

PUT YOUR DREAMS TO WORK

Do you know that you can train your brain to deliver very specific insights about decisions you're struggling with, problems you can't seem to solve or even ways you might smooth out a difficult relationship by literally "dreaming up" a solution? With added purpose and intention, the tradition of dream analysis can take on a whole new level of meaning for you.

Guiding your dreams is a unique area, so I spoke with two experts on how to do it -- Judith Orloff, MD, a board-certified psychiatrist, assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA and author of [*Second Sight: An Intuitive Psychiatrist Tells Her Extraordinary Story and Shows You How to Tap Your Own Inner Wisdom*](#)... and Christina Bjergo, MS, LAc, a qigong expert and author of the new book, [*The Tao of Tarot: "The Way" to Health, Happiness and Spiritual Illumination through Qigong Dreaming*](#).

Dr. Orloff (you may remember her from another recent story -- "Use Your Intuition to Guide Your Health," *Daily Health News*, [January 19, 2010](#)) told me that it was by using this technique that she decided to attend medical school. At a time when she was trying to figure out what to do in her career, a dream pointed her in the direction of what she now recognizes as her "true calling." Working with an intuitive researcher from UCLA during what she calls her "hippie phase," she dreamed of herself as a medical doctor and psychiatrist who helped legitimize intuition in medicine. This was especially surprising because she'd never had an interest in science or medicine... and it is exactly what she has done with her medical career.

DREAM WEAVER...

You can start dreaming productively tonight, but you'll be more likely to gain valuable information if you do some advance preparation. Here are some suggestions...

- If you are not already in the habit of doing so, set aside five or 10 minutes daily to sit in silence and just focus on your breath, in and out. This will help you learn to pay attention to your interior state, without distraction.
- Start a "dream journal" where you will record your dreams. Dr. Orloff suggests buying a really beautiful notebook "to honor your commitment" and adds that she likes to use a pen that lights up so that if she happens to awaken in the night she can write down her dreams without having to turn on a light. Keep these by your bedside.
- Consider designating a "dream buddy" with whom to discuss your dreams. Dr. Orloff advises selecting someone you trust, who will enjoy and feel comfortable with this type of conversation. Sharing your dream life in such a way increases your attention and focus and -- who knows? -- you may find that he/she has insights you'd not have come up with on your own.
- Plan to build some time into your morning routine to linger in bed. Even a few minutes is helpful (though longer is even better) to allow you to bring your dream, in as much rich detail as you can recall, into your conscious mind.

MAKE DREAMS WORK FOR YOU

Ready to start having productive dreams? Dr. Orloff suggests that you begin with a question -- just one, but a specific one. At bedtime, after you've turned out the lights, direct your thoughts to a vexing problem or a creative challenge -- for instance, *how can I improve my marriage* or *how can I heal my back pain?*

Limiting your effort to one question helps to concentrate your creative efforts -- but try not to be intense about this. Just fall asleep and enjoy the state of sleeping, allowing yourself to relax and be open to whatever your dreams may bring -- or not bring, as the case may be.

- If you awaken during the night, quickly record your dreams. Don't worry if they don't seem to make sense and don't analyze them -- just write down whatever you remember. You can examine your notes later for clues to issues or problems in your life.
- Be silent and stay in bed for at least five minutes when you wake up each morning to prolong your stay in the state between sleep and alertness. Bjergo suggests trying this qigong technique to connect with your dreams. Upon awakening in the morning, lay in your bed, face up, hands relaxed over your belly. To get properly balanced, a woman should place her left hand on top of her right, a man his right hand on top of his left. Focus on the movement of your breath, and let your belly rise and fall naturally. This can often bring back details from dreams you had the night before -- and there's a bonus, too: This will also help your energy flow all day.
- When you feel ready, write down whatever comes to mind -- including a narrative of any dreams that you remember, along with the details that stand out and even those nonsensical odd intrusions that seem to make no sense whatsoever. Also describe how you feel now, as well as how you felt in the dream -- some dreams are happy and invigorating, while others invoke anxiety, sadness or any number of other emotions.
- Now, examine your dreams for answers -- direct or indirect ones -- to the question you posed before falling asleep.

Follow this routine for a week and see what answers come your way. Over time, you may find that you can detect certain themes in your dreams. Does the same person or situation continuously present itself? Ask yourself what in your life might be represented in your dreams -- even beyond the questions you've asked at night. Are there clues about any unresolved issues in your life? What healing needs to occur?

And, if you really have difficulty remembering your dreams, Dr. Orloff has one more suggestion: Try making your bedtime request the statement of an intention rather than a question, such as *I will remember my dreams*. Another idea: If you aren't feeling ready to deal with the mystical aspects of intentional dreaming, try it by asking a practical question, combining your intention with something specific you really want to know -- such as, *I will remember in my dreams where I left my glasses*. Let me know how it works!

Source(s):

Christina Bjergo is a licensed acupuncturist, renowned body-dream-work instructor and Grand Master of Sacred Serpent Spiral Qigong. She is based in Vancouver, Washington, and is an international motivational speaker teaching others how to incorporate dreaming in their lives for greater health, joy and spiritual insight. Bjergo is author of [The Tao of Tarot: "The Way" to Health, Happiness and Spiritual Illumination through Qigong Dreaming](#) (O Books).

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