



# Dreams as a Window to Your Inner Selves, Part 1

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For us it is clear that there is in the universe, and within each of us, a deeper intelligence that can be ignited as we begin our journey of personal discovery. Once this intelligence is activated it has the possibility of becoming an always-available friend and teacher to us. And what a remarkable friend and teacher it can be! With its help, we begin to make sense out of things that were previously a mass of confusion. We experience meaning, purpose, and direction in our personal lives that simply were not there before. Our dreams begin to make sense to us and they become an important part of our lives. New thoughts, new ways of looking at things emerge.

As we plug into this newly developing intelligence, we begin to experience the meaning and purpose that lie behind it. It wants something from us. It drives us with inexorable power and certainty toward a deeper understanding of our relationships and ourselves. It replaces in importance many of the other concerns in our lives. Our belief systems and the rules we have lived by in the past are now open to examination and a deeper consideration. We feel the purposive nature of this intelligence, we know that it wants something from us, and that it is moving us in an entirely new direction.

Our personal view is that this intelligence wishes us to become all that we can be, to make use of everything that we brought with us into this world. It wants us to embrace all of our selves so that we can more fully enter into life and relationship and learn to balance the remarkable array of energies that are within us. It wants us to claim our full humanity.

It is a source of immense strength (and a relief, too, we might add) to experience divinity as an integral part of one's partnering relationship. Life in general, and relationship in particular, can be pretty rough going at times. In their groundbreaking book, *Flesh and Spirit*, Jack Zimmerman, Ph.D., and Jacquelyn McCandless, M.D., write about "the third" in relationship. They point out the need to always call in "the third" so that divinity is present and available to us, not just for our individual lives but also for our relationships. This third is an important part of what makes relationship sacred.

What must we do to begin to connect to this divine intelligence? Sometimes we do not have to do anything. Just beginning the process of personal growth can activate this intelligence. Once it is activated, it is there for us. We just have to know where to look for it. Since there are specific ways in which this intelligence manifests, there are also particular things that we can do to support the connection to this divine intelligence and to enhance the spiritual basis of the partnering process. Let's now look at some of the things that you can do to deepen your connection to yourself and to your partnering.

Perhaps the simplest, the most fascinating, and the most rewarding place to begin is with dreams. Our dreams give us the most direct experience of this deeper intelligence. They also bring us into connection with our own spiritual reality, a reality that, in our dreams, is untouched by the rules, feelings, and expectations of others.

Your dreams can help you understand the amazing family of selves that lives within you. Your dreams are remarkable friends; they give you an objective, or unbiased, picture of how your selves dance with each other and, we might add, dance with the selves of your partner. Let's look at the dream process and see what it can teach you about these selves.

We know that there are many useful ways of looking at dreams. You may have studied dreams already and have your own interpretations. The following is our own particular approach to dream work, one that we have found extremely helpful over the years. As you read this, remember that each of us has our own dream vocabulary, so please be aware that yours may be a bit different from this in some places.

## Common Themes in Dreams

There are some dream themes that are very common. We will begin by looking at these and showing you how

you might (1) decode them and (2) how you can use the information that they are bringing you .

## **High Places**

Dreaming of being in a high place takes many forms. Sometimes the dreamer is on top of a tall building or on a high mountaintop. There is often a danger of falling, or at least there is some sense that a person in this situation could fall. In some of these dreams, the dreamer is in fact falling from a high place.

When you are up high you are away from the earth. You might be too identified with your mind or with spirituality which indicates that either your rational mind or your spiritual self is likely functioning as your primary self. You are probably disconnected from earth and all that it represents. This would mean that you disown your body, your feelings, or your instinctual energies. Another way of looking at this kind of dream is that people who are special, and who disown the ordinary, are always high up. Their position is precarious because whenever they stop being special, they can fall down and they fear that when they fall down they will become nothing.

We keep falling in our dreams because we continue to remain too identified with our minds, our being special, or our spiritual nature. So the unconscious shows us falling from high places over and over again. It is basically showing us where we are (up) and what we are missing (down). It is as simple and clear as that. Carl Jung, founder of analytical psychology, called this the compensatory principle of the dream process because the dream is always balancing out whatever we are identified with or whatever we disown.

## **Fast Cars and Freeways**

In these dreams we are driving too fast or our car is out of control. There is often an accident or a crash of some kind.

Driving too fast is the classic dream of a pusher primary self, one that is out of control. The crash stops us. For example, Sonny, a very successful financier, dreams repetitively for many years that he is driving on a freeway at high speeds and his car crashes. This is an accurate picture of the way he actually leads his life. He is always busy and never slows down. After a number of years Sonny has a heart attack. Pusher energy can be very dangerous and this amazing intelligence within was sending him repeated warnings of this danger. (His wife was also telling him he should slow down, but that is another story.) If he had listened to his dream, Sonny would have understood its warning and he would have had the opportunity to separate from his pusher self before he actually got sick.

The car image often gives us a general picture of how we move through the world. If in a dream you are driving the car you drove in college, then your general psychology now is like it was then. If you are in a car and your father is driving it, then your life is being run by your father (either your real father, or the primary self in you that resembles your father).

In these dreams, you are usually racing on a freeway. Again, this is a pusher motif. You might find that, as you pay attention to your dreams and you separate from your pusher, you are now driving down country roads, or you have pulled off the freeway to stop.

## **Quicksand or Sticky Asphalt**

Dreaming that you are trying to walk but it feels like your feet are in quicksand or sticky asphalt is another kind of pusher dream. Here the dream is balancing, or compensating, your primary self, the self that tries to push so hard all the time. Dreams often try to balance our primary self in this way. Here you are trying to hurry and you cannot. Your feet are stuck. The harder you try to reach your destination, the worse things get. Your dream is intent on getting the message through to you. A variation of this dream is one in which you are trying to catch a train or bus or ship and, no matter how hard you try to make it on time, you are too late.

## **School or Military Service**

Dreaming you are back in school or military service is a very common dream. Generally it describes the fact that we are living our life today the way we did when we were in school or in the army. In these settings our lives were not our own and we had to dance to a drumbeat that was not our own. In these settings we had to do what was assigned to us. It is very easy to fall into life patterns that are psychologically very much like being in school or in the army. This dream usually means that we are following a set of rules and requirements that deny us our freedom. We have no choice but are at the mercy of the rules that in this case are usually the rules of a particularly demanding set of primary selves.

A variation of this dream is being in prison or being locked up in a concentration camp. These dreams reflect a loss of personal freedom in our lives and often indicate a lack of connection to our feelings. They usually come when we are working too hard and life is becoming a prison.

## **Police Officers**

The police represent control. Very often when the pusher energy is out of control in our lives, we have dreams of a police officer stopping us for a traffic violation. This dream is also a compensatory dream. There is something in your life that is out of control and your control side is trying to help you regain control and, most likely, trying to get you to slow down. These are warning dreams and you need to learn to listen to them.

## **Houses**

There are very many variations on the house dream. The image of the home represents your personality and how it is operating in the world. The house gives you a picture of how you are living. Is there enough space? Is there enough light? Is it cold? Is it magical? Do you have your own special space? Dreaming of moving into a new home is connected to a major change in personality. Many times when people are bringing more choice into their lives, they dream of new and more spacious houses.

Sometimes people dream that they are going down into the basement where they feel fearful. In this case they are moving more deeply into the unconscious as they explore new aspects of themselves. Discovering new rooms or new treasures in a house is learning about new parts of yourself. Dreaming of living in a Victorian-type home might be related to having a set of primary selves that is based on Victorian values.

## **Dangerous People or Things**

Being chased by dangerous people or things is one of the most common types of dreams. Whatever is chasing you in your dreams is essentially based on what you are disowning. Many people disown their instinctual energies. They are afraid of their anger, their sexuality, and their emotions. So in their dreams they are chased by wild animals or by dangerous men who want to kill them or have sexual relations with them. By examining what is after you in your dreams, you have immediate access to discovering your disowned selves!

Sometimes these disowned selves can represent parts of ourselves other than our instinctual energies. If you are a pusher type bent on success then you may find yourself afraid of people who are not busy, like unemployed street people, people in hammocks, or "ladies who lunch." We saw a woman once who dreamed a dragon was chasing her. She crossed a small body of water and there the dragon stopped and became a book. She was a woman who had disowned the serious use of her mind and that became the dragon that was after her. A few months after this dream she enrolled in school and ultimately pursued a professional career.

## **Birth and Death**

The unconscious needs a way to describe change in our personality development. The image of people giving birth to babies is a wonderful way to describe the development of new ideas, new feelings, and new ways of being in the world.

Conversely, the image of someone dying is a way of describing the end of a certain cycle, the end of a certain way of thinking or feeling or being in the world. There is a Buddhist saying that life is a thousand births and a thousand deaths and when we look at the frequency of the birth and death motif in dreams, we can certainly see how this is true.

If you dream that you die it is generally a time of great change in your life. In these situations you are usually shifting away from your primary self system. It is like a death. The old you is dying and a new you will be born.

## **Cataclysms**

There are a wide variety of cataclysmic dreams. These suggest that there is a big change coming. Here are some of them. There is a huge earthquake and you know that it is the end of the world. It is World War III and you know that the world is coming to an end. There is a gigantic tidal wave that is going to destroy everything.

In most of these dreams the dreamer is going to die. Keep in mind that the dreamer in the dream is generally one of your primary selves. Dreaming of a tidal wave may suggest that your disowned emotional selves are getting ready to overwhelm your rational, controlled primary self. An earthquake means that your primary self that had

everything in order is about to be overturned.

### **Flying (Not in a Plane)**

This is also a very common kind of dream. To make sense out of it we have to determine the primary self of the dreamer. If someone is a very concrete thinker and a practical person with a strong attention to detail, then the dream reflects a readiness to move into his or her intuition, into the world of the imagination, and, very possibly, into the spiritual sphere.

If, on the other hand, the dreamer is very much identified with intuition and spirituality, then the dream can reflect an overidentification with intuition and the spiritual world. It means that the dreamer is always up in the air and does not have his or her feet on the ground.

Sometimes you are being chased in a dream or a situation is extremely emotional and then you jump up and start to fly. This would be a reflection of escaping into fantasy to escape a situation that is too difficult to handle on a psychological level.

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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](http://www.delos-inc.com)

