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The mysterious and wonderful world of dreams

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Everyone dreams, but what does it all mean?

Drifting off you slowly feel it. The gentle comfortable transition into sleep begins. Eyes closed, you body warm and still, something is changing inside of you. Thoughts slow, reasoning slips, and the world around you fades away. You sleep and you dream.

This process is a familiar one for all people. Everybody must sleep, but how many understand this phenomenon? Most would better understand the most insignificant occurrences in life than sleep, which is an activity that consumes such a large percentage of our time.

This is not true of all people. There are some who have dedicated years of their lives to helping people understand their dreams. Dream analysis is not a new trend either. People have been perplexed by their dreams for thousands of years. Even in The Bible there is record of dream analysis. Joseph (more recently made popular in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat the musical) was able to gain the favour of the Pharaoh by interpreting his dreams. The ancient tradition continues today in a variety of manifestations.

Experts like John [Neumin](#), Christina [Becker](#), and Karen [Seeley](#) all specialize in dream analysis. How they approach the analysis of a dream is very different.

Neumin is a psychotherapist. He frequently uses dream analysis techniques in treatment of his patients.

"People come in because their lives are just not functioning or their lives are ok, but they are looking to focus on a particular issue," said Neumin. "I help them

explore who they are and who they want to be. Dreams fit into that in the sense that it's another very different level of who they are."

Neumin deals with people on a long term basis. As a psychotherapist he believes that "you can't just work on a dream without understanding the person."

Christina Becker takes a different approach to dream analysis. She is a Jungian analyst. Her work relies heavily on symbolism, which she feels is a very revealing aspect of dreams.

"If someone is in distress, this means that there is something that they are not connecting to that they need to. They are choosing not to deal with something because it is too difficult or frightening," explains Becker. "Dreams will have a symbolic situation of what is going on."

Contrary to Neumin, Becker said that she doesn't need to know an individual in order to help them understand their dreams. She stresses that "the dream has everything that it needs." People already know what their dream means on some level, she just helps them explore their dreams and come to their own conclusions.

Karen Seeley is a dream analyst that believes in a more ancient school of thought. She is a First Degree Wiccan Priestess, and as such analyzes dreams using Pagan techniques dating back hundreds of years.

"In our community dreams are given a great deal of respect," said Seeley. During our rituals we often are in the realm of the subconscious."

Seeley believes that dreams and nightmares are a means through which the energy of the world around us can communicate and guide people. When you need to understand something about your life, she says these ideas will become increasingly powerful in dreams until you are forced to understand. She feels that dreams should not be feared because, "they are there to help."

So here are three dream analysts with three very different approaches. To put their skills to the test, I took a dream of my own to each one. Aspects of the analysis were different for each, but all proved to be very insightful. Here is what I dreamt:

I was in a snowy cave. In front of me stood the villain from the popular movie Die Hard and I knew it was up to me to defeat him. After a nonsensical battle sequence I got the feeling that I had beaten him and he was suddenly gone.

My victory was fleeting; soon the cave was crawling with crime scene investigators for whom I harboured an overwhelming mistrust. The cavern suddenly flooded with water. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't escape!

"Take a break," they told me. "You've been working too hard."

I couldn't trust these men; these intruders that had invaded my cavern with their claustrophobic movement and suspicious mannerisms.

The next thing I know I'm stealing a transport truck from an underground garage and speeding away from the police. I lose them on the highway and end up at my house where the feeling of the dream changes.

On my snow covered lawn I see my cat Ash digging a tunnel in the snow. He wants me to help and I happily oblige him. Underneath the surface we find my other cats, frozen solid. They thaw and awaken. As they reanimate, a deep and profound sense of comfort and satisfaction washes over me before I wake up, confused and disoriented.

What did it mean? Why did I feel so strongly about it? The experts were able to provide some insight.

Neumin used what little he knew about me and analyzed the dream within that context.

"The dream is connected to the project you are doing. You are plunging into unconscious thought and when you do that you get this feeling that something intense is happening," said Neumin.

His analysis strikes a chord with me, but I don't know if that is all that the dream means. The stress I felt while surrounded with water could be explained this way, but what about the car chase? How do the cats tie in to this? I asked him if there could be other meaning to the dream.

"A lot of meaning can be brought to the dream as well," said Neumin in response. "The dream in some ways can be worked with like a work of art. You don't necessarily understand what the artist meant, but you understand more of yourself by relating to the dream."

Neumin clearly knows his stuff, but without knowing me better what we could accomplish was limited. I needed a second opinion.

The next interpreter I took the dream to was Karen Seeley, the Wiccan Priestess. She was quick to pick up on the theme of water as well. She explained that all the snow and water in my dream represented emotion and that vehicles can indicate driving my own will. She also said that cats are associated with femininity and feminine emotion.

"You seem to feel like there is something that is being put on hold. You want to go out into the world for yourself but something is holding you back," said Seeley. "Maybe you want to navigate your life with your feelings rather than what you are told to do."

This interpretation was interesting as well. I asked her how I should deal with such dreams. Panic seemed to be a theme in my dreams recently.

"You can't control your emotion and fear. Even if you are fearful, take the attitude that the fear is there for a reason...start to work with the nightmare and eventually it will go away because there is no longer a need for it," she said.

Seeley was helpful in my quest to understand this dream, but I still wanted another analysis, just in case there was still something I was missing. I sat down with Christina Becker hoping for a new perspective.

Becker is a Jungian Analyst, which means she models her style after the extremely important and famous analyst Carl Jung. His work relied heavily on symbolism and so Becker analyzed my dreams for symbols that could be important to me.

"The enemy in your dream is a shadow figure. This symbolizes an aspect of yourself that you need to come to terms with," said Becker. She went on to tell me that all the frozen water represented an inability to express feelings. Stealing such a large truck related to feelings of masculinity and that digging with the cat shows that I have a will to actively find a solution. The feelings of comfort and wellness at the end of the dream shows that acting on these frozen emotions is something I feel would help me.

Her analysis was very thorough and helpful. By simply asking me questions about the dream she was able to help me understand complex feelings about very personal aspects of my life.

Each analyst was able to give a different interpretation, yet each seemed to make sense to me in an equally striking way. So what was the real meaning of this dream?

"We never know completely what the message is...ultimately it is a work in progress," said Becker. Neumin seemed to agree with this, explaining that, "most powerful elements in a dream will have multiple layers of meaning. Most dreams will not have one clear meaning."

Though the meaning of my dream was never fully revealed, I still feel as though what I have learned from this experience is to my benefit. I have learned more about myself during this process than I had expected and gained a great deal of

respect for my dreams as well as those that are gifted enough to make sense of them.

As for the dream itself, it has not reoccurred and I sleep much easier now. The understanding I have gained seems to have helped. Perhaps Karen Seeley put it best when she said, "You can take the fear of dreams away, but the lesson you should never forget."

Sweet dreams.

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