

A Personal Experience in Lucid Dream Healing

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First, let me describe my own qualifications and orientation in dreamwork. I normally recall three to five dreams per night, and have over the past decade or so written down and then fairly comprehensively indexed over 5,000 of my dreams. Of these dreams I have had several hundred that I characterize as fully lucid, meaning that within the dream I had at least the same degree of consciousness and free will (the ability to make conscious decisions) as in my physical reality waking state. During these experiences I have applied many of the standard tests for "realness" that one can apply to the physical world (from pinching myself, saying my name out loud, checking my dream body sensations, self-remembering, checking for consensus with other dream persons, etc.) and in each case dream reality has passed the tests. Of course, dream reality compared to physical reality has many profoundly different attributes, and I do not in any way wish to make light of those differences. But from a phenomenological point of view, which bases itself in experience rather than in theories about experience, I have found no basis other than prejudice for assigning any less "realness" to the lifeworld of my lucid dream state than to that of my awake physical state.

In general, I enjoy excellent health based on a number of common sense and mind-body practices. As a result, I've had very little opportunity to try the effect of healing in a lucid dream on myself. However, on Monday, April 9, 1984 I over-enthusiastically ate a Japanese style fish shish-kebab, and punctured my right tonsil with a wooden skewer. By Thursday my tonsil had grown quite horribly infected and swollen, looking about three times normal size, bright red, and with yellow lines of pus decorating the exterior. Aside from upping my dosage of Vitamin C, and a few cursory attempts at visualization, I had done nothing to treat it. On Thursday night my tonsil felt very painful, and I used a sensory awareness relaxation technique to take my mind off the pain to get to sleep. I had used this technique before (which involves a pattern of body sensing) to induce OBEs, and had the idea of attempting healing in the OB state, operating on the "as above so below" principle. I then had the following lucid dream (not an OBE, which I experience as something quite different):

. . . walking through a house I wake to the Lucid Dream State, decide to try healing my throat. I look in a mirror and my throat looks healthy, but the tonsils look more like the middle section (uvula) than like tonsils. So in my dream body my throat looks healthy, but different. I program for healing to occur (using affirmations), and my throat does feel much better on awakening.

Subjectively, I would estimate that less than an hour had passed between sleeping and waking, and the pain had almost entirely disappeared. The next morning my right tonsil looked and felt almost normal, only slightly red and swollen. At least 95% of the infection had disappeared in less than 12 hours. From the dramatic reduction in pain felt right after the healing experience, I suspect that much of this healing took place during the lucid dream itself, although of course the dream could have triggered a large release of endorphins.

The potential limits of lucid dream healing may correlate somewhat to those seen in the placebo effect or in deep hypnosis. However, I would like to point out that the physiological change-of-state documented in multiple personality cases may prove applicable to what one might expect to see in dream healing phenomena. All of us seem to experience "multiple personalities" in our dreams. Perhaps clinically defined "multiple personalities" have simply transplanted a dream state phenomenon over to the waking state as well. Although sharing the same body, different personalities often have different allergies, accelerated healing rates, and eyeglass prescriptions. Dr. Bennett Braun reported on the case of one woman who has diabetes in one personality but not in another (see the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, 26(2), October, 1983 for a whole issue devoted to this subject).

These dramatic changes can take place within minutes, and point to the dramatic and accelerated healing effects potentially available to all of us, through mental changes-of-state leading to physiological changes-of-state.

One final note: lucid dream healing involves mental certainty of a change-of-state not usually available in other self-healing modes such as visualization therapies. I did not imagine that I had healed my tonsil, I experienced a healthy tonsil. Unlike multiple personality patients, most of us cannot change our mental state to bring about a body change-of-state without a considerable amount of doubt intervening and weakening the process. In my lucid dream experience such doubt did not appear, and this could have made all the difference to the effectiveness of the healing obtained.