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Wake Up and Dream The hypnotic benefits of lucid dreaming ©Lee Betchley C.Ht.

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Hypnotherapists recognize the value of dreams for revealing information from the subconscious mind and venting blockages and frustrations as therapeutic change occurs. A lesser known but highly effective aspect of dreaming is "lucid dreaming."

The awareness that you are dreaming while you are dreaming. It's an ability every one possesses, yet dormant in most people. Therapist can assist clients to develop lucidity or increase the degree through specific techniques and practice. As you may know, any hypnotic suggestion is most effective when the client takes some form of immediate action. This is also true for increasing lucidity. After receiving hypnotic suggestions, the client could buy a dream journal or write a personal affirmation. This reinforces to the unconscious mind the seriousness of the intention. The intention of the client is an important aspect of any hypnotic work.

I discovered lucid dreaming as it occurred naturally in my sleep. It became a way to cope with childhood nightmares. While dreaming, I became aware of something that would cause me to think clearly, "This is a dream." I knew consciously that if I were to open my waking eyes, I'd find myself safe in my bedroom. I learned that in a nightmare I could face my fears, realizing that the fear was real but the danger was not. This gave me courage and created dreams that were empowering experiences.

Almost everyone has experienced a nightmare. For some they can be a reoccurring scene or dream. And for others it can be a fearful experience that can cause distress. Many dream researchers agree that nightmares are unrecognized unresolved conflicts in the waking life. The most effective treatment includes dream interpretation, guided imagery in hypnosis or dreaming lucidly.

Several years ago I dreamt I was in the desert. There is a long line of people leading to a fork in the path. The line splits at that point with some people walking further into the desert and the others going into this magnificent casino. A tall dark man catches my attention. He insists I go into the casino and grabs my arm. I am hesitant to disobey him. I suddenly realize that I am not walking to the door but "floating", so I must be dreaming. I am staring at the dark man and remind myself that this is a dream. Suddenly I start to laugh and say; "I know who you are." His face changes. "You're Satan. And you 're trying to trick me." I start flying around him, teasing him. In that instant he was no longer a powerful evil figure but just some man. It was an incredible feeling to know that I had the freedom to make a choice. Go where I wanted to go and return if I wanted. That dream empowered me with the knowledge that as long as I could recognize fear and name it, it can never have power over me. It was as if I had bypassed years of therapy.

Hypnotherapists know the power of an active imagination in hypnosis and the waking state. Think how much more powerful that active imagination can be in dreaming. Dream content is as vivid and rich as perception during the waking state-in fact, even more so. The dream world is multi-dimensional, multi- textural, and so "real" that studies have shown physiological response to take place as if the event were actually happening.

Imagine developing your ability to dream lucidly. You could rehearse an important speech, ask for a raise, audition, or practice your golf swing so vividly in a dream that the brain activity would respond identically during the "real" event. How about the possibilities for problem solving, self-empowerment, healing and even personal transcendence.

Clients who are currently working on increasing their lucidity have had amazing results. One woman told me her waking dentist suggested she use creative visualization to help an area he had worked on. That week she had conjured up a "dream dentist" who applied a "special bandage" on the tooth. When her waking dentist examined the area a few days later, he was surprised at the healing that had taken place.

Lucid dreaming is a skill that anyone can develop with motivation and effort. The enjoyment and benefits are well worth it. What could you do with the third of your life that is spent sleeping? How could you use it to benefit the other two-thirds? Through lucidity the line between the dream world and the waking world begins to blur, providing unique opportunities to interact consciously with your subconscious mind.

About the Author:

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