

Dreams

We all dream every night. By using a few simple techniques, even people who say they never remember dreams can recall them.

1. Keep paper and a pen or pencil beside the bed. Suggest to yourself that you will spontaneously awaken when you need to *without using an alarm clock*, since it can inhibit recall. This method works well with practice, but you may initially wish to set your alarm for 15 minutes after your suggested wake-up time, just to be safe. Before going to sleep mentally affirm that you will remember dreams that will help you in your waking life.

2. Don't jump right out of bed when you wake up. Lie still with your eyes closed and remember where you just were – a dream is an experience and so feels like having been someplace else. Even if all you can recall is a tiny fragment, a single image, write it down. Before you forget anything, write down as much detail as you can remember. Write in the present tense, because dreams are about our current emotional situation. Often you will find yourself remembering more as you write.

Here are 4 key questions to keep in mind when you write your dream:

- What was the key image in the dream?
- What was the key feeling?
- Where was the dream located?
- What situation in my waking life does this dream remind me of?

These four questions will help identify the dream's meaning, and will help you recall the dream later in the day, when you have more time to reflect upon it, in a clear-headed state. Another goal of writing four sentences is that it helps keep your journal entry brief, and thus easier to faithfully record. (It can be tough to write in the morning—before we've had our coffee!)

4. Do this every night and soon you will remember more dreams and longer chunks of them. **BE PLAYFUL, PATIENT, and PERSISTENT.** Although most people start having success the first week or two, dream recall is a mental muscle which may require some time to get back into shape. Try to maintain a relaxed and playful attitude of looking forward to your dreams while being willing to let them come all in good time. Trying too hard or being too serious can be limiting factors. Dream recall and motivation tend to come and go naturally in cycles, and also depend upon what else is going on in your life. Once you start on a cycle of focusing on recall, stick with it for *at least* a few days, because consecutive nights can have an additive effect.

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The most important factor in remembering dreams is the **desire** to remember them. Before sleep, reread your dreams from the previous night or nights. This allows you to begin to connect with your dream memory. Then, as you go to bed, remind yourself to remember your dreams when you awaken in the morning or during the night.

Keeping a Dream Journal

You may find that the easiest way to record dreams as you awake is to keep a pad of paper next to the bed. In addition to this, I suggest that you keep a Dream Journal, a blank book in which you can record and reflect on each day's dreams.

- Buy a special blank book for your dream journal. I suggest one with unlined pages so that you feel freer to use the space on the page as you wish.
- Start each entry with the date and where you slept, if not in your own bed at home.
- Before going to bed, in a few sentences, review your day.
- Write your dream in the present tense, as if it is happening as you write it.
- Give the dream a title