and maintaining an internally consistent system of responding to it.

Likewise, the growth of the critical faculty in dreams enables the dreamer to move out of the unpredictability of the *inner* nature into a conscious relationship to it.

“Thus infantile consciousness, constantly aware of its . . . dependence upon the matrix from which it sprang, gradually becomes an independent system.”
(Neumann, p. 46)

Lucid Dreaming and Out-of-Body Experiences

Once the state of lucidity has been initiated, either through emotional stress or the activation of the critical faculty, the dreamer usually experiences a qualitative change in the dream. There is usually a tremendous sense of personal freedom and independence.

“ . . . I become aware that I am dreaming. I fly up through the roof. The neighborhood is incredibly beautiful. The sun is just coming up and it gives the trees a luminous glow. I ‘take off’ and fly through the trees and above the neighborhood houses.”
(Sparrow, 1974)

At this stage of lucidity, the dreamer becomes acutely aware of having a body other than the sleeping body. We can now say that “out-of-body experiences must be regarded as philosophically

indistinguishable from lucid dreams" (Green, p. 20), for, if *lucidity* is regarded as the state of self-consciousness in which both lucid dreams and out-of-body experiences occur, it can be discussed without the necessity of breaking it into its different manifestations. Two examples of lucidity in which bodily awareness occurs are as follows:

" . . . I become aware that I am dreaming, or rather my body is sleeping somewhere else. I examine the body I am in and find it to be very real and solid. I realize that the experience must be somehow real in a three-dimensional sense . . . " (Sparrow, 1974)

During a period of sustained lucidity, the dreamer begins to experience a relatively unvarying sense of identity. The boundary between himself and the dream world becomes so well defined psychologically that the dreamer begins to realize the existence of a physical boundary as well. Whether or not the resulting body is *real* in any *physical* sense, as parapsychologists have tried to substantiate, it points out an apparent need which arises in the dreamer to give a physical form to his identity apart from the body. We spend our entire lives identifying with a physical body; thus, it is probable that we enter into lucidity with preconceived "sets" which determine our perception of a body rather than an amorphous mass of energy. This idea is supported by the experience of John Lilly as reported in *The Center of the Cyclone* (1972). He relates an experience of meeting two entities while out of his body.

"They stop at a critical distance and say to me that at this time I have developed only to the point where I can stand their presence at this particular distance. If they came any closer, they would overwhelm me, and I would lose myself as a cognitive entity, merging with them. They further say that I separated them into two, because that is my way of perceiving them, but that in reality they are one in the space in which I found myself. They say that I insist on still being an individual, forcing a projection onto them, as if they were two . . . " (Lilly, pp. 26-27)

This experience suggests that our need for a body in the lucid state is due in part to our past identity with a physical body, and our hesitancy to relinquish this identity.

It is doubtful whether there can be a well-defined sense of bodily identity when an individual is in a confluent relationship. Primitive man, like the dreamer, is probably not aware of a separate self until he is able to move out of confluence with the outer world. At this point, the skin becomes the most obvious and definitive boundary

between the individual and the outer world, and adequately insulates the new sense of separateness of which the individual has become aware.

Even when an individual begins to have lucid dreams or out-of-body experiences with regularity, normal dreams continue to outnumber by far dreams of the lucid type. Yet, that which transpires during a single lucid dream may be of immeasurably greater value to the dreamer than a normal dream. The most important quality of the lucid dream appears to be the capacity to consciously accept responsibility for what one has neglected, assuming that the dream is largely a picture of what we have disowned or neglected. This entire process of becoming lucid and "owning" the dream is illustrated in the different portions of the following dream:

"I am walking on a street near my house when I spot a man who I know is antagonistic toward me. I run to the north and hear the man calling to his companions to join him in the pursuit.

"I take refuge in a large multi-storied house. A couple of people who live there accompany me to the top floor, hoping that the band of pursuers will not find us . . . "

Up to this point, the dreamer has come into contact with an aspect of himself which he cannot accept, but *in whose autonomous reality he believes*. The lack of self-reflection and *self-distinction* in the "normal" dream prevents the possibility of the dreamer rising above the apparent reality of the dream world. The dream images which only we have created remain *impervious* to dissolution as long as we cannot face them with full awareness.

Admittedly, reconciliation between the dreamer and the stressful situation can and does occur in normal dreams, but the presence of lucidity and the awareness that the dream has no ultimate power over the dreamer greatly facilitates the process. The dream continues:

"We enter the upper level, and fearfully await their coming.

"Suddenly I realize that we are dreaming. I seem to be standing on a chair because my perspective is from the ceiling. I look down on the girl and say, 'We're dreaming!' She scoffs at this and refuses to believe me. I tell her that I will prove it to her by temporarily withdrawing from the dream. As I do this, I hear her gasp in surprise, so I return. She is elated when she realizes that she has nothing to fear . . . "

At this point the dreamer has been stimulated into lucidity through emotional stress. The immediate consideration is not so much what he

is going to do about the approaching threat, but rather with experimenting with the new-found freedom and independence.

We continue with the dream:

“We hear the gang storming up the stairs. I see a man going to meet them with a gun. I grow afraid even though I realize I can confront them without any danger. I decide to withdraw. As I awaken, I feel as if I have avoided a necessary confrontation.”

Here the dreamer apparently fails in assuming responsibility for the dream by escaping into the waking state. Yet, once consciousness of the conflict has arisen, the problem seems to pursue the dreamer relentlessly as if a commitment has been made to deal with it. We find this to be true in this case. As the dreamer goes back to sleep, there is an immediate confrontation with the unfinished situation:

“From a distance I see the same group of men who were in the previous dream. As they approach, I decide not to escape. They come up to me like a group of dogs, just waiting for a wrong move. But as I laugh nervously, they begin to slap me on the back, and smile in a playful manner.”
(Sparrow, 1974)

This completes the process. The dreamer has come to grips with a part of himself which probably would have remained a threat to him had not consciousness arisen in the dream.

The process of owning the dream through becoming lucid closely parallels the goals of Gestalt Therapy. Great importance is attributed to the development of awareness. Enright says:

“In human beings, *awareness* develops where novelty and complexity of transaction are greatest and the most possibilities (for good or ill) exist. Awareness seems to facilitate maximum efficiency by concentrating all the organism’s abilities on the most complex, possibility-loaded situation.”
(Enright, p. 107)

Enright goes on to say that the goal of Gestalt Therapy “consists of *the reintegration of attention and awareness*” (Enright, p. 108). One possible definition of a dream is that it is a reflection of what the organism is attending to, but of which the conscious self is largely unaware. Thus, the conflicts in dreams become representative of areas in a person’s life in which there is a lack of awareness.

Gestalt Therapy operates under the assumption that once awareness has been reunited with the split-off aspect, the individual can deal with it successfully without further help from the therapist. This is based upon the idea that every individual has the necessary resources to deal with his problems. Impasses arise because blockages exist of which the individual is unaware. As soon as awareness (lucidity) is extended into the area of blockage (the dream conflict), the individual is able to mobilize his resources to deal with it.

If lucid dreaming has a purpose, it is to enable an individual to have a greater awareness of underlying aspects of the personality. Not all of these aspects are disowned conflicts. Surely, many prove to be quite beautiful and profound. In any case, the lucid dream reveals a breakthrough into response-ability upon a level where man is still a child. It is perhaps an indicator of the beginning of consciousness of our *inner* selves, similar to the process which began in relation to the *outer* world ages ago and still remains incomplete.

Chapter Three
THE DYNAMICS OF LUCID DREAMING

*"If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing
would appear to man as it is, infinite."* William Blake

The Qualities Which Promote Lucid Dreaming

One of the first questions to arise in the study of lucid dreaming is: Why do so few people experience lucidity? The answer to this question not only provides a way of approach to lucid dreaming but to other transformative experiences as well.

Our first concern is to decide whether lucidity is an inherent potential, that is, a "given," or learned or acquired faculty. If it is learned, then we would expect to find lucidity occurring only in the dreams of individuals who have actively and consciously pursued the faculty. However, many people upon familiarization with the term are able to recall spontaneous instances of lucidity from their previous dreams. This leads to the conclusion that lucid dreaming is primarily an inherent, unconscious potential, which we shall call "capacity."

However, it has also been shown that once an individual is convinced of the importance of lucid dreaming, its frequency can be increased through desire. The following dream from a young woman's letter illustrates how the desire to experience lucidity may result in a deeply transforming dream.

"After reading the article ('Lucid Dreaming as an Evolutionary Process,' *The A.R.E. Journal*, May, 1975) I went to bed with a strong desire to test it. I slept restlessly until dawn with no recall. Then the most beautiful experience followed.

"I seemed to be responsible for a baby which was very messy and sitting on a pot. My concern was to find a bathroom and clean it up without others noticing it. As I held the baby, I distinctly felt that it should be older and better trained. I looked closely into its face which was full of wisdom and suddenly I knew I was dreaming.

"Excitedly, I tried to remember the advice in the article and the only thought I had was 'Ultimate Experience.' A blissful sensation took over—of blending and melting with colors and light—opening up into a total 'orgasm.' I gently floated into waking consciousness. A feeling of bubbling joy has stayed with me now for six days."

(P.L., 1975)

If desire always effected such immediate results, many of us would be experiencing lucid dreaming quite regularly. But one is liable to find that although desire may initially exert a powerful catalyzing effect, it may soon fail to stimulate further lucidity.

When our desire is intense yet ineffectual, the first thing which we begin doubting is our own capacity for such an experience. However, if our assumption is true that individuals innately possess the capacity for lucid dreaming, then the problem must lie elsewhere.

One way to account for the apparent ineffectiveness of the capacity and desire is to postulate a third variable which influences the frequency of lucid dreaming and other transformative experiences. This quality, which may be called *permeability*, acts as a mediating variable between desire (which is a conscious catalyst) and capacity (which is an unconscious potential).

It is not uncommon for many of us who are diligently practicing meditation as well as intensely longing for transformation to feel at a standstill. We may sense that much is happening unconsciously, but for some reason it fails to reach our conscious awareness. Somewhere, we conclude, there must be barriers which stand between our aspiration and the source of our transformation.

In an attempt to understand the nature of the barriers which inhibit this awareness of our indwelling capacity, Carl Jung postulated a "personal unconscious," or a level of the psyche composed of the memories of our personal experiences.

" . . . the personal unconscious contains all psychic contents that are incompatible with the conscious attitude. This comprises a whole group of contents, chiefly those which appear morally, aesthetically, or intellectually inadmissible and are repressed on account of their incompatibility. A man cannot always think and feel the good, the true, and the beautiful, and in trying to keep up an ideal attitude everything that does not fit in with it is automatically repressed." (Jung, Vol. VIII, p. 310)

Resting on a deeper "collective unconscious" (which contains the innate collective patterns for the spiritual unfoldment of mankind), the personal unconscious contains the memory of guilt, unacceptable

impulses and unresolved interpersonal conflicts. Jung observed that when an individual was able to work through these conflicts, the personal unconscious became more *permeable* to the deeper, integrating patterns in the psyche. Thus permeability is the ideal state of this mediating level between conscious awareness and inherent unconscious capacity.

Thus far three qualities have been presented which give rise to the experience of lucid dreaming. The first quality is the unconscious *capacity* which exists latently within every individual. Although capacity is potentially available it becomes accessible only to the degree that an individual is *permeable*, or relatively free of unreconciled conflicts which form barriers. When a person is permeable, *desire* then stimulates or invites the influx of capacity into conscious awareness. This process may culminate in a healing dream or a deep meditative experience in which a union occurs between the conscious, aspiring individual and the deeper, transforming self.

Lucid dreams may apparently arise under varying combinations of these three qualities. In the next few pages, several possible conditions for the arousal of lucidity and other transformative experiences will be presented.

The Serious Seeker. In the illustration below we see a model depicting an individual who has the desire (indicated by the arrow) and capacity for transformative experience but who lacks the permeability necessary to receive it.

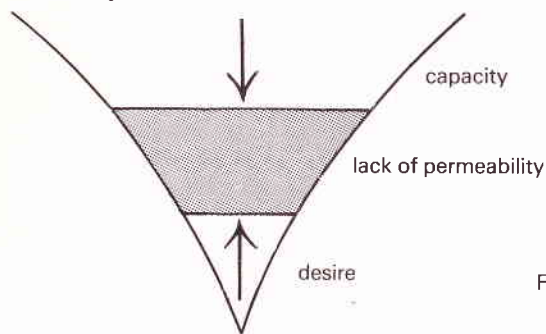


Figure 1. The serious seeker.

Such an individual is likely to feel frustrated, sensing a discrepancy between where he is and where he wants to be. When this condition prevails, the dream life assumes a special significance.

The dream can be regarded as one of the safest and clearest indicators of one's degree of permeability. Within the dream, memories which have been previously rejected rise again into awareness. Furthermore, the desires and attitudes of the dreamer once again interact with these memory patterns; and the lack of harmony which is causing a barrier becomes apparent in the dream.

For example, the following dream reflects one aspect of the dreamer's impermeability:

"I'm on one side of a short fence with a very small dog. On the other side is a larger, more aggressive dog. Somehow, my dog lures the other (black) dog through the fence. It growls at me; I try to be cool. But then he bites my hand and will not let go.

"I grab him by the neck and begin to strangle him. I do enough damage to get him to let go. But he continues to weaken. I feel sorry for the dog . . ." (Sparrow, 1975)

We should note the reaction of the dreamer to this dream. His inability to integrate and accept the aspect of himself which the dog symbolizes creates a state of impermeability.

Yet in the midst of the frustration and tension which may arise in the dream, the dreamer may also experience the deeper self coming to his aid to reconcile the differences. It is as if the dreamer's desire and his unconscious capacity *converge* in the dream to overcome the mediating barriers which inhibit permeability. As a result, dreams which occur in this condition often reveal the appearance of a savior figure, or one who represents the inherent spiritual capacity of the dreamer. The following non-lucid dream dramatically illustrates this convergence:

" . . . I am with a girl. We are both worried as to how we can escape from the devil. She says, 'We'll call . . . (sage-like older man).' I experience great relief.

"That night she and I go to call. As we begin to dial, the devil comes into the building. He looks about 30 years old, has fairly long black hair and speaks gruffly. I act childish and innocent so as not to arouse his suspicion. We walk back toward the building that he occupies. He hits me twice with a rolled-up newspaper for acting stupidly.

"Later we are all outdoors on the lawn in front of the building. As he is talking with other people, the girl and I plan to escape. We make our plans while feigning a romantic attraction.

"We plan to escape by running across the yard toward the shadows of the nearby buildings. The dangerous part is that an area of lighted lawn has to be crossed while he is talking to someone. We take off, or at least, I do. Before I reach the shadows someone tells me that there is a well which I may fall into if I proceed. So I hesitate, trying to decide what to do.

"As I am facing my desired direction, light comes from behind me. I see his shadow creep past me as if the light were behind him. As I turn in fear, I say, 'Lord, have mercy!' Instead of the devil, a beautiful woman clothed in white is here. Light surrounds her. She walks up to me, reaches down and touches my forehead.

"The dream is over. I am aware that light is building within me. A bright warmth fills my vision. Then I awaken."
(Sparrow, 1973)

In this experience the dreamer becomes aware of the barriers within himself which are personified in the dream by the devil. He exhibits a desire to overcome his imprisonment by escaping, which proves to be insufficient. Yet in the midst of his despair, the deeper self (which we can equate with "capacity") comes to his aid and completes the process of liberation.

When desire and capacity converge upon the unreconciled memories or patterns of thought which inhibit permeability, dreams begin to reflect the extremes of the human condition, as in the above dream. On one hand the dreams hold more challenges and pain for the dreamer; yet the ability to face these challenges seems to emerge in response to the influx of the deeper self. The dreamer and his deeper self then cooperate in order to come to grips with previously unacceptable or unrecognized aspects of the dreamer.

This special type of convergence is also significant to a consideration of lucidity. It is important to note that lucidity often emerges in the dream at the same time a symbol of the savior or the higher self makes its appearance. For example, in the "light in the sky" dreams quoted in Chapter One, the appearance of the light preceded the onset of lucidity. On one level we might conclude that this strange sight acts as a cue to "awaken" the dreamer. However, another equally valid interpretation of the relationship between these events is that lucidity and the appearance of a higher self symbol are *subjective* and *objective* manifestations of the deeper self, or capacity for transformative experience.

Thus the perception of light or a symbol of the higher self in the dream environment tends to correlate with the arousal of lucidity. The dreamer's latent capacity may manifest itself in the dream in the externalized *form* of a higher self figure (e.g., a spiritual teacher), and/or the internalized *awareness* of lucidity. The reasons supporting such a theory can be clarified by examining how the arousal of lucidity and the emergence of a higher self symbol have similar *effects* on the *outcome* of the dream.

In the experience with the devil the dreamer reaches a depth of despair to which there seems no solution. He is bound by the

circumstances in the dream which he unknowingly has created. When the illuminated woman appears, however, the situation which previously entrapped the dreamer no longer threatens him. She, in effect, introduces an *alternative* to an inescapable dilemma. The transformative capacity which she represents has a direct influence on a memory pattern that has created impermeability.

Since the dream state is a period during which an individual rarely contemplates alternatives, the course of dreams typically reflects an underlying determinism (i.e., in the dream we rarely think that things could have proceeded other than the way they did). Yet when a savior or higher self symbol appears, as in the aforementioned dream, it often transcends the determinism of the dream by offering the dreamer novel alternatives.

Lucidity affects the course of a dream in a similar manner. The following dream of a young woman is one of a long series of dreams in which she continually fled from an aggressive, somewhat mentally unbalanced man. This dream was the first in which she became lucid; and, as we might suspect, it was one of the last dreams in this series.

"I'm in a dark, poor section of a city. A young man starts chasing me down an alley. I'm running for what seems to be a long time in the dream. Then I become aware that I am dreaming and that much of my dream life is spent running from male pursuers. I say to myself, 'I'm tired of this never-ending chase.' I stop running, turn around and walk up to the man. I touch him and say, 'Is there anything I can do to help you?' He becomes very gentle and open to me and replies, 'Yes. My friend and I need help.' I go to the apartment they share and talk with them both about their problem, feeling compassionate love for them both."

(C.D.Y., 1975)

The question which naturally arises at this point is: If lucidity and the appearance of a higher self symbol are manifestations of the same quality, why does only one of them usually occur in a deep or transforming dream?

Although the two phenomena may represent the same underlying quality and affect the *course of the dream* in similar ways, their effects upon the *dreamer* usually differ radically. In the dream in which the illuminated woman appears, she bestows a gift of healing *upon* the dreamer. As a humble recipient he sees the source of his healing as originating outside of himself (i.e., in another person). The dreamer is left with a sense of being protected and guided by a transcendent "other."

In the dream of the pursuing man, the dreamer assumes quite a different role. As lucidity emerges, she experiences *herself* as being

the healing or reconciling agent. The recipient of healing is seen in this case as a subordinate "other." The experience thus leaves the dreamer with a new sense of competence and inner strength.

We might theorize that the underlying spiritual capacity manifests in the dream in the way which best conforms to the needs of the dreamer. Undoubtedly there are periods when we need to have healing bestowed upon us; for such experiences humble us and engender reverential attitudes. At other times it becomes necessary for us to discover our own capacity to instigate creative change; for this instills within us a sense of self-worth and gradually permits us to experience what it might mean to become "Co-creators with God."

It is important for us to realize that lucidity and the symbolic portrayal of the higher self not only complement each other, but *need* each other.

On one hand, if a person has numerous dreams which reflect the dramatic appearance of a higher self symbol, he may begin to disassociate himself from the dream figure until it is regarded as an autonomous force originating from outside himself. Although the dream may instill a feeling of "presence" within the dreamer, he may never realize that the dream symbol intimates his *own* deeper self.

On the other hand, if a person experiences numerous lucid dreams without ever gaining a sense of a supraordinate "other" then the danger of self-inflation arises. This is characterized by the desire to manipulate the dream according to one's own dictates, as well as an overestimation of one's ability to handle difficult situations.

Hence lucidity and the external portrayal of the higher self make possible a *creative balance* between dynamic self-initiative and reverent receptivity.

The Impatient Seeker. An overestimation of our ability to tackle the barriers inhibiting permeability may lead to a precarious situation. This relationship between desire, permeability and capacity is shown in the diagram below.

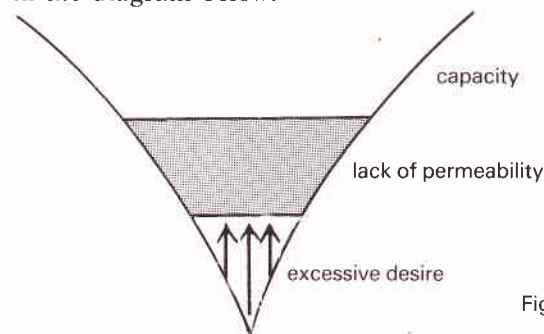


Figure 2. The impatient seeker.

In this situation, an individual tends to encourage a premature confrontation with subconscious barriers through impatience or extreme desire. The attitude which this represents can perhaps be best described as "storming the gates of heaven." Although the underlying supportive capacity does not diminish, it is in effect overshadowed by the zealous impatience of the conscious self. This situation is likely to come about when a person has received a glimpse of what lies beyond his self-created enclosure, and then longs impatiently to be free.

An example of how harmless such an attitude can appear on the surface is an excerpt from my own journal on September 9, 1974.

"Something aches within me for change, for transformation. If I only knew what to give up, what to do. I feel that I too easily grow satisfied with my world and myself. The world of Light recedes in the light of my indifference. I want to meet my obstacles; and I pray for the strength to meet them . . ."

The following dream occurred that night as if in answer to an unwise request.

"I am standing in the hallway outside my room. It is night and hence dark where I stand. Dad comes in the front door. I tell him that I am there so as not to frighten him or provoke an attack. I am afraid for no apparent reason.

"I look outside through the door and see a dark figure which appears to be a large animal. I point at it in fear. The animal, which is a huge black panther, comes through the doorway. I reach out to it with both hands, extremely afraid. Placing my hands on its head, I say, 'You're only a dream.' But I am half pleading in my statement and cannot dispel my fear.

"I pray for Jesus' presence and protection. But the fear is still with me as I awaken." (Sparrow, 1975)

This dream reveals that when a dreamer's desire to confront the subconscious barriers is excessive, even lucidity can prove inadequate to cope with the encounter. If the dreamer wishes to avoid such upsetting and possibly dangerous experiences, he must realize that his conscious desires can *set in motion* a deep, inner process, but they must then await rather than force the natural unfoldment of his inherent capacity. The deeper self seems to operate on the principle that true growth occurs only over a long period of time and cannot be rushed.

The Recipient of Grace. A third configuration emerges when an individual lacks the desire for transformative experiences as well as the permeability to receive them. Yet even though an individual may exhibit no desire whatsoever for transformation or for exploring his self-created barriers to wholeness, he may still receive the gift of healing and transformation.

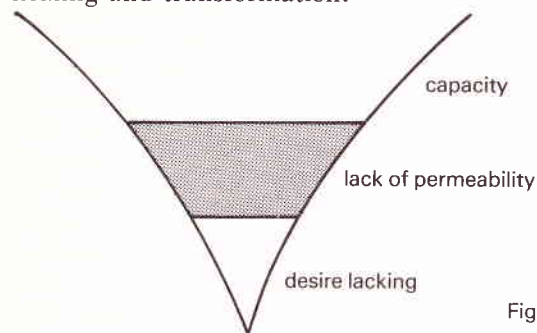


Figure 3. The recipient of grace.

How do these experiences filter through the impermeable, subconscious barriers without the enlistment of conscious cooperation? To understand this, we must examine the relationship between the conscious self and the subconscious barriers.

One of the greatest sustainers of the conscious entity is *consistent identification*. We define ourselves by what we identify with—a body, a name, and a unique set of talents and predispositions. As long as identification serves the purpose of convenience (that is, to give us a sense of distinctness from the outer world and other individuals), it enhances our ability to interact without becoming bewildered or disoriented.

Yet when fear enters, the individual begins to define himself in *contradistinction* to what he fears (e.g., I am afraid of strong emotions, so I think of myself as a calm, collected person). Through his defensiveness he casts out feared or undesirable elements in his life. Even though he may wish to rid himself of these, they remain within his memory (often unconscious memory). Such memories continue to threaten his self-concept (e.g., strong emotions continually try to emerge and have to be pushed back out of awareness). This body of memory then forms a relatively impermeable subconscious barrier between the individual conscious desire for wholeness and his underlying real self.

The principle is this: Subconscious barriers are *maintained* by a rigid and inappropriate *identification* on the part of the conscious self. Thus, when the conscious identity changes or is shaken, the personal unconscious may then become freed and permeable to the deeper self (e.g., after an experience that shakes or disproves my

self-concept of being calm and collected, my emotional self may be free to mediate good feelings from my real self).

In the above diagram which depicts an individual who lacks desire and permeability, the capacity for transformation is inaccessible to the conscious self *as long as its identity remains static and unyielding*. But there are times in our lives when we confront crises which undermine or temporarily shake up any well-defined self-image. In addition there are other periods during which we have difficulty consolidating our self-image because of rapid changes in the environment. Though painful and unstable, these periods may provide the only opportunities for the life-giving source within us to permeate the barriers that we have erected. This infusion, which has been called grace in the Christian tradition, is a gift which is bestowed when the conscious self has been shaken, or to some degree is less fortified.

The concept of grace implies that the divine capacity within each individual is never dormant, but exerts itself in spite of the lack of conscious cooperation. The following dream occurred near the beginning of my spiritual search when rebelliousness still overshadowed my desire for God. However, the instability of my life at the time (as a college freshman) counteracted a clear self-definition; hence the subconscious barriers were ill-defined as well. As a result, I discovered that something beautiful within me wanted my cooperation.

“I’m in bed at home. I feel someone talking to me telepathically and realize that it’s the ‘space people.’ I look out of the window and see a dark sphere. Fearfully, I run out of my room because I don’t want to see them. A dark object flies out of the craft and lands in front of me. A beautiful blonde woman dressed in blue suddenly appears before me. I’m not afraid any more.

“We go into the kitchen to talk. She says that they have been watching me and have finally decided to contact me. I feel a lump in my wrist and ask her what it is. She says that it is a mechanism with which they can keep in touch with me.

“They have come to take Chip (my older brother) with them. It seems that I am not ready to go yet.

“I go into Dad’s room and see Chip kneeling by the bed, wearing a blue robe. His head is shaved. He seems to be crying or half asleep. I tell him that they have come for him.

“Later, from my window, I watch Chip being placed in the craft in a horizontal position. I notice that the woman is standing beside me, and that she is my mother. As the craft

prepares to leave, it sends a flood of bright light towards us which makes viewing difficult.” (Sparrow, 1972)

Dreams of this type usually awaken a desire for further contact with the deeper self. When this desire comes into play, the dreamer assumes, perhaps for the first time, a conscious, active role in his spiritual unfoldment.

The Transparent Self. When permeability is achieved through successive dreams of self-confrontation, purgation and healing, a new relationship emerges between desire, permeability and capacity. This situation which requires the surrendering of acquisitive desire is depicted below.

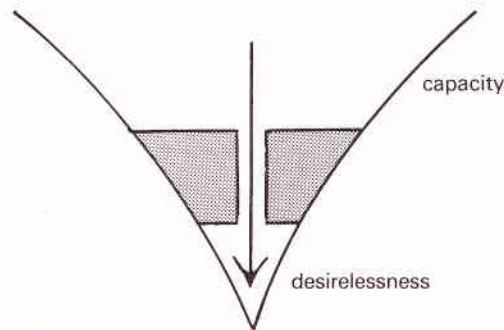


Figure 4. The transparent self.

The convergence of desire and capacity upon the mediating barriers leads gradually to a state of unification which may manifest in the dream as a profound mystical experience. However, the value of desire lessens abruptly as permeability is achieved. It appears that the desire which motivates the dreamer to overcome his self-created barriers must ultimately be surrendered in order to allow the Spirit to have its way.

Desire is built upon expectation, and in its extreme form can be an undisguised demand. Although desire for future change may sustain an individual through difficult experiences, it seems to have no place once the seeker has “arrived”; in fact *desire itself may form the final obstacle to inner union.*

In the following two dream excerpts we can see how desire can inhibit permeability once the latter is achieved.

“A man who I know is Jesus is materializing in front of me. I become excited and run to embrace Him. The figure abruptly disappears . . .” (Sparrow, 1975)

“ . . . I look up in the eastern sky and see a large orb of white light many times the size of the moon. I realize that I am dreaming. I yell out in joy knowing it is coming for me. As soon as I do the light withdraws into the sky as if it is awaiting a more appropriate response on my part. I know that I must turn my eyes away and trust. As I do, the light descends . . .” (Sparrow, 1974)

Perhaps it is inaccurate to say that the seeker must totally relinquish his desire. Instead it appears from the evidence of the above dreams that the culmination of the dream depends upon the dreamer being able to hold in abeyance the *desire for acquisition* (e.g., running to embrace Jesus).

Acquisitive desire tends to be self-oriented, originating out of a sense of lack or a need to bolster one’s self-image. Obviously this desire stands in opposition to the humbleness required to receive the Spirit in its fullness. Yet a positive element of longing remains even after the dreamer overcomes acquisitive desire.

This remnant of desire persists and even facilitates the mystical union. It focuses upon the attainment of an *end* rather than a temporary acquisition (e.g., humbly allowing Jesus to come to me and transform me, instead of running to get Him). Instead of desiring to incorporate or grasp the inflowing Spirit into a limited understanding, the dreamer aspires to become *more* than he is. He in effect offers himself as a sacrifice to a greater vision, a deeper love.

However, this *end* to which the dreamer aspires does not merely avail itself at the critical moment of surrender, but must be a well-established “ideal” within the dreamer’s mind prior to the mystical dream. Without an ideal to serve as a pattern, the experience lacks direction and can perhaps be confusing or harmful. Many experiences are aborted at this point because of the lack of a prevailing ideal to which the dreamer can surrender himself. The above dream of the light in the sky is a good example of this. The readings reiterate the importance of this principle.

To allow self in a universal state to be controlled, or to be dominated, may become harmful.

But to know, to feel, to comprehend as to *who* or as to *what* is the directing influence when the self-consciousness has been released and the real ego allowed to rise to expression, is to be in that state of the universal consciousness . . .

Then, *who* and *what* would the entity have to direct self in such experiences?

Rather than forming a rigid and definitive system of personality types, each of the four conditions outlined in this chapter pertains to perhaps every individual from time to time. Moreover, all of the conditions may arise in the course of a single dream. Hence it is not especially helpful for us to rigidly categorize our present dream-life. Instead, we are charged with the task of continually refining our desires, reconciling our inner conflicts and clarifying our ideals until we can openly accept the luminous culmination of the lucid dream.

Chapter Four THE DELICATE BALANCE

"And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
Romans 12:2

The Value of Sustained Lucidity

During the beginning stages of lucid dreaming the experience rarely lasts for more than a few moments. The dreamer usually awakens immediately, or is quickly reabsorbed into the normal dream-state. The question which arises at this point is: How can the experience be prolonged?

Before we consider specific techniques for sustaining lucidity once it emerges, we must first decide whether there is any value in prolonging a lucid dream at all. After all, it might be argued that lucidity represents an end in itself, and need not be sustained once it initiates a new and better relationship between the dreamer and the dream. However, we have already examined several dreams in which prolonged lucidity enabled the dreamer to contact a profound level of his being as represented by the experience of inner light. This experience alone confirms the value of sustaining lucidity.

Another reason for seeking to maintain and exercise lucid awareness in the dream-state has to do with the theory of reincarnation. Some metaphysical and religious teachings have held that the dream state and the after-death state are similar. The Edgar Cayce readings represent one of the few Western sources that have made such a comparison.

First, we would say, sleep is a shadow of, that intermission in earth's experiences of, that state called death; for the physical consciousness becomes unaware of existent conditions, save as are determined by the attributes of the physical that partake of the attributes of the imaginative or the subconscious and unconscious forces . . .

5754-1

From an entirely different tradition, Sir John Woodruffe, in his foreword to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, draws a similar comparison between the *Bardo* state (period between death and rebirth) and the dream state:

“Rationally considered, each person’s after-death experiences . . . are entirely dependent upon his or her own mental content. In other words . . . the after-death state is very much like a dream state, and its dreams are the children of the mentality of the dreamer.”

(Evans-Wentz, 1970; p. 34)

The ancient Tibetan teachings regard the after-death state as a period during which the deceased is confronted with dream-like images and various lights from which he must discern the true path (Evans-Wentz, 1960). If he is able to make the correct choices, then the need for rebirth is overcome; and the liberated soul becomes one with the “Clear Light.” If this description is accurate then lucidity may not only lead to transcending the illusory aspects of the dream state but may also help to overcome the illusory images in the after-death state which compel the deceased to be drawn karmically back into the earth plane. In his commentary on the Buddhist text, Evans-Wentz confirms this idea:

“ . . . if he [the disciple] has the power to die *consciously*, and at the supreme moment of quitting the body can *recognize* the Clear Light which will dawn upon him then, and can become one with it, all . . . bonds of illusion are broken asunder immediately: the Dreamer is awakened into Reality simultaneously with the mighty achievement of *recognition*.”

(Evans-Wentz, 1970; p. 34) (author’s italics)

Hence, whether we are dreaming or dying, lucidity enables us to rise above the semi-conscious involvement which normally characterizes the dream state, and seek for the Light. The following dream shows how the Light may present itself in its fullness and yet go unseen without the discerning power of lucidity:

“I go into a bedroom and see a pretty young woman sitting on the edge of a bed. I ask her if she would like a backrub and she says yes. I notice bright light coming in through the window. As I give her the rub I begin to be sexually aroused. However, the light coming in through the window (which is brilliant and brighter than the sun) is bothering me. I want to find some sunglasses or pull the

shade but she doesn’t want me to do that. Finally I just turn my back to it.”
(M.A.T., 1975)

How to Prolong the Lucid Dream

When lucidity arises in the dream, consciousness can be said to be moving “away” from total absorption in the normal dream state toward waking awareness. Thus the lucid dream represents an “in-between” awareness in which the dreamer partakes of qualities from both the waking state and the dream state. In other words, the dreamer maintains the *awareness* characteristic of the waking state and the *environment* of the dream state. The duration of a lucid dream thus becomes dependent upon the ability of the dreamer to maintain a balance between waking and dream consciousness. If this balance is to be achieved with any regularity the dreamer must learn to recognize and hold in abeyance the forces impinging upon him from both the waking state and dream state which tend to upset the delicate balance of lucidity.

The Influences of the Dream Environment. In the first case the dreamer must overcome the distracting qualities of the dream environment itself; otherwise the dream will soon re-absorb him into its drama.

During the first few moments of lucidity, the dreamer may have only partially “awakened” and thus may still be vulnerable to the bewildering effects of the rapidly changing dream environment. At this moment, the dreamer may commit the “fatal error” of turning his attention outward. If he does, the instability or the emotional impact of the images may cause him to lapse back into the semi-consciousness of the dream. Hence the immediate need upon the awakening of lucidity is to direct one’s awareness to ideals and objects which will remain unchanging throughout the course of the dream. In other words, the dreamer needs to discover “fixed” symbols onto which he can project his feeble dream identity.

One method of establishing a firm internal identity is to concentrate on an affirmation which serves as a continual reminder of the illusory nature of the experience. An example of such an affirmation is “Everything I see is a dream.” Perhaps even more creative and just as effective is an affirmation which states the consistent purpose or ideal *response* of the dreamer, such as “Let me be a channel of blessings,” or “Create in me a pure heart.” It is perhaps essential that the dreamer cultivate the affirmation in the waking state if he expects it to be an effective aid in the dream.

The following dream from a young man who has worked with lucid dreaming for several years illustrates the fragility of lucid awareness and the effectiveness of an affirmation:

“A long dream in which I become lucid at the end. I am on my way in to see a doctor with some other people. I realize that I am dreaming as I approach the doctor from the rear; I cannot yet see his face. I remember that before I went to sleep I would use the affirmation ‘Everything that I see is the past; all that matters is the way that I respond’ if I should become lucid—I had made this suggestion to myself. I move my awareness to that affirmation. I have to look at one spot to keep my attention upon it. I am afraid that one of the characters in the dream (especially the doctor) will see me staring this way and will get angry at me, thus diverting my attention from the affirmation and causing me to lose my lucidity.”
(M.A.T., 1974)

In this experience the dreamer does two things to sustain his lucid awareness. First of all, he focuses his inner attention upon an affirmation. By choosing a phrase which continually reminds him that he is dreaming, the dreamer effectively insulates himself from any distracting thoughts which might arise to convince him otherwise. Secondly, the dreamer narrows his vision to one spot in the dreamscape. This gradually helps to extend his one-pointedness into the dream environment, and thus weakens its distracting influence. Although the above dream ends at this point, ideally it would go on to assume a more stable appearance as a result of the consolidation of the dreamer’s own identity. At this point, the dreamer would become more able to interact creatively with the dream.

In Carlos Castañeda’s third book about his apprenticeship to Don Juan, a Yaqui Indian sorcerer, his teacher introduces Carlos to the practice of “dreaming,” or lucid dreaming (Castañeda, 1972, p. 126). The first technique that he teaches Castañeda is to become lucid by gazing at his hands or some other portion of the body while in the dream.

At first glance, the dreamer’s hands possess no special significance; instead it seems that Don Juan has made an arbitrary and meaningless selection from a number of possible choices. Yet when we examine the unique role that the body plays in the lucid dream, it will become clear why focusing upon the hands or another part of the body supplies a valuable technique for stimulating and maintaining the lucid dream.

Of all the possible objects which may appear in the dream, the dreamer’s body manifests with the greatest frequency. Although this is an obvious truth, it assumes a special importance when the dreamer’s problem lies in stabilizing a feeble identity in the rapidly changing dream environment.

Since the body is perhaps the most unchanging element in the dreamscape, it provides the best external focus for a struggling internal identity. If attention prematurely extends beyond the body, then the dreamer risks re-involvement with less stable elements in the dream which are more likely to submerge his feeble conscious identity. Hence the body becomes a fixed, external symbol of the dreamer’s identity apart from the dream environment.

However, the body is not the only stable reference point in the dreamscape. Another element which remains relatively unchanging is the ground beneath the dreamer’s feet. By simply turning his attention to the ground, the dreamer may strengthen his internal identity, and as a result clarify and stabilize the dream image. The following experience illustrates how concentration upon “fixed” or unchanging elements can sustain the lucid dream:

“ . . . I walk on down the street. It is night; and as I look up at the sky I am astounded by the clarity of the stars. They seem so close. At this point I become lucid. The dream ‘shakes’ momentarily. Immediately I look down at the ground and concentrate on solidifying the image and remaining in the dreamscape. Then I realize that if I turn my attention to the pole star above my head, the dream image will further stabilize itself. I do this; until gradually the clarity of the stars returns in its fullness.”

(Sparrow, 1975)

The Influences of the Flesh Body. Although the dreamer must on one hand maintain a sense of identity apart from the dream environment if lucidity is to be sustained, he must also keep from immediately awakening. If this is to be achieved, the dreamer must recognize the aspects of his waking self which threaten to withdraw him prematurely from the dream. These aspects can be grouped under the general heading of *sensory or flesh body awareness*.

When we are awake and self-reflecting we continually expect sensory feedback from the flesh body. It is the way in which we typically confirm our perceptions and establish our associations with the surrounding world. This continual expectation forms a strong bond in which we associate self-reflection with the flesh body. It

follows that whenever self-reflection (lucidity) arises in the dream state there is the immediate tendency to re-identify with the flesh body.

One of the misconceptions which arises out of such a strong bond to the flesh body and which causes the dreamer to terminate a lucid dream is that the body will die if consciousness ever "leaves" the body. Although the dreamer may affirm otherwise, this belief is deeply ingrained within most of us, and is likely to resist change. Hence instead of negating this belief which probably has important survival value in our day-to-day existence, the dreamer can counteract its effect during the dream by creatively affirming the potential for healing and transformation in the lucid dream. This constant affirmation will diminish the tendency immediately to abort the lucid dream. Though the change will perhaps take place gradually, the dreamer will eventually experience less apprehension at finding himself "awake" in a dream.

Another belief which typically shortens the lucid dream is the geocentric notion that the waking state is *real* in contrast to the unreality of the dream. This stimulates the dreamer to test the dream by waking standards, which quickly leads to a re-identification with the flesh body and the senses. This tendency is illustrated in the following lucid dream of a middle-aged woman:

"As I completely relaxed and had lids closed but eyes looking straight ahead, this dream scene of a building wall came into view.

"It is as though I am walking along toward the left of the scene. Like a camera eye I am looking up at an old stone building at my right. I keep looking and walk along, then reverse direction, looking up at the building continuously with great curiosity.

"The scene is dark, rather, like a cloudy day, or perhaps this is on an old street with something nearby blocking off the light from this building. I am not especially on a street. It may be in a park or forest. I see nothing but the building which I am very close to. The light is very poor, dim, perhaps it is almost nighttime, when you can't see colors . . .

"I think: I am awake—I have *just* closed my eyes—I *know* I am awake. I have been awake so long, and this must have been wanting to come through. It started as I barely got my eyes relaxed and straight-ahead. This is important to me—I must take a good look at it. What can this be?

"This really bothers me and *to test if I am really awake, I crack one eye open to look at my bedroom. That's it! Now the building has vanished. I do not see it again. Oh, heck!*"
(M.H., 1975) (author's italics)

The way in which we "test" the lucid dream has something to say about our underlying assumptions about the physical world and the waking state. Normally we feel that if we can experience the transition from what we call a dream to what we call reality, we can conclude we have been dreaming. This conclusion tends to diminish the "dream" experience and furthermore to neglect the question, "Are we *still* dreaming?" When we fail to ask this question we are implicitly equating reality with sensory awareness and thus making the physical senses the sole criterion for the evaluation of our experience.

According to the Edgar Cayce readings, this is a mistake:

Be sure that . . . there is not the attempt to measure spiritual things by material standards . . . 254-60

For . . . that we see manifested in the material plane is but a shadow of that in the spiritual plane. 5749-3

In addition to working with his deep-set beliefs, the dreamer can attempt to improve the condition of his flesh body. If the body is uncomfortable or suffering any internal pressures, it will withdraw consciousness more quickly from the lucid dream. Since there is already a strong psychological predisposition to re-identify with the body upon the arousal of lucidity, an inharmonious bodily state only tends to complete the re-identification process.

In *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, directions regarding diet and exercise are given to diminish the tendency of the body to awaken the dreamer:

"The Spreading-out into the Waking-State occurreth when one is about to comprehend the dream, in virtue of thinking that it must be comprehended, and then waketh up." (Evans-Wentz's footnoted explanation: "In other words, the waking from sleep while one is trying to grasp the character of the dream-state is called the spreading-out of dream content into the waking state.")

"The antidote for this is to eat nutritious food and to perform bodily work [or exercise] until fatigued. Thereby sleep becometh deeper; and that cureth it."

(Evans-Wentz, 1958, p. 218)

Both proper eating and exercise tend to diminish the level of sensory imbalance within the body until the lucid dreamer becomes relatively free from the demands of the sleeping flesh body.

Even though the dreamer may accomplish a balancing of his body energies through diet and exercise, the tendency to awaken can still be strong. An additional practice which helps to overcome this tendency is to try to move about in the dream body once lucidity arises. This practice is reflected in the following dream:

"I move into the dream without a break in consciousness. As the dream world scene begins to emerge I (1) try to move (be active) in it in order to solidify my association with it, (2) keep my eyes looking down where there will be the most constant stimulus. I run into what seems to be a gym. I jump up and grab the basketball rim. I know that I need to do one thing which is supernatural in order to solidify my perceptions of the lucid dream. So I push off from the rim, float in the air briefly, and then drop to the ground . . ."

(M.A.T., 1975)

One possible reason why movement in the lucid dream tends to stabilize the dreamer's involvement is that it allows his mind to associate self-reflection with the *lucid dream* body instead of the flesh body. If the dreamer remains stationary, then there is a greater tendency to associate his self-reflective capacity with the sleeping, inert flesh body, and thus awaken.

In the above dream the dreamer also solidifies his involvement by performing a feat that defies physical laws. In doing so he affirms a new set of laws. Since our experiences usually function under the laws of the flesh body, awareness is usually attracted to the flesh body. However, with the introduction of a new set of laws into the dream experience, awareness is less likely to be drawn prematurely back to the flesh body. At this point the dreamer's identity can shift to his dream body which operates according to the new principles.

In summary, this chapter has presented several principles and techniques for sustaining lucidity for the purpose of seeking and becoming one with the Light. They are:

1) Use an affirmation which constantly reminds the dreamer that he is dreaming, and/or which states an ideal response to the dream environment.

2) Focus attention upon a fixed symbol in the dream environment (i.e., body or the ground).

3) Affirm the healing potential of the lucid dream during the day in order to counteract the fear that the body will die if consciousness "leaves" it.

4) Affirm that the waking state is also a dream, a "shadow of that in the spiritual plane." Try not to test the lucid dream by waking standards, or by tuning in to the flesh body to verify that the experience is a "mere dream."

5) Exercise during the day so that the body will sleep deeply.

6) Eat nutritious foods to avoid indigestion or other inharmonious bodily conditions.

7) Move about in the dream body to avoid premature re-identification with the flesh body.

8) Try to do something which defies physical laws so as to affirm laws other than those of the flesh body.

Chapter Five
THE DAWNING OF THE CLEAR LIGHT

"For what can be the value of something that does not engender humility, love, mortification, silence and holy simplicity?"
St. John of the Cross

Lucid Dreaming as a Doorway to Spiritual Experience

In Chapter Two, the transition from the normal dream state into lucidity was compared to the emergence of the ego from the primitive psyche. Emphasis was placed upon the independence and responsibility which arise when the dreamer is able to experience himself as a self-reflecting entity apart from the dream world.

If we were to stop there, much would remain neglected, for whenever there is the attainment of greater independence, a possible danger arises that the individual will deny all links with his former sense of dependence. We can see evidence of this denial in Western culture where the ego has soared to new heights of rational independence without a corresponding recognition of the vast unconscious from which it emerged. Jung says:

"It is even probable . . . that our modern consciousness is still on a relatively low level. Nevertheless, its development so far has made it emancipated enough to forget its *dependence* on the unconscious psyche."

(Jung, Vol. II, p. 289)

If through our new-found sense of independence we develop a contempt or a manipulatory attitude toward the images that are presented to us in the dream, we are likely to suffer in the long run. When we begin to experience our capacity to shape the dream environment, it becomes easy to forget that the goal consists of reconciliation with the dream elements, not a mastery over them. We have to go beyond a rigid sense of independence. As we are able to do this we can move beyond the lucid dream into another level of experience.

"Just as the transition from the first stage to the second demands the sacrifice of childish dependence, so, at the transition to the third stage, an exclusive independence has to be relinquished."
(Jung, Vol. XI, p. 183)

This third stage to which Jung refers seems to entail an act of surrender in spite of the strengths which may have been accumulated in the process of upward development. The culmination of this act of surrender appears to be identical to what the great mystics have described for centuries. It is perhaps the common element in all of the religions—a level of consciousness at which the individual is unified with a force of such overwhelming proportions that he feels melted by it and lifted immeasurably beyond his normal state of consciousness. The lucid dream seems to bring the dreamer much closer to this state, but as we can see in the following dream, there is a tendency to be so absorbed in the new sense of freedom that the dreamer fails to move any further along.

"I am flying around, enjoying myself. At one point, I begin to doubt my weightlessness. As I do, I plummet to the ground. But I get up in good spirits and make ready to take off again.

"Then, 'X' comes out of the house, so I walk up to talk with him. I am elated and want to share my experience with him. He smiles patiently and says, 'I had hoped you would get over your bent for these kinds of experiences. *He* (the Master) has been here twice already.' I am so shocked that I 'awaken' immediately."
(Sparrow, 1974)

This dream suggests to the dreamer that he is fixated at a particular stage in a process which eventually leads to communion with a deeper experience. If this is true (and it appears to be from the examples which will follow), the dream experience can be regarded as a pathway which leads through various obstacles of our own creation. As we respond inappropriately to a threatening image or an attractive situation along the way, we are fixated there until we can change our response. The capacity to respond in an unattached manner seems to be greatly enhanced by the emergence of lucidity. If we are able to realize that the dream images are of our *own* creation, the capacity for unattachment greatly increases, and the compulsion to involve ourselves with them diminishes.

The Importance of an Ideal. Even when the dreamer emerges into a fully lucid state, the temptation remains in a different, more subtle

form. Whereas in the normal dream the dreamer is drawn into an emotional *involvement* with the dream images, now the dreamer feels a desire to exercise his freedom in relation to the image. This can take the form of overcoming the image by force or by mentally changing it into something more desirable. In the case of the previous example of the flying dream, the dreamer is simply engrossed in the aesthetic beauty of the dream images as well as in his freedom of movement.

The fact that this level of experience offers a great deal cannot be disputed. If we have no conception of anything beyond this, it is quite understandable to be satisfied with the virtually unlimited possibilities available in the lucid state. It is only when we have glimpsed intuitively that something may lie beyond, that the lucid dream loses some of its attractiveness. It is probably true that the closer we get to where we want to *be*, the easier it is to be drawn away by the increasing multiplicity of distractions. Hence, the lucid dream is not only a breakthrough, but also a potential distraction if we are seeking the very best. But what is the "very best" to which we can aspire? This is apparently open to individual interpretation. As the dreamer experiences the lucid state with increasing regularity, it is likely that he will gain intimations as to what this might be for him. An example of this realization is as follows:

"I am sitting in front of a small altar which has figurines upon it. At first, I see an ox. I look away momentarily, then look back, only to find that there is the figure of a dragon in its place. I begin to realize that I am dreaming. I turn my head away, and this time affirm that when I look back I will see the highest form possible. I slowly turn back and open my eyes. On the altar is the figure of a man in meditation. A tremendous wave of emotion and energy overwhelms me. I jump up and run outdoors in exhilaration."
(Sparrow, 1974)

In this dream, the dreamer gains an understanding of what the highest is to him. Once this has been comprehended and consciously established as the ideal to the dreamer, it becomes a veritable measuring device by which the inner experiences can be evaluated. The question changes from "How beautiful was the experience?" to "Where does this experience stand in relation to my ideal?" In this way, the lucid dream can be entered into with a sense of purpose which will aid the dreamer in remaining unattached to the diverse opportunities which may arise.

The culmination of this process can be seen in the following two dreams. In the first dream, which has been mentioned previously, the

dreamer experiences the difficulty of surrendering his freedom and receiving that which would come to him. In the second, the dreamer succeeds in moving beyond this sense of independence, and surrendering to a higher experience.

". . . outdoors, I see a light in the sky. I am told that I must turn my head away if the light is to descend upon me. I am aware that I am dreaming. I bow my head. The ground around me begins to be illuminated by the brilliant orb. I begin to be afraid as it nears me. I look up, and it withdraws into the sky. The process is repeated, but I fail to overcome my fear."

"It is a clear night, and the sky is filled with stars. I am walking in my front yard, looking at the stars and hearing music coming from the house across the street.

"Suddenly, what appears to be a meteorite drops out of the eastern sky. At this point, I become lucid. The light falls all the way to the horizon. As it hits the earth, there is a flash of bright light.

"I drop to the ground and prepare to meditate, yet I know that I cannot move out of the form of the dream or the experience will not be complete. Two lights begin to approach me from the area of the impact. They are moving directly toward me in a parallel fashion. I wait until the lights are directly overhead. Then I know it is time to close my eyes and meditate.

"Immediately a tremendous energy wells up within my body. I try to surrender to it. As I do, light begins to fill my vision. There is a tremendous sense of warmth and love, which continues for a good while."
(Sparrow, 1974)

This experience of light and energy seems to be universally recognized in the literature on meditation and contemplative prayer as actual communion between the individual and the Divine. Whether or not this is an *objective* truth, its ubiquitous occurrence lends credence to its essential importance. Carl Jung concurs with this:

"The phenomenon itself, that is, the vision of light, is an experience common to many mystics, and one that is undoubtedly of the greatest significance, because in all times and places it appears as the unconditional thing, which unites in itself the greatest energy and the profoundest meaning."
(Wilhelm, p. 106)

Lucid Dreaming and the Meditation Process. Since the lucid dream appears to bring an individual within reach of a level of consciousness which has been associated in the past with deep meditative experiences, it is quite probable that the process of lucid dreaming is closely related to the meditative process. In fact, it is likely that we can regard lucid dreaming as *a visual representation of the meditative process.*

The problem which confronts the meditating individual can perhaps best be described as separation from himself. The practice of meditation has as its ultimate goal the reunion of the conscious self with those aspects which lie unrecognized in the recesses of the unconscious, and which offer completion to the individual. Yet, before this can happen, the meditator must confront his preconceptions and fears which act as a barrier between himself and the elements of completion. Often these obstacles are very subtle, manifesting only as confusion or an incomprehensible emotional state which arises in the meditation process. The lack of concreteness in these awakening patterns makes a successful reconciliation a vague and difficult endeavor. The dream provides us, however, with a vivid pictorial representation of the encounter which we face. In addition, the dream allows the individual to view the results of his responses toward the obstacle. Thus, the dream facilitates an objectification of the obstacle which to the meditator is often vague and subjective.

If full conscious awareness *and* the objectification of unconscious obstacles are the two prerequisites for the movement toward inner completion, then the lucid dream can be regarded as a state in which the two qualities occur simultaneously. The self-reflecting consciousness usually available only to the awake person intersects with the dream. Thus, for the first time, *interaction* can occur between the dream and the waking self. This appears to result in an acceleration of the meditative process which culminates in the breakthrough experience of light and fulfillment.

When one examines the literature on meditation, it becomes evident that surrender is one of the most important prerequisites to this breakthrough experience. Likewise, the culmination of the lucid dream does not depend so much upon the acquisition of new powers as it does upon the receptive capacity of the individual. The *adventure* of the lucid dream, like the outward appearances of other inner pathways, lures us with a promise of greater freedom, only to demand our total surrender in the end. Perhaps this is the earmark of all genuine approaches to wholeness.

The author is interested in continuing his studies of lucid dreaming with an eye to future research projects. He would, therefore, welcome readers' comments and experiences. He may be addressed at Box 595, Virginia Beach, VA 23451.

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APPENDIX

The purpose of this section is to present several exercises through which one may healthily encourage lucidity in the dream state, as well as stimulate greater objectivity in the waking state. These exercises (which include some of the most frequently recommended practices in the Edgar Cayce readings) have served to encourage lucidity in the lives of the individuals whose dreams appear in this booklet. It must be emphasized, however, that these exercises are not merely techniques but have sufficient value in their own right to warrant our attention.

The Importance of an Ideal in the Dream State

Perhaps the most important exercise one can perform in order to insure a consistent and creative response in the lucid dream is to decide initially upon a spiritual ideal.

Then, the more important, the most important experience of this or any entity is to first know what is the ideal—spiritually. 357-13

Recommended by the readings as the fundamental prerequisite for any successful pursuit, this practice establishes a criterion by which to evaluate and direct our responses in the dream.

In a way, lucid dreaming marks the birth of conscious *will* in the dream state. For the first time, the dreamer has the ability to conceive consciously of alternate paths of action, as well as a variety of possible attitudes. Hence in order to insure an appropriate response or course of action in the dream we need to conceive of an *ideal* to act as a motivational standard against which we can compare and guide future responses. By holding this ideal in mind upon the awakening of lucidity we may bypass alluring distractions as well as pre-empt the confusing effects of fears and doubts. The spiritual ideal then becomes a veritable ordering principle which enhances the quality of our responses in the dream.

For the ideal held as the activative force in the experience becomes then as the leading force in all of its relationships, all of its dealings with its fellow man. 1211-1

Not only does the ideal improve our responses to the thought-form world of the dream, but as a thought creation itself it shapes to some extent the dream environment as well. So as we work with ideals, we may observe an improvement in the quality and clarity of the dream as well as in our responses to it.

Often it is difficult for us to understand just exactly what a spiritual ideal is and should be. The readings define this concept in the following excerpt:

The ideal ever is that each entity fulfill that purpose for which it has entered any given experience. 816-10

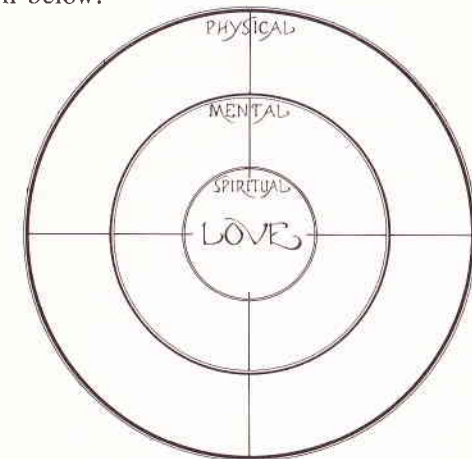
In order to fulfill the purpose of the dream experience we must first determine what it is. Many psychologists have observed that the dream is largely a reflection of thoughts and memories which have been suppressed or overlooked, and which seek integration into the conscious self. This assumption appears to be a valid one when we observe that dream experiences which are fulfilling often reflect a reconciliation of previously unacceptable or obscured qualities of the inner self with the waking personality. We can describe this fulfillment in many ways: as oneness, as the Christ Consciousness, as wholeness, as the mystical marriage. However, the *specific* way in which we personally conceive of this fulfillment becomes our spiritual ideal in the dream state.

The readings advise us to choose one word to represent our spiritual ideal. This single word signifies the stabilizing force in our dreams and waking experiences.

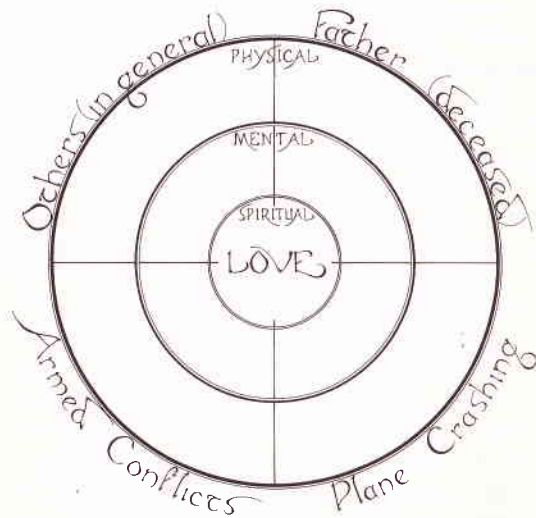
... thy spiritual concept of the ideal, whether it be Jesus, Buddha, mind, material, God or whatever is the word which indicates to self the ideals spiritual. 5091-3

A Model for Setting Ideals. Utilizing the format of the model below, we may begin to establish our own spiritual, mental and physical ideals for dreaming. As we carry out this process, it should become clear that ideals make no demands upon the world (or dream environment), but only upon our responses *to* the world.

The first step is to choose a word which represents to us the spiritual ideal or the fulfillment of the purpose of the dream experience. As mentioned before, this may vary greatly in form from person to person. To some it may be Jesus; to others it may be love. Once a word has been selected it needs to be written in the center of the innermost circle as shown below.



The next step is for us to determine four recurrent situations or areas of our dream life in which we seek to express our spiritual ideal. (Of course we may wish to work with more areas but for now we will concentrate upon four.) These areas can be determined by studying our recent dreams. What situations show up with regularity? Whom do we dream about? These areas may or may not have clear parallels in our present waking life. For example, we may dream regularly about a deceased friend or about fighting in World War II. Once we have determined the four recurrent dream areas we can divide the circles into pie-shaped segments and write them down as shown below.



Once we have chosen a spiritual ideal we can then turn our attention to the specific *attitudes* and *behaviors* we wish to manifest in the dream. By choosing mental and physical responses which are consistent with and serve the purpose of the spiritual ideal we in effect establish mental and physical ideals.

In selecting mental ideals for ourselves we need to determine ideal *attitudes* with which we hope to awaken the spiritual ideal in each chosen area of the dream life.

... Write the ideal *mental attitude*, as may arise from the concepts of the spiritual, [in the] relationship to self, to home, to friends, to neighbors, to thy enemies, to things, to conditions. 5091-3

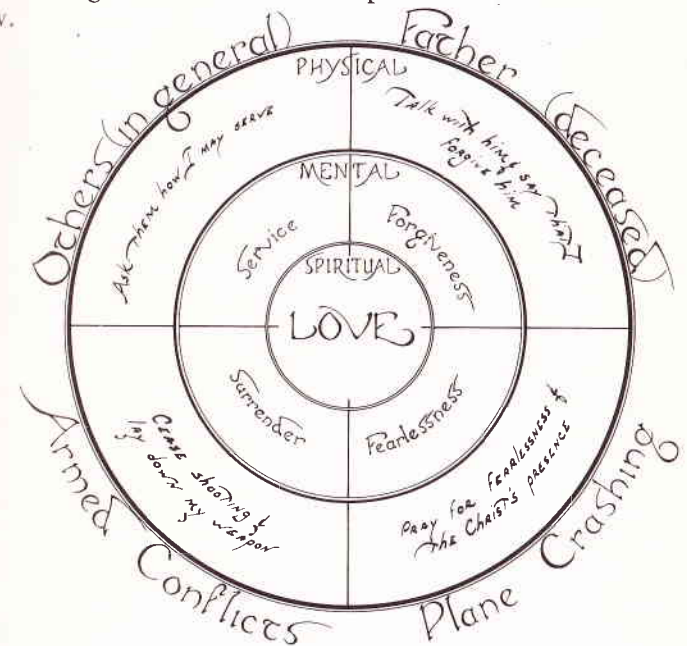
In addition we need to choose ideal *activities* in the dream, or physical ideals, which will allow the spiritual and mental ideals to manifest in each area of the dream. In essence we are deciding how we would like to *act* in relation to each area.

... the ideal material ... Not of conditions, but what has brought, what does bring into manifestation the spiritual and mental ideals. What relationships does such bring to things, to individuals, to situations? 5091-3

The mental and physical ideals can be regarded as outgrowths or *extensions* of the spiritual ideal into our mental attitudes and physical activities. For example, we may have been dreaming regularly of our deceased father and wish to extend our spiritual ideal into this dream relationship. It is possible that the image of our father appears frequently because of some unreconciled conflicts we had with him but were unable to work out before he died. We may also realize that we were never able to forgive him for certain things he did. As a result of this we may decide that an attitude of *forgiveness* in the dream would allow us to express the spiritual ideal of love in relation to our father. Hence the attitude of forgiveness becomes our *mental ideal* in this area.

Next we need to decide how we can exhibit or *enact* this attitude of forgiveness. We may decide that we need simply to talk with our father in the dream and tell him that we forgive him. This overt activity becomes our *physical ideal* in relation to this area of the dream.

Once we have decided on mental and physical ideals for each dream area the diagram needs to be completed as shown in the example below.



As we work creatively with an area of the dream, it may cease to appear with its previous regularity; instead, other recurring situations may appear. At this point it may become necessary to establish new ideals in order to remain abreast of our progress.

[For an in-depth analysis of ideals, see *Meditation and the Mind of Man*, available from the A.R.E. Press.]

The Catalyzing Effect of Early Morning Meditations

As mentioned in Chapter One, an important pre-requisite to lucid dreaming in the author's experience has been the practice of early morning meditations. The time for the meditation does not seem important, except that it should take place after the body has rested long enough to permit the mind to be sufficiently alert. Also, adequate time should remain afterwards in order to allow the person to sleep for an hour or more. The author has found that a 10-15 minute meditation period during the early morning hours from 2-5 a.m. has provided an effective catalyst to lucid dreaming during the ensuing hours of sleep.

It is *essential*, however, that the meditator regard the meditation experience primarily as an attunement experience. Otherwise he will be reducing a potentially sacred experience to the status of a mere technique.

Applying Principles of Lucidity in the Waking State

Another way that lucidity can be encouraged is by applying principles of lucidity to the waking "dream." Once an individual has begun to examine critically the postulates and laws under which he operates during the waking hours, it stands to reason that this will begin to characterize the dream life and eventually result in the initiation of lucidity. The following two awareness exercises are based upon this approach:

1) When confronted with a tense or difficult situation, affirm to yourself that the experience is a dream and the important thing to do is to respond creatively. Then perform a simple creative act based upon this realization.

Example: I am upset because Bob has criticized my term paper. Realizing that the experience is a dream, I ask him for suggestions as to how I may improve it.

2) Spend five minutes a day simply looking at the environment around you as a dream. Observe the details and colors of the objects around you. Notice any incongruities or oddities in their appearance. Describe what you see out loud to yourself.

Although these exercises usually enable only an increased unattachment in the waking state, they often result in radical

transformations of the dream experience once they begin to be utilized by the dreaming individual.

Re-living Past Dreams

Another method of encouraging lucidity as well as experiencing a more creative resolution to what might be frightening or depressing dreams is to re-live past dreams and to imagine yourself becoming lucid in the process.

The first step is to choose a recent dream and to re-live the experience step-by-step up to the point where there is an obvious incongruity or irrational element in the dream. Then imagine yourself becoming lucid at this point. Continue the reverie and attempt to respond in a more creative manner than you did previously. Remember, the aim is not to change the *dream* or what is being presented; instead you are trying to respond more creatively *to* the dream.

A good time to practice this exercise is before going to sleep at night. In this way, a more creative attitude (if not lucidity) can be carried over into the dream state.

Choosing a Recurring Symbol as a Cue to Awaken

Another exercise which seems to increase the frequency of lucid dreaming is the selection of a recurring symbol or a particular event which the individual adopts as a cue with which he becomes aware that he is dreaming. It is soon apparent that this choice cannot be an arbitrary one. The symbol obviously must occur with sufficient regularity to enable the dreamer to make continued efforts at achieving lucidity. It also must be of sufficient importance to the dreamer to stand out in the dream environment. Some possible cue symbols are: a deceased person; a recurring dilemma, such as being arrested; or a recurring symbol of a religious nature.

Undoubtedly there are many factors which contribute to the occurrence of lucid dreaming. However, it is likely that most any exercise which enables a gradual broadening of awareness can be utilized as a method for experiencing greater awareness in the dream.

THE EDGAR CAYCE LEGACIES

Among the vast resources which have grown out of the late Edgar Cayce's work are:

The Readings: Available for examination and study at the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc., (A.R.E.) at Virginia Beach, Va. are 14,256 readings consisting of 49,135 pages of verbatim psychic material plus related correspondence. *The readings* are the clairvoyant discourses given by Cayce while he was in a self-induced hypnotic sleep-state. These discourses were recorded in shorthand and then typed. Copious indexing and cross-indexing make the readings readily accessible for study.

Research and Information: Medical information which flowed through Cayce is being researched and applied by the research divisions of the Edgar Cayce Foundation. Work is also being done with dreams and other aspects of ESP. Much information is disseminated through the A.R.E. Press publications, *A.R.E. News* and *The A.R.E. Journal*. Co-ordination of a nation-wide program of lectures and conferences is in the hands of the Department of Education. A library specializing in psychic literature is available to the public with books on loan to members. An extensive tape library has A.R.E. lectures available for purchase or loan to members. Resource material has been made available for authors, resulting in the publication of scores of books, booklets and other material.

A.R.E. Study Groups: The Edgar Cayce material is most valuable when worked with in an A.R.E. Study Group, the text for which is *A Search for God*, Books I and II. These books are the outcome of eleven years of work by Edgar Cayce with the first A.R.E. group and represent the distillation of wisdom which flowed through him in the trance condition. Hundreds of A.R.E. groups flourish throughout the United States and other countries. Their primary purpose is to assist the members to know their relationship to their Creator and to become channels of love and service to others. The groups are nondenominational and avoid ritual and dogma. There are no dues or fees required to join a group although contributions may be accepted.

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