

## Introduction To Dreams

Dream work needs to be recognized as a spiritual intervention, because dreams are a valuable resource that arise from the unconscious, which Peck (1978) says is our interface with God. Furthermore, Christian tradition has always recognized that God speaks to mankind through the dream, bringing them divine counsel, direction, and instruction for their lives (Doctor, 2011).

Psychologist Benner (1998) observes that in ancient Babylon, Daniel gave king Nebuchadnezzar a brief summary of how modern psychology can appreciate the value of dreams. Daniel declares that dreams come to us for the purpose of helping us know our innermost thoughts—what modern psychology calls the unconscious and Christianity calls the “hidden person of the heart.” Benner asserts that the psychological and spiritual are “inextricably interconnected in the unconscious, in our dreams and symptoms, and in health and pathology” (p. 16). Clinical mental health professionals need to understand “how the psychological concerns people bring to them mask underlying spiritual concerns” (p. 15)

Peck (1978) views dreams as a manifestation of grace and says that they reveal the existence of an immeasurable but concealed domain of the mind that “contains riches beyond imagination” (p. 243). This unconscious part of the mind is accessible to us through dreams. Broadribb (as cited in van Breda, 1999) asserts that, because of the intimate link between mind and body, dreams are essentially a product of our entire being: psychological, physical, and spiritual.

### ***Research points to value of dreams***

According to Van de Castle (as cited in Hill, Diemer, and Heaton, 1997) for many centuries people have claimed that dreams are a useful basis to understand personal issues, solve problems, and provide a source for creativity. Although many theories of dream interpretation have been developed, research results on their effectiveness is scarce.

Preliminary evidence from several studies indicates that the *cognitive-experiential* model recently developed by Hill (1996) provides especially useful insight and self-understanding (Cogar & Hill, 1992; Diemer, Lobell, Vivino, & Hill, 1996; Falk & Hill, 1995; Hill, Diemer, Hess, Hillyer, & Seeman, 1993; as cited in Hill et al., 1997). Researchers have also found that using *brief therapy* for dream interpretation offered very good insight, understanding and depth therapy (Cogar & Hill, 1992; Diemer, Lobell, Vivino, & Hill, 1996; Falk & Hill, 1995; Heaton, Hill, Hess, Hoffman, & Leota, 1998; as cited in Hill et al., 2000).

Hill et al. (2000) observe that their research, along with other research from therapists who work with dreams “seems to promote that working with dreams adds something special to the therapy process” (p. 90). A method developed by Hill offers a three-stage structure for therapists to follow, enabling exploration of dream images, arriving at insights, and proposing action based on what the client saw from the dream. Dream work can rapidly involve a client in the therapeutic process, and working together on dream understanding may also facilitate building of a client/therapist alliance (Hill, et al.).

*Cognitive science* shows that dreams help solve problems by cleaning up information, categorizing memory, and correlating the past and present (Lippmann, 2000). The teachings of Fromm (1951) and Tauber (1963), along with work at the Karen Horney Institutes have helped established the possibility of working meaningfully with dreams, by establishing collaboration

between analyst and client, emphasizing the social aspect of dreams, and using dreams to assess problems (Lippmann).

A social worker, Sackheim (as cited in Urdang, 2002) advocates use of dreams in casework treatment, noting that “like any other life experience, they admit of interpretation on varying levels.” Catalano (as cited in Urdang, 2002) uses children’s dreams in his clinical social work practice. He says that research has provided “insight into the dreams of children and adolescents with emotional disturbances and how they differ from those without such disturbances...dreams provide a wealth of useful material about the issues, feelings, and memories most important to the child” (p. 45).

Findings in *dream research* show that dreams representing traumatic events convey how the dreamer feels relative to the trauma, including helplessness, terror, and grief (Hartmann, as cited in Ringel, 2002). Hartmann asserts that, following a traumatic situation, the dream helps the dreamer integrate the event into consciousness.

In the case of disorganized clients, where it may be more effective to talk about current concerns rather than dreams, Lippmann (2000) cautions against overly enthusiastic efforts at dream analysis. He also notes that with depressed clients, discussion of dreams could deepen their despair.

Several studies (Hartmann, 1984; A. Kales et al., 1980; as cited in Berquier, 1992) have shown a link between *frequent* nightmares and personality characteristics, in particular, psychopathological symptoms. Nightmares have been connected to alcohol withdrawal and various psychiatric disorders, such as schizophrenia, and people with frequent nightmares showed more neurotic symptoms. Recurrent nightmares is one symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Urdang, 2002, p. 529).

As a source of wisdom, direction, and healing, dreams can function to help make the dreamer aware of the unconscious, in order to reestablish psychic balance (van Breda, 1999). By circumventing a client’s defense mechanisms, the dream can rapidly expose the root of a problem—even point toward solutions. Especially for clients who can’t seem to connect to their feelings or relate well to their internal thoughts, dream work can facilitate the therapeutic process.

## ***Theories of dream work***

Many theories used in practice offer their own perspective on working with clients’ dreams, for example psychoanalytic, object relations, Gestalt, cognitive, Adlerian, self-psychology (Ringel, 2002).

According to Urdang (2002), *psychoanalytical* theorists say that, while a person is in a dream state, repressed thoughts can arise to consciousness. Dreams possess both a latent content—the story the dreamer recalls of the dream—and a manifest content—the “unconscious thoughts and wishes which threaten to waken the dreamer” (Brenner, as cited in Urdang, p. 43.). It is the work of dream analysis to connect the symbolic representations of the manifest content with the latent or symbolic matter of the story—through associations.

An *Adlerian* approach sees dreams as mood indicators and as projections of a client’s present concerns. By exploring their dreams, clients can monitor and comprehend their own internal dynamics (Peven & Schulman, as cited in Corey, 1996). By causing problems to arise to consciousness, dreams offer guidance for treatment. According to *cognitive theory*, dreams mirror problems and life situations that are not successfully resolved in waking life (Werner, cited in Turner, as cited in Cooper, & Lesser, 2002, p. 141).

*Object relations* theorists view dreams as capable of revealing “how internalized object relations express a person’s internal world” (Berzoff, Flanagan, & Hertz, 2002, p. 146).

*Self-psychology* theorists recognize the value of dreams in therapy. For example, Kohut (as cited in Urdang, 2002) describes a patient whose fears of “empathic contact with another person and of participation in the world were portrayed in a dream” (p. 99).

In the view of *Gestalt therapists*, dreams convey existential messages showing a client’s current way of being in the world. Perls (as cited in Corey, 1996) suggests that “we start with the impossible assumption that whatever we believe we see in another person or in the world is nothing but a projection” (p. 67). Viewing each element in a dream as a projection of something inside, a client can bring the dream to life as if it is happening right now and understand its meaning.

A dreamer-client lists the parts of the dream, creates scripts for interaction between the characters, and then becomes each of these parts, acting and creating dialogue. In this exercise, it is assumed that the various parts of the dream are facets of the client’s opposing and inconsistent sides. Dreams help us discover personality voids by revealing what is missing inside and exposing our avoidance methods. The goal is to eventually appreciate inner conflicts and integrate the opposing forces (Corey, 1996).

Whether it is classical psychoanalysis, relational theory, self-psychology, or empirical research, all these approaches say that dream imagery reflects the “dreamer’s self and relational structure” (Ringel, 2002, p. 359). Images from the dream convey a client’s attitude toward self, family, and the world around them.

### ***Holistic approach supports person-in-environment concept***

Dream work supports social work’s person-in-environment concept, and assists in understanding clients from culturally diverse backgrounds. Working with clients’ dreams offers social workers a way to enter into their clients’ diverse worlds.

Kruger (as cited in van Breda, 1999) observes that no therapy can occur in a vacuum. Schoeman (as cited in van Breda) notes that, “No matter how much one wishes to enter the other person’s world, one remains situated in your own cultural context. One’s perceptions of events, your interpretations and descriptions, are all codetermined by the consensually validated concepts and categories of thought of your own culture.” The universality of dream images residing in the collective unconscious makes it more possible.

In keeping with the “person-in-situation” principle of social work, treatment must be holistic (Hollis & Woods, as cited in van Breda, 1999). Dream work allows practitioners to treat the client in the context of their entire current life situation and culture.

Dream work touches upon every aspect of a person—body, soul, and spirit—and gives us a holistic view of clients. Because it addresses a client’s entire life situation, dream work supports the major tenants of social work—seeing clients in context of their environment, and appreciating the client’s entire diversity, culture, and socio-political background.

### ***Dream work useful in cross-cultural social work***

In cross-cultural clinical social work, investigation of client’s dreams not only offers therapeutic value, but also provides a common meeting point from two individuals from different backgrounds and cultural experiences (van Breda, 1999). Moreover, dreams are held in high regard in many communities: for black Africans (Bhrmann, 1977a; Mtalane et al., 1993), Australian aborigines (Petchkovsky & Cawte, 1986) and native North Americans (Hallowell, 1966). One elderly native American even suggested, “You will have a long and good life if you dream well” (Hallowell, as cited in van Breda).

### **Native Americans and dreams**

Working with Native Americans challenges social workers to learn how to strengthen a client's view of native cultural and religious events. Dreams are one of the powerful events that can provide rich material for assessing a client's experiences and formulating a treatment plan (Lum, 2000).

### **African-Americans and dreams**

Dream work provides an open window to gain a holistic view of each person's environment and cultural uniqueness. The tendency for black African-Americans to identify with their African roots could be an attempt to heal the unconscious fracture that developed when their ancestors were forcibly removed from their homeland and sold into slavery (van Breta, 1999).

It would seem desirable for social workers to conduct dream work groups for disenfranchised black African-American men, offering the possibility to re-establish connection with their ancestors and heal this rift.

## **What We Need To Know About Dreams**

There's nothing new here—knowledge of dreams and their meaning is very ancient. We know that Biblical books such as Daniel (written some 2500 years ago) are full of dreams, visions, and supernatural understanding of events, both present and future. It's only in recent times that this wisdom has been largely forgotten or ignored.

Behind the dream is the divine purpose of enlarging us, increasing the depth and scope of our lives. Capturing the meaning of our dreams puts in touch with the divine purpose for our lives, and helps us see how God is at work within us to bring us healing, restoration and wholeness.

Today we have an opportunity to work with clients' dreams as a spiritual intervention to help them tap this ancient source of wisdom and guidance for their lives. Dreams can help clients realize more of their potential and help bring them into harmony with themselves, God and the world around them.

### ***Dreams come from the unconscious***

Complex expressions of who we are, dreams reflect what is going on inside in our unconscious. Dreams express the fears and problems we face, they mirror the outward circumstances of our lives in symbols and metaphors. Our secret hopes, goals, and plans are revealed in the images that play upon our minds while we sleep.

Dreams are dynamic mosaics, composed of imagery that express the movements, conflicts, interactions, and developments of the great energy systems within the unconscious. (Robert Johnson)

As expressions of the depths within us, dreams capture a picture of the psyche, not only as it currently is, but also what its potential is for development, the seeds of future opportunities. Because the images and symbols in dreams may represent possibilities for what can unfold in conscious life, the dream may offer us a peek into the future—although often vague and cloaked in difficult-to-decipher symbology.

### ***Key characteristics of dream***

1. Speaks personally to the dreamer
2. Reveals something we do not know or understand
3. Speaks symbolically
4. Reveals, but does not condemn
5. Current concerns of dreamer is key to understanding its meaning
6. Requires a response by the dreamer for further understanding

#### **Quotations from experts about dreams**

Dreams are God's great neglected gift (Herman Riffel)

Dreams and visions are the language of the Holy Spirit (P. Yonggi Cho)

Dreams are God's forgotten language (John Sanford)

Dreams are the first of the two great channels of communication from the unconscious; the second is the imagination (Robert Johnson)

Dreams come while asleep, visions while awake, but they are the same (Morton Kelsey)

Dreams seek to cooperate with God's great purpose to help us realize every part of our potential and to bring us into harmony with ourselves, God and the world around us (Herman Riffel)

The dream is a kind of "snapshot" of the psyche, providing a description in symbolic language of the current psychic situation (Carl Jung)

## Kinds of Dreams

### *Major dream categories*

#### **Dreams from daily life**

This type of dream deals with what is happening in the life of the dreamer, commenting on events in daily life. Dreams like this help keep us centered in the middle of life's normal struggles, helping us sort out yesterday's events and preparing us to face tomorrow. They may also show us how our psyche is functioning in various normal circumstances of life.

Understanding these dreams requires us to be familiar with everyday circumstances of the client. We will need to probe the client to determine their fears, conflicts, aspirations, etc. and inquire about what area of their lives the dream might be dealing with.

#### **Dreams dealing with forgotten parts of life**

Dreams that reach back to forgotten experiences may be helpful to uncover repressed fears, wounds, and anxieties. They may serve to help a client heal old wounds, get relief from earlier traumatic events, or help integrate past and present to make better sense of life.

Understanding this type of dream requires clinicians to get clients to reflect on their life history, perhaps remembering childhood events, how they related to parents, or perhaps a previous marriage or meaningful relationship.

#### **Objective dreams about other people**

When a client dreams about other people, it is often difficult to determine whether a familiar dream figure represents itself (objective) or some part of the dreamer's personality (subjective). Sometimes it even goes both ways.

In attempting to understand this type of dream, experts advise us to err on the side of subjectivity—in general, it is best to consider the person in the dream to represent something in the client. Subjective dreams may be difficult because they show blind spots the client might not be aware of.

Experts suggest these clues to identifying an objective dream: if the dream simply does not fit subjectively; if the client is emotionally related to the person in the dream; if details are exactly as in real life. Special care is needed with objective dreams: they should not be told to the person of whom the client dreams—ultimately the client's dreams are talking about the client.

#### **Dreams commenting on the body**

Sometimes dreams provide insight into the condition of our physical bodies, especially impending illness—but there is not yet a scientific approach to diagnosing illness through dreams. Death of the self in a dream usually is a metaphor for a necessary psychological change, i.e., the death of something in us.

Understanding this type of dream is difficult, but the presence of such a dream could indicate need to be alert for symptoms of impending physical problems. In this case, the dreamer should seek medical help.

### **Dreams dealing with archetypal content**

Archetypes are universal psychological patterns and energy systems. Appearance of archetypal images in dreams indicates need for major changes—enlarge the personality, widen the scope of life, discover the true self, help realize potential. Archetypal images also may appear to warn of danger, point to imminent psychic problems, or when life is threatened. Their appearance signals when a transformation is being demanded of us.

These types of dreams obviously come from a deeper place, and seem to be associated with the inward movement of psychic energy. Understanding these dreams requires being aware of the archetypes or symbols of transformation, which often have parallels in fairy tales, mythology, and religious symbolism.

### **Dreams coming from beyond us**

Unlike dreams from ordinary life, this type of dream transcends the personal life of the individual dreamer. They come from deep in our own spirit or from the Spirit of God and affect us deeply because they bring insight and revelation about spiritual matters.

Understanding this type of dream requires a deep spiritual sense and knowledge of the unconscious. Although these dreams are very important, dealing with this type of dream is beyond the scope of this manual.

### **Dreams that mediate extrasensory perception (ESP)**

Dreams may give us information about future happenings or may make us aware of events at some distant away. Perhaps their purpose is to prepare us for necessary action in a future crisis.

Understanding this type of dream is difficult because the information in the dream is obscure and hard to sort out. Fortunately dreams like this dealing with precognition and clairvoyance are rare. They are beyond the scope of this manual.

### **Clear dreams**

This very rare type of dreams is completely understandable because it simply is what it is. Understanding this type of dream requires discernment of dream images and interpretation that are beyond the scope of this manual.

### **The Big Dream**

In this so-called Big Dream, there is a revelation of unconscious wisdom that transcends the individual dreamer. This extremely rare type of dream concerns itself with the welfare of the whole tribe.

Understanding this type of dream is beyond the scope of this manual.

## ***Subjective and objective interpretations***

Jungian analysts distinguish clearly between dreams that are subjective and those that are objective. Viewed subjectively, the entire dream refers to processes within the dreamer's own psyche, whereas the objective view sees dream images as referring to objects in the external world of the dreamer.

Using the *subjective* approach, each dream symbol and each character points to some dimension of the dreamer's psyche, psychic processes, or an archetype. Boa & Von Franz (as cited in van Breta, 1999) say that approximately 85 percent of dream imagery is subjective.

Looking at dreams from an *objective* approach, all the images in a dream would be considered to refer to people, images, objects, and relationships in the external world of the dreamer. A dream about people would therefore be seen as depicting aspects of those people and how the dreamer feels about them (Broadribb, as cited in van Breta, 1999).

## Approaches To The Dream And Vision

The approach to working with dreams suggested here is taken principally from: Benner, D. (1998). *Care of souls: Revisioning Christian nurture and counsel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

There are numerous approaches to working with dreams, among them: Gestalt; Psychoanalytical (associations); Hill; Freudian. Adlerian. Jungian. However, the author believes the approach outlined by Benner (1998) offers the best way to understand and work with dreams in a spiritual context.

### ***Principles of dream work***

No comprehensive theory of dreams yet exists to provide an overall framework for dream analysis. However, there is considerable agreement on basic dream principles and techniques for understanding them. Benner (1998) identifies eight basic principles for approaching dreams in a spiritual, and in particular a Christian, context.

1. Welcome dreams as a gift from God
2. Recognize that some dreams are more profitable for dream work than others
3. Acknowledge that, with God's help, the dreamer is the one best able to discern the significance of the dream
4. View the dream as offering questions rather than answers, advice or prophetic revelation
5. View dreams as parables.
6. Pay particular attention to repetitions
7. Recognize that people and objects in dreams usually are best understood as representing parts of self
8. Undertake dream work within a context of the Christian disciplines and community

For more understanding, refer to Benner (1998), pp. 157-183.

## Tips For Working With Clients' Dreams

The goal of understanding dreams is to cross over into the unconscious and access the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden there. As noted by Johnson (1986), it takes considerable effort to grasp what a dream is saying because dreams communicate information unknown to the dreamer consciously.

However, very little training is required to obtain value from listening to dreams. Clients should be encouraged to have faith in what their unconscious is trying to tell them. To learn from the dreams, clients simply must work with their dreams. Johnson (1986) even suggests living with the symbols of our dreams as if they were living companions from daily life (p. 16).

### ***Dream belongs to dreamer***

Practitioners can help clients work with their dreams and assist in discovering their meaning and value to the client. However, it is critical to remember that the meaning of any dream must be drawn from the dreamer. Each person is the interpreter of their own dreams, and one should never accept suggestions for understanding their dreams or any attempt at interpretation that the heart does not respond to. Ultimately, the meaning of a dream must be determined by the dreamer—the only person who can interpret a dream is the dreamer, because the dream belongs to them.

It is helpful to know that there is often an “*aha!*” moment when a client will just *know* what the dream means. Symbols are linked to energy deep within us, and when the connection is made, sparks fly and the person simply knows the answer. They will intuitively know that they have tapped into the energy behind the dream, and the practitioner will probably also notice this happening in the client.

### **Diagnostic value**

Because the dream is capable of revealing what is wrong in a person’s life, it has great diagnostic value for practitioners. Dreams often provide clear directives to clients about what they need to do to restore balance in their lives. For clients who have difficulty relating their feelings or connecting to internal thoughts, clinicians can use dream work to facilitate the therapeutic process.

### **Dreams: source of inner healing**

By bringing the dreamer into touch with the unconscious to restore psychic balance, dreams can help heal the psyche. Bypassing the client’s defense mechanisms, the dream can get to the heart of the client’s problem quickly, and may even point toward a solution.

### ***Basic method for working with dreams***

An important element of working with dreams is the dreamer’s attitude toward the dream. Encourage clients to take their dreams seriously. Suggest they make a decision that they want God’s help and direction for their lives, and one way they will seek it is to listen for God’s voice in their dreams. Following are some ideas for making the help offered by a dream more accessible to the dreamer.

### **Write down the dream**

A fundamental rule in dream work is to write down the dream. In the Bible, people who heard from God were ordered to write down what they had heard and experienced (Hab. 2:1,2; Jer. 30:2;

36:2; Rev. 1:11. Is. 8:1). Dreams, coming from another realm, should be treated with similar care and attention.

Clients who want to work with their dreams should be encouraged to start a dream journal. This provides a dedicated place to record dreams and one's immediate reaction to them. Once logged in a journal, the dream is available anytime for further reflection, analysis and revelation. The dream journal enables the client to build an ongoing story of his/her dream life.

### **Pay attention to details**

Suggest that a client describe a dream as fully as possible, without analyzing it or interpreting it. Simply record the events and impressions of the dream, using a narrative, reporting style. Give the dream a name and note the most important images in it. Generally, the client should log the

- Time and date
- Description of the setting, environment
- People, posture, clothing
- Objects, animals, etc.
- Landscape, buildings, furniture
- Describe what client is doing in the dream
- Emotional, feeling tone of the dream
- Words heard in dream—key statements
- Thoughts that came during the dream (or upon awakening)

following about the dream:

### **Allow the dream to have free play**

Encourage clients to refrain from immediately trying to interpret their dreams, but rather to allow the dreams to work in the inner depths of their being. Interpreting a dream can intellectualize it, removing it from the deep place in the psyche where it can do its work. In offering advice on understanding dreams, Benner (1998) proposes that the dream suggests a question for the dreamer to consider. With this approach, the importance of the dream is not to understand it so much as to reflect on the question it poses.

### **Emphasize importance of images**

Clients need to become familiar with their own inner images because dreams occur in the form of images. It is more important to simply muse about the dream itself than to attempt to understand its meaning by imposing an arbitrary interpretation on it, trying to make it fit something in the rational mind. Encourage clients to meditate on the images of their dreams to see what insights they might yield. Images are key: vividness and intensity of images is more important than clarity and precision.

Paying particular attention to images helps put us in touch with what the dream is trying to say. Dreams bring us into contact with the unconscious, and point out to us what problems we need to address and to work out in our lives. With the insight gained from working with our dreams, we are able to make necessary changes to achieve desired inner growth and development.

## ***Dream exploration suggestions***

Before considering what a dream could possibly mean, describe the dream without analyzing it or trying to understand its meaning. Write it down—it is too easy to forget details later. Note the setting, time and date, people, objects, buildings, anything that you recall about the environment and surroundings. Be sure to include the emotional feeling of the dream.

Establish whether you feel the dream is subjective (images represent some part of the dreamer's personality) or objective (images represent themselves). (For more on this, see topic called *Kinds of dreams*.)

### **Background to dream**

What is the background to the dream? Consider what the purpose of this dream might be. What area of your life does it seem to relate to? What is going on in your life? What issues need resolution? What unanswered questions are you asking, unsolved problems?

Does the dream bring to your mind memories and feelings about certain images, or the dream setting, or the characters played out in the action? For people you know in your dream, recall your relationship with them and the emotions that arise thinking about them.

It can be important to consider dreams in a series—especially if you recall multiple dreams from the same night. One dream may shed light on another dream. Even when these dreams are seemingly unrelated at first, they may be addressing the same issue in your life.

Pay particular attention to repetitions. When a dream is repeated, usually it indicates something important. Treat it like a good friend repeating advice to you—give heed to what it says.

### **Main action in dream**

Describe the main action in the dream, the overall activity (walking, talking, looking, running, trying to escape, worrying about something, searching, asking questions, etc.). Reflect on what this activity means to you. Does it possibly represent some activity in waking life?

Identify key statements or words spoken, and any thoughts that came during or immediately after the dream.

Describe your role in the dream. Are you an active participant or primarily an observer, being directed by others? How does that relate to your waking life? Are you friend, advisor, victim, helper, lover, fighter, placator? What does this role mean to you? Does it represent some situation in your conscious life?

### **Feelings in the dream**

Elaborate on the feeling factor in the dream. What did you feel in the dream? Are these emotions warm or cold? What was the basic feeling tone? Glad? Sad? Mad? Loving? Angry? Frightened? Lost? Were these feelings given full expression, or held back—if so, what held them back?

Did you meet something you fear in the dream? Monsters in dreams are usually part of ourselves that we are afraid of and thus avoid confronting. Did you run from the fearsome thing or confront and resolve it?

Allow yourself complete freedom of emotion as you reflect on the dream. Open yourself to the experience of the dream, feel its quality, tone, emotions, intensity. Let the dream figures come to you, let them speak to you. Try to re-enter the experience and let the dream continue its work. Quietly go back over the feeling and movement of the dream, letting the images do their work.

### **Amplification and association of images**

Describe the main characteristics of each image in the dream. Amplify what these mean and make associations for these images with your life. What part of me might that represent? How do I act in that way? Where does that show up in me? How am I like that person or that animal? How do those objects relate to my life?

Personal association with dream images is a key step in understanding what the dream means for your life. Any spontaneous feelings, ideas, sensations, thoughts, or memories that pop up as you reflect on the images help to connect you with the meaning of the dream. How intense is your emotional response to each of the images in the dream?

### **Discuss the dream with someone**

The goal of understanding a dream is to cross the bridge from the conscious over to the unconscious in order to access the treasures of wisdom and knowledge there. Often it is difficult to understand our own dreams because they express what is in our unconscious, which is largely inaccessible to our thinking mind. People around us may be able to recognize what our dream symbols mean more easily than we can ourselves. The key is that the other person be open, honest, intuitive, and in touch with the spiritual part of themselves.

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