

FREUD'S VIEW

Freud explored the mechanism of dreams and concluded that dreams serve a useful psychic function. Freud shared the views of the Iroquois Indians that dreams result from both the conscious and unconscious mind, that the individual has desires that he/she is unaware of which are recognized in dreams, that repression of these unconscious desires may cause mental or physical illness, that wishes are often expressed symbolically with two levels of meaning, and that individuals may need assistance in the correct interpretation of their dreams.³

Freud assumed that our dreams come from the irrational part of our personality. He maintained that we have drives, wishes, and feelings of which we are unaware, yet which motivate our actions. We repress these drives with an internal censor, resulting in neurosis in the waking state and dreams in the sleep state. The language and symbolism embodied in dreams, akin to that of fairy tales and myths, serve as a form of sleep preservation. Our irrational desires, Freud believed, if fully recognized would interfere with our needed sleep. In our dreams we imagine that these desires have been fulfilled, allowing us to continue to sleep and feel satisfied. Freud asserts that these irrational desire are rooted in our basic nature and childhood experiences. Asocial impulses are characteristic of the child, Freud believed. Rather than innocent, he viewed the child as "evil", sadistic, masochistic, exhibitionistic, narcissistic, jealous, and incestuous.⁴ Society functions to repress these "immoral" and asocial strivings, transforming evil to good through reaction formations and sublimations. Good impulses are, therefore, only a secondary product arising from the necessity to repress evil strivings. The higher the cultural development of a society, the greater the repression and neurosis; and the outlet of dreams is the hallucinatory fulfillment of irrational and sexual wishes which originated in childhood and which have not been fully transformed into reaction formations or sublimations.⁵ Freud believed that what was seen between the ages of one and three gave rise to dreams, that which was heard gave rise to fantasies, and that which was experienced gave rise to psychoneurosis.⁶

During our slumber, according to Freud, our "moral censor" is half asleep, allowing "immoral" thoughts and fantasies to appear in a disguised fashion, a compromise between the repressed forces in the id and the repressing forces of the censor--the superego. Dream language is, therefore, the process of disguising and distorting the irrational wishes to allow continuous sleep. Freud believed that if these wishes were allowed to be viewed too clearly, the dreamer would wake up. Freud called this distorted version the manifest dream and the correctly interpreted version the latent dream.⁷ The surface-level is then the "manifest content" while the prehistoric material or motive is the "latent content". The manifest material was believed

USING DREAMS TO ENHANCE SELF-AWARENESS
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The authors expound the views of dreams given by Freud, Jung, C.S. Hall, and Erich Fromm. In an appendix they provide 24 suggestions for the interpreting of one's own dreams.

Most of us recognize the immediate truth of the idea that before we can understand and manage others effectively, we first must be able to understand and manage ourselves. Yet, how little do we really act upon this idea! In fact, it is a common theme among many great minds of the twentieth century that one of the greatest problems facing humankind is that of self-alienation.

If we examine the thinking of the two individuals who are generally considered to be the most creative geniuses of this area of understanding, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, there are two ideas that emerge that seem most central. They are that most of our self is unconscious; and dreams are the "royal road" to the unconscious. If this is so, dreams need to be treated far more seriously than they currently are. The purpose of this article is to adjust for this imbalance and acquaint managers with this potential "gold mine" for self understanding, a gold mine rarely, if ever, discussed in management related periodicals.

A HISTORICAL VIEW

Only in very recent history have people begun ignoring the important messages which come during sleep. An Egyptian papyrus from 2,000 B.C. recounted over 200 dreams of an individual. The papyrus recounted not only the general description of the dream, but whether the dream was felt to be good or bad, and its interpreted meaning(s). Early dream interpretations often viewed dreams as soul-traveling or voices from ghosts or spirits. Oriental interpretations assumed that dreams were messages sent to people by divine powers, an assumption also encountered in the Bible. Indian and Greek interpretation focused on dreams as a tool for use in the diagnosis of illness.¹ Until the middle ages both psychological and non-psychological interpretations were given credence. The psychological interpretations were with the dreams as an expression of the dreamer's own mind rather than as activities outside of the body or messages from higher sources. Nineteenth century rationalism and scientific method explained dreams in terms of somatic stimuli: indigestion, room temperature, body position, and other such factors.² The scholar of dreams who turned the focus toward psychological interpretations, shaping much of modern theory, was Sigmund Freud.

to be triggered by the previous day's events, which produce an unconscious wish coinciding with a similar unconscious wish from childhood.⁸

Freud used the term condensation to refer to the shorthand of dreams, their seeming lack of continuity. Displacement referred to the finding that a seemingly unimportant element in the manifest dream is often very important in arriving at the underlying element in the latent dream. The technique of free association was often used to provide the secondary elaboration necessary for filling in the gaps to form a logical, consistent story.⁹ Freud cautioned that elements often stand for their exact opposite and that dreams do not express logical relationships on the manifest level. By utilizing these techniques for dream analysis, Freud believed one could finally begin emptying the unconscious mind of all of one's primitive and infantile memories and become whole.

JUNG'S VIEW

Carl Jung, Freud's greatest student, felt that there was a weakness in Freud's interpretations. He claims that not only did each dream express wishes of the past (retrospective), but dreams were also prospective, containing future goal orientations, an interpretation found previously in the Talmud.¹⁰ Other critics found Freud's interpretations too arbitrary, Freud equating each symbol with a key meaning. Jung claimed that Freud found only one archetype (basic motif or psychic pattern)--viz., that of incest or the Oedipus motif. Jung found that the more important archetypes are religious, not sexual, although others do exist. Jung found that the unconscious was deeper, richer and more mysterious than Freud envisioned. Jung gravitated toward interpreting dreams as messages embodying the wisdom of the unconscious, often far superior to conscious thought. Jung also addressed the religious aspect of many dreams by saying the voice which speaks is from a higher source than the individual. Jung identified dream figures he called animus and anima, the psychical representation of the opposite sex present in all of us, a form of contrast and disagreement. He also identified a shadow figure, a same-sex manifestation of the darker side of all of us--a figure unidentifiable to us by name in the dream and often lurking in the shadows.¹¹

Jung differed from Freud in his belief that there are no absolutes and that the analyst should try to help the dreamer discover what unique motives activated him or her. He believed that the dream interpretation would be useless unless the patient wanted it. He believed in unsuspected resources present in all of us and a natural tendency in people toward psychological health through dreaming. Jung described a serial dream as being especially important in determining the prospective nature of dreams. He differentiated between the goals implicit in the first and second halves of the average lifetime. The first 35 years usually center on building a career, finding a mate, beginning a

family, and accumulating possessions. The second half usually centers on searching for the meaning of life, one's own identity, and the purpose for life's energy.¹² Jung advised his clients to ask themselves what issues they were wrestling with at the time of their dream. He asked them to remember the context of family, work, and other life events which could influence the dream.

HALL'S VIEW

Perhaps the largest single study of dreams was undertaken during the mid-1940's by Professor Calvin S. Hall at Western Reserve University in Chicago. Unlike many of Jung's and Freud's patients, Hall's subjects consisted of a "normal" group of college students. In all, some 10,000 dreams were recorded. Respondents provided data on their dreams divided into five major categories: setting, cast of characters, plot, emotions, and color. The settings were generally familiar or vaguely familiar places. Characters found in the dreams almost always included the dreamer. That person was alone only 15% of the time. The average number of persons appearing in the dream was three, and family members appeared with the most frequency. Children dreamt of their parents and vice-versa, husbands of their wives and vice versa. Men dreamed more often about male friends, while women dreamt about both sexes equally. Contrary to Freud's findings, Hall's results showed that falling, flying, or floating were rare occurrences. Walking, riding, and passive activities were most commonly reported. Unpleasant emotions outnumbered pleasant emotions and were found to increase with age. Fear was more common than anger in the dreams reported and sadness more common than happiness. Half of the reported dreams contained erotic elements, and Hall believed that an even greater percentage may have occurred but were not reported due to reluctance on the part of the respondent to disclose intimate or sexual content. Only 1/3 of Hall's subjects reported recalling their dreams as having been either partially or fully in color. No significant difference was found between dreams in black and white and those experienced in color, nor any commonality of colors as symbolic.¹³ Hall found that persons dream about their own personal world, intimate things, emotional things, and things which arouse conflict within them. Hall concluded that dreams are a product of our own minds and represent our own perspectives of the world. He believed that each dream is responsible for all that appears in the dream and that dreams should be read in series, not isolation, to provide the best interpretation. He advised interpreters to picture the dream as a snapshot filled with multiple concepts.

FROMM'S VIEW

It is generally agreed that dreams utilize symbolic language much as a fairy tale or myth. Erich Fromm describes this symbolic language as "a language in which inner experience, feelings, and thoughts are expressed as if they were sensory experiences in the outer world."¹⁴ He further



describes it as a language with its own grammar and syntax, where logic, space and time are ignored. He believes that the ruling categories of interpretation are intensity and association. Fromm emphasizes three types of symbols, previously recognized by Jung: conventional, accidental, and universal. Conventional symbols are our everyday language wherein the word is the thing. Accidental symbols are a connection or association of a mood which is not always shared with others. For instance, your associating Las Vegas with fun resulting from pleasant past experiences may not coincide with that of someone who incurred heavy gambling losses on each of his visits. Such very personal symbols occur quite frequently in dreams. Universal symbols show an intrinsic relationship between an emotion and a sensory experience rooted in the body's properties of the senses and the mind which are common to all. The emotion is connected with the thought, an affinity with the sensory. Fire, air, earth, and water are examples of universal symbols.

It should be remembered that most symbols are dual in nature. Fire can be a purifying force or a source of warmth and comfort; yet it can also be destructive. It can be, on the one hand, adventurous and quick, representing excitement, energy, and lightness. On the other hand, it can be continuous and constant. It often represents zeal, uncontrolled jealousy, temper, or hatred, on the one hand, and fiery love, patriotism, or enthusiasm on the other. Air, usually symbolic of mental activity, can be either calm or turbulent. It also symbolizes the breath of life. The earth is generally a symbol for the physical body and can represent dirt or filth or practicality and firmness. Water is symbolic of spirituality, as in baptism. "Stormy seas" may contrast with "clear sailing". It can represent aliveness and energy, or a quiet, slow steadiness. The ancients viewed water as symbolic of the unconscious and the emotional conflicts of life. Dreams of swimming may indicate progress of a spiritual nature or failure when driven back by the tide.¹⁵ Other somewhat universal symbols such as the sun should be interpreted with caution, since their meaning may vary by culture or geography.

The persons you encounter in your dreams are also symbolic and often their most glaring traits reflect that aspect of your personality. Persons of high authority may represent your lower or undisciplined self. Body language, dress, faces, and physical features are also important. The position of bodies (standing vs. sitting, etc.) is also important, as is the relative health and general condition of each character.¹⁶ Automobiles are said to be symbolic of the physical body, and analogies to body parts are logical. The type of car, its color, the way it is driven (in a reckless manner, etc.) and its condition all can carry messages.¹⁷

Dreams which take place indoors give clues to their meanings through the rooms in which they take place. The dining room and kitchen are often symbolic of food. The

bathroom is symbolic of cleansing. The bedroom denotes rest, sex, and secret activities. Office, churches, and other such buildings carry their own meanings associated with their function. The condition of the building may be representative of the dreamer's own mental or physical state.¹⁸

Dreams express religious and philosophical ideas and experiences of the body and soul in symbolic terms. In myths, the surface-level (or manifest) story was believed to have actually taken place. Freud documented and expanded the understanding of symbolic language through his work on dream interpretation. Kafka's The Trial is an example of fiction embodying predominantly symbolic language, much like that of a myth or dream. In attempting our own interpretation of our dreams, we must remember the nature of the symbolic language. Exploring universal symbols, accidental symbols, and even conventional symbols can often lead to understanding of the underlying message. One recent study showed that subjects under hypnosis had little difficulty in interpreting the symbolism of their dreams, yet out of hypnosis labeled them as nonsense. Scientific research has shown that there are not dreamers and non-dreamers, just recallers and non-recallers. More repressive personalities were found to recall fewer dreams, while more self-actualized personalities recall a much greater percentage.¹⁹ The more we understand our dreams, the more self-aware we will become. As the Talmud says, "A dream which is not understood is like a letter which is not opened."

APPENDIX Aids in Reading and Interpreting Dreams

1. Keep a notebook or tape recorder at your bedside.
2. Record dreams immediately upon waking.
3. Look for the setting, characters, action, colors, feeling, and words.
4. Do it daily.
5. Try autosuggestion, especially if having difficulty in recall.
6. Remember that recurrent dreams may indicate a resistance to change.
7. Remember that dreams of ill-health may be literal or symbolic.
8. Be practical in your interpretations.
9. Look for a lesson, especially something you've refused to face.
10. Relate dreams to current activity if possible.

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11. Remember that dreams may be prospective or retrospective.
12. Look for errors of omission or commission.
13. Reduce the symbolism to common sense.
14. Remember that dreams are primarily about the self.
15. Don't accept interpretations which seem inaccurate.
16. Search for the symbolic meaning of things to you via your associations.
17. Understand opposite sex figures as relating to your anima/animus.
18. Understand same-sex figures as possibly consisting of your shadow side.
19. Look for elements in the dream which seem out of place.
20. Enlist the help of others in interpreting your dreams.
21. Play around with free associations and working fantasies.
22. Avoid sleeping pills or alcohol if having difficulty in recall.
23. Use the "alarm clock" method as a last resort.
24. Remain awake for at least 10 minutes to allow for memory traces.

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