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Dreamwork Psychotherapy



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Dreamwork Psychotherapy - Part One

Key Issues In Dreamwork Psychotherapy

When a person is given a gift in a dream what do you do to help the dreamer?

- Comment on the person's dream, saying how important or wonderful their dream is?
- Ask the dreamer what they think the gift is?
- Ask, why did you have this dream?
- Ask what they got for Christmas, Valentines, or their birthday?
- Ask if their intimacy partner loves them, or are they feeling neglected?
- Ask them what are they doing to care for themselves lately?
- Give a symbol interpretation, such as, are you open to something new and important coming into your life right now, a new love, money, something you have wished for but never gotten?
- Or a Jungian interpretation, such as, "A gift? Gift of the Gods? Life itself is the greatest gift. Perhaps you are in a midlife crisis right now and need to face that the first half of life's journey has ended for you? You have made your life up to now, and done a good job of it, wouldn't you say? But for the second half of life, less doing and more receiving. What is the greatest thing you can accomplish with yourself during the second half of your life? This is the time of Alchemy, the Task, the going inward on the life journey, turning base metal into gold, the *Rubedo*, and so on. What an opportunity! Don't you think?"
- Suggest a guided symbol immersion or dream reentry in which with eyes closed they visualize the dream scene again, receive the dream gift again, and see what it is this time around?
- Make a statement to the dreamer that "if this were my dream I would want and so on"?

You can put a capital C next to those interventions that seem like a Counseling Response, a B for just plain Bad, or a DWPT for what would be a Dreamwork Psychotherapy response.

Who Should Work With Your Dream?

Nightmare Example

You are having nightmares. Or someone you know is having nightmares? Here are some questions to respond to.

- You are a dream group leader. Should you offer to work with the person yourself on the nightmares, or refer the person to a psychologist, a dreamwork psychotherapist, a dreamwork counselor or a psychotherapist?
- You ask, Why do you think you are having this nightmare?
- You say, Sorry, I am not competent to handle nightmares. I am not trained as a dreamwork psychotherapist.
- You say, nightmares are negative experiences of ourselves. If you were to rewrite this dream, what positive action or attitude can you put in as a new element to change this dream for the better?
- You say, a nightmare is like any other kind of dream. It is a dream, not reality. You don't have to be afraid of such things. Why don't we just talk about you and your dream?
- You say, naturally you are afraid because you are having nightmares. Something bad must be happening in your life. What is it? Or, something bad will happen soon. Are you prepared for it?
- You tell the dreamer. I am trained in working psychologically with nightmares. We don't know exactly what is going on yet, do we? Let's see how you are acting in the dream by focusing on the image of you in the dream. What exactly in the dream do you seem to be afraid of? What is the justification for your fear in the dream? Is the dream figure actually about to destroy you, or is this an attitude you have that this might happen?
- After exploring the nightmare in the above fashion you ask, Is there anything in your past or present like this dream situation? If so, would you like to problem-solve it?

There are other responses possible as well. Our point here is to illustrate levels in working with people and their dreams. You can also evaluate each of these responses by putting an evaluation by each of these real life examples.

- Minus 5 down to -1 would be negative as to being able to help a person dreaming a series of nightmares, or a recurrent nightmare. +1 to the highest +5 would be the evaluation for maximum effectiveness.

These responses are relevant to Dreamwork Psychotherapy because the issues can run like this.

Issues About Writing About Dreams And Dreamwork

- A writer-researcher has cancer which goes into remission but claims that his dreams helped cure him and writes a book about how dreams are healing. This writer is not a trained psychotherapist. Nor is he a competent thinker to claim that his dreams helped heal him. What is your response?
- Is writing a popular book like this helpful to people suffering from cancer? Are statements not based on direct clinical experience and-or scientific data harmful to cancer patients because it gives them false hope for a cure by believing in their dreams?
- If you are a professional working with cancer people would you recommend such a book, and why?
- If you are a professional dreamwork psychotherapist, or just a psychotherapist, would you recommend any "pop psychology books" to people suffering serious problems of a physical, mental or dream-related nature?

Another "pop dream psychology" writer records that when she had a client who had dreams in which her boyfriend seemed to be acting negatively, she recommended that her client not marry him. This writer wrote from the point of view that dreams can show you the right decisions to make in life.

- Is the above position true? Do dreams often tell you how to act in your outer life? If yes, on what basis has this position been proven?

- Would you refer a dreamer who is confused about her life but values her dreams to a person, even a professional, who asserts that your dreams shows you what to do in life? If so, why? If not, why not?
- What are dreams useful for if not for giving you insights about yourself and your life?
- Can we know any truths about ourselves? Is how we are acting in dreams also how we act in outer life?
- Is it possible that those who assert and practice that dreams give insights that are true about the dreamer are masking over the conscious ego's need to control by creating nice rational statements and pictures about itself that seem mostly positive?

"If this were my dream I would say that . . .

Sorry to say it here, but I have read so many articles and books, and heard so many statements, about what dreams do and are, that I may be a bit skeptical about the human, rational mind and its need in many people to assert control of emotions, of others and of life situations by making all sorts of assertions about the truth, as if any truth can be known from dreams.

Grounding Needed In Working With Individuals And Their Dreams

These kinds of issues are relevant to the practice of dreamwork psychotherapy by professionals. For what distinguishes the professionals from the amateurs is that a dreamwork psychotherapist is there to ground the client in usable aspects of the dreaming experience so that new insight and change specific to the individual can happen if the client so chooses for it.

The professional dreamwork psychotherapist does not tell the dreamer what the dream can mean. Instead, the dream is analyzed together for its themes and issues and the dreamer taken through an involving process with the dream images and themes so that basic patterns and attitudes below consciousness are affected and changed towards congruence and wholeness. The DWPT does not tell the client what the dream means, or what to do. The DWPT takes the dreamer-client through an involving process individually designed for that dreamer that is supportive and transformative.

With the dream counselor or teacher, or popular writer, I find they are usually not grounded through diagnostic analysis as to what the dream can mean to the individual dreamer, and then what to do about its themes and issues. People in these roles tend to make ego statements that are interpretive about the dream's symbols, or they take a generalizing position that because dreams are so universal and varied in symbolism that anything goes in what the dreamer or others want to say about the dream.

From this view comes the statement that only the dreamer finally knows what his or her dream means. Well, if they know enough about their dream, why then did they have the dream? *Most emotion-evoking dreams are not responded to with congruence by the dreamer.*

I make the statement that only professionally trained dreamwork psychotherapists should work with emotionally charged dreams. An emotionally charged dream is one in which the person reacts strongly in emotion-charged ways to the dream so that their waking behavior is also strongly affected.

Thus a person waking repeatedly with nightmares in which the anxiety carries into the day and future dreaming, even not wanting to fall asleep at night for fear of dreaming nightmares again, should only go to a skilled dreamwork psychotherapist, unless of course they go to a skilled psychotherapist who helps them with their fear and anxiety without much focus on the dream itself, which they have not been trained in to analyze and diagnose the dreamer's condition from. A professional psychotherapist should still be trained in dream analysis and dream diagnosis, as well as in dreamwork methodology, before working in depth with clients' dreams. How else would you know what you are doing?

However, since no enforceable clinical standards exist in the field of dream sharing this statement is not likely to be committed to. And, courses and certificates are given by dream teachers and counselors not clinically trained to dream teachers and counselors still not clinically trained. This is a professional liability unless students are clearly told when to refer a person sharing a dream and when you need not do so.

When Dreamwork Teachers And Counselors Should Refer

Counselors and dream teachers should refer dreamers who dream repeatedly of nightmares, who have some physical or mental condition associated by the dreamer

with certain of their dreams, who have an inability to relate to their intimacy partners, who are subject to suicidal depressions, who are accident-prone or otherwise self-destructive, such as being alcoholics or drug addicts, who have been sexually or violently traumatized, and who are not handling their lives well economically, independently and physically.

Whom does that leave as a population of ready dreamers that non-clinically trained dreamworkers can work with without violating ethical principles?

Ethical Awareness

Ethical awareness involves an act of integrity in which the dreamworker clearly puts the well-being and health of the client first, even before any ego desire they might have such as wanting another client to increase their flow of income, or wanting to experience how smart they are in working with someone else's dream. Yes, these ego desires can afflict any of us, even the professionally trained. They are less likely to afflict the professionally trained teachers and psychotherapists because they have been well supervised in working with others using dreams and dreamwork methodology. Even a doctorate does not qualify you to work with other people on their dreams clinically and emotionally if you have not first been clinically supervised in doing so, and if you have not extensively worked with your own dreams under supervision of others more advanced than you.

This narrows the field, doesn't it? But it gives the field of dreamwork psychology more respect.

What Is The Role Of Dream Teachers And Dream Counselors?

There are a large body of dedicated dream teachers, dream counselors and creative dream group leaders who do not structure their teaching or guiding process so as to evoke strong emotions from the dreamwork.

Thus the more rational and creative approaches exist, and as long as their structures for group and individual dream sharing are clear, then their structures may be good ones to contain the emotional level of dream sharing and psychological problem solving. You can of course gain considerable insight and creative uplift from sharing

dreams with others in a non-psychological context. However, just know the difference. And know when to refer.

Creative Dreamwork

I have done many creative dream experiences with my long-term students beside personal growth and development through personal dreamwork processes. These include dream shamanism, but without the use of drugs of any kind. The group rituals have always been based on dream content, following the Senoi Concepts. The creative processes have involved dramatization of dreams, painting of dream journeys, the writing of creative products, the making of dream gifts, the sharing of certain dreams in outer context, such as a relationship dream with the person dreamed about.

The Dangers In Creative Dream Sharing

However, even in this last example I erred severely in not protecting dreamwork training members when I let a dreamer tell his dream about a new woman in the group to her in front of the group. It later turned out he was a notorious seducer of women, and went after three or four women that I know about personally from him and others, seducing them without offering a relationship.

I as leader did not know enough about him yet to protect the women in the training, (by excluding him from the training), from his using his dreams of relationship, and his dreamwork with any of them, in seducing women, women sometimes already in relationship. So I have been burned in letting people be creative in the dreamwork trainings I do. I am absolutely serious about how in dreamwork of an intense and ongoing kind things can go wrong. When I found out he was of course barred from further trainings and all certificates repudiated.

Dreamwork Can Make People As Unconscious As It Makes Them Conscious

We must do all that we can to protect dreamers from themselves and each other. The sharing of dreams is in itself a process that can make people as unconscious as it might help them be more conscious.

Dreamers come to dreamwork training because they are moved by certain dreams, and find themselves in difficulties in life they cannot solve on their own. They want help from their dreams. Thus the dreamwork leader or psychotherapist has a lot of

responsibility. He or she can make a person more unconscious than before, and thus more vulnerable to forces and people whose actions are not in the dreamer's best interest.

Dreams are mirroring experiences to reveal dreamers to themselves and others as they are, not as their personal egos want them to be. The thrust of the dreamwork should be to make the dreamer more conscious and congruent with their real selves, not less so.

Example: The Beating Mother Dreams

- One young mother came to me because in her dreams she was beating up her small children. She was horrified because she did not do this in outer life. Thus the issue, do dreams reflect what we do in life? And, should we act out things in outer life we dream in dreams?

How do you respond to both questions here? In fact, the mother had frustration anger, a perfectly natural thing from taking care of small children but letting them have their freedom to be active and demanding, and not punishing them for being so, the old way of raising children.

We took her through some new ways in role-playing to express her anger, not necessarily to her small children. Yet at some point parents must learn how to express anger towards their children in serious but still accepting ways. The children expect their parents to be angry with them sometimes. Thus dreamwork, under a psychotherapist's direction, becomes emotional anger expression work as well.

How would a dream teacher or counselor be able to do this work if not trained for it and also grounded in their own anger expression? What would a creative person do? Sometimes in dream sharing group I might just have everyone in the group get frustratingly angry all at once, including myself as leader, with shouts but not breaking things.

It turns out to be fun and accepting, and such a process shared together changes attitudes for the better. Imagine trying to be someone who never gets angry with your children? I can't imagine it. Yet one should limit and structure anger expression so as not to overwhelm others you relate to. *Be at the edge but not over it to create with the energy. Don't evoke more than you or someone else can contain and integrate.*

I would hope that those who do other kinds of creative processes with groups of people who share dreams, that even if they are not trained dreamwork psychotherapy professionals they would respect every person's need to become more conscious out of their dream sharing so that they may lead more effective and fulfilling lives.

Thus they would be less susceptible to the predators that prey, the mesmerists waiting in the wings to take over anyone's processes when they allow themselves to go unconscious too much. Do you really know what motivates someone who wants you to share dreams with them? Some dreamers have come to me because they share that I have appeared in their dreams in a positive way. All right! Good enough for me! To some I would be negative in their dream. So either they psychically know I am not right for them, or they project their own fears onto my image. Thus if they worked with me they would have to face these fears and get through them.

Example: Dreamwork Authority

- One person wrote me before starting a training, "Will I have to give up my guru if I join your training group for a year?" I did not answer that question for her. She already knew her issue. If she followed the way of the dream itself then what need would she have for an outer guru or wisdom guide? She never joined the training.

It is better maybe that you see your core issue at the beginning and make your own decision regarding it. Trained as a dreamwork psychotherapist, my position towards anyone has to be objectively neutral. With such a question, a life issue question, I am not going to try and reassure her, such as saying that "maybe her dreams want from her what her guru wants for her, and that I follow the dream, what the dream seems to want of the dreamer."

Unlike a guru, *a professional is to be objective and not want followers of any kind.*

Yes, dreamwork psychotherapy as a profession, in my conviction, is a strict discipline. For in deep dreamwork we are working with not just dreams as reported, but the deep unconscious of a person that evokes sometimes major dreams with emotional and life-choice consequences. Remember the dreamwork writer who advised her client not to marry the boyfriend because he appeared negatively in a dream? Is this objective? Hardly so. Who said dreams tell you what to do. I ran across a quote from Jung to this effect. Jung can be seen as the originator of the broad

psychotherapy approach to working with dreams, whereas Freud took a narrow psychological approach and did not do psychotherapy but psychoanalysis. One is emotional and one is on the side of rationality and attitude shift only, as I understand these things, and I could be wrong!

The Rational-Interpretive And The Process Approach

It is quite possible that the dreamer is the last one to have any idea of what the dream is challenging them about, unless they have learned how to do extensive dreamwork with their dreams. Such dreamwork must come out of process experience and goes beyond any rational explanations for dream symbols or what people generally put down in books. There are a lot of amateur prophets out there. A dreamwork psychotherapist must certainly not be an amateur prophet when working in depth with a person's dream. For they are working with the person as well, and not just the dream.

The Dreamwork Psychotherapist is committed to maximizing the dreamer's experience of the dream as a healing and transformative event in the doing of dreamwork with the dream.

I am a jaded old dream researcher by now. My experience indicates that since dreams are so fluid in their symbolism and self-experience that dreams then make it easy for the rational sorts to project almost anything they want onto dreams of others and of themselves.

Instead of answers, I mostly give questions, issues and possibilities to follow. I also guide in methods to create experiences to learn from, not textbooks or theories only. The few textbooks and theories worth learning from are those that lead you to new direct experiences of your interest area.

Dreams draw writers like garbage draws flies. Sorry! I happen to be a writer myself that others have learned from. Yet what have they learned exactly? If your life and your consciousness does not change for the better, you have not learned anything in reading books, is my conviction. Keeping to this value, I have always included extensive dreamwork examples from my long-term students and clients, sometimes in their own words when possible. I have a writer's credo to write only from direct

experience, and not from ideas in other's books, not even Jung whom I was originally extensively trained in and still hold in high regard.

Case History Examples From A Dreamwork Psychotherapist

I will make some statements here as to how I have used dreams in my work as a psychotherapist. I was first the chief therapist for four years at St. George Homes, Inc., an amazing residential treatment center for disturbed teenagers under the direction of Dorothea Romankiw in California. Then a dreamwork psychotherapist trained in general psychotherapy as a licensed relationships counselor in California. My most important training was with The Guild for Psychological Studies for ten years of almost full-time training under Dr. Elizabeth Howes, a Jungian analyst in San Francisco, California. In the land of the growth movement I have had other extensive training as well, such as in a number of bodywork and emotional release processes.

In 1977 I founded The Jungian-Senoi Dreamwork Institute and there developed my functional approach to dreams, Jungian-Senoi Dreamwork, which consists largely in developing the methodology of dreamwork. This has evolved into what I now describe as a new branch of psychology, first stated two years ago as Dreamwork Psychology, or Dream Psychology. See References for the list of the three books that I have published on dreamwork methodology and its application.

Functional Dreamwork

Functional Dreamwork, as I have termed it, is based on the premise question: How does a dream and its symbols function? Not, what does a dream or a symbol mean? But, How does it function. We turn image into function, not concept as in interpretive approaches.

The Functional Dreamwork approach is *dream actualization* and not *dream interpretation*. Besides the grounding in Jungian psychology we are highly indebted to Fritz Perls who kept turning his dream sharing into an immediate process for the dreamer in what is called the Gestalt approach. Process work! This is where the dreamer is encouraged to experience his or her dream in an immediacy process.

Out of the dream experience comes the direct experience of oneself through re-experiencing the symbols of ones dreams as emotional experiences in themselves,

with all that is there and all that is lacking. Yet the Perls method was limited by a rather narrow view of the personality and how psychological dynamics work. A recognition of archetypes from a Jungian perspective is also necessary. To this I have added myself a lot more waking and dream ego work because of my methods of Objectifying Dreams and Following the Dream Ego.

Dream Ego: Congruent Or Incongruent With The Rest Of The Dream?

Following The Dream Ego is especially important because it shows how the dreamer functions in the dream in relation to the rest of the dream or out of relation to the rest of the dream.

Thus in the dreamwork process that can follow the dreamer develops a stronger and more directed dream ego that seeks to become more congruent with the rest of what the dream is presenting. How does the dreamer function in the dream, and how does that relate to how the dreamer functions also in outer life?

Again, the functional approach to dreamwork. It is still revolutionary since to this day, as far as I know, few other professionals focus at all on what the dreamer is doing and not doing in the dream. This despite the fact that the most common symbol in almost all dreams reported by anybody is the image of the dreamer him or herself. Do we even understand this amazing fact yet? Not even Jung or Freud or Perls discovered how important the dream ego is, though I think I may have got my first clues from Perls in emphasizing the dream ego as Top Dog or Underdog, something I find much too narrow to agree with solely. Yet that was the way with Perls whom I saw briefly at Esselen. He was a one method man.

Dreamwork Psychology Defined

Dreamwork Psychology is a field of psychology that takes as its focus the night dream as a means of analyzing psychological patterns and healing damaging ones.

This focus is reflected in future dreaming and changes in personality and behavior, which is usually more conscious, whole and realistic in terms of the person's self experience and everyday reality.

Dreamwork Psychology Declared A Separate Branch Of Psychology

Dreamwork Psychology consists of an extensive methodology for working with people through working with their dreams for healing and self-growth. Dreamwork psychology and psychotherapy is now declared a separate field of psychology not associated with any one school of psychology.

Schools of psychology tend to emphasize their own personality description and diagnostics, plus focus on a limited number of methods. Dreamwork Psychology emphasizes the usefulness and objective evaluation of almost any dreamwork method that affects the dreamer in significant psychological ways.

A Dreamwork Psychologist is a professional psychologist who knows how to do dream diagnoses and how to use the major dreamwork methodology in the field. Such a psychologist focuses as much on the dream's dreamwork as on the original dream, both in research and in applied dreamwork psychotherapy.

Applied Dreamwork Psychotherapy

The application of dreamwork psychotherapy is where it all counts. During the ten years that the Jungian-Senoï Dreamwork Institute was in existence in Berkeley, California, 1977-1988, I had five to seven dream groups going a week, plus a Friday night dreamwork demonstration on different themes, and fifteen to twenty hours a week of individual psychotherapy, mostly with people who wanted to follow their dreams as the pathway for self-discovery and changing deep psychological patterns within themselves. In addition we had other dreamwork therapists doing dreamwork with their clients.

During the later years you could pay the monthly fee and come to as many as five dream group sessions a week. During these sessions dreams were presented and psychotherapy techniques applied. The dreams would first be objectified as to themes and issues, then emotional techniques applied, such as dream enactments, symbol immersion, dream reentry. Sessions were often intense due to emotional release occasioned by unresolved and conflicted dreams. Application to life was included but not reported on in detail since the main focus was always on re-experiencing the dream.

Group size was usually from three to seven or eight. Everyone had to share a dream in keeping with the commitment to work with dreams. Even if time was short there was

a mini-process and everyone heard everyone else's dream. As the dreamwork psychotherapist in charge the author kept careful control of the process in terms of emotional release and recovery. The minimum commitment to these dream groups was three months and most stayed considerably longer, like a year or more. This was not just sharing and talking about dreams. This was psychotherapy involving interactive processes based on dream-revealed issues that got activated and resolved. No one was encouraged to share more than they were ready for. Individual sessions with the author were also available for additional support as needed.

Examples

People presented problems of great variety that were showing up in their dreams. These would be worked on and the issues and themes would show changes in dreams and in personality and life.

- A sixty year old woman came who felt passive. Her son had died in childhood. Her daughter had been murdered. Her husband did not relate to her with love. Through following her dream ego she went from passive to active in dreams and life. She even had a dream the night before surgery in which she checked out her knee and found it was healed in the dream. The next morning she canceled the surgery with no problems after. She had taken charge of her life and much less acted as a victim of it.
- A young woman was diagnosed with breast cancer but had a series of dreams of a hospital room in which she was the patient. She did not want to open the door, but with special meditative dreamwork she finally opened the dream door and she was not in the hospital bed. Asking for a new diagnosis from the doctor no symptoms of cancer were present. She never developed cancer during the time I knew her. Whether the dreamwork affected her physically, it certainly had a big effect on her fear problem and self image as a woman.
- Another woman was brutally raped and in a private two-hour session the next day she was taken through the rape experience in great detail, repressing nothing. The result was that she had a full recovery because the experience was not repressed and was recounted in an atmosphere of acceptance. She had no shame and could build her self-image in a positive way with emphasis on how she had positively handled the situation and survived. The point is that if the woman had not been

freed of her traumatic experience it would have locked in as a trauma pattern producing nightmares and other fears about life.

- I have dealt with a number of women with rape in their life experience because the trauma appears in their dreams as negative masculine images and dream ego helplessness and fear. Often they have been to other therapists without cure of their fears of men, violence and weakness of self-image. Since the dreams are theirs in the present, they are guided in how to deal with them through process work and dream ego work. They emerge from this process with the awareness and confidence to handle adult sexual relationships with confidence, insight and rightness for them.
- A man was confronted with his wife having a secret affair and learned through working with his dreams to achieve his own masculinity independent of how she was living her life. They eventually made accommodation and both learned not to view sexuality as something negative but as energy work and life work. This attitude was also dream based. Dreams do not themselves seem to view sexual expression with other partners or main partners as negative but as a natural experience in living life. However, dream ego work shows that while sex is portrayed as a natural force for integration, creativity and relationship, one may have inherited negativistic and judgmental attitudes attached to sex. Poor dog! It certainly has been whipped a lot for centuries of Christianity!

Thus we follow the dream and help the dreamer become strong and integrated in handling his and her sexuality, as well as that of others. Dreams certainly will reveal attitudes and desires surrounding sexuality.

Believe it or not, these above real life examples are the norm for the dream groups I led at the Jungian-Senoï Dreamwork Institute. It would take a professional dreamwork therapist to bring such work to healing resolution with most of the few hundred people involved. I worked as a psychotherapist and trainer and not as a growth movement popular leader getting thousands to follow him or her. We psychotherapists work behind the scenes while out front are the creators of glory and the quick faddish rush.

Dream group persons were always highly supportive of each other and quite revealing of themselves. There were with some the need to reveal only in private sessions. In

groups everyone shared every session, but with the focus shifting each time to those who needed the in depth work that session. Average attendance was three dream group sessions a week.

Being able to attend one to five dream group sessions a week is ideal for dreamwork psychotherapy since it lets the group members and the psychotherapist know and relate to what is going on with each dreamer.

Professional ethics involved everyone sharing something each time, and providing enough dream group sessions for the dreamer to work with as many dreams and psychological dynamics as come up during that week. This type of availability of up to ten hours a week made it possible to truly follow dream themes and issues as they developed and resolved.

Professional Integrity

You cannot simply analyze a series of dreams for common themes. You must come through as a dreamwork psychotherapist with the time and the skills to also work in process with those themes. Else, why evoke root patterns revealed by dreams if you are not also going to work with them in a healing way? This is what I call professional integrity.

Do not evoke more than you and the dreamer are willing and able to deal with. This is a basic ethical principle that I have tried to always follow, knowing full well what I can evoke in someone when I exceed the guideline of the principle.

You don't work with trauma people using intensive techniques unless you have the ethical integrity and the skills to help people at this level.

There are many dream teachers and counselors out there trying to do dreamwork psychotherapy who are simply not trained enough or ethically committed to the real work required to take a person through a transformative process at the core.

People have said they use the methods I have written about, yet they have never been trained by me. I chose to put out the dreamworking methods to make them available to both dreamers and professionals, believing it better to accept certain people abusing the methods than not having the methods available in a kind of democracy of holistic health in which each person takes responsibility for themselves in life to the extent they are able.

Dreamwork Psychotherapy - Part Two

An introduction to part two

Part One was all about the emergence of Dreamwork Psychotherapy as a separate profession from regular psychotherapy or psychology from any of the schools. The dream and its dreamwork can now exist on its own as a separate branch of psychology called Dreamwork Psychology.

We have seen in Part One some of the differences in being a dreamwork psychotherapist or another kind of person working with people's dreams. Dreamwork Psychotherapy has been shown to be the province of professionals because such dreamwork involves the emotional processes of the whole person. Many examples from my own practice have been used to illustrate points and to offer evidence of how effective dreamwork psychotherapy can be as a way for people to go through personal transformation with guidance from their dreams and a skilled dreamwork psychotherapist.

Part Two of this article will contain further distinctions between Dreamwork Psychotherapy and other forms of dreamworking the dream more on the creative rather than the emotional, problem-solving side. I will go on to give examples and state the case for professionalism in the field. I will outline the core elements of professional training in Dreamwork Psychology and Psychotherapy, as well as describe my ethical considerations. I also make the statement that now through the Dream Ego Profile a basis for doing dream and dreamer diagnostics has been established, as well as an objective basis for evaluating the results of doing dreamwork psychotherapy with individuals and even groups.

Now follows more examples, more distinctions, and the outline of the core aspects of developing and training professionals in this new field of Dreamwork Psychology and Dreamwork Psychotherapy.

Dreamwork Teachers, Counselors and Psychotherapists

This is the issue. Intense dreams reveal core issues about the dreamer. These core issues, I suspect, are not dealt with in most dream sharing groups led by dream

teachers and counselors. It is thus that certain individuals claim to offer certification in a limited number of weekends over two years in leading dream groups. From a dreamwork psychologist's point of view these claims for training are bogus, and the techniques superficially applied. The effects of group dreamwork under little trained leadership can be evocative, confusing and lacking in resolution or adequate response to what the dreams could reveal to a person.

Just because the study of dreams, and their application to helping people solve their life and personality problems, has come into modern acceptance does not mean that there are yet clear and enforceable standards set up by true professionals who have been well-trained themselves and are fully committed to the field.

I make the statement also that unless publically stated guidelines are enforceable they are meaningless, and even deceptive to the public at large. I am always wary of an ego that self-proclaims without backup from results and from others in the know. Thus professional societies also have committees to enforce the society's guidelines and to determine the truth of complaints. What I write here is my attempt to show the nature of in depth dreamwork, the issues and results, and the ethical and professional guidelines to be aware of.

Through my training programs I have seen teachers and therapists mess up. However, I have always let in serious dreamers of some professional standing for work with their own dreams, feeling this is the best way to teach people-helpers the seriousness of working in depth with people's dreams.

If you cannot work in depth with your own dreams, how do you expect to work in depth with someone else's dreams? You can apply techniques and produce experiences, but do you know how to evaluate effects of dreamwork if you do not have your own experience of dreamwork from other than just your ego point of view? I doubt it.

Teaching self-help dreamwork counseling and sharing does have a place but I don't appreciate people in leadership roles who try to do other than what they are professionally are trained for.

This author thinks that the main reason many therapists and teachers use a rational and not a process approach with sharing dreams and working with them is that they do not want to give the time needed to process deep stuff.

Everyone has deep stuff. This is par for this reality, this life, which certainly is for everyone full of trauma and unrealized desires. *Dreams are more honest than we are, more revealing than we usually want to know.* Why? Probably because the dream source, the deeper psyche, wants healing to the core. Thus we need true professionals working at the core, but they must have integrity so as to give the time and the skills necessary to supporting a dreamer through a process.

For those others who say they work with dreams, if they are not available for the in depth work, then they will have to use rational and non-individual approaches to working with dreams. Even dream group work that is inspiring to people is just energy work and light insight in my estimation if the individual is not confronted by an advocate for the dream itself, and not the ego in control. This has always been the case in depth psychology. This is also why the analysts have kept themselves few and charged high prices for their long hours of work. In depth dreamwork takes time, support and commitments of those involved. It does not come easy. What it evokes may come hard and be difficult to deal with.

My offering attendance in up to five to seven dream group sessions a week for a set monthly fee was my attempt to make dreamwork psychotherapy available to the regular struggling person. I never became wealthy over doing dream groups this way. I do resent also those who charge high fees for limited work with people because these professionals assure their clients that they are getting the best work available. They are not, in my opinion. There are no super-persons in dreamwork. Dreamwork is not the comics. It takes time, labor and love. None of these are instant and always.

I did not make my living from only doing dream groups every week. The regular fees for individual sessions, fifteen to twenty hours a week, is what sustained me, and some royalties for writing books.

When I started doing dreamwork psychotherapy with people in 1976 the general population did not know its value. So I worked as a marriage counselor also. Yet, every Friday night for years I would give talks to the public in Berkeley, California on how to work with your dreams. The largest attendance I got was for one Friday night in which twenty-five men, and no women, came. It was called "Dreams and the Journey." I was amazed that it was the Journey archetype which motivated men. It makes sense since men have been mostly the outer explorers of the world.

Example From The Dark Side Of Dreamwork

- In this example I am working with psychologists, teachers and psychodramatists in a year long, thirty-day training. One of the psychologists presents a dream in which he is standing very near to an endlessly deep black hole. Since I know him well and he is very much part of the training after several months I take him in a Guided Dream Reentry with the group present into a deep immersion in the dream. In the dream he is very close to the edge, looking down in. He is in a guided trance state which I am very much in tune with since I have my eyes closed as well, the technique I prefer. I ask him to step back from the edge of the dark hole and to find a safe place nearby to sit down on. Is there something else in his environment? I ask him. He sees in the distance a light. We do not explore the light as I don't want his process to turn rational, since he is a very intelligent man and a successful therapist himself. By not focusing on the light we do not rationalize it. I ask him if he is ready to come out of his dream. When we open our eyes I am momentarily surprised when he informs me in front of the group that he has been contemplating suicide. I do not go into this with him, but do say, "You won't have to do that now," a somewhat enigmatic statement, yet appropriate to the situation. Others in the group have also been sharing very deep dreamwork experiences. He feels related in his group. He knows and trusts me. He is a well-known psychologist himself. My point with him is not to talk only to his ego, which would resist, but to his deep center and place of knowing. As far as I am informed, he has not committed suicide.
- What would you have done in the situation of someone presenting a dream of looking down into a black hole?

Other similar dream circumstances are dreaming of being caught underground in a dark tunnel and you know you cannot get out by yourself. Or you are flying over a big stormy lake. Or you are swimming and floating out to sea and there seems no stopping you. Or a giant hand is reaching up through the water of a bay you are swimming in to pull you under. Or you are walking on a path in a deep jungle and the path suddenly ends and you are stuck there, no way out or back. Or you are at the top

of a high waterfall and decide to let yourself plunge over it without regard for life or any protection.

- Would you feel yourself competent to handle with the person any of these dreams? If so, how would you interact?
- With any of the dream examples above what would be some of the dangers involved for you in working with such dreams?
- If you are a psychologist, psychotherapist or psychiatrist without thorough training in working with dreams, would you still go ahead in working with these dreams? What difficulties might you provoke for the dreamer? What other psychotherapy techniques have you found effective in working with such people who present dreams with this kind of symbolism?

Of course I have clinical perspectives for all these situations that have made me effective as a dreamwork psychotherapist. I can also tell you of one of my "failures," if it can be considered so.

- In one of my European trainings that lasted two years the local therapist in charge of the dreamwork training group had been certified as a transpersonal therapist but had never undergone either individual or group dreamwork for herself. I agreed to take her on for individual work. However, in the first two sessions she revealed material about herself that I realized would take at least three years of ongoing work with me to change. As a trainer in four countries, and not living in her area, I could not continue her case. We would be evoking more than I could help her handle. Though I did my best to be gentle she took my "rejection" of her material harshly and would have nothing further to do with me. I was for her now the devil. A colleague reported that she had drawn a circle around her belly button to ward off my evil spirit. I had failed to read the signs well enough and opened Pandora's Box. It was further revealed to me that she identified with certain elements in dreams of people who worked with her and told them so.

She was not professionally trained to work with people. Transpersonal Psychology people had given her a certificate to be a transpersonal therapist with only two years training and no growth work herself. She had not been through her own process to

ground herself. She even wrote a book about working with dreams. Many do who have not been through the process themselves.

Book writers often write beyond what they themselves have experienced. I question this practice in the field of dreamwork. They quote others and tie up together a pretty package of wonderful insights and possibilities from working with your dreams, as if dreaming and dreamwork are the next savior to afflict human kind. Such book-length positive pictures are unethical because they mislead people into false hopes, people who are often quite afflicted themselves, and thus having strong dreams.

We need realistic and well-trained dreamwork psychotherapists who are there to help people face the full reality of their dreams and how they might apply to solving the afflictions and opportunities of their lives.

- What would you have done if you were in my shoes? What would you have done if you were in the above dreamer's shoes?
- What does this experience suggest about the archetypal power behind a person's dreams?
- What does it say about needing skilled and available guidance if you are going to share your dreams and what they evoke with another?
- What does this and similar incidents say about psychotherapists needing to be trained in dreamwork psychotherapy and not just psychotherapy?

If I see one more course or workshop out there on "Certified Dreamwork Training For Anybody," "Sacred Dreaming," "The Shamanic Dream Journey," "Exploring DreamTime," and so on, I am going to ... I don't know what I am going to do. This article is my best response to at least point to issues and ethics, as well as skills and commitments needed.

Yes, I know. Money drives the market. Yet I still take a stand on living from a "moral imperative" in life. My simple plea: Get yourself well trained before you work in depth with people's dreams.

Definitions of Dreams, Dreamwork and Dreamwork Psychotherapy

A Dream is an experience in image and action which occurs when the waking life consciousness lets go of control in sleep, allowing the core integrative function of

the psyche to produce dreams mirroring unconscious archetypal patterns and issues with the ego function of the dreamer congruent or not congruent with these emotional imagery experiences called dreams.

- A dream functions to present life and personality issues to the dreamer at an emotional and awareness level. The dream mirrors back to the individual the state of their consciousness and the state of their larger psyche.
- A dream itself is an experience in dreaming time with coherence of connection and meaning based on the dreamer's image of him or herself being present in every dream.

The Dream Ego

Remembered or not remembered the dream ego is present in every dream. Every dream seems to be characterized by whether the dream ego is itself congruent with whatever else is happening in the dream. Thus many dreams portray dream situations that are not resolved or whole because in part the relationship of the dream ego to the other dynamics of the dream is weak, in conflict or otherwise not congruent. We know that dreams are wholeness processes needing resolution.

What I have discovered is that you do not need outside reality judgments to evaluate the content of dreams. Even Content Analysis developed by Hall, Van de Castle and others, such as G. William Domhoff.

All dreams seem to function to present to the dreamer issues needing resolution and, or, potentials needing development.

Keys To Objective Dream Analysis

Here are the keys to objective dream analysis based on universal internal structures in all fully remembered dreams. Yet in making these statements, discovered and put together by me, I have to say that these findings are still too recent to have been researched by research types of surveys. They are based only on clinical evidence from direct work with thousands of dreams.

1. We can objectively analyze the dream ego's behavior, when recalled, in every dream a dreamer has remembered for consistent dream ego patterns, attitudes and behavior.
2. We can objectively analyze a dream internal structures of image, action and dream ego relation within the context of how much, and what kind, of congruence is there between the dream ego and the rest of the figures and actions in the dream. We can also analyze for the amount of congruence between characters and actions other than the dream ego's in all dreams. Congruence is when the parts work together to increase the relatedness between them in such a fashion that this relatedness creates actions of unity, forward movement and balance within the dream itself.
3. In a reported dream we can analyze for the amount and kind of wholeness being expressed in the dream itself. Wholeness is a context, a structure, and a process in which all the parts work at an integrative level together.
4. We can say that most reported dreams when analyzed show clearly how dreams are often remembered as not resolved. Non-resolution means as a function that parts are in conflict, non-congruence and unrelatedness and are not working together as one whole and thus draining energy and effectiveness. Things are not being realized as intended. Dream situations are started and not completed. With nightmares there always is a blocking of forward and resolving motion, often on the part of an incongruent dream ego that does not accept and cooperate in the dream but tries to still exert control where it does not have the power or the awareness to lead the process.
5. We can state also that when the dream ego is incongruent with other parts and actions of the dream that the dream itself is far less likely to express a wholeness pattern of the harmonious and developmental relatedness of all the parts.
6. We can also state now that each of the above five points can be used to analyze the dream and also suggest ways and methods for dreamwork interventions into the dream state of the dream itself.
 - Through dreamwork we can work to make the dream ego more accepting and congruent with the rest of the dream itself.

- Through dreamwork we can use the dream ego function to evoke through its own increased congruence harmony, integration, resolution and congruence among all the other parts and actions of the dream.
- Through dreamwork on resolving dream issues and increasing congruence we can retrain the waking ego of the dreamer to also use these guidelines for action in personality and outer life situations. The dreamer will be more able and willing to do so because she and he have experienced this harmonizing and resolving process in work with their dreams.
- Through process dreamwork techniques such as dream reentry and dream enactments we can also restructure ego attitudes towards acceptance and congruence, rather than control and dominance. Such direct interventions often means an emotional, deep restructuring of the archetypal patterns that are unresolved, such as resolving nightmares through dream reentry and evoking resolution and congruence there in the dream and in the unconscious pattern of personality dynamics producing the unresolved dream.

It must be stressed that the use of such powerful dreamwork techniques and perspectives should be cautious, conscious and implemented by those well trained in such techniques.

Yet think also of the thousands of dreamers with their dreams who could be a lot more healed and fulfilled in life if there were a lot more dedicated and skilled professionals willing to work in this way in this area of "objectified dreamwork healing."

Example Of Failure In The Use Of Emotional Process Dreamwork

Without any personal disparagement of the psychiatrist involved I one heard an hour long report by a psychiatrist using dream psychodrama in working with severely disturbed veterans of the Viet Nam War. This exsoldier who was in and out of the hospital suffering severe depression had a recurrent nightmare just as vivid as the actual battle experience he survived. He and his nine men were on patrol in the jungle and ambushed by a superior force of the enemy. He successfully hid in the bushes but watched as the enemy soldiers killed each of his men, the last wounded ones finished off by hand.

Ever since this incident he was afflicted by terrible guilt at having failed his men. Why did he not fire back at the enemy to either die with his men or save some of them? Cowardly? What would you have done? Obviously he was still in rehearsal years later over this incident. The Veterans hospital psychiatrist tried doing dream psychodrama with the man and his therapy group. They enacted the whole battle scene again, and it was terrible again. But nothing was resolved. The man was not released from his terrible nightmare or his guilt. The only behavior left to him was to become a mental patient, as if letting himself and everyone know that his life was indeed ruined because he had so utterly failed his buddies.

In my gentle comments after on the presentation I pointed out the need for not only dramatic expression of the nightmare trauma but the necessity to resolve it emotionally. What the psychiatrist did not seem to know to do was how to resolve the terrible situation. Without resolution there is no healing.

I would say now what I did not say then because the psychiatrist seemed to have taken on some of the soldier's guilt himself for not curing the man.

In Dream Enactments you not only dreamtically enact the original occasion as reprotayed by the recurrent nightmare. You also reenact the dream situation again, but this time going for a resolution that occurs but is not made up by the dream or waking ego.

We don't know what would be the action to take to resolve the situation. I can see some good possibilities.

- As the scene is being replayed have the soldier shoot at the enemy and maybe die himself.
- Have the soldier express his feelings about the horror of war and go on to oppose militarism and war.
- Have the soldier offer himself to be captured so that maybe not all the rest of his soldiers would be killed but taken prisoner, even if they are all killed later.
- After the enemy is gone, go down again to each of his dead buddies and say goodbye individually to each one of them, confessing his weakness and inability to save them.
- Going on a visit to each one of the living who were intimate with each of his dead buddies and telling each one what he did and how badly he feels about it. Then the

other members of the group roleplaying these dialogues would react. Some might get angry, or cry. Some might forgive. But at least there would be an experience of resolution. He could not bring his buddies back. He did not actually kill them. But at least he can share his shame and inadequacy and his moral horror that he could not or did not do more.

Note we do not do an enactment that make the actual precipitating situation better than it was, such as a company of American soldiers entering the scene and saving him and his buddies. Life simply is not that way, except in movies which are always artificial tranquilizers for the soul.

In Dream Enactments the leader or psychotherapist does not tell the dreamer what to do. He or she may make suggestions and get the dreamer's okay to participate in ones he might choose. We try as much as possible to go with the emotional energy so it is released and transformed.

Since the psychiatrist was not trained in psychodrama he could not really know what he was doing. Expression in itself is not healing. Expression must lead to change in attitude and the healing of the deep pattern that is blocked and conflicted. Again we point to the need of professionals not to stay within the boundaries of their degrees and licences but always to seek real training when they work with highly emotional patterns such as dreams can reveal. I am always a bit wary as well as open when I guide such deep work. Any inflation on my part that I can handle things quite well would be destructive to me and the others involved. Yet, the method, in the right hands, works time and time again. The method not used leaves people afflicted sometimes for life.

The Basis For The Statements Here

Everything stated here about dreams is based on the objective analysis of thousands of dreams in relation to active dreamworkers. No studies are done with groups of unknown and uncommitted individuals, such as college students. Further evidence for the key statements is that when strong dreamwork interventions are done, such as Dream Dialogue and Dream Reentry, the basic energy functions of integration, wholeness, congruence, and resolution are brought into play as essential functions.

After such processes dreamers experience quite often a change in dream themes and actions, including for the dream ego. A few examples follow.

Examples Of Dream Ego And Waking Ego Change

- With no other help from any other psychologists a woman needing to get over her fear of flying was able to do so by working with the current dreams that reflected such a fear, including one in which she was a passenger in an airplane that crashed, killing everyone. Following a full guided dream enactment of this dream situation this dreamer was cured and went on to fly everywhere with no problems.
- The author once performed a dream reentry with another psychologist when their plane was delayed in the air for over an hour and it brought back the time when a passenger plane she was in had crashed, but in which she was saved.

Fear seems to function to block the resolution mechanism in the psyche so that the person remains in maximum psychic tension causing extreme stress. Dream reentry into the anxiety situation evoked by the outer air predicament was used to resolve the anxiety pattern and relieve the ego of its trauma.

- Another classic case where this author assisted was with a Catholic priest who had been in the action zone in the Viet Nam war. Since this was a one-time crisis situation the author asked permission for them to go back into the war situation by meditative state reentry and for the priest to describe what comes up for him. The correct assumption was that a war trauma had become an internal nightmare that stayed active for the priest but that he was still locking out of his consciousness because he could not deal with it. The priest's presenting symptom was that he could not dream. Every time he would try and fall asleep he would wake up, doing this all night long. This had been going on for years of fitful sleeping. Our mutual dream reentry with eyes closed produced his war trauma, which we then resolved in the dream reentry. He reported that he had no problems sleeping after that. This battle trauma is called a dream in the sense that Jung describes we are dreaming twenty-four hours a day but our waking consciousness diverts us from it. This priest would sometimes become paralyzed when awake and visualize the war helicopters coming back from battle with the wounded and the dead. He was still dreaming the war because he had not resolved his part in it. The reentry revealed

that what he was hiding his consciousness from was a dying bandaged soldier he knew with a wife and child who was soon do to go home. Now he never would and the priest could not at first come to terms with why God would allow this. The healing part came when I suggested in the reentry that he go to the chapel and tell God his true feelings.

- The author has used guided dream reentry with people diagnosed with cancer in the early stages and whatever symptoms they had before were gone upon the doctor's reexamination. Others who had cancer and worked with their dreams with this author did have cancer develop and surgery followed. Not enough work is done yet in this field but the successes and non-successes do support my ego-psyche congruence model, which states that when you put the ego function in congruence with the archetypal pattern that is locked and not resolved the congruence triggers a release mechanism in the psyche and wholeness can again be achieved in the psychic pattern, as well as a shift in ego identity and attitudes.

How would you evaluate the above real life cases, even with just this essential information?

- Would you say that a person who works with these strong dreams and dreamer situations should be well trained as a dreamwork psychologist? Or could a dream teacher or a dream counselor handle these dreamer situations in a positive and non-destructive way?

Who Can Do Effective and Ethical Dreamwork Psychotherapy?

Three types of errors can occur in working with a person who has intense dream and life situations. One error is that you mis-diagnose the person's dream issues and their psychological and life issues as well. Another error besides mis-diagnosis is that you also evoke a harmful experience for the dreamer, even making their situation or dreaming worse. Still another error is that you do misguided work that makes the dreamer go in false directions, or even devalue the value of working with dreams. Two examples.

- A therapist in training with me guided another therapist into her dream in the meditative state but came to me as the supervisor because the dreamer could not

be gotten out of the dreaming fireplace where she was stuck. The student had gone too far and too powerfully for this dream and this dreamer. I successfully intervened and got the student out of the dream fireplace.

- In another training a psychologist during group dream sharing declared to us that she was becoming paralyzed. She lay down right there in dream group and could not move, speak, anything. A Gestalt psychologist immediately started shaking and talking to her, but by then I had pulled away the Gestalt person, took charge and entered into the paralyzed person's inner state and worked with her there until she felt movement coming back to her limbs. Through the whole week of training this psychologist had a series of remarkable dreams portraying a severe childhood trauma, which by the ending of the seven days revealed new resolving dreams on her theme, as well as her conscious ego had now been able to incorporate the traumatic material and she was no longer afraid of her dreams or the out of control pattern inside her.
- Another student psychologist could not stop smoking and knew it was bad for her health. She had a few dreams on the issue, which finally we resolved together because my image as teacher-psychotherapist had been incorporated into her dreams in a positive way. First her dream ego could smoke in front of me in the dream but while half hiding behind a tree. Finally she could see what the ego pattern was that kept her smoking and she then quit with no effort at all.

I have had success with other smokers as well. Once you unlock the pattern causing the weak ego, then the smoker can easily choose to quit. Dreams reveal the pattern to a skilled dreamwork psychologist, and the right dreamwork interventions unlock the pattern in the deeper psyche so that the configuration can change and psychic energy flow.

The Dreamwork Psychotherapist

These are my definitions, the definitions of a functional psychology and a functional dreamwork psychology.

Psychotherapy is the direct intervention in a co-process into a receptive person's life and behavior in effective ways that cause positive change, and the lessening or ending of destructive patterns and behavior. It follows that only a professional well-trained,

and also one who has lived the process him or herself, can be an effective and non-destructive psychotherapist to work at the level the definition describes.

A Dreamwork Psychotherapist focuses on dreamwork psychotherapy. **Dreamwork Psychotherapy** is the practice of skilled intervention into a cooperative person's current dreaming and life behavior by following the dream and personality issues embedded in the dreams themselves.

A Dreamwork psychotherapist and dreamwork psychologist may do any of the following.

- **Dream diagnosis:** The DWPT is well trained in objectifying the basic elements of dreams and dreaming and connecting these also with the life and psyche of the dreamer as these express themselves in daily life and future dreaming.

The basic elements of doing a dream diagnosis involve analyzing with the dreamer the behavior of the dream ego in the dream using some set of universal values.

The ones I currently consider most important, as reflected in my **Dream Ego Profile** are: Active, Reactive, Interactive, Objective, Subjective, Creative Action, Passive, Observer, Decisive Action, Congruent Action, Choosing, Bringing Resolution, Following Ego Desire, Flight, Control, Cooperation, Fight, Fearful, Emoting, Accepting.

These I deem the most important dynamics being experienced to varying degrees in a dreamer's series of dreams. The DWPT can quickly analyze presented dreams and make a diagnosis as to which are dominant and which absent in dream situations, other dream characters, or in the dream ego itself. Then the DWPT does interventions using the dreamwork methodology she or he has been trained in.

The Dream Ego Profile is also useful for analyzing a person's personality and life expression. When this is done after a number of sessions connections are made between the Dream Ego Profile and the Life Ego Profile. This way also we evaluate the congruence between dreaming and waking life with a particular individual.

My guess is that if a fairly objective study were done using the DE Profile before and after working with dreams using the methodology and the profiles, that after three months we could see significant differences in both the new dreams and the dream

ego behavior. If we also profiled the person's life we would have a stronger basis for objective evaluation of the dreamwork psychotherapist's and the dreamer's work together.

I make the bold statement that there has been no clinical means of evaluating dreaming and waking behavior change from before and after engaging with good will in a course of dreamwork therapy.

The Dreamer Working Alone Or In An Unguided Dream Sharing Group

Of course a dreamworker can do dreamwork on his or her own, or with a friendly partner at the same skill level. They can also do the Dream Ego Profile evaluations as part of their dreamwork. I have often taught lay people. Some who are at a fairly stable place in themselves seem to derive much benefit from using the methodology in working with their dreams. The methodology is somewhat self-correcting. If you start using Dream Reentry without being trained in it, or without being clear on how your dream ego works with several different kinds of dreams, you may experience a fear of being overwhelmed and therefore stop using the technique. We have another method called, *Rewriting The Dream To Resolution* which seems to evoke less anxiety in most people.

What is truly lacking in the dreamwork field are means of objective evaluation. What really happens when you work with a dream, not what you say happens?

If you don't have objective means of evaluating, how in the h... can you evaluate the results with any sense of objective truth? At least, then, the serious Dreamwork Psychotherapist should be able to objectively diagnose both the dream and the dreamer, and then go on to evaluate also the results in future dreaming and personality development or problem-solving because of the ongoing dreamwork. Have you noticed how in many books written about dreams that the authors do not present objective methods they have used to evaluate the statements they put out as truths?

The Dreamwork Psychotherapist's Methodology

A Warning On Using Dreamwork Methodology

In these days of putting information on the internet it can seem like any information goes. One psychologist recently made a list of things you can do with your dreams, including Dream Dialogue, Dream Enactment, and Dream Reentry. I must submit that these are powerful techniques that can have dangerous techniques to the dreamer. I was the first to publish these techniques in the first dreamwork manual, *The Jungian-Senoï Dreamwork Manual* in 1978, revised and expanded in 1980. But even there I pointed out the danger in using these techniques on yourself or with others. I have given examples here of my use of such techniques to illustrate the dangers. I have also trained other therapists in their use for twenty-seven years now.

However, I have also offered these techniques for those doing self-help dreamwork with themselves. It is my finding that the dreamer will go no further in the use of Dream Reentry, for instance, than they are able to cope with.

However, if you guide someone else in Dream Reentry you can do damage where you evoke more content than the dreamer can cope with and the dreamer goes paralyzed and has an increase in anxiety, rather than decrease, over their issues.

Thus I made the distinction between Self Dream Reentry and Guided Dream Reentry. The same with Dream Enactments. I do not recommend doing this technique without a trained and skilled leader to guide the process. However, humans love technology and there will always be those who use methods without knowing experientially what they are doing, and who will go too far at times.

Even with all my training and experience in the early days I sometimes, but rarely, went over the natural boundaries of what the person could handle and integrate, and what not. I have always taught my students what is "too far" in doing process techniques. Some have chosen not to use them in their own practice and teaching with people, not feeling adequate to the seriousness of the task.

The Dreamwork Psychotherapist's Work

The reason a Dreamwork Psychotherapist's work should be different from that of a dream teacher or dreamwork counselor is the following. A DWPT does interventions

into the dreaming and the life and personality of the dreamer. You better know what you are doing then. Right?

Thus a DWPT must be skilled in diagnosis and in interventions using dreamwork methodology. A psychotherapist who is not specifically trained in dreamwork psychology does not know how to diagnose and otherwise analyze a series of dreams, and could get way off quickly. Misdiagnosing a client in working with that person can lead them to go down directions not right for them or at the least, not helping the dreamer solve the issues presented in a dreaming experience.

Also, the dreamworking methodology I use is specifically designed for working with dreams and other forms of feeling-imagery meditative states, using imagery interaction work.

The meditative state, as I define it, is different from the trance state or the hypnotic state because the ego consciousness function of the person is still active, experiencing but not directing or controlling the experience in the sense of dominating it. The DWPT acts also as a guiding ego that supports the dreamer's ego in letting go to the non-ego dynamics represented by the images and actions of the dream.

Since dreamwork techniques can be powerful interventions, a therapist should be well trained through adequate supervision and coursework in applying dreamworking techniques with others. The DWPT should also have had these techniques used on her or himself, as well as worked on their own with their own dreams and the methodology.

For professional integrity do not do to others what you have not done to yourself. Do not do to others what you have not allowed skilled others to do to you. Else, you will be projecting your own material into other people's dreaming and waking life issues. Examples follow.

- A dreamworker not adequately trained by me or his other teachers would do dreamwork with those who came to him. In one session reported to me he heard the dream of his client and immediately asked the dreamer, how are you not feeling fulfilled in her personal relationship? This is a No-No. You do not immediately jump off from the dream into the dreamer's personality and life issues. Dreamwork psychology means ethically, start grounded and stay grounded in the dream itself. The dream is a product of a non-controlling, non-ego directing

state, probably the integrative center in the deeper non-ego psyche. Follow the dream, not the ego. The dream ego is only one seventh to one fourth of a dream's dynamics in my estimation. Our concern is to enhance the whole dream and not just the ego's point of view.

- A hypnotherapist who ran an esoteric school claimed that he could psychoanalyze dreams and dreamers though he had no supervised training or certification in such an approach. He maintained he could read books in psychoanalysis and understand the theory with no practical work in application, except what he did as a hypnotherapist.

This is gross un-professionalism to assert that you are more qualified, or qualified when you are not. To do in depth work with others applying powerful techniques means that you can abuse such techniques, whether consciously or not. The only way of making yourself conscious of how you work with dreams and people is to be first supervised in working with your own dreams and life, and then in working with other people's dreams and life issues.

I have seen far too much unprofessional work in applying dreamwork techniques than I care to accept in several lifetimes. Yet, I keep telling myself, wait, be patient several lifetimes yourself. You have made your mistakes. This is a new field where we put the dream first before a particular viewpoint or school of psychology or esoteric spirituality. It all takes time and new generations more open.

Dreamwork Training Programs

Since working with dreams is a new interest area hardly out of the chrysalis yet, we have seen all sorts of offers from all sorts of people to teach dreamers and people-helpers to work with their own and with other people's dreams. From my experience, and from hearing the "horror stories," I set certain limitations to calling yourself a trainer in working with dreams, and in what training programs should and should not do.

- I am not for teaching dreamwork methodology to others not already qualified in an adjacent field for working with people. You should be already a counselor, a teacher, an artist, a psychologist, a psychotherapist, a psychiatrist and so on.

- The role you are qualified in should also limit the ways you work with people's dreams. So-called dream teachers, massage therapists, dream group leaders, go too far when they use dreamwork methods to evoke emotional content that neither they or the dreamer are skilled enough to handle. Yes, there are horror stories that I have had to at times help repair.
- Only qualified psychotherapists should be taught process methods of dreamwork that evoke emotional content in the dreamer.
- Qualified psychotherapists should not do dreamwork with clients unless they have been supervised and qualified in dreamwork psychotherapy. Unless you know dream diagnosis and have experienced first hand from an expert how to apply and evaluate dreamwork methodology it would be unethical to use such dreamwork methodology. You are always fully responsible for the results of your actions on your clients. This means you must also be trained in objective ways of evaluating the results of doing dreamwork with another.
- Training programs in dreamwork psychotherapy should be imparted by psychotherapists who have specialized in dreams and dreamwork methodology and been through their own supervised, emotional process work involving their personalities and their lives, as well as their dreams.
- Training programs for qualifying dreamwork psychotherapists should be of sufficient duration and intensity that the psychotherapist learns dreamwork psychotherapy to such an extent that they can use it in their private practices.

All dreamwork therapy training programs should cover these basics.

- The candidate for qualification should have been through a supervised, personal dreamwork process with ones own dreams and shown evidence of increased congruence with ones dreams and life.
- The candidate for qualification should have been supervised adequately in doing dreamwork psychotherapy with groups and individuals, and to have shown that positive effects resulted.
- The candidate for qualification in dreamwork psychotherapy should have been trained by a skilled professional in dream and dreamer diagnostics. Through the application of *Objectifying Dreams*, *Following the Dream Ego* and *The Dream Ego Evaluation Profile* it is now possible to analyze dream issues and dynamics

and apply these to the dreamer personality and life in an objective manner. These same dynamics can be measured as to *congruence* between how they appear in dreams and how they appear in the life and personality of the dreamer.

- The candidate for qualification in dreamwork psychotherapy should have been trained in objective means of evaluating future dreaming and outer life behavior as a result of ongoing dreamwork with a dreamer. It is now possible to analyze and evaluate results of doing dreamwork psychotherapy. Report writing using *The Dream Ego Evaluation Profile* is now possible. Case studies discussion and evaluation is now possible.

What A Professional Dreamwork Training Requires

In summary, a professional training program should teach the nature of dreams and dreaming, the methodology for working with dreams, the results of dreamwork application, the psychology of the dreamer, the application of dreams and dreamwork to life and personality issues, the practice of dreamwork under supervision, the evaluation of the growth level of the dreamwork psychotherapist in following their own dreams, the extent of knowledge of dreams, dreamwork and key approaches in the field, and finally the personal integrity of the dreamwork psychotherapist in working with themselves and others, including their ability to be a scientifically objective as possible about their work and results.

Practicing psychologists have been notoriously difficult for me to teach because some of them seem to have become set in their ways. They also want to keep their school of psychology as a belief system, and not move on to using effective methodology and models from wherever they might come.

Thus a number of the psychologists who have come to me for long-term professional training experience a conflict within themselves. They want the powerful methodology for working with dreams, and this is my specialty, but they don't want to do the personal growth work by working with their dreams and using the methods on themselves first.

A big exception to this is the professional psychodramatists who have trained with me. They seem more open to working with their own issues, I think because they are

used to learning from many teachers psychodrama is itself process oriented and objective.

To counteract any students ego inflation and role identification I have always insisted that my students work thoroughly with their own dreams. But even with this insistence I have not always been successful. Some give a little and some give a lot. But at least the standards are there, whether everyone chooses to follow them or not.

For others who set themselves up as dream teachers or counselors I can respect the view that working with dreams, at least in some way, even if it is only somewhat objective sharing, is better than not sharing and working with dreams. However, even here, too many still set themselves up to others as being more competent than they are. Stating that you follow a set of guidelines is like the fox fiddling with the latch on the gate of the chicken coop and saying when caught, "oh, I love chickens. I just wanted to help them! I say back to the fox: Sure, sure. I believe you because you said it.

On a personal level I make the plea to get serious and supervised training yourself if you are going to work with others' dreams. I have seen and heard about too many misadventures and engaged in a few myself even though I was committed not to. I have had considerable success, a self-statement which I sometimes doubt myself. I have worked with regular normal people who needed help in understanding dreams and problem-solving. But I have worked with equal numbers of significantly disturbed individuals, even classified mentally ill, who chose the dreamwork path with me and often had breakthrough results. I certainly have had breakthrough results with my own dreamwork in my life. I stand by the dream and its dreamwork, no matter what.

Summary

In summary this article has been both a history of my working as a dreamwork psychotherapist most of my adult life and the issues and results of such work. Yet it has been also a history of the dreamwork psychotherapy movement within the larger context of the dream and dreamwork education movement. When I started there were few educators and independent psychotherapists in the field. Now the public has a greater awareness of the nature of dreaming. The next step is to see that dreamwork with dreams is as valid a field of study and practice as the field of dreams and

dreaming is in itself. Dreamwork is the new discovery of value already being recognized. *Dreamwork is the dream itself worked with in a variety of ways, and not the realm of any one school of psychology or research.* I hope I have contributed with value to the field.

Strephon Kaplan-Williams

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