Dream Journal

During our psychotherapy session, we discuss the insights and cognitive processes of which you have gained mindfulness understanding. Each session builds upon your current status. No two individuals will experience the same psychotherapy process, though the overall treatment plan (as described with the “IN SYNC” videos) and the interventions (as described with the “Self-Help” videos) are the same.

After you have gained integration training in the Daily Journal and the Sleep Journal, we will begin to integrate your Dream Journal into psychotherapy.

Visual areas of the brain are much more active during dream states as are emotional centers. During sleep, our brain areas of linear logic and language areas are damped down. We do not dream in “words” per se, but in images, simple narratives, and in intuitive emotional ways. Many of these symbols come in the form of “metaphors.”

To begin your cognitive understanding of “interpretation” of dream metaphors for this dream treatment stage, read these articles:

<https://www.asdreams.org/baw-metaphorindreams/>

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/do-all-dreams-have-meaning>

Here are some video descriptions:

<https://youtu.be/JXSVH1Hlyow>

other videos:

<https://presidentialscholars.columbia.edu/content/metaphors-and-models-neuroscience-comparison-2>

Stages of Dream Journal development

Stage One:

Keep a writing pad next to your bed. As soon as you awaken from a dream state, write down short brief phases (even just one word) of images and memories which come to you WITHOUT effort or thought. Developing the ability to write spontaneously, without cognitive thought, is the focus of Stage One. Do not JUDGE what you wrote, or “worry” about the accuracy of your memory recall, or permit any other “filter” that the OCD mind attempts in its efforts to derail/prevent this spontaneous writing task.

The Dream Journal Spontaneous Writing ability is very different from the spontaneous writing which is taught for “writing a book” skill. In that style of writing, you are encouraged to engage the fantasy imagination. In the Dream Journal Spontaneous Writing ability, you are by-passing all cognitive writing filters. The focus is upon linking the hand’s mechanical writing skills (learned via the left hemisphere) to the unconscious visualization processes which are part of the brain’s dream function. We are attempting to access the early life links which initially formed when you, as a child, began learning “how to write.” This is the brain’s initial “metaphor” creating training.

After writing these brief phrases and words (even single letters), you will read these writings “out-loud” and focus upon “listening” to the sounds of the writings. Do not allow the OCD mind to apply a “fantasy/imagination” filter to your thoughts about these sounds. Just focus upon the experience of the sound coming from your vocal cords and reaching both inner ear and outer ear. No thoughts or judgments to this experience. This exercise will re-enact the brain’s early childhood learning of “reading” of printed text “out-loud” and learning how to connect basic “meaning” to the sound as the brain “learns” the written text.

Stage One may share some similarities with an older concept called “automatic writing,” popular during the 1800s.  Spiritualists used it as a way to tap into the spirit world.  Automatic writing was done in a meditative or trance-like state (similar to your initial awakening from a dream).  Instead of communicating with the spirits, practitioners were actually connecting with their sub-conscious and by-passing the self-critic of the OCD mind. Be mindful that your spontaneous writing can tap into disturbing or traumatic memories and possibly lead to emotional distress.  So be mindful to always apply your progressive relaxation and deep breathing skills if this occurs during the writing task. If this happens, DO NOT continue writing until you have gained somatic peace. If the initial “dream-state” has dissipated, do not continue writing as you have now engaged the sympathetic nervous system. If you continue to write in this state, you will only encourage the OCD mind to develop a “dream defense” which will prevent you from attaining the learning necessary for Stage Two of Dream Interpretation.

Stage Two:

Dream Interpretation uses unconscious metaphors, which you will learn how to access in Stage Two of Dream Interpretation. In order to access these metaphors, we will “reverse engineer” the reading and writing tasks you developed as a child.

Read this article for more information on how the child develops language, reading, and writing cognitive skills,

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/how-most-children-learn-read>

From these early language skills, the child is also developing an ability to understand and create metaphors. Read these articles for more information on metaphors:

<https://www.twinkl.com/teaching-wiki/metaphor>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/04/190402113157.htm>

<https://www.learningandthebrain.com/blog/metaphors-learning/>

<https://www.coursera.org/lecture/uncommon-sense-teaching/4-the-value-of-metaphor-2hTHX>

The first step in understanding Dream Interpretation will occur during your treatment session. You will read to me the entry from the morning of your therapy session. You will then integrate these symbols as metaphorical understandings of the prior Daily Journal’s entries. The events of the day reveals the unrecognized consequences of your own behaviors which your unconscious mind is attempting to integrate into your knowledge base.

I will then respond to you from my clinical understanding of your life challenges. I will comment on the feelings these symbols evoke in me and what the content suggests to me metaphorically. Through the process of attunement, I am offering you both empathy and a pool of ideas that you might not have thought of. Then, together, we discuss which “interpretations” are congruent, in agreement, with your current cognitive understandings of your life. We discuss if these interpretations suggest any changes in your current therapy assignments.

This first step in Dream Interpretation always “assumes” that the dream prior to the therapy session is a “Therapy Dream.” The dream images are accepted as being a metaphor of your overall emotional state. Each element of the dream—even minor metaphors—shed light on the meaning to your therapy progress. By giving consideration to the abstract insights which are new to us, the dream enables us to make conceptual changes to the therapy journey. The “interpretation” of metaphors is a primary way that unconscious elements can be transferred to the left hemisphere for use in conscious decision-making processes.

Stage Three:

In the Stage Two of your Dream Journal, we are “training” your unconscious brain functions to communicate in a more effective manner with the conscious functions, rather than relying solely on the somatic automatic reactions. As this process develops, you will begin to experience an intuitive state which has been called “Intuitive Knowing” which is a healthy form of “automatic reactions” not based upon traumatic automatic reactions to past experiences. “Intuitive Knowing” is spontaneous, heart-centered, free, adventurous, imaginative, playful, nonsequential, and nonlinear. It has been present in you since pre-birth, as a preconscious embodied state.

As you deepen your own control over “metaphors” of your dreams and conscious mind, there will be an increase in your sense of control over your life, an increase in your “agency” (the capacity to act independently and make your own free choices). Gaining freedom from traumatic metaphors loosens the structural influences (such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, ability, customs, etc.) that determine or limit your agency and decisions.

<https://youtu.be/qWTo_3-YR6k>

For more information on “Clean Language” theories:

Book: Clean Language: Revealing Metaphors and Opening Minds by Wendy Sullivan and Judy Rees