

## REMEMBERING YOUR DREAMS ~ SOME KEYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR UNCONSCIOUS

"The dream rectifies the situation. It contributes the material that was lacking and thereby improves the patient's attitude. That is the reason we need dream-analysis in our therapy."

- Carl G. Jung.



In Jungian Psychology we consider the unconscious a precious **jewel**, a treasure to be discovered and be utilized to help to make our life more whole and conscious. This means that our **shadow** represents portions or parts of us, of our personality that we don't like, we don't see it and/or we don't recognize despite that our shadow is filled with much potential. Unknowingly by many, it is pure gold.

As a part of us and part of who we are our shadow is also connected to the world itself and makes us who we are, human beings with mind, body and soul; we are an embodiment of different **polarities**, represented by the positive and the negative, the conscious and the unconscious parts in us.

A side from the individual aspects to take into consideration, dreams also connect us to the universal, the **archetypal** and the symbolic. Dreams have the power to awaken us to the terrestrial plane and to the divine **mystery** we are all living in and attempting to comprehend more fully.

The unconscious is filled with information about ourselves and about our personal growth as individuals. Often, the unconscious can **reveal** and let us know in truth how we really process our experiences, but most important to consider is, that speaks a very unique and symbolic language, not as easy to track and interpret.

A very famous quote from C. G. Jung says: “*Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.*” This is the reason why in the endeavor of providing Psychotherapy, the purpose of such is connected to improving the life of the individual, the family or the group or overall society. But primarily, it is about assisting the process of making conscious the unconscious and then being able to understand what is **missing** or attempting to understand what is not working well.

At Bach Flower Therapy we believe that flower essences can assist anyone with this arduous and elaborate process of finding what is missing but we certainly see the benefit of investing time and energy paying attention to your dreams and being healed by them while you take the flower remedies. Certainly, it is a very unique healing modality.

What the essences catalyzed is your **inner doctor** within, and dreams come as a reflection of the conflict or portraying an image of what is needed to change or what has been already resolved. Each flower essence has a quality and while working on healing any trauma, dreams can be your ally to find **clues** that are **hidden**. While making these clues conscious, it will then favor your conscious process and for you to awaken to parts of yourself that perhaps have been dormant or inactive for you to feel better, back to normal or renewed.

We say sometimes that it is an “arduous process” because it takes bravery to look at your unconscious. And, it can be important in this process to not be alone. This is a process of knowing yourself and **awakening** to who you are. Also, it is a process for bringing into consciousness what is most precious for you to realize. To be conscientious of unknown things that can be the key to the next steps of your life. In this sense, we want to offer you guidance and support.



## THE UNCONSCIOUS

The unconscious is a pretty “sensitive entity” and it is like a character that has his own personality. In our psyches, the unconscious is a whole entity by its own doing its job. This is a very **powerful source** and it has life in itself. I might say also that this is a pretty sensitive entity to be looked at in relationship to other parts of us.

The unconscious can be a trouble maker, a **mobilizer** and shaker. Its energy is very powerful. This is the reason why we can wake up very moved by a dream. Also, this is the reason why the unconscious favors us to have the most amazing **wake up calls**. It can be shaking but it is fascinating at the same time when we open up to learn about ourselves. It helps us to really pay attention to what is need it, even if we don't like it or we don't want to.

One of the most important things to pay attention to in catching your dreams is **constancy**. Often, I like to equate this process to the act of “fishing”. The process of catching a fish can be long and arduous; it requires a lot of patience: you have to take care to not scare the waters by waiting patiently for the fish to bite the hook. In this regard, you have to trust what you are doing and wait for the fish to show up.

In this sense, what it the most crucial aspect to consider in this process is for you to become an **ally** to your unconscious and allow the unconscious to be revealed to you through your dreams and the synchronicity that can accompany this magical process. Let's say that in order to make friends with your dreams and your unconscious, it is very important to be open with **curiosity** (not be scared) and set up the right intentions. By setting the right intentions, it can also wake up your curiosity in synch to your inner experience.

In my years of studying and practicing Psychology, I encountered many people complaining of not remembering their dreams and this becomes a frustration to them. But once they start to be curious and pay attention, trusting the process and being open, things start to change.

Therefore, here I want to make some suggestions or give you some tips for you to pay attention and see how these can work for you. Welcoming your unconscious in your life implies to invest time in exploring and nourishing your inner life. And, for me to help you to be doing this work, I will provide you with some tips that can favor the remembrance.



## CREATING THE RIGHT INTENTIONS

As you might know, one important theme in Psychology and Metaphysics is setting intentions and working with your **belief system**. By modifying your set of negative beliefs to a more positive ones can benefit you immensely.

Therefore, the first step to take in the journey of following and tracking your dreams is to review your set of beliefs about your unconscious. As we said earlier, being **open** to look at things in a different way, and to get to know parts of yourself that can be ugly or difficult, or they can feel negative or **puzzling** to you.

Thus, by not pushing away anything puzzling, strange to you or that feels negative, can be a good step to begin and welcome the unconscious in your life. As firm and as determined and open you are to the world of dreams, the more **possibilities** will open up for you to remember them.

Often, to remember dreams it can be of good advice to suggest to yourself a “mantra” that you can repeat to yourself along the day. You can write an affirmation down in a



paper (e.g. “I am open to remember my dreams”), or even painting the word “dreams” in a board or an image that symbolizes the oniric and the imaginal world will help you to invoke them and for them to show up and be part of our life.

When going to bed, it is important to hold this intention in your mind and keep repeating your **mantra** until you fall sleep. It is like when we were little children and our mothers read us fairy tales or encouraged us to start counting sheep to help us transition from the day time to the night time.

In this way, by doing some writing, visualizing that you will remember your dreams or doing an affirmation or mantra connected to this purpose, you will welcome your dreams and you will hold a **better attitude** to enter the dreaming state when you go to sleep.

To favor your intention to remember your dreams, you can also write down your mantra or affirmation in a piece of paper and place it under your pillow. The utility of this is based on the fact that your unconscious will pick up on the very intentional act.

The same that we do when setting intentions and affirmations, it is very important to see yourself being the master of your own process and visualize yourself **journaling**, and writing down your dreams and working on your **association/s** and diverse meaning that can elicit.

For example, visualize in your mind that the right dreams are revealed to you and that they will be very meaningful to you. Visualize all the process in your mind, like “playing a tape” of all the ritual that you create. See this process headed to a very positive outcome (your ideal one). Enjoy it, **feel** it, and recreate it like it was real.



## RITUALIZING AND ACCOMMODATING YOUR SLEEPING AREA

It is very important that you have a place to sleep that it is **clean** and you feel **comfortable**. Keep in mind that your sleeping place is a special place. Ideally, this should be accommodated for you to rest and have a peaceful night.

It can be of help that your bedroom or your sleeping area is **decorated** with meaningful things, including personal objects that inspire what gives you a sense of clarity and well-being, as well as inspire your purpose or what you want to become, connected with your conscious dreams.

It is said in some dream studies that it is easy to remember your dreams if you sleep in the complete **dark**, without any type of light around. Thus, if you feel comfortable, it is important that you sleep with the windows, doors and lights closed.

Meditation also is a good practice known that favors remembering our dreams. While **meditating**, you learn to cultivate awareness in the present moment and to notice what flows to your conscious mind, allowing it to be present, and then once it is made conscious, be able to let it go.

Therefore, when paying attention to your memories, slowing down your mind and connecting to your **breathing**, it favors the inner sight to expand and connect more easily with your subconscious mind.

This will bring up some unconscious material to the **surface**. This content is stored and once emerges is the time for you to explore. This can happen through an **image**, a felt sense, a thought, a word, or a vague memory that emerges while meditating and being mindful of the content that emerges in your mind.

Interestingly, it is also known that some people tend to remember more their dreams when they sleep in an unknown or **unfamiliar** place out of their usual comfort zone, or in uncomfortable situations that interrupt their sleep. Studies show that it is easy to wake up at different times during the night time, which they remember easily the dreams than when they sleep all the way through the night.

**Ritualizing** your life can favor the access to your dreaming state. It is important that you choose the way in which you “sacralize” your life and your present moments. You can do that in different ways, by doing a **prayer**, by ringing a bell, reading a passage of a book or a poem that means something important to you, or even lighting a **candle** in your altar or incense before going to bed.

Again, here it is also where you can set up your intentions and aligning your beliefs with the purpose of working with your dreams and **welcoming** your unconscious to be of guidance to you. This is a mental preparation, a readiness to surrender to the unknown.

It is also a way to **honor** your dreams and be serious about it. If you want a good example about ritualizing your life, the monks prepare themselves all day long with rituals. For example, going to bed very early and waking up very early in the morning while practicing all sorts of rituals and prayers during the day long.



## BE THE DREAMER AND THE DREAM

Another way to help you to remember dreams is to **read other dreams** that you have written before in your journal. Reviewing them is a wonderful way to get in synch with your inner life.

In this case, reading for example one dream, you can activate a chain of other dreams (recurrent ones) that can bring more answers to the questions you have to that particular dream or to the content that it is connected. In this way, by sitting with your journal and the dreams you wrote, you send the message to your unconscious that you really care about what is trying to show you.

When you sense that you are falling sleep, quiet your mind and observe your thoughts and the images coming along. By paying attention to watch for the **hypnagogic images**, this is the entrance to the night time. These are images that come and go spontaneously. Even if you think that they are not related to you in any way, these are important to pay attention.

When you will recognize this type of images, you must **trust** them and hold them in your memory to later write them down or make a note to yourself to remember them. When a dream will be revealed more clearly, perhaps will be in connection as well with these other images.

As a dreamer or person who pays attention to his or her dreams, you need to keep them alive in your conscious mind. You need to welcome them and play with them. Well, I say “play” in a very positive way as dreams are not toys. They are psychic material to be explored and be understood.

When we are **playing**, we are mostly exploring, taking an **adventure** in our own minds and re-creating this outside. Of course, this is easier to do when we were children, but when we are adults, the key is to learn to put a side our judgment and allow ourselves to be curious, open and playful with possibilities.

In this case, achieving a **“beginner’s mind”** will be the key, a state of mind where there is no censorship and there is tons of room for making mistakes.

How you wake up is crucial to be able to catch up the images of the dream and hold them for long enough time to write them down. In this sense, to catch a dream, it is much easier to wake up **naturally** with no alarm clock. In this sense, I often recommend to many of my clients (the ones who suffer from being workaholics) to set up a day on the weekend when they allow themselves to wake up at their body’s desire.

By doing so, as the weeks pass by, this will favor remembering the dreams that night. The clocks unfortunately take us away of the dream time and often can interrupt them.



## PART II - PROGRAMMING AND CONTACTING THE UNCONSCIOUS



### SEEKING A MIRROR AS A CATALYST FOR LUCID DREAMING

As we mentioned before in the title of setting the right intentions, instructing your dreaming self to seek a mirror in your dreams and trying to see your own reflection in it, can become a powerful catalyst for lucid dreaming as long as you rehearse this cue sufficiently beforehand. By making repeated **suggestions** to yourself during the day that you will become lucid in your dreams it is possible to program our unconscious. This is a process known as “autosuggestion”.

Different dream analysts in the field of dreamwork recommend to us to suggest ourselves each night: *“Tonight I shall know that I am dreaming, and I shall awaken in the dream world.”* As we mentioned earlier, it is crucial to become **intentional** and affirm what we want. By repeating this mantra very firmly as you fall sleep can be of great help to get to the state of lucid dreaming. This happens when you are conscious in the dream and you can consciously act and participate of the dream as it is unfolding.

You can imagine yourself back in a recent dream, only this time knowing that you are dreaming. If there is an **object** or **event** that features **frequently** in your dreams, such for example a house, a soccer field or a car, you can use it as an anchor image. By telling your waking mind that the next time it appears in dreams, you will realize that you are dreaming.

For example, you can also choose an activity that you regularly perform in dreams like for example, cooking or building a house. Whatever object, event or activity you select, **visualize** it as often as possible during the day.

Another method is to create a cue for lucid dreaming. Instruct your dreaming self to find a **mirror** and look into it. Later, promise to yourself that you will know that you are dreaming when you see your **reflection**. This technique is especially effective because it is an unusual dream experience. If you frequently dream of water, tell yourself to go and look for your reflection in the surface.



## BEFRIENDING THE UNCONSCIOUS & DEVELOPING STRONGER DREAM SKILLS

It would be unrealistic to expect the unconscious to respond to us like the conscious mind does. Even after a long period of intense efforts, it may fail to get the message you are trying to convey, only to reward you when you least expect it or to respond to you only when you have been seeking for a specific result.

As you work to develop stronger dream skills, bear in mind that the unconscious does not learn in the same way as the conscious mind does. The **conscious mind** is usually more logic, rational, and/or **linear**. This tends to search for patterns and relationships, and thrives on consistency and predictability. It thinks primarily in terms or words, and can readily test itself on what it has learned.

By contrast, the **unconscious mind** follows no rules, tends to be stubborn and willful, definitely more wild and perhaps we can affirm that it is more illogical or non-linear, and makes progress in a frustratingly **unpredictable** and inconsistent ways. It sometimes obstinately refuses to cooperate with us as well.

In this process of befriending the unconscious, it is crucial to be **patient**, and not to waver in your belief that the unconscious will respond. The unconscious does, however, resemble the conscious mind in that it responds well to **praise**. You must befriend it, letting it know how much you value it.

You can reward it verbally and holding the value with your warm feelings for receiving your dreams it gives you. Make sure that you **thank** yourself and your unconscious for each improvement in your dream life. Keep asking what further help you can give to it, and **wait** in silence for the answers it provides.

Never regard actions of this kind as fantasy. They are an effective way of self-integration, and produce a range of psychological benefits as well as improvements in the overall process of dreaming. **Subtleties** are very important to not disregard them. I know that it is a hard work and it is easy to skip by or to give up. Thus, in this regard every little improvement and renewed intention surely counts.

As we pointed out earlier, the best way to approach the unconscious is through simplicity and **repetition**. You have to be a “faithful fisherman.” Give it instructions that are clear and unambiguous, such as “*I am going to remember my dreams*” and repeat it with faith and sincerity frequently.

Another attractive option to work with dreams and symbolic images chosen by many people is to listen to **music** that you feel that echoes or represents the dream mood you wish to experience. You can also read romantic or mystical **poetry** and visualize its symbols and ponder the deep metaphors involved. You may opt to watch and listen as your mind learns how to absorb impressions, and resist the temptation to reduce these impressions to the level of rational, linear thought by expressing them as words.

One important fact is pretty true and this is that the more rigid and inflexible the conscious mind becomes, the more thoroughly it prevents the energy of the unconscious from emerging into awareness. In this regard, it may be helpful to think of the unconscious as the source of your psychological life, and see the conscious mind as a kind of over layer, placed over it by learning and in experience.

Another way we can befriend our unconscious is by making the different parts of our mind work in unison by creating a **visual metaphor**: visualize the conscious mind as a strong and serious doorkeeper holding the door closed through which the unconscious is trying to enter.

Therefore, imagine the conscious mind opening the door and greeting the unconscious like it was a lost close **friend** or a brother or sister. Watch the two parts of the mind assent that they both have much to learn from each other. Feel deeply in your heart that from now on, once they have **re-encountered** each other after a long time of being separated, they will work together in harmony.





## SLEEPING ON PROBLEMS AND ASKING FOR SOLUTIONS

While we are sleeping, our minds continue to work by processing information, storing memories, sometimes untying the more complex intellectual, emotional and moral problems. Not attached to the conventions of the conscious mind, the unconscious is free to take the unusual or **unexpected** approach that can provide the **breakthrough** that we have been seeing or desiring for a long time.

Overnight, the sleeping brain **incubates** the problem, analyzing it and bringing the solution into consciousness as we awake. We all have often spent many efforts pondering an apparently insoluble problem or question, only to wake up with the answer. This feels **intuitive** and “out of the blue,” but it definitely has gone through an overnight process. One way to test this process, at a very simple level, will be to ask a friend to give you an **enigma**, a puzzle or dilemma. If you cannot solve it by your conscious efforts, hand it over to your unconscious.

Asking your unconscious to aid you is a matter of holding the problem in your mind when you are going to bed. You can feel confident in the knowledge that you have no need to worry about the solution during the night. Your sleeping mind will do all the work and will **reveal** to your conscious mind the **answer** in the morning, either as a entire reply that you will know it, or might appear buried in a dream.



When you will wake up in the morning or even in the middle of the night, you may find that you simply **know** the solution to your problem or you get the answer to your enigma or question. If not, search for it in your dreams, where it can appear **symbolically**, as a verbal sentence, which may need further interpretation.

Another approach to be asking for solutions to your unconscious mind is by suggesting an appropriate symbolism to your dreaming mind. Doing this, you can visualize the question in **themes** that are involved in your dilemma or problem, or name the elements of the problem.

For example, if the problem concerns your family, imagine them and the outside place where they live, write the theme in a piece of paper and later add each of each element associations that comes along. You can proceed to organize in the paper the images that come to your mind to represent the problem awaiting solution. To expand on the themes of your problem, your **feelings** can help you as well to bring images. In this sense, ask yourself: *What I am feeling (conflicted?, chaotic?, angry?, powerless?)*.

The solution to your problem could appear in various forms, presenting itself in terms of the people involved, the symbols you have using or in some other way. You have to be prepared to repeat this process of **visualizing** the problem and its questions for different nights in a row, giving your unconscious time to mull over the problem and bring you the solution in a symbolic or literal, more direct form.



## READING AND INTERPRETING THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR DREAMS

Dreams speak to us in a symbolic and visual **language**. In this sense, things in the dream world are rarely what they seem or what they appear to our conscious mind. The two great schools of psychiatry offer us different explanations for this.

In this case, Sigmund Freud, founder of **psychoanalysis** when working with his patients with hypnosis, taught that dreams use a very elaborate symbolic system to protect us. In this case, the process of dreaming could be looked at like a defense mechanism system in itself.

Freud suggested that the underlying meaning of a dream can appear so disturbing to the conscious mind that it would wake us from our quiet or normal state of consciousness and worry us so deeply if it were presented **undisguised**.

According to Carl G. Jung however, symbols for him was the **primal** language of the unconscious, a pre-linguistic means of communication which resents truths potentially so mystical and profound that they can be understood only in terms of metaphor, parable or myth.

Dream interpretation, as Jung proposed is then best approached with an open mind. The goal is to **play** freely with the dream symbols that can come to you through your unconscious and put the conscious/subconscious mind into a receptive and quiet state.

There are two main **techniques** for interpreting dreams: 1) **Freud** used the free association technique, which involves allowing each aspect of a dream to stimulate a stream of unhindered associations. These eventually lead to a sudden insight that the dreamer recognizes as the essential hidden meaning.

2) **Jung** considered that free association would take the dreamer too far from the dream itself and often will miss its specific significance. Jung's method of direct association was slightly different. Instead of allowing the mind to free-associate, the dreamer returns to the dream image after each association.

Although the language of dreams is in some respects consistent for us all, we have personal idiosyncrasies that render dream dictionaries, which ascribe specific or common meaning to dream experiences, of limited value.

In order for us to grasp the real significance of our dreams, we must learn how to interpret them. We can definitely say that this task is in many ways more of an **art** than a science. This certainly means that accurate dream interpretation requires practice.

It is very important to highlight that dreams that arise from the personal unconscious are especially inclined to use images and associations from the dreamer's own life story and **subjective** inner world. In this case, successful dream interpretations depend on

learning the appropriate techniques and make a special study of your own dreams to **unravel** their very personal messages.

We all can make a good use of the universal and **archetypal** significance but it is certain that dream significance is a unique and personal endeavor. You can get help and borrow many different techniques, but what is really amazing to appreciate is that no one can do this for you.



## SHARING AND LISTENING TO DREAMS

Being in personal **analysis** as an ongoing psychotherapeutic work, or be participating of weekly psychotherapy or having a dream **guide** mentor can help you very much to pay attention to your inner life.

If you participate in dream groups, other dreamers can offer suggestions as to the meaning of your dreams but only you can experience your inner world, and you are the final **authority** interpreting the information what your unconscious is seeking to convey.

In this case, the flower remedies that operate as **catalysts** for change can be of a great aid at certain periods of your life when you want to be doing **in-depth** work on yourself and be healing and while you do that, you will be looking forward to receive answers from the depth of your unconscious mind.

- *Are you ready to dive in the healing process and be transformed and healed by the flower remedies and your own dreams?*

The old saying that “a problem shared is a problem halved” applies to dreams as well.

Talking over your dreams with a friend or with a **witness** partner can help you to remember more details and arrive to a fair interpretation. Your listener should be someone that you trust, someone who won't exercise judgment or censure you, no matter how bizarre the dream and the content associated.

You can start by recounting the dream, **telling** as much of the dream details as you can. It is always best if you can write the dream down in a paper or at your journal to not lose any detail. You can narrate it like it is a story. As much as **detail** contains, the best it will be to recreate the context in which the dream happened for analysis purposes and expand on different parts of the dream.

Add as much information as possible, for example about the colors, the forms and the sizes you saw, the actions there were made by you or others, feelings and **sensations** that the dream made you feel while dreaming and when you woke up.

Also, you can describe what textures you perceived by touching things or what **perceptions** did you had when looking at things, etc. *Did they feel familiar or unfamiliar?*

Next, describe your emotional reactions to the dream and its setting or the environment that the dream occurred. *Did you behave as your waking self would have behaved? If it was unpleasant in some way, what improvements would you do? If the dream is not complete, how would you have liked it to end?*

After that, you can also generate **direct associations** from the images of the dream and the different events of the dream. This can lead to a discussion of possible interpretations and themes that the dream is pointing out for you to work on.

When listening to yourself or others, one important thing is to help yourself or the other person who tells you a dream to remember his or her dreams as fully as possible. When **listening** and the other wants to receive feedback, use open questions such as:

*"How did you feel about this event or this character in the dream? Or: "How would you like the dream to have ended?."* These types of questions will help your subject to **uncover** interpretations.

You could also suggest some ideas of our own but always express them as suggestions and formulate them as questions. For example: *"That suggests to me so-and-so; does that make sense to you?"* Always have present in mind that it is the other person's dream and it is a **unique** experience for him or her.

We can all be facilitators for consciousness to emerge and become visible to us by having a dialog about our psychic experiences, but at the end, only each unique individual can fully interpret and give significance to his or her own dreams.