



The best of DREAMS

It really is possible to dream your way to a better life and we're going to show you how

Dreams are incredible. They can give us experiences that are out of reach in our waking lives, such as being able to chat with departed loved ones in Spirit, travel to strange new worlds and experience 'super powers' like the ability to fly. And, of course, through our dreams our unconscious helps us unravel and process worries. But did you know you can also use them as a spiritual tool to shape the life you want, solve dilemmas and be more creative?

In mainstream Western culture, there's been a tendency to dismiss dreams as pure fantasy but our ancestors knew the realms of sleep could offer many riches. In ancient cultures they were believed to be a spiritual experience where guidance could be received from higher realms.

But over the past few years there's been a rising curiosity about working with dreams for empowerment, with scores of books being published on the subject.

Leading expert and author Dr Clare Johnson has been studying dreams for 25 years and has found that not only can we learn from them but actively guide them in order to live more fulfilling lives.

'Your dreaming mind can become your best friend,' says Clare. 'A friend who wants to help you live a happier life, a friend who is available to listen to your problems and dish out advice, even at 3am. It's an entirely free, natural way to empower our lives. It's even time efficient because we do it when we're asleep!'

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Expert tip

Practising mindfulness will help you to have more positive dreams. Be mindful of your thoughts, identify negative ones and put a positive spin on them.

Perchance to dream

Even if we don't remember our dreams, we always dream during the rapid eye movement (REM) stage of sleep, which happens about 90 minutes after you fall asleep.

According to Clare, there are six different types of dreams: emotional, physical, soul, archetypal, pre-cognitive and lucid dreams.

'Emotional dreams are, as their name suggests, ones which are dominated by emotions,' she says. 'A lot of people find themselves crying out in distress or perhaps really angry in their dreams, and this is often highlighting repressed feelings from our waking life. By recognising what's going on in these

dreams it gives us a chance to heal.

'Physical dreams are linked to the body. You may feel pain because you are in physical discomfort. One extreme example of this was a man who dreamed he was being tortured with hot coals beneath his chin and it turned out he had thyroid cancer. But they may also reflect unresolved emotions.

'One of my favourite types are soul dreams. These are amazing dreams where you might be floating in light and meeting higher beings who give you advice. I once dreamed of columns of blue light that were wise beyond belief. These experiences connect us with a deep source of light and knowledge that we all have somewhere within and can have a lasting spiritual effect.

'Archetypal dreams contain universal images, characters and themes such as the "warrior or goddess" that appear in all cultures throughout time. Highly symbolic, they can give us insights about changes that are going on in our lives. For instance, a devil (an archetypal symbol) could represent a shadow or hidden aspect of your personality.

'Pre-cognitive dreams are when you dream of the future. Some people have insignificant dreams of the future, such as receiving a green envelope and getting one in the post the next day. Others may dream of important future events.'

These can be a sign that you are in tune with your innate psychic abilities.

'Lucid dreams happen

Giveaway!

Ten readers will win a copy of *Llewellyn's Complete book of Lucid Dreaming* (Llewellyn, £21.99). To enter this competition, email spirit.destiny@bauermedia.co.uk with your full contact details. Closing date March 1st 2018.



in any of the above categories, but the difference is you know you are dreaming. You can guide it and choose to respond to a scenario in a particular way – face a fear, or realise impossible fantasies like flying to the stars.'

The concept was first recognised and explored by English psychologist Dr Keith Hearne in 1975 at the University of Hull.

Choosing your dreams

There are some dream types you may find more helpful than others. If you are looking for guidance at any given time, you may benefit from having a soul dream, for instance. Through a method called 'dream incubation', you can request the type you want before you go to sleep.

'This is a simple but powerful technique that has been practiced for millennia,' explains Clare. 'In ancient Greece, the ruins of temples show that people would ask one of their deities to

invoke dreams for healing, protection during childbirth or life guidance. Nowadays, we can do the same by working with our dreams to harness guidance.

'To incubate a dream, you have to really want it, willpower is a key tool.'

It's possible to incubate both a particular type of dream *and* the type of content, for example, meeting a particular person who could help you solve a problem.

'To incubate a soul dream, it's helpful to have a soulful question in mind, and focus on this as you drop off to sleep, while trusting that it will come to you in response,' adds Clare. Soulful questions include: What is my life's purpose? What happens when we die? What is the gift that I am here to share? Close your eyes and focus on your question, feeling its power. Keep the question running through your mind like a relaxing mantra as you drift into sleep. This will help you harness the answers you seek.'

Another way to incubate any type of dreams you want is to place a visual representation of what you want the subject matter to be about (a photo, drawing, or object) under your pillow or beside your bed.

Everyone is different, so experiment to discover what works best for you. It's also very effective to ask a question before you go to sleep such as 'Am I following the right career for me?' or 'Am I in the right relationship?' There's no need to be too prescriptive, see what flows.

Lessons to be learned

The mood or frame of mind you are in just before you drop off can influence your dreams. If you are calm and relaxed before bed, you are more likely to have fruitful dreams.

'Bedtime mantras are important too. Before you go to sleep say, "I will wake up refreshed and remember my dreams",' says Clare.

We tend to dream six times per night, which

Using nightmares as a gift

Bad dreams can leave us feeling off kilter but they can actually be used as a positive force in your life

One of the best kept secrets is that nightmares are healing gifts. They point out parts of ourselves and our lives that we need to work on, such as unconscious fears, buried trauma, or unresolved emotions. Transform your nightmares into therapy with the following tips:

- Begin by closing your

eyes and imagine yourself inside your nightmare again, while knowing that you are completely safe.

- Ask the scary person or monster from your

'Transform nightmares into therapy'

nightmare, 'Why are you chasing me?' or 'Do you have a message for me?' Their answer may surprise and enlighten you. You can also send the object of your fear some love and light, or imagine stepping forward and giving them a warm, forgiving hug.

- Do this exercise regularly to promote healing and wellbeing.

Did you know?
Treasure Island author Robert Louis Stevenson would wake himself up from lucid dreams so he could write them as stories.



5 tips for lucid dreaming

- 1 Carry out 'reality checks' during the day by asking yourself from time to time: 'Am I dreaming right now?' Try to put your finger through the palm of your hand, just to check if your hand is solid. Test the reality you find yourself in with serious curiosity, and you'll be much more likely to recognise when you are in fact dreaming.
- 2 If you can, have a short nap in the day, it will usually take you directly to REM (rapid eye movement) sleep.
- 3 As we start to drop off we usually experience a series of random visual images. Use these as a gateway to enter a lucid dream by reminding yourself 'I am dreaming this'.
- 4 Visualise yourself becoming lucid in a dream and experimenting with what you might do, for instance, tell yourself: 'I'm going to fly'.
- 5 Try waking up after four hours or so, then before you return to sleep, set a firm intention to lucid dream, perhaps telling yourself you will return to the one you were just having. Go to sleep mentally repeating, "Everything I see and touch is a dream." >

works out at roughly 2,000 dreams a year, but many of us forget them on waking. However, there are some techniques that you can use to help you recall them such as cultivating the right environment on waking.

'One key rule is to wake up to soothing music rather than a jangling alarm clock. Anything that jolts you awake stamps out memories,' says Clare. 'Give yourself 10 minutes in bed to relax, trying not to focus on tasks for the day ahead, as this relaxed state is when you'll find images you thought you'd forgotten coming back to the surface.'

Practise dreamwork

Once you've brought the memory to mind, you can play with it by doing what's known as 'dreamwork'. You simply think of the dream, replaying the imagery, colours and emotions in your mind.

'When we are interacting with dreams, we can experience sudden insight or find ourselves understanding our current life situation better through the sensations or symbols we felt in the dream. But don't worry if none of this happens right away. Doing this regularly will help develop a bridge between your inner and outer self.'

Get creative

'You can also connect with your dreams by getting creative with them,' says Clare. 'Try making a collage, painting or sketch of them to help you identify themes, symbols and

emotions from your unconscious mind.'

Keeping a daily dream diary is also really powerful. Use unlined paper so you can sketch as well as write. You may wish to use the right-hand page for writing and the left-hand page for sketching. Make sure to keep the diary along with a pen on your bedside table and write down what you remember first thing in the morning.

Writing in the present tense will help draw you back into the dream and will improve your recall. Before you go to sleep, go through your journal underlining any insights, symbols or themes that jump out at you.

This process will help you make a conscious connection with your unconscious mind.



More info

Dr Clare Johnson is the author of *Llewellyn's Complete book of Lucid Dreaming* (Llewellyn, £21.99) and *Dream Therapy* (Orion Spring, £14.99), out now. Visit deeplucid dreaming.com for more details.

'Get creative to connect with your dreams'

1 How would you describe yourself?

- A** Empathetic - you understand how others are feeling
- B** A thinker
- C** Intuitive - you sometimes 'just know' things
- D** Big-hearted

2 Which gift would you most like to receive?

- A** A photo album filled with special moments
- B** A meditation course
- C** A crystal ball
- D** An amethyst

3 What best describes your current life situation?

- A** Riding on an emotional roller coaster
- B** Searching for spiritual truths
- C** Striving for happiness - your own and that of others
- D** Giving to others with love

4 How would you most like to spend an afternoon?

- A** Having a laugh with friends
- B** Attending a consciousness-raising event
- C** Daydreaming about the past, present and future
- D** Communing with nature - walking in a forest or boating on a lake

5 When life gets tough, what do you wish for?

- A** A shoulder to cry on
- B** A clear head so you can make the best decisions

- C** A time machine so you can erase past mistakes and ensure a happier future
- D** Courage to get through life's latest spiritual lesson

6 Which dreams stay with you the most?

- A** Nightmares and high-drama dreams
- B** Dreams in which you know that you are dreaming
- C** Dreams that then come true in waking life
- D** Blissful, light-filled dreams

7 When you were a child, what did you most wish for?

- A** The biggest cuddly toy collection in the world
- B** The ability to fly
- C** To know what you would be like when you grew up
- D** Peace on earth

Mostly As:

You are an emotional dreamer
Your dreams are more likely to be about what frightens you, concerns you or makes you happy. When we have emotional dreams, we generate huge amounts of energy. To utilise this energy in a positive way, channel it into being creative. Next time you have a vivid emotional dream choose the most emotional image from it and write about it. Try painting your dreams, or turning them into collages. The creative and emotional process of turning them into art, gives us a deeper, calmer perspective on life.

Mostly Bs:

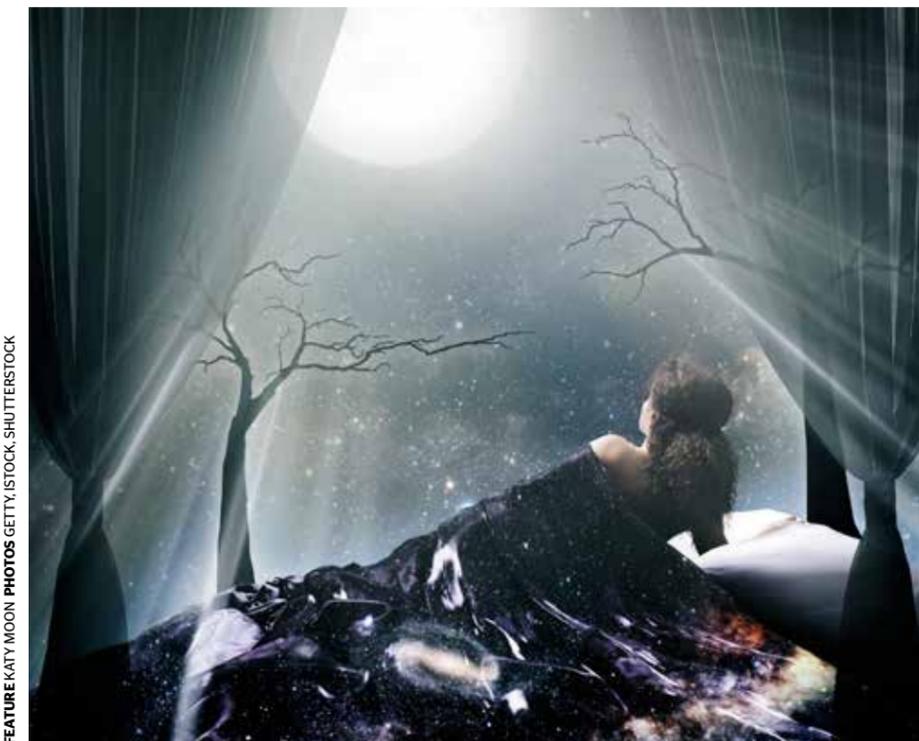
You are a lucid dreamer
Or well on your way to becoming one!
Being a lucid dreamer means you often - or sometimes - know that you are dreaming. As well as being a valuable skill, which can be used to help you deal with issues, it's also a sign you are marching through life with full awareness and able to tap into your potential. While you develop your skills, keep a journal. Learn from the ideas and themes that emerge.

Mostly Cs:

You are a precognitive dreamer
You are someone who can receive messages about the past, present, and future while asleep. To enhance this skill, write down your dreams and look out for elements that 'come true', however arbitrary they may seem - dreaming of a blue door and then encountering a blue door in waking life. When we understand the interlinked, flexible nature of past, present, and future, we advance on our spiritual journey and become more able to navigate life's difficulties.

Mostly Ds:

You are a soul dreamer
Soul dreamers have deeply spiritual dreams and have a strong connection with the divine source and knowledge (or source energy) that we all have within us. To strengthen this connection and have more soul dreams, set a firm intention to connect with higher energies in your dreams. Dreams of a spiritual quality can manifest through vibrant colours, scenes of natural beauty or glowing light. When we experience this imagery we open the door to spiritual experiences that will light up our waking lives, too. ✨



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