

**Dream Studies**  
Your dreams and your nightmares – What do they mean?

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**Introduction**

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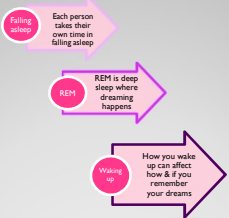
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- Does everyone dream? Yes, with a few exceptions.
- Basics of Dreaming:



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### The 4 Stages of Sleep

**NREM Stage 1**

- transition period between wakefulness and sleep
- lasts around 5 to 10 minutes

**NREM Stage 2**

- body temperature drops and heart rate begins to slow
- brain begins to produce sleep spindles
- lasts approximately 20 minutes

**NREM Stage 3**

- muscles relax
- blood pressure and breathing rate drop
- deepest sleep occurs

**REM Sleep**

- brain becomes more active
- body becomes relaxed and immobilized
- dreams occur
- eyes move rapidly

verywell  
Illustration by JR Bee, Verywell

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### Why learn about dreams?

Dreaming isn't just a thing we do at night, it's a window into ourselves. Knowing the meaning of our dreams can be of great benefit.

**To work out daily issues**

**To better understand the self**

**To enrich your life**

**To have fun**

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**Dream insight + relationship to life + invitation to move forward = worthwhile experience and validation**

The Ingredients

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**Writing your dreams down**  
Write in first person, present tense

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- Sit up in bed and give yourself time to catch your breath
- Don't be afraid to examine the dream – doing so may help to relieve the anxiety
- Looking at your dream won't 'make you' do anything
- Don't assume something is wrong with you
- Track your dream patterns over time
- Consider the 'classic' nightmares for life events
- National news can blend with personal stressors

**Bad dreams and nightmares**

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- Get out of bed
- Get a drink of water / splash water on your face
- Take a shower
- Change your linens / change your clothes
- Spray your favorite scent lightly in your room
- Move your bed

*• Analyze your dream to take the 'sting' out of the imagery*

**When you're afraid to go back to sleep**

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- Monsters
- A break in
- Blood and guts
- Death
- End of the World
- Car out of Control
- \_\_\_\_\_?



**Nightmare Elements**

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- Dream Insight
  - In line to get fingers getting cut off
- + Relationship to life
  - A profound avoidance of my own feelings about the situation
- + Invitation to move forward
  - I can continue to avoid or I can make a change in my life
- Worthwhile experience
  - I felt significant relief when I made the change

**Putting it all together**

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**Starting the analysis**

**Actions  
Emotions  
Symbols**

Dream symbols are deeply personal – that's why 'dream dictionaries' are pretty much garbage



TIP: The interpretation has to resonate with you

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Whether it's the same darn bad dream again or a new bad dream that you can't seem to figure out, try:



- Journaling – free writing
- Drawing and painting
- Sculpt with clay
- Share with a safe group to get insight

**Persistent Bad Dreams**

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Dream Book Resources

- The Complete Dream Book by Dr. Gillian Holloway, 2006
- 5 Steps to Decode Your Dreams by Dr. Gillian Holloway, 2011
- Dreaming Insights by Dr. Gillian Holloway, 2002
- All About Dreams by Dr. Gayle Delaney, 1998
- Breakthrough Dreaming by Dr. Gayle Delaney, 1991
- Your Sleeping Genius by Dr. Gayle Delaney, 2015
- Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming by Dr. Stephan LaBerge, 1991
- Crisis Dreaming: Using Your Dreams to Solve Your Problems, Dr. Rosalind Cartwright 1992

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