

Prepare, Process, and Practice the Principles

(Three P's of combining 12 Step Work and Dream Work)

Prepare: Begin the setup by *expecting* to receive dreams that will be useful and *expecting* to remember them. Start by recording your dreams, whether in the middle of the night or in the morning. Put a tape recorder or pen/pencil and journal beside your bed and USE them when you awaken. Before drifting into sleep, talk to your subconscious and tell yourself what aspect of your program you would like guidance on. Give thanks at the end of your talk or say a brief gratitude prayer. If you believe you need a little more help, you may want to use a "Dream Invocation" to invoke a dream about a particular step or problem. The prep work boils down to this:

- a) Expect dreams to be useful
- b) Talk to your subconscious before retiring
- c) Record all dreams or fragments

Process: Record your dreams immediately, but don't begin the actual dream processing until after your morning has begun. Go about your early routine, eat breakfast, and do your morning meditation. When relaxed, sit quietly, and review what you recorded. Find your symbols, record them in your glossary and determine their meaning. Now figure out your dream (If you are a beginner, use the Dream Processing Worksheet found in Chapter Three: *Processing your Dreams* or in the free download at www.12StepDreamWork.com).

Match the dream to your 12 Step work. Determine which of the four main dream categories it falls into: *Meaningless, Psychic, Guidance, or Reassurance*. (You learned about the categories of dreams in Chapter Two: *Anatomy of a Dream*). Naturally, if it falls into the *Meaningless* (pizza before bed) or *Reassurance* categories, you won't need to continue. If it falls into the *Psychic* or *Guidance* categories, you will want to know if your dream refers to your 12-Step work.

Ask yourself which of the program objectives your dream is working on (as discussed in the beginning of this chapter):

- a) Is your dream asking you to examine yourself, trust God, take corrective action, or be of service to others?
- b) What specific Step would this lesson correlate to? Once you know which of the four objectives your dream is working on, then it's pretty easy to find out which Step or Steps apply.

Practice the Principles: Responding to the guidance that you receive is just as important as understanding what your dream is telling you. It is actually the last part of processing your dream-- practice the principles contained in your dream guidance! Applying what we learn is vital to successful dream work. Remember that "Faith without works is dead." (James 2:17)

Is your dream revealing a character defect that needs to be changed? Is there someone you need to work with? Do you need to take an inventory? Do you need to study more of your program material? Do you owe someone an apology? Do you need to talk to your sponsor or minister? Do you need to get to a meeting or to join another 12-Step program that you overlooked before? This is a daily program, and you don't want the day to escape before you apply the principles you are guided to do. The "Big Book" says, "The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p 83)