

## Letter from the Guest Editor

Editing this issue has certainly been a rewarding experience because of the rich set of provocative articles that were submitted. Quite fortuitously (synchronously?), all the articles and letters either directly or indirectly address the value of and/or potential problems inherent in the development of lucidity. The authors present a variety of perspectives which enrich the ongoing debate(s) in this area. What emerges from many of the articles is a greater appreciation of individual differences: the experience that is growth inducing to one person may be destructive, or merely not useful, to another.

In the first section of the issue are several case studies which provide thought provoking examples of the issues that are discussed both in the subsequent section of articles, letters to the editor and in the interview. Examples of the physical healing potential of consciousness in sleep/coma are provided in articles by Kellogg and Block. Kellogg describes his use of a lucid dream to stimulate the swift healing of an infection, while Block's discusses how a state of pure consciousness, experienced initially in a coma state, promoted recovery from extreme injuries following a car accident. Savolainen also discusses the physical (and psychological) healing benefits she obtains from a clearer state of consciousness achieved both in the dreaming/sleeping and waking states. However, she describes this experience as one of witnessing consciousness which she emphatically differentiates from lucid dreaming. In fact, in her experience she feels that lucid dreaming resulted in a deterioration of her health.

Payne and Father X dwell more on the psychological impact of lucidity. In Payne's article, she describes the psychological riches her husband has found in a variety of experiences including an apparent UFO abduction which he attributed while it occurred to a dream. On the other hand, Father X's material is somewhat different in nature. In a series of letters written over several years he describes some of his lucid dreams and OBE's. Several of these experiences are very unpleasant and disturbing, and could well be shattering to a vulnerable, less stable individual. On the other hand, one senses that Father X has profited from these experiences albeit in a less obvious way than that described in the other articles. He describes them as intellectually stimulating, and they clearly have prompted and deepened his thinking about the nature of being and reality.

The second section of the issue opens with a theoretical paper by senior editor, Jayne Gackenbach, in which she discusses several of the case studies from the previous section in the context of lucid dreaming and its relationship to meditation and especially to the state of pure consciousness. This is followed by several papers which address the strengths, values, limitations and potential dangers of developing Lucidity.

In terms of the positive aspects of lucidity, Linda Magallón describes the special opportunity that lucid dreaming provides for carrying out experiments with paranormal phenomena such as mutual dreaming. Christian Bouchet, in a transcription of his 1987 presentation to the European Symposium on Lucid Dream Research, argues that lucid dreams also provide a unique opportunity to directly observe psychological wellbeing, although he notes that psychological health in dreams is not directly related to waking mental health. (I particularly appreciate his caveat here given my research with nightmares

which indicates that individuals can have many nightmares and yet be well adjusted in their waking life.) Nonetheless we spend a great deal of time in dreams and he suggests that lucid dreaming allows us to both planfully observe and develop our wellbeing in this state, with the ultimate hope of positively influencing our waking psychological and physical health. In his appendix he cites at length some fascinating examples from St. Denys' book, illustrating the various ways that physiological (and other) problems can be addressed in dreams. Finally, Zack Cernovsky and Harry Hunt suggest an application of lucid dreaming for ameliorating the nightmares of refugees while I note some limitations in employing lucidity as a strategy for treating nightmares.

In his interview Lucidity Association chair, Harry Hunt, suggests that unpleasant experiences will ultimately be inevitable for anyone who seriously pursues the development of lucidity. He points out that this phenomena has already been documented in older fields of research into altered states of consciousness, specifically studies of advanced meditation and of psychedelic drug use. Furthermore this research suggests ways of coping with these experiences. Rather than arguing about whether lucidity is "good" or "bad", Hunt suggests that we should devote our energies to examining how individuals can profitably work through these troubling experiences, and that a good place to begin is with the accumulated wisdom of older literatures,

On the more cautionary side in the letter to the editor section, Kelly Bulkley in a follow-up to his article in the June 1988 issue, reminds us of the need to consider ethical issues in the promotion of lucid dreaming. In a letter, Joseph Dane warns us about the unpleasant experiences that can occur in association with lucid dreaming, and the impact these can have on vulnerable individuals.

Happy reading!  
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