

## **What is Possible in a Lucid Dream? Results of The April, 1987 Omni Experiment**

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About a 1000 people from across the nation responded to us about an experiment we designed for *OMNI* magazine on lucid dreaming which appeared in the April, 1987 issue. In the experiment we suggested that the participants do the tasks as often as possible over a two week period before they filled out the accompanying questionnaire (a copy of the questionnaire is available in Table 1 of the Appendix to this article). It was also pointed out that some people may need to practice the technique for weeks before getting results, while others may succeed on the first night. Finally we asked the *OMNI* readers to fill out the questionnaire whether they managed to have a lucid dream or not. We asked the readers to try four exercises: inducing lucid dreams by waking suggestion and dream reliving; flying in lucid dreams, spinning while lucid in order to stabilize it and/or reach a target and creative problem solving. The exact instructions for each exercise are given in Table 1 in the appendix of this article.

### **Who Answered the Questionnaire?**

Respondents returned completed questionnaires (656 data analyzed) and/or letters, dreams or dream diaries (837 data analyzed). We will focus on two types of information from this wealth of information. The first are responses to the questionnaire from all who filled it out and from 145 individuals who sent verified lucid dreams (see Tables 2 and 3 in the appendix for descriptive statistics). That is, we clearly identified them as lucid due to the inclusion of a recognition phrase or comment such as "and then I realized it was a dream". The second set of data comes from independent judges evaluations of the dreams. In this latter set of data our discussion will focus on results from 314 lucid dreams provided by 192 individuals that included a recognition phrase. Data on all categories scored by judges is provided (e.g., descriptive statistics on both data sets are provided in Table 4 of the appendix). From these sources of information we will not only comment on how the experiment went but also on some characteristics of the lucid dream/dreamer. Descriptive statistics on the *OMNI* questionnaire and the judges evaluations for all scored respondents and for the clearly identified lucid dreamers are presented in three extensive tables in the appendix of this article.

We will start by describing who responded to the *OMNI* dream experiment. First and foremost 85% said they had had a lucid dream within the last year. This is far above the general population incidence (Snyder & Gackenbach, 1988). In other words, it appears that lucid dreamers answered the survey questionnaire. Well, so they claim - of the 371 subjects who sent a dream which were scored by independent judges only 192, or 52%, sent a lucid dream which could be clearly identified as such because of the inclusion of a recognition phrase. This 48% drop out rate due to ambiguity in dream report is typical of

such research (Snyder & Gackenbach, 1988). This does not mean that those who sent dreams and labeled them lucid but did not include a recognition phrase or comment were not in fact lucid dreams or dreamers. We simply don't know. Those dreams labeled as lucid without a recognition phrase tend to be one of three types: 1) dreams which included a point of recognition which was not explicitly stated in the report, 2) lucidity which was constant or implicit and either never became explicit or was not referred to beyond the label or 3) dreams that were not lucid but were sent because the dreamer misunderstood the definition of lucidity. Of the 525 dreams for which the category recognition phrase/label was scored 60% included the recognition phrase while 34% were labeled as lucid but had no such phrase or comment.

There were some differences as to the demographics of individuals likely to include a recognition phrase. Chi-squares on phrase/label as a function of sex of subject, marital status, education, family income, ear problems, motion sickness and general health were computed and a t-test on number of drugs used as a function of phrase/label was also calculated. The chi-square's for sex ( $X^2(1) = 4.65, p = .031$ ) and marital status ( $X^2(2) = 7.46, p = .024$ ) were significant. Essentially marrieds and males were less likely to include the recognition phrase.

**Table 1**  
**Incidence of Phrase/label Dreams**  
**as a Function of Sex of Subject and Marital Status**

		Phrase	Label
Sex of Subject	Male	57	43
	<u>Female</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>30</u>
	Single	73	33
Marital Status	Married	42	35
	Div./Wid.	16	3

This seems to imply that we can rely a bit more on the testimony of current singles and females. The incidence of lucidity in females relative to males has been discussed by Gackenbach (in press) but the marital status finding is surprising and may simply reflect the magazine readership (primarily singles) whereas sex does not as males primarily read OMNI.

In terms of demographics, those 145 who included a lucid dream transcript with a recognition phrase tended to mirror the population as a whole (see appendix Table 2). About the same number of males as females responded half of whom were or are married. They are a well educated group with 56% reporting college or graduate work. Further, 40% make over \$30,000 per year with only 17% in the less than \$10,000 household income bracket. The majority were under 30 years of age with 37% falling in the 31 to 50 years of age bracket. As for their health, 65% said they were in very good to

exceptional health. The largest employment categories were blue, collar, clerical and student followed by the creative fields and engineering/science.

## Results of the Dream Experiments

As noted subjects were given four tasks to do in the dream over a 2-week period. They were: 1) attempt to become lucid; 2) try dream flying; 3) try dream spinning to either travel or stabilize a dream; and 4) try to solve a problem in the dream.

Regarding the attempts to become lucid for those we could be sure understood lucidity it took an average of 5 days to become lucid. This group experienced between 2 and 3 lucid dreams over the course of the 2-week experiment. But other types of dreams were also recorded and were on average 10 nonlucid dreams including one nightmare, one false awakening and one prelucid dream. The message here affirms other research (Snyder & Gackenbach, 1988; LaBerge, 1985), you have to be a high dream recaller in order to attain lucidity in sleep.

As to the tasks to be undertaken in the OMNI readers lucid dreams all three (flying, spinning and problem solving) were successfully accomplished, but the extent to which they were attempted rather depends on who and how you ask. According to the questionnaires of respondents who demonstrated lucidity understanding, about an equal number said they tried flying and spinning during the 2-week experiment (67% said they tried each). There was no direct question on the questionnaire about who tried problem solving during the experiment but there was a question asking if the subject ever tried problem solving during dream lucidity. Thirty-one percent of the verified lucid dreamers said yes. From this it would seem that flying and spinning are a bit easier to do than problem solving in lucid dreams.

But if we look at the judges data a slightly different picture emerges (see appendix Table 4). Of the 314 recognition phrase lucid dreams sent by 192 individuals 40% mentioned flying, 23% mentioned spinning and 12% mentioned problem solving. Again problem solving is most infrequent but here a difference in incidence of flying versus spinning in a population told to do both emerged. This could be because flying is more "natural" to the state and thus appeared more frequently or because this sample of recognition phrase lucid dreams included all dreams sent and not just those from the experiment. Thus we divided lucid dreams with recognition phrases into those during which there was clearly an experiment being tried versus those with no apparent experiment occurring. A total of 273 dreams, 213 nonexperiment lucids and 60 experiment lucids, provided by 171 subjects, 112 provided nonexperiment lucid dreams and 33 provided experiment lucid dreams while 26 provided one or more of each. In the experiment dreams subjects were equally likely to try flying or spinning (see Table 2). But twice as many of the nonexperiment lucid dreams sent contained flying than contained spinning. Thus flying may be more "natural" to the lucid state but that may only be a function of expectation. Tell someone to spin and they do! It can be seen in

Table 2 below that for virtually all the flying and spinning variables assessed by the judges the incidence was the same.

But what of the techniques and successes for each of these three dream tasks. As indicated all but a third who tried were able to fly in sleep and the vast majority of these dream flights occurred while lucid. Most said it took little or no effort. As to techniques, three flying maneuvers were most popular; 1) head first, 2) face down and parallel to the ground and 3) standing perpendicular to the ground. These three accounted for 70% of all dream flight maneuvers. Uncharacteristic body positions while awake, such as upside down and perpendicular to the ground, were also rarely seen while asleep and dreaming. Interestingly, if one wanted to argue that dream flight takes its cue from the real sleeping body either lying on ones stomach or back then we would have expected an equal incidence of these

**Table 2**  
**Flying and Spinning in Two Types of Lucid Dreams**

<u>Fly-Spin/Categories</u>	<u>Nonexperiment Lucidity</u>		<u>Experiment Lucidity</u>	
	<u>Sum</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Sum</u>	<u>Percent</u>
A. Flying type	70.00		39.00	
1. Independent of support	64.00	91.43	34.00	87.18
2. With vehicle	3.00	4.29	2.00	5.13
3. Other	3.00	4.29	3.00	7.69
B. Flying purpose	70.00		37.00	
1. Enjoyment	37.00	52.86	20.00	54.05
3. Other	8.00	11.43	3.00	8.11
C. Spin Style	31.00		36.00	
1. Like a top	20.00	64.52	25.00	69.44
2. Somersault	2.00	6.45	3.00	8.33
3. Other	9.00	29.03	8.00	22.22
D. Spin Direction *	30.00		33.00	
1. Clockwise (top)	10.00	33.33	14.00	42.42
2. Counterclockwise (top)	12.00	40.00	17.00	51.52
3. Forward (somersault)	0.00	0.00	1.00	3.03
4. Backward (somersault)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5. Other	8.00	26.67	1.00	3.03
E. Spin Purpose	30.00		29.00	
1. Stay in dream	15.00	50.00	13.00	44.83
2. To travel	8.00	26.67	13.00	44.83
3. Other	7.00	23.33	3.00	10.34
F. Spin outcome state	28.00		30.00	
1. Lucid	17.00	60.71	21.00	70.00
2. Nonlucid	4.00	14.29	1.00	3.33

3. Awake	7.00	25.00	8.00	26.67
G. Spin outcome setting	24.00		25.00	
1. Same dream	13.00	54.17	16.00	64.00
2. New dream	4.00	16.67	6.00	24.00
3. Other	7.00	29.17	3.00	12.00
H. Spin arrive at target**	24.00		27.00	
1. Yes	6.00	25.00	12.00	44.44
2. No	4.00	24.00	10.00	37.04
3. Does not apply	14.00	58.33	5.00	18.52

\*  $X^2(3)=7.85, p<.05$

\*\*  $X^2(2)=8.69, p<.02$

two forms (parallel to the ground with face up or down) but instead we found 26% in the face down parallel to the ground position and only 4.4% in the face up parallel to the ground position. Perhaps, as suggested in the instructions, we are modeling superman in our dream flight.

As for the speed of flight, car and bicycle speeds were most favored (50%) while the slowness of walking (10%) or floating (10%) rarely emerged. Here is an example from a lucid dreamer in Corpus Cristi, Texas:

Dream flying was achieved only once but it was like never before. I never took a step - just started floating a few feet off the ground and starting gradually gaining speed. It was as though I was on a cable [which ran] through my belly [and] pulling me along. I was mildly tilting during the ride but I had control of my balance . . . . [Later I was] half running - half flying. Sort of bouncing. I start out by running slowly and gradually pick up speed.

As for heights attained, these OMNI readers were about equally likely to report flying between a few inches to airplane height (20 to 30% each) but rarely went as far as outer space (2%). These speed and height findings from the questionnaires tend to point to the dream modeling the real world. Yet in the dreams themselves, judges reported that dream flying rarely involved a vehicle (5%) and was predominantly done for the fun of it (52%) rather than for travel (33%), not common characteristics of flight in the real world.

Perhaps a better way to conceptualize dream flight is not as "flying", as we think of it while awake, but rather as a change in perspective; taking the birds eye view. Blackmore discusses the relationship of this perspective to lucid dreams and out-of-body experiences (OBE) by arguing that as in waking imagination, in the mental model [imaginal world] of dreams and OBE's we are likely to place "self" in the birds eye view [Editors Note: see her article in this issue of *Lucidity Letter*]. So indeed dream "flight" models waking "imaginal" reality.

As for the spinning task, again the general thrust was that the dream world modeled the real world. Targets chosen tended to be real and in the present. People wanted to visit everyone from their deceased sister to a boyfriend to the "weirdo at work". In both subject pools (see Table 2 in the appendix) the target person was not famous and tended to be a friend. The next most frequent categories in both populations were lovers (past or present) and relatives. The most often stated target location was the name of a city including Joplin, MO and Paris, France. Also frequently mentioned were places in nature. These included a "beach" and the "Moorkench Mountains".

If using spinning to visit a target, 30% of the verified lucid dreamers reported success, 45% said they were unsuccessful while 26% were uncertain. If spinning was used to stabilize the dream environment the results were a bit better, 40% reported success while 28% were unsuccessful and 32% were uncertain. From the judges readings of 73 spinning dreams with recognition phrases we found that most spun like a top. More used the spin to stay in the dream (48%) than to travel (36%) and the majority found themselves in the same lucid dream after the spin (63%). According to the dreamer, and to a lesser extent the judges reports of the dreams, spins were equally likely to be clockwise as counterclockwise. But at least one dreamer, from Burlington, Iowa, got dizzy. The dream takes place in Old Williamsburg, VA where he is on vacation with his mother. While touring in the dream he writes:

We have to step down, as the store is in the basement. The building is brick with white lattice covered glass windows. The steps down are stone and feel cool. While in the shop I realize I am dreaming. I have to spin, counterclockwise, to stabilize. It works. I go outside and find my mother waiting with my sister.

Later he writes, "I start loosing the dream, I try spinning but remain in a colored mist. I can feel my physical body but am not in it. It feels like it needs to belch from gas in my stomach. I okay the belch and when I do I am shocked awake when puke comes up into my mouth and nasal passage!"

In these two types of tasks does the dream model the real world? The answer is yes and no. The ease of flying would seem to clearly not be a model of the real world. Yet as LaBerge (1989) has recently pointed out perhaps it is. After all when we expect to pick up a jug full of milk and find it empty it "feels" like it "flies" up in our hand. So too in sleep if our mental model of our body is heavy with weight which precludes flight, but when we unexpectedly find it weightless upon recognition that we are in an imaginal world (dream) we may naturally "fly". Preferring head first and standing positions are real models. But the relative incidence of face down versus face up (parallel to the ground) positions is not a real world model. Speed and height of flight on the other hand are within normal experience while awake. Although infrequent, we can and sometimes do experience extraordinary worlds such as flying in outer space.

As for the spinning task the real target in present time models the real world but the direction of the spin does not. As the population tends to be right handed, we would hypothesize a tendency to move in space in an rightward (clockwise) direction. Yet both

directions for the spin were equally likely to occur. For that matter the entire concept of spinning to stay in a "dreamt reality" is an odd idea by waking standards. Although recent dream function theories hold that the dream world primarily models the waking world it does, however, have it limitations.

### **More on the Problem Solving Results**

Now lets turn to the final task of the OMNI experiment. Although we can't discuss the results of dream problem solving during the two week experiment we can talk about it in general. As noted it is an infrequently attempted activity which may be because its difficult or because it simply never occurs to most dreamers. Types of problems attempted include:

- how to write a book on art sales (22 year old female)
- name for a baby (26 year old male)
- high school physics problem (female high school student)
- I wanted to write a script for Magnum P.I. (33 year old female)
- researched life in the 1890's for a book (22 year old male)

It can be seen from Table 2 in the appendix that the types of problems attempted varied from the entire population to those individuals who provided a recognition phrase. As recognition phrase inclusion may not be relevant to what problems people want to solve we will highlight the populations reports. Creative problems were the most frequent (36%) followed by spatial/mathematical problems (26%). An illustration of the latter is a "design for electronic counter circuit." When categorized into spatial, verbal, creative, logical/mathematical or other by the judges, we found no difference in the dream problems with recognition phrases in terms of the success of solving problems ( $t(34)=-.151$ , ns) or in the dreamers or the judges evaluation of the interest of these dreams ( $t(35)=1.50$ , ns).

The majority (64%) of dreamers felt they had been very successful in solving their problem in their lucid dream. Here is an example from Melanie:

For days I had been drawing stick figures on paper to try to come up with new mounts (pyramids) for my cheerleading squad. Almost every night I went to sleep thinking of people climbing on top of one another into different positions. One night I woke into a dream and I was building pyramids. (I was the coach and telling others what to do.) I built a bunch but the physics was all wrong. Finally I came up with a configuration which was stable, different, and ascetically pleasing. I woke all the way up. I was so excited - but I of course immediately lost the design. I tried for awhile to get back into the dream but was trying too hard and I couldn't relax enough. But the next day in the shower I was able to recover it and we used it for the cheerleading squad.

But most telling is this comment from a homemaker, "that's like asking me what I use my

hands for!" The very function of dreams has been recently characterized as creative, problem solving (Globus, 1988).

### Lucid Dreaming Healing Results

We looked in more detail at the healing types of problems. Again few thought to use dreams as healers (23% of recognition phrase lucid dreamers) but when they did 77% said they were successful. In the questionnaire we asked, "Have you ever tried to mentally or physically heal yourself in a lucid dream, curing an illness or overcoming a phobia or fear?" Eighty-nine dreams labeled "Lucid Dream Healing" were examined. The healing analyses were conducted separately and earlier and thus all reports were not available for the judges evaluations (see Table 4 appendix). The original analyses are discussed in more detail by Gackenbach (1988). Of those available to the judges there was no difference in success ( $F(2,11)=.288$ , ns) or interest to them ( $F(2,11)=.497$ , ns) as a function of type of healing (psychological/physiological/other). The 89 healing dreams analyzed by Gackenbach (1988a) were of a wide variety. The types are detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Types of Healing Dreams**

Vague/unclear -	15 (17%)
not a dream -	8 (9%)
nightmares -	22 (25%)
sports -	2 (2%)
phobias -	8 (9%)
get sick and heal self/other in dream-	8 (9%)
nonlucid healing -	5 (6%)
healing the body - .....	8 (9%)
<u>other -</u>	<u>13 (15%)</u>

The largest response category was healing nightmares using lucidity as is illustrated in this from Peoria, Ill.:

It had such an impact on me that I was really happy and felt 'accomplished' when I woke up. I was in a small town in the country. There was also a boogey-man type person after me. I can remember that he wanted to kill me with a large knife. So he was chasing me all over town, when finally I opened up a manhole and climbed in. So this man got out of the truck he was driving and was looking down into the manhole at me. The manhole was dark. I remember looking at the man's face and seeing the sunlight reflecting on the ladder that lead down to me. I was

afraid that there were "monsters" or other creatures down in the manhole with me. So I said to myself, "Enough is enough, I've had enough of this shit." So this is the part where I realized I was dreaming and my will power was strong enough to control it. I literally flew out of the manhole and zapped the man (who wanted to kill me) with bolts of electricity emanating from my right hand. Then he exploded and I woke up.

[Editors Note: For a more detailed discussion of the possible psychotherapeutic uses for lucidity see Gackenbach's paper in this issue of *Lucidity Letter*.]

A category of particular theoretical and clinical interest were cases of bodily healing. A clear case of bodily healing with the lucid dream was identified as one where the individual had a physical discomfort prior to falling asleep. When they slept they had a dream where they knew they were dreaming and recalled the physical discomfort. They tried to do something about the discomfort and when they awoke either immediately or in the following weeks or months (depending on the case) the dream was reported as affecting the resolution of the discomfort. Eight such cases were from four men and four women with an average age of 34.4 yr (range 21 to 57). Six of the eight were married and all but one had a college education. Their average family income was about \$30,000 with three skilled laborers and two managers among the occupations represented. All claimed to be in good health with no reports of the sleep disease called narcolepsy. Related to individual differences association with lucid dreaming ability, ear problems and motion sickness were infrequently reported in this sample.

In terms of their dream history, although they were by and large (5 of the 8) frequently lucid dreamers (1+ per week), their normal dream recall history over the past year was a bit more varied. Further they showed a mixed pattern of nightmares, false awakenings, and prelucid dreams over the past year. Consistent with research on frequently lucid dreamers this set claimed to control in general both their lucid and nonlucid dreams. Further flying while lucid was also quite common in this group.

Here are a couple of illustrations, a married woman from Sedona, Arizona tells an amusing tale about napping in order to rid herself of a headache. She writes:

Because of a terrific headache, I took a nap. While sleeping I found the solution to the headache. I would chuck my head up in a lathe and turn the top of my head off. Solution found, I couldn't wake myself up. I was thinking I had to wake up so I could solve the headache problem. Of course, when I did awaken the solution was ridiculous - but the headache was gone!

Twenty-one year old photographer, Carl Paoli, from Mt. Prospect, Illinois writes of an incident with a severely sprained ankle:

About a year ago I sprained my ankle worse than I ever did before. It was very swollen prior to going to sleep and made it very difficult for me to walk. I

remember dreaming I was running but having this sprained ankle really bothered me. It must have really been on my mind because while running I realized I can't possibly be running, I must be dreaming. At this point I began to come out of my dream, the pain of my ankle started to fade in. But then I reached for my ankle with my dream hands causing my self to tumble in my dream. This kept me dreaming. As I held my ankle I felt that vibration feels similar to electricity. Amazed with the electricity I decided to throw lightening bolts around in my dream. I awoke with next to no pain in my now unswollen ankle and was able to walk with considerable ease.

None of the cases we examined can be characterized as miraculous cures. They do, however, fit into the waking imagery literature. Specifically, they demonstrate that during the enhanced state of mental imagery called dreams one can potentially impact the well being of the body. Further these results can be conceptualized in terms of the model proposed by Tholey [Editors Note: See Tholey's article in this issue of *Lucidity Letter*]. for training athletes. That is, develop a waking model of what you want to accomplish, become lucid with recall of waking intent, engage in behaviors to satisfy the goal, and then upon awakening observe the results.

There are commonalties which we can observe in these cases:

1. There is a history of dreaming lucidly as well as lucid and nonlucid dream control.
2. There is a definite presleep intent to lessen the physical discomfort.
3. This intent is recalled upon awakening in the dream.
4. Action is taken either by the dreamer or by a dream character to rid the dream body of the discomfort.
5. The dreamed actions are, with one exception, nonharm inducing although not necessarily passive (i.e., relaxation, laying on of hands, belief in a healer dream character, and prescribed exercise). A common strategy recommended in the waking imagery literature is one of aggressive attack of the illness although more recently suggestions have been made that this strategy may not be universally functional.
6. The positive results of the dreamed action are apparent in the dream.
7. Upon awakening the results of the dreamed action are often apparent shortly after the dream experience.

In terms of these communalities it should be pointed out that the same ones hold for the nonlucid healing cases. In other words, you don't need lucidity to have control over the dream. In some people waking suggestion is sufficient. But it has been repeatedly shown that lucidity dramatically and significantly increases dream control (LaBerge, 1985; Gackenbach, 1988b).

Finally, we must stress that although there is some persuasive theoretical reasons for presuming that dreams can be functional in healing and that lucid dreaming offers a unique opportunity to access this healing potential due primarily to the enhanced dream

control the evidence for such healing potential in dreams and in lucid dreams is, as yet, highly speculative. None-the-less, we have chosen to present it here because of the moral imperative to provide information which may be of help in healing so long as one is reasonably certain that engaging in the proscribed activities is not harmful. [Editors Note: For more on this potential see Tholey's article.] Clearly problem solving and healing remain an untapped potential of the lucid state in sleep.

### **Dream Control: The Controversial Aspect of Lucidity**

A term that has become almost synonymous with lucid dreaming is dream control. It is illustrated in this from Shawnlinda from Salt Lake City, Utah:

In my lucid dream I started out in the house I was living in at the time. My brother-in-law came into the room where, for some reason, I was writing a letter to my best friend who lived down the street, about my colt, who we were co-training. When I realized I was writing a letter to someone I saw almost daily, I thought that this is really stupid, and I tore it up. Meanwhile, Joe, my brother-in-law, came in and started to tell me about his deer hunt. When he told me he got one, I said, 'I must be dreaming.' but he said no, I wasn't. I listened to him rattle on a bit and then I glanced down and saw the letter I'd torn up was whole and then I knew I was dreaming. Then, I figured since it was my dream, I might as well do something I've wanted to do a long time. I wished that Joe would turn into a very large, ugly frog and he did! Then I wished I was aboard Riddle my colt, and I could take him over the jumping course and do the exercises perfect, and we did!

Although by the minimal definition a lucid dream is not necessarily one that is controllable, and visa versa, none-the-less the potential for controlling ones dreams while lucid in sleep has repeatedly been demonstrated. This demonstration has caused considerable dialogue in the dream community as to whether or not one should control one's dreams. None-the-less so too in this survey among the recognition phrase lucid dreamers 72% reported often or sometimes controlling their lucid dreams compared to only 37% of them reported often or sometimes controlling their nonlucid dreams.

The judges were also asked to evaluate this dimension of control but in more detail. They were asked to evaluate the lucid dreamers success at controlling awakening from the dream, the dream ego, the dream characters, the dream environment and the dream plot (see Table 4 in the appendix). Of the 33 to 117 dreams evaluated along one or more of these dimensions all were evaluated as more than moderately successful at the specific control attempt. Even though all of these forms of dream control were moderately to highly successful some were easier than others. According to these judges reports controlling awakening was harder than most of the other forms (control awakening versus control dream self  $t(44)=-2.064, p<.05$ ; versus control dream environment  $t(44)=-1.693$ ,

$p < .1$ ; versus control dream plot  $t(44) = -2.764, p < .01$ ). We found no difference in success, as evaluated by judges, between the other forms of dream control. Particularly important is the lack of a superiority in controlling of the dream self. The common wisdom in the lucid dreaming literature is that it is easier to control the dream ego than other aspects of the dream, just as it "appears" to be easier to control ourselves in waking life (sometimes call "free will") than to control others or events. But we found no such differences, at least from the point of view of independent judges. Perhaps as in waking to some extent self control is an illusion which is at the mercy of environmental and biological states and stresses. Indeed Gackenbach (1988b) has warned of the "eye of the beholder" effect when doing content analyses of lucid dreams - lucid dreamers evaluate their lucid dreams differently and generally more intensely than independent judges.

### Types of Lucid Dreams

The judges were asked to identify how interesting they found several types of lucid dreams. Nine distinct types were asked about. They were:

1. Healing - psychological or physiological healing in the dream
2. Problem Solving - spatial, verbal, creative, logical problem solving in the dream
3. Nightmare - a frightening or anxiety provoking dream
4. Sexuality - Sexual content
5. Peak/Transpersonal - specific religion, abstract experience of God or nature or some "natural phenomenon"
6. Out-of-Body - experience in the dream of the 'self' being located outside the body
7. Recurrent - a repeated dream
8. Entity/Force - an unseen but felt entity or force in the dream
9. Child - a dream from a child or from an adults memory of being a child

When the judges were asked how interesting they found these types (all recognition phrase lucid dreams) a pattern of differential interest emerged. Paired comparisons on the interest of each of these nine types are portrayed in Table 4 below. The most interesting were those with an entity or peak experience while of least interest to the judges were the recurring and sexual dreams.

**Table 4**  
**Comparisons of Judges Interest in Types of Lucid Dreams**

<u>Dream</u> <u>type</u>	<u>Mean/N*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>							

1.	Healing		4.07/14			x		x	
	x	x							
2.	Problem								
	Solve		3.44/36			x	x	x	x
		x							
3.	Nightmare		3.90/49					x	
	x	x							
4.	Sexual								
	Arousal		3.00/30					x	x
		x							
5.	Peak		4.09/11						x
		x							
6.	OBE		3.42/12						
		x							
7.	Recurring		2.90/10						
		x		x					
8.	Entity		4.80/5						
		x							
<u>9.</u>	<u>Childs</u>		<u>3.65/17</u>						

\* Comparisons marked with an "x" are significantly different at the .05 level using a one-tailed t-test.

### Concluding Comments

Although the vast majority of people who wrote to us said they enjoyed the experiment and would like to participate in a future research project on lucid dreams a few had other experiences. For instance, a gentleman from La Mirada, Calif. wrote:

Shitty, Yes, that certainly would describe the past fourteen nights. I guess it's kind of like asking a golfer which leg he leans into more when he's making a difficult putt. All of a sudden he doesn't know "how to" anymore. I mean I really TRIED

to have a flying dream, a lucid dream, a spinning dream, on some night - ANY DREAM! Nothing, nada, zip! What's more I never, ever, ever, have "nightmares." During this time I had two. And to top it off I got a cold during the first week of this test and my left ear is still bothering me. I think I was eight last time my ears bothered me!

We wonder if a vestibular disorientation with the ear ache might not have caused both the nightmares and inability to do lucidity as indicated by the research of Gackenbach et al. (1987) and Snyder and Gackenbach (in press).

Other than affirming what we have found in previous research, i.e., high dream recall is associated with the lucidity skill, we also have some hints of unexpected things. For instance, the lack of a superiority in the dream ego in terms of dream control. We appreciate the cooperation of OMNI magazine and its readers in participating in this experiment which has provided new information about the exciting dream experience which includes consciousness, the lucid dream.

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