

What Dreams May Share

by Kathy Scott

During Health Certification Training, I often heard that we might experience unusual dreams. I rarely did, but one night I had a fairly disturbing dream in which I had been yelling at my two children. When I first woke up, I thought, "Oh, it was just a dream, I can forget it." But for some reason the thought occurred to me, "our minds don't know the difference between imagination and reality." (You know, the classic "think about a lemon"—imagine slicing it, smelling it, putting it up to your mouth to taste, etc., Then notice the saliva dribbling down your chin.)

I have been doing a lot of work in the area of forgiveness lately, and thought, "Hmm, well, this dream certainly has the type of behavior that I have judgment about and would need/want to forgive myself for." So I decided to do a self-forgiveness process about the dream. For me the purpose of forgiveness is to allow myself to let go of the past and to be present fully in this moment, in a state of loving-kindness, towards myself and others.

Well, I did a self-forgiveness process for the dream, and it felt better, but not complete. The day

before, in Health, we had done a meditation-type process of communicating with symptoms. I wondered if there was something the dream was trying to communicate to me, much the way our aching body parts sometimes do. (This is probably old-hat to those of you who do dream work, but it was a new idea to me.) So I decided to ask the dream what its message was. I used some of the questions we had learned the day before from Suzi Smith.

Those questions included the following: What is it that you (the dream or the part that created the dream) are trying to do for me? And what does having that get for me (positive intention)? Is there something you want to be different in my life? Do you want me to stop doing something, start doing something, or change certain things? If so, what? Reassure the "dream part" that you appreciate its message for you and ask if it will help in finding new behaviors or ways of being that are satisfactory to it (the dream part) and the rest of you. Share information about how the dream part impacts the rest of your life. Continue dialogue until you come to understanding/resolution. What

modifications need to occur for this to work for all aspects? Then, of course, thank it for communicating.

After thinking briefly about the questions, my mind jumped back to an incident years ago where I had indeed REALLY yelled at my kids, for some perceived transgression. I have often thought about that incident with dread and shame. But I never knew what to do about it, so I would file it away in that deep part of me that holds all those ugly secrets. (I guess I hadn't thought about it during any of the NLP reprogramming processes or perhaps I would have already dealt with it.)

In any event, THIS event (the time I really yelled at my kids) was not imaginary and seemed like the perfect one for self-forgiveness. So I did the forgiveness process again with that incident in mind. I was very aware of an ecology piece as I did it—that I needed to go home and make atonement with my kids. This might mean discussing the situation with them, explaining to them how out of line my behavior had been, what my positive intention was, perhaps attempting to reprogram the experience for them, or some other such corrective action. It seemed

clear, however, that if I would do that piece (talk to my kids), I could forgive myself fully for this past misdeed.

In fact, I did go home and talk to my kids—my purpose was to assist them so that they can go forward more resourcefully. I think it helped them. But even if it didn't, it has made a world of difference for me. Now when I think about that incident, I look upon it as unfortunate, as something I wish had not occurred, but I am no longer "hooked" emotionally by it. Instead, the memory of that original experience now serves almost as a lighthouse—a reminder to stay away from those types of rocks in the future. When I start to feel upset now, I often recall the lesson of that incident without all the attendant shame. This helps me to remain more resourceful. In that way, I hope it will continue to help my kids. Perhaps it can also help you.

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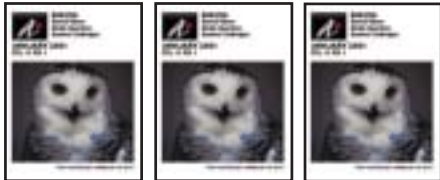
See page 56 for details.

Here is the process

1. Recall a dream.
2. Be aware that our minds may not distinguish the dream from reality.
3. Decide if your dream needs Immediate NLP relief and which process would be appropriate. For example, if your dream involved physical violence, you may want to use the trauma relief process for the events of your dream. Or if you have done something in the dream that you judge yourself for negatively, try forgiveness. You may even want to forgive another for something they did to you in the dream, Perhaps you need to re-imprint something. Maybe the cloud/basket loss process can help?
4. DO any NLP or other processes that seem appropriate for the facts of your dream (trauma relief, forgiveness, re-imprinting, etc.). This is simply to clear the issues that the dream may have installed in your mind as real events. (You don't want to be subconsciously angry at your spouse for a dreamed offense, so use this step to help clear that before you move on to the real message of the dream.)
5. Treat the dream as a communication: what message does this dream hold for me? This step goes beyond the immediate relief of the dreamed events and assumes that there is a reason you had the dream. Use Suzi Smith's questions in the text above or others that seem useful to you.
6. Do any processes that seem appropriate to honor or resolve the message you have received. Was this message about limiting beliefs? You may want to try a walking belief change process, or the chaining beliefs process. Do you need to find out more about positive intention? Maybe some of the core transformation questions will help. (What would having "that" give you that is even more important?) How about Meta Mirror on Robert Dilt's web site? Did the dream involve conflict? Parts integration may be the answer. Maybe your dream is to remind you of an upcoming event or issue and you simply had the dream as a reminder to practice how you would like things to be—you know, mentally rehearse a successful outcome. (Recall the research that shows basketball players who actually practiced shooting baskets over a few weeks improved 25% and players who did not touch the basketball but merely mentally rehearsed shooting baskets improved 23%. Those who did nothing had no improvement.) The point here is to pay attention to your dream's message, figure out what action to take, and then take it.
7. Experience gratitude and celebrate another day. After all, you did live through another night, and have another moment to feel and share joy. You may even want to use this process with daydreams and other mutterings in your mind. Enjoy!



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