

Problem Solving and Dream Lucidity: An Unpleasant Experience

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When I first read about lucid dreaming, I felt the process being described was essentially rational thought while asleep. After reading subsequent material, I don't think this is exactly what is meant. I was inter-ested because on several occasions, usually while under stress from extremely heavy work loads, I have experienced nights in which I essentially kept solving the day's problems while asleep. This was extremely annoying since (a) sleep should have been a refuge from these problems, (b) this was exhausting. I am not talking about normal disturbed sleep from stress, etc. During these episodes, my mental processes were as rational as while awake. I was often aware I was asleep but could not stop my brain from continuing its activities. Some of the solutions were good— but I could have reached the same ones at 10 a.m. and gotten some rest.

If I were a naive person who doesn't know better, I'd say I almost never dream. I am a very heavy sleeper. I come from a family whose energy output is higher than average. I never nap (and get "drunk" if I do). I like to put my head down and go immediately off to sleep—and do. I'm very reality oriented, despised books like Alice—in—wonderland as a kid, still seldom read fiction but do read everything else in sight. In short, I don't want to dream! (This does not mean I have no fantasy life——actually I'm quite creative and have musical ability and creative writing abilities.) I am a high—energy person who handles much complexity.

One exception to my "negative" reaction to dreaming is the case, which has happened several times, of going to bed worried and confused about which of several courses to take——and waking up quite sure of what to do, but certainly not able to articulate the process by which my brain arrived at that conclusion while I slept. I have followed these "decisions" each time with confidence and found they were correct. (That, of course, if the opposite of lucidity!)

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