

DREAM TEAM EXERCISES

Role Playing

In Chapter 2 we discussed dialogging with your dreams by imagining a conversation with a dream figure, a wise dream interpreter, a spiritual guide, or any dream symbol. Role playing is another creative method for "dialogging" with a dream symbol to discover the meaning or purpose of its involvement in your dream. One participant shares a dream with their partner who takes notes on the other's dream in order to ask pertinent questions during the roll-playing portion of this exercise. The dreamer picks a dream figure or symbol that seems important to them. Maybe it is a pine tree, a space ship, an elderly woman, or a pool of water. Then the dreamer roll plays the part of that symbol while their partner asks questions.

Example: If you pick the pine tree, imagine your roots in the ground, smell the sweet odor of the forest, feel the wind rippling through your needles—pretend you are the symbol and, of course, pretend you can speak. Become that image. Imagine yourself to be like one of those visual effects in science fiction movies—you can take any shape or form you want. Your partner then begins a dialogue with this symbolic figure and records the answers on *your* pad of paper. He or she asks questions like: Why did you appear in so and so's dream? What does your color mean? Why did you appear in the past in this dream? What insight are you bringing to this person? What Step are you asking him or her to pay attention to? And so on.

The spontaneous answers given by the role player will prompt more questions and dialogue from the one doing the questioning. Your team partner can help uncover details and ask questions that you would not have thought of, giving you a whole new slant on your dream message.

Variation

Another form of role playing is for one member to play the role of a "wise dream interpreter." We discussed in Chapter 2 how one can do this exercise alone by imagining the dialogue. But in this exercise, one person plays the role of the "wise dream interpreter," while the partner asks questions and records the answers in the role-player's notebook.

This exercise can be used to interpret a particular dream or it can be used for dream and program information in general. The team member leading asks appropriate questions and the person playing the role answers. The important point to remember for the "wise dream interpreter" is not to censor the answers. Let them flow spontaneously, even if silly, because these could lead to valuable information on one's personal symbology. The one leading this exercise will always record the questions and answers in *your* notebook for further study later.

At the end of each dialogue, the team leader will thank the roll-player (image or figure) for talking to them. "Thank you, tree symbol, for helping us here today." This reinforces and encourages active participation from the person's subconscious for future sessions.

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Guided Imagery

(through dream reentry)

In guided imagery one member of the dream team lies on a mat or on the floor, closes their eyes, takes some deep breaths, and slowly reenters the dream of their choice. This is done by remembering the original dream setting and starting the dream over mentally. The one attempting to reenter a dream should try to reignite the visual and sensory reality as best he or she can. Even if the imaginary dream impressions are vague, the dreamer continues. Their partner leads the exercise by asking probing questions after the dreamer has finished describing their dream scape. Again, the leader jots down the answers in the *dreamer's* notebook.

As the dreamer reenters, they share out loud the events of the dream. The leader imagines the dream along with the dreamer. Once the dreamer is finished describing his dreamscape, the leader begins asking questions while the dreamer remains supine with eyes closed. The dreamer may be asked to notice the color of the clothes, building, or vehicles. The leader may ask the partner what sounds he or she hears, what odors are present, or how the dreamer feels about a particular occurrence. The dreamer may be instructed to ask a question of one of the players or symbols in the dream; for example, a dog: "Ask that little dog what he is doing there."

If the person is fleeing, the leader may ask the dreamer to confront who they are running from: "Why are you chasing me?" The dreamer may be instructed to find a solution by changing the dream: "How can you get this person to stop chasing you?" Again the leader should record all the answers being given in the dreamer's own notebook. Once the leader feels that all the illuminating information has been given, they ask, "What does this dream want of you?" Finally, the leader asks, "What program objective does this dream ask of you: to examine yourself and be honest, trust and rely on God, take moral action, or be of service to others?"

Once the questions are answered, the team discusses what principle and Step or Steps might be involved.

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Sentence Completion

This exercise may be geared toward the interpretation of one particular dream or may be used to work with symbols in general. One member of the team shares a dream or describes several symbolic images or actions that they want help in deciphering. Their partner then writes three to five sentences in the first person's notebook. For instance, if the dreamer had a funny dream about a blue banana in a bowl of cherries, the collaborator may write:

Another word for banana is _____;

A bowl of cherries reminds me of _____;

The color blue makes me feel _____;

A saying about a banana is _____.

The dreamer then takes back their notebook and fills in the blanks. The dreamer might answer that "Another word for banana is *fruit*"; "A bowl of cherries reminds me of *life isn't a bowl of cherries*"; "The color blue makes me feel *sad*"; "A saying about a banana is *he's going bananas*." It wouldn't be too difficult to interpret this, for example, as a person who is afraid that depression is the basis of his or her fear of going insane. Such a dream would probably be asking the dreamer to trust God. It would, therefore, be considered a 2nd-Step dream. This simple "funny" dream suddenly illuminates a series of symbols for this dreamer.

Remember though, the partner mustn't tell the dreamer what the dream is saying. The dreamer must do his or her own processing. Correct answers will always be in an individual context. For instance, what if this same dream came from a teen-age girl? Her answers to the statements might be, "Another word for banana is *penis*... '*pop your cherry*'... '*blue is the color of honesty*'... A saying about a banana is '*the ditty from the Chiquita® banana advertisements*.'" This young woman might be getting an important message about her virginity. Maybe she is playing "sexy," like the Chiquita banana girl, while not telling the young man she is dating that she is a virgin. In this case, the dream is asking her to be honest and examine her own behavior; it might be an 8th- and 9th-Step dream. You can see the importance of understanding that the dreamer is the interpreter.

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Word Association

One exercise for word association is the "machine gun questions" technique. This is a fun drill in which the questioner listens to the dream of the first party, then in rapid succession asks what each symbol means. "What does _____ mean?" The dreamer answers quickly, without thinking about it first. Next the questioner quickly asks what the first answer means, then what the next answer means. They do this about three times for each symbol that needs clarification. An example of this comes from Lisa, a young woman who was having a difficult time understanding why in a certain dream she was afraid of pregnancy. I shot the question at her, "What does *pregnancy* mean to you? NOW! Answer!"

"Child," Lisa said.

"What does *child* mean to you? NOW!"

"Life," she said.

"What does *life* mean to you?"

"Sober life," and she smiled and added, "It's a gift."

From this we determined that Lisa was afraid of this new sober life, this gift from God. She was frightened, like many of us, about the uncertainty of a new life that was so different from the old. From that "machine gun questioning" session, the full meaning of her dream revealed itself. The point of this technique is to rapidly fire the questions at your partner and not allow him or her time to think about or censor the answers. It allows the subconscious to answer.

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Past, Present, and Future Technique

In this exercise, one team member presents a dream to their partner. The partner interprets the dream as if it is their own from three different perspectives. The partner pretends that it is their own dream and interprets it as if it is a message from their past, then their present, and then the future. The one whose dream it actually is takes notes as the partner speaks. This is a slick way to examine other angles of the dream that the real dreamer may not have considered. the exercise finishes with the real dreamer interpreting their own dream.