




Simple Dreaming by Amy E. Brucker

DREAM to change you life. DREAM to grow great lifework. DREAM to make happiness.

- 
- getting started dreaming
 - different kinds of dreams
 - dream recording
 - dream techniques

Dream Your Way to a Better Life with

Simple Dreaming

5-easy dreamwork techniques
plus a whole lot more!

By Amy E. Brucker
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About the Author



Amy Brucker is a published writer, dynamic public speaker and specialist in the fields of spiritual development, dream work and meaningful marketing. She has helped hundreds of people grow lives and careers they love by teaching them how to follow their dreams and life callings.

Amy publishes a **FREE** ezine, "[Grow Up: Spiritual Growth in a Weedy World](#)", inspiring readers to take practical action with their inner visions and transform them into reality.

She teaches creative dreamwork to international audiences, and serves as core faculty at [The Chaplaincy Institute](#), an interfaith seminary in Berkeley, CA.

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About *Grow Up™ Ezine*

"You inspired me to keep my goal in sight and trust the obstacles will clear!"

- Karen Baldwin

About *Amy's Dreamwork*

"Your thoughts about my dream were insightful and intuitive."

I had misgivings about my ability to organize a large event, but you have given me more faith and trust in myself. You have a wonderful style. Thank you so much.

- Bonnie

Sleep Your Way to a Better Life

Several years ago I was frustrated with my job. On paper it looked like everything I should have loved, but I was miserable.

To top it off, I felt paralyzed by my potential. As a self-proclaimed “Jill of All Trades” I had many career options, but I also had a self-sabotaging inner critic that disregarded every idea with a sassy, “That’ll never work!”

Then I had the following dream (written in present tense):

I am a bookkeeper, but not in the ordinary sense. Instead of working directly with money and numbers, I help people care for their finances by tending to their gardens. I used my credit card to draw water from the Source, which comes from a spigot on the side of a house, and then I water people’s yards.

After a day of “business gardening,” a loving, disembodied male presence helps me review my clients’ financial records. I discover that by helping other people grow their finances to the million dollar mark I miraculously made a million dollars myself, without even realizing it! I am astounded at how easy it is to be both financially and spiritually wealthy.

I woke from the dream feeling like Spirit had laid out a plan for me: to help other people grow their lives and tend their businesses by using my “credit” or credentials as a creative dreamer, spiritual guide, business administrator and internet marketer.

That dream was a turning point in my life. A year later I resigned from my job and returned to the world of self-employment. I took with me a divinely inspired plan to help mind, body and soul people grow financially prosperous private practices and small businesses. Several months later, I successfully launched the first Grow the Extra Mile (now Grow Your Lifework). That one dream inspired my work and turned my thoughts into literal cash, not a million dollars, (in reality, \$40,000), and the dream is still helping me generate ideas for services and books.

I am not the first person to be inspired, healed and redirected by a dream. Throughout all of recorded history people have turned to their dreams for guidance. The purpose of this ebook is to help you gather the tools you need to get started dreaming, or deepen the dreamwork skills you already have.

Whether you are a beginner or advanced dreamer, whether you plan to use the material for yourself or to share with your clients, I wish you happy dreaming, happy growing and an abundant life that inspires you.

Here’s to growing somewhere great!
Amy

Simple Dreaming contains four parts:

1. Get Started Dreaming

In order to benefit from the rich imagery of your dreams you must first remember them. Learn the reasons why we forget our dreams and what you can do to remember them.

2. Different Kinds of Dreams

There are a variety of ways to look at dreams and benefit from their sage advice. Discover how dreams can help you heal and prepare for the future.

3. Dream Recording and Dream Partners

The best way to understand the deeper implications of your dreams is to record your dreams and explore them alone, with a partner or a group.

4. Dream Techniques

This section provides dream techniques you can use alone, one-on-one and with a group.

What are Dreams

Throughout human history many people believed that dreams were sacred messages that came from a Divine source. Modern Western culture, however, has often viewed dreams as:

1. Meaningless images
2. Random neurons firing in the brain
3. A useless recycling of past days' events

But all of that is changing. As scientists begin to discover quantifiable evidence that dreams are important and meaningful, people are simultaneously beginning to pay more attention to the wisdom of their dreams.

Dreams have inspired countless individuals to subtly and radically change the course of human history. One needn't look far to find the relevance of dreams and their impact on humanity:

- Harriet Tubman dreamed of escape routes that helped her guide slaves to freedom.
- Jasper Johns produced the dream inspired and famous painting, *The Flag*.
- Robert Louis Stevenson dreamed about a man who radically transformed after drinking a mysterious potion. Upon waking, Stevenson started to write Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.
- Handel heard portions of *Handel's Messiah* in his sleep.
- After a terrible nightmare, Elias Howe realized his dream images offered the perfect solution for creating a functioning sewing machine needle.
- General Patton developed effective military strategies by listening intently to his dreams.

*Source [Our Dreaming Mind](#) by Robert Van de Castle

Additionally, dreams provide health warnings and methods for healing (read the inspiring story of breast cancer survivor Wanda Burch in [She Who Dreams: A Journey into Healing through Dreamwork by Wanda Easter Burch](#)).

Dreams can foreshadow cataclysmic events and help people avoid dangerous situations.

Dreams inspire career changes, shifts in perception, and help heal mind, body, soul and heart.

In short, dreams can enrich our lives by providing

- Entertainment
- Creative Inspiration
- Solutions
- Foreshadowing of events
- Warnings
- Methods for healing

But, in order to benefit from the wisdom of your dreams, you have to remember them and listen to their deeper messages.

Why We Forget Our Dreams

Even though we all dream, some people remember six dreams a night, while others don't remember any. Here are seven common reasons why people forget their dreams:

1. Dreams are Weird

In DreamTime magazine, dreamworker [Jeremy Taylor](#) mentions that dreams are frequently unusual, not resembling anything from our waking life, and therefore sometimes difficult to express in thought and word. Also, dreams may reveal new information and are multi-layered in meaning. As a result, dream images are, as Taylor describes, "not yet speech ripe." Taylor goes on to say that over time, with practice, we can learn how to remember those odd dreams and grasp them long enough to be able to record them.

2. Disinterest in Dreams

Whenever I teach dreamwork, someone inevitably says, "I never remember my dreams. How can I participate in this class?"

Usually within a few weeks the same student excitedly shares with me that she's started to remember her dreams.

Sometimes all you need is a little encouragement to jump start dream recall. If you don't remember your dreams, but want to do dream work, chances are good you will start remembering simply by paying attention. If not, the next chapter offers several techniques you can use to enhance dream recall.

3. Stress, Too Much on One's Mind, and Lack of Sleep

Stress, no matter the reason, can wreak havoc on a dream life. For some, stress causes nightmares or anxiety dreams. For others, it causes dreams to slip out of consciousness immediately upon waking.

There are techniques for minimizing the impact of stress on dream recall. Please see the "how to remember" section.

4. Alcohol and Drug Consumption

Alcohol and drugs affect the REM cycle and therefore our dreams.

If I have two glasses of wine I have a hard time remembering my dreams. I know others, however, who can drink an entire bottle and have no dream recall problems whatsoever. Every body is different.

Drugs have similar effects. People on various medications have shared in dream groups that their dreams change in unusual ways when they start taking prescriptions. **I'm not suggesting you go off any medications to improve dream recall. Consult your health care practitioner before making any changes to your medication.**

5. Moon Phases and Biorhythms

Phases of the moon can affect dream cycles. I tend to remember more dreams around the full moon and less around the new moon. We have natural biorhythms that can also affect our dream recall.

Notice if there is a cycle to your dream recall. If you remember dreams sometimes and not others, be grateful for the dreams you remember and don't worry about the times you don't.

6. Traumatic Events

Disclaimer: I am not an expert on trauma and dream recall. The following thoughts are based on experiences I've had with people in dream groups.

It seems to me that there are times when a traumatic event can cease dream recall, the ability to remember ones dreams. Regardless of whether or not we have a conscious memory of a traumatic event, we always retain an unconscious memory. In other words, the memory lives in our mind somewhere, even if we don't remember it.

Since dreams come to help us heal our lives, if we are not ready to heal we may not remember our dreams. Psychotherapy, or some type of counseling, may be required to begin the healing process before dream recall can return.

7. An inability or unwillingness to wake up

Dreams help us "wake-up" in the Buddhist sense of the phrase. That is, during waking hours we can fool ourselves into believing we're something we're not. For instance, we may be miserable, settling for less than we deserve in life, but trick ourselves into thinking we're happy. Dreams help us wake up from our illusions so we can see what's really going on.

Consequently, if there is something the dreamer doesn't want to recognize about herself, it might be difficult to wake up from sleep. Looked at metaphorically, there may be resistance to "waking up" to a new awareness about a personal dilemma.

The question to ask is this "Is there something I don't want to see in my life that is keeping me asleep, or am I simply in need of more rest?"

How to Remember

As I mention in the previous section, reading this ebook may be enough to help you remember your dreams. If you need specific techniques there are a few steps you can take to begin unlocking the door to your dream warehouse.

To get started dreaming:

1. You have to want to remember

If you don't currently remember your dreams, you may start remembering simply by stating that you want to remember them.

2. Invite dreams into your life

Historically, cultures from around the world practiced elaborate rituals to elicit meaningful dreams. The exact method of the ritual is not important; however, the very act of creating a ritual or focusing one's attention on the dreaming process helps improve dream recall. Here are some simple ideas:

- a) Imagine successfully remembering your dreams.
- b) Imagine it's morning and you're recording your dream in your journal.
- c) Keep a pen and dream journal close to your bed.
- d) Prior to sleep, write in your journal, "I will remember my dream in the morning."
- e) Make the conscious decision to remember your dreams.

3. Take dreams seriously, fake it until you make it if you don't

4. Record your first thought or emotion when you wake up

- a) As soon as you wake, write whatever comes to mind.
- b) If you remember a dream, record it.
- c) If you remember a feeling, record it, e.g. I feel happy.
- d) If you have a vague sense of something, write, "I have a vague sense of something."
- e) Elaborate if you can, but write something.
- f) Draw a simple picture with stick figures
- g) Do this every day until you start remembering

5. Upon waking in the night from a dream, either get up and record the dream or create a title and repeat it several times

I'm lazy. I don't like to get out of bed in the middle of the night so I devised this method of remembering dreams. Create a title, repeat it five times and then fall asleep. See title writing details on page 25.

6. If you had a dream but forgot it, return to original sleeping position

If you forget your dreams immediately upon waking, you might remember them as soon as you go to bed the following night. Returning to your original sleeping position can help improve dream recall, especially dreams from the previous night.

Keep a dream journal by your bed to record dream memories as they surface. If you're too tired to write, use my title trick.

7. Remember the feelings of a forgotten dream and let go of expectation for remembering the details

Many people wake up in the middle of the night and remember their dreams, only to drift back to sleep. Upon waking a second time, you may have a vague feeling of remembering a dream. If this happens, let go of the need to remember the details. Allow the vague dream feelings to build momentum in your body. Focus solely on the feeling, not the imagery. This process helps the images and events of the dream to resurface to conscious memory.

8. Get enough sleep

9. Abstain from drugs and alcohol, or use moderately

10. B vitamins (I'm not sure why, but studies have shown that B vitamins help with dream recall)

Once you start remembering your dreams, it's time to delve into their rich offerings

Is there more than one type of dream?

Just like movies, stories and myths, dreams come in a variety of genres, or moods, each carefully designed to convey a point. There are

- comedies
- action filled adventures
- thrillers
- romantic dramas
- spiritual tales
- fantasies
- science fiction
- horror flicks
- and some are even X-rated!

A nightmare, perhaps in the guise of a horror movie type dream, has an entirely different feel than a romantic drama. Connecting with the type of dream can help you explore the various layers of meaning. Nightmares, for instance, scare you into paying attention. If you have a nightmare, chances are good you'll remember it for awhile. It may be helpful to work with a professional dreamworker if you have nightmares on a regular basis. People trained in dreamwork often see layers of meaning that the dreamer cannot see for him or herself.

Why are dreams so difficult to understand?

When I teach dreamwork someone invariably asks why dreams are so difficult to understand. If dreams mean something, in other words, why aren't the meanings obvious?

One reason is that dreams address different areas of life, sometimes all at once. Each dream scene, therefore, can have many layers of meaning.

There are many opposing perspectives on what dreams are and whether or not they hold symbolic or literal meaning. In this ebook I discuss a multitude of perspectives because I believe they can all be true – at the same time.

For example, one dream can comment on the state of your

- past, present and future
- physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing
- family dynamics
- interpersonal relationships
- work life
- general life direction
- etc.

By speaking in symbols and through literal imagery, our dreams can more easily convey multiple messages at once.

For instance, imagine you dream of a rose. The genre of your dream, whether nightmare or romantic comedy, informs the deeper implications of the meaning of the rose. The rose in the dream may be any one or several of the following:

Simile: my love is like a red, red rose

Metaphoric: my love is a rose

Puns: He rose from death and was resurrected

Archetypal: The archetype of the rose is the “original model” for all roses. The rose archetype is a universal blueprint for all roses.

Literal: a rose by any other name is still a rose, or a rose is a rose is a rose

Lucid: In my dream I see the rose and realize I am dreaming

Prophetic: dreaming of receiving a rose and later receiving one in waking life (or receiving something in waking life that the rose symbolizes, like a new relationship or love)

Recurring: dreaming of a rose over and over again, either in identical dream scenarios, or similar scenarios that involve roses, perhaps to emphasize that I'm repeating a pattern in waking life

Diagnostic: Having a rose that is infested with bugs may indicate physical or emotional dis-ease

Dreams Come to Help Us

Dreamworker Jeremy Taylor popularized the phrase, “**All dreams come in the service of health and wholeness.**” (Read [Where People Fly and Water Runs Uphill](#) by Jeremy Taylor)

But is it true? Are all dreams here to help us? To serve us? To guide us toward wholeness?

People often ask, “How can dreams of war, disaster, disease, dilapidated homes, boogie-men, betrayal, and affairs of the heart come in the service of health and wholeness?”

It’s easy to view a nightmare, or a dream of disease and disaster, as an anxiety producing dreams that cannot possibly offer beneficial information.

But Jeremy is right. Dreams come to alert us to problems so we can prepare ourselves emotionally, mentally, and physically, and learn what to do to transform the situation or our relationship to it.

The disturbing dreams, the really nasty ones, often come to tell us about potential problems, health issues, or ways in which we are hurting or betraying ourselves and others. In general, disturbing dreams shake us up intentionally so we pay attention. Also, they often provide steps for cultivating health and wellbeing.

In this section I offer several examples that illustrate how disturbing dreams are really here to help us.

Example Helping Dreams

Dreams often provide useful health information. I know several people who dreamed about having cancer before being medically diagnosed. Not all of these people were aware of the symbolism in their dreams prior to diagnosis, but discovered the correlation after the fact.

In each of these dreams the dreamer was informed not only of their disease, but also of the method for healing.

Dreams of Insects are Sometimes about Autoimmune Problems

A common dream symbol of autoimmune disorder is an infestation of small insects, termites, ants or spiders in a house. Each insect seems to represent an unhealthy cell in the "house", a metaphor for the body. One dreamer shares:

I realized in the dream that there were too many ants for natural products to work and I would need to use chemical pesticides. The area they were infesting was a spiral staircase (often represents the spine) ... and the bone marrow biopsy of my spine was one of several diagnostic tests where the cancer showed up. I also had several more dreams before, during & after treatment that seemed to chart the course of things.

This dreamer received chemotherapy and is healthfully alive six years later.

Breast Cancer and Little Seeds

Another woman dreamed a doctor removed a black seed-like substance from her body. At the time she had breast cancer and decided to have her breast removed. She is now a breast cancer survivor with a clean bill of health, a new outlook on life, and says her dreams were instrumental in helping her choose her treatment.

Insects in a Bowl and Intestinal Problems

I once dreamed I found a large ceramic bowl I made in college. The bowl was filled with cobwebs and spider mites. In the dream, I successfully cleaned the bowl with tap water, removing all cobwebs and spider mites.

As a dreamworker, I was acutely aware that dreaming of an infestation of spiders can be about cancer or illness. I was concerned for my health, but I took comfort in the fact that my dream-self easily cleaned the bowl simply by rinsing it out with water.

Two weeks later in waking life I developed an intestinal problem. I felt awful. After a few hours I remembered my dream. As it turns out, the bowl in my dream represented a place to store food, symbolic of my "bowel" which is the place where my body stores the remnants of digested food, and that my "bowel" would have some "bugs." The dream provided useful information on how to rid myself of the "bug" by flushing out my system with water. I drank large quantities of water for 3 days, hardly ate a thing, and my body

returned to normal. It might have healed on its own anyway, but the water helped tremendously.

Chased by a Rhinovirus

I once dreamed a rhinoceros was chasing me. In order to get away from it, I locked myself in a room.

A few days later I could feel a cold coming on (“rhino” virus!) Honestly, though, I didn’t make the connection until after I saw a commercial for a cold remedy that entailed a rhinoceros chasing a woman! It was as though my dream was being shown to me again on TV.

I didn’t take the advertised cold remedy, but I did take Chinese herbs to boost my immune system (to create a “boundary” between me and the “rhino”virus), ate a lot of home-made chicken noodle soup and rested. I never got sick, but my partner Scott was sick for 2 weeks. He doesn’t believe in the significance of dreams.

Book Recommendation

Robert Moss has a fantastic chapter on Dreams of Healing in his book [Conscious Dreaming, A Spiritual Path for Everyday Life.](#)

Prophetic Dreams of Death

A week before my step-sister Kim died, my step-dad had a dream that startled him awake. He almost never remembers his dreams, but this one was so powerful he decided to call Kim immediately the next morning. Much to his relief, Kim was perfectly fine and they had a great conversation. The next night she was in the hospital. A week later she died of medical complications. She was only 37 years old. In his own words:

Not only do I rarely remember my dreams, but I am one of those pragmatic people who has always believed that dreams are little more than a collection of memories stirred vigorously with brain chemistry. That belief was severely shaken in 2007 when I was startled out of a sound sleep (dream) in which I stood alongside a hospital bed with several family members as medical people worked feverishly to revive someone.

Concerned for my daughter who had fought a long battle with diabetes, I waited for morning and called her.

Not wanting to alarm her I did not mention the dream, but took great comfort in the fact that she said she felt fine. We had a wonderful talk and I went happily to work.

The next evening she went to the hospital with congestion in her chest that turned out to be pneumonia. For the next seven days her condition worsened and one week after our phone call that dream came to life as a true nightmare. I stood helpless as a dozen hospital personnel fought

heroically to save her life without success. The scene in her room was what I had seen in my dream. It haunts me still that even with the dream warning I was unable to change the result, but at least I was able to have a wonderful last conversation with a remarkable young lady.

Upon hearing such a story one might argue whether or not dreams do indeed come in the service of health and wholeness. I suspect sometimes it is a matter of semantics or perspective - do we focus on the positive or the negative - but had this loving father not been awakened by his dream, he never would have talked with his daughter again. This dream gave him an opportunity to share one last meaningful moment with his youngest daughter.

As I reflect further on my step-dad's dream, I feel like Kim's death was meant to be. The dream came to prepare us for death and showed that nothing could have been done to prevent Kim from dying.

How are these dreams helpful, or how do they “come in the service of health and wholeness”?

They are helpful because they

- push us to take action toward healing
- prepare us emotionally for an unavoidable circumstance
- solve a potential problem or disaster so we can avoid suffering in waking life

Book Recommendation

As an aside, Robert Moss, in [Dreamgates](#), discusses how we can use dreams to explore life beyond death. His book [The Dreamer's Book of the Dead: A soul traveler's guide to death, dying and the other side](#) is a great source of information for those who yearn to contact their departed loved ones in the dreamtime.

Dreams are truly powerful when you know how to interact with them.

Many people can easily understand one or two layers of their own dreams. That's because dreams usually reflect parts of your life you're already conscious or semi-conscious about. In other words, dreams can remind you of things you already know.

But as mentioned earlier, dreams can have **many** layers of meaning and it's easy for the dreamer to miss many layers of meaning of her own dreams. Why? Because dreams deliver messages from our unconscious mind or from Spirit to our conscious mind, but only when we're ready for new insight. Essentially, dreams can reveal information about our lives that we've never fully understood about ourselves. They can also present prophetic information about the future.

Unfortunately, when emotions like fear or denial dominate the dream experience it can be challenging to uncover the deeper, hidden layers of meaning.

When I work with clients on a bi-monthly basis I see patterns emerging in their dreams and life. The same message can surface in subtly different combinations of images and dramas until the dreamer fully understands the message. Once she integrates the meaning of a dream message, it's likely she won't continue having dreams related to that message. Unless, of course, the dream is carrying multiple meanings.

I've also noticed that people can dream the same or parallel dream themes when they understand something intellectually, but have not yet fully assimilated the information in a transformational way.

For example, a person can know intellectually that his job is not good for him, but choose to ignore the situation. He may start to dream various scenarios that show him how his work is adversely affecting his life. He may continue to dream similar themes until he leaves the job and finds something more healthful. But the more he ignores the dreams and their guidance and doesn't take action to solve his problem, the more likely his dream dramas will escalate to nightmare status until he is forced to pay attention.

That's why working with a professional can be so helpful. A professional is trained, experienced and more objective. For instance, I can see patterns in my clients' dreams and waking life that they miss because I'm not emotionally attached to the outcomes or events.

However, when my clients and I do dream work together, I never tell them what their dreams mean. In other words, I never say, "Your dream of a rose means you will find love."

Instead, I realize that I can only see their dreams through the lens of my own experience. When I share dream ideas with a client I know I can only project my experience onto their dream.

To emphasize this point, I always refer to another person's dream imagery as though it were my dream. I say, "If it were my dream, the rose is a reminder that I might have love in my life, or that I will find love."

If you start to help other people with their dreams, I highly recommend you use the "If it were my dream" method, too. It was made popular by Jeremy Taylor and is used by professional and novice dreamworkers all over the world.

So, when you're **not** working with a professional
what can you do for yourself?
Turn the page to find out!

Dream Journals

The best way to begin working with your dreams is to record them on a regular basis. If you do not have a dream journal I suggest buying or making one.

Finding a journal that suits you is akin to finding the right traveling shoes. Sometimes you have to try on many different versions before you find the right one.

Types of Journals

Simple and Easy

Spiral or perfect bound notebooks

A simple and inexpensive way to record your dreams is to use a pre-bound (spiral or perfect bound) notebook. Many drugstores and paper supply stores, including places like Target, carry a wide variety of designs in many colors with sturdy covers.

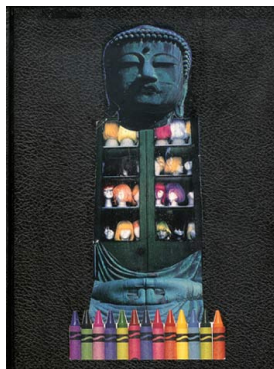
Loose Leaf, Lined or Plain Paper, 3-Ring Notebook

Another simple technique is to use loose leaf paper and a 3-ring binder. The beauty of the 3-ring option is that you can use lined or unlined paper in a variety of colors and textures. A 3-hole punch is necessary unless you purchase pre-punched paper. With this system, artistic pieces of odd sizes and shapes can be included, too. But, you will have to have holes in your journal pages.

Pre-Made Journals

Hard and Soft Cover

Most book stores carry elaborate journals with covers made in leather, vinyl, linen, or colorful papers. They come in hard and soft covers, with lined and unlined paper inside, and may have enclosures, book marks, or pockets. The beauty of this system is that when you have filled the pages you have a nicely bound book to protect your dreams.



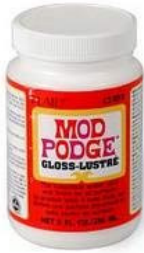
Artist's Sketchbook

Similar to the pre-made journal is the artist's sketchbook. They come in all shapes and sizes, colors and bindings. Black hard covered journals run about \$10-\$20, depending on size, and usually contain plain white paper. Their covers can easily be decorated using collage and something like "Mod Podge."

One of my old journal covers (to the left) has a collage of magazine images with a layer of Mod Podge over it.

How to create a Collage Cover

Supplies:



images (from magazines, cards, postcards, photos, scrapbooks, etc.)
scissors
glue stick
Mod Podge®
paint brush for glue
smooth stone, spoon or roller for print making

Arrange images on the cover of your journal and glue in place with a glue stick. As you glue, smooth the images with the stone, spoon or roller to ensure each image sticks to the surface and that the air bubbles are eliminated.

When everything is glued in place, let the glue dry before brushing Mod Podge® over the entire collage, ensuring all images are covered. If you plan to decorate both sides of your journal, only do one side at a time. Mod Podge® is sticky and takes a few minutes to dry thoroughly. Let the collage dry fully before turning over.

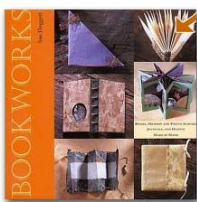
Adding Mod Podge® will protect the images and help them stay intact longer than if you simply glue the images to the surface. Mod Podge is fairly durable, but can peel with a lot of wear and tear.

Fabric Cover

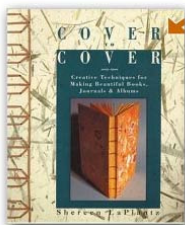
You can also put a fabric cover over a pre-bound journal. There are many book binding books with directions on how to do this.

Making Your Own Journal

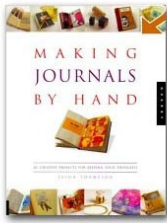
If you're feeling creative and inspired, you can make your own journal. Here are a few books to help you get started:



[Bookworks: Books, Memory and Photo Albums, Journals and Diaries Made by Hand \(Hardcover\)](#)
[by Sue Doggett](#)

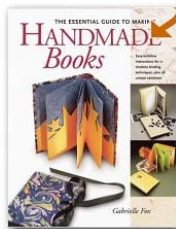


[Cover to Cover: Creative Techniques For Making Beautiful Books, Journals & Albums](#)
[by Shereen LaPlantz](#)



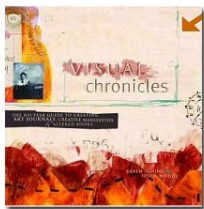
[Making Journals by Hand: 20 Creative Projects for Keeping Your Thoughts \(Paperback\)](#)

[by Jason Thompson](#)



[The Essential Guide to Making Handmade Books: Gabrielle Fox \(Paperback\)](#)

[by Gabrielle Fox](#)



[Visual Chronicles: The No-Fear Guide to Creating Art Journals, Creative Manifestos and Altered Books \(Paperback\)](#)
[by Linda Woods and Karen Dinino](#)

Typed and Audio Recorded

Some dreamers find their handwriting too difficult to read so they type their dreams shortly after waking, or record them into a digital audio recorder and then transcribe them later. I've discovered that there are advantages to doing this. One is that in the typing process many layers of meaning may be revealed. For most people, however, the audio recording and transcription are unnecessary steps that can feel daunting and may cause a person to become discouraged.

Creative Writing Tools

Like journals, the perfect writing device is a personal choice. A good pen or pencil can enhance the ease of journal writing; bad ones can leave undesired ink blotches, smear graphite or bleed through thin (and even thick) paper.

Dream journaling can be enhanced greatly from the use of drawings. Even rudimentary stick figures go a long way toward helping the dreamer remember and understand his or her dreams.

A pen or pencil is a necessity, but sometimes having a splash of color is more desirable. Most supplies can be purchased at Michael's Craft Supply store or an art store in your area.

Here are some of my favorite journal supplies:

Colored Pencils

Prisma colored pencils are fabulous. They are softer than most colored pencils and blend well. They are also on the more expensive side. I think they're worth it, but then again I'm an artist. Crayola pencils are less expensive and work well, too.

Watercolor Pencils

Caran D'Ache Supracolor II Soft watercolor pencils (or other brands) come in a variety of colors and can be used like colored pencils and later brushed over with water to achieve a water color look. The downside is that they can easily be smeared if water comes into contact with your journal page (I've never had this happen...knock on wood).

Watercolor Crayons

Similar to watercolor pencils, the crayons have thicker tips and can be easily used for filling in larger areas or writing thicker letters. They can be used as is, or you can brush water over the color to achieve the watercolor effect.

Crayola Crayons

Crayons are inexpensive and can easily be used under watercolor to create some great wax resist effects.

Colored Pens and Markers

Gelly Roll Pens are great fun. They have a slight metallic sheen and can be used on black paper.

Pentel Color Pens are really thin tipped markers that come in a variety of colors. They yield a solid color suitable for any journal exercise, however, they may bleed through paper.

Faber-Castell PITT Artist Pens are markers with tips that create fluid lines. And, you can color marker over marker.

Recording Dreams

After waking in the morning

Not everyone has the time to record their dreams in detail immediately upon waking, but if you don't take time to interact with our dreams right after you have them, you may forget them altogether.

I elaborate on dream recording techniques in the next section, however I will share this: **creating a title can help you remember dreams later in the day. But it has to be a good title.**

For example, imagine you have a dream about a tiger who carries a raw turkey in its jowls to give to her two cubs. You might title the dream:

The Tiger

But after a long day of work, this dream title may not trigger any dream details. And, you may have many dreams about tigers and forget which one this is referring to.

Instead, be more descriptive.

The mama tiger brought a turkey to her cubs and watched me as she walked by.

This elaborate title captures enough of the dream details to trigger full dream recall later in the day, possibly even years later.

Dream titles need to reflect the actual images of the dream. Do not use titles that are interpretations of the dream. For instance, the following is a dream interpretation of the tiger dream:

My warrior self nourishes my new ideas.

As the dreamer, you might dream this theme repeatedly, but with different objects and subjects. Also, if you give your dream a title based on an interpretation you will find it difficult to contemplate the other layers of meaning associated with the dream. In other words, the dream is not just about the warrior self nourishing new ideas. There are many other layers of meaning as well. It is for this reason that titles need to reflect actual events in the dream, not interpretations.

The following dream recording suggestions range from simple to elaborate. Experiment with different techniques and find one or several that work for you.

Many people want to remember and record their dreams, but feel like they don't have time. What to do? The simplest form of dream recording only takes a few minutes, but is effective and useful. This consists of recording

- The date of the dream
- A pithy title
- A short summary or stick figure sketch

Date

Recording the date is essential – month, day and year. This helps put things in perspective over a long period of time.

Title

A good title will help you remember your dream for years to come. Think of this more like a headline or caption, and less like a short title. Refer specifically to events in the dream and refrain from creating a dream title that is really an interpretation.

For example

Imagine you have a dream that goes something like this (told in the first person):

I wander through the airport looking for my luggage. I finally find it, but it's heavy and I can't lift it. I'm going to miss my plane if I can't figure out how to carry my luggage to the check-in counter.

A good title might be:

My luggage is heavy and I might miss my plane if I can't figure out how to carry it to the check-in counter.

This title captures the essence of the dream without recording in minute detail.

A poor title might be: Luggage and Airport

Luggage and airports are common dream themes, and you may have many throughout your life. Chances are good that if this is your dream title, you will not remember which dream it is referring to.

Another poor title might be: My emotional baggage is heavy and I can't reach new spiritual heights until I figure out how to get rid of my burdens.

While this statement may be true, it is an interpretation, not a title, and won't help you remember your actual dream. Such a title only focuses on one possible dream explanation.

Recording Dreams

The most straight forward way to record dreams is to write them down in detail and then create a title (or do it in reverse). This is easy if you have short dreams or a lot of time.

HINT: Always record dreams in the present tense

Example:

I walk through the room and see my friend. We talk for a few minutes. All of a sudden there's an earthquake. I'm afraid.

Recording dreams in the present tense helps the dream stay alive and enhances image exploration.

How to Record Long Dreams (or Any Dream)

If you have multiple, epic-long dreams each night it may be a daunting task to record every detail. Here are some ideas that might make recording easier:

- Create a title
- Draw a picture or series of pictures. Stick figures will do.
- Write a 4-sentence summary instead of recording every detail.

Drawings

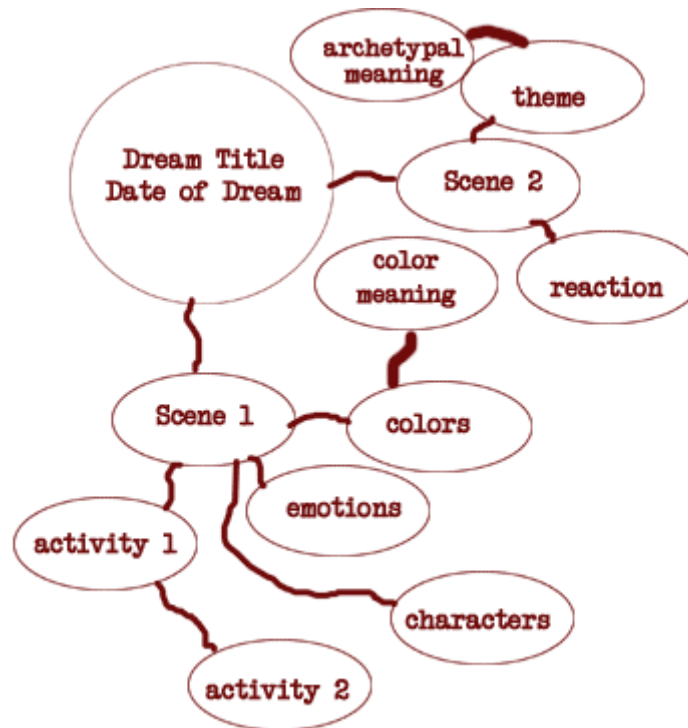
The most rudimentary drawings with stick figures and basic shapes can go a long way in helping you remember and explore your dream.

The old saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words" is doubly true in dreamwork. Drawing a simple picture can trigger full dream recall years later.

Other Dream Recording Methods

Mind map

Some people have linear brains that prefer straight left to right writing (like this page). Others need something more creative, or circular. If you fall into the latter category a dream mind map might be perfect for you. There are many ways to do mind maps and you can probably invent a system that works well for you. Here's one way to do it:



The gist is that you put your key concept in the center. Begin by writing the title and date of your dream in the middle the paper and draw a circle around it. I always start by drawing a line straight down (about an inch) from the circle. I then write a short description of the first scene and draw a circle around it. From that circle I draw more lines, somewhat like spokes on a wheel, and then record free associations OR continue to record various scenes, elaborating on the people and objects and themes.

When I'm done with the first scene or series of scenes, I move to the right and draw another inch long line from the center circle. I write the second major scene and draw a circle around it and start over again.

This system works well if you want to free associate meanings of the themes, objects, colors and image.

You can incorporate different colors, images, shapes, and symbols to convey different meanings.

Left or right margin for notes

When recording, consider leaving a wide left or right margin in your journal so you can jot down thoughts later on (interpretations, observations, symbols, puns, etc.)

Record Details at the top of your page

It can be helpful to keep track of dream themes at the top of your journal page. For instance, I record objects and subjects in detail so I can easily flip through my journal and find all the dreams I had about a particular person, animal, color, etc. At the top of my page I note the

- Animals
- Numbers (I make special note of things that show up in multiples, like “two tigers”)
- Colors
- Time of day
- People
- Location
- Mood
- Action
- Elements (earth, air, fire, water)
- Weather

Create an Art Journal

This approach is inspiring, however it requires more time. It's perfect for artists and creative people who use arts and crafts for meditation or just for fun. Here is an example from my art dream journal:



Dream Partners

The following exercises can help you access the deeper meaning of your dreams. However, there is at least one paradox of dream work that is hard to get around:

The dreamer is the only person who truly knows what her dream means. But most people miss many layers of meaning when they work their own dreams because dreams rarely come to tell the dreamer something she already knows.

So how do you figure out what you don't know?

Hiring a dreamworker, working with a dream partner, or forming a dream group, can significantly enhance your dream work experience.

For instance, many of my clients do dream work with me twice a month. As a result, I notice patterns emerging in seemingly unrelated dream symbols and storylines. These patterns retell the same or similar stories using different scenarios to help the dreamer connect with the deeper messages.

When I point out the message I see, the dreamer is often surprised and has an enormous "Aha" of recognition and is better able to take action to help resolve whatever issue needs to be addressed.

Aha of Recognition

When someone shares a dream meaning with you, they are “projecting” their ideas onto your dream.

If you are working with someone else and they are offering thoughts about your dream **the only way you can know if their ideas are relevant for you is if you resonate with what is said.** This frequently reveals itself with a feeling of “Aha.”. There are two kinds of “Ahas.”

1) The positive “Aha” as in, “Wow. That fits so perfectly.”

We have this type of “Aha” when we recognize the dream projection is true and makes sense to us on one or many levels. This type of reaction may cause a bodily sensation of goose bumps or shivers.

2) The negative “Aha” as in, “No way! I am not like that at all!”

Be on the lookout for a negative “Aha.” This type of reaction can indicate the dreamer is having a negative response to something that is true, or partially true, and something that he wants to deny in waking life. The negative “Aha”, like the positive one, often creates a bodily response, like an emotion of anger, guilt, denial or shame.

A feeling of indifference to the dream projection probably means that what was said holds no relevance for the dreamer.

Working in Dream Groups

If you are going to start a dream group, there are certain guidelines I suggest you follow to create a safe environment. It is important that participants feel welcome and confident that their dream and experience will be honored and kept private.

Dreamworker Jeremy Taylor, whom I've mentioned already, has a Dream Tool Kit that can be readily used and copied by dreamworkers. He gives his students and colleagues permission to use the Tool Kit as long as he is credited and the copyrights are maintained. It is a solid model, and I cannot think of a single reason to create a new one.

If you establish a dream partnership, whether it's with one friend or a group of people, having a handout of the Tool Kit can be useful. If you do this, **please ensure Jeremy's name and information are left intact. If you change the tool kit significantly, do not use Jeremy's name. (These are requests Jeremy has shared in his dream groups).**

Dream Tool Kit

One

All dreams speak a universal language and come in the service of health and wholeness. There is no such thing as a "bad dream" -- only dreams that sometimes take a dramatically negative form in order to grab our attention.

Two

Only the dreamer can say with any certainty what meanings his or her dream may have. This certainty usually comes in the form of a wordless "aha!" of recognition. This "A-ha" is a function of memory, and is the only reliable touchstone of dream work.

Three

There is no such thing as a dream with only one meaning. All dreams and dream images are "over-determined," and have multiple meanings and layers of significance.

Four

No dreams come just to tell you what you already know. All dreams break new ground and invite you to new understandings and insights.

Five

When talking to others about their dreams, it is both wise and polite to preface your remarks with words to the effect of "if it were my dream..." and to keep this commentary in the first person as much as possible. This means that even relatively challenging comments can be made in such a way that the dreamer may actually be able to hear and internalize them. It also can become a profound psycho-spiritual discipline -- "walking a mile in your neighbor's moccasins."

Six

All dream group participants should agree at the outset to maintain anonymity in all discussions of dream work. In the absence of any specific request for confidentiality, group members should be free to discuss their experiences openly outside the group, provided no other dreamer is identifiable in their stories. However, whenever any group member requests confidentiality, all members should agree to be bound automatically by such a request.

6 Basic Hints for Dream Work
by Jeremy Taylor © 1996

Dream Exploration Techniques

ONE: Timed Writing

Timed writing exercises can help reveal unconscious thoughts we have about particular dream objects and subjects. This technique can also be used for waking life experiences (people, places, things, concepts, anything).

People are frequently amazed at what this simple exercise can unearth. It has helped me reveal thoughts I never knew I had.

Before You Begin

Make sure you have enough paper and a pen. Pencils work too, but if you write for a long time you may need to sharpen it and that can stop the flow of your writing. Oddly, I've found that mechanical pencils don't work well for this exercise.

Step 1:

Find a dream character* that you would like to explore in more detail. Perhaps there is a mysterious dream object that you are baffled by (and who doesn't have one of these!)

*note: I use the word "character" to refer to any aspect of the dream: person, place, thing, creature, or even an emotion or dynamic between two characters.

Create a topic for your exercise. For example, if you had a dream about a dog you might start with "My dog is...", or, "Dogs are..." Notice the slight difference in the question? One is about *your* dog and the other is about dogs in general. You may love your dog, but dislike others. Depending on the dream, and your relationship to the dog, you may want to do two timed writing exercises, one for each question.

Be creative in your topics - the sky is the limit.

Step 2:

Set a timer for 10-20 minutes, longer is better. It takes about 5 minutes to get into a meditative state where the words just flow out. The longer you write, the more unexpected information will surface.

Don't worry about grammar, neatness, or the contents of what you are writing. You might even skip dotting Is and crossing Ts.

You may notice the longer you write, the bigger your handwriting becomes. This is why it's useful to start with a lot of paper.

Write as fast as you can. Do not stop to read anything. Do not stop to ponder or reflect. If you can't think of anything to say, write, "I can't think of anything to say." Or, if your topic is "Dogs are..." write "dogs are dogs are dogs are..." Keep writing until something pops into your mind and write it down.

Try to stay on topic, but if you notice a particular theme emerging you may want to switch topics, or save it for another exercise at a later date.

Step 3:

Put your writing aside for awhile and come back to it later. The only reason I suggest this is because it's often useful to clear one's mind after a journal exercise and come back to the writing with a fresh perspective. It might even feel like someone else did the exercise.

Two: Word Association

A student of mine once asked how she could remember the symbolism of an object she was normally familiar with, but just happened to forget while she was helping another person explore the meaning of her dream. “For instance,” she said, “I know what an airplane means, but when we were doing our one-on-one practice session I couldn’t remember. I got so frustrated. I couldn’t think of anything.”

Here’s what I told her: don’t try and remember a predefined symbolic meaning, like something you’d read in a dream symbol dictionary. Instead, do a mini brainstorming session. Ask yourself or the dreamer, if you’re doing dream work with someone else, what “airplane” means to you. Then ask what “air” means to you and “plane.” Here’s what I’d say:

Airplane = transportation, one place to the next, commercial travel (with a 747), travel with others or in community, higher altitude and therefore higher mind, “up there”, adventure, returning, leaving, fear, joy, excitement.

Air = breath, spirit, wind, movement, stillness, life (can’t live without air), freeing

Plane/plain = flat, level, travel, holds people, claustrophobic

You can discover meaning from simple free association. You don’t have to know anything about archetypes or symbols. You don’t have to look up objects in a dream dictionary. Trust your experience and intuition.

If you do this exercise with another person say, “If it were my dream, riding in an airplane is about feeling guided in my spiritual life.” The dreamer may or may not relate to what you said. It’s OK either way. The point is not to be right, but to help the dreamer explore his or her dream. Your comment may not strike a cord of insight, but it may lead to something else that does.

Exercise

When you record your dreams make a vertical line down the length of the paper, creating two columns. The left column is 1/3 the width of the page and the right is 2/3rds. (or vice versa) In the wider column record the dream. In the narrow column write words from the dream that stick out as relevant. They might be objects, emotions, people, activities, it doesn't matter.

Next to the word write an = sign and do a quick brain storm of things you associate with those words. You might write archetypal meanings or symbols, such as water = emotion. Or, you might record personal associates, such as water = fluid, cold, smooth, warm.

After you do this ask how the words and their meanings are relevant to your current life, past or potential future. Here's an example:

NOTES: Water = emotion, unconscious, fluid, fear Dark = scary, unconscious, unknown, mystery Boat = way of navigating water, floats above the darkness Drown = death, overwhelmed by emotion or activity Breath = spirit, life force Breathing underwater = ability to take in life (or Spirit) in darkness, uncertainty, when overwhelmed or afraid.	DREAM: The lake water is dark and cold. My boat is sinking and I don't know how to swim. I hit the water and feel like I'm going to drown, but eventually I notice I can breathe underwater.
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Three: Conversations with Dream Characters

A simple way to get a different perspective on a dream scenario is to imagine a conversation or interview is taking place between two of your dream characters. You can use a conversation that started in the dream, or create a new conversation that comes from your imagination.

There are many ways to do this. Be creative.

Here are some ideas to help you get started.

A. Writing the Dialogue in a Journal

Imagine you are writing from the perspective of both characters. You might use your left hand for one voice and your right hand for another voice. Using the non-dominant hand can help you connect with the unpredictable parts of your dream characters and inner self. It's especially useful to use your dominant hand for "your" voice and your non-dominant hand for the voice of a dream character. If you are ambidextrous, use your foot. I'm serious!

Go back and forth between the two characters for as long as you'd like, or combine this exercise with the timed writing process.

B. Puppet Show

Creating simple puppets can help you embody the characters and "get out of your head." Be creative - use paper bags, paper cut outs, socks, anything, and decorate them to resemble the dream character. Then take turns using different voices for each character. Have a conversation – be goofy or serious. Let it unfold naturally.

Alternatively, do this exercise with a partner or in a group. Let each person play a different character and invite everyone to trust their intuition and speak from the perspective of the character.

C. Draw a Cartoon

Remember Sunday comics? Create a cartoon of two dream characters. Have them talk to each other and see what happens.

NOTE: You don't have to stick to the dream storyline. Be creative and allow your imagination to unfold. Don't censor. Just see what happens. You might learn something interesting!

A. Write a Letter

Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of a character in the dream. You don't even have to know who is writing the letter! (Like if a mysterious figure is chasing you and you don't know who or what it is.) Start by addressing it to yourself like this:

Dear (insert your name here),

Then allow the words to stream from your pen. See what happens. Don't judge what you write as right or wrong, good or bad. Free your mind as much as you can and allow the message to unfold before you.

When the letter is done, sign it something like:

Sincerely or Love,
(insert name here)

Trust your inner voice if it assigns a name or entity to the "writer" (such as God, Life, The Great Mystery, Your Inner Fear, Work, Marriage, Nature, Earth, Alcohol Addiction, Fear, Mom, Dad, President Lincoln - anything).

If, for example, you don't believe in God and God signs the letter, you might want to do the timed writing exercise and start out with "God is..." and see what happens. You may discover some feelings about God you didn't know you had.

Most important - have fun!

Tip: combine this with the timed writing exercise. Write a letter to yourself as fast as you can and when the buzzer goes off, finish your sentence and sign it using the first name that pops into your mind.

Example

Dear Sue,

I know you wonder why I'm chasing you. I just want to get your attention, but you don't seem to listen very well. If you don't face me soon I'm really going to "get you" and I don't think you're going to like the results. Just turn and face me. Let's get it over with. The sooner you do the better you'll feel. I promise

Sincerely,

Your fear of confrontation

Four: The _____ Part of Me

One way of looking at dreams is to imagine that every dream aspect – object, subject, emotion, color, etc. - is a part of the dreamer. This is a journal writing exercise, but its roots are in the Gestalt dream work method which works under the premise that every aspect of the dream is a part of the dreamer.

If writing doesn't appeal to you, this exercise can just as easily be done by reciting the dream story out loud and adding the words "part of me" after each subject and object of the dream.

If I were to re-write or re-tell my dream inserting the words "part of me" after the subjects and objects, my dream would sound something like this:

"I'm traveling on the plane part of me to get to the ship part of me. The ship part of me is the vessel part of me where I will be living for quite awhile with the studying part of me.

The captain part of me is present, as well as the passenger parts of me. We arrive safely to the destination part of me and I'm curious about what I see."

That's it. It's a simple, but revealing exercise. If we combine this exercise with the brain storming exercise we did earlier, we might discover that the plane part of me, which might be my method of navigating spirit, is taking me to the ship part of me, which might be my method of navigating emotion or the unconscious (water), and that I will be engaged in studying and learning. There is a captain part of me who knows what "he" is doing in terms of guiding the vessel safely, and there are other aspects of me that are being safely transported from one place to another.

After completing this exercise I ask myself if there is a place in my life where I am learning new things, perhaps in a metaphoric place where I have transitioned from a spirit-based awareness to an emotion-based, personal awareness. Perhaps I have brought an idea "down to earth."

Five: What are You Doing in the Dream?

Each time we dream our “dream ego”, the part of us that is in the dream, can behave in a variety of ways. Notice what you’re doing in the dream and you may find some key information about how you’re behaving in your waking life.

For instance, it’s common for dreamers to:

- Directly participate in the dream activities
- Be in the dream, but not really participating
- Observe from high above
- Face an adversary and fight them
- Run away from something
- Forget something (like baggage) or miss something (like a plane)
- Get lost
- Hide
- Have any number of emotions (anger, sadness, lust, love)

What you are doing in the dream may be:

- **A sign of how you are behaving in waking life** (running from something scary in a dream may be about metaphorically running from something scary in waking life).
- **An invitation to act another way in waking life** (facing an adversary in a dream may be an invitation to face a waking life challenge).
- **An indication that there is an emotion that wants to come out** (in waking life we can convince ourselves we’re not angry when in fact, we are).
- **A future premonition** (I once dreamed my family made me promise to take the left road, even though I wanted to take the right road. A few weeks later In waking life, I came to a juncture and my GPS told me to take the right road but the street sign said take the left. I looked at a map and discovered that the right road led to a narrow, gravel mountain road – it was rainy and nearly midnight. Just as my dream predicted, I took the “left road” which was the freeway.

Conclusion

Dreams can help you find more meaning, connect with inspirational ideas, and get answers. The more you interact with your dreams and get to know them, the more they can help you navigate your life by offering useful information.

Whether your dreams give you information to create a new career, discover an invention or simply provide you with colorful images for original artwork, I hope you find this book useful.

Be sure to read the articles at www.amybrucker.com. There is a section called “What Dreams Mean” and it offers a variety of articles on common dream themes such as tornadoes, vehicles, animals, and chase dreams. They are not meant to serve as “dream dictionary” guidelines, but as ways to contemplate what your dreams may mean.

Happy dreaming!

Amy E. Brucker

To learn more about dreamwork with Amy Brucker, or to learn how you can grow a prosperous private practice as a spiritual or wellness practitioners, email amy@amybrucker.com.

Everything you said made perfect sense!

“Your reading of my dreams was amazing! I want to thank you so much for helping me see such a different view of my situation. Not only did you hit the nail right on the head, but you also helped me feel not so alone at this point in my life.

Matt

Your dreamwork is helping me make progress!

“As for your dreamwork, my respect for you just went through the stratosphere. It was an exact description of my life. Your thoughts hit so close to my heart that I couldn't read it aloud without sobbing. You are absolutely right, a huge part of me is dying -- I see that now. I think I am making very good progress, and your thoughts helped me more than you can imagine.”

Carol

Have you acquired x-ray vision?

“Magnificent! Your dreamwork is as comprehensive, sensitive, and accurate a set of projections that I can remember receiving for one of my dreams. What do you feel is going on? Are we occupying the same space?”

Josh S.