

## **Part VI: Applications**

### **Introduction**

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At first consideration the notion of practical applications for something as ethereal as a dream may seem fanciful at best. Be that as it may, in *Lucid Dreaming* I recounted a story that is still apt: in the eighteenth century electricity was thought no more than a scientific curiosity and a practical-minded woman is said to have asked Benjamin Franklin, "But what use is it?" His reply is famous: "What use, ma-dame, is a newborn baby?" If today the same question were asked in regard to lucid dreaming, a "scientific curiosity" of the twentieth century, the same answer could justifiably be given. Nonetheless, a variety of anecdotes and observations suggest that, like electricity, the power of lucid dreaming could also be harnessed to aid us in performing a variety of tasks with far greater ease.

Many varieties of lucid dreaming applications have been proposed: scientific exploration, health and inner growth, creative problem solving, rehearsal and decision making, and wish fulfillment and recreation. Part VI (see also other parts of this volume) presents illustrations of many of these applications. For example, there are accounts of lucid dreaming applied to sports (Tholey), creative inspiration for painting (Bogzaran), and healing (LaBerge, Kellogg).

The most interest and controversy has been expressed in the area of clinical application. A panel discussion on clinical mental health applications from the first meeting of the Lucidity Association gives a hint of the range of views. Two reprints put these applications in perspective: a comparison of clinical and transpersonal approaches (Hunt), and an account of the use of lucid awareness in dreaming and waking life (Malamud).

Some of the papers presented here reflect the considerable controversy over the issue of whether lucid dreaming is dangerous or of limited value and the extent to which general development of lucid dreaming should be encouraged. I think it is worth noting that every new idea in history has been accompanied by objections that the invention or innovation is some combination of unsafe, unnecessary, unethical, and unnatural. "If God had intended man to fly, He would have given him wings." Some seem to consider it equally impious to fly wingless in dreams.

Objections aside, in time we shall see what this newborn baby is capable of.