

A “Bringing to Awareness” Dream

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The following is a presentation of a ‘bringing to awareness’ dream. It is purely descriptive and I think that it relates to Havlicek’s notion about the relationship between the “activation of kinesthetic modality with imagined movement...it is as if the image of movement itself awakened consciousness” (p. 10). More importantly it shows how the ‘dreamer’ integrates the differing stimuli and needs — to weave and guide the dream in order to satisfy the need; it appears to be a creative problem—solving situation.

Only the end of the dream is remembered. That is, there is a distinct awareness that there was a meaningful episode unfolding, onto which the reported ending of the dream was seemingly grafted. The first clear image is that of myself squatting near my daughter. We are interacting and observing a small lizard that is under a box frame. The animal is peaceful and so is the observation. The lizard is gradually changing in size and shape and increasingly starts to look like a large mouse. As this goes on the environment also changes. Whilst previously it was an obviously outdoor scene in the short grass, we are now on a wall—to—wall carpet. The interaction shifts from between daughter—and-self to mouse—and—self. Correspondingly my daughter fades out of focus, although her presence is still felt. She slowly gets out of the frame and gradually the feeling of her presence peters out. In this new indoor environment the possibility of the mouse running away from where it is, and hiding in the house and chewing food and books, is a growing concern. If it escapes it will be hard to catch. (The idea of trapping the mouse does not occur.) A clear realization forms in my mind: “I must remove this animal from here, now.” And I also realize that to do that I must move my hand fast and with total deliberation if I am to catch the mouse and thereby remove it. It is an important movement. I realize that it must be a single -minded movement for it to be successful. I must identify with my hand, I must become my hand (as in martial arts) because my hand has, about two feet to move, and the animal will notice my hand moving and will start to run away...and if I don’t catch it then I will cause what I wanted to prevent. I move for the catch and I am holding the mouse or rather restricting it, but I do not have a grip on it. The weight of my palm or wrist is, pushing it down so that it cannot escape. It feels rather as if the stump of my arm is holding it down. Yet, I am not squashing the animal — there is no reaction of pain or a violent attempt to escape. The mouse is firmly fixated by my wrist. Now I have to get a grip on it with my fingers so I can lift the mouse to take it away from where it is. To remove it. I can’t do it! Of course, the mouse is trying to get away. It is able to turn its head sufficiently to attack one of my fingers (index or middle — I can’t remember which one it was) and is biting into it. This does not worry me. I know that as soon as I get a grip on the mouse this will stop. I need to hold the skin on the back of the mouse and then I can take it away and it won’t be able to bite me any more. I can not afford to be distracted by the needle—like sensations that the sharp little

teeth are inflicting on my finger. I have to get a hold of this mouse! My hand is moving around a small area but it all seems to be in a haze, I am clumsy. My hands and fingers are inept. I am getting nowhere with this simple task and I don't really know what I am doing because I am not sure about what my hand is doing or where it is. It certainly does not do what I want it to do, it is as if I has lost contact with my hand and fingers, I have no feedback. I find this ridiculous. The difficult task of catching the mouse was successful, yet this simple task of grabbing the captive and immobilized animal is impossible to complete. I am not accustomed to such clumsiness. I don't understand what issues this loss of dexterity. This calls for some explanation. In the meantime the mouse continues to have a go at the top segment of my finger and is mutilating it. Most of the flesh is exposed. The sooner I grab the mouse the sooner will this discomfort stop. But I cannot get my fingers to do the job. They don't behave like they normally do. Another realization forms in my mind: "My hands are getting numb from bleeding. I will have to stop the animal doing this to me." I need to hold the mouse, to get a grip on it, to take it away, to a secure place so that it can not escape, yet the mouse is 'hooked' on my finger piercing and numbing;. (There was no goal-place where I might put the mouse e.g. a box, etc. The aim was simply to get the mouse 'away' from where it was.) I also realize the double bind of the situation: the longer it is going to take me to do it, the less strength I shall have left in my hand. This realization puts urgency into the situation and I know that I have to put all my energies into my hand to execute the task. I have to a grip on it — that is the task.

At that point I woke up. My hands are up near my head in a typical baby—like position, and I realize that I want to move them down to my hips because they are numb, but I can't, there is no strength in them. It is now clear that this was trying to break into my awareness during the dream and that's why I had to "remove the mouse from where it is" in order to be at peace within myself.

In the above dream, which was spontaneously recalled late in the evening of the following day, the point of concern is communicated in so many different ways, yet it does not get through despite the fact that all the details are observed and memorized. It is fascinating to observe how the dream evolves, or manipulates towards the need to move the hand. But the 'sleeping will' is not strong enough to execute the necessary movement despite all inducement and concentration. It changes the lizard into a large mouse (or rat) because rodents are a concern to me. There currently is a mice plague and the mice are in the roof of the house. This is causing concern because the mice might chew on the free electric cables and also they might get into the house. I certainly would not like them to munch on my books. It is the image of movement of the limb "the attempt at motoric mastery of the anxiety causing stimulus, and this can be via any activation of the kinesthetic process — including "observation". This dimension we could call the dimension of "willful activity", it only adds depth to the sought—after syndrome (Havlicek, 1966, page 15 in translation). It results in bringing in the consciousness to do what was previously attempted unsuccessfully. This was staged through a series of clever

twists, away from the original dream story — through the intimate knowledge of an insider, selecting the most effective props, to induce or seduce, to the achievement of the goal.

I'd like to note that in order to get the feeling back into my hands I needed to move my arms. In the dream my right arm moved, the wish was fulfilled, but the need was not satisfied — I could not remove the mouse from where it was — I had no feeling in my right hand.

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