

Book Reviews

**Paul Tholey &
Kaleb Utecht's
Schoepferisch
Trauermen. Der
Klartraum als
Lebenshilfe**

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This book addresses a wide readership. Its main aim is to give practical advice on learning the art of lucid dreaming and to provide the reader with guidelines for its various uses.

From my own acquaintance with Paul Tholey I know that much time has elapsed between the conception and the publication of this book. Tholey pursued his studies in lucid dreaming for over 10 years before he began to present his findings to specialists in his field. As the wide range of applications and the enormous significance for psychohygiene and psychotherapy began to emerge, it was decided that a book should be written on lucid dreaming in a language readily comprehen-

-sible to the layman. However, it was not until almost 10 years later that Tholey's work founded on numerous theoretical and empirical studies, was - with the help of co-author Kaleb Utecht - compiled and presented, with innumerable examples and illustrations in book form.

In the introduction, the authors ask the reader how they put to use the 4 years or so of their lives which are given to dreaming. If merely staying in a foreign country can

alter people by furnishing them with new views about their own selves, what benefit could be had from a journey into one's own strange dream world? The dreamer is led to a better comprehension of the dream content through an explanation of various physiological and psychoanalytical (Freud, Jung) methods of observation. This is followed by initial advice on how to gain access to one's own dreams. Then an explanation is given of lucid dreaming. To begin with six aspects of lucidity are distinguished. Tholey differs from other authors in that he does not view the first aspect, i.e. the knowledge that one is dreaming, to be sufficient evidence of a lucid dream. The dreamer must, he argues, also be aware that he can make his own decisions during dreaming and that he can change aspects of the dream at will. Only then, according to Tholey, does the dream take on a completely new quality. The final requirement is that the dream ego is able to recall the waking life.

I consider these two final criteria to be important, for only when these two criteria are also fulfilled, is it possible to carry out the experiments described in the book and to exhaust the manifold application of this type of dream. In my experience as a psychotherapist, these two criteria are just as vital for the use of lucid dreams in self-healing and therapy.

Chapter 1 is characterized above all by its practical slant, and begins with a technique for the induction of lucid dreams. The technique in question is the reflection technique developed by Tholey beginning in 1959. It is based on the following principle: What occupies my thoughts in my waking life will also occupy them in my dream life. If one asks oneself several times a day, whether one is awake or dreaming, this question will at some stage also crop up during dreaming. Generally, one will then become aware that one is dreaming due to a bizarre event in the dream. However, the world we experience during dreaming and that which we perceive in the waking state sometimes appear to be identical. For this reason, it is suggested that reality tests be carried out, i.e. tests which allow the subject to differentiate between the two worlds. For instance the authors suggest the turning test which involves turning the entire body 180°. In the dreaming state, this usually results in the body appearing to continue to turn, or in the surroundings turning in the opposite direction to one's self. I find the underlying principle of this technique (here merely outlined) to be very important, because the question about one's state of consciousness requires a playful attitude which alters the perception of the world in both the waking and dreaming state and therefore creates a situation in which powers of self-healing can be released. It is clear that if not for the development of the reflection technique, as well as other techniques employed to induce lucid dreams, the many experiments discussed by the authors in their research into lucid dreaming would not have been possible.

Following the description of the reflection technique, an important use of lucid dreaming is explained. It is shown how it is possible, through confrontation with figures appearing in nightmares to rid oneself of these completely. The authors further stress that there is no risk involved in this.

Chapter 2 provides the reader with more theory. For a better understanding of both the dream content and for dealing with the dream figures in lucid dreams, methods

of observation from the world of psychoanalysis (Freud, Jung) are included as well as expressions from Gestalt therapy (Perls). The expressions, "topdog" and "underdog", for example, which were coined by Perls, are referred to, in order to explain one of the lucid dreams. Moreover psychoanalysis - at least traditional psychoanalysis is criticized, as are theoretical weaknesses in Perls' work as a whole. In my opinion, the discussion of these theories could have been conducted in more depth.

Chapter 3 deals with the problem of psychological resistance which is encountered during confrontation with one's own unconscious. Examples are used to illustrate how this resistance can prevent the dreamer from recognizing his/her state of dreaming, but also serve to show how this resistance can be circumvented, in order to attain lucidity in the dream and alter one's behavior accordingly.

Chapter 4 contains an in-depth description of how to deal with other dream figures (friendly or hostile) encountered during lucid dreaming. In dealing with hostile dream figures, the most important principles mentioned are confrontation, dialogue, and reconciliation with these figures. The application of these principles often results in a seventh aspect of lucidity, not mentioned in the introduction, the recognition of what the dream symbolizes. This recognition allows the subject to discover psychological conflicts during actual dreaming and contributes to a dreamer's healing. This chapter also contains a description of a series of techniques which allow the dreamer to maintain lucidity about his state of consciousness while falling asleep. The authors point out that the use of some of these techniques can lead to so-called 'out-of-the-body experience'. They also mention that directions on how to include lucid dreams have existed in some cultures for thousands of years as amount the Tantrists, the Tibetan yogis, magicians and American Indian tribes. These directions are similar to some aspects of Tholey's empirically tested techniques, but seen as a whole contradict each other and are too encumbered with mythological and ideological thought to make them very effective.

In chapter 5, attention is once again directed towards theory. The authors show how lucid dreams and 'out of the body experiences' can be easily incorporated into the critical-realistic view of the world of Gestalt psychology. This view of the world is described and illustrated using numerous illustrations. It is founded on the strict differentiation between the phenomenal (mental) and the transphenomenal (physical or physiological) set of facts. In my opinion, these empirical discussions derive their importance from the fact that they allow calm and fear-free contact with one's own unconscious during lucid dreaming.

Chapter 6 contains a wealth of examples of lucid dreams. They illustrate the diversity of experiences which occur in lucid dreaming and various types of lucid dreams together with their possible applications. The authors show how lucid dreams can be used to gain knowledge about one's own person and situation, for scientific research, for mental training in sport and, finally, for one's own pleasure. I am acquainted with the enormous amount of lucid dream material Tholey has collected and cannot help feeling that more appropriate examples could have been chosen for this book.

Chapter 7 is devoted solely to lucid dreams which involve the performance of creative tasks. In this connection, it is underscored that not only the dream ego, but also

other dream figures are capable of performing amazing cognitive tasks. This is followed by an explanation of a series of lucid dreaming experiments, some using apparatus. Experiments by LaBerge are described, in which he shows that it is possible for the dream ego to transmit information to the 'outside world' using various 'Morse code signals', i.e. the signals are transmitted first to a specially designed apparatus and then to the observing scientist. Mention is then made of the fact that certain types of apparatus can be employed to induce lucid dreams, although such apparatus does not as a rule prove to be very effective when compared with other methods.

The book concludes with a bibliography which not only contains somewhat older literature on the subject, but also includes more recent scientific works on lucid dreaming. This is a highly useful book and deserves a special place among the many self-help books available on the market. Without wishing to raise false hopes, the authors have succeeded in providing their readers with a means - in a form easy to understand, yet not just of interest to the layman - of tapping the potential inside each of us, a potential which can be used to change our lives in a decisively positive way.