

Just A Dream? A student essay

Makayla Reed

Southeastern School Corporation, Walton, Indiana, USA

Summary. This article is about the questions that pop in to most people's minds when they think about dreams. Why we have them? What our dreams mean? etc. I believe that this article will answer most of the questions people have roaming around their minds about dreams. Because I know it answered a lot of mine.

Keywords: Dreaming, attitude towards dreaming, functions of dreams

1. Introduction

People have had dreams for as long as they can remember. But the same questions keep coming up: Why do we have dreams? What do my dreams mean? Etc. Many people have google searched these questions to try and figure out the real answers, but the fact is that everyone ends up on some pointless website talking about their zodiac signs and stories about some famous person's dream they "supposedly" had. This essay is going to tell people what they have been looking for this whole time. If someone wants answers to their questions keep reading.

A question that is gets debated very often is: Do dreams have meaning? Scientists still continue to debate this issue, but most people find that their dreams are very meaningful for them. Many think dreams are full of symbolic messages that may not be clear to us on the surface. But, if we dig deeper and think about what is going on in our lives, we can usually come up with an interpretation that makes sense. Many people have done with a few of these common dreams. Falling is said to symbolize insecurity and anxiety. Being chased is said to mean that someone is running away from their problems. Taking an exam (or forgetting that you have one), experts say this means that they are being scrutinized about something or feel they're being tested. It may also mean there is something that person neglected that they know needs their attention. Flying typically, means that they are on top of things. They are in control of the things that matter to them. Running, but going nowhere, according to some, this dream means they have too much on their plate. They are trying to do too many things at once and can't catch up or even get ahead.

There are a few different types of dreams we have. Nightmares, which most of us have had at some point, they are frightening dreams that usually result in waking the dreamer from sleep. Sleep terrors also known as night terrors, distinct from nightmares, sleep terrors are intense periods of fright during sleep. They may be accompanied by screams, agitated movement, or jumping from bed. Recurring dreams are dreams that we have over and over. Lucid

dreams, these striking dreams are ones in which the dreamer, thought sleeping, is aware they are dreaming, and may be able to control some aspects of the dream.

"Almost everyone has experienced dreams that contain anxiety or outright fear. These dreams can be quite traumatic or recurrent. For some, unpleasant dreams or nightmares repeat on real content. For others, the content may change but while the theme remains the same such as scenes of falling, or of being pursued or attacked, of being late or unprepared for class, a presentation or exam. Many dream theories converge in their view that this type of experience is associated with lack of progress by the dreamer to recognize and solve related conflicts in life."

Dreams let us play out painful or puzzling emotions or experiences in a safe place. Dreams also allow us to process information or events that may be painful or confusing in an environment that is at once emotionally real but physically unreal. They are useful in learning more about the dreamer's feelings, thoughts, behaviors, motives, and values. Dreams reveal a person's "deepest desires and deepest wounds."

Dream analysis is a key component in the process of becoming whole as a person. When people think about analyzing their dreams, they think of crystal balls, dream dictionaries, and psychologists, but in reality dream analysis is none of these things, and it's actually a valuable way to better understand yourself. Dreaming is the communication between our conscious mind and our unconscious mind, helping people create wholeness. "Dreams are the bridge that allows movement back and forth between what we think we know and what we really know."

Most people think of dreams as something that happens to them, but we happen to dreams. We create everything in them, every atom, every photon, every person, and every event. We can't control everything we dream about, some things just happen.

Some examples of these instances are genes can influence your nightmares. Identical twins may usually have the same interests and habits, but scientists have discovered that their genetic basis are stronger than anyone can imagine. It's so strong that they can even experience nightmares on almost the same frequency. Black and white television even affect your dreams. University of Dundee has shown that the type of television you watched as a child has a profound effect on the color of your dreams. So it's possible that media has as much influence on our subconsciousness as life experiences. The different types of cheeses you eat affect your dreams. All cheese contain amino acid called

Corresponding address:

Makayla Reed

Email: mreed42@sescstudents.net

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tryptophan, which is helpful in normalizing sleep and reducing stress levels. A 2005 study done by the British Cheese Board discovered that the people who normally ate cheddar cheese dreamt more about celebrities; the people who ate Blue cheese experienced bizarre dreams. Cheshire gave the best night's sleep, but it caused the dreamer not to dream. The people who ate Red Lancashire had nostalgic dreams about their families and childhood and the ones who ate Blue Lancashire dreamt mostly about their work. Research has even found out that what you hear and smell influence your dreams. Our minds interpret the noise occurring around us while we're asleep, and our minds make it a part of our dreams. That means if we heard a sound in our dream the sounds familiar it could easily be something we have heard before. The way smells can influence our dreams are similar to how noise can, our brain interprets smells as a signal and incorporates it in dreams. For example, the scent of cookies or candles might have taken you back to when you were a kid or you might have had a pleasant dream, but if you smelt something foul you might not have had a very good dream.

There are many different theorists and theories about dreams and why we have dreams. Sigmund Freud is one of these theorists. He had designed other theories that many people had thought to be true but, most of his theories were about the stages of child development. So when people heard that he had this new theory they began to believe it without even questioning it. Freud's theory stated that he considered dreams to be the "royal road to the unconscious" as it is in dreams that the ego's defenses are lowered so that some of the repressed material comes through to awareness, albeit in distorted form. Meaning that he believed that dreams are an attempt to satisfy sexual and aggressive impulses that we cannot satisfy when we are awake. He also believed that dreams perform important functions for the unconscious mind and serve as valuable clues to how the unconscious mind operates.

Another well-known theorist is Calvin Hall who created the Cognitive Theory of Dreaming. Hall was a psychologist who explored the cognitive dimensions of dreaming. His work began before the discovery of REM sleep, so little was known about the biology of sleep and dreams. His theory was among the first scientific theories of dream interpretation based on quantitative analysis... rather than wishful thinking. Hall's cognitive theory is that dreams are thoughts displayed in the mind's private theater as visual concepts. Hall dismissed the Freudian notion that dreams are trying to cover something up. In his classic work *The Meaning of Dreams*, Hall writes, "The images of a dream are the concrete embodiments of the dreamer's thoughts; these images give visual expression to that which is invisible, namely, conceptions." So dreams reveal the structure of how we envision our lives, a display that is clearly valuable for anyone who remembers and studies their own dreams. After studying thousands of dreams collected from his students and from around the world, Hall suggested that the main cognitive structure that dreams reveal include, conceptions of elf (how we appear to ourselves, the roles we play in life), conceptions of others (the people in our lives and how we react to their needs), conceptions of the world (our environment: is it a barren wasteland or a nurturing place?), conceptions of penalties (how we view the Man. What is allowed? What is forbidden?), conceptions of conflict (out inner discord and how we struggle with resolving it.) As

a behavioral psychologist, Hall believed these conceptions are antecedents to our behavior in the waking world. He thought they were like maps to our actions, and "with these maps we are able to follow the course of man's behavior, to understand why he selects one road rather than another, to anticipate the difficulties and obstacles he will meet, to and protect his destinations."

There are people who believe in one of those two theories, and there are people who believe in different theories. Among those people some of them believe that dreams are nothing more than images resulting from random electrical activity in the brain. Those on the physiology side of the "why do we dream" argument see dreams as only nonsense that the brain creates from fragments of images and memory. For centuries, however, people have looked at their dreams as both omens and insights into their own psyches. The people who have tried to come up with the answer to "Why do we dream?" But the truth is no definite answer exists.

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