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# DREAMTIME

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# Amazing Dreamers: Interview with Dr. Laurel Clark

Clare R Johnson, PhD



Have you ever had a spiritual dream that illuminates an aspect of your life to bring you clarity and purpose? Or a dream so luminous that it seems to show you the very nature of life, death and the universe? These are dreams that can light up a dark night of the soul and provide us with immeasurable solace. Carl Jung called such life-changing dreams “the richest jewel[s] in the treasure-house of psychic experience”.

When I was researching grief dreams for *Mindful Dreaming*, I came across an intensely spiritual dream that I knew would enrich my book. It belongs to Dr. Laurel Clark, President Emeritus of the School of Metaphysics in Missouri. The night after 9/11, Laurel dreamed of seeing her deceased husband in radiant health. He was helping souls who died in the World Trade Center, and told her, “Once they’re out, they’re fine!” With a whoosh of exhilaration, Laurel understood that once they are out of the body, their spirits are free. This dream subsequently helped Laurel to counsel people suffering from the loss of a loved one, or facing death themselves.

Laurel Clark is the author of *Intuitive Dreaming*, a chapter author for *Dreams that Change Our Lives*, and a long-serving member of IASD’s Executive Committee. She has kept a regular dream journal for four decades and loves to increase her knowledge and wisdom in applying the messages from her dreams to her life so she can know herself more deeply. Laurel said

to me: “I believe that people are inherently spiritual beings and that our dreams connect us with our soul and spirit.”

Spiritual dreams can give us immense soul-comfort, guidance, and affirmation that we’re on the right path in life. Here, Laurel shares a spiritual affirmation dream she had in her early twenties, which changed her life:

I am with a group of people. We are wearing flowing white gowns. It seems like I am at a spiritual ceremony. We are all in a circle, with our hands raised in the air. It feels joyful and exhilarating. We are dancing a kind of ritual dance to celebrate death.

**CJ: How did this joyful spiritual dream change your life, Laurel?**

LC: When I awakened from this short dream, I felt peaceful, energized, inspired, and full of joy. I knew what it meant, although I was hesitant to share it with my friends because I thought they might find it odd that I was happy about celebrating death!

I was 22 years old. I was keeping a dream journal but was often troubled by the dreams I remembered, which were mostly nightmares. I had recurring dreams of men chasing me, being afraid, and frequently dreamed of my purse being stolen. I would awaken with my heart pounding, afraid to go back to sleep.

In February 1979 I began a course of study with the School of Metaphysics which included daily spiritual lessons. I learned concentration exercises that helped me to clear my mind of negative thinking, to slow down my thoughts, and to begin to find some space in between my thoughts. I developed a meditation practice which I did every day, faithfully. This renewed me. It enabled me to listen to the silence. It brought me a kind of inner peace I had longed for. I never missed my spiritual disciplines and felt myself becoming calmer, more peaceful, and more centered.

I also began to learn how to interpret my dreams. I view “death” in a dream as change or transformation. And I interpret hands as a symbol for purpose.



We use our hands in waking life to write, to hold tools, to give, to create. So I interpreted this dream to mean that I was celebrating a change that I had caused on purpose, and that many aspects of myself (the people) were affected by the change. It felt exhilarating to know that I had purposely caused a beautiful transformation that was bringing such joy to my whole being.

The ritual feeling of the dream, the ceremony, the long white gowns, and the circle, indicated to me that this change concerned my spirituality, my wholeness, and affected me at my core.

I recognized this as affirmation that my daily waking practice of meditation was indeed producing a profound change in my consciousness. The fear, hesitation, and insecurity that had been showing up as nightmares had transformed into the deep peace and security of spiritual awareness. This was the great change that I was celebrating in my dream.

Even though very short, the dream was life-changing because it showed me that I could indeed cause a profound change in myself through daily practice of meditation. It reaffirmed my commitment to spiritual growth and set me on a path that I have continued for four decades. Meditation and daily spiritual practice is a way of life for me.

**CJ: That's a wonderful example of how dreams can be guiding lights for us, illuminating our path through life and affirming our choices. Did spiritual dreams like this one lead you to write *Intuitive Dreaming*?**

LC: The initial stimulus for writing this book was a presentation I gave at a Psiberdreaming conference on several life-changing "psi" dreams. One was a precognitive dream, one was clairvoyant, and one was telepathic. Two of these dreams may have saved my husband's life when he was sick with diabetes, by alerting me to his plight so that I was able to get help. In one case, we had a telepathic connection through dreams when he was nearly comatose and unable to contact me by phone. Two visitation dreams after he died awakened me to the profound healing that can come from such dreams. I enjoyed writing *Intuitive Dreaming* because in addition to including my own dreams, I collected stories from people (some of whom I had never met) about dreams that inspired creativity and invention. I love hearing such stories and how they can change the world.

**CJ: How do you feel that a deep connection with one's dreams can benefit us?**

LC: I believe that people are inherently spiritual

beings and that our dreams connect us with our soul and spirit. So I feel that a deep connection with our dreams helps us to be more whole, to be able to cooperate with an inner urge we have for balance, understanding, and integrating the inner and outer selves. As we understand ourselves better through our dreams, we become better able to understand each other. We can communicate more deeply and in a more "true" fashion for peace and understanding.

**CJ: Yes, that "human understanding" aspect of dreaming really rings true. One of the things I love about IASD management is the way that we listen to our dreams for guidance... and begin each Board meeting by sharing our dreams with each other! Laurel, for the past five years, you've served on the Executive Committee of IASD. What has this taught you?**

LC: This is a big question. I have learned how sincere and committed the Executive Committee is to developing the community of dreamers. I have learned how powerful it can be to use dreams as a source of guidance for leadership and for cooperative idealism. I have also learned about the power of listening. I continue to learn about the depth of friendship that develops from sharing common ideals with people who love dreams and who want to bring the study of dreams to the world.

**CJ: That is beautifully put. And lastly, could you explain why dreaming holds such a dear place in your life?**

LC: I find dreaming to be a soul-nourishing, nurturing experience. The inner world of dreams seems creative and magical, sometimes mysterious, always wonderful, and opens me to greater awareness of myself as a soul and spiritual being. Paying attention to my dreams helps me to become more attuned to my needs, to cause change, to understand myself, my relationships, my thoughts and emotions. Dreaming seems to be a universal human experience and I love sharing dreams with other people for deeper connections with them.

**CJ: Thank you so much, Laurel, for sharing your spiritual dream and your wise thoughts about dreaming!**

**Clare Johnson, PhD** is the author of two new dream books: *Llewellyn's Complete Book of Lucid Dreaming*, and *Dream Therapy (US/Can title: Mindful Dreaming)*. Clare responds to questions about dreams and nightmares on her website, [www.DeepLucidDreaming.com](http://www.DeepLucidDreaming.com)