

## **DREAM YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH**

**by Serge Kahili King, Ph.D.**

Does this sound strange? Yes it does. Does it work? Yes it does.

Although dreams are often thought of as unreal, even useless aspects of our human nature, they can be turned into amazingly effective tools for healing. It is well known that thoughts can influence our health, and dreams are simply special forms of thoughts.

In this brief article I want to introduce you to three ways of working with night dreams and how you can use them to improve your health. I'm not talking about controlling them in any way. That falls into a category called "lucid dreaming," which generally takes special training to achieve. However, you can obtain the benefits of lucid dreaming without actually doing it. The reason is that after you dream a dream it becomes a memory. The dream is over, but the memory remains, especially when it's scary or unsettling.

Scary or unsettling dreams, usually called "nightmares," may in some cases reflect problems with mental, emotional or physical health. This is especially true for recurring nightmares. One very effective way resolving the problem being reflected is to simply change the memory of the dream.

A memory is a recording of an event. We usually think of it as a record of the past, and we usually think of the past as unchangeable. That may be so, but the record is in the present and it can be changed. Why would we want to do that? Because your mind, your emotions and your body are always affected by whatever you pay attention to in the present moment. When you recall a nightmare or an unsettling dream, and especially when you dwell on it, your inner self reacts as if the event is taking place right now and recreates the anxiety, fear, anger, tension, pain, and bio-chemical reactions that may have been part of the original dream. When you consciously change your memory of the dream in a positive way, your inner self also changes the mental, emotional and physical reactions in a positive way. The best part is that you don't have to know what the dream was about, although this insight often does appear.

In working with clients and students over many years, I have found three kinds of changes that produce excellent results for most people. You can take your pick or try them all.

1. Change Your Reaction. Recall the dream. Pick a point in the dream recall that is most scary or unsettling. As vividly as you can, imagine that you act in a more positive way than you did in the original dream. Often the recalled dream changes itself accordingly.

Example: I have an old truck and I'm having trouble with the brakes. The brake fluid is so old it's not made any more and I wake up very frustrated.

The Change: I recall the dream, sell the old truck as scrap and buy a new one that comes into view. This feels very good.

2. Change The Story. Recall the dream. Pick a point in the dream recall that is most scary or unsettling. As vividly as you can, imagine that the story of the dream changes in some positive way. Notice how the recalled dream changes itself accordingly.

Example: I dreamed that I had an important trunk that I had to put in my car and drive away with. When I got to the storage place the trunk was gone, and there were so many fences and other obstacles I could not get my car to the highway.

The Change: When I got to the storage place I imagined that the trunk was still there and I put it into my car. Then I saw that a roadway had opened up onto the highway and I drove off feeling very good.

3. Continue the Dream. Recall the dream. Pick the point in the dream recall where you woke up and without trying to control anything, stay with the dream and let the story play out. Although it sometimes takes a while, any negative dream will resolve itself into a good ending if you stay with it.

Example: In a very recent dream I have landed or come to a very strange civilization that seems somewhat feudal. I am treated like half guest, half prisoner. There appear to be different social groups mingled together in clans. My weapons are taken from me and I am constantly getting confused about what is the right and wrong thing to do. I wake up with the same feeling.

The Continuation: While writing this article, I recalled the dream and just let it go on. After losing my weapons my hands are bound and I am led to a kind of pyramidal temple where it looks like I'm going to be executed or sacrificed. At the base of the temple a priestess in a golden robe comes out from the side to take my hand and lead me away to a high platform where I am shown a group of young people who are also strangers to the city. I am named as their clan leader and accepted as equal to the other clan leaders of the city. The effect of this change was to

release some tension patterns in my body, particularly my back, that I was barely aware of.

In addition to having beneficial effects on your emotions and for your body, any of these techniques will also make the nightmares disappear. And should another one occur for some reason, just return to one of the techniques to heal it immediately.

Don't limit yourself to using them for nightmares only, however. Any scary or unsettling dream may be an indication of mental, emotional or physical problems that you can do without. You can use these techniques as an additional resource to supplement any other means of healing you choose to use.

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