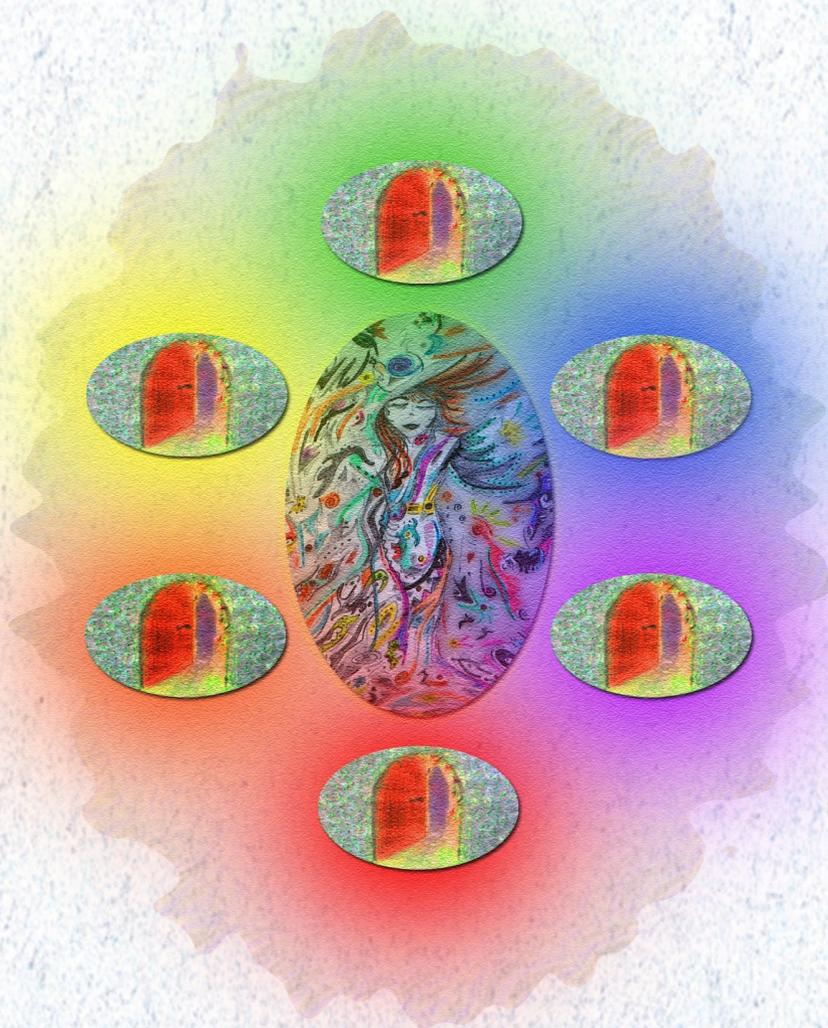


DREAM GATES

A Manual for Lucid Dreaming



Sašo Drobnič

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To all Freedom Seekers – may Your Path be shed with Light
and not covered with thorns...

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Foreword

A person that sleeps for eight hours per night effectively spends a third of their life asleep, and yet few of us ever wonder what happens in that time. When dreaming becomes a topic of conversation, people usually mention they don't dream or they don't remember their dreams. With some, the discussion triggers a memory of a long forgotten dream and they start to wonder what it could mean.

Dreams have been stirring imagination since ancient times. Questions like what do they mean, how to interpret them and how they relate to our waking lives are just some examples. People are interested in dreaming for different causes – some seek information and answers, others use them as gateways to other worlds where they can communicate with ancestors, spirits, angels or soul guides.

Explanations like these go back for millennia. Tibetan monks developed dream yoga in the eighth century which allows them to maintain waking consciousness in their sleep, and Indian shamans believe that we can travel to other realities through dreams.

A possibility of conscious control over dreams is definitely one of the most appealing aspects of dreaming. Modern man has turned down these kinds of explanations for a long time, considering them to be legends. This point of view started changing gradually when writer and anthropologist Carlos Castaneda published a series of books that describe in detail his experience with traveling from our waking reality to other

worlds. His stories inspired experts and psychonauts and so began the exploration of the secrets of human consciousness.

Today much information is available regarding all kinds of techniques, procedures and supplements one can use in order to achieve **lucid dreams** – dreams in which the dreamer is aware they are dreaming. Depending on energy levels this awareness allows them to actively participate in their dreams – they can live out their fantasies, solve everyday problems, influence the environment and dream themes, or explore the laws of the dream world and try to find out how deep the rabbit hole goes.

The terminology that I will use to describe terms and techniques for dreaming is mostly derived from the books of Carlos Castaneda and the research of a group of dreamers called “*DreamHackers*”. The expressions and abbreviations were agreed between the dreamers, therefore I try to hold to that agreement as much as possible. For better understanding there is a list of most commonly used terms and abbreviations that I use in the texts. I suggest that you read it often, because it represents the first step in the upgrade of your description of the world.

Where this manual ends, the real dreaming actually just begins. Exploring the secrets of the Second Attention, researching the abilities of dream body and meeting other dreamers are just some of the challenges that most definitely change the definition of reality as we know it.

First Gate of Dreaming

“... is the obstacle we must overcome by becoming aware of the feeling before we fall in deep sleep; the feeling of pleasant weight that doesn't allow us to open our eyes. We reach the first gate of dreaming when we become aware of falling asleep, covered with heavy darkness.”

Carlos Castaneda, The Art of Dreaming (1993)

What are dreams and why work with them?

“... I just pass the huge bridge when I hear sounds in the air. I look up and see two larger birds circling above me. I shade my eyes with my hand in order to see them better when it crosses my mind – I'm dreaming. For a while I switch my gaze between the hand touching my forehead and the birds still circling above me. I am somewhat surprised by the unusual sharpness of the image I am seeing. I look down from the bridge; I see a mist covering the bottom. I decide in a second and I throw myself over the fence. I fly nearly straight down; I'm falling without a single voice. The wind is cutting me around the ears and over the face; for a brief moment I think about where I would land but I decide it doesn't matter. When I touch the bottom, I sink in; I cut through it and I'm standing on the ground the next moment. Someone approaches me and says that it looked amazing when I was cutting the air like an arrow. ...”

Even though there are many different theories and explanations regarding what dreams are and why we dream, it is practically impossible to get a definite answer. The theories differ according to our approach to dreaming and according to our interpretative model (or the view of the world).

People behave according to a predetermined mind model – a system of patterns and beliefs that we took on in our early childhood from our parents and the society we belong to. Castaneda called this model a description of the world. Regardless of the expression we use, it is about a social framework – a set of agreements we use during interactions so we can understand each other. The description of the world determines whether or not two people observing the same item describe it in approximately the same way (i.e. according to shape, color, size etc.).

If we simplify this as much as possible, we actually don't see that object. We see a model of reality, created by our mind according to data, acquired with our senses (in this case from our eyes). The description of the world is some kind of agreement (a program) which determines our perceiving the world. If the senses would send faulty data to our brain (let us assume that we are color blind and that we do not detect colors) the world we perceive would actually differ from the “real world” that other people perceive.

Similar logic applies for dreams – dream world is also a model, created by our mind. The main difference is that while we sleep our mind doesn't perceive external data from our senses but rather it creates our dreams based on internal information – on the one side from our memories, beliefs, wishes and fears and on the other from archetypical structures, common to a social environment.

The closest and most familiar approach to dreaming for a modern man is analysis and interpretation of dream symbols

as a tool for psychoanalysis and personal growth. Modern science explains that dreams are meant for reliving daily events and cleaning mental ballast. Through the interpretation of dream symbols we can discover dreams' **therapeutic value** – we can use them as a tool for recognizing and transforming limiting beliefs for psychoanalysis and personal growth.

Interpreting dreams

It might seem that interpreting dreams doesn't fit into a lucid dreaming manual but it has been demonstrated that it can actually have a positive effect on achieving lucidity. Dreams are created from archetypical structures as well as from our deepest beliefs, feelings and fears. This means that we create them ourselves unconsciously. Each object, word or phantom (dream character) that appears in them is the representation of an aspect of ourselves. While we learn to interpret our dreams, we are developing our dream memory. With the search for answers and solving everyday problems through dream interpretation we slowly create room for dreaming.

When we interpret our dreams, it is important to know that the same symbols dreamt by different people can have different meanings. Confusion becomes even greater if we start looking for explanations of dream symbols in different dream books and on-line dream dictionaries. When we interpret our dreams it is important to bear in mind that dream books and dictionaries are only guidelines and that we will feel the real explanation.

We can interpret lucid dreams as well, considering the fact that when conscious in a dream, we are more receptive to the messages from our unconscious and we perceive them more directly.

Dreams as a Source of Inspiration

Human history is full of examples where dreams have served as a source of inspiration in different areas:

- Mary Shelly's "Frankenstein" was inspired by dream;
- German psychologist Otto Loewi discovered a way to prove that the transfer of nerve impulses is a chemical and not an electrical process, which resulted in him winning a Nobel prize for medicine;
- The story "The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", written by Robert L. Stevenson, was also inspired by dream;
- The singer Paul McCartney heard the melody for The Beatles' "Yesterday" in a dream;
- German chemist Friedrich Kekulé discovered the structure of a benzene molecule from dreams;
- And many of the masterpieces of the king of horror writing, Stephen King, were inspired by dreams.

These are just some of the documented cases that show that dreams are actually much more than a by-product in the mechanism of human performance.

An important development towards the understanding of dreaming will happen when science acknowledges and begins to research the possibility of lucid dreaming and astral travel. Lucid dreams hide an enormous **healing potential**. They can help us in getting rid of all kinds of complexes, psychic traumas and stress. Additionally, they can serve as a great tool in facing fears and nightmares. When we find ourselves trapped by an invisible enemy and we acknowledge that it is only a dream, we receive a precious gift – an opportunity to recognize our fear and face it once and for all. Through dreams we can consciously look for and accept the parts of our personality that we usually try to hide and in doing so we approach our wholeness one step at the time.

Esoteric theory states that dreams serve as a contact with afterlife, for divination and looking into our future. People turn to individuals for information – to shamans, prophets, seers and similar, who transfer the information and messages from other worlds. These kinds of explanation appear throughout history and go back to prehistory. Today, esoteric knowledge of dreams and dreaming is only transferred to us by half-forgotten stories of the past.

From **mythology** there come many stories about our seemingly real world actually being an illusion (Maya, a mirage). It is but one of countless levels of existence in the multidimensional matrix which dreams are a part of as well. They are gateways through which we can enter other worlds.

Such themes can be found from the beginning of human history. Modern man doesn't believe in such perspectives because they talk about things in a way that does not fit the usual model of reality and the world. But if we look at them through a different description model, we can see that they hide much more than it seems at first glance.

Besides different approaches to dreaming there are several different ways of categorizing dreams:

1. The most common and most used categorization divides dreams to ordinary (**normal**) and **lucid dreams**. The latest are further divided to pre-**lucid dreams** (the feeling that something is off with the reality we are in, but we don't know what is wrong), **lucid dreams** and **highly lucid dreams**.

2. Furthermore, Patricia Garfield divided dreams to 12 categories according to their themes:

- chasing,
- injuries, death and dying,
- trouble with cars and other means of transportation,

- losing valuables or damage possessions,
- trouble with tests/exams or fear of public speaking,
- falling or drowning,
- nudity in public places,
- being late (busses, ships, trains,...),
- trouble with telephones or other electronic devices,
- natural or man-made disasters,
- being lost or trapped,
- “apparitions“ (spirits of deceased).

We could continue naming categories on and on, therefore let's mention one more categorization that was created by:

3. Dreamhackers – they divided dreams into four categories:

- *Delirious Loops* – hard to remember, we usually have them in times of disease, weakness or exhaustion. They typically have minimalistic backgrounds (usually there is no real content, dream scenery is degraded), there are very few phantoms. In these kinds of dreams, colors and geometrical shapes prevail. For beginners, they are more or less useless, but experienced

dreamers can induce them and use them as an entry point into dreaming.

- *Talks* – dreams that mostly consist of monologues, dialogues or any other form of chatter with dream phantoms. We usually don't remember them but with experience we can change them into intense or transparent dreams.
- *Intense dreams* – dreams with colorful background, complex plot and picturesque phantoms that we usually remember well.
- *Transparent dreams* – very rare in the early stages of dreamwork. They are easy to remember and are often mixed with conscious dreams because they include moments of awareness that we are asleep and dreaming.

When we talk about dreams, we can use any of the above categorizations or create a brand new one, considering they are just a part of an agreement between different groups of dreamers. For the purpose of our further explanation we will use the common categorization of dreams.

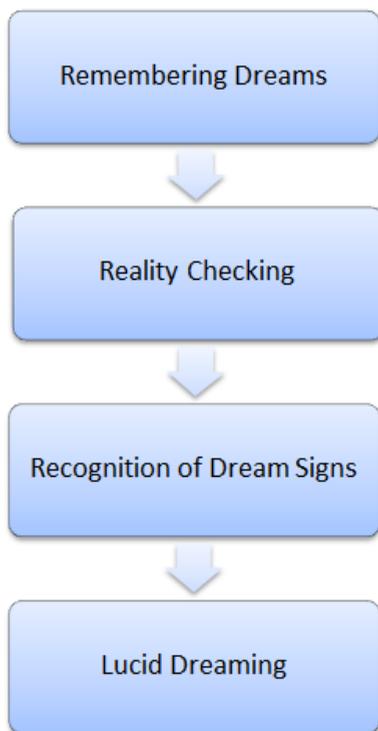
Second Gate of Dreaming

“... You reach the second gate of dreaming when you wake up from a dream into another dream. You can have as many dreams as you want or as many as you are able to have but you have to have enough control over them not to wake up to the world we know. Crossing over the first gate of dreaming dreamer reaches his energy body. And what actually crosses the second gate of dreaming, jumping from a dream to a dream, is the energy body.”

Carlos Castaneda, The Art of Dreaming (1993)

How to begin?

Lucid dreaming is a skill that anyone can obtain with some effort and practice. However, it is a process of interconnected and interrelated techniques and procedures that require persistence and discipline, which can last differently from person to person. Roughly we can break it down to four phases:



Phase one is **remembering dreams**. The task is a bit more complex than it appears, considering the memory of dreams dissolves as soon as we begin to move in the morning. This obstacle can be crossed by writing a dream diary. We write down every dream we can remember upon waking. There are at least two arguments supporting the assertion that dream journaling is an important step – first, by writing down dreams we develop and train both dream memory and dreaming attention, and second, creating a dream diary in any form is a foundation for further dreamwork – collected dreams are a source of dream signs (*anomalies* in dreams), which are our first contact with the dream world or the Second Attention.

The second phase, which we do at the same time as journaling dreams, is **reality checking**. During our everyday chores, we stop for a while to perform a maneuver with which to check if we are dreaming. Such repeated activities in time transfer into dreaming, therefore it is best to perform reality checks during situations that happen to us many times during the day – for example, whenever we wash our hands, when we enter the room, when we flip a light switch and the like. Reality checks in dreaming serve as a tool to recognize dream signs.

The third phase is **the analysis of our notes and recognition of** (personal) **dream signs**. The dreamer looks for reoccurring elements in his dream diary – i.e. locations, objects or people he dreams of often, or things that are impossible in the real world. He can use them as lucidity triggers in dreams.

Regular dreamwork and reality checking triggers the awakening of dreamers' *Double*. *Moments of pre-lucidity* begin to appear (we get the feeling that something is wrong with the reality we are in) as well as *short lucid dreams*. They are usually interrupted by intense emotions (i.e. uncontrolled excitement about finally succeeding or from a shock caused by seeing our sleeping body); later on, dreams can get interrupted by lack of energy, motivation or ideas. Nevertheless, regular activity triggers *the explosion of dream memories* – dreamer remembers all the dreams that he dreamt in his life in a single moment. This, together with the maneuvers during dreaming, bring him additional energy that he needs to penetrate deeper into the *Second Attention*.

Following is the next phase – **lucid dreaming**. In a lucid dream, the dreamer is aware of the fact that his physical body is actually lying in the bed at this moment and that he is actually asleep and that the experience is being held by his *Double*. This knowledge gives him an opportunity to influence the dream plot and course of events, dream scene, environment and other elements of the dream. Lucid dreams are some kind of *testing ground* – the dreamer learns new skills that help him progress in dreaming and/or his everyday life.

Practicing dreaming requires more than just practicing techniques – it requires a certain amount of discipline that a dreamer has to bring into his life. We require a quality sleep for dreaming and to have a good night's rest we need to sleep

enough. We can help ourselves by applying some new habits to our lives:

- The room we sleep in needs to have fresh air, we need to make sure that the temperature is appropriate. It is best not to have any electronic devices in our bedroom – these cause high frequency sounds that can be disturbing while we do techniques and procedures.
- We use a comfortable bed. We use light covers so the weight on our body is minimal and the pillows that enable as natural position of the body as possible.
- Before sleep we avoid heavy (hard to digest) foods, alcohol, sugar, coffee and black tea.
- We set the time we will go to bed in the evening and the time we will rise in the morning and try to hold to that time as much as possible.
- We can prepare for bed by having a small *ritual*. We change our night stand into *an altar*, we prepare our dream diary, a pen and other things we might need during our nightly awakenings to record our dreams.

Getting ready to bed is useful because the things we do before going to sleep can transfer themselves into dreaming. If we are excited because of our daily activities or shocked because of the movie we saw before going to bed, dreaming is the last thing on our minds which shows on the quality of our sleep and the contents of our dreams.

We can add relaxation or meditation techniques to our bedtime ritual as well. There are many different techniques that we can choose from, therefore I only include two simple exercises:

Relaxing the body

We take a couple of deep inhales and exhales, pay attention to breathing. When we breathe in, we tighten leg muscles and we release them when we exhale. Continue with thighs, abdomen, chest, hands, palms, neck and face – when we breathe in, we tighten the muscles, when we breathe out, we release them. Before we finish we take one last deep breath and tighten the entire body on the inhale, remain tense for a while, then release all tensions with a deep exhalation.

Instant recapitulation

We go backwards through the day in our minds – we try to remember everything we did since the moment we went to bed to the moment we got up in the morning. We go through the events quickly, without getting caught up with the details. The situations or people that occupy our attention most intensely are the ones in which we lost most of our energy and it is wise to release that energy separately. When we go through the entire day to the moment we woke up we can proceed with instant recapitulation of last nights' dreams or we can move on to practicing techniques for achieving lucid dreaming. When we do the procedure during Wake-Back-To-Bed (WBTB), we try to recapitulate the dreams we woke up from.

Sleep and sleep cycles

The experts still don't know for sure what sleep is and why it happens. By measuring brainwave activities (EEG) and examining biochemical processes in the brain and body they have discovered that sleep is a biological process during which our consciousness is reduced or absent, our metabolism and heart rate slow down, bodily temperature decreases, sensory sensitivity reduces and the muscles become inactive. While we sleep, our immune, nervous, skeletal and muscular systems restore and rejuvenate.

Brainwaves	Frequency	Basic Characteristics
Beta	> 13 Hz	wakefulness, concentration
Alpha	8 - 12 Hz	relaxation, meditation
Theta	4 - 7 Hz	deep relaxation, light sleep
Delta	< 3 Hz	deep sleep, coma

Classical medical classification of brainwaves and according states of consciousness

Even though sleep is considered as an extremely passive process, it is actually much more than that. With an adult who sleeps approximately 8 hours per night, 4 to 5 sleep cycles exchange in a single night. Each of the cycles lasts 90-110 minutes and is divided into two broad types: rapid eye movement (REM) and non-rapid eye movement (non-REM or

NREM) sleep. Each type consists of a specific set of physiological and neurological features.

NREM stage 1 – Drowsiness

Stage 1 is the beginning of the sleep cycle and represents a transition from wakefulness to sleep. Body begins to relax, breathing, heart rate and eye movement slow down and brainwaves change from beta (> 13 Hz, prevalent in wakefulness) to theta (4-8 Hz). This phase lasts for 5-10 minutes and represents 2-5 % of total sleep time.

NREM stage 2 – Light sleep

In stage 2, which lasts approximately 20 minutes, breathing, heart rate and brain activities continue to decrease, bodily temperature drops. Brainwaves still prevail in theta, occasionally sudden fluctuations appear. These bursts of oscillatory brain activity are called sleep spindles (spindle waves); their frequency ranges between 11 and 16 Hz. Stage 2 brings deep relaxation, the ceasing of muscular activities and gradual shutdown of our senses.

NREM stage 3 – Deep sleep

Formerly divided into stages 3 and 4, this stage is called slow-wave sleep (SWS) or deep sleep. In stage 3 delta waves (0.5-4 Hz) prevail. Bodily functions slow to the lowest daily levels,

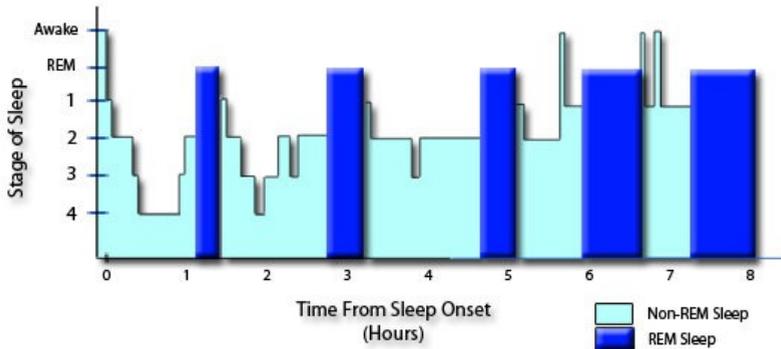
eye movement and muscular activity cease completely. It first occurs 30-45 minutes after sleep onset. Even though the most intense body regeneration is typical for this phase, night terror, sleepwalking or bed wetting can occur.

Stage 4 – REM sleep

REM (“Rapid Eye Movement”) phase is the most active phase of sleep which occurs for the first time approximately 90 minutes after we go to sleep and represents 20-25 % of total sleep time. In the first cycle it can last only a couple of minutes, but it lengthens with each next cycle on the account of shortening of deep sleep and can last nearly an hour in the last sleep cycle. Most dreams occur in REM phase when our brain emits beta waves similar to waking state. During this phase breathing becomes faster, irregular and shallower, rapid eye movement occurs. Blood pressure and heart rate increase while the body is in the state of sleep paralysis which prevents injury during the more intense dreams.

Sleep cycles do not follow an entirely consistent pattern – sleep starts with stage 1, then proceeds through stages 2 and 3. After the third stage is complete, stage 2 repeats, after which the first REM stage occurs. When this ends, the body usually returns to stage 2 and another sleep cycle begins.

Sleep Stages Through The Night



Hypnogram showing sleep cycles by stages

Being familiar with sleep cycles and REM phases can be of great help to a dreamer. While we practice techniques in WBTB method, we can set the alarm to wake us up during REM phases or immediately after them when dream recollection is the most intense, which simplifies remembering dreams. Besides that we can determine with observation which time of night fits us best for dreaming (i.e. when we can fall back to sleep the easiest, make the conscious transition to dreams, when we remember dreams the most and alike).

Night terror

The term “**night terror**” should not be confused with *nightmares* (frightening dreams that cause dread or fear). A “night terror” describes the feelings of intense horror we can experience while waking up suddenly during the night. The terror can be accompanied by phenomena such as the feeling of presence, feeling of being pulled, lifted or levitated, feeling of heaviness or weight on the body, or sounds, voices or other kinds of auditory perceptions. The phenomena that are most commonly referred to as Night Terror are “**the old Hag syndrome**” (**Sleep Paralysis**) and **False Awakening**.

Sleep Paralysis is a phenomenon that occurs to everyone. It is the safety mechanism of the body which prevents us from experiencing dreams too physically (sleepwalking, sleep talking and alike). With most people it happens unconsciously, like the other phases of sleep, therefore experiencing it spontaneously and consciously can feel rather unpleasant.



The Nightmare – Henry Fuseli, 1781

Sleep paralysis can be experienced on two occasions:

1. in the moments before we fall asleep – it occurs as the final stage of relaxing the body and announces the *transition* into dreaming (REM phase);
2. right after we wake up – our mind wakes up faster than the rest of the body does.

Sudden disabling of movement and speech can bring forth unpleasant feelings in us by themselves, but when the paralysis is accompanied by visual and auditory perceptions, the horror is magnified. It is good to bear in mind that what we perceive is not physical (we do not perceive it with our physical senses or our body), but rather energetic (internal perception). It usually passes in a couple of minutes when the sensations of our body are restored. We can speed up the process by focusing on one of our fingers and trying to move it or by trying to touch the top of our mouth with our tongue.

Dreamers can use sleep paralysis for conscious transition into dreaming. All it takes is a little practice and it can be achieved in two ways:

1. When we try to touch the top of our mouth we do it deliberately and as a Reality Check. If we fail to touch it, there is a great possibility that we are in a dream. We can make sure by becoming aware of our bodily sensations – we can try to sense sounds or lights coming from our environment.

2. Sleep Paralysis is usually accompanied by auditory perceptions, such as whistling, buzzing or humming. The perceptions progress to the feeling of intense vibrating (*pulsating*) that runs through the whole body from feet to head. The pulsating announces the transfer of consciousness from our physical to our dream body. If we succeed in maintaining awareness up to this moment we can use this state to make a transition into a dream – we can imagine that we are climbing or descending on a stairway, that we are sinking in water or even in our bed or that we pull ourselves up on a rope hanging off the ceiling. We can also try to roll off the bed. But be careful – if we actually wake up, we could fall to the floor.

When we find ourselves at home and we can't figure out how we came there and what we did before it is good to do a Reality Check. Sometimes it happens that the experience we are involved in is actually a **False Awakening**.

False Awakening is a dream that we mistakenly take for our everyday, waking reality. Completely ordinary situations can happen:

Our alarm goes off. We turn it off and reach for our dream diary. We record the dream we just woke up from in minute detail, then we get up and head to bathroom. On our way we think about the things we have to do during the day. We wash ourselves, get dressed and go out to do our chores... Then, the alarm goes off again.

An empty dream diary isn't the worst that can happen in such a case. The room we find ourselves in is actually not home but its replica in the Second Attention. That usually means that it differs from our waking home – there are hidden rooms which don't exist in our physical home and we can meet all sorts of beings which are often pretty scary. The experience can be extremely unpleasant and that is why it is important to keep as calm as possible and simply try to wake ourselves up. We achieve that easiest by going back to sleep.

False Awakening can also be used as an entry point for lucid dreaming. Faulty cell phones, distorted numbers on electronic watches, broken pens and other similar details are the phenomena that often occur during False Awakening. When we recognize them as Dream Signs, we can become aware in our dream with the help of Reality Checking.

Lucid Dreaming is a vast field of exploration, limited only by our imagination. The Second Attention is a world where other laws apply than in our waking reality. Laws of physics and gravity are much more flexible here, allowing us to move through closed doors, walking through walls and flying. We can expand the borders of our usual perception – we can try out spherical sight (we expand our field of vision from a normal 160 degrees to 360), we can develop and strengthen our subtle and extrasensory perceptions (intuition, clairvoyance, clairaudience), we can travel through time, meet spirit guides or other beings from near and far, or we can change our physical form and experience the world from an animal's point of view. We can move between places via portals, or we can

travel through dream worlds with our fellow dreamers. Lucid dreams allow us to discover new aspects of ourselves and our role in the world.

Changing beliefs

As mentioned in the beginning, people perceive the world according to a mind model, created by our description of the world. There is a general belief in our cultural environment that sleep is only meant for resting and regenerating our bodies. If we wish to actively participate in dreaming we have to be aware of the fact that sleep is the starting point for becoming aware in a dream, therefore we need to check through and, if necessary, to adjust some of our beliefs and patterns.

Changing beliefs is not a simple task, for it interferes deeply into the structure of our personalities. The first step we have to do is identify patterns and beliefs related to dreaming (i.e. “*Everybody dreams.*”, “*I can become aware in a dream.*”, “*I can easily remember dreams.*” and alike) and figure out whether they need to be upgraded. We can test our beliefs by the following procedure:

Make yourself comfortable; take a couple of deep breaths to relax your body. Touch your left hand’s thumb and index finger lightly to make a circle then put thumb and index finger of your right hand in the circle from below. In your mind do two or three test affirmations – think about true statements like “*My name is...*”, “*I was born on...*”, and at the same time as you think about the affirmations you try to break the circle with the

fingers of your right hand. If the statement is true (i.e. has a positive effect or supports us) the fingers don't break apart without efforts. We can test the method by using it on positive, true affirmations, and can achieve the opposite effect if we use a different name instead of our own when thinking of the affirmation "*My name is...*". If the statement isn't true or if it doesn't support us, the circle breaks without any efforts.

The easiest way of changing beliefs is by using autosuggestion and repetition – we stop several times during the day and either in our minds or out loud we repeat positive affirmations, statements and beliefs, related to dreaming a couple of times. It is important not to do this as if on auto-pilot but to take time, to give power to our words, to feel them and believe in them. With repetition, in time, the affirmations will sink in into our subconscious and eventually become a part of our description of the world.

Remembering Dreams

The ability to remember dreams is an essential requirement for lucid dreaming. Some people take this for granted; not only can they perfectly remember their dreams upon awakening; they can hold them in their mind for a whole day or even more. Unfortunately, this doesn't apply to the majority.

It is known that memory of dreams fades away very quickly. Researchers have determined that only five minutes after waking up we only remember half of our dream content, after ten minutes this percentage goes down to only 10 percent.

Different things can influence our ability to remember dreams:

1. Daily activities

Our way of life is often a reason why we begin to think about things we have to do just moments after we wake up. A flood of thoughts erases the memory of dreams in seconds, which is why it's so important to wake up slowly and think about what we just dreamt first.

2. The duration of sleep

Most of our dreams occur during REM phases that occur roughly every 90 minutes, and which get longer as they progress on the account of shortening of delta sleep towards the morning. In each REM phase we dream at least one dream, which our brain erases or suppresses during non-REM phases. Our task becomes to try and wake up between or just after REM phases when our dream recall is at its' best. We can approach the situation in different ways:

- We prepare a glass of water on our nightstand. Before we go to sleep we drink half and suggest to ourselves that we will remember our dreams when we will drink the rest on waking in the morning.
- We drink a large amount of water before going to bed. This method is similar to the first but it is somewhat harder to control because we never know when (and how badly) we would have to use the toilet.

- We try to set an alarm to wake us up during REM phase. The upside is that by observing our sleep cycles we will soon find out our sleep rhythm and be able to wake up during or just after the REM phase. However, there is also a downside – waking up with the help of an alarm clock can be rather rough, which is why we can forget our dreams in seconds.
- We can also use “Dream Machines”. They are equipped with sensors which recognize eye movement behind our closed eyelids (REM phase) and warn the dreamer by flashing lights on a sleeping mask or they can help us understand our sleep cycles by measuring our brainwaves and thus detecting changes in our sleep phases.

If we want to improve our ability to remember dreams it is important to have enough time for sleep. If we are well rested it is easier to focus on dream recollection than when we are tired and willing to donate a kidney for a couple of extra minutes of morning sleep. It is also easier to devote a couple of minutes to record our dreams when we wake up at night.

3. Way of waking up

Better dream recall depends on our way of waking up. If we wake ourselves up with an alarm clock, we are thrown out of the dream and into waking reality, and the chances are that the memory of dreams will disappear in a second. It is very

important to wake up slowly and with the intention to remember dreams.

To get additional time for waking up naturally we can help ourselves **by setting our internal (biological) clock**.

This is a procedure we can use to alter our biorhythm. Let's see what it is all about by looking at an example:

Because of our daily activities, we get up at 6:30 with the help of an alarm clock. Since we know how an alarm clock affects dreams, our intention is to wake up before the alarm goes off so that we get some additional time for remembering dreams and writing down our nightly adventures. To achieve the desired effect (that is, to alter our biorhythm) we set our alarm clock earlier by half an hour, waking up at 6 o'clock for two to three weeks. After the "running-in period" we change the time of the alarm to 6:30 again. It appears that our body develops a reflex – an internal timer that allows us to wake up naturally at 6 o'clock. We get an additional 30 minutes to remember our dreams and write them down before the alarm goes off.

We can adjust our body to wake up at any given time using this procedure. What we have to keep in mind is that by doing so we are changing our unconscious patterns which is not a simple task and often requires more than one repetition.

When we are having troubles remembering dreams, we can also help ourselves by using the technique of **fishing for lost dreams**.

This is a form of meditation which helps us to recall parts of, or even entire, dreams. The technique is most effective if we do it as soon as possible after waking up and if we try to remain as still as possible.

We make ourselves comfortable then start to visualize that we are a fisherman, sitting in a boat in the middle of a lake. We place the bait (the dream fragment that we can remember) on the hook and throw it into the water. We try to keep the piece of our dream story in our mind. We try to keep a calm mind and remain as still as possible in order not to scare our catch off. When images begin to arise we begin imagining that we pull the hook out of the water nice and slow. We allow the connections between images and ideas to form naturally; we ask ourselves if that brings forth any other associations or memories. If the catch is too great and we feel that it is pulling us back to the ocean of dreams, we can either allow ourselves to swim back to dreams or we can keep our attention focused on the dream recall and finish the meditation when we recall the forgotten dream. We write down the dreams then we attend to our other chores.

To strengthen our dream recall we only need motivation and some practice.

When we wake up, we remain as still as possible and even before we open our eyes we think about what we were dreaming. We try to recall the dream content in as much details as possible; we try to remember as many details as we can. We can help ourselves by using cues like “*I was in/at...*”, “*I met...*”, “*I was talking to...*” and alike. And we are at the next step – writing dreams.

Writing dreams

Writing dreams is an important step in dreamwork. Dream diaries serve as a reminder to recall our dreams in later stages. Besides that they are of great help when identifying reoccurring elements and searching for dream signs.

Most of the people who start working with their dreams often encounter the first obstacle in the early stages (that is with remembering and writing down dreams). Even though we have a feeling that we are holding our dreams by the tail we can't recall them. It is important to keep in mind that this is normal and that it will pass. Our minds need some time to adjust to seeing dreams as not just unimportant ballast to be tossed back into our subconscious as soon as we awake.

This is a strong argument for writing dreams down as soon as possible after we wake up. Regardless of how well we remembered our nightly adventure when we woke up in the middle of the night, chances are that we will forget all about it by the morning.

The most effective way of crossing this obstacle is to take writing dreams as seriously as possible. Whenever we wake up, we write down anything and everything that we remember. The entries to our dream journal will probably be rather short at first – a word or a sentence, associations and feelings that we have upon awakening, individual locations or events; usually the things we dreamt just before we woke up. With practice and persistent journaling we will be able to remember dreams that we dreamt in the beginning of the night.

We can use different approaches to writing down dreams:

- we write down key information (where were we, who was with us, what we did,...) that will help us to recall more details later;
- we describe our dream in as much detail as possible;
- we write down our feelings and associations that we have upon awakening;
- we sketch places and/or contents of our dreams.

Regardless of the way we choose, it is important to write dreams regularly. By training our dream recall we also develop our **dreaming attention** – the ability of control that we need in order to consciously perceive dreams and by which we *fixate* dreams so they don't change.

Occasionally it happens even in later stages of dreamwork that we can't remember anything when we wake up. There are many reasons for that – lack of sleep, heavy dinner or disease, greater workload or stress in our daily life and so on. Since we can't influence some things we can help ourselves with a trick:

We start writing down dreams as usual – we write down the date and time, then we make a note that we don't remember last night's dreams and we start to write down any dream that we can remember. We describe them with as many details as we can; the idea is to train our dream recall.

Sometimes it can happen that writing dreams can trigger an association that brings the forgotten dream back in our memory. If that happens, we write down that dream as well, otherwise we finish journaling our dream then we attend to other chores.

We can use different approaches for recording dreams.

Dream diary

Writing a dream diary is the most common way of recording dreams. For this purpose we choose an appropriate notebook, which should only be used for writing down dreams. We always keep it on a nightstand next to our bed. When we wake up, we don't allow our thoughts to run wild about the things we have to do. We concentrate on our dreams and write down everything that we can remember.

For the purpose of future systematizing of dreams we write the date and time on top of every page. It is the most practical to write the date beforehand – that way we can write down the time when we wake up, then start writing the dream's contents immediately.

Writing dreams on a computer

When we choose an appropriate way of writing, using a computer can make our lives much easier. We can use specific software (i.e. *DreamDiary* or *FirstGate*), web pages or web forums and last but not least an ordinary text editor.

We can easily work with texts when written on a computer – we can use different colors to differentiate between dream categories, simply and unmistakably tag recurring elements and dream signs, edit and copy texts etc., and besides that, most of the computer software has quite advanced search engines. That becomes an important advantage after some time – browsing through years old dream diaries can be quite time consuming and is far from simple.

Using computers also has some disadvantages. Besides the fact that anonymity and privacy are always at stake when using websites and forums, server errors and hard drive malfunctions can also occur.

If we use a computer to record our dreams, it is important to keep in mind and do regular backups.

Recording dreams

Some dreamers use a Dictaphone or any other portable voice recorder to record their dreams (nowadays most mobile phones and ordinary MP3 players have the recording function included).

The procedure is quite similar to writing a dream diary – before we go to bed we prepare a voice recorder and leave it within reach. The main advantage of recording dreams is that we can do it lying down without turning the lights on which includes less moving around and consequently lesser loss of dream contents.

The newer voice recorders also have the function of automatic recording – the recording begins when the microphone detects the sound. If we use a recorder that allows this functionality, we can prepare the recorder near to the head (for the best audio quality it is even better to use an additional microphone) and we can start reciting dream contents as soon as we wake up. Don't get shocked if you hear snoring or any other unusual sounds when you start to listen to the recordings.

This approach is somewhat less useful when we share our bedroom with other people.

We are all different and only by trying out different methods will we be able to find out which approach suits us the most. Regardless of the chosen method, the most important thing is

to add writing dreams to our daily routine and practice it as regularly as possible.

Reality Check

Reality Check is a dreaming maneuver we can use to check whether we are dreaming at the time of testing. We do it by stopping for a moment on different occasions during the day to ask ourselves if we are dreaming in that moment. Regardless of how crazy the question sounds when we know that we are awake, we should approach our task conscientiously and with the utmost seriousness. If we repeat the maneuver long enough, it imprints in our subconscious mind and we begin to perform it in our dreams, where we can become aware with its help.

It is best to test the reality in situations that happen regularly to us throughout the day – i.e. when we enter a room, when we wash our hands, when we check the time, flip a switch and alike. By the implementation of the maneuvers at recurring situations we increase the opportunity of recognizing dream signs and becoming aware within a dream.

We can use different ways to test reality:

- **Counting fingers**

We lift our hand in front of our face, palm up and count our fingers. When we finish, we turn the hand around

and count the fingers again. When we're dreaming it often happens that after counting for the second time a finger is missing, or there are too many, or our hand looks abnormal and alike.

- **Reading texts**

We read any text, turn away for a moment, and then read the text again. If it changes in any way during that time, there is a great possibility that we are dreaming.

- **Faulty electronics**

We try to turn the light or any other electronic device on and off. When we are dreaming, things often don't work as they were supposed to.

- **Flying**

We stretch the arms besides our body and jump as if we're trying to take off. If we are in dreams, we might get lucky.

- **Look at a digital watch**

This method is similar to reading texts – we take a look at our digital watch, turn away then take a look at the watch again. When we are dreaming, the numbers can be different or not clear the second time we take a look.

- **Finger through matter**

We try to push our finger through something solid, i.e. our palm or the wall. This test is somewhat less efficient and is advised to be repeated a couple of times because we need to become accustomed to the fact that in dreams the physical laws are different than in our waking reality.

- **Prolonging fingers**

We put out a finger, hold it with our other hand and pull it to make it longer. If we're dreaming, success is ensured.

- **Breathing through closed nose**

We close our nose with one hand and cover the mouth with the other, then we try to breathe in through the nose. An equally effective method is breathing under water.

- **Look at the tip of the nose**

We close one eye and try to see the tip of our nose with the other.

- **Touch the top of the mouth with the tongue**

We try to touch the top of our mouth with our tongue. If we are dreaming, it's not possible.

- **Touch our elbow with our tongue**

We try to touch our elbow with our tongue.

Sometimes it happens that testing reality fails even with the most reliable test (that is with the test we use most often and with most success to become aware within a dream). To avoid such failures, it is advised to use a combination of two or more different tests at the same time.

There are many different ways to test reality and surely we can find a few that we can use at any time and in any place without other people looking at us strangely.

Dream Signs

Dream Signs are the recurring elements that appear through several different dreams. They can be anything, not only unusual occurrences or events. Everybody who works with dreams sooner or later faces the extremely unpleasant feeling when their teeth begin to fall out and into the sink or with the embarrassment when they find out all of a sudden that they are completely naked in a crowd of people. Those are the examples of **collective dream signs** – signs that occasionally appear in dreams of every person. Among the collective dream signs there are also

- neglected public toilets,
- faulty lights and other electronic devices,

- changing texts,
- being late

and other similar nuisances. If the situation doesn't get us completely out of track, we can use it as a starting point for becoming aware within a dream.

On the other side, the **personal dream signs** are specific for each individual dreamer. They can be any element of dreams as well – events, people or objects that we see a lot, recurring locations or oddities that tip us off that something is not right with the reality. They appear in a pattern that we can discover by systematic analysis of our dreams. When we search for dream signs, we pay special attention to

1. recurring elements of dreams:

- activities (running, chasing, falling,...),
- projections (dream characters)
- different objects (i.e. *dream totem*),
- animals,
- events (ceremonies, celebrations, picnics,...) and
- any other elements that appear often in our dreams;

2. things that are not possible in waking life:

- objects that change shape when we look at them,
- showings of ghosts, spirits, deceased and other unusual beings,

- supernatural powers (flying, breathing under water, super-strength, super-speed and alike);

3. locations where we find ourselves often; in dreaming there are places and spaces that do not exist in physical reality.

We write down the dream signs, then we try to find them in waking life. If we wish to recognize them in ordinary, everyday situations, we need to become aware of everything that goes on around us (the state of *heightened awareness*). When in dreams, that alone can trigger lucidity, and when we recognize dream signs in more ordinary situations, we can use them as a clue for reality testing.

Third Gate of Dreaming

“... you reach it when in dreams you find out that you stare at someone who is asleep. Then you find out that it's you.”

Carlos Castaneda, The Art of Dreaming (1993)

Achieving Lucidity

Achieving Lucidity is a process of becoming aware that we can approach in two ways:

- we become aware during a dream (**Dream Initiated Lucid Dream**),
- we enter dreams directly through our everyday, waking reality (**Wake Induced Lucid Dream** /Astral Projection)

Testing reality, systematizing and interpreting dreams, searching for and identifying dream signs and all sorts of dreaming techniques and supplements are the tools we can use to help ourselves with becoming aware within a dream. Their main purpose is the development of *the critical doubt* – the question whether what is going on around us is actually real. In our everyday circumstances we rarely think about it; most of what happens to us we accept as granted and we practically never doubt about things. Since we operate like that in our waking life, it is even less probable that we would doubt the reality we encounter when we sleep and dream. That is exactly the reason why we don't recognize the dreams; those are a lot like our waking reality in the early stages of dreamwork.

For the best efficiency in achieving results it is best to approach dreaming by taking on daily and nightly activities.

With the activities we perform during the day (reality testing, systematizing dreams and searching and identifying dream

signs) we develop and strengthen our dream recall and develop dreaming attention – the ability of control that we need in order to consciously perceive and participate in dreams. Activities that we perform before going to bed or during WBTB (bedtime rituals, preparations for sleeping and dreaming, different kinds of relaxation, meditation and visualization and the use of techniques and supplements for achieving lucidity) are the indirect preparations and the transition into dreaming.

DILD - Dream Initiated Lucid Dreams

When we start working with our dreams and engage in dreamwork, the most common and seemingly most random way of becoming aware in dreams is Dream Initiated Lucid Dream. Dreams start out quite ordinarily then an event or situation arises that makes us realize that we are in a dream and we become aware.

Awareness occurs because of one of the following reasons:

1. Identification of an object – we find something that we subconsciously connect to dreams.

This is usually connected with the recognition of dream signs that we previously identified by a systematic review of the notes in our dream diaries. To increase the probability of becoming aware in a dream we need to pay more attention to dream signs in our waking reality.

To assist us we can choose a personal item we use as a **dream totem**. We can choose any item that we can keep with us at all times. We use it as a dream sign – we perform a reality check whenever we see it, touch it et cetera. The maneuver transfers itself into dreaming in time where we can use it as a lucidity trigger.

2. Testing reality – we perform a reality check and become aware within a dream.

Let us remember that reality testing is a maneuver that transfers from our everyday waking reality into dreaming. This means that we can increase the frequency of becoming aware within a dream if we test the reality in recurring situations: while we wash our hands, when we turn on or off the switch, when we enter a room and in other situations that happen to us often throughout the day.

3. Recognizing anomalies

We recognize things in dreaming that are not possible or do not exist in our waking reality. We become aware when we notice that we are flying, when we see spirits of the deceased or when we talk to our deceased relatives, we communicate with animals and alike.

In the early stages of dreamwork becoming aware within a dream is mostly random; the experience itself usually ends rather quickly due to lack of energy. But in time it shows that becoming aware within a dream is triggered by recognition of

specific elements of dreams – i.e. recurring objects, people or locations. By identifying dream signs, testing reality and performing other dreaming maneuvers we collect additional energy and improve our dream recall and dreaming attention, which enables us to become aware within a dream more often and engage in longer, more intense dreams.

WILD - Wake Induced Lucid Dream

The WILD technique is an advanced dreaming technique that allows us direct transfer of consciousness from our waking reality into dreaming. We make the transition by *falling asleep awake* – we stay conscious while our body passes the phases of relaxation and *shuts down* (enters the sleep paralysis) and the REM phase begins. That is when the transfer of consciousness to our subtle body (*the Double*) happens with which we perceive the dream world.

We perform the procedure in three steps:

1. Relaxation

The transition of consciousness happens right before we fall asleep. The first step is to relax the body as much as possible. We pay attention to our breathing. When we breathe in, we tighten our leg muscles and release the tension when we breathe out. We proceed with calves, thighs, abdomen, chest hands, palms, neck, face – when we breathe in we tighten the

muscles and release the tension by breathing out. We can use any relaxation technique we prefer.

2. Stay attentive

The purpose of the technique is to remain attentive and not to allow to be taken to (ordinary) dreams while our body is sinking into sleep.

We can help ourselves with maintaining awareness by using different tricks:

- by counting or performing other mathematical operations,
- by repeating affirmations or mantras,
- by paying attention to our breathing,
- by imagining that we descend down the stairs, climb a ladder or a rope that hangs from the ceiling and alike,
- by observing hypnagogic images.

The hypnagogic images appear when we are completely relaxed and are slowly sinking into sleep. We begin to perceive colored dots or lines behind our closed eyelids that gradually transform into picturesque dream images. Our task is to observe carefully how they transform until we find ourselves in the middle of a dream.

3. Enter the dream

While we maintain our attention on hypnagogic images we can notice that they become more and more transparent and

complex in time. At a certain moment we would get the feeling that we can literally enter into a dream through them. The easiest way to make a transition is to try and grab the nearest object or to examine any detail from the image that we perceive.

WILD is definitely one of the most difficult methods for achieving lucidity. Retaining awareness while our body sinks into sleep is anything but simple. Direct transfer of consciousness into dreaming is only possible after the sleep paralysis and unconsciousness (inability of conscious perception of the environment with bodily senses) occur. To put it differently, this means that we have to fall asleep awake, which is a great test of persistence and patience. During that we go through the processes that happen to us unconsciously under normal circumstances – the feeling of weight, tingling and tickling over the body, the feeling of pressure or presence, intensive perception of sounds such as all kinds of rumbling noises and wheezing and in the last stages the feeling of *pulsating* – intense feeling of waves flashing faster and faster throughout the entire body from feet to head that announces the final transition of attention from the external to the internal perception.

To remain perfectly still while our mind uses every possible trick in the book to see whether our body is already asleep is a challenge that requires a lot of persistence and patience. The most important thing is not to get discouraged by failures, because only practice makes it perfect.

To ensure we receive a good night's rest and still get the most from dream induction techniques it is best not to perform the techniques immediately when we go to sleep. Instead, we should perform them 5 or 6 hours later. Of the first sleep cycles the longest is the phase of deep sleep, during which our body rests and regenerates, the REM phase, after which most of the dreams occur, lasts a much shorter time. The duration reverses in the morning which means that dreams begin more rapidly and last longer.

This doesn't mean that performing techniques in the evening, when we go to sleep, is not possible. It means that waiting for the REM phase that occurs only after the sleep paralysis is rather lengthy and quite hard, a great challenge even for the more experienced dreamers.

This brings us to the WBTB method which is actually not a technique for achieving lucidity but rather a way to increase efficiency of other techniques and by that the probability of becoming aware within a dream.

WBTB – Wake-Back-To-Bed

WBTB is one of the most efficient ways to achieve lucidity. As we know, most of the dreams happen during REM phase, that prolong on the account of shortening of deep, regenerative sleep during the morning. By using WBTB method we provide our body with the time it needs to rest and regenerate, and at the same time we harness the best conditions for dreaming.

We perform the procedure following five steps:

1. We set the alarm to 5 or 6 hours after we go to sleep. By doing so we provide our body with the time to regenerate and rest as well as sleeping over the sleep cycles with longer delta (deep) sleep and shorter REM phase (dreaming).
2. When the alarm goes off, we get up and write down the dreams we just woke up from. By observing our sleep cycles we can accurately determine when we are in the REM phase and we can consider that when setting up the alarm. If the alarm doesn't reset our dream recall in a moment, waking up directly from REM sleep ensures a better dream recall.
3. We get out of bed. It is important that we wake our mind up as much as possible while the rest of the body remains pleasantly relaxed. We can take a warm shower or have a light snack. It is advised to do something dream related – read something, write dream related stuff, browse through our old dream diaries or perform any other activity to encourage and stimulate our mind – i.e. solve a crossword puzzle or perform mathematical operations.
4. We stay up 30 to 60 minutes, then go back to bed.
5. We relax the body, then perform any other technique to achieve lucidity (countdown into dreaming, dream incubation, entry point, WILD, etc.).

Techniques to achieve lucidity

We can help ourselves in different ways to achieve lucidity – by meditating, with the techniques of energetic healing like Reiki or Theta Healing, by doing breathing exercises and alike.

Following are the descriptions of most common techniques and methods for achieving lucidity and conscious dreams.

Countdown into dreams

Countdown is the most basic and the simplest technique for dreaming. We perform it by laying in a comfortable position, relaxing the body, performing the instant recapitulation, then start to count down from 100 to 1 and repeating affirmations like *“I am aware that I'm dreaming.”*, *“I am dreaming.”*, *“When I count my fingers next time, I will become aware within a dream.”* and alike between each number. When performing the technique it is very important that we repeat the mantra (countdown in combination with the affirmation) attentively and that we lie completely motionless. If our thoughts begin to wander we just redirect them back to the mantra but when we move during the practice, it is best to repeat the procedure anew. By performing the technique correctly we can achieve one of the next:

- While we keep our mind busy and awake by counting, our body goes into sleep paralysis (we fall asleep awake). We can either use this state for a conscious transition into dreaming or it can lead to a situation that

we recognize as a dream and we become aware within a dream.

- We fall asleep with the last thought about dreams or dreaming which increases the probability for DILD.

Dream Incubation

The Dream Incubation technique is not directly meant for achieving lucidity. We can use it to create any desired scenario that we would like to dream about – a meeting with our favorite celebrity, uncovering the forgotten mysteries of history, traveling to the most beautiful corners of the world and researching deepest oceans or the most distant planets in the universe. Nevertheless, it is an important element of lucid dreaming – we can also incubate a situation in which we perform a reality check and become aware within a dream. Besides that, it is an indispensable tool if we wish to enter a dream in a controlled manner as opposed to popping up at random locations of the Second Attention.

Preparation

Dream Incubation is a combination of visualization and intention (intent) with which we create a situation we wish to dream about. It is important that we memorize the scenario in as much detail as possible. We can help ourselves by writing it down then reading it several times throughout the day. Whenever we perform the technique we can recall the scenario with as much detail as possible this way.

We can do the preparation as a meditation.

We close our eyes and pay attention to our breathing. When we feel that we have calmed down, we begin to visualize the situation we want to incubate. We try to imagine it in minor detail – where we are, what we're wearing, what we do, what goes on around us, whether there is someone with us and so on. We pay attention to the details; we try to incorporate as many senses as we can. When we are satisfied by the scenario we slowly end the meditation, open our eyes and write down the situation we created.

The procedure

1. We lie down, relax the body and calm the mind.
2. We recall the scenario we created. We imagine it with as much details as possible; we try to feel as if we are actually there and that we participate in the scenario.
3. We try to keep the image before our *inner eye* until we fall asleep. If our thoughts begin to wander, we gently redirect them back to our scenario and proceed with the visualization. When the situation ends, we start from the beginning. We repeat the procedure until we fall asleep and find ourselves in the created situation.

Even though it sounds quite simple, the technique can still be some challenge. Imagining and visualizing are the skills we

need to develop and they can only be achieved by persistent practice. It is best to begin by incubating a simple situation that doesn't change too much. Only later, when we know our way around, should we proceed by incubating more complex situations and scenarios.

The method of an Entry point

When performing the method of an Entry point, we incubate a scenario that serves as a transition from wakefulness into dreaming. It is recommended that the scenario is as simple as possible so we can repeat it precisely whenever we perform the technique.

We can imagine this situation:

The elevator stops and the doors open. Before us there is a long hallway with rooms on the left and right. We look around, we pay attention to details – patterns on the carpet, lights, the color of walls and doors, the shape of numbers and alike. We walk slowly towards the other side of the hall and count the rooms in the meantime – odd on the left and even on the right. After a while we reach the end of the hallway. Before us there are three doors – one each on the left and right and one in front of us. Those are different than the others; they have no numbers on them. We choose a door, open them and enter into dream world.

Instead of a hallway we can imagine stairways we ascend to or a narrow tunnel through which we descend towards a light barrier separating our waking reality from our dreams.

MILD - Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreaming

The MILD technique was developed by Stephen LaBerge, who was the first to scientifically study lucid dreaming. We can use it for re-entry into a dream that we just woke from. Like all other techniques it is best to perform MILD at night or in the morning when we wake up from a normal dream and we return to sleep (WBTB). Following is the summary from LaBerge's *"Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming"*.

The procedure

1. Preparation

Before going to bed we set the intention to remember our dreams upon awakening.

2. Remembering

When we wake up, we try to recall and write down as many details as possible.

3. Setting intention

While falling asleep we focus on our intention to become aware within a dream. We repeat positive affirmations to

ourselves until we fall asleep, like “*I am entering a dream now*”, “*I am aware that I’m dreaming*” and “*I am dreaming*”...

If our thoughts begin to wander, we gently redirect them back to our affirmations and we continue with repeating.

4. Visualization

In our mind we return to the dream we had before waking up. We imagine ourselves becoming aware that it’s a dream. We visualize what we do after becoming aware within a dream.

5. Repeating

We repeat steps 3 and 4 until we fall asleep. With a little luck we will find ourselves becoming aware within a dream.

To achieve a lucid dream with the help of MILD we need to improve our ability to remember things. If we use external aids to jog our memory while awake (i.e. shopping lists, reminders and similar) there is only a small probability that we will remember anything while dreaming.

Following is a description of an exercise to strengthen associative memory. By performing it we train our mind to perform random reality checks and increase our probability of becoming aware within a dream.

1. We read daily targets.

The exercise should be performed for the entire week. At the end there is a list of targets – the events when we will perform a reality check to see whether we are dreaming when we notice them. When we get up in the morning, we read the targets for that concrete day (and not for the entire week) and we memorize them.

2. We try to notice the targets during the day.

Our goal is to notice each event (the target) exactly the first time it happens. If the target is “*Next time I hear a dog bark*”, we perform the RC the first time we hear a dog barking and not every time the target event occurs.

3. We write down the results.

We write down the results each evening in regard to how many targets did we hit. If during the day we notice that we missed any of the targets, then we missed the chance, regardless if we noticed it later on. If we are sure that one or more targets didn't occur at all during the day, we write that down as well.

4. We perform the exercise for at least a week.

It is advised to perform the exercise for at least as long as to try and hit all the targets in the list. If at the end of the week we discover that we missed more targets than we spotted, we

should proceed with the exercise until we hit most of the targets.

Daily targets

Sunday

Next time I see an animal.

Next time I see my reflection in the mirror.

Next time I turn on the light.

Next time I see a flower.

Monday

Next time I write something down.

Next time something hurts me.

Next time when I hear someone call my name.

Next time I drink something.

Tuesday

Next time I see a traffic light.

Next time I hear music.

Next time I throw something into garbage can.

Next time I hear laughter.

Wednesday

Next time I turn on television or radio.

Next time I see vegetable.

Next time I see a red car.

Next time I work with money.

Thursday

Next time I read something other than this list.

Next time I look at the watch.

Next time I catch myself daydreaming.

Next time I hear a phone ringing.

Friday

Next time I open the door.

Next time I see a bird.

Next time I use the toilet after noon.

Next time I see the stars.

Saturday

Next time I put a key into the keyhole.

Next time I see an advert or commercial.

Next time I eat something after breakfast.

Next time I see a bike.

SSILD - Sensory Induction of Lucid Dreams

SSILD is a simple, but very effective dreaming technique that was presented for the first time in 2011 by a dreamer over the internet known as Cosmic Iron. He presented the technique for the first time on a Chinese dreaming forum where in only a couple of months hundreds of dreamers confirmed its efficiency. Its main characteristic is that it is neither WILD nor DILD technique – it is a hybrid that by repeating stimulation of senses prepares the mind and the body to a subtle state that provokes lucid dreams in a natural way. The technique does not include advanced elements such as relaxation techniques or visualization and it also avoids complex mental exercises. To perform it we do not need an extensive knowledge of lucid dreaming, because it is designed in such a manner that we can achieve good results simply by following the simple procedures. By including the elements from other techniques we can quickly diminish its efficiency.

“The Cycle”

The basic element of SSILD technique is called “the cycle”. Each cycle is conducted from three steps:

1. Focusing on visual perception.

We close our eyes and pay attention to the darkness behind our closed eyelids. We try to detect colors, light or images, while our eyes are totally relaxed and we don't strain our eye

muscles (we don't move our eyes). If we can't perceive anything, that is completely normal.

2. Focusing on auditory perception.

We relax the eyes and shift our attention to our hearing. If it is quiet in the room we can perceive inner sounds (humming or buzzing in our head, the sound of our heartbeat). If we don't hear any internal sounds, we can also pay attention to the sounds originating from our environment.

3. Focusing on somesthetic perception (touch, bodily sensations).

We pay attention to our body. We feel it and try to perceive any unusual sensations (tingling, sensation of heaviness or lightness, a feeling of spinning or moving). If we can't perceive anything like that we can try to feel the weight of our blanket, our heartbeat, air temperature in the room and alike.

A common mistake that beginners usually make is that they try too hard while performing the cycles. They want to see, hear and feel things. When nothing unusual happens they become disappointed or even desperate. While performing the cycles we shouldn't expect anything special. As a matter of fact, it is even better to expect that nothing will happen at all.

The procedure

1. We get to bed early, preferably before 11 o'clock in the evening. We set the alarm to wake us up after four or five hours.
2. We get out of bed and stay up for 5-10 minutes. We can go to the bathroom, freshen up, walk around for a while and stretch. We try not to wake up too much.
3. We get back to bed and lay down in a comfortable position, different from the one we usually fall asleep in, if possible. By doing so we prevent falling asleep too soon. If we are the type of person that doesn't fall asleep easily, we can also use our normal position.
4. We repeat the cycle quickly 4-6 times. This is only a warm-up, so each step should be very short, a couple of seconds should be sufficient.
5. We perform the cycle slowly and repeat it 3-4 times. This is the most important step, which is why we should take more time for each cycle. After the fourth step we should be quite relaxed by now which makes it easier to focus our attention on our senses. This means that our eyes would be more relaxed and that it is possible that we will be able to perceive light, color or movement behind our closed eyelids. Besides that we can notice that the external sounds are disappearing in the background. Do not get overly excited. Pay attention calmly to what we perceive and gradually move to other senses. The

time interval is adjustable, but in general terms each step should last for at least 30 seconds.

While performing the slow cycles, random thoughts can occur that disturb our activities. That is a good sign, indicating that we are closing in on sleep. Do not try to suppress these thoughts. Imagine that they are gentle waves and allow them to carry us away and sweep us from the shores of reality. If we forget how many repetitions we already made, we begin the cycle anew and proceed in a relaxed manner.

6. We get back to our favorite sleeping position and try to fall asleep as soon as possible. We don't think too much and we do not worry if it is going to work. The faster we can fall asleep again, the better the probability of success.

What can we expect to happen?

1. Hypnagogia: When we enter into dreaming consciously we are often faced with different unusual hypnagogic perceptions. These include the feeling of falling or floating, seeing light or images, perceiving different sounds and much more. Occasionally the sensations can be so unusual that we can't even describe them. When we come across these feelings it is quite possible that we are already inside a dream or at least very close. SSILD can trigger hypnagogia during the cycles (even though this is not the effect we are trying to achieve). It is also nothing unusual if we suddenly wake up during the bombardment of intense hypnagogic sensations. When this happens we should try and remain as still as possible.

Observe the sensations passively and wait for the feelings to become stronger. As soon as they become clearly recognizable we should be able to perform a positive reality check and get up. Usually the dream begins in our bedroom because we subconsciously expect to be there. We can also stay in bed and create a desired dream scene by using visualization. In every case it is important that we remain calm when the hypnagogia begins. We try to avoid internal monologue or mental analysis since they can cause the feelings to fade and end up in our awakening.

2. False Awakening: SSILD often causes very realistic FA. The following scenario can occur: We end with the SSILD procedure and fall asleep. Then we wake up all of a sudden with the feeling that there were neither normal nor lucid dreams. We are disappointed and we get out of bed, then we wake up again. Since these kinds of experiences happen quite often it is advised to develop a habit of performing an RC after each awakening following SSILD, regardless of how sure we are that we are awake. Another possible scenario is that we fall asleep while performing the SSILD cycle and we find ourselves in an FA immediately. When this happens we can suddenly feel completely awake and we may have a feeling that we won't be able to fall asleep again. Some dreamers have complained that due to performing SSILD they are losing sleep only to find out later that they were performing SSILD cycles in their dreams. When we learn to recognize such FAs, the odds of success increase greatly.

3. DILD: When we fall asleep after performing SSILD, we enter into dreams with increased awareness. As a result, a lucid

dream can appear. We call this DILD. With increased awareness we can notice anything unusual and become aware within a dream on that account. Very often, it can also trigger spontaneous awareness – we suddenly become aware for no particular reason.

4. Real awakening: After performing SSILD we wake up again. We do an RC and find out that we are in our ordinary, waking reality. Do not lose confidence, there is still a chance. We try to stay calm, relax the head and allow it to sink into the pillow. Then we perform a couple of additional SSILD cycles, this time in middle tempo. At this phase it is very likely that we stumble across strong hypnagogic sensations. If this doesn't happen, we complete the cycle and allow ourselves to fall asleep. Our chances of success will increase.

The described techniques are only some of the possible ways we can use to becoming aware within a dream or to consciously enter into dream worlds. Even though the descriptions are separated, the procedures themselves are quite interrelated and complementary. There is no universal rule which technique or which combination of techniques is the best and that is why you will find the way that suits you the most only by experimenting and trying all sorts of different methods.

The supplements for lucid dreaming

It is probably human nature that we seek the easiest way to achieve our goals and I am definitely no exception. On my way to becoming aware within a dream I tried out a wide variety of different aids – from dream machines to different plants and herbs, vitamins and other dietary supplements that affect sleep and dreaming.

NOTE: The “” symbol in the text notes that there are links and resources for further reading available at the end of the book.*

Technical gadgets

There are different devices and technical gadgets that can help us to achieve altered states of consciousness or otherwise be employed to promote lucidity in a dream. According to the manner in which they work we can divide them into three groups:

Biofeedback

Devices for biofeedback (i.e. *ThoughtStream** and *Zeo Sleep Manager**) are meant for personal monitoring of the processes that happen within us, with the intention to (consciously) influence them. They are equipped with sensors which detect changes in our brainwave patterns or heartbeat, and resistance and conductivity of the skin. With their help we can

learn to recognize bodily processes and influence them consciously.

Dreaming masks

By their appearance they resemble ordinary dreaming masks which are intended to provide complete darkness for an uninterrupted sleep. They are equipped with sensors that monitor when rapid eye movement (REM phase) occurs and warn the dreamer with a visual signal (blinking of the lights on the inside of the mask).

These devices are *REM-Dreamer**, *NovaDreamer**, *Dream Stalker** and *Remme**. One should keep in mind that the latter is quite different from the others in the way it operates. The other devices use sensors to monitor when the REM phase occurs and warn the dreamer with blinking lights, while Remme operates as a kind of alarm clock that activates every 90 minutes and warns the dreamer with auditory or visual signals.



REM-Dreamer Dreaming mask

Binaural beats

Binaural beats are sub threshold tones our brain detects when each ear receives a monotonous sound with a slightly different frequency over headphones. If, for example, we detect sound with the frequency of 495 Hz on one ear and a sound with the frequency 505 Hz with the other, our brain creates the third tone with the frequency of 10 Hz, which is exactly in the middle of alpha brain waves. Binaural beats can alter our brainwaves and can be used for relaxation, meditation and achieving other altered states of consciousness.

Dietary Supplements

There are different foods, herbs and dietary supplements* (by including them in our regular diet we provide the body with substances it can't get through a regular diet) that influence sleeping and dreaming. Herbal tea or a cup of warm milk before bed can relax us, consuming certain foods and supplements before sleep or during WBTB can also encourage longer and more intensive dreams, greater possibility of becoming aware within a dream and a better dream recall.

When using dietary supplements it is important to keep in mind that

- they are not magic pills that we take prior to going to bed and dream lucidly the whole night;

- that they influence bio-chemical processes in our body and brain and that it is wise to collect as much information on what they are and how they work before we begin using them;
- that it is recommended to start with small quantities and increase the dose gradually;
- that it is important to take enough time between uses to allow the body to purge itself from them, thus preventing desensitization (reduced sensitivity to different substances that can cause the supplements to not work as well in the same amounts).

WARNING: The purpose of the following texts is not in any way to encourage the use of dietary supplements or any other substances that influence brain activity and states of consciousness, but to present the information about the possibilities open to dreamers in order to achieve lucidity. Even though I didn't experience any side effects by using the supplements listed, every use of them is exclusively at one's own risk.

Calea zacatechichi

Calea zacatechichi is believed to be a dream herb. It originates from the Mexican highlands and some parts of Costa Rica. It grows between 1 and 1.5 meters in height and it has multiple branches with even, oval, 3 to 5 centimeters long and 2 to 4 centimeters wide leaves.

Mexican Indians from Chontal tribe call *calea* “*the Leaf of Gods*” and use it to receive prophetic messages through dreams. In their local medicine it is appreciated for its ability in purifying senses, encouraging visions in dreams and other common healing properties – among other things they use it for encouraging appetite and controlling metabolism and digestion.



Calea zacatechichi



Calea zacatechichi, dried leaves and flower

Usage

We cover 3 to 25 grams of crushed, dried leaves with steaming water and leave the herb in it for 5 to 8 minutes. We remove the herb and slowly drink the concoction. It is good to keep in mind that calea tea has an extremely bitter taste, which is why the locals also refer to it as "*Bitter Grass*".

Some dreamers suggest smoking dried leaves in combination to drinking tea. We can smoke it in a pipe (water pipe is the best option since it allows the smoke to cool down a little and therefore has less burning effect) or rolled in smoking paper.

Effects

Calea causes a soothing, drowsy feeling and increases the probability of spontaneous awakening within a dream. Psychoactive effects are extremely subtle and can be described as dreamy. It is said that the feeling of pleasure can last for a day or even longer and that there is no negative side effects. Calea is considered a hallucinogen by indigenous people of Mexico, but the scientists still haven't succeeded in isolating the hallucinogenic alkaloids.

Silene capensis

Silene capensis (also known as “*African Dream Root*”) originates from riverbeds in South Africa and is considered a holy plant by the Xhosa tribe. Local shamans traditionally use it as a tool in divination and communication with the ancestors, and besides this it is used as a supplement for triggering intense, sometimes even prophetic dreams.



Silene capensis



***Silene capensis*, root**

Preparation and usage

There are two traditional ways of preparing *Silene capensis*. The first option includes taking approximately half a cup (around 1 deciliter) of water and we put in a teaspoon of dried into dust grounded root and mix thoroughly. We drink the concoction on an empty stomach after waking up and avoid eating until our appetite returns. The other option is a preparation of a thick foam – we add a full spoon of crushed root into half a litter of water and we stir until a thick foam is

formed. We drink this foam until we feel bloated, then we go to sleep.

Alternative method for foam preparation: We take a plastic bottle (750 milliliters or more). We fill it up about one quarter of capacity with water and pour 1 gram of powdered root into it. We shake the bottle hard for a couple of minutes, then we squeeze the foam out and consume it. We can store the rest in the refrigerator for the next day when we shake the bottle again to harvest the foam. After a couple of days the mixture stops foaming; then we can add another gram of powdered root or start the procedure from the beginning.

The simplest way of consuming is most certainly the chewing of dried roots – we take 250 to 500 milligrams of the root, chew them thoroughly and swallow them. When the roots moisturize they become slightly bitter in taste.

Effects

Silene capensis is effective in relatively small doses. Recommended active doses are between 250 and 500 milligrams, if taken in larger doses it can cause harmless, but unpleasant purgative effects. The alkaloids from the root travel slowly through the body, which is why the effects on wakefulness are minimal but still intense on dreaming – dreams are intensely bright and connected and we recall them easier when we wake up.

Nymphaea caerulea

Nymphaea caerulea, also known as “*Sacred Blue Lily*” or “*Blue Lotus*”, originates from riverbeds of Nile and other parts of East Africa where it was brought from to other parts of the world in ancient times. It has pointy, 10 to 15 centimeters long flowers and mostly round, floating leaves with smooth corners and a diameter from 25 to 40 centimeters. In Ancient Egypt and Egyptian mythology it was believed to be a sacred plant – it symbolized the rise and fall of the Sun, and at the same time it represented a symbol of the Egyptian deity Nefertem, the god of healing and beauty. In Asia and Africa it is considered as a symbol of immortality due to its ability of survival in the long and dry periods, in China and in India it represents a religious symbol and a symbol of a female beauty.



Nymphaea caerulea, flower



Nymphaea caerulea, dried leaves
and flowers

Usage and effects

In the past it was used as an artistic tool (for preparation of natural dyes), as a supplement for preparation of bread, for making perfumes and for healing. Today it is mostly used for the preparation of different *concoctions* (teas, wines and martinis) and in aromatherapy, for it is considered to have a “divine” essence which causes the feeling of heightened awareness and tranquility. The latest research has shown that because of the alkaloids nuciferine and aporphine it has mild psychoactive effects, consuming flowers can have mild sedative effects.

To make tinctures and extracts we use 10 to 20 grams of flower petals that we pour in a weak alcohol for at least three weeks, for preparation of teas we take whole flowers and let them boil for 10 to 20 minutes.

If used as a dreaming enhancer it is suggested to drink tea in combination with smoking flower petals 30 to 60 minutes prior to going to bed. This combination causes a drowsy and dreamy feeling before sleep and more intense, more memorable dreams increasing the probability of becoming aware within a dream. Similar but somewhat milder effects can be achieved by consumption of a tincture.

Galantamine

Galantamine is a substance, derived from *Lycoris radiata* (also known as “*Red Spider Lily*”). It is researched due to its promising results for reducing the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease, dementia and other memory related problems. Besides that, it has an interesting side effect – it causes intensive and unusually long dreams and can be used as a trigger for lucid dreaming.



Lycoris radiata

It works as an AChE (Acetylcholinesterase) inhibitor – it serves for disintegration of acetylcholine (ACh – the neurotransmitter that increases memory abilities and prolongs REM phase), which is why ACh forms in increased dosages. The most effective is after 4 to 5 hours of sleep and it allows one to pass directly from waking into dreaming without loss of consciousness. It can be obtained in the form of capsules that include only galantamine, or in combination with choline or melatonin. It reaches maximum efficacy 60 minutes after

consumption and is completely released from the body in 48 hours.

Side effects

After a long term use of higher doses, galantamine can cause numerous side effects – sickness, vomiting, diarrhea, vertigo, reduced appetite and weight loss. When used as an aid to increase lucidity, much smaller doses are sufficient (up to 8 milligrams) which doesn't provide side effects other than unusual stomach sounds, possible muscular tensions or cramps, and energy fluctuations the day following consumption.

Tryptophan

Tryptophan is an amino acid that is used in numerous biochemical processes in the body. Among other things it increases the production of serotonin (the neurotransmitter that affects the intensity of dreams and a better dream recall). The body doesn't produce tryptophan by itself which is why we need to provide it with appropriate nutrition.

The sources of tryptophan are poultry, lamb and fish, but it is also contained in milk, cheese, tofu, soy, beans and pumpkin seeds.

L-Theanine

L-Theanine is the main amino acid in the leaves of green tea. It has a relaxing effect on us because it triggers the production of alpha waves that have effect on psychical and physical relaxation and reduce levels of stress and anxiety. It encourages production of dopamine and blocks certain glutamate receptors which help us to relax and fall asleep easier without decreasing the possibility of entering REM sleep.

Side effects

L-Theanine doesn't have any harmful psychological or physiological side effects, even if administered in higher doses.

Effect on sleep and dreaming

L-Theanine helps with peaceful and restful sleep. A cup of mild green tea before bedtime relaxes and reduces possibilities for nightmares, therefore it helps with better rest. Because it improves mental abilities before sleep, it can also increase the probability of becoming aware within a dream.

When preparing tea we need to leave the herb in water for at least 5 minutes, because tannin which causes a sedative effect on the body begins to extract only after 3 minutes. Prior

to that time the brew has the opposite (stimulating) effect, similar to caffeine.

EGCG

EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate) is an antioxidant, present in tea. It reduces the chance of cancer, prevents cardiovascular diseases, inhibits tumor growth, reduces bad cholesterol and increases good, and regulates insulin secretion. Their antioxidant activity strengthens, firms and regenerates skin cells and tissues.

Effect on dreams

It acts as a COMT inhibitor – a substance which is used for degradation of the neurotransmitters dopamine and norepinephrine, which facilitates their manufacture. Increased levels of dopamine lead to longer, more vivid and somewhat morbid dreams and increase control in a dream, while norepinephrine allows us to remain intensely lucid for longer periods and enhances the ability of remembering details and memories from waking state while in dreams.

Vitamins

Vitamins have a significant impact on sleep and dreaming, especially those from the group of B vitamins. During sleep, the synthesis of proteins occurs and that is why the body requires a high level of amino acids that are produced in the synthesis of vitamins.

The neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which is formed during the REM phase, for example, is synthesized from choline and vitamin B5. The body can synthesize choline by itself but it requires vitamin B12, folic acid, melatonin and serine for it.

B vitamins can be found in whole, unprocessed foods. Many of them are contained in kombucha, (whole) whole grains, potatoes, bananas, lentils, chili, beans, nutritional and brewer's yeast and molasses (sugar syrup). Their use is safe, because the surpluses are excreted from the body. Use of ethanol-based alcohol interferes with the absorption of thiamine (B1), riboflavin (B2), niacin (B3), biotin (B7) and folic acid (B9).

Vitamin B12 (cobalamin) plays an important role in the normal functioning of the brain and nervous system. It participates in the activation of amino acids and in building proteins. It may also increase the synthesis of acetylcholine, or normalize the transmission of nerve impulses in the brain. The plant products include it in very small quantities, a rich source of it are foods of animal origin - fish, shellfish, meat (especially liver), poultry, eggs, milk and dairy products. A rich source of vitamin B12 can also be found in some insects, such as termites.

Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) is the coenzyme, which is involved in more than 60 enzymatic reactions involved in the synthesis of proteins and neurotransmitters in the body. It is an indispensable element for the activity of amino acids and is also involved in the metabolism of selenium, calcium and magnesium. Foods rich in vitamin B6 are whole grains, meat, vegetables, nuts and bananas. Cooking, processing and

storing of food can reduce the amount of vitamin B6 in them by more than 50 percent.

Vitamin B1 (thiamine) enhances brain functions. Most of it is found in yeast and yeast extract, and it is also present in large quantities in pork. A rich source of thiamine is cereals (higher in whole grains than in ground grain), oat flour, flax and sunflower seeds, brown rice, whole rye, asparagus, kale, cauliflower, potatoes, oranges, liver and eggs.

Another way to increase intake of B vitamins is via energy drinks. Although surpluses of B vitamins are excreted from the body, it is still wise not to overdo it with the energy drinks.

Fourth Gate of Dreaming

“... once at the fourth gate of dreaming, the energy body travels to special, concrete places. There are three ways to use the fourth gate of dreaming: first, to travel to concrete places in this world; second, to travel to places outside this world; and third, to travel to places that only exist in the intention of others... The last way is by far most difficult and dangerous.”

Carlos Castaneda, The Art of Dreaming (1993)

In Dreaming

“... I find myself in a situation that I recognize as a dream. Awareness is weak, but I still remember my plan: to try and stabilize the environment. I look at my hand, then I look around. Too many details start to bother me and the image begins to fade so I look at the hand again not to lose myself. I look at the outstretched hand for a while, then I look around again. This time, the visual perception is much more stable; things are distorting less and I still know that I’m inside...”

To become aware within a dream means to know that we are actually sleeping and dreaming at that moment and at the same time consciously participate in a situation we find ourselves in or create something entirely different. That is quite a big deal for our mind, thus lucid dreams are quite short at the beginning – often they are interrupted by strong emotions that accompany the awareness, or due to lack of energy. If we wish to prolong them and participate in them consciously, we not only need the necessary energy, but also the dreaming attention (the control to maintain a dream without it changing by itself).

We can help ourselves in different ways:

1. The duration of a lucid dream depends on the energy we have available. Since there is not all that much energy in the early stages, we can help ourselves by setting intent upfront – to make a goal of what we want to do when we become aware within a dream. Considering that we can do practically anything in a dream, setting a goal can help us not to disperse our limited energy into too many details at once, which allows us to remain in a dream for a longer period of time.

2. Intense feelings, accompanying the first lucid dreams, often end the experience and cause us to either fall into ordinary dreams or to wake up. When we become aware within a dream, we should try to stay as calm as possible. Before we start exploring the surroundings, we should take time to calm down and ground ourselves. We should take a couple of deep breaths, then we should try to feel our body. It is the strongest element of our dream, therefore we can use it to ground ourselves in dreaming reality. We pay attention to all of our senses, but try to observe the perceptions from a distance – any strong focusing can trigger another dream which usually means the loss of flow of attention.

3. We observe the environment and the objects around us with rapid and brief glances. In the dream world, things begin to transform after observing them for a while. This transformation can trigger another dream or cause a loss of consciousness due to perception change and we wake up in our everyday reality. Experienced dreamers exploit this feature of dreaming

and use the objects as *transits* for traveling around the dream world.

The perception can start to change due to other reasons as well. In early stages this happens more often because we have very little energy and control over dreams. Whenever we feel that the dream begins to fade, we can help ourselves with the techniques which help us to redirect our attention from our sleeping body back to the dream body. By doing so, we increase our perception and the awareness of being inside a dream.

Techniques for stabilizing dreams

- We move our attention to our body. Try to feel it, breathe deeply, look at our hands.
- We rub our hands intensively.
- We turn around our axis (*spinning*).
- We jump up and down.
- We fall (drop ourselves) backwards.

Since we are in a dream – in a world where different laws apply than in waking reality, we can use more dream-like techniques to increase perception and prolong lucidity:

- Use voice commands like “*Increase sharpness!*”, “*Strengthen perception!*” and alike.
- Use a *lucid pill* you carry around in your pocket.
- Put on glasses (or clear them if you wear them in waking reality).
- Imagine a remote control or a button you can use to reset the sharpness of visual perception or change the scene altogether.

In dreaming it often happens that we feel unusual – we can't remember details from our waking life, we can't think rationally, as if we were disconnected from the reality. The reason is hidden in the fact that during the night the left hemisphere (rational, conscious) is less active, and the right one (creative, unconscious) more active. To increase the awareness, and by that gain more control over dreams, we can use different ways:

- Try to remember details from our waking life – what is our name, when were we born, where do we live, how old are our parents, where we went to primary school and alike. Be careful not to get lost in the details, for we can lose lucidity.
- Perform mathematical operations – from addition and subtraction to the more complex tasks. This activates

the rational mind and memory centers, which increases awareness of the dream body and our surroundings.

- Sing a song or recite poetry. This also awakens the rational mind and memory centers, thus increasing awareness of the dream.

Instead of the conclusion...

Lucid dreams are the beginning of a complex process that is almost indescribable. This manual includes but a shard in the mosaic of unconscious. It is a guide that brings you to the gate which hides reality and our true nature. And to journey beyond this point is an adventure into the Unknown...

“... I find myself in an unfamiliar part of town with a group of friends and it is immediately apparent to me that I am dreaming. When I tell that to others, they don't take me seriously. I think about how I could “prove” it to them. I get the idea that I could take someone home and help him in raising awareness. Since I can't decide who to go to and because they try every possible thing to pull me in their “game”, I change my mind and leave on my own.

During the stroll through the empty streets I'm thinking about what to do and I remember about “brightness”. I look up into the sky, and soon notice a pigeon flying around in confusion. I decide to follow it.

I soon reach a grassy slope which has a wall on one side. Following a little over a meter high wall I slowly walk toward the hilltop, where some kind of castle stands. After reaching it I turn back only to see that the path I came on is

gone; now, there is water running. I look the other way and in the valley I see a kind of camp. I see a group of children playing and when I start to descend, I notice a couple of people on my right.

I join them and soon I find out that at the castle a concert will start soon. I decide that I'll check it out. I meet a familiar boy at the door. We start talking and soon I find out that he too is a dreamer. During the conversation he is looking away from me all the time. I ask him why and he explains to me that my face changes too much and that it makes him uncomfortable. While chatting we get to the entrance where a security guard stands and checks the tickets. Since I don't have one, I take the money out of my pocket to pay the entrance fee, but the guard doesn't let me in; he insists on the ticket. I turn around and walk away...

... I find myself in front of a cottage. The yard is full of all sorts of junk lying everywhere around and some chicken grazing in between. I get to the house and on the porch I see an older man doing something. I ask him if he knows where to find my "brightness". My question doesn't seem to get through, so I begin to explain that the term is probably a little inappropriate. After hearing my explanation he begins to laugh at me and says that the term is "luminosity". He

goes to the house and beckons me to follow him. We enter a room that looks like some kind of shop. The guy picks up an object, similar to a pen, lying near the counter and “fires” three miniature balls that look like some kind of spiders and hover in the air. I catch one of them and put it in my mouth. The man starts to laugh and asks if this is new to me. I honestly admit that it actually is. While I’m trying to convince him to explain to me how this “works”, another man approaches... “

Terms and abbreviations

LD – Lucid Dream – a dream in which one is aware that (s)he is dreaming

HI – Hypnagogic Images – shapes and forms we perceive behind closed eyelids

DC – Dream Character – a person from a dream, with whom the dreamer is in interaction; personally I prefer the dreamhackers' term *phantom* or *projection*

FA – False Awakening – a dream in which we believe that we woke up, but are actually still dreaming

RC – Reality Check – a dreaming maneuver we use to check whether we are dreaming in the time of testing

SP – Sleep Paralysis – disability of moving one's body that usually occurs moments before falling asleep or right before waking up

AP – Astral Projection – a conscious projection of one's consciousness in order to travel (in our everyday, physical world or in the unphysical worlds); also OBE (Out-of-Body Experience)

REM – Rapid Eye Movement – the phase during which most dreams take place

DILD – Dream Induced Lucid Dream – becoming aware within a dream

WILD – Wake Induced Lucid Dream – a direct transition from waking state into dreaming

WBTB – Wake-Back-To-Bed – a method of interrupted sleep

MILD – Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dream – technique for achieving lucid dreaming by random associations, developed by Stephen LaBerge

SSILD – Senses Initiated Lucid Dream – technique for achieving lucid dreaming by stimulating senses; developed by a dreamer, known by the nickname Cosmic Iron

VILD – Visual Induction of Lucid Dream – technique for achieving lucid dream by using visualization

Lucidity Trigger – an object (can also be a person or an event) that attracts our attention and thus causes the elevation of energy or lucidity

Double – energy / dreaming / astral body; *the vessel* we use to travel through Second Attention; a part of consciousness that works in both worlds – can influence and change them

Luminosity – dream manifestation of energy we use / lose during everyday chores and in interaction with other people; it is usually located at specific locations of the Second Attention and is protected by different kinds of “monsters”

(personifications of our most primal fears – fear of drowning of suffocating, fear of dying etc.)

Transit – an object that causes a change of dream scene (perception bubble)

Perception Bubble – an area where the dreamer is located

Intent – the force that enables or inhibits the change of the world

First Attention – our everyday (physical) world

Second Attention – consciously perceived dream world; the purest perception of the world with minimal interference of Tonal in human cognitive system (description of the world)

Tonal – physical world – everything we can perceive and define; the mechanism of consciousness we use to describe and interpret the world we perceive

Nagual – all that surrounds Tonal; Unthinkable, Unknown, the Abstract

Recapitulation – the technique that allows us to release and recollect the energy we exchanged while interacting with other people; a maneuver for collecting personal power

References and links for further research

“Fiction”

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- Spomini iz druge strani; Alan Asta, 1996 (Slovenian)

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- Advanced Lucid Dreaming – The Power of Supplements; Thomas Yuschak, 2006 (English)
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Technical gadgets

<http://www.mindplace.com/Mindplace-Thoughtstream-USB-Personal-Biofeedback/dp/B005NDGPLC>

<http://www.myzeo.com/sleep/>

<http://remdreamer.com/>

<http://www.lucidity.com/novadreamer.html>

<http://www.yugzone.ru/dreamstalker.htm>

<http://sleepwithremee.com/>

Dietary supplements and herbs for dreaming

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calea_zacatechichi

<http://www.erowid.org/experiences/exp.php?ID=12224>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silene_capensis

<http://entheology.com/plants/silene-capensis-african-dream-root/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nymphaea_caerulea

<http://www.ffa.uni-lj.si/o-fakulteti/laboratorij-za-molekularno-diagnostiko-kkb/seznam-laboratorijskih-preiskav-in-storitev/comt-1947-ga.html> (Slovenian)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galantamine>

<http://www.dreamamins.com/>

Web forums and communities

<http://www.ld4all.com/forum/>

<http://www.dreamviews.com/forum.php>

<http://cosmiciron.blogspot.com>

<http://obe4u.com>

<http://ascportal.net/sanjanje/forum/index.php> (Slovenian)

<http://www.lucidnesanje.com/forum/index.php> (Slovenian)

Other links

http://www.scholarpedia.org/article/Neurobiology_of_sleep_and_wakefulness

About the author



Saso Drobic is a dreamer, psychonaut and an explorer of altered states of consciousness.

Dreams and dream related phenomena have followed him since early childhood – a meeting with a foreign being around the age of two and forgotten night walks while growing up awoke a wish within him to understand the mysteries of consciousness and the unexplained phenomena of the world.

While he was growing up he was almost lost in the wheels of the system, but found out by experimenting with different techniques of alternative healing (Reiki, Theta Healing, Tai Ji Quan, Heart & Soul Healing, Reconnection) and by participating in all kinds of experiential and therapeutic workshops that reality is much more than what they teach in schools and publish in the media.

For the past decade he has devoted his time to the exploration of conscious dreaming, out-of-body experiences and other such altered states of consciousness, and works also to disseminate this information more widely.