

## A Dream Assignment

Keep a dream journal for the next two or three weeks. If this seems like a difficult task, try these suggestions. (1) *Decide* you are going to remember your dreams. (2) Be patient. It may take your unconscious a few nights to get the message. (3) Keep a journal close to your bed. If you use an alarm clock, keep the journal on top of it. When you reach to turn off the alarm, you'll grab the journal which should remind you to record your dream. (4) Don't jump out of bed. After the alarm blares, turn it off and think about whether you were dreaming. (5) Once you remember a dream, record it immediately. Write down everything that you remember: dialogue, the number of people, the types of people (strangers versus friends or relatives), recurring objects, mood of the dream, point of view, setting, and so on. (6) After each dream, briefly describe any events from the previous day that may relate to the dream. For example, let's say you dream about lying on a beach, but you don't feel comfortable about it. After recording this, you may recall that your boss, in real life, had warned you that your work was not up to par. Possible interpretation: your mind has been on vacation during work.

After recording several dreams during these two or three weeks, analyze your dream journal in a three- to four-page report. Here are possible questions that you can address:

- Were there any common threads (people, objects, ideas, moods) running throughout the journal? Any guesses about what these common threads mean?
- What seems to be the main function of your dreams? To review the day? To solve problems? To warn you of illness? To remind you of your priorities?
- Were your dreams bizarre, mundane, or both? Does this say anything about your personality?
- Were any dreams disturbing to you? Why?
- Were you able to control your dreams as you remembered more and more of them?
- Were you able to interpret any of your dreams? If so, describe one or two dreams and explain what they mean to you. If not, try it now: describe a dream and make guesses about what it could mean.

If, after several weeks, you are not able to remember any dreams, simply write a report on dreams from a slightly more objective standpoint. What functions do dreams serve? Which theories about dreaming do you agree or disagree with and why? Describe your reactions to class discussions and assigned readings.

## Dream Tasks

Over the next few nights you will be asked to think about various "tasks" just before your head hits the pillow. After you read each task, place it in your dream journal, and when you wake the next morning, record any dreams you remember.

### **Dream Task #1: Problem Solving**

The letters **O T T F F** form the beginning of an infinite sequence. Think of a rule that would determine any or all successive letters. According to this rule, what would be the next two letters of this sequence?

Sleep on it, and maybe you'll have the answer in the morning.

### **Dream Task #2: Incomplete Story**

Think about this "story" as you fall asleep. Maybe you'll complete it in one of your dreams.

You're sitting in a huge study hall. You don't know anyone in the study hall. Suddenly you hear heels clicking on the linoleum floor. The sound gets louder and louder. A finger taps you on the shoulder...

### **Dream Task #3: Wish Fulfillment**

Think about someone you would like to meet or know better. This person can be an acquaintance or a celebrity; this person can be alive or dead. As you fall asleep, think about the things you would like to say to this person.

### **Dream Task #4: Solving Personal Problems**

Think about a problem in your life that will soon require a solution or a resolution. Here are some examples: You need to decide which college to attend; you need to talk to a friend to straighten out a misunderstanding; you wonder if you should quit your job. As you fall asleep, think about possible solutions to your problem. Pleasant dreams.