



Dream Studies:

How to Deal With Trauma Dreams

Creating Resilience
through Dreams

By Vanessa Timmons and Lea Sevey
Certified Dream Analysts

Lea Sevey has been in the S/DV services field for over 20 years and holds a Master's degree in Human Services and a Bachelor's Degree in Administration of Justice. Lea is a Director of Capacity & Programming at the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence. Lea has been studying dreams for over 30 years and has taught classes in community colleges in Oregon and at conferences across the country. In her free time, Lea enjoys writing (she's on her 3rd novel) and spending time with her husband and Golden Retriever.



Vanessa Timmons is the executive director of the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and has been a writer, activist, and women's health advocate for over 25 years. She attended Marylhurst University's Multidisciplinary Studies Program in Portland, Oregon, and has continued her formal education through certificates and training, including the Interpersonal Neurobiology of Trauma Certification Program at Portland State University. Vanessa has served nationally as, a Northwest regional field organizer for the National Organization for Women, and currently serves on the National Network to End Domestic Violence Board of Directors, and National Women of Color Network Public Policy Committee.



Both Vanessa & Lea hold Certifications in Dream Analysis through training from Dr. Gillian Holloway. You can hear interviews with Dr. Holloway here:
<https://www.owltail.com/people/7i1Vp-gillian-holloway/appearances>



To work out
daily issues



To better understand
the self



To enrich your life



To have fun

Why Learn about Dreams?

Dreaming is a window into
ourselves through out
subconscious.

Knowing the meaning behind our
dreams can be a great personal
benefit.

STAGE 1

lightest (1-7 mins)

Light sleep right after you drift off, 1–5 minutes.

STAGE 2

light (10-25 mins)

Light sleep, your body relaxes, and it's best to wake up during this stage.

STAGE 3

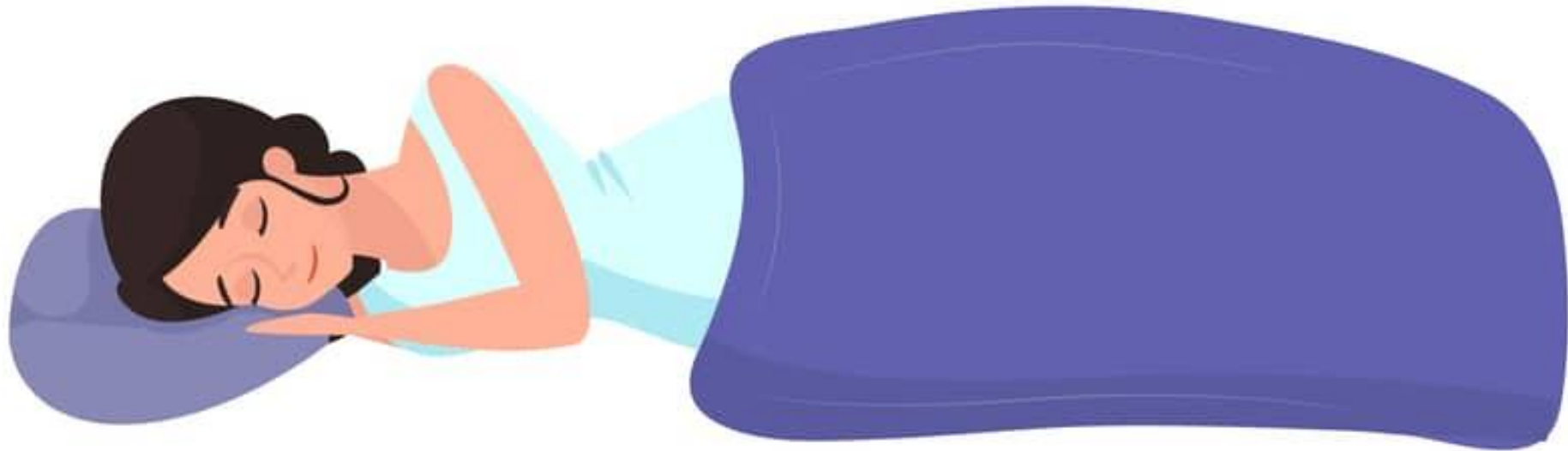
deep sleep (20-40 mins)

Deep sleep, your brain and body recover, you'll wake up groggy.

STAGE 4

REM (20-40 mins)

REM sleep populated by vivid dreams and a feeling of unrest upon awakening.



A little about potential triggers.

How dreams can help you.

How dreams can help others.

Advocates

Loved Ones

Survivors

Co-workers



Write something
down as soon as
you can



Use present tense

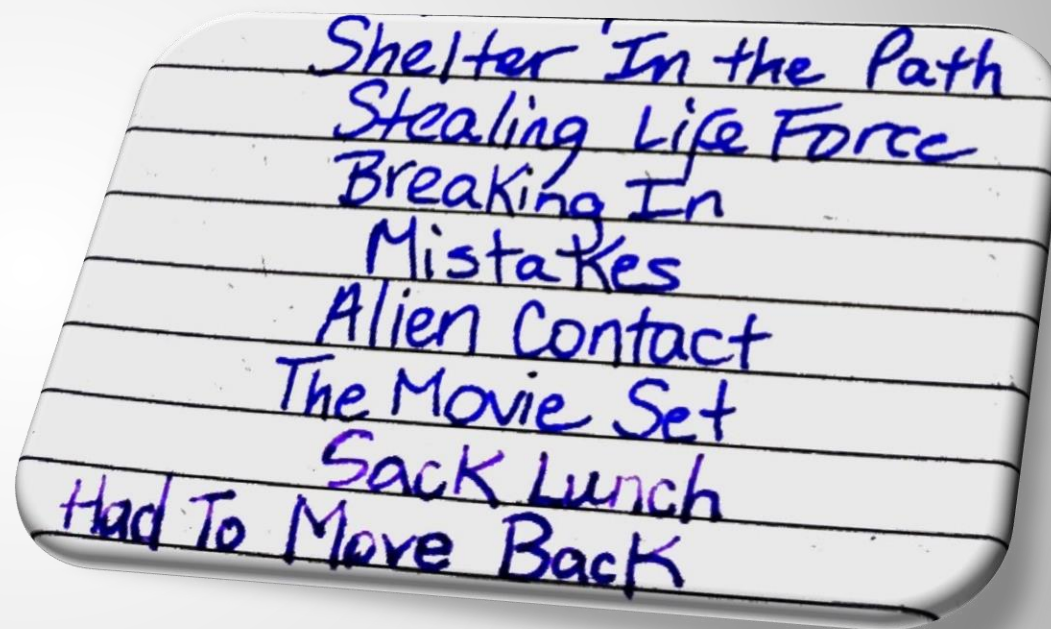


Give your dream
a title (as if it
were a short
story)



Differentiate
feelings, objects,
names, & places

Sample titles of Lea's dreams:



Discovering Your Dreams

Digging Deeper



If this were a movie or book, what would it be called?

Interpreting Basics

1. Notice what is striking about the dream, what stands out, first impressions
2. Look at the action – what is the main thing that happens
3. How did you feel – what are your reactions
4. What are the symbols
5. What is the 'gift' – the 'so what' of the dream

How to start

- You've had a dream
- You've written it down in the 1st person tense (as if it was happening right now) and given it a title
- Start with asking yourself “What feeling from the dream is lingering?”
 - If it's a nightmare you might find the imagery, sounds, or even smells in your dream gets in the way of moving forward with analysis. Acknowledging this can help you press forward.



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Digging Deeper



Try drawing the dream with your non-dominant hand.

Nightmares

- Stressful situations – divorce, death, parenthood, job loss (or promotion), trauma event
- Feelings & thoughts we push aside tend to play out in your dreams
- Your subconscious turns up the volume until you listen
- The two ways your subconscious looks for trouble:
 - To scan for threats
 - To improve survival skills

Digging Deeper



What am I afraid this might mean?

What is the setting? Is it day or night? Raining or clear and cold?

What does the setting tell us?

- Tip: Don't try to figure it all out at once

"Attack Dogs"

I'm outside, in a **parking lot area**. Its **dusk** (not dark but not daytime). There is a picnic table with stuff on it. When I get near, the stuff turns into mean dogs. They are barking and snarling and jumping around on top of the table. I can't get away. One of them (a short, skinny mutt) grabs my arm with his teeth. I scream and fight. I'm afraid the other dogs will attack. The image fades away.

- Setting, objects, places, animals

Parking lot, outside, dusk, picnic table, dogs, mutt

- Verbs – action

Barking, snarling, jumping, grabs, scream, fight, attack

- Feelings, thoughts

_____?

“Attack Dogs”

I’m outside, in a parking lot area. Its dusk (not dark but not daytime). There is a picnic table with stuff on it. When I get near, the stuff turns into mean dogs. They are barking and snarling and jumping around on top of the table. I can’t get away. One of them (a short, skinny mutt) grabs my arm with his teeth. I scream and fight. I’m afraid the other dogs will attack. The image fades away.

Digging Deeper



How is this relevant to what is happening in the world or my life now?

Q & A

What symbols
have you seen
in your
dreams?



Digging Deeper



How is my body experiencing my dreams?
Where in my body does this dream live?

Let's talk about symbols

There are some shared symbols.

Examples of these include:

- Water
- Blood
- Teeth falling out
- Pregnancy & babies
- Nudity
- Your old home
- Dogs

Symbols are
unique and
specific to each
person.

Other symbols of the
dream can surface during
writing the dream down
or during the
interpretation.

Digging Deeper



What do I most need to know at this moment?

Deeper analysis of my dream:

I am in a world that is a bit alien to me with no sense of belonging here and am fearful of forces outside of my control hurting me.

FYI:
Dreams can have more than one meaning.

- The 'gift' is the positive take-away
- Usually has an emotional component
- Its always about the self
- If it was a nightmare don't be afraid to examine and understand what it means (this can bring about balance)



Finding the Gift

The sleeping environment

Awaking from a nightmare or night terror can leave a person in a state of distress. These changes can help separate the dreamer from the frightening dream imagery.



- Move the bed to a different location (even if its just a few feet)
- Take a shower
- Change pjs
- Add a scent to the room (incense, perfume, essential oils). If in communal living, try using a sachet
- Change sheets (and/or add a spritz of essential oil scents)

Recurring Dreams

Usually related to unresolved stressors or issues.

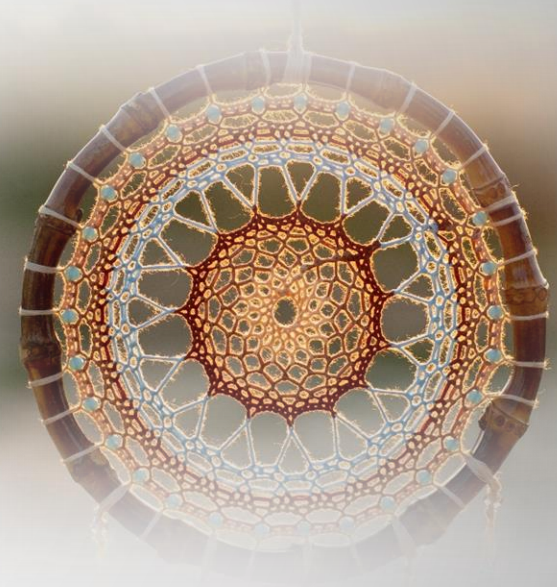
Most typically, a recurring dream will not return when the issue has been resolved or healed.



Asking for Dreams

An invited dream can help you to:

- **answer a specific question,**
- **discover a hidden feeling,**
- **find a lost object, or**
- **simply to have a fun adventure in your sleep!**



Honoring Your Dreams Through Action

You can honor your dreams by taking action, such as –

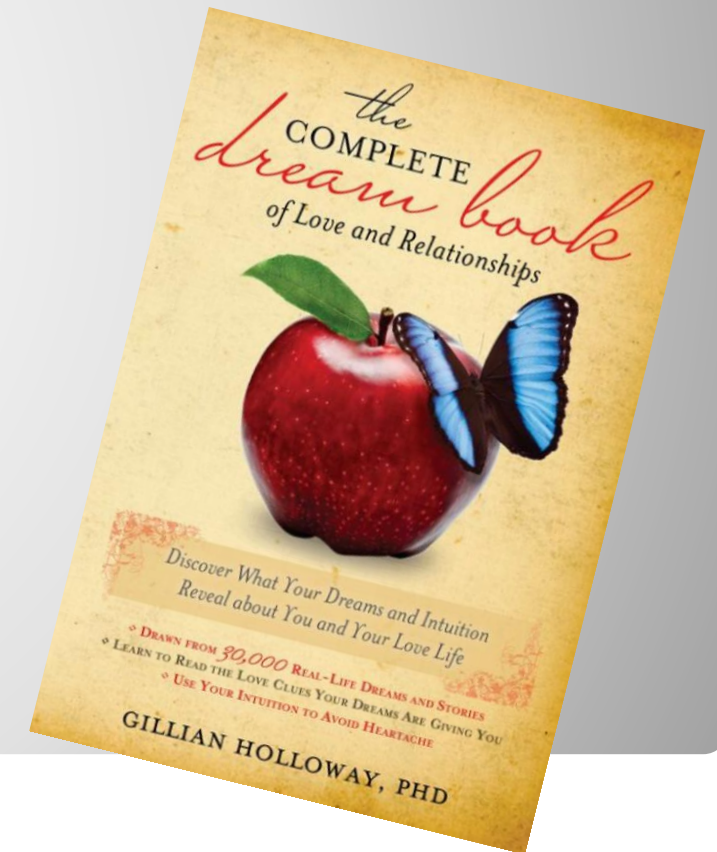
- **Visit the beach because you dreamed of the seashore,**
- **Post a picture on your social media that reminds you of a lion you dreamed about,**
- **What resonates with you?**



Q & A



- Dreaming Insights: A Five Step Plan
- The Complete Dream Book – Discover What Your Dreams Reveal About Your Life
- The Complete Dream Book – Of Love & Relationships
- Erotic Dreams
 - *All the above By Dr. Gillian Holloway*
- Dreamtime & Dreamwork
 - *By Stanley Krippner, Ph.D.*
- Our Dreaming Mind
 - *By Robert L. Van De Castle*



Resources