

Title:

Daydreaming

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1003

Summary:

This article highlights the positive benefits of daydreaming

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Daydreaming is a common experience for the majority of people at intervals throughout the day.

However, there are also different trains of thought regarding whether or not this is a useful or harmful pursuit if indulged in to a great extent Daydreaming can sometimes be a way of escaping from a situation which causes stress or unpleasant feelings Some people hold the belief that daydreaming can alter a person's sense of reality. It may be such a distraction that the person can become so occupied with what is going on inside his own head that he becomes gradually more withdrawn and isolated from others and what is going on around him. The person has disappeared into the world of his own imagination.

Children who daydream are sometimes thought to be sad or lonely. They have chosen to escape into a world of fantasy where they can have what they want. The same views are often held regarding children who have imaginary friends.

When one of my children, the third of four started to have an imaginary friend called James, I at first felt quite sad and as though I had let him down. Had I got so involved with my two older children that he was missing out? Very quickly I came to realise that he was still a happy little boy and this new friend did not interfere with the normal pattern to his day. It was just an extra.

At meal times, he would sometimes say that he was not having anything as we had not set a place for James. At other times we would include him and be asked whether we were making a fool of him by doing this His friend offered both companionship and entertainment, which kept us all amused.

We would sometimes watch them interacting and his play behaviour revealed that

the imaginary friend was being used in a very adaptive way from which he would learn a lot about life skills and optional ways of dealing with situations. If he did something which he was likely to get into trouble for, he would sometimes blame the imaginary friend. He was obviously able to distinguish between what was good and bad and did not really want to be perceived as being bad. (This is well demonstrated in the film "Drop dead Fred".)

My little boy enjoyed this special friendship which was brief and he was allowed to grow out of it naturally. He is now eighteen and we sometimes still talk about this friend with affection. Joey himself is a very creative person and I think that his imaginary friendship may have been an early indicator of this.

Since I myself have always talked to my dogs and other animals, it would certainly have been a case of double standards if James had been actively discouraged from our lives. I think daydreaming like imaginary friendships can increase opportunity for creativity.

Day dreaming can be seen as a form of visualization, which creates what you want from the full range of senses involved. It can allow you to do the things which you wouldn't normally do in real life, provide the opportunity to take up roles which you would not otherwise do and give you the scope to return to situations of your choice time and time again. A big positive about day dreaming, is that it allows us to deal with difficult situations in a protected environment.

I day dream frequently whilst out with my dog (probably not the most sensible time to do this) and also when I am swimming fifty lengths a number of times weekly. This is economical for me in terms of time. The cognitive rehearsal of situations which crop up or are likely to crop up in the future, mean that I am more prepared to deal with them in a way which I assume will work out well. I can look at information from past experiences. I can generate new ideas, look at what works, what doesn't, deal with my emotions regarding this and also be aware of changes I may have to make. It can be seen as a way of brainstorming for ideas. (Apologies to anyone I offend by using this term. I was recently told it is no longer politically correct but know of no other way to adequately describe the technique!)

When used after the event, it can be beneficial as a way of helping to rationalise the outcome. When things go wrong, some people tend to think at least initially that it was down to something they did or did not do. This technique can also help people to consider alternative explanations and come up with external attributions therefore allowing them to think less badly of

themselves. Daydreaming can result in more information coming to light, necessary before a decision can be made. Daydreaming can encourage creative thinking, planning out of ideas, motivation and help elicit goals. Further examination of plans and steps to be taken can optimise the chances of them working out in a positive way.

From my experience of working in the mental health arena, I would say that the confusion of reality with imagination is uncommon amongst healthy people.

If you are someone who loses time by daydreaming when in the shower, pass a tree and get caught up in trying to work out how many leaves are on it, or have ideas about the ideal biosphere for the future, don't worry. Try to see your behaviour as normal and if you can, tap into your creative ability, see it as a gift and use it to enhance life for you.

This article was submitted by Mary Lennox an experienced counsellor and intuitive life coach. The combination of her education, career background and life experiences enable her to have an empathic understanding across a broad spectrum of circumstances. Visit her website www.lifecoachinggym.com for more free articles or to subscribe to her free bi monthly newsletter "WORKOUT."