Chapter 5: Exploring and Using Dreams

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**Abstract**

Dreams contain valuable information; thus the ability to recall dreams, create and apply a functional dream works model, and interpret and find creative solutions to problems within dreams is a valuable. This article focuses on the development of these skills to ultimately create the habits that will lead to an increased ability to interpret dreams and to find occurring patterns within dreams that can be used to solve problems that many people face. The ability to solve problems is a lifelong goal of many so this is a valuable asset that many can use as another source of solutions to the problems that life has presented to all.

*Keywords:* dreams, recall dreams, dream works model, dreams and creativity

**Introduction**

Dreams are a common part of everyone’s life and they contain valuable insights to the mysteries of one’s life. Because of the valuable insights that dreams have, one should try to understand them in order to fully use these insights in their own life. The problem that most people have is that they are unable to recall their dreams, and thus they are unable to analyze the content of their dreams which contain the answers and solutions to many problems that people face. The purpose of this paper will be to teach people how to recall dreams, analyze those dreams that are recalled, and how to apply the dream content in an effective way to solve the problems that many face; and in turn, ultimately help those who apply the methods discussed. The article will begin by describing what materials to accomplish the ultimate goal of dream interpretation by explaining how one can increase dream recall frequency, create a dream works model, and find the creative solutions that can solve problems.

**Literature Review**

In Coon and Mitterer (2012), it suggests a method on how to catch a dream (i.e. improve dream recollection), application of dream work (including ways to probe dreams), how to use dreams, and the connection between dreams and creativity. Coon and Mitterer (2012) explain the dream works of Sigmund Freud and how he identified four mental filters that disguise the meaning of dreams: condensation, displacement, symbolization, and secondary elaboration. As well, they introduced other methods of understanding dreams including Perl’s method of taking an active role with the characters, and Hartmann’s method of talking about the possible meanings of dream elements. Coon and Mitterer (2012) also suggest seven probing questions that can be used to understand the meaning of a dream more effectively and with more completeness. In order to understand the symbols of a dream and ultimately the meaning of the dream, one must be able to recall enough parts of the dream.

Paulson & Parker (2006) conducted a study where they found the effectiveness of various courses whose purpose was to teach people how to increase their chances of having a lucid dream. They tested the effectiveness of these courses based lucid dream recall frequency; this is why it is relevant for this particular paper. In their study, they found correlations that increased dream recall which is important to the ultimate goal of understanding the dreams and gaining valuable insights, such as dream works and creativity. Paulson & Parker (2006) found that keeping a dream journal, finding a motivational reason to recall dreams, and asking yourself constantly whether or not you were in a dream state all increased a person’s ability to recall dreams. Once one has been able to recall a dream, one can apply it to a dream work model in order to understand what it means.

In Blume-Macovici (2010) research, it was found that there are many differences between dreams based on the gender. It was also found that dream work was less practiced by psychologists when working with male clients primarily because there is no prominent model for male focused dream work practices. Blume-Macovici made suggestions, mostly applications that could be used in clinical practices, in three areas: dream recall frequency, sex of dream character and dream aggression. The applications were suggested as a model that could be used to involve with dream works because there is not a current accepted model to be used. Motivation to recall dreams and keeping a dream journal was found to increase dream recall frequency among males. Analyzing the male characters in a males dream was found to be more effective with specific dream characters within a male’s dream. As well, aggression was a theme more likely to be found in male’s dreams because the male gender is often times associated with this, and because of the dimensions of success, power, and completion (Blume-Macovici, 2010). Once these applications in this dream works model have been applied, one can use the dreams for creative purposes.

Hartmann (2012) commented and critiqued Hobson’s claim that dreams were logical and also on his proposed method of determining how creative a dream; the creativity being judged on how appropriate a response the dreamer had to the events that occurred within their dreams. Hartmann disagreed that this was a proper way to determine the creativity of a dream because the appropriate response to events that occurred in a dream would be dramatically different than what they would be in a waking state of consciousness thus it is an improper way to determine the creativity of dreams. Hartmann (2012) argued that a “dream is not a series of perceptions to which we respond… [rather it] is more closely related to imagination than it is to perception.” This implies that while dreaming, one is in a heightened state of imagination, and because of this, one can discover more creative solutions to their current predicament.

**Methods**

To try and increase my ability of dream recollection, I primarily applied the eight steps in the *How to Catch a Dream* method; which includes: 1) plan to remember your dreams, 2) awaken gradually, 3) set an alarm clock one hour before you must wake and fall asleep once again, 4) once awoken, remain still and try to recall the dream, 5) make the first dream record with your eyes closed, 6) review the dream, 7) put dreams in a diary or journal, 8) remember that some drugs suppress drugs (Coon & Mitterer, 2012). I kept all these steps in mind and followed them precisely throughout my experiment.

Next, I used the seven questions in the *Probing Questions* to better understand my own dreams; which include: 1) what characters were in the dream, 2) what social interactions took place, 3) what activities took place, 4) was their striving, 5) was it full of good or bad misfortune, 6) what emotions were present, 7) what was the physical environment like (Coon & Mitterer, 2012). I answered these questions at the end of each of my dreams to try to gain a better understanding of what the dreams met.

Next, I tried the tips found in the Blume- Macovici (2010) research to develop my own dream works model. Primarily, I created a motication to want to increase my dream recall frequency, analyzed the characters of my dreams, and related the aggression in my dreams to my current life situations.

Finally, I analyzed my dreams for creative content (Hartmann, 2012). After the initial analysis, I decided what dream content I would be able to use as a solution with some problems that I was currently facing.

**Results**

The results that I obtained were quite disappointing. The application *How to Catch a Dream* method to try and increase my dream recall frequency did not end up working so well which made it quite hard to progress as use some of the other methods because of the natural dependencies of the various methods on the one preceding it; and because of the dream recall being the first one, the following methods could not be accomplished as well as I had hoped. But I was still able to continue on to the other methods with what little recollection I was able to get from the initial *How to Catch a Dream* method.

Because of the lack of information that I was able to collect in this state, the following methods were impossible to use, because the analysis was impossible because of lack of information.

**Discussion**

I assume that one thing that I could have done better to increase my ability to recall my dreams would to be wake up without any obligations as discussed in the Coon & Mitterer (2012) suggestions so that I would be able to increase my recollection of the dream. With this I would have been able to perform the other methods with better results and more information to use which would have ultimately made a better experiment. But because of the failure of this stage, it is hard if not impossible to confirm the later methods that have been discussed. I would like to see others use this information and use it and to submit their personal results as to whether these methods work or not.

**Conclusion**

The ability to recall dreams is necessary if one wants to use the following methods to find creative solutions to problems that one has; but if one is able to develop those skills and habits, that individual will have another source of solutions to their predicaments that they face. It is important for one to know there dream patterns for the sake of dream recollection, which allows one to construct a functional dream works model, which leads to the ability to use dreams for a practical reasons, which includes the ability to find creative solutions to problems that one faces.

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