







BY COMING HERE TODAY , YOU HAVE RAISED YOUR HAND WITH A QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT DREAMS?

- **KNOW:** How to unpack a dream
- **FEEL:** That helping your clients understand their dreams will greatly enhance your service and value to them
- **DO:** You'll possess the tools necessary to unpack your own dreams, and to help your patients unpack theirs
- **BE:** Thus, you will become a facilitator of discovery for your patients!

FROM 40,000 FEET, DREAMS...

Dreamwork is, of course, a subjective thing; but here are some facts....

1. We all dream, and forget them in the morning
2. Our dreams are wonderful guidance from the subconscious mind
3. To take advantage of those messages, we must learn to unpack a dream
4. To unpack a dream, we must understand the language (symbolism) of dreams
5. It's a skill you can learn, and one that you can teach your clients to use as well

" I HAD THE STRANGEST DREAM LAST NIGHT "

You have said, or you've heard someone say.....

Just for fun, how many of you in the last 30 days, have had a dream that made absolutely no sense? It is a common occurrence to wake from a dream and then describe to someone how strange it was - how it didn't make sense. Well, here's a newflash..... dreams rarely make sense to the conscious mind; and the reason for that is because the language of the subconscious mind is symbolism, and the conscious mind is literal! Think of it this way - if you and I met on a bus, or even here at this conference; and we quickly realized that two different languages were being spoken - and thus we had no hope of understanding each other, we would be likely to lose interest and move on.

I'm sure that many of you have had a dream that significantly impacted your life or the life of someone you knowLet me share with you some dreams with historical significance, and some of them have impacted us in this room.

HISTORICAL DREAMS – ALBERT EINSTEIN

He admitted that the earliest beginnings of his Theory of Relativity occurred to him in a dream he had when he was a teen. In his dream, he was sledding on a snowy hill with his friends; and his sled started going faster and faster until it reached the speed of light. Then the stars changed their form and displayed a beautiful array of light and colors. Einstein said that, "in many ways, his entire scientific career was an extended meditation on that dream." So the implied message is that Albert Einstein came unpacking his dream throughout his career! - *Famous Dreams*

HISTORICAL DREAMS-RENE DESCARTES

Descartes' idea for Rational Empiricism, which was also the foundation of scientific theory, came to him after he unpacked one of his own dreams in 1619. He had two other dreams, from which he established the beginnings of the basic parameters of philosophy.

HISTORICAL DREAMS – ELIAS HOWE

Elias Howe invented the **sewing machine** in 1845. He had the idea of a machine with a needle which would go through a piece of cloth but he couldn't figure out exactly how it would work. In his dream, cannibals were preparing to cook him and they were dancing around the fire waving their spears. Howe noticed at the head of each spear there was a small hole through the shaft; and the up-and-down motion of the spears and the hole remained with him when he woke. The idea of passing the thread through the needle close to the point, not at the other end, was a major innovation in making mechanical sewing possible.

Note that the brilliance here was Elias Howe's ability to UNPACK his dream - without the unpacking, the invention would have never happened! Who would have thought that an image of angry cannibals with spears could springboard the industrial revolution?

- Famous Dreams

HISTORICAL DREAMS – ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Abraham Lincoln dreamed of his assassination at a play a few days before it happened, and after he awoke and unpacked his dream, he realized that the man in the coffin was him. But what was Lincoln's mistake?

- Lincoln said that in the dream, he entered the East Room to find "a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards, and there was a throng of people, some gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully."
- Lincoln said that in the dream, he asked a soldier, "Who is dead in the White House?" The soldier answered, "The President. He was killed by an assassin." John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln only days later. And sure enough, after Lincoln was assassinated, his body was displayed in the East Room of the White House.

Culture Cheatsheet/National Geographic

HISTORICAL DREAMS-VARIOUS

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Mark Twain all were involved in some way with dreamwork.
- Emerson wrote about dreams constantly, interested in their relationship with waking reality, and the way they did, or did not, free the mind to think outside of its accustomed tracks.
- Thoreau was very interested in the impact of various activities on the nervous system: "Their world was one in which the nervous constitution of a human being was front and center." And so the physical impact of dreams was of great import.
- Twain's fascination with the upside-down world to be found in dreams fed into his work, and into his hobbyist's interest in psychic phenomena.
- Bible story of Joseph's interpretation (unpacking) of Pharoah's dream.

8 Stories of Famous Dreams – www.atlasobscura.com

SAMPLES OF UNPACKED DREAMS

- Barbara's dream about rotting meat in her purse.
- Jim's dream about repairing a refrigerator – "Maybe I should leave."
- Mary's dream about paint blistering and bubbling up.
- Mike's dream of pastel colors

**WHAT IS A DREAM?

- “Dreams are impartial products of the unconscious psyche, outside the control of the will. They are pure nature; they show us the unvarnished, natural truth.....” - Carl Jung
- “A Dream Is An Answer to a Question We Haven't Yet Learned How to Ask.” - The X-Files
- Think of unpacking a dream like playing Jeopardy – you are given the answer, then it is your job to figure out the question!

FROM THE PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

- To paraphrase Ralph Waldo Emerson, the most memorable moments in life are those in which we feel the rush of revelation.
- A dream, properly unpacked, will result in a personal revelatory experience for the dreamer
- “It has seemed to me, in these years of practice, that the names of therapies have changed, but that like so many fried-chicken franchises, they still put out the same good, hot, spicy fare. The basic recipe seems to me to be unchanged: take a human being who is troubled, sick or scared, allow that person to focus feelings, thoughts, skills and energies until there is a healing dream, vision or surprising emotional event, record the dream, accept the fee, and send the person back to ordinary life.” – Eric Greenleaf, Ph.D.
- And because the message of a dream came from within a patient, it is much more powerful than if it came from you. Thus the importance of starting a suggestion for the meaning of a dream symbol with, “If that were my dream.....”

THE BASIC DREAMWORK TOOLKIT, BY JEREMY TAYLOR, PHD

1. All dreams speak a universal language and come in the service of health and wholeness – *there's no such thing as a bad dream!*
2. Only the dreamer can say with any certainty what meanings his or her dreams may have – *the “ah-ha moment” is the only reliable touchstone*
3. There is not such thing as a dream with only one meaning – *multiple meanings and layers of significance*
4. No dreams come just to tell you what you already know – *all dreams break ground on new understanding*
5. When talking to others about their dreams it is both wise and polite to preface your remarks with words to the effect that “if it were my dream” and to keep this commentary in the first person as much as possible – *why?*
6. All dream group participants should agree at the outset to maintain anonymity in all discussions of dream work – *confidentiality, don't use names*

****WHAT IS DREAMWORK?**

- 1) **What did I dream?** Recording a dream upon awakening prevents the dream, in it's elusive nature, from escaping the conscious mind.
- 2) **What does it mean FOR ME?** The unpacking and the ah-ha moment connects the conscious and subconscious minds for a confirmation of the true meaning.
- 3) **What should I do, having received the message?** A suggested statement for you, the therapist - "What are you going to do between now and our next session with this newfound insight?"
- 4) The idea of unpacking a dream is more than just unpacking, it is guiding the patient (or yourself) in what to do.

CENTERING EXERCISE

- Before each dreamwork group, I do a centering exercise
- Hold your hands in front of you and feel the energy between them. This "Hands Technique" is from Ernest Rossi.
- Video, "Humble and Kind"

FIVE ELEMENTS TO GUIDING THEIR UNPACKING

1. Focus on their feelings and energy prior, during and post, and behind each symbol
2. Identify the symbols that stand out
3. What are the circumstances in their life now
4. Who are possible players in the dream
5. What is the message your subconscious is trying to send

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE...

- Live demo of unpacking 1 dream – or more if time allows
- Before we talk about the car (Q & A), let's get in and drive it.
- In a few minutes, I will be demonstrating how to unpack a dream; and I need 3 volunteers who have had a dream. It can be a recent dream, a recurrent dream, or even one recalled from childhood. So if you would like to volunteer, please go to the side of the room and sign the appropriate waiver.

WHAT IF I DON'T DREAM?

- Patients often ask me, "What if I don't dream?"
- Answer: We all dream, but for reasons primarily unknown, we often don't remember them.
- My opinion as to why dreams are hard to remember, or not remembered at all.....concrete thinkers often have poor dream recall; some medications can shut down dream recall; low desire to remember dreams; and of course, the difference in languages between the conscious and subconscious minds.
- Jeremy Taylor's suggestions for improving dream recall (next slide).

MORE FROM JEREMY TAYLOR..

- "Like the dream itself, the decision to remember dreams is an act of creative imagination."
- First and foremost, express your strong desire to your subconscious to recall a dream.
- Draw your dreams.
- Use a Gestalt technique, such as talking to an empty chair – as if your subconscious is sitting in it.
- Record any dream elements (upon awakening) that break through; and ponder their significance and symbolism.
- Rewrite the dream, adding "part of me" to the images - example

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- Dreamwork is an ideal method for circumventing patient resistance, as they are revealing themselves to you (the clinician) without realizing it.
- The experience of achieving “the ah-ha moment” is so satisfying that it fosters a desire to do more dreamwork.
- Anyone can do dreamwork, but it is more difficult to do alone
- Recording dream elements upon awakening is critical!
- Begin where your patient is, not where you are.
- Even one word or image in a dream can unlock profound insight (i.e. story of patient who dreamed of just one word – “Pastel”
- Dream dictionary recommendation: Dreammoods.com

MY PARTING MESSAGE

When you enable your patients to harness the power of their own subconscious through Dreams, you not only “feed them a fish for a day” You “teach them how to fish for a lifetime”.

That’s the power of DREAMWORK!

You will be a facilitator of discovery, and your patient will discover that he/she carries within him/herself a powerful source of wisdom and strength!

Don’t be hesitant to try this, because your patient is doing the work. You can practice on yourself.....and if you get stuck, feel free to contact me!

BRUCE FORDHAM, CMHC

Bruce.Fordham@gmail.com

801-427-2177
