

# Dream Work Reduces Stress

By Jack Elias

I had a powerful dream this month. In my dream a person was approaching me with great hostility. His face was cut out revealing



a sharp-toothed reptilian face with hate-filled eyes inside what now was clearly just a human body-suit hiding this monster. I held my ground, faced it and felt its rage, but it clearly was not in a mood to work anything out.

As that was clear, I woke up. I was disturbed by the image and thought about what to do. I decided to practice what I preach with students and clients.

Each of our experiences is a creation of our mind. This is more obvious to us regarding dreams, but it is equally true regarding waking experience. Remembering this, I reasoned that I would communicate a resolution to my unconscious mind via a consciously created dream that I repeatedly and vividly ran in my mind until I felt it have a tangible effect.

In my conscious version, I confronted this monster, but I was 50 times bigger than he. I held him in my hand and gently bounced him around. As my giant self, I looked him in the eye and completely stared into his hatred. Then I softened and invited my whole body to relax as I invited him to communicate at which point there was a wordless release in my emotional and physical body.

A client also shared a dream within a few days of my dream. He was with his family

Jack Elias says that what we all miss very often in reflecting on dreams (not to mention our conscious experience) is that we also form our sense of self as the experimenter in the presence of the "others."

and feeling intensely annoyed that his wife and children were ignoring him. I had shared my dream process with him, so he wanted to jump in and be 50 times bigger than everyone. I agreed he could certainly do that, but in this case, since it was his family and not a monster, I suggested he look at his self in the dream. In the dream, he was identified in his dream-self looking out of his own eyes unaware of his own self-definition and condition, much the way we live our daily conscious life.

I explained that, since the dream was in his mind, it was made of his own mental energy, and it followed, therefore, that all the people in his dream were made of his own energy taking the form of his beliefs about each of them. What he missed in the dream, and what we all miss very often in reflecting on dreams (not to mention our conscious experience), is that we also form our sense of self as the experimenter in the presence of the "others."

Just jumping into the "trick" of being 50 times bigger wouldn't give him an

appreciation of this important fact. I had him see the "him" in the dream that had been constructed on automatic pilot by his subconscious, and examine who that self had to be in order to be affected by the actions and attitudes of his family. We changed some debilitating attitudes and beliefs that were operating in his dream self, including a limited sense of context.

Then we replayed, vividly and repeatedly, a movie of the dream with his new more aware and empowered self interacting with his family instigating creative play and cooperation. He experienced a wonderful shift that he was able to take home with him, and we also communicated this new sense of self to his subconscious mind to replace the old autopilot version.

In my opinion, this is a much more productive and enlivening approach to dream work than analysis. And the most powerful piece is to ask, "Who do I have to be, in order to be affected in this way?" and,

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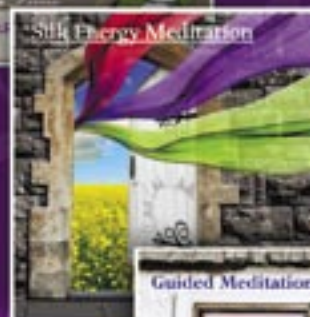
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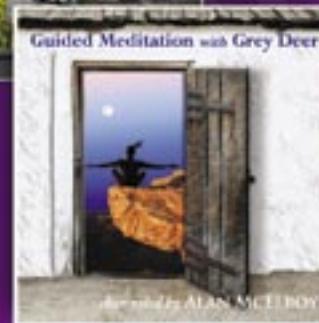
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