

INITIATIC DREAMS

Lee Irwin, PhD, FRC

Introduction

I'm going to start by giving a very simple, traditional idea of what an initiation is. A simple definition, to which many layers can be added, is that initiation is a transmission of esoteric knowledge from an advanced practitioner to a less advanced practitioner. It's a basic, fundamental idea. However, I want to emphasize that esoteric knowledge is not a matter of simply ideas. Most people associate esoteric knowledge with ideas, but there are many different layers and types of knowledge. As we continue, I'll try to articulate that a bit more.

Normally, in the ordinary course of instruction, either verbal or written directions are given to you, coupled with ritual action. As you go through the learning process, you receive increased instructions along with practices to complete. It's a mixture of both instruction and ritual action. And typically, the teacher evaluates the students as they learn, so there's not just one ritual of initiation. There's a series of initiations, and there are different levels of advancement in terms of the actual tradition or practice. Thus, there are periodic instructions and initiations.

The exception to that is something called *barakah*, which is a Sufi term. I am a member of both the Rosicrucians and a Sufi order. In the Sufi order, the term *barakah* means that the teacher has a certain capacity to transmit some particular unique spiritual energy or aspects directly

to the student. This kind of grace cuts through the ordinary structured practice.

There's an alternative, however, to traditional instruction and *barakah*. You can have your own personal direct spiritual experience, which is initiatic. It opens you up to a greater visionary experience, and you begin to have your own personal encounters. And that is the direction I want to take with this talk. I'm going to move away from the more traditional and into the less traditional. For example, how does this compare with initiatic dreams?

Well, first of all, you can't just call one up. It requires you to be aware of



your dreams and study them. An initiatic dream is often an unsolicited, spontaneous, vivid dream with iconic, symbolic content. Regarding the term *iconic*, I mean there will be images and icons that stand out to you as having some latent meaning or value. You will have to do the work of interpretation to try to understand what these symbolic contents are. In other words, you won't

usually get literal teachings from initiatic dreams. You'll get symbolic encounters and experiential interactions, and you must do a certain amount of work to figure out the interpretation.

Furthermore, I'm not talking about ordinary dreams. I'm talking about non-ordinary dreams. In fact, I would estimate that the amount of time that one has initiatic dreams is maybe 2 or 3 percent of all dreaming. It's not an everyday thing. That doesn't mean that an ordinary dream can't have some initiatic aspects,



but, generally speaking, these are special dreams that come periodically. Just as we talked about initiation over time, these dreams come over time, deepening your awareness.

Explicit and Implicit Contents

You have to learn to distinguish between what I call explicit and implicit content. By explicit, I mean that you have a dream in which someone comes up to you and says something. You understand what they're saying. It's a message, and you can take the message—that's explicit. On the other hand, someone may come up to you and hand you an object that they say is important, and though you take the object, you don't know exactly what it is or what it means. All you know for sure is that it's valuable and important—that's implicit.

Dreams are filled with explicit and implicit content, and you have to work to understand the implications of these symbols and the things that appear. Now, to make it a little more complicated, there is another issue. When most people think about their dreams, they think about the content; they think about the scenario or the story that is part of the dream. For instance, "I met so and so," certain things happened, and so on. However, initiatic dreams tend to be rather weak in content but much stronger in states. Also, states and contents reflect your stage of development.

All of this makes it a bit more complicated because often in initiating dreaming, at least in my experience, states are more significant than contents. Most people aren't used to thinking about that, so we have to dive into the significance of states. So, what do I mean by states?

Altered States of Consciousness

By states, I'm referring to altered states of consciousness (ASC). There are many altered states which haven't been entirely studied or understood. There's no complete map of altered states. There's some mapping, but it's far more complicated than any map could possibly demonstrate. Furthermore, it happens during dreaming. Start with this idea: you're lying in bed when you fall asleep and begin to dream. In the dream, there's an action going on. You're running, walking, talking, and interacting, but your physical body in your bed is not moving. You might toss and turn a little bit, but you're basically not moving. That is an example of an altered state; you're in the sleep state.

The Sleep State

However, the sleep state itself is not one state. It's many different states, and this is a whole area of esotericism that is just starting to be studied at this point because the states induced in dreaming are highly variable. They go from very mild, hardly noticeable, to really strong, powerful states. And there are many



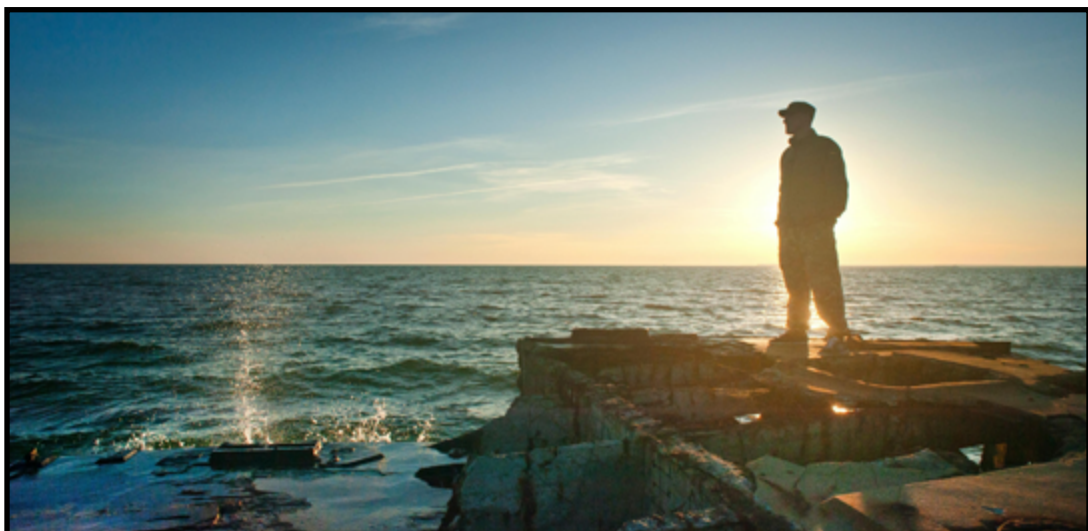
different, diverse states. One of the factors I'm trying to communicate is that esoteric knowledge is not so much content. It's state- and stage-dependent. What state you are experiencing in the dream and what stage of development you are in will be additive to your basic esoteric knowledge. So, what kind of feeling are we talking about here? What kind of experience or encounter?

The initiatic dream is a felt sense of the sacred; you have the encounter with the sacred. It could be a person, an event, a place, or an object. There are many different ways this encounter with the sacred, the holy, the numinous, or the power of the inherent sacred character and its transpersonal presence leaves an impact on you. It leaves an impact on your awareness, and it demonstrates a direct experience. It's not so much the knowledge that's significant; it's more about the experience you take away from the encounter. ASC changes awareness, and then this awareness you have in the dreaming state can transfer to the waking state. This is where you bring your dreaming into what we call live dreaming or waking dreams, where you're truly engaging in this deeper, soul-level consciousness induced through the encounter with the sacred.

Initiatic Dream Types

There are many different initiatic dream types, so I'm only going to talk about three: mythic, psychic, and mystical. This is what I call psychonoetic. Literally, the word means soul knowledge. These are dreams that impact you deeply on a soul level and transform your awareness. You might not be able to bring it back to consciousness. It is not easy to always bring back the sacred encounter to the waking state. That takes practice and training.

So, what is the mythic dream type? A mythic or archetypal dream is an encounter with some kind of mythic figure like a god, goddess, wise elder, or trickster. There are many different archetypal sorts of encounters that you might have. The encounter is initiatic because it has an impact on you and changes your consciousness. It changes your awareness through the encounter. Generally, these are not historical figures, by which I mean they're not a person you will recognize or know. It's more like a type, as I said, a god or a goddess type, and they're very powerful. They're numinous and filled with this special energy. You can encounter them and have a transformative experience.





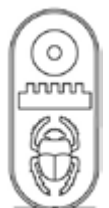
I'll give you an example. I had a dream not too long ago in which I was in a garden. There was a very large apple tree in the garden, and sitting on the lower branches of the apple tree was a young man dressed in a young man's Greek dress holding a cup. Standing a little higher up in the tree was a man with a beard holding a bow. When I saw them, I assumed and interpreted that they were images of Apollo (the elder) and Dionysus (the younger). Apollo spoke to me and said, "Can you see me?" I said, "Yes, I see you." He responded, "Do you acknowledge that there are such things as gods that can manifest?" I said, "Yes, I do." He reached down and picked up an apple from the tree. He threw it to me, and I caught the apple. The apple was white and semi-transparent. When I took a big bite of the apple, my consciousness expanded. I had this sudden awakening that within the garden and the entire dream scenario, there were all these spiritual energies at work. They were all active and interactive, and suddenly, I could see, acknowledge, and interact with them.

That was a pretty powerful archetypal initiatic dream that definitely had symbolic and iconic contents: the bow, the apple, why it is an apple tree, and what the significance of apples is—you can go on and on elaborating the content. It takes real work to decode. I've been working on my dreams for a long time. I've been recording

them since 1970, so I have over fifty years of recorded dreams. With practice, I've mastered the art of decoding and interpreting dreams and drawing out their meaning. The way you do that is to study and work on your dreams. What happened to me, and will likely happen to you, is that these dreams challenged my everyday mindset and had a very powerful impact. Carl Jung described "big dreams" you carry with you your whole life: they're not dreams you forget about. You remember that dream, and it has a teaching inherent to it. It contains esoteric knowledge that you have to focus on and draw out into your waking life. That's a good example of the mythic dream type.

Psychic Dreams

Then there's the psychic dream. Psychic dreams are both explicit and implicit in terms of contact with people like guides, teachers, masters, animal spirits, and aliens—oh yes, aliens. As far as I'm concerned, we have to include UFOs and aliens in the initiatic tradition because many people have UFO- or alien-encounter dreams that shift their awareness and consciousness. It's a more contemporary, modern, or post-modern kind of encounter. My way of thinking is that it's still part of the continuum of teachers and guides that you can meet in the dream situation.



That said, these encounters are often actual historical individuals that you might recognize. They're known people, teachers, and masters that you may have read about or seen through video or some form of media. As traditional figures or teachers, you don't know who these people are personally, but they come with a message or teaching. They wish to transmit some kind of knowledge or gnosis to you.

This is the dream type and scenario that I think most people think of when they think about initiating dreams: a teacher shows up and offers them some kind of teaching or form of interaction that has a deep and profound effect, which they take away with them. When they wake up, they're still carrying the energy of that interaction. However, it also highlights another feature that is, I think, quite common and not well studied or recognized: non-ordinary initiatic dreams very often have paranormal features. The way to think about that, for me at least, is that the latent capacity we have as individuals for psychic perceptions and paranormal awareness is already there. We're not creating it. We're not making it happen. It's there, it's just latent. It's waiting to be stimulated, so to speak. These features, in the dreaming context, can be fully actualized. I've experienced every one of those capacities in my dreams.

Mind-to-Mind Communication

I've experienced these more than once, many times, in fact. Take telepathy, for example. Mind-to-mind communication is picking up on other people's thoughts in

the dream. Sometimes, when I've had an interaction with a teaching figure, the person doesn't actually speak to me. The person thinks, and I think with them. We think together; it's like telepathic communication. Very commonly, in these psychic initiatic dreams are precognitions. Precognition is being able to see the future before it happens. I've had numerous precognitive dreams in which I dreamed something was going to occur, and then several days later, that event happened just as I dreamed it.



Psychokinesis (PK) means that you can move an object with your mind, mind over matter. Here's an example of a psychokinesis dream: I was asked to pick up a stone about the size of a watermelon with my mind. Not to touch it. To pick it up and make it float in the air. I was trying and trying and trying, and it really wasn't easy to get that stone off the ground,

but then all of a sudden, I had this insight. The insight was that you have to get into the inner essence of that object and attune with it. When you attune with that object, you'll find that it has no weight; it can be moved about. And suddenly, the stone floated up into the air. That was like esoteric knowledge. I got an intuition about how it's possible to actualize psychokinesis in a dreaming state. In a sense, you could say I was practicing that ability, and in practicing it, I was actually seeing the result.

Clairvoyance means you're aware of something happening at a distance at the same time that it's happening. For example, let's say I have a friend who lives in Seattle, and I suddenly have a thought



that something is happening with him. I call him on the phone, and I find out that it really is happening. And I can have a dream in which I see events happening simultaneously. That is a clairvoyant intuition or psychometry.

Psychometry happens in a dream. I just had a psychometric dream the other night in which I found a lizard skull. It was painted and had feathers on it. The lizard skull was from Mayan Ruins, which are part of my Native American interest and background. When I was looking at the object, I could see in my mind a history of the its use, how it was used in rituals, and so on. There are people who practice psychometry who go on archaeological digs to provide intuitions about what happened to found objects.

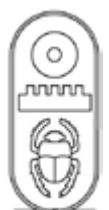
Of course, healing is a very well-known psychic capacity that can be practiced in dreams. I've had many dreams of healing people. You can actualize the potential and get a feeling for what it's like to heal someone. You get a sense of the energy as it flows; you feel it flowing into the other person. You can feel it affecting the other person, an example of training and induction into an altered state. It's learned through the dream and can be carried into the waking state.

The latent power we're talking about is extra sensory perception (ESP) or PSI phenomenon, which is the term they use

these days. We don't really understand what PSI is. We know how it works but don't know exactly what it is. And it certainly has a profound spiritual aspect, but that's a whole other topic.

These kinds of dreams bring teachings that actualize a latent capacity, power, or ability. And that ability is transmitted in the dreaming context. It can be an action, a blessing, or a confirmation. It can be something that actualizes a developmental stage. Often, it takes the form of a test. I've had testing dreams numerous times in which a spiritual teacher shows up and asks me to do certain things to demonstrate my abilities or psychic capacities in a long series of stages. Not too long ago, I had a Rosicrucian master come to me in a dream who wanted to see if I was ready to be inducted into the adept order. He said to me, "We want you to manifest an object in this room through an act of thought," and I said, "Okay." I thought of an object, and bingo, it manifested in the dream. It might sound easy, but it's really not that easy. The Rosicrucian master said, "Yes, that's what we want to see, and, therefore, we sanction your adept status."

I've had interactions with Sufi masters as well. The Sufis have a tradition in which they teach you in your dreams. That's a given part of many of the Sufi traditions. The teachers will come to you and give you instructions in your dreams. Sometimes,



however, there's no teaching at all. It's just totally silent. There's no information exchange. There are no psychic abilities manifested. It's just barakah—just the direct transmission. Something is being communicated to the other person. Something is being transmitted. Something profound that you can carry with you.

Every Initiation is Planting a Seed

I once had a Buddhist teacher who told me something I've always remembered. He said, "Every initiation is planting a seed. You may not feel the effect of the initiation, but in time, that seed will grow and develop and expand and become more part of your waking conscious life." These initiatic dreams are like the seeds of baraka that are planted in the dreaming state as you develop and evolve.

The Plenum of Sacred Presence

So now we come to the third point, which is also a profound aspect of the initiatic dream tradition: the numinous transpersonal encounter, or sacred encounter, that I'll call a direct experience of the sacred without intervening scenarios or persons. Often, it's a scene of unity or sacred light. There are other sets of qualities as well. Basically, this kind of dream is an intense, altered state dream. It's completely immersive. It involves opening

up to this vast, open, super spatial reality. It's what I like to call the great fullness or the plenum of sacred presence.

When I've had these experiences, and I've had a number of them, there are no people. There's no scene. There's no scenario. There's no story. There's just this vast, open cosmic space filled with spiritual energies and activities. But it's not empty space. It's totally full of hyperactive creative sacred energy at work and acting on us and our consciousness, helping us evolve into more self-aware beings. I'll give you one example of that type of dream.

One night, I had a dream in which I was sitting at a kitchen table talking to two other persons, two women, neither of whom I knew. We were just having a nice conversation about spirituality. As we were sitting, we reached a point where we stopped our conversation and started sitting in silence together. As we sat in silence together, all of a sudden, the whole scene of the dream began to dissolve until the entire scenario of being in the kitchen was gone. There was nothing but a vast open space and the people I was sitting with. Then, everybody began to separate from each other. They disappeared, and I was alone in this giant space. And then I was lying, as always, in my bed. I woke up on my back with my hands over my chest.





I was lying in that position when, suddenly, my heart started to pulse with this spiritual energy. The energy was increasing and increasing and increasing, becoming more and more full and vast and filled with sacredness. And I thought, “Wow, what a profound experience,” but then, much to my surprise, off at a great distance, came these waves. The waves came washing over me—waves of light and consciousness—and as they did, I completely dissolved. There was no person left. There was only the scene, the waves, the living cosmos, and sacred energy. I don’t know how long that lasted. Eventually, the energy began to contract and shrink away. The next thing I knew, I was lying in bed on my back and feeling extremely calm, but I noticed I couldn’t move. I was unmoving for about ten minutes. Then, I finally started moving. I got up, and I could move around. I felt calm. I felt fine, and yet, at the same time, I had this definite waking sense of that cosmos surrounding and penetrating the room and everything around me.

The Mystery of Being

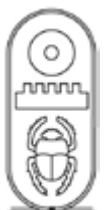
It was a very profound, mystical dream that left a lifelong impression. That’s not the kind of experience you forget. Out of that experience, I felt that everything was alive, that the cosmos is filled with sacred energies, with beings. It’s a multiverse of extraordinary complexity. And it reveals something which I’ll call the Mystery of Being. It is far beyond my comprehension. I don’t understand what

all these experiences add up to. I only know that they are a series of progression of developmental stages that are exposing all of us, each of us, to these kinds of energies. This kind of vaster multiverse is working on us in a very subtle, soft, gentle way in the midst of our dreaming.

I’m talking about the superordinate reality. It’s not the conscious, everyday world. It’s something behind the scenes, so to speak, that is filtering in and imbuing us with the contact and experience of God or Divine nature, however you might want to think about the Divine or Divine nature. And I mean the Divine beyond form, beyond any kind of concept, beyond words. I can’t describe it. I can’t really communicate the real experience. I can only point to it, and that’s because these experiences are beyond words. They’re very profound and leave a deep impression psychically on the individual. You’re transformed by this, even if it’s only very subtly. It only lasts a little bit. It’s part of who you are as you go along, then.

State-Based Initiation

So, let’s summarize: Dreams communicate and basically direct spiritual experience, whether through symbols, a teacher showing up, or some kind of direct mystical encounter. . It’s the states that impact you, not necessarily the explicit teachings. That said, explicit teachings matter. I’m not suggesting they don’t. They’re very important. They’re part of the training and teaching, and you need



something to think with. You need ideas to grapple with this really profound depth.

I see it as a state-based initiation. Dreams, all through your consciousness, provide opportunities—now remember, I said 2 or 3 percent of your dreams, not all your dreams—and offer supporting stages of development as dreams change over time. However, I want to emphasize that it's not a fixed progression. I described the dream types—mythic, psychic, and mystical—to clarify the differences. However, a single dream can have all three aspects. You can have a little bit of myth, have some psychic elements, and be mystical too. And it doesn't mean that you're going to work your way from the simple, easy ones to the much more complicated ones. That's not at all what happens.

What happened with me was I had some really amazingly powerful, overwhelming dreams at the very early stage. Over the years, they became more and more integrated as I practiced understanding, analyzing, remembering, assimilating, and so on. That process means that you have to understand that it's an individual developmental process. It won't be the same for you as it was for me or anyone else, really. Each person has their own path to follow. Each person has to do the work of development in order to

contribute to the collective development because I strongly feel that the dreaming transformation you go through on a nightly basis can add positively to the collective. It can also add negatively. If you have a lot of nightmares and harmful dreams that are causing you suffering or anxiety, that too contributes to the collective. You have to adjust your mindset to look for the deeper positive underlying potential of the dream that is waiting to manifest.

The Dream is the Teacher

My view is that the dream is the teacher, the true medium of transformation. My dreams have taught me. I didn't learn this from reading a book or studying dreams, not at all. In fact, dream study didn't help me. I had to grapple directly with the dream experience, so I take the dream as the teacher and as the true medium to help us in our evolutionary process.

The Metaphysics of Discovery

This is something I call the metaphysics of discovery. By metaphysics of discovery, I'm suggesting that these state-based encounters with paranormal features promote human development. My view is not that the dreams are leading you to a conclusion. I don't believe that is true. I believe that dreams lead you forward on a path in which you have to make decisions about exactly what you want to develop in



your life. Who are you, and what is your developmental potential aimed at? What are your spiritual goals? You have to be clear about your spiritual goals. And they will be different for different people, even people in the same family and your closest friends. It's a matter of differentiation in which you creatively choose to develop along a certain pathway.

As far as I'm concerned, this is an evolutionary process. Dreams teach us through states, contents, and stages, but as a part of ongoing discovery. It's not as though we are in the process of trying to actualize a given path. It is true that the path has structure, and it does have stages and a variety of different states, but your dreams, from my point of view, are probably the most creative expression of your being. I believe that for myself, for sure. And I'm open to what my dreams teach me because I still note that I have to make choices in the dreaming state. It's not as though they're just laying on a pathway for me, and it's certainly not taking me toward a fixed end. It's opening a doorway. I'm crossing through the doorway and choosing how to pursue my spiritual development.

For me, there's no final development. Yes, there might be such things as enlightenment, as they say in various Asian traditions. I don't deny that. I'm sure it's true, but I don't think it's a final enlightenment. I think it's a stage of enlightenment. I'm a scholar of comparative religions, and all I can say is these stages of spiritual development are codified into esoteric teachings, but it doesn't close the door on what is possible.

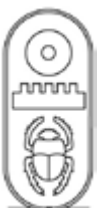


And if we're looking for a creative resource that would help us determine or find the path that we really want to take, then look at your dreams because your dreams are going to give you creative influences that you're not expecting.

That's the thing I love about dreams. They don't take you where you think you want to go. They offer you alternatives. A lot of people mistakenly ignore their dreams. They don't make the effort to truly understand what's involved in unpacking their dreams and applying them to their life. I would use the phrase "metaphysics of discovery" because I believe that this is not based in material causality. It's not reducible to material theories. It is something instigated, I believe, by a higher power, however you want to conceptualize that, and how that power manifesting in our life through prophetic inspirational dreams communicates esoteric

knowledge.

Higher power is what I call the Mystery of Being. Behind the scenes, it is working very gently through our psychic process development and infusing itself into our dream, but we have to choose to follow, study, and work on it to try to really gain a deep and profound knowledge of what that influence is because it's going to be different for different people, genders, and ethnicities. It's going to be differentiated. That's the future. The multicultural future of spiritual development is not going to be convergence to a single teaching but divergence into a vast array of teachings, which can be empowered through the process of dreaming.





So, how do you do it? Okay, well, there's no easy way to do it. Dream learning comes from dream study. You have to study your dreams, and you have to pay attention to them. If you're waiting for a dream to come along where a teacher shows up and teaches you exactly what you need to know, it will be a long wait! That's usually not how it works.

The Three R's of Dream

These are what I call the three R's of dream work: record, reflect, and research. Yes, I've been recording my dreams. I have eight hundred single-spaced pages of dreams on my computer, which means I can search for symbolic correspondences, themes, and all kinds of stuff through my computer. I have really great access to over fifty years of dreaming. And what I do, and what I've done in the past—though I don't need to do it anymore because I remember my dreams on a daily basis—is use a digital recorder. I stick one of those little digital recorders under my pillow and go to sleep. When I have a dream, I reach over and click it on. When I am done recording, I click it off and go back to sleep. With the digital recorder strategy, you have the actual record and don't have to worry about writing up your dreams. When you have time, you can sit down with the recording, put your earbuds on, hook it up, and sit at your computer and transcribe your dream. Over time, you'll develop quite a good record of dreams. What you're looking for is not your ordinary dreams but your non-ordinary dreams.

I actually taught myself to remember my non-ordinary dreams and not my ordinary dreams. You can do that. It does work. And then, once you have them recorded, you'll start seeing patterns and themes. These themes are quite important because they're existential themes, really. Themes of what you are struggling with personally in your life. I don't want to make it sound like it's all roses and everything is heading toward perfection. That's really not it. The dream record reveals where you need to work, where the rough spots are, where the conflict is, and where the unresolved tension is.

Initiatic dreams push you, so to speak, past the threshold of where the conflicts and tensions are if you pay attention to them and spend time thinking and analyzing them because once you have the dream recorded, you've got a start. However, you can get a letter in the mail, but if you don't open and read it, you're not going to know what it says. Just because you recorded the dream doesn't mean you understood it, so you have to reflect on it. You need to reflect on the non-ordinary character. You have to reflect on the scenario, the state, and the content. You have to learn to parse it out and see what is really going on in the dream.

In reflection, you don't want to rush your interpretation. I've had dreams that I've been thinking about literally for twenty years, and I'm still thinking about them. It's interesting what happens because I will have a dream, and then I'll think about it,

and I'll come up with an interpretation of what I think it means, what the symbols mean, how this applies to my life, and so on. And then, a few years later, I go back and read the dream. It's like, "Wow." It's a revelation. I see a whole other layer of meaning I didn't see the first time around. The lesson is that you have to live with your dreams, and you have to live with them over time through a process of slowly learning to understand your own symbolic language.

This is why dream books and symbol dictionaries don't work. They might be okay for collective analysis, such as answering the meaning of a certain object or figure. You might be able to say something about it collectively, but individually, it's going to have its own special individual nuances, so you have to learn the nuances of your own psychic processes. And those are highly individuated. Basically, you have to write your own dictionaries. You have to have your own understanding of what your dreams mean, and this takes time. It takes work and reflection. I think about my dreams every day. I've been doing it for a long time, and I keep learning. I don't feel like I've reached, by any means, the

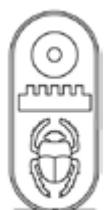
end of the path. I'm just somewhere in the middle, going along.

And then comes the third R, which is the research element. You need to research your dream content. It's not just subjective. Your dreams draw on collective elements, social circumstances, and ethnic context. There are a lot of different layers, so to speak, that feed into the dream, and often they take real research. I frequently have dreams for which I have to dig to figure out. For example, I once had a dream in which I had a manuscript with an Egyptian symbol on it. I had no idea what the Egyptian symbol meant. After a lot of research and digging, I found the symbol and its meaning. It fit perfectly into the dream scenario once I figured it out, but I had never seen the symbol before. I don't know how that symbol popped up, you know?

I've been researching my dreams for quite a long time and trying to understand the symbols, the icons, and the references. My practical suggestion is to take a dream object or symbol and meditate on it in a meditative state. See where it leads you in terms of what kind of feeling you get from it and what kind of insight comes to you.



Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, The Dream (1883).





See if it enhances your inner alignment with external events and spiritual influences.

I'll give an example. One time, I had a dream about a golden triangle that was really a golden pyramid floating over my head. In the dream, I could communicate through the symbol to other dimensions of reality. After I woke up, I started meditating with that object, using it as a medium for communicating to a more subtle realm of existence. Such symbols can appear in your dreams, and they can be transferred and used according to how you want to develop your dreaming skills.

Share Your Dreams with Other People

Finally, you should share your dreams with other people. Working and interacting with other people is better because they will often give you alternative views on what you're experiencing. My wife and I have been communicating and discussing our dreams for a long time. We've been together for over forty years and discuss our dreams every day. She often has insights about my dreams that I don't have. If you can, partner with others, form a dream group, and start a dialogue with people.

The International Association for Study of Dreams (IASD) is a very good group for people who are extremely interested in dreams. The organization hosts all kinds of events around dreaming. That's a good place to start, as partnerships help provide

a context for greater interpretation. I've discovered that some people have a knack for dream interpretation. If you get to know someone like that, they can really help you unpack dreams, and then you can begin to cultivate your practice to identify and integrate the subtle effects of initiatic dreaming.

If you're interested in the information in this article, you might be interested in a book coming out from Lexington Press. It's called *Dreams Beyond Time: On Sacred Encounter and Spiritual Transformation*. It talks about everything I've talked about and a lot more. If you're wondering, "Why do I need to hear more about what kind of dreams these are?" Well, this book has sixty non-ordinary dreams in it and a lot on the history of dreaming, theory, metaphysics, ontology, paranormal, and psychic abilities. Everything you could want to know about initiatic dreams is in this book, and I recommend it.

If you are interested in communicating with me, would like to find out more about initiatic dreams, or have some questions, you're welcome to reach out to me at my email address irwinl@cofc.edu. I'm pretty good at responding to emails, but it may take a little while. Be patient because I will get back to you. Thank you.

Video

<https://youtu.be/he3R9aMPZEo>