



Dreams and Relationship, Part 2

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Previously, we discussed certain categories of dreams that give us pictures of ourselves and the way in which we are living our lives. You can see, as we study these dreams, that we have a friend inside of us, a kind of dream master. This dream master, who is really the intelligence of the unconscious manifesting itself in the dream process, is an amazing advisor. It brings us all kinds of information, ideas, insights, and new ways of looking at things. It seems to want us to look at and embrace more and more of what we are. Its insights about relationship are staggering.

The Psychological Divorce Listen to the following dream of a woman who had come to one our workshops with her husband. They had both begun to separate from rigidly controlling primary selves and were beginning to meet each other in an entirely new, far more flexible way. This was her dream the last night of the training:

People are waiting for me to come down to the wedding ceremony except that it was actually a divorce ceremony. I'm wearing the same dress as the wedding dress I wore to my actual wedding. The bodice of this dress is different however. It is beautiful with colored beads across it. Neither of us have the script quite ready and so we are not quite ready for the ceremony to begin.

This is a remarkable dream. What is this divorce ceremony the couple is about to go through? It is the divorce from their primary selves. We think of it as a psycho-spiritual divorce, something that every couple truly needs. It marks the end of the relationship between two primary selves and the beginning of a relationship between two complex, sentient, soulful partners.

Many years ago Hal dreamed that he was in a court of law standing before a judge. The judge asked him what he was there for and Hal told him that he wanted a divorce from his wife (Sidra). He then asked Hal why he wanted this divorce and Hal told him that he wanted it because he loved her so much!

At that particular time Hal was learning to separate from the good father and the responsible father, the primary selves that had been so dominant in his life. Both of these selves had bonded him to Sidra in a way that worked against a deepening of the relationship. So long as Hal was identified with his good father, he could not react properly to Sidra, nor could he establish appropriate boundaries for himself. With the divorce from his primary selves - and from the bonding patterns - he was released and the relationship could move to the next level. This psychological divorce is the divorce that all partners must ultimately get from each other. It is the one that really counts.

Bringing Vulnerability into the Relationship Let's look at another example of how the dream process can point the way in relationship. A physicist to see us. He married to an artist, his total opposite in every way. Try as they might, they could not get close to one another. He had no connection to his feelings and his vulnerability. Needless to say, these were her strong suit. During one of our workshops he had the following dream:

I'm walking down a road and I hear someone crying. I look to see where it is coming from. I walk to the side of the road and there I see a hand sticking up from the earth. I rush over and start to dig. When I finally dig deeply enough, I discover a very young child and I pull him out of the earth.

Who is this young child that he discovers, that he is ready to discover? It is himself as a four year old when he had to "bury" his vulnerability. The dream master is giving him a picture of his own feeling nature that was buried at that time because his family was too disturbed and he needed to protect himself. He developed a strong logical mind that figured things out. With this, he felt safe no matter how much emotional disturbance surrounded him.

No wonder the physicist and his wife had such difficulty relating. To live in relationship without vulnerability is to live in torment because there is no place to touch at that deeper level that can provide the real food for the soul.

The Dream Master's Picture of the Relationship Sometimes the dream master of the unconscious uses humor to describe what is happening in a relationship. Many years ago, we got into quite a negative place with each other. It was pretty grim. Hal went into negative father mode and began taking potshots at Sidra for much of the day and into the evening. These took the form of constant criticisms that she blithely sidestepped. That night Sidra had the following dream:

Hal is throwing lit matches at me. I keep dodging them so he cannot hit me. Finally Hal explodes and yells at me: "Stop jumping around so much. Stand still so that I can hit you."

When we woke up the next morning and Sidra shared her dream, we both started laughing. The unconscious had made its statement and it was very difficult for Hal to stay locked into the negative energy any longer. We cannot tell you how many times in our life together a dream, or a combination of our dreams, has broken a negative bonding pattern between us. What a gift!

Sometimes the directness of the unconscious is quite extreme when it wants us to get the picture of what is happening in the relationship. In one instance, a woman dreamed that her husband was having an affair with another woman. She felt it was a dream so she did not say anything and the next night she had the same dream. Then, amazingly enough, the dream repeated itself a third time.

On the morning after the third dream the woman asked her husband at breakfast if he was having an affair. Once he got over the shock, he admitted to her that such was the case and they began to deal with their relationship and its problems. Imagine the intelligence of the dream master who insisted, who demanded, that this woman become conscious of this affair so that she could meet the challenge and move on with her life and deepen her process. It is as though the dream master forces us to shed our skin over and over again so that change can occur. For anyone who works with dreams, the hand of God is patently obvious and truly inspiring.

Another woman was married to a man who saw himself as very spiritual. He meditated a good deal and often criticized his wife because she did not meditate or have a spiritual practice of any kind. You might almost say that he was spiritually arrogant. During the course of one of our trainings, the wife had the following dream:

I am standing in a line of people next to an altar. Each person has a gift to bring to God that they place on the altar one by one. Many of the gifts are beautifully wrapped. All I have is a pile of loose gunk in my hand. The gunk is all of the confusion and problems of my life. It is loose and I can hardly hold it in my hand. I feel so very ashamed that this is all I have. Finally it is my turn and I place the gunk on the altar where it quickly spreads all over. Then from above a large fist comes down into the middle of the gunk and suddenly the gunk begins to solidify and out of it emerges a large fish. It is given to me as a gift and I am meant to eat it.

What a remarkable gift the dream master brought to this woman. She never thought of herself as being spiritual. It was her husband who knew how to do that. Suddenly everything was framed in a different way. There was a meaning in her life. Her problems were not just problems. They were the substance of her own transformation. Her dream was a dream for all of us. It showed her that God lives here, now, with all of our problems and all of our imperfections. All we need to do is to step to the altar and give to divinity our greatest gift - ourselves with all of our imperfections. You may be sure that a decisive shift occurred in their relationship as a result of this dream and its message.

With another couple the dream master provided another picture. The husband was always complaining about the fact that he felt his wife was overly protected. He wanted to reach her but never could. During one of our trainings she had the following dream:

I dreamed that I was in a large fortress made of concrete. It had thick walls and great battlements. I was snuggled down safe inside of the fortress feeling comfortable and glad that I had its protection all around me. I felt safe and well taken care of. Then I could see outside of my fortress and I saw what it was protecting me from. I saw that it was protecting me from a very soft gentle rain that was falling all around, a rain that would have felt good and would have nurtured me and helped me to grow. I was still glad that I was in my fortress, however.

What a remarkable picture of herself the dream master brings to her. Here she is, encased in her fortress. What is outside? A beautiful soft gentle rain that can nourish her if only she would allow it. Eventually she will leave her

fortress but for now she needs this protection. What is the fortress? It is her primary self system. It is her mind, her control, her iron discipline, and her absolute requirement that she show no vulnerability.

So we see how dreams so beautifully reflect the dance of the selves as they operate within us and in our relationships. The dream world is like the handwriting of God. What a creative collaboration it is when partners learn how to decipher this writing with each other. Just telling your dreams to one another is a great way to start. There are many different ways to look at and work with dreams. It does not matter where you begin. Just know that the dream master and the unconscious love attention and they both flower when you spend time with them. Become aware of this energy field between yourself and others. See where you have linkage and where it is missing. With some people you feel "met"; they are truly present with you. There is contact or a warmth that passes between you. Play with this connection and make it warmer and cooler. It is important to learn about this energetic connection and to gain mastery over it. This energetic linkage is the food we all crave and it is what nourishes us deeply in a partnering relationship that works!

Lastly, for romance to stay alive, we recommend regularly scheduled business meetings. Weekly meetings are a must. More frequent meetings should be scheduled if (1) there is too much going on to handle productively in a single meeting, or (2) if matters are moving quickly and follow-up meetings are required sooner than a week apart. All the business details of life are to be brought to these meetings from the question of who is going to pick up the laundry to who is going to return which phone calls to questions regarding financial planning or summer vacations. Everything is important, everything should be dealt with jointly and consciously.

Why, you might well ask, is this necessary? There are two reasons for this. First, we have found that life has become exceedingly complicated and, if they are not attended to, business details will invade every aspect of life. We can find ourselves thinking about them at the most inappropriate times. This restricts business to scheduled business meetings and keeps it out of the bedroom. Second, if they do not take care of these business details as a team, partners will fall into default patterns, with one partner in charge and the other dependent.

Each relationship, even one that ends, is a spiritual teacher and can provide us with a true spiritual path. An evolving partnering relationship leads us forward on our individual journeys of consciousness and makes space for the infusion of sacred energies into our lives.

In the early 1970's, Hal and Sidra had developed Voice Dialogue as a method for working with sub-personalities. Through both their personal relationship and their professional collaboration, their work evolved over the next quarter of a century into a complex methodology for working with selves and a complete theoretical system which they now call the Psychology of the Aware Ego. They are the authors of numerous books and teaching cd's which are listed on their website www.delos-inc.com

