



Dream Studies: Imagery and Symbols

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 our
subconscious.

Knowing the meaning behind
our dreams can be of 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

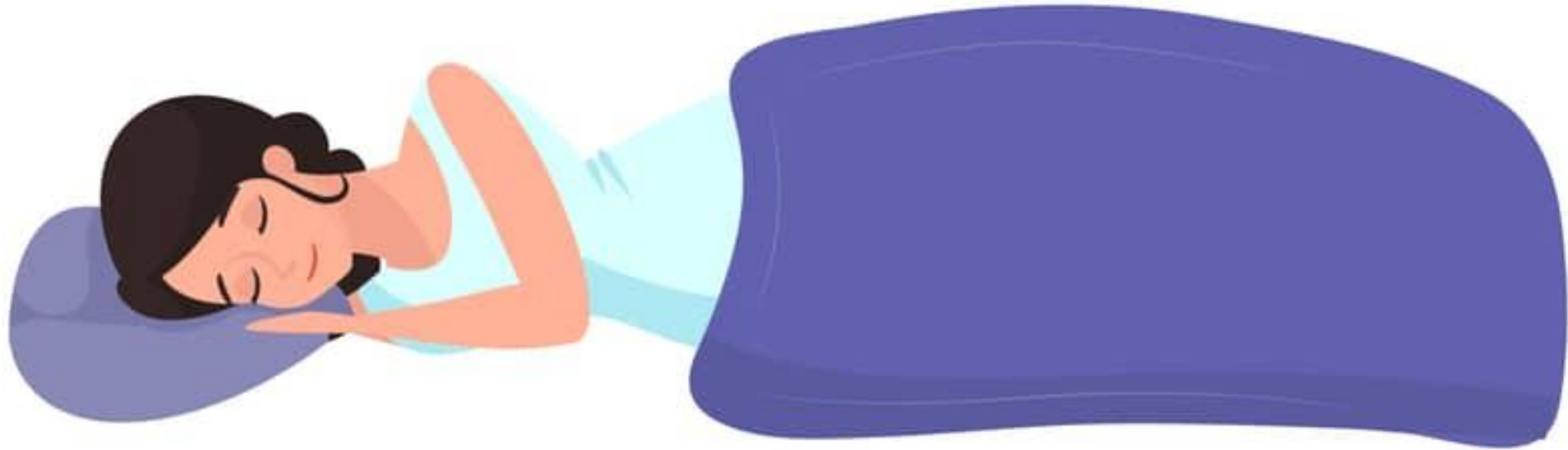
deep sleep (20-40 mins)

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.

Advocates

Loved Ones

Survivors

Co-workers

Discovering Your Dreams



Write something down as soon as you can



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

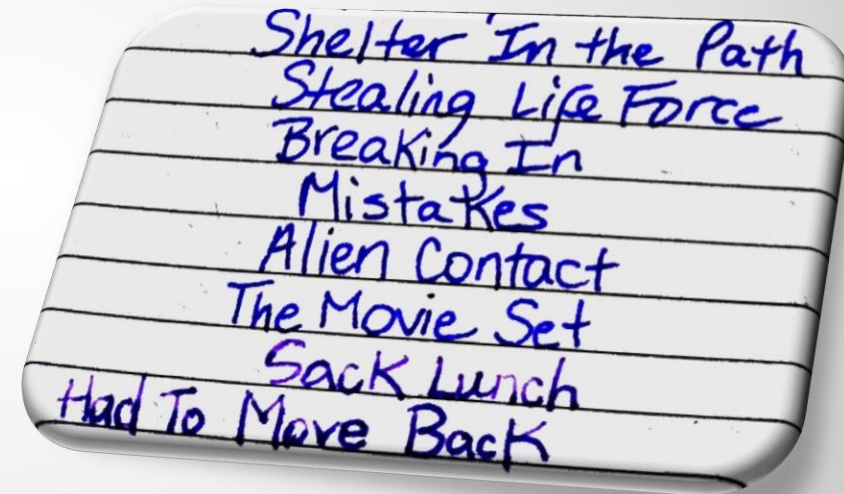


Use present tense



Differentiate feelings, objects, names, & places

Sample titles of Lea's dreams:



Digging Deeper



1. What am I not seeing?
2. How is this relevant to what is happening in the world or my life now?
3. What am I afraid this might mean?
4. If this were a movie or book what would it be called?
5. How is my body experiencing my dreams?
6. Where in my body does this dream live?
7. Draw the dream with your non-dominant hand.
8. What makes me uncomfortable?
9. What makes me comfortable?
10. What do I most need to know at this moment?

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

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.

What are universal symbols?

**Universally shared symbols vs
personalized symbols**

- Historical relevance
- Cultural relevance
- Contextual symbolism

How can your
individual symbols
help you in your
everyday life?

Q & A

What symbols
have you seen
in your
dreams?



- 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.

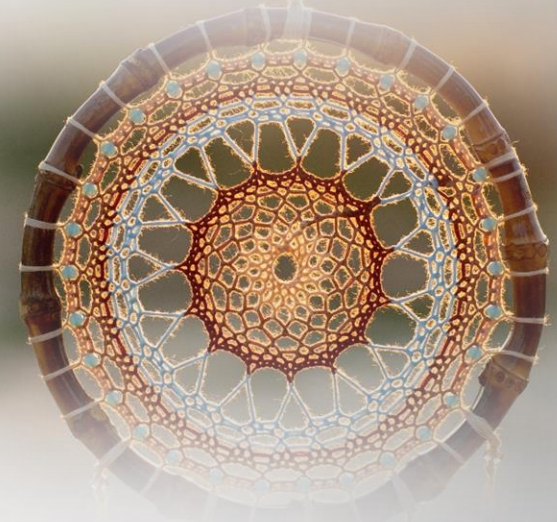
Most typically, a recurring dream will not return when the issue has been resolved or healed.



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?



How does all this help you as an advocate?

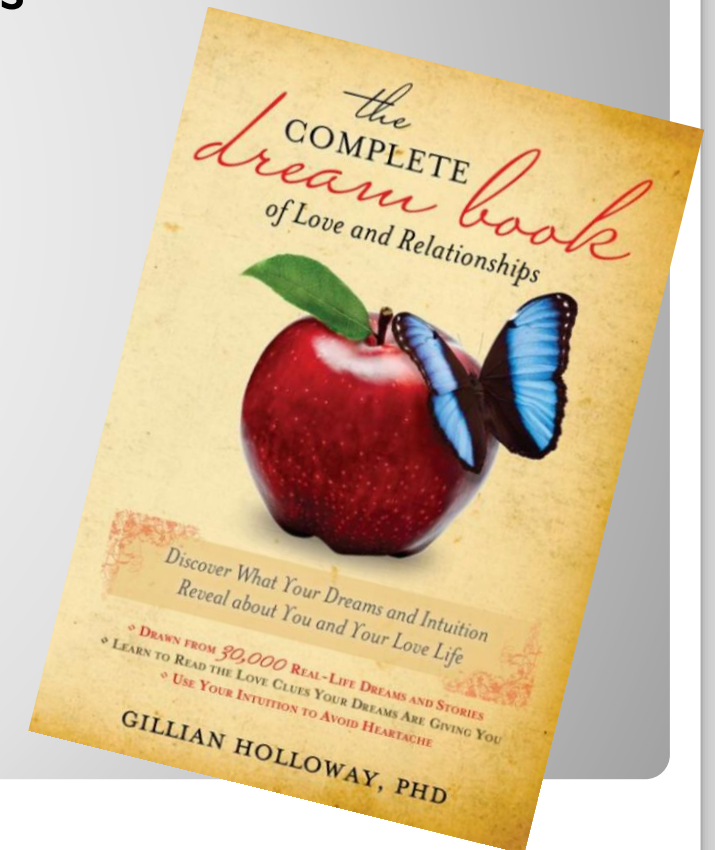
- **Reflecting upon how our subconscious is always sending us messages**
- **Understanding nightmares and methods for getting out of the loop**
- **Deciphering your own dreams can help clients**



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