



“Practically Dreaming”

A Course Handbook

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Lesson in Recall

“The gods love the obscure and hate the obvious.” - The Upanishads

The author, in so saying, was referring to the use of words in dreams.

Steps to using our dreams ...

1. Bedtime routine: Go to bed, at least 15-30 minutes earlier than usual to get enough sleep so you can wake up easily ... an hour or two earlier if you find you are still tired during the day. It is best to have a pencil and notepad close by.
2. If you cannot change your bedtime routine, stay in bed longer in the mornings until you recall a dream or two. Start this on a weekend or holiday, if you have a regular routine during the week. The longest dreams are usually the last one you have before waking, and are likely to be the one most easily recalled if you were actually asleep. Some dreams are known to be an hour and a half long. A certain amount of your dreams will be lost from not having recall skills.
3. Recall can be enhanced and improved through various techniques. Sometimes a word or scene will stimulate recall of a dream during the day or two following one you had, sometimes that recall is referred to as *déjà vu* (seeing or being aware for a second time).
4. Tell yourself as you go to bed you will wake up after each dream as it helps create the focus and intent. This is something you can do silently. Your conscious and unconscious mind sometimes needs to be prodded with suggestions to comply with the intents you have, so say what you want to do, out loud, if silently doesn't get results.
5. Don't expect volumes of information, even though there are at times some dreams which are huge in content when you write them. Most of us miss and lose far more dreams than we ever recall. Recalling all of them is not necessary unless you can afford the time and disruptions to your sleep. Periodically you might do that, but not regularly.
 - i. As an adult, I struggled a year to write 4½ pages of dreams. By the end of the third year I was writing 4½ pages a week, and then it leveled off. The longest dream my older son had at 12 years of age was 2½ typewritten pages long. Some of it is astonishing content.
6. It is only adequate notes you need during the night, not the whole dream written in detail.

- i. It took a long time before being able to wake up after even half my dreams. Jotting them down wasn't easy in the dark but I managed to retrieve almost 100%. I wrote my dreams for more than a year before allowing myself to return to sleep with one dream in memory so I could wake up (not fully but enough that I was aware of being awake even if my eyes were not open) and write down two after having the second dream.
7. You will form a significant portion of your dreams into words before going back to sleep, as just recalling images is usually not enough to keep the dreams in mind. There's something about sleep that ruins the ability to recall dreams. Sometimes you will be able to keep the brighter or clearer images a long time without putting them into words. Sometimes you will recall those ones for many years. Pulling yourself to an eye-closed almost awake state and forming the words in your mind as to what occurred in the dreams is not difficult after you do it a few times, but it seems impossible to those who have yet to do it. That's one point of self discipline. Do this before you allow yourself to drop into sleep again and you stand a much better chance of being able to write them down later, but if it doesn't work for you do it by waking yourself after each recalled dream.
8. Only words describe what you see or experience, so gestures, motions, body language and actions need to be converted to words. Do not add comments or explanations within the dream unless they are bracketed, If you do, you may create unnecessary confusion by trying to explain something that isn't actually part of the dream yet is part of a reality with which you are familiar and are trying to explain the connections or relevance of it. The dreams will almost always be described in sensory terms, ie., "I saw, I heard, I felt", etc. Use all the words you can to reasonably describe the dream (without becoming too wordy or adding guesses not implied). You will need those words to get at the meaning within the analogy later. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO INTERPRET THE WORDS YET.**
9. When you see yourself in some area of the city or country, add words to describe that location, near such-and-such, or by X (a building, boat or other object). You need all the words you can glean from the content you experienced to find the meanings being conveyed to you. Each dream is a story, often incorporating references to other things, scenes, events etc. some of which may have come from something you saw recently on TV or a movie. Most times, dreams are a complete report designed to inform us of something relevant to our life; however, not all are 'stand alone'. They may continue for several dreams and actually at

times span more than one night. Some dreams will seem to be partial repeats or make reference to previous dreams, and many call them 'recurring'.

10. Create a routine for yourself that works. Recalling dreams is a matter of self-discipline. For quite some time, you will have to force yourself awake after having a dream, and that goes against what we want or expect to do - sleep undisturbed. You choose whether the value is sufficient to warrant giving up a small portion of your sleep to find the creative and helpful nuggets of information they contain. It's your life that figures largely within them and the benefits are mostly for you! If, after some attempts at doing this, you are not doing well with recalling dreams, do it from meditations where you allow yourself to go down to the dream state. Instructions on that are contained later in the Course.
11. Initially writing them will disturb your sleep patterns, but most people find any wakeful disturbances settle down: for some, right away and for others after a month or two. From my experience, you tend to become a lighter sleeper and may require a bit more sleep than if you slept heavily. We don't need as much sleep as we usually get.
12. After having a dream, write it out briefly and promptly on a notepad by your bed. Or, if you sleep alone you could use a tape recorder to record them verbally before transposing them in the morning. I strongly recommend using computers for recording the written words because they make searching them for the same word so much easier. After you have been recording them for some prolonged period, up to a decade, you will find you will not have to write them out as often, as you will eventually be able to process the dreams into words in your mind and find what they are conveying to you. You will miss some of the value, however, as time and expediency is a factor in our lives you may choose that once the process is clearly embedded in your mind. Usually by that time you can determine the goal or intent and take relevant action that day or soon.
13. Do NOT struggle to have them make grammatical sense when writing them out if you intend to get the complete information they contain. The grammatical errors may shift the meaning in ways which were intended. You may find yourself laughing some of the shifts of context that are created. Have a sense of humour - even the Creator does at times. We

learn it in part from contextual shifts in words and humour³ has lots of that.

14. Avoid using alarm clocks, radio alarms or wake-up calls. Lie still as you awaken while you are gathering your recollections of the dream, You can practice waking up at the required time before the alarm goes off. It doesn't take long to achieve that discipline.
15. Do not allow yourself to think of anything you have to do, or want to do later in the day, until you have put into words what you experienced. It's your choice - your gold. It isn't necessary to capture every nugget of gold; however, it is easy to let the self-discipline slide to the point of little or no recall.
16. A partner can be a great asset or an impediment to recalling dreams. How you work with another can make a difference to your relationship and the benefits you both attain. 'Partner' could include friends and associates as well as family.
17. Recollect the dream and record it as soon as possible or you'll lose valued portions or all of your dreams. Some researchers report that within five minutes half the dream is beyond recall, and in ten minutes, up to 90% of it may have disappeared. It's important to make an effort to record them in some way, immediately! Sound recorders might be a solution for those who sleep alone.
18. In recalling a dream, you will find you are often recalling it from the end or some significant point in it, working backwards (and forwards) to piece together the sequences and fitting in bits that you had initially forgotten. As you first piece it together as images and experiences, it is important to recall in as much detail as you can. Do not put it into words to start, the imagery and experience comes first.
19. Most dreams are conveyed visually to people who have or have had sight. The next most common sense within them is sound. The profoundly deaf and blind from birth also dream. Their dreams are still sensory analogies and describing them reflect the senses they have. A limited education or exposure to many different things will also change the way in which words are used and the analogies conveyed.

³ Americans seem to have lost the second U/you in humour. As a result of many changes to English they have arbitrarily made they have lost many understandings, like for fence and its various associations, which someone who couldn't spell well used fens (stinking bogs) and so they have long misspelled defence.

20. Sleep in a cool room if possible, on a bed that that is firm enough that you aren't engulfed by it. If you are too comfortable, you will sleep heavier and find it more difficult to recall what your dreams are conveying. Fresh air is better than stale, non-circulating air, unless you thrill at having dreams conveying stress.
21. Take note of the foods you ate prior to going to bed (in the twenty four hours) as some may have an effect on your dreams. The effects can vary from person to person. Certain materials and seemingly harmless food additives: such as malic acid, vitamin C, some food dyes, caffeine; as well as thin atmospheres at higher elevations, being in water (swimming, hot tubs, baths or showers) can affect dreaming and dreams, as well as many activities including exercise. Some things enhance dreams, while others suppress or disturb them. Sometimes the effect they have may be relevant to the time of day. Just ask someone sensitive to caffeine in tea, coffee, Coke, Pepsi, or chocolate whether they will take something with that stimulant after a certain hour of the day. Find out what things influence you.

There are no universal answers, only trends, as each of us can have responses different to the norm. If you find certain activities impair your ability to dream then it's advisable to limit, avoid, or change the time you do them. The same holds true of various foods. Some foods acceptable to others may cause disturbances to dreams or health.

22. While entheogens (dream stimulants) bring a dream state closer to consciousness, there's little gain. They're unnecessary for someone working with dreams frequently or using methods you'll learn in the Practically Dreaming Course. Avoid risking your health. There's no shortage of examples of substance misuse and abuse. However, if the use of certain foods or substances is recommended by your dreams, pay attention. Dreams often show what to eat, or to avoid.
23. The abundance of dreams about your future is most prolific in childhood and at times of stress in your life. Dreams about the future aren't limited to your own future. It also appears the time that you will get more dreams for your future is during times you are recording them. The Source of dreams is also aware that they are being recorded and so ensures there is a greater amount of dreams that have useful content for your future - sometimes distant.
24. Some dreams may show you awake or aware of dreaming in your dream. While there are claims indicating we can control the dream and

its outcome, it is not at all certain the person is dreaming by that point, or whether the perceived control within the dream is actual or supplied as a function of that type of dream. We can and do make choices in dreams and those choices transfer into real life; however, their value is still in the words describing the experience. The choices made are ultimately ones we make in real life or could make.

25. Nightmares are only dreams in which we have encountered future situations we fear. They are for a large part conveying cautions to us, sometimes within days, in other cases in the far distant future. Most nightmares relate to us or people we know. The biggest difficulty is in knowing when to apply actions to the cautions we would have to take. Do not fear what you see, even if it sometimes makes you feel fearful. They provide cautionary information on which you can act to avert, avoid or divert the problem.
26. Some of the things you might see in your dreams will include your own demise (and rebirth) and that of your circle of friends and family. Sometimes knowledge of those things gives you the opportunity to change the time of the event by acting preemptively (often quite simply by changing diet or activity levels). You might even find how long you will live and under what circumstances it might end. We all leave life at some time, so don't worry unduly about things you can't change. Our soul or spirit doesn't die with our body.
27. Don't expect what you see or experience will have a literal reality any time in the near future. It's possible, however it doesn't happen often as literality is hidden in figurative terms and sometimes in less common uses of words. What seems to be relevant to the near future might actually be for something more distant in time (duality of meaning is common ... a duel with **words** might be seen in a dream). A dream may do its 'job' by getting you to act or consider.