

# How to Experience a Lucid Dream

**Author:** David Slone Lucid dreaming means dreaming while you know that you are dreaming. With practice nearly anyone can experience lucid dreams. Once lucid in a dream, people can control the dream content.

Lucid dreaming means dreaming while you know that you are dreaming. The term was coined by Frederik van Eeden who used the word "lucid" in the sense of mental clarity. With practice nearly anyone can experience lucid dreams.

Lucidity is not the same as dream control. It is possible to be lucid and have little control over the dream. However, becoming lucid in a dream is likely to increase your ability to deliberately influence the events within the dream. With practice you may extend the amount of control that you have over dream events. Many lucid dreamers choose to do something permitted only by the extraordinary freedom of the dream state, such as flying.

Some people have objections to lucid dreams. They say that it is un-natural and could be harmful to the psyche. In my opinion this is not true at all. Perhaps if all of our dreams were lucid and controlled there may be some harm, but with our lucid dreams spread out among many "normal" dreams we have plenty of time for non-lucid dreaming.

While we are in a dream our mind accepts what we see and feel as reality. We often find ourselves in very unusual circumstances when compared to our waking life. You could be living in a different house or driving a different car. The sky could be green and the river yellow. In most cases we accept these things as being true. Why doesn't the mind "think" 'Hey! I don't have this vehicle' or 'This isn't where I live!' or even 'Hey! I know the sky isn't supposed to be that color!'

This is what I call incongruities. Things in our dreams that are not "normal". We must wonder, and many have, why our mind so readily accepts anything we experience within our dreams as being real. We know there are no monsters. We know the proper colors for things. We know our home and our daily life. While we are dreaming we often forget these things and we believe what we see in the dream.

Just knowing this and thinking about it can actually help you on your way to a lucid dream experience. An incongruity is one of the triggers to lucid dreaming. A trigger is that which inspires or begins lucidity.

Here is an example of this from one of my own lucid dreams:

I was driving a blue Ford Bronco down a dirt road. I think it was a late 70's model. There was a young boy in the passenger seat. I was giving him a ride because his motorcycle had run out of gas. The bike was in the back. Suddenly I realized it. I did not own a blue Bronco! In the dream I slammed on the breaks and held my hands up. "I don't own a Ford

bronco!" I said, "I am dreaming!" from that point on I was lucid.

A recurring dream or nightmare can also be used as a trigger. If you have a recurring dream make a conscious effort to realize that you are dreaming the next time you are in that situation. If the dream involves a certain person or place try to think as you go to sleep, "The next time I see that house I will know that I am dreaming". Since the dream is recurring it won't be long before you see that house, person, etc. This may take several attempts. Don't be discouraged if it doesn't work the very first time.

Another technique that works for a lot of people is asking yourself "Am I dreaming?" and leaving notes for yourself. Several times a day ask yourself the question aloud. Also write the question on a note and put it on the refrigerator. Put the same message in other places where you will see them throughout the day. Many people will find themselves asking that question or seeing the question written on a note while they are actually dreaming. This will trigger a lucid dream.

My first lucid dream, that is the first one I had when I was trying to achieve lucidity, was triggered by a flying dream.

Try to go to sleep in the same place and around the same time as much as possible. It is best to sleep with silence as music or other sounds can affect your dreaming. If you do choose to listen to music while you are going to sleep choose soft and soothing music, preferably without vocals. Use the same music each time. Before you go to sleep concentrate on a trigger. My first time I said, "tonight I will fly", aloud several times and I concentrated on it. The second night I had a flying dream but I did not become lucid. On the fourth night I had another flying dream and at that time I became lucid. I was then able to fly to wherever I wanted to!

The trigger or combination of triggers that you use will depend upon you. If you have a common dream theme this is a great trigger. Just concentrate on the next time that you see or experience that you will be dreaming. Think of it as often as you can while you are awake.

Lucid dreamers often comment to themselves in dreams. You may say aloud, "This is a dream! I know that I am dreaming."

Make a list of questions that you have about dreams. Read the list often and look over it several times and concentrate on it before you go to bed.

Can you read text in a dream? Can you add numbers in a dream? These were some questions I had on my list at one time. I had read in a dream book that it was not possible to read text or to calculate numbers in a dream, but I didn't believe it. I eventually found myself lucid in an office. I walked over to a calendar on the wall and I read the text describing a New England farm house. I turned to another man there and said, "You see? You can read text in a dream!" I turned back to the calendar to read again and found that the words had completely changed. That amazed me and I commented to the other man

about it. Next I walked over to a desk and found a calculator. I added and subtracted numbers and came up with correct answers. Yes, you can read text and perform mathematics in a dream. I proved it to myself beyond any doubt and with more confidence than I ever could have by reading anything about dreams.

### **Keep a Dream Journal**

Keeping a dream journal is one of the most effective tools to achieving lucid dreams. Try to write down your dreams as soon after you wake up as you can. Don't just write a narrative of what took place in the dream. Record your thoughts and emotions felt. This will help you later on as you develop your dreaming research. Be sure to note all major elements, such as people, places, animals, etc.

Keeping a dream journal will also help you a great deal in understanding your non-lucid dreams. As you continue to write in your journal and re-read your previous entries you will begin to see parallels with your dreams and your life. Gradually you will be able to recognize what the symbols in your dreams are really saying to you.

Once lucid in a dream, people can often choose their actions and exert some deliberate control over the dream content. This ability has been utilized in the laboratory to study lucid dreaming and dream psychophysiology. For example, proof that lucid dreams occur in REM sleep was achieved by having subjects give a prearranged distinct signal with deliberate eye movements to mark the points in time when they realized they were dreaming. The dreamers' reports of the eye movements they had made in the dreams corresponded exactly to their physical eye movements as recorded by means of electro-oculograms on a polygraph record. Reports from experiments conducted using eye movement signaling in lucid dreams can be found in the literature (Dane, 1984; Fenwick et al., 1984; Hearne, 1978; LaBerge, Nagel, Dement & Zarcone, 1981; Ogilvie, Hunt, Kushniruk, & Newman, 1983).

### **What Are The Benefits of Lucid Dreaming?**

The scientific study of dreaming and REM sleep

A variety of psychological and recreational applications.

Lucid dreaming can be a powerful tool for overcoming nightmares

In therapy, lucid dreams appear to be promising for providing personal insight, assisting with integration, and as a safe environment for experimentation with new behaviors (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990).

Many lay people are attracted to lucid dreaming because it offers an outlet for fantasy, an opportunity for adventure unfettered by the laws of physics or society, and free of risk. As such, lucid dreaming is for many a source of creative and inspiring recreation. Anecdotes indicate that lucid dreams are helpful for artistic creativity, problem-solving,

and practicing skills for waking life (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990).

Dreams hold the most vivid mental images attainable by most people. Lucid dreaming is probably the best method for achieving the benefits such as enhancing physical performance, learning, remembering and facilitating healing.

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