

# *The Psychology of Dreaming*

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## SECTION 5

### PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF DREAMING

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*I think my life would be easier, he said, if I could just get my selves to agree on something*  
– Brian Andreas

**W**e meet ourselves in our dreams. Our dreams are more than simply a reflection of our waking life but rather an encounter with all the parts of ourselves that have been affected by the emotional impact that our waking life situation has had on us. Furthermore, our dreams attempt to resolve not only the problem at hand, but underlying emotional conflicts and/or lifelong dysfunctional patterns that leave us stuck. We learn in dreams and thus ever so slightly change our perception or attitudes about ourselves and life. As Robert Stickgold (2009) stated, “When you wake, you understand how the world works better than when you went to bed.”

In this section I will discuss some of the psychological principles involved in that encounter and resolution process, from the viewpoint of some of the great psychologists and luminaries who have pioneered contemporary dream theory and dreamwork.

### Our Evolving Inner Model

I start by introducing a theoretical concept of how we perceive reality. Our perception of reality and our role in it is formed in our memory systems as a result of what and how we perceive and store the information received through our senses – that is then interwoven with existing information in our memory stores. As we experience life, we form a “world model” or *inner model* of our physical and social reality and who we are in relation to - neural “maps” that synthesize meaningful experiences from disparate pieces of information, stored by various groups of neurons in our brain. The *inner model* forms both a reference for processing perceptions in our waking state, as well creating the stage in our dream space. When our waking experience is not in agreement with or threatens this *inner model*, we become anxious, confused or conflicted. Resolving those conflicts or finding a way to accommodate the anomaly within our *inner model*, becomes a focus of our dreams.

Such a model is necessary since our brain has a finite capability, and we would not be able to operate from moment to moment if we had to think through and re-evaluate every bit of sensory information coming in as if it were new. Gerald Edelman (in Ratey, 2001) at the Scripps Institute indicates that we always perceive things, but only become conscious when we relate what we perceive to our internal experiences.

This handy reference or *inner model*, which helps us process reality, is not without problems. The brain has a finite learning ability and cannot accurately model the totality of external reality. Thus, the *inner model* will always be somewhat incomplete. External reality will always bring in new experiences that don't fit the internal view, stimulating the brain to reinforce old relatively unused pathways or create new ones. Our psychological and social model can be easily corrupted, because learned reactions create biases. Our *inner model* is heavily colored by our emotional and instinctive reactions (the “emotional tag” that our limbic system places on each sensory experience) – and heavily biased by the “rational” filtering of our pre-frontal cortex, our decision-making engine.

## **“Me” and “Not Me” Persona and Shadow**

Due to the biases and perceptual flaws discussed above, our *inner model* presents an interesting situation regarding our self-perception versus our actual behavior or how others perceive us. We typically consider those personality states that fit this inner model to be “Me” or who we are comfortable with being; our *ego*-self and *persona*. Other personality states that fall outside this image of self to be “Not Me.” the *Shadow* self as Jung termed it or alienated personality *fragment* as Fritz Perls called them.

The concept of *ego*, *persona*, *Shadow* and personality *fragments* will be discussed further in this section. I will also introduce another term for the *inner model*, offered by Stanley Krippner and David Feinstein (Krippner, 1999), that of *personal myth*. They consider the many elements of our *inner model* to form much like a complex mythology, a story of continuity that we create about ourselves and life to interweave and explain the ever changing natural or social phenomenon in which we find ourselves. The “Me” and “Not Me” in this terminology become the *existing myth* and the *counter-myth*.

## **The Role of the Dream**

Dreams seem to explore and test various ways of accommodating anomalous experiences that don't fit the *inner model*. Areas of our brain that play a role in detecting the anomalies in our experience, are active in REM dreams (the anterior cingulate and basal ganglia for example). Processing new experiences into long-term memory takes repetition and time (many hours), a process known as long-term potentiation – but dreams certainly provide both the time and the repetition. The sections on Do Dreams Have a Function, in particular the discussion on Memory Functions summarized the process. Researchers such as Ernest Hartmann (2011), Robert Stickgold & Matthew Walker (2013); Jessica Payne (2009), Josie Malinowski and Caroline Horton (2015), and Erin Wamsley (2016), observed that dreams selectively “illuminate” emotionally salient memories to enhance our memory systems, preferentially promoting lasting memory changes for emotional memories (emotion being a marker for which information is to be selectively processed and integrated into pre-existing memory networks). Associated ‘meaning’ or the general theme or ‘gist’ is extracted from those memories and dreams then simultaneously reorganize, interleave, and reintegrate fragments of the recent event with past experiences and related material into our *inner model* of reality and our role in it.

At night, the emotional residue of a daily experience will surface for the dreaming brain to process. Perls and Jung, among others, understood that nothing in the dream appears inconsequentially, that everything image, character or thing pictures some meaningful association with every other thing in the dream as well as with the mental and emotional situation of the dreamer. The result is a simulation of possible solutions which may eventually lead to resolution that either accommodates the experience within the *inner model* or alters the *inner model* to better match the experience. Even the best dreams don't transform the model all at once, because of the huge amount of past history and embedded learning that must be undone. With

few exceptions, it is generally a long slow journey, dream by dream, with moderate successes along the way.

One possible advantage that dream-state processing might have over that of the waking state, is the absence of the rational filtering in the dream state. There may be more access in a dream state to all available information, without our rational filters selectively interfering or interpreting. The dreaming state of the brain is also more interconnected (hyperconnected as Hartmann termed it) thus open to bringing in all of the associated memories, experiences as well as the disturbing and suppressed emotional memories and feelings – the disowned *fragments* of our personality. In dreams these are no longer hidden but can freely surface, express themselves and be dealt with unencumbered, creative “out of the box” thinking. In the end the eventual solution, must be experienced and accepted in some way in order to be woven into the *inner model*. Hartmann stated that it was emotion that drives this, Jung stated that it is the *ego (dream-self)* that is the gatekeeper that must accept the guidance. Researchers call it memory reconsolidation.

## Psychological Theories

Ever since the time of Sigmund Freud, many theories on dreams have been proposed, leading to a wealth of dreamworking practices. Some of them can be relatively ineffective, or even misleading, but many have remained useful for both therapeutic work and as building blocks for further exploration.

### Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud is probably best known for introducing the validity of dreams into the field of psychology, as well as into the awareness of the general population. He was born in 1856 and began as a neurologist. He established a link between neurotic symptoms and dreams early on, but he considered both as arising out of sexual conflicts, many originating in early childhood. It was this extreme emphasis on the sexual source of symptoms that alienated him from his contemporaries at the time and which, to this day, creates contention as to the value of these areas of his work.

Freud also introduced the concept of the *unconscious* as a foundation of his Psychoanalytic theory. He divided the human *psyche* (or mind) into the *Ego* (our *conscious* personality and what we are conscious of and can access – our memories), the *ID* (instincts, drives and the unconscious repressed content we can't easily access) and the *Superego*. Perhaps the broader value of Freud's contribution, whether the ideas originated with him or not, was in bringing awareness of certain principles to the field of psychology such as: the validity of dreams in working with symptoms; emphasis on what he called the latent content of dreams (the wishes and fantasies within them); emphasis on the pictographic, symbolic nature of dream imagery; and the significance of metaphor in the telling of the dream. Freud most often ascribed the latent of the dream and dream imagery to sexual, instinctual material that had never been conscious, as well as to material that has been banished to the *unconscious* because it was unacceptable. He promoted the idea of *condensation*, the fusion of several different elements, in which the content of a dream *element* is always far more extensive than what is apparent. He also considered it purposeful—reducing of the length of the material, that is, combining two or more complicated thoughts into a single image or scene. He promoted the concept of “secondary revision” which is a natural tendency of the mind to organize disconnected elements into a unified whole.

He published *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900. In later revisions, he discussed the topic of symbolism as disguised pictorial representations of latent thoughts. He saw symbolism not as meaningful metaphor, but as a distortion of dreams intended to disguise the latent content. To Freud much of the latent content in symbols had a sexual origin. For example, he related elongated objects to the male organ, hollow objects with openings to the female organ, and various motions such as climbing stairs to the sexual act.

His method of dreamwork was to decode, translate and “interpret” the dream, using free association, which he considered the fundamental rule of psychoanalysis. According to Freud, the motivation behind dreams was wish fulfillment and the function of dreams was the guardian of sleep - to continue sleep by censoring and disguising the disturbing latent dream thoughts so that the superego will not be offended and wake the dreamer.

## **Influential Contributors – post Freud**

While Freud popularized the notion that dreams are meaningful, the understanding of dreaming and practice of dreamwork evolved dramatically both within Freud’s time and ever since. There were many others who pioneered some of the lasting theories and techniques of dreamwork that we enjoy today. Discussions on the lasting contributions of many of those summarized below can be found in *Dreams: Understanding the Biology, Psychology and Culture* edited by Hoss, Valli and Gongloff (2019). A summary can also be found in Robert Van de Castle’s book *Our Dreaming Mind* (1994) as well as *Extraordinary Dreams and How to Work with Them* co-authored by Stanley Krippner (2002).

### ***Foundational Theories and Approaches***

**Carl Jung** (1875 - 1961) [featured below] was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and founder of Analytical Psychology. He considered dreams to be “the most readily accessible expression of the *unconscious* processes.” He was a colleague of Freud but broke with Freud on a number of concepts one being that dreams do not disguise but rather express, in symbolic form, the actual situation in the *unconscious* and that the symbolism is simply the language of the unconscious mind.

**Alfred Adler** (1870 – 1937) an Austrian MD and psychotherapist, founded of the school of Individual Psychology, was an early associate of Freud also differed in that he considered dreams to originate not so much in the unconscious but in unfinished and unsolved social problems, also that they are oriented toward the future as opposed to the childhood past. He contended that dream images were a type of language that represented the individual’s current life situation, and that individual concerns were openly revealed in dreams.

**Samuel Lowy** a Czech psychiatrist, who authored the *Psychological and Biological Foundations of Dream Interpretation* in 1942, proposed that dreams were biologically necessary and were stimulated both by psychological and physical stimulus – advancing our understanding of how emotion plays a role in dreams. He introduced the idea that physical changes such as digestion, illness and such produce stimuli causing dreams as well as such changes as anxiety, anger or sexual impulses.

**Fritz Perls** (1893 – 1970) [featured below] was a German-born psychiatrist and psychotherapist. In the 1940s and 1950s, he (and his wife Laura) developed Gestalt therapy Perls which incorporates *role-play* to identify and resolve emotional *impasses* and bring closure. It became part of a movement toward non-interpretive humanistic or existential-phenomenological approaches.

**Thomas French** and **Erica Fromm**, co-authoring *Dream Interpretation: a New Approach* in 1964. The book departs from Freud as the two contend the conflicts people have that are represented by their dreams and that dreams like waking life were dominated by the need to find a solution to a problem. His “focal conflict” theory described how a dream might focus on a recent problem which in turn is related to earlier problems from the dreamer’s life, all of which network in the dream to produce the dream content.

**Erik Erikson** (1902 – 1994) was a German-born American psychoanalyst and one of the originators of Ego Psychology and was known for coining of the phrase “identity crisis.” He developed an systematic dream analysis approach, which stressed the role of the *ego* and concepts of *ego* identity and socialization.

**Calvin Hall** was an American psychologist who in 1953 proposed a Cognitive Theory of Dreams, which promoted translating dream *elements* into the ideas to which they refer. In 1966 he and **Robert Van de Castle** developed a systematic process for content analysis called the *Quantitative Coding System*<sup>57</sup> and publishing it as the well-known name *The Content Analysis of Dreams*. Hall proposed that a content analysis of a person’s dream series makes it possible to determine the “conceptual systems” of that dreamer. He placed dream content in the following categories: conceptions of self, of others, of the world, of problems and conflicts, and of impulses, prohibitions and penalties.

**Harry Hunt** was as Canadian psychologist who published *Multiplicity of Dreams* in 1989. He contended that there are so many different types of dreams which are so multifaceted, with so many levels of meaning, that there would be no single physiological mechanism or approach that can account for all.

### ***Existential-Phenomenological and “Grassroots” Movement***

A movement began in the 1950’s which distanced dreamwork from the the need for a psychotherapist or analyst to “interpret” dreams to that of treated the dream as a here-and-now experience where the dreamer’s own meaning emerges from their own encounter and discovery of the connection between the dream and their waking life. It also moved away from the psychological assumption that dreams emanate from the *unconscious*. What has been often called the “grassroots movement” moved dreamwork further from clinical and professional settings to non-professional dreamwork and dream groups. Some has been quite positive where ethical concerns are honored. Unfortunately, some has been not so healthy where pop-myths about dreams, or “symbol dictionaries” of fixed meanings (as opposed to the dreamer’s own associations), or less than ethical interpretive approaches have proliferated.

The existential-phenomenological movement also includes many other great luminaries, just a few of note being: **Ludwig Binswanger** (Swiss psychiatrist and pioneer in Existential Psychology); **Medard Boss** (Swiss psychoanalytic psychiatrist who considered “dreams are not something we have ...we are our dreaming state,” used themes in dreams to bring forth memories, which he echoed it in a manner that put it into a lifetime perspective); **James Hillman** (an American psychologist who founded a movement called archetypal psychology, stressed “keeping the dream alive” with the idea that encountering dream images deepens our sense of personal identity to contain their potentials); **Eugene Gendlin & Carl Rogers** (who in the 1950s - 60s, added the non-verbal intuitive “felt sense” – waiting to discover how the body responds to a series of questions with a uniquely different answer than the initial cognitive response – allowing something to break through “directly from the unconscious”).

**Gestalt Therapy (Fritz Perls)** was part of a later Humanistic movement which much like the existential movement brought dreamwork into group settings using a non-interpretive approach where everything comes from the dreamer and is focused on the dreamer in relation to their whole being and environment (Perls, 1974).

**Montague Ullman** (1916 – 2008) is of particular note to this movement and to modern day group dreamwork. In 1979 he published *Working with Dreams* introducing the Ullman “Method” which he termed “dream appreciation” (Ullman, 1985). It is a non-threatening approach to working with dreams in a group setting which is widely used today – in both clinical as well as non-professional dream groups. At the core is the aim of “respecting the privacy of the dreamer and his authority over the dream” (only the dreamer can understand their personal meaning of the dream). His approach is perhaps best known from the phrase

“If this were my dream...” where during the process members of the dream group take the dream on and project their own meaning on it as if it were their own dream – suggestions which trigger the dreamer’s own associations with their waking life situation. A more detailed discussion of his work is featured below. **Jeremy Taylor** (1943 - 2018), helped to popularize “projective dreamwork” (Taylor, 1983), adhering to much the same structure and safety practices. Monte also founded the Dream Laboratory at the Maimonides Medical Center in New York where among other activities researched extrasensory dreams with Stanley Krippner, culminating the book *Dream Telepathy* (Ullman, et al.,1973).

## ***Contemporary Theory***

**Ernest Hartmann** (1934 - 2013). There is no way to adequately capture in one place all of the valuable theories, approaches and hard-core research that has contributed to the understanding of dreams and dreamwork as we do today – or to adequately project where it may be heading. Ernest Hartmann, professor of psychiatry at Tufts University School of Medicine, however, in his 2011 book *The Nature and Functions of Dreaming* has perhaps condensed much of what we have learned from research, contemporary psychology and dreamwork practice into an understandable theoretical construct that he calls the Contemporary Theory of Dreaming. Hartmann developed boundary theory (which he and other researchers have related to dream recall), the concept of the Central Image (CI) describing how dream imagery represents the emotional state of the dreamer and considered dreaming as relating to current-life emotional concerns and learning in dreams (weaving new content into existing mental systems) as a wake-to-dream-to-waking continuum between dreams and waking consciousness.

## **Four Notable Luminaries**

Two of the leading luminaries, who provided the foundation for much of modern-day dream psychology, as well as highly effective techniques for dreamwork that have lasted until this day are **Carl Jung** and **Fritz Perls**. **Monte Ullman** was a third who, may not have pioneered the deep theoretical foundations, but was an influential pioneer in revolutionary methods for group dreamwork in particular that have lasted until today. I will therefore focus on the work of these three in this part of the section.

There are two other contemporaries as well that I will note, **David Feinstein** who co-authored the book *Personal Mythology* with **Stanley Krippner**. They refine Jung’s relation with mythology, to that of “personal myth” (the *inner model*) with a simplicity that can be readily observed in the dynamics of the dream experience and thus personal dreamwork. Feinstein presents a functional model of the dream in *Dreamtime & Dreamwork* (Krippner, 1990) based on how it manages the dynamics between the *existing* or *old-myth*, *counter-myth*, and the evolving resolution or *new myth*, that I reference throughout this document.

## **Carl Jung – Analytical Psychology**

Carl Jung, who lived between 1875 and 1961, was an eminent Swiss psychologist and one of the founders of analytical psychology. He became friends with Freud for a few years but broke with Freudian psychology about the time he wrote *Symbols of Transformation*, which dealt with the symbolism of the *psyche*, and it’s mythological orientation. He regarded Freudian psychology, and its focus on sexuality as the primary psychological force, as narrow and controlling. Jung claimed that the aim of the *psyche* is not to suppress or repress, but to come to know one’s other side, to control the whole range of one’s capacities. He believed that dream to be projective or future focused, the *elements* frequently representing emerging forces in a person’s life, rather than sexual wishes and troublesome past experiences.

Jung had a healthy theory regarding the dream process that, unlike Freud, related dreaming more to the present state of the individual rather than traumas of early childhood. He related dreams to the “unfinished business” of waking life, observing that “thoughts that were not thought, and feelings that were not felt by day, afterwards appeared in dreams” (Jung, 1971a). Jung disagreed with Freud that the dream imagery was a “disguise” but rather considered dreams to be a “spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, of the actual situation in the *unconscious*” and the dream imagery to represent the “*unconscious* aspect of a conscious event appearing not as a rational thought but as a symbolic image” (Jung, 1964). To Jung, dreams presented the current state of our mental evolution, bringing forth content related to both our unrealized potential and our less desirable weak side. He saw the dream as a method for bringing unconscious material into consciousness, whether it came from the outside (something we never became fully aware of) or whether it came totally from the *unconscious*.

## Jung’s Model of the Psyche

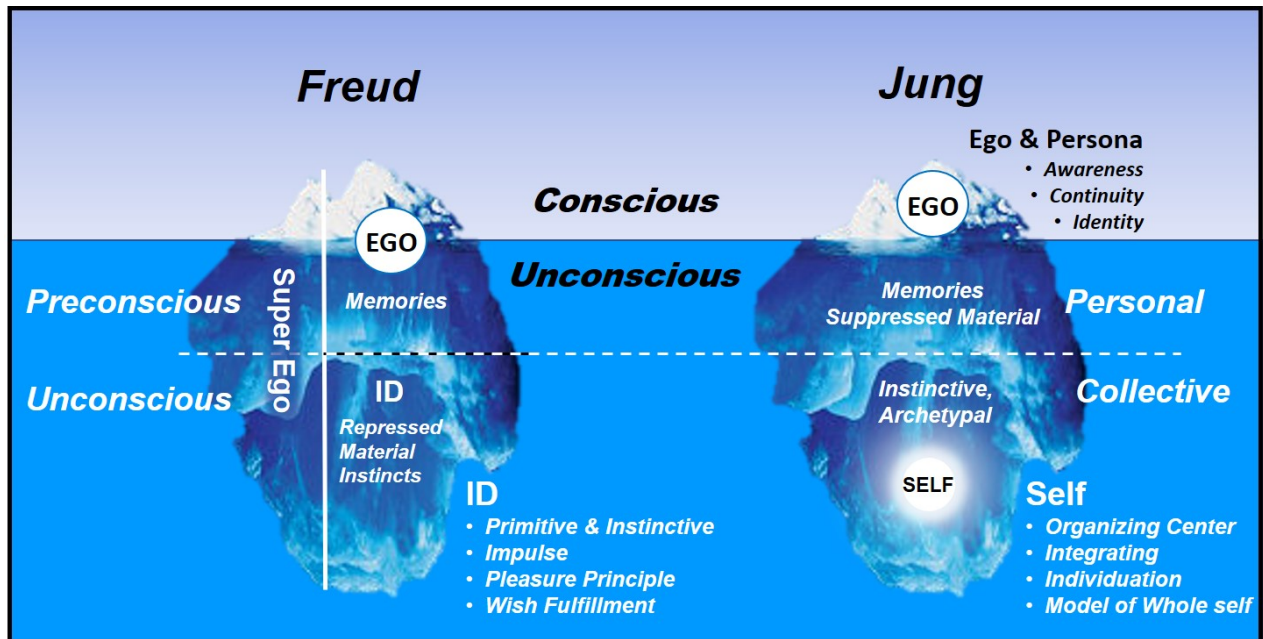
Jung (as did Freud) used the word “*psyche*” to describe our mental or psychological makeup. He roughly divided it into the *conscious* and the *unconscious* as did Freud but defined the *unconscious* very differently (see figure 5-1). The *conscious* is the only part of the mind and personality that we know directly. It grows through the application of what Jung called the four functions: thinking, feeling, sensing, intuition. The *ego* is the name Jung uses for the organizing element of the conscious mind (Hall & Nordby, 1973). The *ego* has a lot of control over our perceptions since it must acknowledge something in order to bring it into awareness. We develop a personality through a process he called *individuation*, which is highly driven by what the *ego* accepts into the conscious personality. Jung identified an alter-*ego* element that he called the *Shadow*, which contains our basic animal nature and instincts as well as our insights, and parts of self that make us uncomfortable. This division of *ego*-self is much like the concept of a “me” and “not me” division of the inner model presented at the beginning of the section.

As opposed to Freud’s division, Jung divided the *unconscious* into the *personal* and the *collective*. The *personal unconscious* contains all of our memories of our life experiences. It also contains *Shadow* material, both material we repress because it is considered undesirable or unattainable or material that was once conscious but is now suppressed or disregarded, perhaps because it was upsetting, unresolved or irrelevant. Within the *personal unconscious* lie “*complexes*” which act like separate little personalities clustering around instinctive motivations or *archetypes* (below) that drive our behavior at times. He referred to the *ego*, the *Shadow* and the *complexes* as the “field of consciousness” the contents that the *ego* attaches itself at times. The contents of the *collective unconscious* have never been conscious and are linked to our instinctive and genetic evolutionary past.

These *collective* contents are evidenced in dreams by primordial imagery (*collective* imagery) that Jung called *archetypes*. He not only saw their appearance within our dreams but in the common mythology of humans across cultures – thus considered them “collective”. These are discussed in more detail below.

Jung considered the *collective unconscious* as a “second psychic system” which acted independently of the *ego* and *conscious* self or personality. He stated, “We have no knowledge of how this *unconscious* functions, but since it is conjectured to be a psychic system it may possibly have everything that consciousness has, including perception, apperception, memory, imagination, will, affectivity, feeling, reflection, judgment, etc., all in subliminal form” “If the *unconscious* can contain everything that is known to be a function of consciousness, then we are faced with the possibility that it too, like consciousness, possesses a subject, a sort of *ego*...” (Jung, 1993).

**Figure 5-1**  
**The Psyche as Defined by Freud and Jung**



## Archetypes

The term "*archetype*" has its origins in the ancient Greek "archein" and "typos" which mean "original" and "pattern or model" – synonymous with *collective*. It relates to the "original pattern" of which all other similar persons, objects, or concepts are derived, modeled, or emulated. Carl Jung considered *archetypes* to be patterns or models of behaviors and personality, that arise from the *collective unconscious* and appear as *collective* imagery in our dreams. They are not learned but are innate, universal, and hereditary patterns or models which function to organize how we experience inner and outer life. Borrowing from a computer model, they are like the operating system of our mind.

While Jung identified hundreds of *archetypal* patterns and images and did not put a limit on the number that can exist, he identified **four major archetypes**: the *Self*, *Shadow*, *Anima & Animus* and *Persona*. He defined the *Self* (capital S) as both the totality of the *psyche* (containing all the *archetypes*) and the central organizing principle of the personality – that which drives the *individuation* process.

He also described twelve primary motivational *archetypes* (for example the Hero, Ruler, Caregiver, Rebel, etc.) which he grouped in 4 orientations (Ego, Order, Social, and Freedom). Furthermore, he described a great number of what he called "symbols of the *Self*" - personifications or the *Self* and patterns representing the forces of the *Self* (discussed further in the next section). The totality of his work with *archetypes* is beyond the scope of this document – I will only provide an introductory summary and orientation. More information can be found in *Man and His Symbols* (Jung, 1973) and many of his other *Collected Works* (Jung, n.d.).



## *The Self*

The *Self* represents the entire *psyche* the unified *unconsciousness* and *consciousness* of an individual which both complement one another to form this totality – a concept, Jung claimed, could only be grasped through the investigation of one's own dreams (Jung, 1973). It contains all of the *archetypes*. Jung considered it to be the central organizing principle of the personality from which the structural development or blueprint of the *ego* stems (Hall & Nordby, 1973); the *ego* being a structural counterpart of the original center. Thus, Jung suggested that there are two different centers of personality: the *ego* making up the center of consciousness; the *Self* at the center of personality and organizing principle. Perls referred it a representation of our non-actualized potential.

The *Self* can emerge as a superior male figure such as the cosmic or wise old man, guardian or superior woman such as priestess, sorceress, earth mother or an unknown unseen guiding figure. Although I don't consider the gender distinction between dreamer and *Self* that important in understanding the dream, Jung defined the *Self* appearing as the same gender as the dreamer.

Jung however identified a multitude of images as representation of the forces of the *Self* – which he called “symbols of the *Self*”. In addition to the various personifications of guiding or *compensating* figures discussed below, symbols of the *Self* can include geometric patterns such as: a) any of a multitude of center oriented, circular, spiral or mandala shapes representing a tendency toward centering and *wholeness*; b) images representing conflict resolution and conscious/*unconscious* integration such as black and white patterns, couples, marriage, and pairs or balanced groups of opposites. They can also include nature imagery, animal and organic representing our natural instinctive origins, such as the cave or deep water representing our *unconscious* and the *great tree* representing the slow but purposeful process of *individuation*, or the great stone representing the natural original substance of *Self*.

## *The Persona*

The *persona* is how we present ourselves to the world. The word "persona" is derived from a Latin word that literally means "mask." The *persona* represents all of the different social masks that we wear among various groups and situations intended to shield the *ego* and adapt to the world around us and fit in with the society in which they live. As we grow, particularly as children and adolescents, we learn that they must behave in certain ways in order to be accepted by our parents and peers or to fit into society's expectations and norms. The *persona* develops as a social mask to contain the instinctive urges and emotional impulses and reactions that are not considered socially acceptable. It adopts many of the motivational archetypes mentioned earlier to adapt to situations in life. Becoming too closely identified with our *persona* can lead us to lose sight of our true selves. The development of our *persona* is in part what *fragments* our personality into the “me” and “not me” discussed earlier – the parts we consider acceptable to reveal and the parts we feel we must suppress. The *persona* may appear in dreams as the misconceived views of the *dream-self*, a figure you identify with in the dream or a person you know from waking life whose personality is like the *persona* you are projecting or wish you could project in the situation the dream is dealing with.

## *The Shadow*

Jung indicated that one of the initial images encountered in the process of *individuation* is that of the *Shadow*, perhaps to convince the dreamer to “accept what seems to be criticism from the *unconscious*” (Jung, 1973). The *Shadow* represents lesser known elements of the *Self* or a suppressed aspect of the personality, which have not been integrated into the *conscious* personality and which the *ego* does not identify with. These elements can arise from instinctive urges, desires, weaknesses, disowned or suppressed or repressed material which the person feels are negative and unacceptable. A person might consider them

unacceptable to one's moral values or the norms or expectations of peers, parents, or society. The *Shadow* also might represent positive material and desires that are considered unattainable. Even vulnerable, sensitive or loving qualities might be denied, due to a hurtful experience or peer and family pressures and culture. One danger of the *Shadow* is that we tend to project it on others – we often dislike or react to something about another person because we dislike that within ourselves.

In dreams the *Shadow* often appears as a dark or shadowy, unseen or unknown figure, often of the same sex as the dreamer (as Jung defined it), acting in opposition or as a balance to the views of the *ego*. It can appear as a figure or dream *element* in a repulsive, frightening or threatening role, when it represents characteristics that you have rejected within yourself. When you face the *Shadow* in a dream you may find you are facing some aspect of yourself as in this example: “*I have had this recurring dream for years where I am running away in fear from some dark figure. One night I turned around in my dream and faced the person. It turned out it was me!*”

### ***The Anima or Animus***

In Jung's definition the *Anima*, in Jung's definition, is the *feminine* component in the man's *psyche* that balances the *masculine* component that a male *ego* generally identifies with, either due to cultural or social norms or the female role models in his life. It often appears as an unknown female figure in a man's dreams, sometimes a mother image or mate of the *Shadow*. Likewise, the *Animus* is the *masculine* counterpart in a woman's dreams, the *masculine* component within the female *psyche*; often appearing as an unknown male figure in a woman's dreams. Personally, I consider the effort to define which is *Anima* and *Animus* in a dream, in relation to the dreamer's gender, to be overly complex and counterproductive and of little help in working with a dream. The attributes have little to do with the dreamer's biological gender in any case. It is more productive to understand the unknown male and female figures as representing *masculine* and *feminine* attributes within you.

Although they have little to do with your actual gender – the definition of these attributes tend to align with biological, inherited and cultural norms to a reasonable degree – implying a collective, inherited, perhaps genetic origin to these *archetypal* attributes. There are no hard and fast definitions, but *masculine* attributes are generally considered qualities traditionally or culturally associated with men, a few being: father, strength, assertiveness, aggressiveness, individual dynamics, a tendency toward left brain processing (linear logic) and such. *Feminine* attributes on the other hand might be considered qualities traditionally or culturally associated with women, some being: mother/nurturing, intuitive, communicating, social group dynamics, a tendency toward right brain processing (wholistic and intuitive).

A balanced personality means the person has access to either depending on the situation, thus the changing mixtures of male and female figures in our dreams. The mix of male and female figures in a dream may therefore represent the mix of attributes we are applying to the situation the dream is dealing with – and perhaps the introduction of one or more unknown figures, or the union of male and female figures (embracing, sex, marriage, or a morphed image) might be a re-balancing that the dream is trying to establish to resolve the situation.

### **Jung's Transcendent Function**

Jung (1971d) claimed that the driving force within the *collective* unconscious has no deliberate plan outside of an urge towards self-realization. He claimed that dreams act on a natural tendency towards balance or *wholeness* through a *transcended function* which enables transition from one psychic condition to another resulting in a new attitude toward oneself and life. Jung indicated that the aim is *individuation*, to become a *whole* person by reconciling our *conscious* and *unconscious* parts.

## *Compensation*

The *transcendent function* depends on a principle he called *compensation* or the action of the *unconscious* to balance or complement the conflicted viewpoint of the *ego*. The corrective or *compensating* action of dreams appears in many forms: a) a moment of surprise or insight that places our beliefs or actions into perspective perhaps revealing our misconceptions that have left us stuck in conflict; b) revealing and or guiding us toward an alternative solution to that of the *ego* so as to bring about a reversal in attitude and viewpoint; or c) leading us through, or having us observe, a dream experience that demonstrates a new approach or viewpoint that works. In this process, conscious (*ego*) and unconscious (*Self* or *Shadow*), views are juxtaposed in an “interactive tension” out of which an eventual third element (view or attitude) evolves which is a higher-level integration of the two.

The concept of *compensation* is supported by some research studies. Patrick McNamara (2002) at the Boston University School of Medicine termed this compensating or alternative resolution scenario a *counterfactual* (a mental simulation of what might happen if a different decision were made) and observed the introduction of *counterfactuals* in 97% of dreams studied in a 34-subject study.

## *Individuation*

The eventual aim is self-realization or *individuation* brought about through *compensation* that leads to the eventual integration of the *conscious* and *unconscious* (personality and inner self) such that a person's *unconscious* and the *conscious* mind moves together, bringing about a *transcendence* from one state to another in the *psyche*, expressing itself as a new attitude and awareness. The goal is self-actualization or becoming the *whole* individual you were meant to be.

Jung considered *individuation* to be a spiraling process around the primordial or archetypal image of *Self*, a journey whereby “a person becomes whole, calm, fertile, and happy when the *conscious* and the *unconscious* have learned to live at peace and to complement one another” (Jung, 1964). Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz writes, "Our dream life creates a meandering pattern in which individual strands or tendencies become visible, then vanish then return again - but - if one watches this meandering design over a long period of time, one can observe a sort of hidden regulating or directing tendency at work, creating a slow, imperceptible process of psychic growth - the process of *individuation*. Gradually a wider and more mature personality emerges" ("The Process of Individuation," in Jung, 1964).

## *Archetypal Imagery of the Transcendent Process*

Jung identified patterns in dreams, he called “symbols of the *Self*, associated with the processes of the *transcendent function* (above) taking place such as *compensation*, *integration*, *transcendence* and *individuation*. The process generally begins as an **encounter** with the problem or conflict, a picture-metaphor of your waking emotional situation which can contain *archetypal* imagery of conflict such as a pair of identical images (equal forces in conflict). Images or themes may appear of turning within, a giving up of ego control; what Jung called a “*death of the ego*.” This can include journey imagery; searching; descending stairs or going into darkness or within the earth. under, down stairs into the depths; fall/winter; sunset. The dream (the *unconscious Self*) then generally introduces a a form of guidance or *compensation*, a scenario that opposes or corrects for the view or actions of the *ego* or *dream-self*. Compensating forces can appear as a personification of the *Self* (wise or guiding figure), a voices or words, a moment of surprise, decision, insight or discovery. Organizing and *integration* forces are often introduced with the aim of focusing and directing the *ego* and dream scenario toward achieving completion or a balanced *whole* individual. They can appear as a unification of opposites or balanced mandala like geometric imagery

including: male/female unification, black and white patterns, geometries and numbers relating to balance and *wholeness* such as four or four-ness and the circle and center oriented imagery such as the circle with something in the center; the spiral, the cross or circular or spiral movement. Imagery related to the underlying aim of *individuation*, such as the “great tree”, “great stone” or crystal may appear. And as *integration* and *transcendence* is achieved or projected within the dream scenario it will often be accompanied by a rewarding ending with emergence, renewal or *rebirth* imagery (child, egg, spring, nature) including illumination or moving into the light,

## Jung’s “Purposeful Structure” of Dreams

Jung contended that dreams have a “purposeful structure,” that when present in a dream or series of associated dreams, has four stages:

- 1) **Exposition:** The opening scene (sometimes described as a going within and encountering the unconscious and emotional aspect of a conscious event, appearing as *symbolic* imagery).
- 2) **Development:** The emergence of the plot (which Jung indicated was a *compensating* plot that attempts to bring the *conscious* and *unconscious* views together in an interactive tension with the aim of an *integrated* solution).
- 3) **Culmination:** Something significant occurs, and the main dream figure responds (the dream-self may respond to the *compensating* event - a moment of opposition, insight, guidance, discovery - by rejecting, arguing or accepting or following the guidance and reversing its direction or viewpoint).
- 4) **Lysis:** The result or solution of the dream’s action (which might be a resolution, *transcendence*, or a symbolic *rebirth* evolves as the *ego* accepts the *unconscious* guidance; *integration* occurs as the *conscious* and *unconscious* moves together and a new self/attitude/viewpoint emerges).

Jung observed a strong similarity between dream imagery and this “structure” with the work of alchemists – considering alchemy to be a historical counterpart of his “psychology of the *unconscious*” and analogous to the process of *individuation*. The work of alchemy was a process of creating the philosopher's stone an alchemical substance capable of turning base metals such as mercury into gold (something eternal that can never be lost or dissolved, comparable to the divine). The Alchemical processes originally had four stages which Jung (1971b) saw as similar to the fundamental process of *individuation*: Negredo (blackness and decomposition/death); Albedo (whiteness, integration, life conquers death); Citrinitas (drawing of the inner light of one’s own being) and Rubedo (*wholeness* and the awareness of one’s divine *Self*).

Jung also found a strong relationship between the role played by figures in our dreams and the cross-cultural myths of humankind. Mythology depicts reality as mystical patterns, and life as directed by unknown forces greater than us, which must be appeased by ritualistic behavior. He saw our life’s journey and the journeys experienced in the longer series of associated dreams, to be similar and much like the “Hero’s journey” (Campbell, 1949) of which there are many variations, but which contain three basic phases – with many similarities to his “purposeful structure”:

- **Departure** – beginning in the “Ordinary World” (daily life) there is a “call” to adventure/action and sometimes a “refusal” of the call;
- **Initiation:** begins with “meeting the mentor” who gives the hero something to provide courage; then a “Crossing the Threshold” followed by “Tests, Allies and Enemies”; eventually facing the inner conflict or “Approach to the Inmost Cave” followed by a symbolic “Death and Rebirth” and finally “Reward” (emerging as a stronger person, often with a prize);
- **Return:** begins with the “The Road Back” (returning home with the reward, acclaim, vindication, exoneration; choosing between the personal objective and that of a higher cause); “Resurrection” (the final battle having far-reaching consequences to others); and “Return with the Elixir” (returning home to the “Ordinary World” a changed person).

We can observe this Hero's journey in the myths and classic stories of mankind cross-culturally, as well as in many of the popular hero movies produced by Hollywood. Although all of these mythic stages are certainly not contained within our dreams – the themes of departure, initiation and return can be readily observed in relation to Jung's concept of *transcendence* and *individuation*. The dream journey often begins the *departure*, "crossing the threshold" or going within, when our *conscious* attempts to resolve fear and conflicts in the "ordinary world" no longer works. It is a symbolic giving in or "death of the *ego*" which often symbolized by descending within the earth, going into darkness, fear of the unknown or impending death. In order for you to grow into your full potential, the old view of self (the existing *ego*) must change, or symbolically "die," so that the new self can be born – thus the journey becomes a symbolic "death and rebirth" which is necessary to becoming a whole and fully integrated self. So, in this journey we enter an *initiation* – the *conscious dream-self* or *ego* confronts the fearful or uncomfortable of parts of ourselves we suppress or repress because we see them as evil, uncontrollable or undesirable. This is often experienced as loss or search (often trying to return to someplace, something or someone – your car, home, a companion) confronting one-self (our *Shadow* side, our fears, conflicts and misconceptions). But at some point, the *unconscious* (the guiding forces of the Self, the "mentor"), introduces a *compensating* scenario to balance the misconceptions of the *dream-self* or *conscious ego*. The dream story or stories continue as a juxtaposition of *conscious* and *unconscious* views in an interactive tension, until (as Jung stated) out of the tension a 3rd element is formed, an integration of the two or "rebirth," which manifests as a new attitude. There is a return – a reversal, a discovery, a *transcendence* as the *dream ego* accepts the guidance accompanied by an emotional reinforcement or celebration of the new self – the completion of another cycle toward *individuation*.

Jung observed that total achievement of *individuation* does not complete itself in one dream, nor a series of dreams nor even a lifetime, but is cyclical, achieving stages of completion little by little, sometimes in large breakthroughs (he called "Big Dreams"), but always striving toward the potential whole being, the *Self*. Carl Jung considered "Big Dreams" to: resemble "visions" more than other nocturnal dreams; have a consistent "purposeful structure" that is cleanly focused and be *archetypal* in nature with "*collective unconscious*" origins.

### ***Illustrative Example***

The following "*Rusty Car*" dream (illustrated in figure 5-2) might illustrate some of Jung's *archetypal* theories as well as the principles of the *transcendent function*, his concept of a *purposeful structure* as some recognizable elements of the "hero's journey." The dreamer in this case was offered a teaching position in an area of expertise he had abandoned many years before. He felt it would be too difficult to resurrect his talents, so he decided to turn the position down the next day. But that night, he dreamt: "*I am wandering through a red sandy desert and see an old rusty car. I look inside and find the driver is not moving. I give him up for dead. My unknown companion from behind says "the man is just asleep" and urges me to wake the man. I argue that it is useless, but after much discussion I reluctantly give in and shake the man. When I do, both the driver and the car come to life and the car transforms into a newer car.*" The *transcendence* or the change in viewpoint did seem to be achieved within the dream. The next day the dreamer (without understanding the connection between his dream and the offer) woke with a completely different view, reversed his decision and accepted the assignment. It was only upon reflection much later that he recognized the role the dream may have played in that decision.

Let's look at some of the elements of the *transcendent function* in this dream from within the what Jung called his "purposeful structure":

- ***Exposition*** (opening scene): The dream begins with a "departure" a journeying into the desert where the dreamer metaphorically encounters the "*unconscious* aspect of the conscious event." The conscious even was the offer of a teaching assignment and the ego inflation that went with it. The *unconscious*

aspect is the *Shadow* material, the conflict, the feelings of inadequacy that his talents were old, “rusty” and unrecoverable; and his inner motivation (the driver inside) as dead.

- **Development** (*compensating* plot emergence): The *compensating* forces of the *unconscious Self* (unseen companion/voice from behind – the “mentor”) introduces an alternative view and resolution scenario – “*the man is just asleep*” and urges him to wake the driver.
- **Culmination** (something significant occurs, and the main dream figure responds): The *dream-self* (*conscious ego*) argues with the *unconscious* guidance that it is useless – but after much urging eventually reverses its position and shakes the man.
- **Lysis** (conclusion). In the end a *transcendence* occurs with the restoral and *rebirth* of the driver and the car – the “reward”. Here a new resolution image emerges, as a result of the *conscious* (*dream-self* or *ego*) and the *unconscious* (resolution scenario) moving together.

### Figure 5-2 The “Rusty Car” Dream

Introducing a *counterfactual* or alternative resolution scenario



## Jung’s Dreamwork Approach

Jung gave a group of lectures in 1935 at the Institute of Medical Psychology in London, which were published as *Analytical Psychology: Its Theory & Practice* (Jung, 1968). There he discusses in some detail his approach to dream analysis as well as an active imagination, which he developed to investigate content originating in the *unconscious* psychic process. Jung considered dreams to have two levels of interpretation:

- **Objective** or analytical: in which some of the symbols in our dreams represent external realities.
- **Subjective**: in which the symbols represent aspects of the dreamer’s *psyche*—some features of the dreamer’s psychological life or their *individuation* process taking place.

Jung treated the dream as a text in which one “does not understand the language”. He developed two approaches for this, plus a third, *Active Imagination*:

- **Amplification**: The *objective* approach where he explored the dreamer’s own associations

- **Archetypal:** The *subjective* approach of exploring the parallels with *collective unconscious* imagery to decode the language. Here he explored *archetypal* structures of the *unconscious*. Jung considered *archetypal* symbols to be “fixed,” requiring an understanding of studies in mythology, folklore, comparative religion, archeology, language, and anthropology.
- **Active Imagination:** an approach Jung used with any mental impression - a dream scene or *element* from waking life. He didn't consider it fantasy, but rather an active purposeful creation where the images take on a life of their own and events develop according to their own logic. It begins by concentrating on an initial image then as you concentrate on the mental picture, it begins to stir, and become enriched by details that develop into a complete story. The approach is letting things just fall into consciousness, being careful not to interrupt or influence the flow with our *conscious* will.

Jung considered dreams to be about a particular unresolved problem about which the dreamer has a misconceived *conscious* judgment. He approached dream analysis by emphasizing that it is not safe to interpret a dream without considering the detail of its context and “Never apply any theory but always ask the dreamer how they feel about the dream images.” Whereas Freud's approach was retrospective, with a focus on past events, perhaps in the dreamer's childhood (trauma, sexual fixations and desires, and such), Jung's dream approach is prospective. Jung treats the dream like a map of the dreamer's future psychological evolution toward a more balanced relationship between his *ego* consciousness and the *unconscious*.

Jung did not like to analyze one dream by itself, concerned about that being too speculative. He considered the *psyche* and the psychological process taking place as continuous, that an individual dream was “just one flash or observation in a psychic continuity that became visible for a moment—a continuity that is connected with the previous dreams.” He therefore preferred to compare a series of dreams, so as to observe the process that is going on in the *unconscious* from dream to dream, the history before and history after the dream. Jung presumed we are dreaming all the time, although we are not aware of it by day because of the nature of the waking conscious state.

Jung split with Freud's methods in a number of ways. He abandoned free association, considering it to lead to a multitude of associations and a multitude of *complexes*. He stated, “I want to know what the dream has to say about the *complexes* [what the *unconscious* is doing with them] not what they are.” In further opposition to Freud, Jung stated that dream do not conceal stating: “The dream is the whole thing, and if you think there is something behind it, or that the dream has concealed something, there is no question but that you simply do not understand it.” He thus treated the dream as if it were a text that he simply did not understand properly—where the words are unknown or the text is fragmentary, thus he applies a method a philologist (one who studies linguistics and meaning) would apply in reading such a difficult text—a method he called *amplification*. Rather than interpret, Jung would explore the dreamer's associations asking, “How does that thing appear to you,” or, in other words, “What is your context?” or “What are your associations with the words you used to describe the dream image”. He looked for the personal mental issue which the term in the dream narrative is related. Whatever information the dreamer brought forth, he put in the context of the dream. Jung did not like speculation in dealing with a dream, stating, “I can assure you that the results are more interesting when you apply things that are human than when you apply a most dreadful monotonous interpretation” In dealing with personal *elements* in a dream, he applied a certain principle, stating, “When you are dealing with the *personal unconscious* you are not allowed to think too much and to add anything to the associations of the dreamer. Can you add something to the personality of someone else?”

However, when dealing with an *archetype*, he took a different approach that requires knowledge of the *collective unconscious* and the imagery it produces. He taught that an *archetype* is not from the dreamer's personality but relates in a *collective* manner to the mental structure of the dreamer, so the role of the

therapist (who understands cultural and *archetypal* motifs) can provide those associations in the appropriate context for the dreamer. For example, he might observe the manifesting of “inferior functions” (the *Shadow*) as projections on those the dreamer is dealing with in waking life.

To “translate” the dream, he would often insert these personal and *collective* associations back into the text of the dream narrative, and “translate” the text by rereading it to the dreamer for a revealing context and insights. He considered a scene change as a point at which the representation of an unconscious thought has come to a climax, and it becomes impossible to continue that motif – so the dream goes on to the next. Jung would also observe and point out where a particular *archetypal* motif and its various representations appeared through a series of the person’s dreams.

Note that the *Transformative Dreamwork* approach in this document (section 7 and table 7-1), incorporates some of Jung’s approaches: the treatment of a scene change as a separate dream segment; in Part #1 the use of *amplification* and the inserting of associations back into the text of the dream; and in Part #3 work with basic *archetypal* imagery to identify the plan and guidance driving the *individuation* or transformative process that might be taking place.

## Fritz Perls - Gestalt Therapy

Fritz Perls (1893 – 1970) was a noted German-born psychiatrist and psychotherapist. His psychoanalytic training took place at the Psychoanalytic Institutes of Berlin, Vienna and Frankfurt. He, with his wife Laura Perls, developed Gestalt Therapy while in the United States from 1946 until 1970.

Gestalt means “whole” or the totality of the inner and outer self in its environment, and much like Jung, Perls considered the aim to be closure or becoming “whole” and re-owning the fragmented or “alienated” parts of the personality. At the core of the Gestalt Therapy process is enhanced awareness of sensation, perception, bodily feelings, emotion, and behavior, in the present moment. Relationship is emphasized, along with contact between the self, its environment, and the other.

### Gestalt Theory

Perls also considered the dream as part of the normal function of the mind, calling it “the most spontaneous expression of the existence of the human being” (Perls, 1974). Like Jung’s theory of *individuation*, he referred to a similar singular inborn process for the individual, calling it the process of “self-actualization.” He claimed that, in essence, we are whole unified individuals, but that we “fragment” ourselves. We dissociate or alienate parts (*fragments*) of our personality that we don’t like or can’t deal with. Gestalt Therapy provided an approach for re-owning these *fragments*, and for re-unification (Perls, 1974).

Perls claimed that everything in the dream is “part of the dreamer” and that each of the dream figures and images we see in dreams outside of our *dream-self* is a part of our own personality or “disowned parts of oneself,” which “should be re-owned.” He saw a relationship between how we relate to those fragments in our dreams and how we relate to others and events in our waking life. These personality *fragments* are not only *projected* as images in our dreams but are *projected* on other people in our waking life. If there is a part of ourselves we do not like, then we often find ourselves disliking someone who reminds us of that part. This fragmentation was evidenced in the “*Rusty Car*” dream as the discarded car and dead driver – both aspects of the dreamer that in the end were re-owned.

Perls also claimed that dreams are an opportunity to get in touch with, interact with, and re-own these alienated *fragments* to bring about the unified, self-actualized being. He claimed that a primary biological process of “gestalt formation” drives this activity whereby any imbalance in the personality creates an



immediate need to correct this imbalance. He discussed at least three basic types of Gestalts that dreams deal with: **unfinished business**; **conflicts** within yourself or with others; and **non-actualized potentials**. This is similar to Jung, who also indicated that dreams work on unfinished business and are driven by evolving forces within the *unconscious*, forces that contain representations of the fully actualized Self.

Perls indicated that there is a regulating law, whereby the more urgent situation becomes the controller and takes over. Our dreams on any particular night, therefore, may be related to the most urgent piece of unfinished business left with us before we fell asleep. This was the conflict pictured in the “*Rusty Car*” dream – his rusty talents represented as the rusty car and inner motivation being deal pictured as the dead driver inside. This perhaps explains why we are able, with proper self-training, to incubate and stimulate a dream on a certain problem. By concentrating on the problem as we fall asleep, we are sometimes able to place the request as the most urgent piece of unfinished business in our sleeping mind.

With Jung, the barrier to becoming individuated or self-realized, involved a fear of accepting the unknown, the *unconscious*. Perls called the barrier to self-actualization an “*impasse*” – a point at which neither external nor internal support is forthcoming, nor has authentic self-support been achieved. It is a state of anxious limbo in which the person has nowhere to turn until a new support mechanism is found.

By becoming aware of self and permitting the process of “organic self-regulation” to take place, Perls indicated that the individual abandons the tendency towards self- manipulation and manipulation of one’s environment. They no longer become fragmented because they experience a “fit” between the external experience and the internal view of who they are. This self-regulating principle that Perls described is similar to the natural centering force discussed by Jung. According to Perls, as the personality becomes unified, it no longer requires support from the environment but becomes more capable of self-support. The transformation from environmental support to self-support, Perls called “maturation.”

## Perls’ Dreamwork Methods

Contrasting himself with Freud, Perls considers Gestalt dreamwork to be the “royal road to integration.” Integration cannot be produced but is rather a process that begins in the dreamwork session and may take place at any point: while enacting the dream, through dialogue between “parts” (dream figures or other *elements*) in the dream, or outside the dreamwork over time. The term “integration” in a Gestalt sense does not necessarily mean a resolution, it often means (as it did with Jung) developing an ability to recognize and contain both sides of a conflict at the same time.

The key value of the Gestalt approach is in “enacting” the dream. He asks the dreamer to: “play this part,” “take the other role,” “set the stage,” and such. Enacting or *role-play* is not interpretation; it allows the dreamer to gain an embodied sense of the deeper personal meaning of the dream, to recapture motivational energies that have been inhibited, and re-own “disowned/alienated *fragments*” - aspects of themselves that they have suppressed. The dreamer is helped to “become” the person or object in their dream because each is an unexpressed part of themselves —the expression of these dream figures (their motivations, concerns, and aspirations) can be quite different than the dreamers *ego* view and expression.

Note that the *role-play* step in the *Transformative Dreamwork* (section 7 and table 7-1) protocol was based on Gestalt *role-play*. I adapted parts of the more in-depth approach, aimed at a therapy, into a simple 6 to 7 question scripted *role-play* that is easier to learn and apply when the aim is dreamwork. It uses what I found to be the some of the most effective guiding questions in a Gestalt therapeutic session. It is structured, however, in a way that limits the questioning to a fairly safe level aimed at revealing underlying emotional conflicts but avoiding going more deeply than needed for basic dreamwork.

## Example

If we were to apply Perls' approach to the "Rusty Car" dream for example, it might go something like this. Perls: "Play the part of the rusty car". The dreamer might respond: "I am an old rusty car. I feel abandoned, no longer wanted, left to rust. I wish someone would take an interest in me and restore me, but I fear it would take way too much effort to bring me back to my original condition." Note that the *role-play* permits the dream *element* to express itself (to be given a voice) and reveal the core emotional conflict pictured by the image – in this case the conflict behind the dreamer's decision to decline the teaching position. The conflict of feeling abandoned and seeing this invitation of a teaching position as someone taking an interest in him, wanting to restore him to his prior self – versus – fearing his talents are too rusty and that it would take way too much effort to restore them. The power behind role play is that it moves that the rational *ego* filters to the side (focuses the *ego* on play acting) permitting the *unconscious* to speak and reveal material that could take hours to get to (if at all) using cognitive methods of symbol or metaphor analysis.

## Feinstein & Krippner - Personal Mythology

Whereas Jung related dreams to the mythology of humankind, dreams can relate to a more personal mythology, according to David Feinstein, PhD in Stanley Krippner's books *Dreamtime and Dreamwork* (Feinstein, 1990) and *Personal Mythology* (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988). Feinstein considers dreams as a place where we meet and reconcile the day's events within the context of how we perceive and make sense of ourselves, this context taking on the characteristics of a deep "personal mythology." This is, in a sense, the nature of the *inner model* to which I have been referring.

Our *inner model* is naturally structured by organizing a complex set of images, emotions and concepts around a core theme. Feinstein claims that this core theme has all the aspects of a myth. We often associate the word myth with the lack of reality. However, in its true definition, a myth relates to the way the mind interprets reality. According to J. Campbell (1983) the characteristics of a myth include: the urge to comprehend the world in a meaningful way; the search for a marked pathway through life; the need to establish secure and fulfilling relationships, and the longing to understand one's part in the mystery of the cosmos. These characteristics, according to Feinstein, are similar to the way the mind organizes its inner model or view of self and reality. Thus he terms this inner model the *personal myth*. This personal mythic structure is similar in some ways to what Carl Jung referred to as the "field of consciousness" that contains the *ego*, the *Shadow* and the *complexes* to which the *ego* attaches itself at times.

Since one's personal myth is the mind's interpretation of reality, rather than absolute reality, it does have an aspect of fantasy. As we mature, the myth is modified to better fit our experience, but the core theme remains an interpretation, with all of its limits and internal biases. By recognizing that events in a dream are taking their story line from the viewpoint of a personal myth, it will permit us to better understand the dream in relation to our view of self. The personal myth concept relates well to Jung's description of dreams as associated with the collective mythology of man. The approach presents a way of understanding dreams from a personal aspect, as well as explaining how some imagery and core themes are common across the human cultures. Feinstein indicates that personal myths are the product of four interacting sources:

- 1) Biology - capacities for symbolism and narrative found within the brain structure, along with the impact of one's physical characteristics on one's unique mythology;
- 2) Culture - the ubiquitous influence of the society on one's evolving personal myths;
- 3) Personal history - any emotionally significant experience that impacts one's evolving mythology;
- 4) Transcendent experiences - episodes of profound insight and vision that expand, inspire and enlighten.

This is not unlike the teachings of Jung (1971e) who saw the unfolding myth in dreams as a function of: 1) biological evolution including the evolution of the mind or *psyche*; 2) cultural influence; 3) personal

experience and 4) the personal state of *individuation* and *transcendence* (union of *conscious* and *unconscious*). Feinstein states that dreams incorporate not only the myth and counter-myth, but (like Jung) deeper *archetypal* mythic structures as well. Taking the Jungian approach one step further, he proposes that external experiences (a waking experience that does not fit the myth) trigger the conflict between the *conscious* and *unconscious*. He also expands the concept of the internal mythical structure to include the *collective myth* (the Jungian *archetypes*).

By looking at our dreams, we can see the structure of our personal myth. Dreams reveal how our internal view of reality may be accommodating, or failing to accommodate, our waking experiences. Feinstein (1990) states that the dream process is mediation between the older myth and the emerging counter-myth. The dream works on a new experience by relating it to a reconstruction of the past; relating it to recent events; or considering possible future alternatives. The outcome can be one of three events:

- 1) **Sustaining the existing myth:** the older myth is sustained (your mind justifies things as they are or accommodates a new situation as fitting into the existing model in some way). This involves preserving the inner model or existing myth (or old-myth) perhaps assimilating the new, and possibly threatening waking event, into the existing mythic structure. The event may be compared with similar past events to find a fit or projected into the future in order to dissolve the fears.
- 2) **Strengthening the counter-myth:** an alternative view is enhanced or created by the new experiences that don't fit the existing myth. Sometimes when we can't deal with a disturbing event, or some aspect of our self, we suppress it into the *unconscious*. Unfortunately, such events do not disappear, they join a complex of similar memories, perhaps strengthening a counter-myth (*Shadow* as Jung termed it). At some point, a counter-myth may grow strong enough to make itself known in dreams or through the emergence of *dysfunctional* behaviors in waking life.
- 3) **Integrating Conflicting Myths into a Higher Order Synthesis:** the two conflicting myths become integrated or evolve into a new mythical structure (your mind finds a new way of perceiving the situation). Sometimes our mythic structure must be altered or transformed to achieve this balance. The conflict may be between an *existing myth* and a *Shadow* like counter myth or between an *existing myth* and positive emerging *counter-myth* or alternative. To achieve balance within the psyche the conflicting myths are integrated and transformed into a new myth – a new viewpoint, attitude or ego state. (This is the third element Jung spoke of in the transcendence which arises out of the interactive tension between opposing views).

The results of all of this interaction are three different types of dreams:

- 1) Dreams which may not come to resolution, but rehearse interactions between the myth and counter-myth (where dream figures or events might be appear in opposing or integrating activity - interactive tension as Jung called it);
- 2) Dreams which present a new mythical structure, a higher order synthesis of the most viable elements of the old myth and counter-myth (dreams that provide and emotionally reinforce a moment of surprise, insight, discovery or resolution)
- 3) Dreams, which relate how one might bring that new synthesis into daily life (dreams that provide guidance or resolution scenarios analogous to a solution that could be applied in waking life).

This is similar to the way Jung (1971e) described the process taking place in dreams: 1) the *unconscious* first attempts to *compensate* for the views of the *conscious* mind (mediation between myth and counter-myth), and 2) the process eventually results in a *transcendence* where a union is formed between the *conscious* and the *unconscious*. There is also commonality with the Perls approach whereby: 1) we first encounter the alienated parts of our personality; and 2) we interact with these parts in an attempt to create an eventual balance or Gestalt; 3) resulting in a self-actualized being.

## Examples

### 1) Sustaining the *existing myth*:

This “*Office Party*” dream attempts to accommodate a new situation by modifying or fragmenting it - suppressing certain elements and accepting others – in order to sustain the *existing myth* of and inflated ego: “*I was in charge of an office party that was going on in three of four houses (the fourth being incomplete). My job was to bring each of the groups through the woods into a lighted area on the right to join in a circle dance. After bringing the first group to the circle, I got so caught up in my self-importance (existing myth), that I lingered and by the time I got back to the other three houses, most of the people had left and gone home. They exited into the darkness on the left.*” Note that some *fragments* (dream figures at the party) were incorporated into the existing myth or the *conscious* personality (the lighted circle dance), but as the *ego* became inflated, other *fragments* of self remained separated, and eventually fell back into the *unconscious* (party-goers who had returned into the darkness to the left).

### 2) Strengthening the *counter-myth*

At some point, a *counter-myth* may grow strong enough to make itself known, as illustrated in this “*Evil Entity*” dream (from the Science of Dreaming Section 3). The dreamer had a fairly strict religious upbringing and believed that a “good person” does not have “sinful” thoughts. So, believing herself to be a good person that should not have evil thoughts (*existing myth*), each time she had such an instinctive urge, (*counter myth*) she felt it was something evil within her and would go through a prayer ritual to exorcise the demon within (suppress it from her mind). Unfortunately, suppression is not healthy, it simply strengthens the *counter myth*. Her dream illustrates an unhealthy strengthening of the *counter myth* and an attempt by the *unconscious* to warn that her actions are only making it worse: “*I dreamed that a person I consider evil was alive again and realized that an “entity” was at work. I am trying to exorcise the entity by going through a ritual. But the more I try the darker the sky becomes. Finally, a loud voice booms from above, “Stop — you are only making it worse.*”

At times a dream may follow and test a *counter-myth* in order to determine where it leads – perhaps strengthening it or simply observing and learning from the outcome. In such cases the *counter-myth* can be wonderfully positive as well, relating to unrealized potential that doesn’t fit one’s existing *myth* or deflated self-image, for example: “*I dreamed I was wandering through my house and I was discovering all sorts of new doors and rooms, many of them filled with a lot of treasures I did not realize I had.*”

In Fritz Perls’ Gestalt work (*role-play* and dialog) a conflict or *impasse* between *myth* and *counter-myth* is often discovered to be contained within and pictured by the dream image. Fritz Perls stated that the *fragments* of the personality that we have most alienated, and are least in touch with, appear as the most distant and inhuman imagery in our dreams, the insignificant inanimate objects.

### 3) Integrating Conflicting Myths into a Higher Order Synthesis

Sometimes our mythic structure must be altered or transformed to achieve balance. The imbalance might be between an *existing myth* and a *Shadow* like *counter myth* or *complex* in the “*Evil Entity*” dream. Often it is between an *existing myth* and positive *counter-myth* or alternative as in the “*Rusty Car*” dream. To achieve balance within the *psyche* the conflicting *myths* are integrated and transformed into a *new myth* – a new viewpoint, attitude or *ego* state. In the “*Rusty Car*” example the *existing myth* (my talents are too “rusty” to restore, and my inner “drive” is dead) was juxtaposed with a *compensating counter-myth* – “*the man is just asleep, – wake him.*” Once the *dream-ego* accepts and tests the guidance, the dream pictures the *new myth* – that the car and driver (dreamer’s talents and motivation) can be resurrected and move on as a new car.

## Monte Ullman - “Dream Appreciation”

Montague Ullman (affectionately called Monte) was a psychoanalyst who was trained to use a traditional hierarchical approach (therapist is the interpreter and considered the expert) but he began to realize that it is the dreamer holds the key to the dream’s meaning. He developed his own “Method”, which gave the dreamer full authority over the dream’s meaning (Ullman, 1985). We know it today by the phrase “if it were my dream” used as the group members work with a dream. This method of dreamwork that can be facilitated by anyone given proper training on the associated safety and ethics procedures. Ullman rejected the term “dream interpretation,” which is used in hierarchical approaches, and believed that the term “dream appreciation” is closer to what dreamwork is about. Ullman also recognized that the more the dreamer receives input from several people, the better the individual will understand his dream. For this reason, the Ullman Method is most often used in small groups – the optimum size being about eight people to allows enough input but not overwhelm – and the session time typically 90 minutes to 2 hours.

Ullman’s basic assumptions or “rules” for dreamwork are: 1) a recognition that dreams are personal and private, thus the issue of confidentiality is utmost; 2) the dreamer must feel safe and in control; 3) avoidance of interpretation, i.e. the group members and the dreamer all recognize that each group member has taken on the dream and is *projecting* on it as if it is their dream about something in their life, and in no way is interpreting the dream for the dreamer. Thus, the phrase to be used by each group member is, “if it were my dream” before talking about their own associations with it (their *projections*). The “Method” incorporated these safety factors: 1) the dreamer decides whether to present a dream to the group; 2) the dreamer is not pressured to reveal anything that causes emotional discomfort about waking life; 3) the dreamer is in control and can stop the process at any time. There are four stages to the Ullman method. Three occur in the initial session with the fourth follow-up stage, which occurs in a subsequent session (summary derived from J. Lewis in Hoss, Valli, Gongloff, 2019):

### ***Stage #1 – Sharing the Dream***

- **Introduction:** A group leader guides the group members through the process, safety rules and confidentiality then asks if anyone has a dream to share (the group deciding who goes first if there is more than one)
- **Sharing:** The dreamer then shares the dream in the first-person present tense as if they are re-experiencing it, slowly so the group members can write it down (alternatively they can provide written copies).
- **Group members:** listen and take notes in a manner so as to take on the dream as if it is their own dream.
- **Questions of clarification:** After the dreamer has finished, the group can ask questions of clarification (only about the dream, not about the dreamer’s life) aimed at either helping the dreamer remember more details about the dream, or so that a group member can better take the dream on as their own. This is to avoid group members from developing preconceived notions about the dream’s meaning since they are to work with the dream as if it were their own dream.

### ***Stage #2 – Group Projection***

- **Giving the dream to the group:** The leader asks the dreamer whether they are ready to “give the dream to the group” and asks the members to work among themselves and not look at the dreamer during this part, so as not to pick up emotional cues (sometimes the dreamer turns around). The group members work with the dream as if were their dream related to a situation in their own life – preferencing their “projections” by stating “**if this were my dream.**” Group members can communicate among themselves but not engage the dreamer - the dreamer is an observer at this point.

- **Projections:**
  - **Feelings:** Group members begin by exploring feelings that are awakened in themselves as they imagine themselves having the dream making it their own by referring to it in the first person.
  - **Metaphors:** Once feelings have been explored only then does the leader widen the discussion to include metaphors. (Ullman found that group members are naturally drawn to metaphors because they are simpler and fun to explore – detracting from the important exploration of feelings).
- **The dreamer listens** to the group’s discussion and associations noting statements that resonate with experiences or concerns in their waking life, taking notes on those associations or “aha” moments.

### *Stage #3 – Sharing and Connecting*

- **Returning the dream to the dreamer:** The leader asks the group if they are ready to return the dream to the dreamer for any comments the dreamer wishes to make, emphasizing that the dreamer does not need to share anything about their personal life unless they wish to.
- **Dreamer shares:** The dreamer then can respond to what they resonated with and any thoughts about what they now understand the dream to mean for them.
- **Group and Dreamer dialog:** The group can the dialogue with the dreamer by asking *open-ended* questions that help the dreamer to make connections from dream to waking. *Open ended* questions are those that do not direct the dreamer toward a certain viewpoint and avoid asking about situations in the dreamer’s waking life that have not been shared by the dreamer. *Close-ended* questions tend to reflect a foregone interpretation or pursue a point in a way that is invasive to the dreamer. The dreamer only shares what feels comfortable and can stop the process at any time.
- **Reading back the dream:** The dream is then read back to the dreamer, “with as much feeling as possible” and after scene the dreamer is asked whether anything else arises regarding their waking life.
- **Dialog continues:** *Open-ended* questioning by the group continues, exploring any dream images that have not been fully developed or previously discovered. The dreamer can open up more about waking matters but has the right to set boundaries and stop at any time.
- **Group member suggestions:** Finally, the group members take what they now know based on what has been shared and offer their ideas on the dream in an attempt to help the dreamer make even more connections between the dream and their life. Group members are no longer working with the dream as if their own, but never go beyond what has been shared by the dreamer and avoid presenting views with an air of authority but only offered them as an inquiry, implying that it is up to the dreamer to decide. The dreamer can respond when and as they wish.
- **Ending:** The dream group leader thanks the dreamer for presenting the dream.

### *Stage 4 (follow-up):*

- At the next session, the dreamer shares any additional insights, new behaviors, or additional dreams that relate to the previously presented dream. The group members can also share their insights.

## SECTION 6

# THE NATURE OF DREAM IMAGERY

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*The Unconscious aspect of any event is revealed to us in dreams, where it appears not as a rational thought but as a symbolic image – C.G. Jung*

**W**hat we experience in dreams is both visual and non-visual. Up until this point, I have mostly referred to dream content in terms of imagery, i.e., the visual content. When working with a dream, it is wise to consider all of the content, or dream *elements*, some of which are not visual imagery but rather other sensory representations as well as the actions taking place. Working with a dream is way more than just working with the imagery or dream *elements*, however this is where the exploratory work generally begins.

### Dream Imagery and Elements

Although most dreams are noted for their imagery, there is a lot that is meaningful besides visual imagery taking place in the other sensations and activities that are present. Jung and Perls both believed that nothing appears in a dream at random, that everything in a dream is there because it has some meaningful relationship to the dreamer's mental and emotional situation.

Table 6-1 is a categorization of the dream *elements* to be considered when recalling and working with a dream. It is derived from a listing in *The Mythic Path* by Feinstein and Krippner (1997) which they based on the Hall & Van de Castle content analysis categorizations. The first group, including dream figures, setting, objects, nature, certain activity and descriptors (color and shape for example) are primarily visual, and therefore might fall under what I have been referring to as imagery. Sensations, dream emotion and certain other descriptors are primarily non-visual *elements* of a dream that are just as important to consider as the visual imagery. Spoken or written words are both visual and non-visual and are very important *elements* in the dream that can often relate to *compensating* guidance. Therefore, I will use the term dream *elements* as the primary term for what is experienced in a dream, whereas imagery is more aligned with the visual experience.

#### Table 6-1 Consider all of the Dream Elements

- **The Setting:** The description of the setting or environment of the dream might relate to the “place” you are in emotionally in waking life. Example: “*I am in a dark place*” might relate to a being in an emotionally “dark place” in waking life.
- **Objects:** Note the objects. The inanimate man-made things can contain some of the most valuable content for *role-play*.
- **Dream figures:** Known and unknown persons, or an animated object that you interact with. Who are you in the dream: yourself; someone or something that you identify as you; an observer? Known dream figures can contain valuable personality associations, and the unknown dream figures valuable collective clues.

- **Nature Imagery:** plants or animals, natural *elements* (example: earth, fire, air, water, rock, elemental metals, trees, etc.) might contain a mixture of personal and *archetypal* associations with our natural roots; animals perhaps instincts or emotional urges/responses; other natural *elements* (ex: the *great tree*) perhaps the natural growth of the personality.
- **Color and other Descriptors:** Colors that stand out are important clues to emotional content. How you describe a dream *element* can contain valuable metaphors. A crystal clear dream object might reveal something that has become “crystal clear” to you in waking life.
- **Patterns, Numbers and Orientation:** Geometric shapes and numbers often represent *archetypal* organizing forces. Left/right and up/down (see fig 7-3) can relate to *conscious* (right/up/light) versus *unconscious* (left/down/dark) material or realms.
- **Words and voices:** These are usually guiding cues, although usually metaphors to be understood within the context of the dream story and its relationship to your life story.
- **Emotions:** Note the feelings evoked by the dream when you are telling it, as well as the emotions that were felt in the dream, or when awakening.
- **Activity:** Note the actions and interactions that you and the others in the dream are engaged in. What are you trying to achieve? What is inhibiting your progress and how? The barrier to progress in a dream can relate to your own *impasses* or internal barriers to progress.
- **Sensations:** Consider the importance of sensations such as touch and bodily feelings (cold, soft, hard, wet etc.). Some sensations may be externally induced (cold room, need to go to the bathroom, etc.) but often they can be emotionally significant or contain a useful metaphor (“*it felt warm and fuzzy*” for example).

## Composition of a Dream Element

We learned in Section 5 that theorists such as Freud, Jung and others consider dream images or *elements* as *condensations*, that is they represent combinations or linkages between associations, each part of the *element* relating to a different but linked association. Or as Jeremy Taylor put it, regarding this multitude of connected associations, “there is no such thing as a dream [thus dream image] with only one meaning,” there are many levels of meaning.

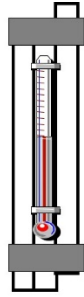
*Condensation* can create some interesting visual combinations such as the “*Old Shoe*” dream discussed previously. Figure 6-1 illustrates two more. The first is an image of a slide rule with a thermometer on it. Each of these imagery fragments combined into one image to represent a meaningful connection – in this case slide rule (engineering) and thermometer (degree) and red (perhaps emotional temperature - anxiety). The dreamer in this case had gotten laid off and was devastated that his engineering degree seemed useless. Here the image pictorially spelled out the word “engineering degree.”

But the associations go beyond the simple word combination, they recall personal memories, emotions, perceptions, and contextual associations with the experiences that created each imagery fragment. In the above case the simple picture brought forth all of the memories and hopes and perceptions the dreamer had (*his personal myth*) regarding the status of obtaining his engineering degree – as well as the devastation when he was laid off - finding his degree to be useless in protecting him at this moment.

The second image came from a dream with just one image: “*I dreamed I saw a license plate with the words ‘HIDE 45’.*” The dreamer had just reached his 45<sup>th</sup> birthday and was looking for a way (a “license”) to hide the fact. The dream condensed the desire to hide the dreamer’s age of 45, with the desire for a legitimate way to do it, the “license.”



**Figure 6-1 Image Condensations**



Slide Rule = “Engineering”  
Thermometer = “Degree”



It was an image of a  
license plate with the  
words “HIDE 45”

In contrast to waking life, where we combine letters and words to form meaningful sentences, dreams combine images to “spell out” meaningful associations (as they did in these two cases) that are quite rational once we understand the figurative language.

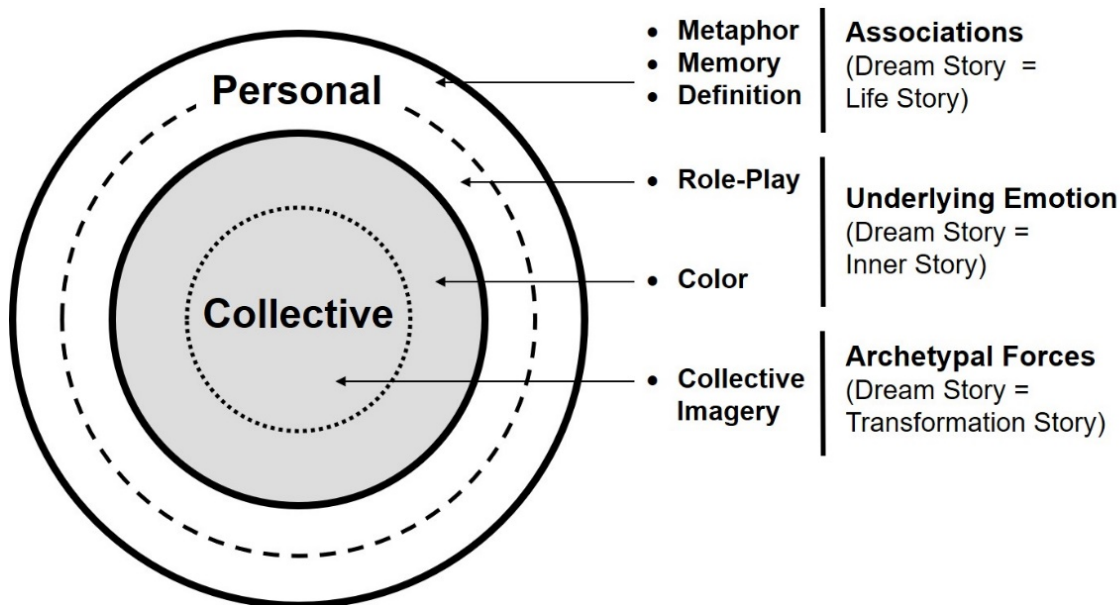
*Condensation* might have to do with the biology of the brain. Visual processing is distributed in the brain, for example color being processed in a separate brain center than shape and other aspects of the visual image (Ratey, 2001). The information from the different centers of the brain are then integrated in the occipital-parietal regions to form the visual image that we “see.” If all the elements of an image are processed in separate centers, then in a dream each fragment of an image may represent a different emotional or memory stimulus. The composite image therefore becomes the composite of all those emotions and memories.

In following the writings of Carl Jung, and to a degree Freud, *condensations* are not simply created from dream fragments that represent conscious feeling, memories and conceptualizations, but might also involve combinations with *archetypal* or *collective* content. The full meaning of the image would therefore be a creation of both consciously accessible associations as well as underlying emotional conditions and collective *unconscious* mental processes taking place. For example, in the slide-rule thermometer image, while the slide-rule and thermometer related the dreamers “engineering degree” the dreamer also reported that the fluid in the thermometer was notably a bright red. This color fragment might relate to his emotional temperature or anxiety.

## **Peeling the “Dream Onion”**

Figure 6-2 illustrates the concept that the full meaning of a dream image or *element* is a combination, or *condensation*, of the associated elements that make it up: 1) personal content and 2) *archetypal* or *collective* content; as well as the many layers or levels of meaningful content that make up the *element*. It also illustrates that there are different approaches for dealing with each layer of a dream *element*, including: a) Associative or Metaphor work (which Jung called Amplification) to relate the dream story to the waking life story; b) *Role-play* and Color work (what I call Image Activation) to reveal the underlying emotional conflicts or barriers; and c) *Archetypal* work in order to understand the *collective* origins or forces at work and how that dream *element* might relate to the dreamer’s journey of *individuation*. A detailed discussion of all of these methods can be found in the downloadable PDF version of Dream Language on [www.dreamscience.org](http://www.dreamscience.org). The complete procedure however is brought together in the next section and table 7-1, in the *Transformative Dreamwork* protocol. Below is a brief summary.

**Figure 6-2**  
**The Composition of a Dream Image/Element**



**Personal content:** includes symbolic representations of the dreamer’s personal memories, thoughts and emotional experiences that stimulated the dream *element*. When the dream is told, the personal content is translated into figurative speech and metaphors descriptive of the dreamer’s waking life situation. At a deeper level, personal content also includes emotional content such as conflicts, *fragments* of self and elements of the dreamer’s personal mythology that are activated by the situation the dream is dealing with.

**Collective or Archetypal content:** includes any of the figures, geometries, actions or motifs referred to by Jung as *archetypal* or emerging from the *collective unconscious*. In this document I use the terms *collective* and *archetypal* somewhat interchangeably but consider *collective* the more general term and *archetype* one which relates more to the specific *archetypal* figures and specific images Jung describes as such (Section 5). Color is also a pseudo-collective/personal imagery modifier where the emotional response to color has a somewhat *collective* nature (color elicits somewhat common emotional responses in humans – see Section 7) but the specific emotional association is personal. Some colors can have *archetypal* origins (such as black in relation to *unconscious* material) but also evoke personal emotional associations.

## Recognizing Personal Content

Personal content relates to personal “meaning” or associations that the dream *element* itself holds for the dreamer – the essential function of the thing, the memories that are recalled, the feelings it evokes, and perhaps even cultural associations. The dream *element* can contain something as simple as the expression of a thought in a picture form, a figure of speech that relates to the waking life events, or an emotional memory from some past experience that relates to the present experience. At a deeper level it is the underlying emotions, conflicts and *impasses* that is pictured by the dream image.

The concept of dream imagery relating to personal associations (the dreamer’s memories, feelings, thoughts and concepts) is based in part on the functions of the associative and visuospatial processing center of our dreaming brain. The associative function of these centers establishes linkages between internal associations

and emotional and episodic fragments of the waking life event that the dream is dealing with. These centers work with our memory systems to relate those associations to our inner model of self and our social world view.

Look for the dream imagery to relate to emotional events of the day in relation to our expectations or beliefs and past emotional experiences. Do not try to understand dream *elements* or images in the same terms or context used to identify them in waking life (a “door” is not just a “door”). Dream images and *elements* almost always represents a deep and complex collage of feelings, past experiences and memories associated with such an object.

## ***Working with Personal Associations***

An approach and protocol for understanding the personal content in a dream, the *Transformative Dreamwork* protocol, will be detailed in Section 7 “Dreamwork”. A summary of the exercises in that protocol are listed and briefly described here.

- **Metaphor Work** - look for phrases, word-play and action themes in the telling of the dream story, or the descriptions of the imagery, to sound like they also might describe something going on in your life at the time.
- **Define** – defining the **purpose** or **function** (what it is and what it does) of an object in the dream reveals your own personal association, the objects essence in your own words. This reveals is the “right hemisphere” meaning of an object (more akin to its dream meaning) as opposed to its waking “left hemisphere” name or label.
- **Known persons** – generally are borrowed by the dream to represent a personality characteristic so you might define their personality, how they are like and unlike you and how they might approach the unresolved waking situation you find yourself in?
- **Memories** – Dreams resolve problems by bringing in past experiences or associated events to compare with the present experience. Explore if the action, setting or objects in the dream recall something from your past, in particular if the imagery is something from your past. When you do get specific; what one specific past event comes to mind and how does that relate to your present situation?

## ***Exploring Underlying Emotion***

- **Role-Play (give the dream a voice)** – using a scripted *role-play* is a simple and quick way to reveal the underlying emotions and emotional conflicts or *impasses* pictured by the dream image – that which has you stuck and unable to resolve your situation and move forward. (see Section 8)
- **Color Work** - as you will learn in Section 7, color relates to emotion. Color adds valuable emotional content to a dream image and sometimes is the most important information (as the “*Change Purse*” dream example below will illustrate). Ignoring color will render meaning of a colored dream image incomplete. Most all dreams are in color, but color fades quickly if you don’t pay attention to it. Sometimes this can be helpful since the color you recall may be the one that contains the most emotional information. So, work on the color of the dream image you are working with and/or the colors that stand out in the dream. Section 7 contains a Color Questionnaire (table 7-2) as an aid, which contains some of the common human emotional responses to color from color psychology studies and literature – which are intended to trigger your own associations and aid with this color work.

# Recognizing Collective Content

The concept of *Collective* or *archetypal* imagery, is based almost entirely on the observations and theories of Carl Jung. *Collective* content consists of influences and imagery emerging from the *collective unconscious* of the human *psyche*, content that is not individual and cannot be derived from the dreamer's own personal experiences. Jung linked these motifs to the evolution of consciousness and the basic mental processes taking place in the human mind including *individuation*, your own psychological evolution as an individual personality. An introduction to *archetypal* imagery was provided in section 5. In this section I discuss the relationship between personal and *collective* how the two might be sorted out when exploring an dream *element* or dream story. As an introduction, a brief compilation of a few basic *collective* or *archetypal* motifs found in the various works of Carl Jung (1964, 1971c, 1971e, 1972, 1973) are listed below:

## *Elements of Conscious Origin*

- **Setting:** illuminated or sunny; whiteness; typically imagery in the right field of view, above or ahead.
- **Conscious personality figures**
  - **Ego:** generally, you in the dream, the *dream-self* or a figure you identify with.
  - **Persona:** a figure acting out the characteristics of your waking persona; sometimes a person you know (present or past) with a personality characteristic reflecting your persona.
- **Dream elements:** known persons, familiar settings and man-made constructs
- **Acceptance of Material into Conscious Personality:** *dream-self* reverses its viewpoint or direction; movement to the right, into the light, perhaps clockwise;

## *Elements of Unconscious Origin*

- **Setting:** dark or blackness; typically imagery and places in the left field of view, below or behind.
- **Dream elements:** Unknown dream figures, dressed in black, dark or a shadowy, unseen, non-specific male or female *figure*. **Symbols of the Self** as organizing/ integrating *archetypal* patterns such as balanced or center-oriented geometries, numbers and direction an motion. Expressions of the **natural origin** and connectedness the *psyche*: organic (primitives, animals, nature) and inorganic (the stone white or shiny black, gold/silver metals, crystals).
- **Archetypal figures:**
  - **Self** - central organizing force of within the *psyche* – can appear as a guiding, wise, unknown, unseen or god/goddess-like dream figure;
  - **Shadow** - suppressed or unrealized aspect of the personality which have not been integrated into the *conscious* personality and which the *ego* does not identify with – can appear as a dark or shadowy unknown figure (typically of the same sex) that acts or appears in a role counter to the views and aims of the *dream-self* or *ego*;
  - **Anima & Animus** - the personification of the introduction of *conscious* and *unconscious* integration; the *feminine* and *masculine* component within a man's and woman's *psyche* respectively; they often appear as an unknown male figure in a woman's dreams and unknown woman in a man's dream. An imbalanced group of males or females (unknown or even known) might indicate a need to adopt and balance a particular *feminine* or *masculine* attribute to resolve the dreamer's situation.
- **Going within the Unconscious:** movement to left, down, under, behind, into darkness; perhaps counter-clockwise motion.
  - **Suppressed/Rejected material:** frozen, dead, moving to the left or under or into darkness
- **Arising from the Unconscious:** emerging movement from below, behind, or from the left;

movement from darkness into light; perhaps clockwise motion.

- **Release of suppressed material:** explosive action, volcanoes, earthquakes, explosions; sometimes end-of-the-world imagery

### ***Problem Resolution or the Transcendent Function***

As noted earlier, Jung claimed that dreams contained a *transcended function* which enables transition from one psychic condition to another resulting in a new attitude toward oneself and life – the aim being *individuation* or becoming a *whole* person by reconciling (*integrating*) our *conscious* and *unconscious* parts. This process begins with the separation or conflict, depends on an *unconsciously* driven *compensating* event (counterfactual or opposing schema) which brings about eventual *integration* of *conscious* and *unconscious* material, and finally at *transcendence* or change. This sequence itself might be observed in a series of dreams or one concluding dream. Some of the imagery or motifs related to the process, as compiled or deduced from Jung’s writings (Jung, 1964, 1971a, b, c, e) is summarized below:

- **Problem, Impasse or Conflict:**
  - **Story-Line:** picture-metaphor of your waking emotional situation; imagery of conflict, decision making, feeling trapped, afraid, lost, a barrier to proceeding.
  - **Dream elements:** A dream figure, situation, fear, barrier, separation or crossing you must overcome to progress. A difficult decision point or alternative paths imagery. A pair of equal *elements* (conflicting equal forces) parallel lines and numbers (11, 22 etc.), an equal pair of the same sex, contrasting color pairs.
- **Departure, Giving in or Turning Within:**
  - Symbolic “*death of the ego*,” giving up, death, fragmentation, separation, departure, beginning a journey; searching; descending or going into darkness or within the earth, under, down stairs into the depths; giving up control; loss; fall/winter; sunset.
- **Compensation:**
  - An alternative solution or event that opposes or reverses your direction or thinking in the dream such as; a wise or guiding figure; voices or words; a moment of surprise, insight or discovery; presentation of a new approach or viewpoint; bizarre or unexpected imagery combinations or actions by someone you know that are out of character; humor; certain color combinations; or a moment of decision; the opposing actions or urgings of the Self or Shadow.
- **Integrating or Unifying/Balancing Force:**
  - **Integration:** Unification of opposites imagery (male/female unification, marriage, sexual attraction, balance number of males and females in a pair or group, black & white patterns.
  - **Wholeness:** geometric forms and numbers relating to balance and *wholeness* such as: four or four-ness, the circle, a ring or the numbers 0 and 1. Center oriented imagery such as the circle or circle with something in the center; the spiral, the cross; horizontal/vertical emphasis; circular or spiral movement (circle dance, a tornado, walking around a block, for example).
- **Resolution/Transcendence**
  - **Individuation imagery:** the “great tree” or stone, triad geometries; a sphere or crystal.
  - **Return/Renewal/Rebirth:** rewarding ending; emergence imagery; rebirth child, egg motif, primitives; renewal imagery (spring, new growth, flowering); illumination or moving into the light,

# Personal and Collective Condensations

## *Combinations in a Single Element*

The *condensation* of personal and *collective* imagery, including color, is illustrated in the following “Change Purse” dream: “*In my dream I was having a long dialogue with an associate about an upcoming battle. When I awoke, I realized that I had been talking to a leather change purse! My associate in the dream was a slightly rounded rectangular shaped, zippered change purse, red on the top side and a green-brown color on the underside. I kept flip-flopping it over in my hands, trying to decide which side and color I liked best.*”

The dream came at a time of a “pending battle” at work that involved an organizational “change” and the dreamer’s role in contributing to this change. The metaphors in the dream story, “pending battle” and the “change purse” were recognizable figures of speech that related the dream story to the waking life situation. Aside from these obvious metaphors there were three additional element combinations of note in this image: 1) First the change purse was a bizarre combination of an inanimate object and a human figure, in that this object appeared as a human companion to the dreamer; 2) the second was the combination of the change purse image with color (in this case two colors seemingly in conflict – two sides) and 3) the third less obvious is the shapes that stood out – rectangular and rounded corners – both shapes relating to possible *collective* forces aiming at completion (square) and *wholeness* (round). The colors involved will be explained more in Section 7, but what is important at this point is to understand how the *condensation* of imagery taking place established the full identity of the dream image. The various elements (each with their own associations) combined in this one image to tell the full story of the dream’s attempt to find a solution or closure (round/square shape) from the dreamer’s conflicted “flip-flopping” over whether to pursue the situation with an assertive, win-oriented style (red) or to apply a bit more self-control and not take on so much responsibility as the opposing color (green-brown) might imply (see table 7-2).

## *Combinations in a Pattern of Elements*

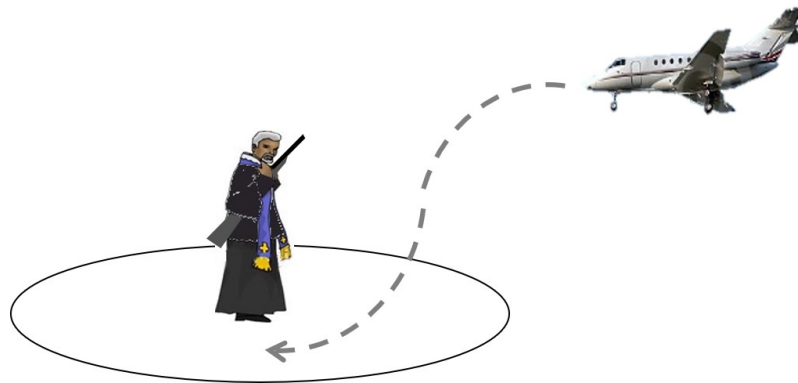
missing in a grouping of the other three therefore might relate to an emotional condition that is missing in order to reduce anxiety and attain a more balanced emotional state. Often collective and personal imagery combine in a pattern to represent personal elements or matters that require attention or are in or out of balance.

For example, Jung related fourness or the square to completion and balance in the personality. Therefore, three people sitting around a square table with one chair empty might illustrate something (represented by the missing person) being the element required to resolve the dreamer’s situation. Jung related the four-color “primaries” (the presence of red, yellow, green and blue) to a balanced state. In section 7 you will learn about how color relates to emotion the implication being that one color missing from (or more active in) a grouping of the four “primaries” might relate to an emotional state requiring attention.

This “*Latin Priest*” dream relates to a relationship between a *collective* center-oriented geometry (both a circle and spiral) and the imagery of a Latin priest and an airplane, both of which represented personally meaningful associations. The dreamer in this case was passionately embracing a new concept of spirituality that was in conflict with his earlier Latin American Catholic upbringing, when he had this dream: “*I was in an airplane which landed in a spiral motion on the rim of a large circle in a Latin American village. In the center of the circle was a priest dressed in black, with a gun, protecting the village. The priest threatened to shoot me if I returned back to the plane.*”

Jung discussed center-oriented imagery as the psyche or Self with the focal point of the ego being at the center, i.e. the issue the *ego* must deal with in order to resolve the situation. Here in the center of the circle and spiral was the priest with a gun – his *Shadow* self - triggered by the *ego* adopting a new belief (the airplane) that threatened his well-established childhood Latin Catholic upbringing. The *Shadow* informs the *ego* that it must symbolically “die” in order to embrace that new belief (go back to the airplane) – a *death of the ego* motif indicating that a part of the old self must symbolically “die” in order to adopt the new belief. Note that the airplane was a “man-made” construct, likely relating to the new believe as a *conscious* conception

**Figure 6-4**  
**Personal and Collective Pattern Orientation**



## SECTION 7

# DREAMWORK

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*Dreams are no longer the exclusive province of the shaman, the priest, or the psycho-analyst. Dreamtime and its products properly belong to the dreamer – S. Krippner*

**D**reamwork, or working with your dreams, can take on many forms. Many popular approaches aim at simply understanding the “meaning” of a dream in relation to some situation in your waking life. Other approaches focus on experiencing the dream in various ways without cognitive understanding, including dance, body work, artistic expression, drawing the dream, or journaling – without necessarily exploring meaning. The more effective integrated approaches, as well as those aimed at therapy, use the dream to explore waking life situation and conflicts, and underlying emotional issues, that the dream is dealing with – then use the insight gained, to help work through the dreamer’s situation and/or conflicts that have left them stuck.

The *Transformative Dreamwork* approach featured in this document is one such integrated approach for Individual Dreamwork, which combines Jungian and Gestalt methods along with a color work in a 3-part process of exploration, insight and action. The protocol is divided into action modules (highlighted by borders) so that modules might be used separately or as one protocol – as appropriate to the work being done.

### The Effectiveness of Dreamwork

Various studies, cited in Section 1, have found dreamwork to be helpful for gaining insight in both professional and non-professional dreamworking activity. We learned that when therapists who used dreamwork were asked “Has working on dreams contributed to therapy success?” they found 88.7% answered positively with 61% much to very much (Schredl, 2000). A comparable study by Fox in 2001 resulted in about 90% reporting dreamwork to be slightly effective to very effective. A study by Malinowski and Pinto (2017) found that exploration-insight scores to be higher for session with dream discussion than sessions with only event discussion.

In Section 1, I also described the Cognitive-Experiential Model (CEM) as therapeutic dreamworking approach that perhaps has had more research conducted on it than any other. A feature that makes it effective is that it is an integration of various approaches (behavioral, client-centered, Gestalt, Jungian, phenomenological, and psychoanalytic) and goes beyond simply understanding dream meaning to working with the dream in 3 important stages: exploration, insight and action. In 12 studies by Clara Hill (2004) of clients who rated the quality of a particular Cognitive-Experiential Model (CEM) the clients rated their sessions significantly higher than data published for regular therapy sessions. This integration of Jungian, Gestalt and other methods, within a structure of exploration, insight and action, is the model followed by the Transformational Dreamworking approach I feature in this book.

The effect of dreamwork can depend on the approach being used. A therapeutic model with an action stage, such as that of CEM for example, is designed to help individuals make adaptive changes to their lives, whereas Montague Ullman’s ‘Method’ (also below) or “dream appreciation” model, although found to be



highly effective for gaining insight, is designed primarily to make insightful connections between waking experience and dream. Therefore, one can expect contrasting outcomes depending on the approach used. Some of the research demonstrated that a model with an action stage (such as CEM), might offer more insights relating to future action, intentions and solutions, than say a purely insight-oriented model. For example, Edwards (2013) found Ullman ‘Method’ scores for exploration-insight to be very high (mean of 8.17 out of 10) but action gains to be much lower (mean of 5.78 out of 10).

## Ethical Dreamwork Practices

It is always best to approach dreamwork in a way that honors the dream and the dreamer. This means that the dreamer is considered the ultimate authority regarding what the dream means to them. It requires that the group, dream worker, or therapist avoid imposing his or her own personal projections or connections with the dream in a manner that implies that those projections are the only true meaning of the dream.

I refer all readers to the ethics statement from the International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD), as an excellent guide to proper dreamwork. Refer to [www.asdreams.org](http://www.asdreams.org) for the complete statement. It states in part: *IASD celebrates the many benefits of dreamwork yet recognizes that there are potential risks. IASD supports an approach to dreamwork and dream sharing that respects the dreamer's dignity and integrity, and which recognizes the dreamer as the decision-maker regarding the significance of the dream. Systems of dreamwork that assign authority or knowledge of the dream's meanings to someone other than the dreamer can be misleading, incorrect, and harmful. Ethical dreamwork helps the dreamer work with his/her own dream images, feelings, and associations, and guides the dreamer to more fully experience, appreciate, and understand the dream. Every dream may have multiple meanings, and different techniques may be reasonably employed to touch these multiple layers of significance.*

In order to honor the dream and the dreamer, avoid approaches which imply that someone in authority has the ability to fully understand and analyze the dream for the dreamer. Skilled practitioners and experienced dream workers may, indeed, have a greater understanding of dreams and dreamwork than the dreamer, but the practitioner should never treat the dream as if they understand its meaning for the dreamer. Images contain personal associations that differ for each of us, and thus only the dreamer holds the key to the correct associations or meaning within a dream or dream image.

## Individual vs. Group Dreamwork

**Individual dreamwork** or work with your own dreams and/or the dreams of another individual other individuals is different in many ways to **Group Dreamwork** where the dream is discussed and worked in a group, the group providing support to the dreamer and ideas about possible metaphors and connections the members see in the dream. One principle is the same however, the associations and eventual “meaning” must all come from the dreamer.

### *Individual*

Individual dreamwork is focused on understanding and work with your own dreams or helping another understand and work with theirs. A number of the personal dreamwork tools can be effectively used for Group Dreamwork as well – assuming protocols are followed to ensure a safe, minimally intrusive environment. Some Individual Dreamwork approaches are totally unique; some are created based on ideas from some of the historical contributors to dream psychology; and some integrate multiple approaches into one consolidated protocol - *Transformative Dreamwork* is one such integrated protocol.

The Cognitive Experiential Model (CEM) mentioned above is one that contains the three important stages which end in closure or action: (1) *exploration*, helping the dreamer explore several individual images and associations with the dreamer's life; (2) *insight*, gaining insight into the whole dream and the dreamer's underlying emotional issues in relation to their life; (3) *action*, deciding about making changes in waking life based on the exploration and insight.

In this approach, the therapist or dreamworker is only an expert in the process (i.e., he or she knows how to apply the steps of the model), but he or she is not an expert in the personal "meaning" of the dream. Rather, it is the dreamer who arrives at the "meaning" of the dream based on the insight gained from the exploration, and makes the decisions about action, with the support, encouragement, and collaboration of the therapist or dreamworker. Dream dictionaries or standard interpretations are not used. The goal is to teach the dreamer a method for working with their dreams.

I developed *Transformative Dreamwork* as an approach which contains those three basic stages *exploration*, *emotional insight* and *action* or closure. It is designed to work with the dream as the dreaming brain appears to do. It acknowledges that the dream is not only detecting and presenting our unfinished business in its own metaphoric language, but that the dream can be problem-solving (restorative, adaptive or transformative). The dream may be dealing with the underlying emotional issues by simulating solutions and learning. The protocol contains the Jungian *objective* and *subjective* approaches to dreamwork: *amplification* to explore the dreamer's own associations; *archetypal* work to explore the *unconscious* guidance an *transformative* processes taking place; *active imagination* to continue an unresolved dream; as well as "translating" the dream language by inserting the associations back into the dream narrative and re-reading it. It also contains a simplified scripted version of Perl's Gestalt *role-play* as well as a research-based Color Questionnaire. The full protocol will be discussed in more detail below.

## **Group**

In Group Dreamwork is much of the benefit comes from the social interaction with the group and sharing of the multitude of group-member personal insights on metaphors they see within the dream story and connections between various associations the dreamer made between the dream and their life. It is prudent to follow a proven set of safety procedures if you are contemplating group dreamwork. There are perhaps many ways to conduct a dream group. One of the most popular and effective approaches, however, is based on an approach developed by Monty Ullman (1985) which he called "dream appreciation" (or the Ullman 'Method') as opposed to interpretation (see section 5 for details). Adaptions of his method have also been termed "Group Projective Dreamwork" as popularized by Jeremy Taylor (1983) and many others.

The group process generally uses a process called *projection* where each member of the group takes the dream on **as if it is their own dream** and projects their own associations on it as if it was about their own life – the dreamer listens and may gain insight about their dream from observing the projections. But this has to be done with great care since the danger of *projective* work comes when group members (rather than using the dream to relate to their own life) attempt to "interpret" the dream for the dreamer, based on their own *projected* stuff. Individual one-on-one dreamwork can fall into the same dangerous ground if the dream leader or practitioner projects their own stuff onto the dream as an "interpretation." In any case avoid *projecting* your own stuff on a dream as an "interpretation" but simply ask questions that will guide the dreamer toward their own insight. The associations and insights should come from the dreamer – only the dreamer can validate the personal meaning of the dream for themselves.

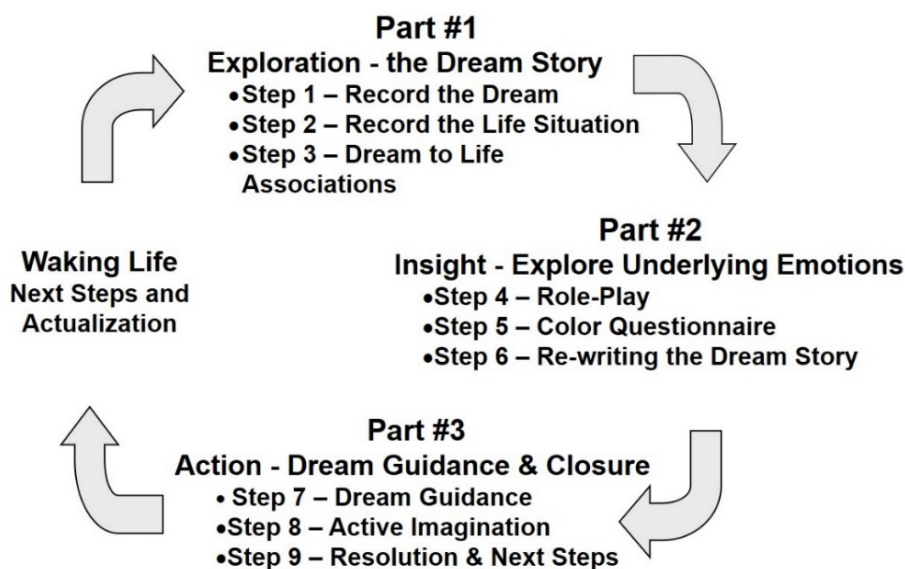
# INDIVIDUAL DREAMWORK

## The *Transformative Dreamwork* Protocol

The *Transformative Dreamwork* protocol is developed and illustrated in this section and summarized in table 7-1. The protocol and worksheets can also be downloaded at no charge from [www.dreamscience.org](http://www.dreamscience.org). The full *Transformative Dreamwork* procedure is designed around the learning structure in section 3 (*encounter, scenario introduction, testing & mediation, and emotional reinforcement*) that focusses on dreams of a problem-solving nature; *restorative, adaptive and transformative*. These are dreams that attempt to move the dreamer from where they are mentally and emotionally, to a new state or viewpoint by resolving the issues that have the dreamer stuck.

As Section 4, under the Science of Dreaming tab, illustrated, not all dreams are of an emotional problem-solving nature although most will provide insight by, at a minimum, picturing the dreamer's situation metaphorically. The protocol contains three stages – *Exploration, Insight* and *Action* illustrated in figure 7-1 and table 7-1. The primary guidance is to at least explore all 3 phases (including Parts # 3) that fit the dream and not to jump to conclusions too early in Part #1. The common mistake is thinking that the dreamwork is complete after an “aha” which generally only makes a dream to life connection. At that point the dreamwork has only begun – the dream itself is working at a much deeper level and has so much more to offer.

**Figure 7-1**  
**Transformative Dreamwork**



- **Part #1 – Exploration - Association and Metaphor:** This phase begins with recording the **dream**, and what is happening in your **life** at the time that is emotionally important. The dream story is then explored using several tools to reveal how the dream story relates to your life story. These tools explore the picture-metaphor, associations and memories represented in the dream imagery. Understanding the dream at this level generally only reveals what life situation the dream is dealing with but not how the dreamer might deal with it – there is much more dreamwork to pursue – so don't stop here.

- **Part #2 – Insight - Underlying Emotions:** This phase uses two Image Activation approaches for revealing the emotional content within a dream *element* or image. A scripted *role-play* technique and the Color Questionnaire (see Section 7).
- **Part#3 – Action - Dream Guidance and Resolution:** This phase explores how the dream (and the *unconscious*) it attempting to resolve the situation and how the dreamer might apply that insight as waking life action. The dream structure is reviewed and four clues to revealing the guidance in the dream are explored. The resultant insight is tested and turned into action steps.

Below is a detailed description and guidelines for the *Transformative Dreamwork* protocol. This protocol and a downloadable worksheet are also included in the Dreamwork and Worksheet link on the [www.dreamscience.org](http://www.dreamscience.org) welcome page. Feel free to download the worksheet for your use.

## Part #1

### Exploration - Association and Metaphor

#### *Step #1 Record the Dream Story*

How you tell the dream and record it are important for effective dreamwork. It is important to not only record the dream properly, but to also record the emotional situations happening in your life at the time while it is still fresh. This is very important, particularly if you are keeping a journal, to record both who that you can look for dream patterns that relate to waking life patterns.

- 1a) Recall the Dream** by closing your eyes before writing anything down, going back into the dream and trying to capture as much of it as you can before writing it down or recording it.
- 1b) Record it as if you are Reexperiencing it:** in the first person present tense as if you are re-experiencing it (using “I am..” or “I see..” or “I feel..” walking down a path...” or “Suddenly I see a person ahead ...”). Keep any slips-of-the-tongue and spelling or phrasing mistakes – they might be important metaphors. Consider all the *Elements*: dream figures, objects, emotions, color, other descriptors etc.
- 1c) Separate the Segments:** Look at scene shifts as separate segments each dealing with the same issue but from a different perspective, bringing in new associations or memories and introducing different resolution scenarios, perhaps learning something from the segment before. Worked on them later as separate but associated dreams.
- 1d) Give it a Title and Date it** – an imaginative one that captures its essence but just a few words, first thing that comes to mind.
- 1e) Sketch the Dream** – as if looking at a map from above. This is optional, but it is helpful and permits you to see relationships between dream figures as well as geometric patterns and directions that provide important clues as to the processes taking place. You might add a separate sketch of any odd imagery or imagery combinations.

## ***Step #2 Record Your Life-Situation at the time***

The dream story relates to our life story. Therefore, recording your life story at the time of the dream is absolutely necessary. Record what is happening in your life at the time, in particular emotional situations, things that happened the day before which created some emotional discomfort/annoyance, or that you did not want to, deal with at the time; or even positive emotionally impactful events.

## ***Step #3 – Dream to Life Comparisons***

Explore your personal associations with the various *elements* in order to relate the dream story to your waking life story. Although the dream may include persons or events from waking life, the actual event that stimulated the dream rarely appears as experienced in waking life - instead the dream captures and pictures the emotional impact or personal “meaning” of the waking life event in relation to your past experiences and inner model or self and reality – “the unconscious aspect of the conscious event” as Jung put it.

**3a) Dream Orientation:** At the onset does the dream *metaphorically* picture some emotional situation in your waking life? Does it symbolically picture (figuratively or *archetypally*) the thing that is to be dealt with in order to resolve that situation (*Shadow* issue, past even/memory or trauma, conflict imagery or pair of equals). Does the dream then introduce an impactful, surprising or guiding event or resolution, (perhaps opposing the view of the *dream self*) that alters the view or actions of your dream-self?

**3b) Metaphors: In the Narrative** - look for phrases, word-play and action themes in the dream story that, when the dream is written or told verbally, sound like they could also be describing a situation or feeling in your life at the time. It works best when you re-enter and tell the dream in the first-person present tense (“I am...” I feel...” etc.). **In an Image:** does an odd combinations of imagery fragments when described or defined as personal associations “spell out” something meaningful?

**3c) Associations and Memories:** Dream images are pictures of connected associations, thoughts, feelings and memoires. These are largely unconscious so trying to “think” of them consciously is difficult so try the following aids:

- **Define the Dream Elements and their Purpose or Function:** what it is and what it does (as if you were explaining what the dream *element* is to someone who never heard of it before).
- **Define Personality Characteristics of Known Persons:** Dreams borrow persons you know to represent personality characteristics. It may be a characteristic you are displaying or more often one you need to help you through the situation. Define “how are they like you and in what ways are they unlike you” and ask, “how would they approach that situation the dream is dealing with differently than you have?” The dream may be testing that personality characteristic as a solution.
- **Similar Themes (dream to life):** Are any of the actions or feelings or the general theme of what you are doing in the dream similar to what you are doing and feeling in waking life.
- **Memories:** Are there any persons, places or things from your past in the dream – or does anything remind you of something from your past. Recall one specific past event that comes to mind? Relate it and any feeling at the time to your present situation.

**3d) Rewrite the Dream Story and Relate to Your Life Story:** Place the above associations into the dream narrative (in the margins perhaps) and read the new story. How it might relate in various ways to the events in your waking life?

## Part #2

### Insight – Exploring Underlying Emotion

This section contains a procedural summary of the two approaches for exploring the underlying emotions pictured by the dream imagery: 1) *role-play*; 2) and color work. As the primary approach to working with dreams, I recommend applying both *role-play* with color work to one or more key dream *elements*.

#### *Step #4 – Role-Play (6 “Magic” Questions)*

One of the most effective approaches to exploring the underlying emotional issues, conflicts and motivations, that the dream is dealing with, is to “give the dream a voice.” This is a scripted *role-play* approach derived from Gestalt Therapy (Section 5). My students lovingly termed it the “6 magic questions” since it seems to rapidly reveal underlying unexpressed emotions or emotional conflicts that are at the core of the situation the dream is dealing with.

Each *element* in the dream is a meaningful creation associated in some way with your life. You can choose to work on many, or just one or two which may be all you need to reveal the underlying emotional feelings or conflict the dream is dealing with. Re-enter the dream and select **images that curiously draw your attention**. It doesn’t have to be an imposing image - sometimes one in the background or an inorganic one can contain the most information (Perl’s indicated that the more “alienated” *fragments* of the personality might appear as the least human and remote imagery). *Archetypes* can appear as unknown dream figures, or as nature *elements*. Because they originate in the *unconscious*, attempting to *role-play* them might not reveal something you are consciously aware of, but can often result in a deep emotional experience or statements that simply define the essence of the *archetype*. Some archetypes (such as a pair of equal images, or something in the center of a circle) can point to the issue at the center of a conflict needing attention.

#### *Scripted Role-Play*

**4a) Pick a Dream Image** or *element* that curiously draw your attention. To do this re-enter the dream at perhaps the most emotional part and look around the dream scene and pick an image X (inanimate or animate thing or figure) that draws you to it – it doesn’t have to be the dominant image. You might pick a few and work on each one of them using this scripted *role-play* procedure.

**4b) Give the Image a Voice (the 6 “magic” questions):** Close your eyes, re-enter the dream again and bring that dream image or figure X into view. Now take 3 deep breaths and with each breath move into and “become” X. Feel what it feels like in that role. Then speak as if you are the image in the first person, present tense, answering these 6 to 7 questions (best if someone asks and records the answers so you can stay in character):

1) Who or **what are you**, and how do you feel in that role: “I am \_\_\_\_\_”

(Alternatively, **if X is a person you know** from waking life, then become that person and state: “my most notable personality characteristics are...” “The way I am most like and different than the dreamer is...” Note whether they are acting similar or differently than they normally would.)

2) As X what is your **purpose or function**: My purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_”

3) What do you **like** about what you are and what you do as X? “I like \_\_\_\_\_”

4) What do you **dislike** about what you are and what you do as X? “I dislike \_\_\_\_\_”

5) As X what do you **fear** the most, what is the worst thing that can happen to you? “I fear \_\_\_\_\_”.

6) As X what do you **desire** the most? “What I desire most is to \_\_\_\_\_”

7) Dialog (optional): Spot the dreamer in the dream and think about what you or they need or are doing, what would you tell them (first thing that comes to mind)?

**4c) Relate these Statements to Waking Life:** Read the statements back to yourself – but this time not as if they are that dream image X speaking but now as if they are you saying them about a situation or way you feel in your life. Do any of the statements describe a situation or feeling in your waking life?

- Do the “**I am**” and “**My purpose**” statements sound like a role you are playing in waking life?
- Do the “**I like**” versus “**I dislike**” statements sound like conflicting feelings, or an argument going on inside your head, regarding a waking life situation?
- Do the “**I fear**” and “**I desire**” statements sound like fears and desires you have regarding that situation, perhaps fears and desires that keep you stuck in the conflict?
- Does the statement from the **dialog** sound like it might be practical guidance?
- If the dream figure is a **known person**, focus on their personality characteristics and ask yourself: “Am I acting like that?” or better yet “How would they approach the situation I am dealing with?” If they are acting abnormally that is likely a surprise or *compensating* event to be explored.

Pick the most impactful or meaningful statement(s) and focus on one specific situation in your life when you felt that way and describe the situation and your feelings.

### ***Step #5 – Exploring Emotion in Dream Color***

Color is a symbol as is every other image in a dream, and one that *condenses* with other imagery to add valuable emotional content to a dream image – providing a more complete and personal “meaning” to the image. If the dream image you are working on contains color, or if the dream has some key colors that seem important, then use the instructions below in conjunction with the Color Questionnaire. The color questionnaire is included at the end of this section (table 7-1) and can be read and downloaded on this website under the Working with Dream Color tab.

The Color Questionnaire was created out of over a decade of research into the significance of color in dreams: researching color psychology literature (Lüscher, 1971, 1979; Birren, 1961, 1978; Brown, 1974; Ertel, 1973; Goldstein, 1942; Riley, 1995; Sutton & Whelan, 2004) as well as original research using large dream databases, large personal databases (Hoss, 2010), along with sessions with individual dreamers (Hoss, 1999, 2004, 2005, 2010). What I found was that (although influenced by culture and experience) human color associations are dominated by subliminal (unconscious) physiological and emotional response – and that response is common in both the waking and dreaming state. Also, that each color evokes a different but relatively common set of emotional responses. In particular I found a relatively positive agreement between the emotions evoked during a Gestalt *role-play* session with a colored image, and the Lüscher and color psychology research based associations – which were of a subliminal (unconscious) emotional nature. The Color Questionnaire (table 7-2) was therefore created from these associations and is based on the hypothesis that the same active centers in the brain in the REM state, maintain similar associations whether awake or asleep. It Questionnaire does not represent the “meaning” of color, only common human subliminal association. It is to be used only as a questionnaire (have I felt that way lately?) to trigger or test your own personal associations in relation to the dream.

### ***Color Questionnaire***

**5a) Select colored dream images to work on:** the color of the image you have been working on, or those colors you feel most drawn to or that stand out or are unique (not the common color for that object, such as green grass for example, unless it stands out). Also look for color pairings which might represent a conflict between emotions or and integrated state of emotional resolution. Look for a grouping of the 4 primary colors - red, yellow, blue and green (or if one color seems to be most active in the group of 4 or is obviously missing from the group, then work on that color).

**5b) Pick the color** in table 7-2 that best matches the color of the dream image. **Color Pair:** explore the possibility that the two colors might represent conflicting emotions by using table 9-7 on each color separately - or – explore the 2-color table in the Working with Color in Dreams tab on this site, or table 9-8 in Chapter 9 of *Dream Language 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (free download on this site).

**5c) Read each statement as a question** – ask yourself: “Does this statement sound like a way I have felt recently of describe a situation in my waking life?” For color pairs, read both colors using 9-7 to explore whether the two colors might represent two conflicted emotions – or the two-color table in the Working with Color in Dreams tab on this site (or table 9-8 in Chapter 9 of *Dream Language 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*). Also explore statements in the two-color table as representing a possible resolution scenario or state (integration of colors or conflicted emotions).

**5d) Relate to Life:** Pick the one or two statement(s) that create the strongest “aha” response or “connection,” that best relate to a waking life situation or conflict. Describe the situation, and the feelings at the time, in your own words. How does this add to your understanding of the situation the dream is dealing with?

### ***Step #6 – Situation Summary***

At this point you should have: explored the personal content within the dream imagery/*elements*; made various connections between the dream and your waking life situation; and will have identified some of the emotional issues or conflicts involved. The next phase of the dreamwork is the Action stage, determining how the dream was attempting to resolve the situation that stimulated the dream (those emotional issues and conflicts) so that you can use that insight and guidance to help you move forward. In order to understand how the dream is trying to solve a problem, the nature of the problem needs to be defined or summarized from what was revealed in the first two parts of the procedure. It may be obvious at this point but if not here are some hints you can try:

- ***Finish Re-writing the dream story:*** If it helps try inserting the *role-play* and color information from Part 2 into the new dream story you created in Part 1 in a way that further aligns it with your life story.
- ***Try Creating a Core Conflict Statement:*** A number of emotional conflicts may have been revealed in Part #2. Identify the more impactful statements in the *role-play* and color exercise and try to define what appears to be the most impactful core issue, in a sentence something like this: “I need or desire \_\_\_ because \_\_\_ but if I then I fear \_\_\_ will happen”.
- ***Reflect on Your Past, the Originating Decision:*** It may be helpful to explore your past (traumatic event, childhood beliefs/teachings, source of a phobia, etc.) for the originating decision that created the present conflict – particularly if events and things from the past were evident in the dream. Reflect on the conflict defined above and your feelings. Go back to one specific situation earlier in life, which brings to mind similar feelings. What happened, who was involved and how did you feel? What decision did you make at the time and how does it relate to your situation today?

## **Part #3**

### **Action – Dream Guidance and Resolution**

At this point, you likely have a deeper understanding of how the dream story relates to your life story. You may also have become aware of some uncomfortable or painful emotions, fears and conflicts that are



contributing to the situation. These are issues that you have been unable to consciously resolve – but which your *unconscious* and you dream is now dealing with. So, the next step is to understand how the dream (along with the vast wisdom and experience of the *unconscious*) is trying to resolve the situation.

**A word of caution.** At this point, if issues have surfaced that seem severe or highly emotionally charged and appear beyond the scope of a simple self-help technique, then it is best not to proceed. The following procedure should **not** to be considered a substitute for therapy or professional help.

### ***Step #7 – Exploring the Dream Guidance***

- 7a) Re-orienting:** Re-enter the dream and briefly mentally review the story. With the information from the prior steps in mind, explore the flow or structure of the dream story to understand whether and how the dream was trying to resolve the problem. Did the dream metaphorically picture the waking life problem the dream is dealing with? Did it seem to introduce a solution scenario (may be an opposing or *compensating* one), a decision point, guidance, a surprise, insight or discovery? Was there any *archetypal* imagery present that pictured the *unconscious* organizing or *integrating* processes taking place (see Section 5)? Importantly, how did the dream end?
- 7b) Guidance:** Did you experience a guiding event (guiding figure, activity, written/verbal message) or alternative/opposing solution, approach or viewpoint (discovery, insight)? Describe how it changed your behavior or thinking in the dream, before and after the event.
- 7c) Surprise:** Did something surprise you in the dream (action, situation or figure in a role opposite to expectations; unexpected twist; unexpected discovery; odd imagery blend)? How did it differ from expectation, provide a different point of view, and how did you respond?
- 7d) Acceptance or Reversal:** Did your *dream-self* (or something representing you or your viewpoint) at some point accept the apparent guidance or reverse its thinking, viewpoint or action in the dream? What brought this about?
- 7e) Positive Ending:** Did the dream end positively or with a potentially positive direction to it? If so what specifically happened that brought it about and how might that be an analogy to a waking life solution? If it ended negatively or with a warning, what was your *dream-self* doing that appeared counterproductive?
- 7f) Compare to Life:** Can you see any analogies between how the implied solution (change in viewpoint, attitude or direction) in the dream might be helpful as a solution to the situation in your waking life?

**Next:** If this was revealing, Go to Step #9 for the Action steps. If not try Step #8, Active Imagination below.

### ***Step #8 – Active Imagination (finish the dream)***

Not all dreams have an obvious resolution scenario or guiding “message.” Most dreams don’t end positively which may be an indication that the dream did not resolve the problem but only made some attempts or tested one or more scenarios. Therefore, if the explorations in step 7 are nonobvious or if the dream does not seem to conclude, it can still be used as a platform to help “finish the dream” with a resolution metaphor to guide thinking in how best to move forward. In order that the *unconscious* is involved as much as possible in creating the new ending it is best get into a calm state and divert the attention of the rational mind. A

technique that works well is to take a few deep breaths and visualize yourself at the end of the dream. Focus on your feelings as the dream ends. Think back through the dream as to how you got to this point. Staying in touch with your feelings, what if anything are you wanting or trying to do at the end. Hold the feelings and image for a bit and now, without thinking about it, just letting the images flow, finish the dream with a new imagined ending that works out positively for you and perhaps all involved. When you create that new dream ending write it down but also describe all the details of what happened, or what you did, to bring it about. Could those actions be analogous to actions you might take in waking life to bring about a resolution?

### *Active Imagination*

**8a) Place Yourself at the End of the Dream:** Take a few deep breaths and re-enter and visualize yourself at the end of the dream and focus on your feelings at that point. Think back through the dream as to how you got to this point. Staying in touch with your feelings, what if anything are you wanting or trying to do at the end.

**8b) New Ending:** Continue to focus on your feeling as you visualize the ending of the dream. Now, without thinking about it, just letting the images flow, finish the dream with a new imagined ending that works out positively for you and perhaps those you are involved with in the dream.

**8c) Waking Life Analogy:** Once you have a vision of the new ending, if there are missing details further imagine (spontaneously let the images flow) what specific actions or events must have occurred to bring it about. What you end up with is typically another metaphor but one related to resolution. Think in general about ways that new metaphoric ending might be analogous to something that could be done in your waking life to resolve the situation or conflict the dream appears to be dealing with?

### *Step #9 – Action: Resolution and Next Steps*

One of the most important steps in dreamwork is to use the insight gained to help you make better decisions about how to manage or move forward with the situation the dream was dealing with – using the depth and breadth of your unconscious wisdom to help you in ways that the cognitive rational mind has not been able to. This involves creating a tangible solution statement from the metaphors of guidance and insight from the dream that might be analogous to a workable solution in waking life.

Sometimes the analogies are apparent but sometimes not. Because the dream resolutions (step #7), as well as your imagined ending to the dream (step #8) speak in metaphors, these metaphors may logically relate to the dream story but may not directly reflect your life story - the need to be translated into analogous terms that do relate to your life. The tough part is setting the ego biases aside which may influence and misinterpret the resolution the dream was attempting. Because, at that point the analogy becomes a cognitive creation it must be checked out, as to whether it is healthy and practical, BEFORE you act on it.

Just as importantly, the dream or dream segment you are working on may not be focused on resolution – it may simply be an encounter dream or one that is simply dealing with testing a counter-myth or minor aspect of your overall situation. So, if this final action step appears to be leading nowhere, it would be inappropriate and unhealthy to try to force out a solution. This is even more of a reason to **Check Out** any proposed solution you come up with to make sure it is healthy, appropriate, practical and doesn't leave you stuck in another situation.

## *Resolution and Next steps*

- 9a) Define an Apparent Solution:** Define in specific terms how the metaphors in steps #7 or #8, might represent a practical solution to your waking-life situation. Because these are usually metaphors, the may logically relate to the dream story but perhaps not directly to your life story - they may have to be translated as you would any dream *element*. If not obvious try using association, *role-play* and/or the color tools (steps #3 to #5) to understand what the *elements* relate to. Once a general solution emerges, then define a specific solution that you can actually act on, that the dream appears to be suggesting.
- 9b) Check It Out:** Do an appropriateness check. Is it a healthy, practical, appropriate resolution that allows you to progress in a positive direction - or - does it go too far to be achievable or perhaps leave you stuck again? If it is not healthy or appropriate, do not pursue it
- 9c) Next Steps:** If it checks out positively, then what specific next step(s) can you take to bring it about? Imagine/picture yourself in the situation again and describe what you would do differently this time. Turn that into specific written “next steps” that you can actually try out.
- 9d) Reminder Image:** It can be helpful to take away some simple visual reminder of the new solution in the event a similar situation is experienced in the future. From the resolved or positive ending (actual or visualized), select a “resolution” image to remind you of your new solution.

## EXAMPLES

A couple of dream examples have been provided in previous sections that address the use of this *Transformative Dreamwork* protocol. The “*Rusty Car*” dream was one that concluded with most every element in part 3 of this protocol: **Guidance** (the unknown companion who states “the driver is just asleep, wake the man”); **Acceptance and Reversal** (when the dreamer accepted the guidance and shook the driver); **Surprise** (when the driver came back to life) and **Positive Ending** (when the car came back to life as a new car). In this case the learning occurred within the dream and the solution or action was taken by the dreamer without having reflected on the dream.

The complete protocol is also illustrated in the example below called “*Wiping Away the Paint*” where the dream was very short, simply an encounter or scenario introduction, but with no guiding clues. In this example, therefore, the active imagination step was used to carry the dreamwork to the point of developing a healthy and appropriate resolution to the dreamer’s waking life situation that they could act on.

### Example: “Wiping Away the Paint”

#### Part 1: Exploration - Association & Metaphor Work

##### *Step#1 Record the Dream Story*

**Dream:** “A friend of mine Jane is painting over my newly painted gray walls, red and blue. I try to wipe it off with a rag. I wake up screaming!”

**Title:** *Wiping away the Paint*

## Step #2 Record Your Life Story at the Time

*“In waking life I am very nervous about moving across the country to take a new job.”*

## Step #3 Dream to Life Comparison:

**3a) Dream Orientation:** At the onset does the dream *metaphorically* picture some emotional situation in your waking life? Does it introduce an impactful, surprising or guiding event, decision point or resolution, (perhaps an opposing the view of the *dream self*) that alters the view or actions of your dream-self?

*ANS: The theme of a conflict was apparent - the dream-self having painted her walls gray versus the sudden entry of Jane who painted them blue and red, causes me to panic.*

**3b) Metaphors: In the Narrative** - phrases, word-play and action themes in the dream story that sound like they could also be describing a situation or feeling in your life at the time

*“Painting over” is a possible metaphor for “covering up something” or “making it look better”*  
*“I try to wipe it off” is a possible metaphor for “avoiding thinking about something”*

### 3c) Associations and Memories:

- **Function – define:** the dream *elements* and/or their function (what it is, what it does)

*Wall = a barrier, holds things up*

*Rag = function is to clean off unwanted stuff – in this case the paint*

*Waking Life Association: My concern about moving may be a barrier, holding things up.*

- **Define Personality characteristic of known persons:** how are they a) like and b) unlike you and c) how would they approach the unresolved waking situation you find yourself in?

*ANS: Jane is a person who goes with the flow. **Same:** We are both ambitious and fun loving. **Different:** Jane is more flexible and less hesitant when it comes to trying new things. **How would they approach your situation?** She would go without much hesitation.*

- **Themes:** Are any of the actions or feelings or the general theme of what you are doing in the dream similar to what you are doing and feeling in waking life.

*ANS: Painting my walls gray = I just did paint the outside walls of my house gray. Feelings = terrified in the dream is like terrified of my move in waking life.*

- **Memories:** if a setting or object or maybe a person is something/someone from your past, reflect on it and recall one specific past event that it brings to mind? Relate to your present situation.

*ANS: Nothing from my past in the dream.*

**3d) Rewrite the Dream Story and Relate to Your Life Story:** plug the associations into the dream story.

*ANS: Jane who goes with the flow and would try new things, is covering up my newly covered up gray walls red and blue to make them look better. I try to avoid thinking about those unwanted feelings by wiping them them away. I woke screaming!*

*Relate to Life Story:* Jane would see my new job as an opportunity and go with it but whenever I think about it – I get terrified - so I try not to think about it – I am stuck and haven't even prepared for it. I haven't even tried to sell my house.

## Part 2: Insight - Exploring Underlying Emotions

### Step #4 Give the Dream a Voice (Scripted Role-play or 6 “magic” questions)

#### 4a) Pick a Dream Image or element that curiously draw your attention.

ANS: “the Rag”

#### 4b) Give the Image a Voice (the 6 “magic” questions): move into and “become” X then speak as if you are the image in the first person, present tense, answering these 6 to 7 questions:

##### 1) What are you, name and describe yourself, perhaps how you feel in that role?

ANS: “I am a rag, in somebody’s hands”.

##### 2) As X what is your purpose or function?

ANS: “My purpose is to be handy and clean things up.”

##### 3) What do you like most about being X?

ANS: “What I like is being available, needed, and used.”

##### 4) What do you dislike about, or what is the downside of, being X?

ANS: “What I dislike is getting thrown away after the job is done.”

##### 5) As X what do you fear the most, what is the worst thing that can happen to you?

ANS: “What I fear is getting dirty and being thrown away.”

##### 6) As X what do you desire the most?

ANS: “What I desire is staying clean and continuing to be used.”

#### 7) Dialog (Optional): Now as X look out into the dream where you see the dreamer. What would you say to the dreamer?”

ANS: “You can't wipe it away, you will just make a mess”.

#### 4c) Relate these Statements to Waking Life: Read the statements back to yourself – but this time not as if they are that dream image X speaking but now as if they are you saying them about a situation or way you feel in your life. Do any of the statements describe a situation or feeling in your waking life? Pick the most impactful or meaningful statement(s) and focus on one specific situation in your life when you felt that way and describe the situation and your feelings.

ANS: “I feel my career is in somebody else’s hands. I do consider my purpose on the job is to be handy and clean things up. On my last two jobs, I was hired to do a job, but once that job was done, I was told I was no longer needed and was let go—so, yes, I dislike being ‘thrown out after the job is done.’ I fear that on this next job I might mess up (get dirty) again and be thrown out—but will now have left my friends and family, sold my home, and be clear across country. I want to avoid conflict (stay clean) and continue to have my talents used.” [Note: the conflict created such an extreme impasse that she had not even begun to sell her house or prepare for the move, yet had to be on the new job in 2 weeks.

## ***Step #5 Exploring Emotion within Color***

**5a) Select colored dream images to work on:** Also color pairings which might represent a conflict between emotions.

*ANS: "Gray walls, Blue and Red paint"*

**5b) Pick the color** in table 7-2 that best matches the color of the dream image.

*ANS: Gray walls, Blue and Red paint*

**5c) Read each statement as a question** – ask yourself: “Does this statement sound like a way I have felt recently of describe a situation in my waking life?” For color pairs, read both colors in table 7-2 to explore whether the two colors might represent two conflicted emotions. Also, for a color pair try the 2-color table (Working with Color in Dreams tab on this site table 9-8 in *Dream Language 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*) to further explore the conflict or statements that might represent a possible resolution state or scenario (integration of colors or conflicted emotions).

**Gray:** “*I want to remain uncommitted, non-involved, shielded, or separated from the situation*” and “*I do not want to make a decision that will require my emotional involvement.*”

**Red:** *I want to win, succeed, achieve*”

**Blue:** “*I need a relationship free from contention in which I can trust and be trusted.*”

**5d) Relate to Life:** Pick the one or two statement(s) that create the strongest “aha” response or “connection,” that best relate to a waking life situation or conflict. Describe the situation, and the feelings at the time, in your own words.

*ANS: “The statement for Gray: ‘I want to remain uncommitted, non-involved, shielded, or separated from the situation’ and ‘I do not want to make a decision that will require my emotional involvement’ is how I feel about having to decide to move”. [note: Gray is an emotional “wall” or barrier, shielding her from making a decision so as to remain uncommitted, to the point where she had not even begun to prepare for the move or taking steps to sell her house, two weeks before she was to be on the new job]. “I do want to take the job to again ‘succeed and achieve’ in my career, but I also need a relationship with my new boss ‘free from contention’ where I ‘can trust and be trusted,’ which I fear might not happen.*

[Side Note: We also explored the dual color table for a possible resolution scenario (integration of the two emotions). One statement for an integrated blue and red resonated with the dreamer, “*Seek harmony and cooperation with associates for our mutual benefit.*” So, I asked, “does this sound like a way to embrace your fears and focus on a means for resolving the conflict going forth?”]

## ***Step #6 - Summarize – Putting it All Together***

*ANS: I am trying to avoid thinking about my move – it seems to be a wonderful opportunity since I may eventually own the company, but for some reason it terrifies me. I want to be handy but feel my career is in somebody else’s hands. I dislike being ‘thrown out after the job is done’ as I was on my last two jobs. I want to succeed, achieve and feel needed and used by taking on this new job - but – I also need a relationship free from contention in which I can trust and be trusted [Red and Blue]. I fear that I might mess up again and get thrown out but will now have left my friends and family, sold my home, and be clear across country. So, I have up to this point remained emotionally uncommitted, non-involved, and shielded from the situation [Gray]. I do not want to make a decision that will require my emotional involvement.*

## Part #3

### Action – Dream Guidance and Resolution

#### *Step #7 – Exploring the Dream Guidance*

**7a) Re-orienting:** Did the dream metaphorically picture the waking life problem the dream is dealing with? Did it introduce a solution scenario (an opposing or *compensating* one), guidance, a surprise, insight or discovery? Was there any *archetypal* organizing imagery present? How did the dream end?

*ANS: The only thing that related to my life is that I did paint the outside walls to my house gray. The moment of surprise or opposition was when Jane entered and painted over my walls and I tried to wipe off the paint. The dream ended with me trying to rub the paint off with a rag and I wake screaming.*

[Note: although quite obscure, the dream did metaphorically picture her situation of having constructed “gray” emotional barriers to isolate and protect her from the conflict. The dream then introduces a solution scenario in the form of a surprise and opposing event – the entry of her friend Jane (representing every time she thinks about just “going with the flow”) which unfortunately exposes the conflict that has to be addressed (red vs. blue) and overwhelms her protective barrier (gray walls)].

**7b) Guidance:** Did you experience a guiding event (guiding figure, activity, written/verbal message) or alternative/opposing solution, approach or viewpoint (discovery, insight)?

*ANS: There was opposition but no obvious guidance.*

**7c) Surprise:** Did something surprise you in the dream (action, situation or figure in a role opposite to expectations; unexpected twist; unexpected discovery; odd imagery blend)? How did it differ from expectation, provide a different point of view? How did you respond?

*ANS: Yes. I was surprised that it was Jane painting my walls. She is my friend and would never do something to hurt me.*

**7d) Acceptance or Reversal:** Did your *dream-self* (or something representing you or your viewpoint) at some point accept the apparent guidance or reverse its thinking, viewpoint or action in the dream? What brought this about?

*ANS: “No, I tried to wipe the red and blue paint off.*

**7e) Positive Ending:** Did the dream end positively or with a potentially positive direction to it? If it ended negatively what was your *dream-self* doing that appeared counterproductive?

*ANS: It ended negatively with me waking screaming. I was trying the wipe off the paint.*

**7f) Compare to Life:** Can you see any analogies between how the implied solution (change in viewpoint, attitude or direction) in the dream might be helpful as a solution to the situation in your waking life?

*ANS: The moment of surprise is that Jane entered and painted my walls. Perhaps the Jane part of me (that wants to “go with the flow” and leave) is doing something I don’t like – when I want to leave it shows me the terrifying conflict I am in (the Red/Blue conflict desire to succeed vs. fear of getting thrown out again). I want to wipe away that fear and back to Gray (covering up my emotion and avoiding the decision). There was no solution shown at this point, however.*

**Next:** If there was a resolution Go to Step #9; if not try Step #8, Active Imagination below.

### ***Step #8 - Active Imagination***

**8a) Place Yourself at the End of the Dream:** focus on your feelings at that point and how you got to this point. What if anything are you wanting or trying to do at the end.

*ANS: I am terrified and trying to wipe off the paint with a rag.*

**8b) New Ending:** Continue to focus on your feeling as you visualize the ending of the dream. Now, without thinking about it, just letting the images flow, finish the dream with a new imagined ending that works out positively for you and perhaps those you are involved with in the dream.

*ANS: "I let my Jane finish painting the room Blue and Red.....it looks GREAT!"*

[Note: the dreamer went so deeply into envisioning the ending she hesitated for a moment then surprised herself with her enthusiastic answer.]

**8c) Waking Life Analogy:** How is that new metaphoric ending analogous to something that could be done in your waking life to resolve the situation or conflict the dream appears to be dealing with?

*ANS: Face the conflict and "go with the flow" it will turn out fine.*

### ***Step #9 - Resolution and Next steps***

**9a) Define an Apparent Solution:** Define in specific terms how the metaphors in steps #7 or #8, might represent a practical solution to your waking-life situation.

*ANS: Rather than fighting the conflict, I face my fears and (as Jane would) go with what is happening! But (based on the insight from the color work) focus on attempting to maintain a cooperative harmony in my relation to my boss and co-workers. [Note: as noted in step #5, a clue to facing her conflict came from the integrated color work using table 9-8 in *Dream Language 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Per Jung, the resolution to a conflict is the integration of the two sides. One statement that resonated for the integration of blue and red is, *Seek harmony and cooperation with associates for our mutual benefit.*]*

**9b) Check It Out:** Is it a healthy, practical, appropriate resolution that allows you to progress in a positive direction - or - does it go too far to be achievable or perhaps leave you stuck again?

*ANS: "Yes, it is a helpful solution that allows me to move forward."*

**9c) Next Steps:** If it checks out positively, then what specific next step(s) can you take to bring it about?

*ANS: "I can put my house on the market and leave for my new job."*

**9d) Reminder Image:** visual reminder of the new solution in the event a similar situation is experienced in the future.

*ANS: "Jane (who goes with the flow)"*

**Follow-up note:** after the session the dreamer put her house on the market, packed and, with the help of her friends (Jane included), moved to her new job.



**Table 7-1**  
**GUIDE FOR TRANSFORMATIVE DREAMWORK**

**PART 1: EXPLORATION - ASSOCIATION & METAPHOR WORK**

**Step #1 - Record the Dream Story** – as if you are re-experiencing it (use first person, present tense). Give it a **Title** and **Sketch** the scene from above or any odd imagery (*dream elements*).

**Step #2 - Life Story:** describe any emotionally impactful (positive or negative) or upsetting situations, conflicts, decisions in your life at the time.

**Step #3 - Dream to Life Comparison:**

- a) **Dream Orientation:** At the onset does the dream: 1. *metaphorically* picture some emotional situation in your waking life; or 2. symbolize (figuratively or *archetypally*) something that needs to be dealt with to resolve the situation (*Shadow*, past event or trauma, associated factor). Does it introduce an impactful or surprising event or resolution, that alters your view or actions?
- b) **Metaphors in the Dream Story:** Look for phrases, word-play and action themes in the dream story that when verbalized sound like they also might describe a situation or feelings in your life at the time. Does an odd combination of images “spell out” something meaningful?
- c) **Associations and Memories:**
  - **Define** the dream *elements* (images) and/or their purpose or function (what it is and does)
  - **Define Personality characteristic of known persons** – how are they like and unlike you and how would they approach the unresolved waking situation/conflict you find yourself in?
  - **Themes:** Are any of the actions or feelings or the general theme of what you are doing in the dream similar to what you are doing and feeling in waking life.
  - **Memories:** does an action/setting/image recall something from your life or your past? If from your past what one specific past event comes to mind? Relate to your present situation.
- d) **Rewrite the Dream Story;** substitute these associations in place of the related words/phrases in the narrative; re-write and re-read the Dream Story as relate it to your Life Story.

**PART 2: INSIGHT - EXPLORING UNDERLYING EMOTIONS**

**Step #4 - Give the Dream a Voice** – scripted *role-play* (the 6 “magic” questions):

- a) **Pick one or more images/elements X** that seem important, or curiously draw your attention.
- b) **Give the Dream a Voice:** Re-enter the dream and “become” that dream *element* ‘X’. Speak in the first-person present tense as X would in their role in the dream. Record your statements.
  - 1a) Who or **what are you** (describe yourself and how you feel): “I am \_\_\_\_\_”
  - 1b) *Alternatively - if the dream figure is someone you know, then “become” that person and describe a key personality characteristic they have in relation to their role the dream.*
  - 2) What is your **purpose or function** in that role? “My purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_”
  - 3) What do you **like** about being ‘X’ ? “I like \_\_\_\_\_”
  - 4) What do you **dislike** about being ‘X’ ? “I dislike \_\_\_\_\_”
  - 5) What do you **fear most** as ‘X’, the worst thing that can happen to you? “I fear \_\_\_\_\_”
  - 6) What do you **desire most** as that dream *element*? “What I desire most is to \_\_\_\_\_”
  - 7) **Dialog** (optional): Spot the dreamer in the dream, what would you tell them?
- c) **Relate to a Life Situation:** Do one or more of the statements sound like a situation or feelings in your waking life? Do the “I am” and “My purpose” statements sound like a role you see yourself in? Do the “I like” vs. “I dislike” statements sound like a conflict going on in your mind? Do the “I fear” vs. “I desire” statements sound like waking fears and desires that leave you stuck in the conflict? Does the dialog statement sound like a form of practical guidance? If the dream figure is a person you know, they likely represent a personality characteristic: perhaps a reflection of your actions in the situation OR more often they may represent a solution the dream is testing - ask what would they do in your situation, how would they handle conflict you find yourself in?

### Step #5 - Exploring the Emotion in Color

- a) **Pick the Colors to work on:** colors that stood out in the dream or color of the image in step #4.
- b) **Pick the closest color** in the **Color Questionnaire** below (table 7-2).
- c) **Read the statements** for that color and select any that trigger a “connection” with a situation or feelings in your waking life (note: the statements NOT the “meaning” of color, they represent common subliminal associations from color psychology research, intended only to trigger your own personal associations). If the image or scene contains a color pair: a) explore the possibility (table 7-2) that the 2 colors might represent 2 conflicting emotions or b) the integration of two conflicting emotions (table 9-8 in *Dream Language 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*) as a potential path to resolution.
- d) **Relate to Waking Life:** Pick the one or two statement(s) that create the strongest “aha” response or “connection,” that best relate to a waking life situation or conflict. How do these statements augment the other dreamwork steps?

### Step #6 – Summary, Putting it All Together:

Reflect on and combine the more “meaningful” statements from Parts 1 and 2 in a way that relates the dream story to your life story. Focus on the specific waking life conflict(s), fears, desires, past traumas and past events and decisions you made in the past that may relate.

## PART 3: ACTION - GUIDANCE & RESOLUTION

### Step #7 - Dream Guidance re-enter/review the dream to the end, what brought that ending about?

- a) **Resolution Scenario?** Visualizing how the problem was pictured; was something introduced that impacted or changed your *dream-self's* viewpoint or actions (an alternative, guidance, discovery, insight)? Did any *archetypal* imagery picture *unconscious* organizing processes taking place?
- b) **Guidance:** Did you experience a guiding event or insight (advice, discovery, written/verbal message) perhaps one that supported an alternative scenario or viewpoint? Define how it changed your behavior or thinking in the dream, before and after the event.
- c) **Surprise:** Did something surprise you in the dream (action, situation or figure in a role opposite to expectations; unexpected twist; unexpected discovery; odd imagery blend)? How did it differ from expectation or provide a different point of view?
- d) **Acceptance or Reversal:** Did your *dream-self* (or something representing you) at some point accept the guidance or reverse its thinking, viewpoint or action? What brought this about?
- e) **Positive Ending:** Did the dream end positively or reinforce the guidance or alternative scenario or actions of the dream-self? If so what specifically happened that brought it about and how might that be an analogy to a waking life solution? If it ended negatively or with a warning, what was your dream-self doing that appeared counterproductive?

**Compare to Life: Compare to Life** - Can you see an analogy between how the dream was attempting to resolve the dream situation (change in viewpoint, attitude or direction) and a solution or approach that might help in your waking life?

**Step #8 - Finish the Dream (Active Imagination):** If it ended negatively or inconclusively, try this: Close your eyes and place yourself at the end of the dream; focus on your feelings for a moment; then spontaneously (don't think just let the images flow) finish the dream with a new imagined ending that works out positively for you (and the others in the dream). **Compare to Life** - Can you see an analogy to a solution in your waking life situation, conflict, attitudes or beliefs?

### Step #9 – Acton: Resolution and Next Steps

- a) **Define a Solution:** Review the waking life analogies in steps #7 and #8 and define a specific solution to your waking life situation that the dream metaphorically might be suggesting.
- b) **Check it Out:** is it healthy, appropriate, practical or does it leave you stuck again?
- c) **Next Steps:** If positive, then what specific next step(s) can you take to bring it about?
- d) **Reminder Image:** pick an image from the resolved ending as a reminder of your solution.

## Table 7-2 Color Questionnaire

The emotional themes/expressions are NOT the “meaning” of color nor should they be used that way. They are intended only to trigger your own associations with like feelings or situations in your life. The statements were derived from color psychology research and literature (waking subliminal associations between color and emotion), the *Color Test* by Dr. Max Lüscher and the works of Carl Jung where noted.

<b>R E D</b>	1) I feel intense, vital or animated. 2) I feel transformed. 3) I feel assertive, forceful. 4) I feel creative. 5) I want to live life to its fullest. 6) I want to win, succeed, achieve. 7) I feel sexy or have strong sexual urges. 8) I have a driving desire. 9) I am feeling anxious; 10) I need something to make me feel alive again. 11) I need to be more assertive and forceful. 12) I need to get out and enjoy myself. 13) <i>Note: If it appears as blood or inflammation - it could indicate sickness or injury.</i>
<b>O R N</b>	1) I want to expand my interests and develop new activities. 2) I want a wider sphere of influence. 3) I feel friendly and welcoming. 4) I want more contact with others. 5) I feel enthusiastic, outgoing and adventurous. 6) I am driven by desires and hopes toward the new, undiscovered and satisfying. 7) I feel driven but need to overcome my doubts or fear of failure. 8) I must avoid spreading myself too thin.
<b>Y E L</b>	1) I feel a sense of joy and optimism. 2) I feel alert. 3) I am seeking a solution that will open up new and better possibilities and allow my hopes to be fulfilled. 4) I feel the new direction I am taking will bring happiness in my future. 5) I am hopeful. 6) I need to find a way out of this circumstance or relationship. 7) I need a change. 8) My actions may be compensating for something. 9) I am acting compulsively.
<b>G R E E N</b>	1) I need to establish myself, my self-esteem, my independence. 2) I want recognition. 3) I need to increase the certainty of my own value and status, through acknowledgment by others of my achievements or possessions. 4) Hard work and drive will gain me recognition and self esteem. 5) My opinion must prevail. 6) I must hold on to this view in order to maintain my self-esteem. 7) I want what I am due. 8) I must maintain control of the events. 9) Things must not change. 10) Detail and logic are important here. 11) I need to increase my sense of security. 12) I need more money to feel secure. 13) I want to withdraw and retreat into my own center. 14) I need healing or feel a sense of being healed.
<b>B L U E</b>	1) I feel tranquil, peaceful and content. 2) I feel a sense of harmony. 3) I feel a meditative awareness or unity. 4) I feel a sense of belonging. 5) I need rest, peace or a chance to recuperate. 6) I need a relationship free from contention in which I can trust and be trusted. 7) I need a peaceful state of harmony offering contentment and a sense of belonging.
<b>V I O</b>	1) I like to win others over with my charm. 2) I feel an identification, an almost "mystic" union. 3) I have a deep intuitive understanding of the situation. 4) I feel a sense of intimacy. 5) The feeling is erotic. 6) I seek a magical state where wishes are fulfilled. 7) I yearn for a "magical" relationship of romance and tenderness. 8) I seek to identify with something or someone. 9) I need intimacy. 10) I engage in fantasy perhaps to compensate for my feelings of insecurity.
<b>B R O W N</b>	1) I seek a secure state where I can be physically comfortable and relax or recover. 2) I am uneasy and insecure in the existing situation. 3) I need a more affectionate environment. 4) I need a situation imposing less physical strain. 5) I want to satisfy the physical senses (food, luxury, sex). 6) <i>If it is a Natural or wood brown (Jung): a) I am concerned about matters of family, home, or my "roots". b) I am concerned with a son or daughter. c) I am searching for my true self or natural state of being.</i> 7) <i>Note: If Dirty Brown or green/gray-brown: it may relate to a physical problem or illness.</i>
<b>G R A Y</b>	1) I want to shield myself from those feelings. 2) I feel emotionally distant, only an observer. 3) It is as if I am standing aside, watching myself mechanically go through the motions. 4) I want to remain uncommitted, non-involved, shielded or separated from the situation. 5) I do not want to make a decision that will require my emotional involvement. 6) I have put up with too much and wish to avoid any further emotional stimulation. 7) I am trying to escape an anxious situation. 8) I am compensating for something.
<b>B L A C K</b>	1) I am anxious and don't know why. 2) I am fearful of or intimidated by the situation. 3) I have been dealt an unacceptable blow. 4) Nothing is as it should be. 5) I refuse to allow it/them to influence my point of view. 6) I can't accept the situation and don't wish to be convinced otherwise. 7) I feel the need for extreme action, perhaps in revolt against or to compensate for the situation. <b>Jung: Black/Darkness often represents the unconscious realm. Beautiful Shiny Black a positive view of the unconscious from which a new self emerges.</b>
<b>W H I T E</b>	1) This is a new experience. 2) I'm becoming aware of new feelings. 3) I'm experiencing a new beginning, a transformation. 4) I have a new outlook, a new awareness. 5) I feel pure and innocent. 6) I feel open and accepting. 7) I feel unprepared. 8) I feel alone, isolated. 9) It feels cold or sterile. <i>Note: White mixed with a color (pastel); adds a sense of calming, or newness/new emergence or re-emergence of that emotion that the color is associated with.</i>

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