

Lucid Dreaming: Personal Observations

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To dream lucidly is to be consciously aware that one is dreaming while one is still asleep and actively dreaming. For myself, as a lucid dreamer, I experience a world having familiar characteristics yet one that is, at the same time, profoundly unlike what I know while awake. Gradually, I have learned some-thing of the nature of my dreamer's universe, and what follows below are observations based upon 91 nights of lucid dreaming, covering a 52-week period.

It has been my experience that...

1. Lucidity is not an all-or-none affair. Mine has varied in duration (from "spark" to full-length dream), and naturalness (from "forced" to self-supporting). I have also had instances of "indirect" lucidity, where verbal awareness of dreaming was not central, yet a nonverbal part of me did know, and behaved as if, I was aware.
2. My best lucid dreams have been in the morning (approximately 5:00 to 8:30 a.m.) following a full night's sleep. Sleeping supine is also generally facilitative.
3. For inducing lucid dreams, the spontaneity or "genuineness" of my nightly meditative induction seems to be more important than the sheer bulk of induction measures (al-though the latter certainly has worked). Apparently, I can, at times, "try too hard" to lucid-dream, and I am presently experimenting with induction on an "on-off" schedule.
4. Induced/excessive lucidity appears to be "low man on the totem pole." That is, if there is something more immediate my dreaming process needs work on, that will take precedence over lucidity. For exam-ple, I am now looking for work, so my dreams are geared more for helping me deal with financial stress rather than allowing me lucid indulgence. What I do once I am lucid, though, is important, for I have used "natural"/spontaneous awareness to enhance the dreaming process. Forced lucidity, on the other hand, is more of a hindrance, requiring a disproportional amount of my concentration. It feels like a dam in the flow of the dream.
5. Related to the above, lucidity permits me to control dream content, as opposed to dream process. There are overall dream themes which must be allowed to run their course, and any undue or excessive interference results in either loss of lucidity or waking up. I have to "go with the dream flow," though I can, to some extent, "play along the way."

6. Lucidity is triggered either by noting something “not right” (e.g., seeing a dead relative, or flying), or is preceded by a very pleasant feeling, something like “Ahhh...I’m dreaming.” My body feels relaxed, fluid, and “wonderfully free.” I maintain lucidity through self—reminding the more natural the lucidity, the “softer” and more infrequent the reminders.

7. Dreaming lucidly has brought to my awareness the felt realization that there are no legitimate distinctions between myself and my environment. All is Felt to be One. Powerful/natural lucid dreaming allows me to “feel the world” from within, and the stronger this awareness the purer and more direct my influence over my environment (affecting things with the merest of whims). With less intense lucid dreaming (sensing things with only parts of, instead of my entire body), whims usually need be enhanced or reinforced with dream vocalizations or gestures. At present, I am trying to discern what body part feels what and what the feeling is like (so far: numb—tingling”). At its worst, lucid awareness has been extremely cognitive, and control--if at all possible--involves a great deal of concentration.

I have also noted a peculiar tension in my eyes once I become lucid, as if an “unusual” focus were being held. It is similar to what I experience while meditating.

8. Close visual examination of my dream environment (during a “good” lucid dream) reveals that things are constantly becoming, “always new.” Each and every point of focus is continually “blossoming into it’s own being” (not unlike a hallucinogenic “trip”). It is Always Now.

9. Lucidity between dreams: The feeling is as if I were a “cork riding the waves of awareness,” each crest being a dream—picture. Visually, I have noted a Gray Void, a “sparkling/particulate nothing-ness” from which—the dream—pictures form. This “sparkling” does not appear to be all that different from the “constantly becoming” that is going on during the dream itself.

Let me repeat that the above observations are intended to necessarily hold for all individuals. Nor should it be inferred that new insights will not, in time, be revealed. It is my opinion “that the lucid experience must be very similar to what it must be like to be “Enlightened,” This is based somewhat on personal meditation experience, but mainly on literary knowledge. In any event, lucid dreaming apparently provides a unique and fabulous environment in which to learn, in which to play, and through which one may explore, the depths of consciousness; indeed, grandest of all ventures.

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