

**REMEMBERING DREAMS – CREATING A DREAM JOURNAL**  
**EXCERPTED FROM “THE EVERYTHING DREAMS BOOK” BY TRISH & ROB MACGREGOR**

*“To catch your dream, have a pen and paper or a tape recorder by your bed – a material suggestion.”*

*- Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder*



Sometimes, dreams are so startling or vivid that you come awake during the night. At that time, you might think, “I won’t forget this one!” Yet, by morning a fog may settle over our memories of the night’s “events” and you may recall the flavor of the dreams and little else. Or, you may just remember thinking that you weren’t going to forget your dream.

The best way to remember your dreams is to record them immediately after they occur. If you don’t usually wake up after a dream, try giving yourself a suggestion before you go to sleep that you will wake up following each dream, although it might not be a good idea to do so every night. You may reach a point where you can recall four or five or more dreams a night.

Either jot down the dream on a bedside pad or record it on a tape. If you decide to write down the dream, you can either use a penlight or learn to write in the dark. At first, your night-time scrawls may be virtually indecipherable, but with practice you can write clearly enough so that you will be able to transcribe the dream into a journal in the morning.

The next best time to recall a dream is in the morning before you get up. The experts all seem to agree that how you awaken in the morning is vital to preliminary recall of dreams. If you can dispense with an alarm clock, by all means do so. An alarm intrudes, jerking you from a sound sleep so quickly that your dream tends to fade as soon as you open your eyes.

To awaken without an alarm, of course, is difficult if you’re working a nine-to-five job or have young children. One alternative is to start your dream work on a weekend, when you may be able to sleep later and to wake up without an alarm. Another alternative is to train yourself to wake up without an alarm. This is actually much

easier to do than it sounds. Before going to sleep at night, simply give yourself a suggestion to wake up at a particular time, say, ten minutes before your alarm clock goes off. If it doesn’t work immediately, keep trying until you feel confident you can eliminate the alarm clock.

Once you wake up, don’t open your eyes. Just lie there for a few minutes, retrieving your dream images. If nothing comes to mind, move into your favorite sleep position. This may trigger some dream fragment that will expand.

“For some as yet unknown reason,” write Patricia Garfield in her book *Creative Dreaming*, “additional dream recall often comes when you move gently from one position and settle into another.”

At first, you may remember only bits and pieces, an image, a word, a face. But with practice, large parts of your last dream will come to you. These parts, in turn, may trigger a memory of the dream before it. Eventually, this process will become automatic, as intrinsic to your morning ritual as brushing your teeth.

Sometimes, it helps to have reference points to aid you in the recollection of a dream.

Quite often, our own thoughts about our dreams are the biggest obstacles to recalling them. A dream may be so unusual that you wake up certain that you’ll remember it, only to forget it within minutes of opening your eyes. On the other hand, you might think a dream is too silly or embarrassing to write down, or that it’s not worth remembering.

It’s best to avoid making value judgments about a dream and simply write it down as if it were someone else’s story. Later, when you interpret the dream, you may find that what seemed silly or outrageous or insignificant has far deeper meaning than you initially realized.

## *A Suggestion to Remember Your Dreams*

The best suggestions occur in a slightly altered state, when your mind is more open.

In the twilight state as you drift to sleep at night, tell yourself that you will recall the most important dream you dream that night. If you have a specific question that you want answered, tell yourself that you'll remember the dream that answers the question.

Repeat this request several times as you fall asleep. Make sure that your journal and pen are within reach.

Since most of our dreaming occurs in the early morning hours, this is an excellent time to give yourself a suggestion. Set your alarm thirty or forty minutes earlier than you usually get up. Put it in the music mode, so you awaken more gently.

When the alarm goes off, try not to open your eyes. Lie there quietly for a few minutes and tell yourself you're going to fall back to sleep and have an important dream –or a dream that answers a particular question. Strongly urge yourself to recall the dream.

In quiet moments throughout the day, tell yourself that tonight you're going to remember your dreams. If you have particular questions you want answered, phrase those questions to yourself. Sometimes, you only need to repeat your intention several times though a day, like an affirmation. "Tonight I remember my dreams" or "Tonight I get answers though my dreams."

Experiment with different methods until you find the one that works best for you. It helps if you sincerely believe you can receive answers through your dreams.



## *The Dream Journal*

A dream journal is an integral part of dream exploration, a portal to other parts of yourself that is rather like the hole Alice fell through on her way to Wonderland. A notebook will do, but a bound journal is even better. Many bookstores now sell bound journals with blank pages inside. Some are specifically designed as dream journals and include a place for the date and time of the dream, the dream itself, and your interpretation.

If your bedside writing isn't clear, transcribe your dreams later into a "permanent" notebook or onto a computer file. If you use a notebook computer, keep it near the bed and type the dreams directly into it when you wake up.

Keep the journal and a penlight nearby – on a nightstand, on the floor, or even under your pillow. If you jot down your dreams during the night or tape record them, then set aside a time to transcribe them into your journal.

When you describe the dream, include as many details as possible. The interrogatives – who, what, where, when, and how – act as excellent guides in collecting details. Were you alone? If not, who was with you? Friends? Family? Strangers? What activity, if any, were you or the others engaged in? Was it day or night? Dark or light? Where were you? How did the dream "feel" to you? Familiar? Odd? Pleasant?

Brugh Joy attributes particular significance to the lighting in a dream. If a dream is brilliantly colored and very vivid, it reflects what he calls the "superconscious" state, the more evolved areas of consciousness. In his own life, these types of dreams are nearly always prophetic. If the light in a dream is soft or shadowy, in sepia tones like an old photograph, or if it's in black and white, Joy says it emanates from less evolved areas of consciousness. Dreams that are even darker originate from the deep unconscious. When you

record a dream, one of the details that should be included is how you felt upon awakening. What is our dominant emotion? Exhilaration? Fear? Sadness? Happiness? Sometimes, when you go over the dream later, you may remember more details.

Montague Ullman advises that when you record a dream, jot down whatever you were thinking about when you went to bed. It may provide a clue to the meaning of the dream.

Sometimes, you may not remember the specifics of a dream, but only that you've dreamed. Then, later that day or several days later, your recollection of the dream is triggered by something in your waking environment. Be sure to note the

event or experience that triggered the recollection, because it may provide vital clues about the dream's meaning or significance.

If you're not getting enough sleep, recalling your dreams is going to be much more difficult. You may want to note in your journal how long you sleep on a given night and how many times you wake up. If you habitually wake up at night, try taking advantage of the situation by seeing if you can recall any dreams. If you do, then record them. If you initially have trouble recalling dreams at night, then try recapturing a dream when you wake up from a nap. This works well for some people.



## *Exercise: Recalling a Dream*



This provides a list of points to look for in recalling a dream.

1. What was the location of the dream?
  - ✓ Was it indoors or outdoors? Above ground or below ground?
  - ✓ Was it located in a familiar or an unfamiliar place? Was it located in another town or city?
2. Were there people involved?
  - ✓ Did you know them or were they strangers?
  - ✓ Were they in your life now or from your past?
  - ✓ Were any of them celebrities?
3. What emotions were involved?
  - ✓ Were you exhilarated, happy, afraid, depressed, confused, or lonely?
  - ✓ Did your emotional state change during the dream?
  - ✓ If so, what caused the change?
4. Were there any animals in the dream?
  - ✓ Were they friendly, fierce-looking, gentle, or wise?
5. What objects or symbols were involved in the dream?
6. What was said in the dream?
  - ✓ Did anyone in the dream speak directly to you? What was said?
7. What was the major action in the dream?

