

DREAM CONVERSATION

(*"The message in my dreams"*)



In this process you will get in touch with the messages your dreams are trying to tell you. Dreams are much like a puzzle that is not yet put together. In a puzzle, each piece by itself is meaningless but as you put the pieces together a whole is formed which is the meaning of the puzzle. When the puzzle is completed the individual pieces now have meaning within the larger context of the finished puzzle—the pieces all "fit together" in a particular way, the pieces have their "place." In fact, when the puzzle is completed, one doesn't even notice the pieces—one is focused on the whole completed picture.

One way of looking at the process of journal work is that it is a process of putting together the puzzle of your life. We cannot yet see the *whole* picture—that cannot be accomplished until we have completed our lives. It could be said that the meaning of our lives can only be *fully* revealed to us at the time of our death. It is only then that we see how *all* the pieces, e.g. the events, circumstances and situations, "fit together." We see and experience the *whole* picture and our lives suddenly "make sense." But, as in a puzzle, we can begin to see the meaning of the puzzle well before all the pieces are put together. And so it is with our life. We do not need to wait until the ending of our life to understand the wholeness of our existence.

What we can do through journal work is actively engage in the process of integrating the pieces of our life. This is basically what you have been doing so far. The LIFE PATH has essentially given you a whole picture of your life up to the present period and the AREA PATHS are some of the pieces. The means by which you are putting the pieces together is through conversation or communication. As in a puzzle, the more of it you put together (integrate, unify, make whole) the more you see how the total picture is taking shape. If you have no prior recognition of what the completed puzzle looks like then, as you put it together, you may begin to say, "Aha, I see what it is!"

Dream work can assist you in the process of integrating your life. A dream is a mini-drama that occurs on the stage of your mind. The drama can be a horror story, a love story, a comedy or a thriller. It can have bizarre and disconnected scenes. Or there may be no particular drama in it all, just an apparent surreal scene with no characters in it but yourself. A dream usually has some kind of short dialogue in it between various "characters" and each character in the dream typically has his or her "inner conversation". It can be said that the dream contains some of the "missing pieces" of your life and your task is to discover how these pieces fit together within the context of your life situation. The way which we will proceed in dream work is much the same way we dealt with the material in the conversation work. The technique here is simply to identify ourselves with certain parts of the dream and create a conversation between the opposing parts.

If you have trouble remembering your dreams you can train yourself to do so. It often requires an immediate writing of the dream lest it fade from your memory as you awake. The best method is to keep your journal and a pen next to your bed so that the moment you awake you can write it down. Before you go to sleep, declare in your own mind, "I will remember my dreams tonight." If at first you don't succeed, keep declaring your intention and eventually you will remember them. Once you write the dream down you can always do the necessary "work" on the dream at a later time.

Now, one thing that can be said about any dramatic scene is that there are at least 3 points of view. There are (generally) at least 2 main characters who have some interaction with each other. One is a protagonist who has a certain purpose, intention or point of view, the other is an antagonist who in some way opposes the protagonist. The antagonist can be a person (such as someone who is chasing you) or an object (such as a strong wind that keeps you from walking). The opposition is what creates "drama" which can be powerful or weak. Now the third point of view is the audience who is watching the drama unfold. The audience *observes* the action and has an ability to describe the sequence of actions as they are occurring. The audience is involved in the drama but they are not characters in the story. What makes the dream unique is that *you* are, at the same time, an audience (of one) as well as an actor. In fact, as you will discover later, *all* of the characters of the dream as well as the objects in the dream ("props") are in fact different parts of yourself, which you have "disowned". The audience and the actors in the dream are all the same person which is *you*.

The first step is to divide your page in half and write down the story line of the dream in *present tense as if it were happening now* on the left side of the page. Instead of saying, "I was in a dark house and there was a group of people who were trying to get me," say "I *am* in a dark house. There *is* a group of people present. They *seem* like they are trying to get me..." As you recall your dreams write them in this format. You want to relive the dream as fully as you can from beginning to end. Begin now to write down the dream in this way ...

Every dream has many elements to it, some of which may appear insignificant on the surface; but as you go into the elements the meanings begin to reveal themselves. The best place to start is with the main characters, the main actions and the main emotions and thoughts and then *identify* yourself with these main qualities. Identification is the process of "playing the role" of these various parts and describing yourself as these parts. Once you have identified yourself with the various qualities you can then begin to set up a dialogue between them or a dialogue between you (as the main character) and these other qualities. As you have revealed your "inner conversations" to yourself in the different areas and periods of your life, so will you see that the characters in your dream also have inner conversations and emotions. As you begin to reveal these inner conversations and emotions, you will see that *these are true expressions and feelings that you have disowned in yourself*.

Consider the following short fragment of a dream:

I am ice-skating in a rink and I am racing around a track. I am going very fast but there is another person (Diane) who is racing me. I think that I am going very fast but she always catches up to me. I think I am leaving her behind but she is right behind me the whole way.

As the dreamer of the dream, I am the audience who has observed this little "drama". I am also a character in the dream (a racer on ice skates, the protagonist) and there is another main character (Diane) who is racing me (the antagonist). The main action is the race itself. The main emotion (in myself, the actor) seems to be one of "trying to pull away but can't"). What is the "inner conversation" of each of the characters?

As myself: "I want to pull away from you but you are always right on my tail. I can't seem to pull away. No matter how hard I try you are always right behind me."

As Diane: "I won't let you win. I am faster than you are."

The next step now is to choose another character in the dream who stands out for you and is an antagonist to the main character and identify with this character. *Become* this character and write down the story of the dream from *this other's point of view* leaving a blank between lines as you did before. As you do this you will notice that this character also has an internal monologue going on. Fill in this character's internal monologue as you write down the dream from this other character's point of view...

The last step now is to create a conversation between the protagonist (you) and the antagonist in the dream. Allow these two characters to speak to one another bringing their monologues into relationship to one another. Begin with yourself as the protagonist speaking directly to the antagonist. What do you want to say?... Then, as you have done in previous conversations, "switch places" and become the antagonist and allow the antagonist to speak back... Continue this conversation until you reach a natural pause or conclusion...

After completing the conversation reflect and write on the following questions:

How does this dream fit in to my current life situation?

Are these two characters in the dream really representations of opposing parts of myself?