

Sleep Dreaming, Awake Dreaming, Gates of Dreaming

The dreaming body is that part of ourselves that is wild and uncontrollable, but houses our totality, or the rest of it, as well as our animal natures, knowledge without reason, seeing without sight - it is the part of us denied a place at the table since birth.

So, in a sense, we are seeking to reintegrate it into our totality, to not be separate from our dreams but a living part of them always. So accessing the dreaming body is important to regain the totality of what you are, you cannot be complete without it, or at least shamans cannot.

To the dreaming body all knowledge is accessible because it is not separate from the larger world, as our intellects perceive it. Much is stored in the dreaming body: Knowledge, personal history, abilities we all share as human beings, but few recognize even the potential. The rational mind retains control; much of what the dreaming body can place us in contact with is incomprehensible to it. Shamans have traditionally worked on this reclamation by practices involving ecstatic trance and journeywork - and most importantly dreaming, because it is during dreaming that the barriers most easily are crossed, but the conscious mind, or reason is always there working against it. Place and time are concepts that only apply to the intellectual body they mean nothing to the rest of us.

Sitting Bull once said that his dreams had become so clear that soon he would be able to dream himself back into the world...then he died. It wasn't the dreaming that killed him though. But the question is how do you reach the dreaming body and make it a part of your everyday existence. First you must trap your own attention, then overcome the fear that reason instills in you, and then you must stop the world. There will be created a dead space between reason and the dreaming body. Within that space you will start to move without intending towards your dreaming body because it is only natural for them to want to be reunited. Once your attention is trapped, not focused, you will slip into a space which at first you cannot recall any memory of, that is when the world stops. Within that space anything is possible. To recall and take control of the process requires personal energy on a level few people ever think about. Everyone has these experiences at one time or another, but shamans seize them as opportunities. The drawback to this is that once you experience one of these episodes there will usually be a readjustment in your personal energy, which can be very hard to deal with in the real world. So, shamans, recognizing the absolute necessity of recombining with the dreaming body, hunt for ways to do that. That is why we say we stalk the dreaming body. If you want more then you have to actively stalk it. The process of active reintegration of the dreaming body is too powerful for most people to deal with. For one thing it is very hard work and for another the results can cause you to doubt your own sanity on basic levels. For this reason shamans are always talking about balance. Once the process is started it tends to progress under its own weight. But only up to a point and that is a very dangerous position.

The dreaming body is a form of consciousness undefined. As you do this work, you are defining it in terms that will create the double and then it will come out. The dreaming body will still exist, but so will the double otherwise how would your double connect back to your consciousness? It comes out of your own energy, but not in this dimension so to speak. It is the part of you connected to other things. The dreaming body creates the double, which is also the dreaming body.

The double is the dreaming body set loose in the first attention. You create a dreaming body so intense and detailed it can move back into the real world. Now once that happens you are working towards the totality of the self, which means pushing the waking body toward a larger and larger worldview. Eventually it will include the dreaming body and you will merge the two. When the two are finally merged, (the double/dreaming body and the waking body,) you will know the totality of yourself and you will burn with the fire from within, your physical body will no longer be able to contain your energy.

You will know yourself and all your connections will have been illuminated. You can think of it this way: you have two containers, each contains a chemical, and there are billions of little tubes connecting the two. As each line is opened a flow starts. When the last few lines are opened finally a critical mass is reached and the two containers merge their contents and burn. It's a crude metaphor, but in a way it's pretty accurate.

Dreaming falls into two categories, the normal metaphorical dreams we are used to and dreams which are directed or push through to another reality. Pushed dreams normally can occur in either awake or asleep states, and they occur naturally in both.

Sleep Dreaming

Sleep dreaming is the movement of our energy into the other side of our awareness. Awake dreaming is as well, but it tends to be more of a linear movement at first. We touch upon other things, which pass through our energy and then we can follow those to new and places.

There are three levels or types of sleep dreaming - upper, middle and the journey dream. The upper are those dreams that are influenced by real events in the world, like you need to go to the bathroom, so you dream about going to the bathroom, or there is noise and you incorporate it into a dream. It's the lightest type of dreaming.

Midlevel dreaming is where most people dream. The dreams are like little stories. They may be weird stories sometimes, but still stories. They are highly metaphorical usually, but lucidity can be achieved there and followed into deeper dreaming.

Journey dreaming, or the deepest dreaming, doesn't usually rely on story lines. It is powerful, often chaotic and very hard with which to deal. Usually people don't remember these dreams because they are so far apart from the first attention they can't fit them into the conscious mind very easily.

This is where power lies, the second attention and the unknown, it is where nightmare originate and chase you back into midlevel dreaming where they become fearful stories. The nightmare chases you back because your attention can't handle it. You recoil and your energy moves back up to midlevel consciousness but the power of the deepest level follows you. For most people it becomes a nightmare. So, the dreamer's goal is to achieve this journey level and navigate there without falling in to fear - to cut through to the bottom with control. What is to be found there? The unknown.

The key with asleep dreaming is to move to the point you can dream yourself back into the world. You basically create a dreaming body; create it to the point you can move back into the real world with it. You have to do the recap to accomplish this - gather all your energy back - it requires all of it. The double, or dreaming body, is not bound by the normal rules of perception. Once it is reunited with your normal body you take on those abilities too. At some point you combine the two back together and at that point you have regained the totality of yourself.

Once you have the two recombined you have total awareness of yourself, this allows you to see energy the way you want, to move anywhere you want in time in space etc, the rules don't apply anymore. But you are still human. Once you have that, you can move past this world into other worlds, in reality, not just with your energy.

Once you have done this, the totality thing, you face a decision and that is to move or die a normal death. That choice remains with each person I think who achieves that. This is the flight past the human form, leaving it behind to move on. There may be any number of reasons a person would decide to not move on beyond the human. It might be love, it might be a sense of duty, it could be a lot of things - but in the end it's all about knowledge anyway, isn't it?

If a person chooses to move on beyond the human, they burn - the anchor to the human form is burned away and they move on, across the unknown. Restless spirits on an endless flight - into the unknown.

We have all agreed that we are limited but we are so much more. Not great beings, but so much more than we imagine.

Awake Dreaming

Awake dreaming is a movement of your energy. Start with daydreaming, take control of it as a process and learn to move it with intent. Awake dreaming is different because it is a direct affront to your reason.

Let's say you want to see what someone is wearing right now. You start to daydream about it, which is a feeling everyone can master. Next as you move into that visualization change it to one of movement, of clarity, like wiping the fog off a mirror. When you realize you are only looking and not 'thinking' you will snap back, but your reason won't be fast enough to stop the image. Daydreams take a little time, the movement past them anyway, you are working against your brain directly.

You can use anything that is distracting as a tool to move past the rational brain. Put on a pair of headphones and play Captain Beefheart at top volume and then daydream. The thing is you want to directly force your brain into two separate directions and then you escape through the crack. It takes a while though and you need verification of course.

Visual stuff works pretty well, but it has to be consistent, like staring into a light bulb. I like just a simple fifteen-watt bulb. When you first get up in the morning, or after a nap, turn on one light and start to stare at it, you'll be gone. I know, it sounds odd, but what you were doing is a direct movement of your energy as opposed to using the practice of dreaming to get there. By using distraction you can slip past the gatekeeper of your rationality and begin to realize that you can perceive things using other aspects of your energy.

Gates of Dreaming

The usual steps involved in dreaming practices shamanically are pretty straight forward. First, to be able to remember your dreams, second to 'wake up' inside your dreams and third, to take control of your dreams in a real way. A notebook by the bed is a very good idea, it allows you to record your dreams when you wake up during the night, or upon first waking in the morning. Focusing your intent, or what you are intending to do, is also important, without that things can become too chaotic in dreaming and of no value to you when awake. Typing out the dreams is a

good way to reinforce the memory of the dream.

There are other methods that can be used to remember your dreams or make them more vivid in detail for you in waking. One of the best is simply to set your alarm clock for an hour or so earlier than you have to wake up. You might get a second alarm clock and leave it set for when you actually have to get up and then when the first one goes off just turn it off without having to worry about resetting it. Being jogged toward consciousness like this tends to bring us closer in memory to our dreams. You will tend to remember more, especially in the period between the two alarms.

Some people use this method every two or three hours during sleeping, resetting the clock each time for another two hours. I think that can be a little extreme and cause some sleep deprivation so I don't recommend it as a general rule. If you happen to be one of those people that this type of schedule doesn't bother then by all means use it. There is some experimentation involved here to determine what type of schedule works best for you. What you are doing here in all of this at first is to simply draw back the curtain on your dreaming. All people dream in one way or another, you're just trying to get a clear picture of your dreams and draw closer to that side of yourself.

That pretty much covers the simple aspects of the first part of dreaming practices. The second aspect, of waking up in your dreams is a logical next step I think. In order to accomplish that you must have a much more narrowly defined intent going into dreaming and it can take a long time to manage it fully. Simply being aware you are dreaming, or becoming lucid, isn't enough. Ultimately you are trying to move beyond even the complex imagery of your dreaming mind and into the energy of dreaming itself. During this process your dreams will tend to become less chaotic and more 'complete' in a sense. You will become aware at some point that you are awake in the dream, realizing that you're dreaming etc., at that point you begin to acquire better focus and understanding of why you want to do any of this in the first place.

Dreaming energy is not bound by the normal rules of our waking world. I'm sure you've noticed that over time. Almost anything can happen in a dream. In the dreaming state, we are not bound by time, distance, or even physicality. Your dreaming people could be from anywhere, the past, the future, another time altogether. They could be ancestral memories, or other dreaming energies who happen to get caught in your dreaming. Without knowing the context when a specific one appears it is hard to say. But in general it indicates you are a daring dreamer, willing to reach past the mundane in dreaming, not afraid to see new things or people. This is a good thing.

Some people have success by remember to 'notice' some object in their dreams to trigger lucidity. If this works for you then by all means use it. Some people will use a keyword, like say, 'pickle' or any word will do. They fall asleep with the intent of saying that word and becoming aware in their dream. If the object works for you then use it, form the intent of seeing it in your dreams. When you do, focus on the object, then shift your focus to elements in your dream and begin practicing holding onto them, not letting them shift into other things..