

Dreamwork:

*How to Decode Your Dreams
for Personal Growth*



Laura Lander

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Chapter One

Why Study Dreams?

My understanding of dreams and their possible significance stems from decades of recording and studying my own dreams and those of others, in addition to extensive reading on the subject.

Several books that I read long ago stand out in my memory as having had lasting influence. One is *Dreams: God's Forgotten Language* by John A. Sanford. Another is *Dreams: A Way to Listen to God* by Morton Kelsey. Perhaps the most influential is *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams* by Eugene T. Gendlin.

It is this last-mentioned book that has most informed my method of asking myself questions about the symbols in my dreams. Some of the questions I consider in deciphering my own dreams come directly from Gendlin, as does the practice of answering by free association and the idea of regarding a dream as a drama on a stage. For more about Gendlin's work, please see the reference in the bibliography at the end of this book.

My purpose for studying my dreams is to gain a deeper understanding of myself, my *whole* self, by learning from the glimpse into my subconscious mind that is served up to me nightly in my dreams. My conscious thoughts are perfectly capable of finding all kinds of ways to hide less-than-desirable or challenging truths about myself in a misguided effort to placate my ego. The subconscious tells no lies. It doesn't really give a hoot about placating the ego.

In coming face-to-face with these shadowed sides of my own nature, I am given the challenge and the opportunity to recognize the validity of their existence. I may accept that they are a part of who I am, and listen to what they have to tell me about myself. Sometimes the messages are loud and clear, sometimes more elusive. They are always truthful.

A further purpose for giving attention to our dreams, and just as important if not more so, is that in my experience, it is our subconscious that is more directly connected with God, the Divine, the universe, the sentient knowing that is the Source of all. There seems to be fewer barriers and a bit more transparency between our subconscious selves and this Source of who we are. If this is true, then it behooves us to give some attention to our dreams.

Some may be of the opinion that dreams are meaningless, that they are mere static in our brainwaves or scattered and re-hashed fragments of our day or our past experiences. I will not engage in debate over those issues in this book. I feel no need to convince. Dreams have certainly featured with cultural and spiritual significance in story, song and traditional sacred writings handed down from time immemorial. I will let that fact speak for itself of the importance of dreams in our human development.

I only present my approach to finding meaning within my own dreams in order that others who have a similar interest in cultivating personal growth through this means may use my experiences as a template for doing their own work. The proof of

the efficacy of this type of inner work will be found in the insights gleaned for each individual.

While writing this book, I was asked by a friend, “What if I never remember my dreams?” This man wanted to delve into personal growth and self-understanding via dreamwork, but he didn’t feel it would be possible for him because he never remembers having any dreams. The only advice I could give him was to address his own Higher Self, or spirit, each night before falling asleep, and ask to be guided by dreams. Then, if ever upon waking he remembered even a tiny glimpse of a dream, to write it down immediately, before it slipped away. I believe that if you give consistent and genuine attention to this endeavor, at some point you will be rewarded.

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