

SCENE

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Lonne Sterling and Christine Michaels, Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC) and Certified Employee Assistance Professionals (CEAP) and the co-founders of the Center for Change of Florida, have worked in the mental health, employee assistance and substance abuse fields for over 25 years. Their Center provides clients with outpatient counseling and area businesses with Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services. Together they have established a reputation as dynamic professionals, each bringing unique and varied experiences to their practice.

The Center services a diverse client population dealing with a broad range of mental health issues, such as mood disorders, relationship and family problems, anger and stress management, grief and loss, addictions, eating disorders and relapse prevention. The Center's staff is highly skilled, utilizing a brief, solution-focused, therapeutic approach and techniques such as EMDR and Hypnotherapy.

For further information or assistance call the Center for Change of Florida at (941) 955-5518.



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Dare To Dream

*"It's not a place you can get to by a boat or a train. It's far, far away. Behind the moon, behind the rain."
"Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore." **The Wizard of Oz***

WE all live in two worlds. The conscious, waking world filled with the concrete, the tangible and the factual, and the elusive world of dreams, shrouded in symbols, metaphors and mystery. In the dream world, we are weavers of fantastic tales, where we play the roles of audience and actor, writer and director, hero and victim.

Everybody dreams. Although we may not remember many of our dreams, we dream about 20% of the time we are asleep. Through the sleep cycle, the dreamer descends and ascends back and forth through four distinct stages up to seven times during the night. Our most pronounced dreaming (but not our deepest sleep) occurs in Stage 4 known as Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. It is here that dreams are more likely to be remembered and where they are most vivid, populated with detailed images, scenery and narrative.

Why do we dream? Do we dream to preserve our sleep or sleep so we can dream?

Recorded throughout history is the belief in the predictive power of dreams. Early civilizations were convinced that dreams carried messages from good and bad spirits and built special shrines to serve as dream oracles. In some of these ancient cultures, a dream that warned of impending invasion would be considered so prophetic that the dreamer might reschedule a battle. A more modern example of a dream premonition occurred in 1865 when Abraham Lincoln dreamed of his own death. He saw a body dressed in funeral vestments laid out in the East room of the White House with its' face covered. When he asked the weeping mourners the identity of the corpse, he was told it was the President, killed by an assassin. Only a few days later, John Wilkes Booth assassinated Lincoln.

The predominant view of most dream interpreters is that dreams alert us to important aspects of our unconscious minds. Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung are the two most dominant figures in dream psychology, with practically all modern day theories emerging from their early work. Freud believed that dreams are coded messages devised from the unconscious to tell of the repressed desires and instincts that dwell there. Jung is best known for his concept of the "collective unconscious", embodiment not only of our dream images but common themes called "archetypes", derived from myth, legend and religion.

Today, dreams might best be explained as a conversation we have with ourselves in a symbolic language. Some of these dream conversations can be a response to events in the outside world, express deep-seated preoccupations, or illuminate unresolved emotions or problems in the dreamer's everyday life. Our minds can solve problems through dreams, so there must be truth behind the familiar saying, "sleep on it". In 1961, the discovery of the molecular structure of benzene came to German Chemist Friederich Kekule in a dream. Kekule dreamed of

molecules joining together in a pattern like a snake catching its' tail, forming what is now called the "Benzene Ring."

Symbols are the words used by dream language to represent an idea, memory, mood or insight arising from the dreamer's unconscious. However, unlike words, many dream symbols can change their meaning from one person to another based on an individual's life history and experience. Therefore, as the authors and actors of our dreams, we are the best interpreters of these symbolic meanings.

To give you a head start, we've listed below some common symbols and their suggested meanings.

- **Fractured Limbs:** A threat to the foundations of life, the safety of relationships and one's personal power
- **Burials or Funerals:** The repression of desires and traumas or the need for or end of a life phase
- **Being Tied Up:** Need for freedom
- **Tripping and Falling:** Reminder of over-intellectualization, living too much in the head and failing to care for the more basic and emotional aspects of life
- **Crossroads:** A point of decision or a coming together or parting of people or ideas
- **Packing:** Need to escape everyday problems or seek new experiences
- **Beautiful Music:** Infinite potential of creative life
- **Impotent Weapon:** Powerlessness, need to arm oneself against challenges
- **Violence Towards Others:** A struggle for self assertion or a fight against unwanted aspects of the dreamer's inner or outer life.
- **Tests:** Success or failure in any area of personal or professional life
- **Puppets:** Manipulation and lack of free choice or control of one's life
- **Airplane:** Wish to travel or see the world, desire for rapid progress or success
- **Hoarding Money:** Both prudence and selfishness or an indication of insecurity
- **Chased by Police:** Need to face the accusations of a guilty conscience or to learn from past mistakes
- **Houses:** The dreamer's body or the various levels of he dreamer's mind
- **Clocks/Watches:** The human heart and the emotional side of the dreamer's life
- **Books:** Wisdom, intellect or a record of the dreamer's life

Where to begin? Start with a positive attitude and tell yourself during the day that you will remember your dreams at night. Keep a dream diary next to your bed and immediately upon waking, write down everything you can remember of the dream. Also, make note of any emotions or associations that emerge. Be patient. With time you will become more successful at remembering and understanding your dreams. So, pick up your pencil and **Dare To Dream.**

Source Material: Fontana, David. *The Secret Language of Dreams*. Chronicle Books (1994)