How to Use Dreams to Help with Your Food Problems – Part One – An Introduction

By Glenn Livingston, Ph.D

© Psy Tech Inc. – All Rights Reserved

(PASS IT ALONG: Even though this is a copyrighted document, you are free—and even encouraged—to copy it and pass it along to others provided you change nothing within it and charge nothing for it)

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: For education only as per the Disclaimer and Terms of Use Agreement on www.NeverBingeAgain.com. If you do not agree with these terms and conditions, Psy Tech Inc. is unwilling to license this material to you and you are instructed to immediately delete it from your hard drive without reading it.
Glenn Livingston, Ph.D. is a veteran psychologist and was the long time CEO of a multi-million dollar consulting firm which has serviced several Fortune 500 clients in the food industry. You may have seen his (or his company's) previous work, theories, and research in major periodicals like The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Chicago Sun Times, The Indiana Star Ledger, The NY Daily News, American Demographics, or any of the other major media outlets you see on this page. You may also have heard him on ABC, WGN, and/or CBS radio, or UPN TV.

Disillusioned by what traditional psychology had to offer overweight and/or food obsessed individuals, Dr. Livingston spent several decades researching the nature of bingeing and overeating via work with his own patients AND a self-funded research program with more than 40,000 participants. Most important, however, was his own personal journey out of obesity and food prison to a normal, healthy weight and a much more lighthearted relationship with food.

Click here to learn more about his book: "Never Binge Again: Stop Overeating and Binge Eating and Reprogram Yourself to Think Like a Permanently Thin Person...on the Food Plan of Your Choice!"

Or click here to learn more about his coaching program.
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ............................................................................................................................................... 4

**What Are Dreams?** .................................................................................................................................. 6

Here’s the Very Least You Need to Know to USE Dreams to Solve Real Problems and Achieve Real Goals................................................................................................................................. 10

The Black and Orange Tarantula— a Practical Example of the Value of Dreams for Overeating..... 15

**Nobody Really Knows Anything About a Dream but the Dreamer!** ..................................................... 20

Who is the Best Candidate for Dream Work? ............................................................................................... 21

What About Nightmares? ............................................................................................................................. 22

What About Daydreams? ............................................................................................................................. 22

**Getting Started** ....................................................................................................................................... 22

What If You’re Not Ready ............................................................................................................................ 23

When People Get Stuck and Moving to a Different Part of the Dream Doesn’t Work......................... 23

The Quiet Client ........................................................................................................................................... 24

Not Every Dream Has to Be a Gold Mine .................................................................................................... 24

One Last Time: Be Sure to Make It All About the Client’s Goals .............................................................. 24

**Conclusion** ............................................................................................................................................... 25
VERY IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS BOOK: I originally wrote this book for coaches. It was designed to show them how to help their clients use dreams to solve every day problems and accomplish every day goals. However, you do NOT have to be a coach to use it. The understanding and dream-insight technique it provides is VERY applicable to food problems. In fact, the example I chose to illustrate the technique with was one of my own dreams which helped me to give up sugar.

So please ignore that the book is written for coaches… unless of course you ARE a coach. (In which case please be sure to sign up for the reader bonuses on NeverBingeAgain.com so you’ll be notified when we launch our Never Binge Again coach training program – where we will be training a limited number of people in the Never Binge Again method itself and licensing them to use the brand name.)

(Next Page Please)
Introduction

Every night when we sleep we go to a weird and wonderful place. It’s called a dream state.

Everybody dreams. It’s a part of human physiology. Not everyone remembers their dreams. But study after study has proven everyone has them. And those who don’t recall dreams—or don’t recall them in much detail—can train themselves to improve with a few simple steps we’ll talk about later on.

Virtually everyone who does remembers their dreams is intrigued about “what they mean.” And for centuries, people have wondered where we might “go” when we wander off into dreamland. Is it a mystical place? How do we get there? How do we get back?

It’s only in the last hundred years or so that psychology and other disciplines have really started to figure out what’s going on in dreams. And while there’s still a lot of controversy, it’s pretty clear that while the “meaning” of any one dream is always debatable, dreams, at the very least, have a PURPOSE.

Most professionals agree they’ve got something to do with processing the events of the day, rehearsing solutions to existing problems in a safe environment, dealing with long term struggles, and preparing us for the day ahead.

Which means dreams can be very useful when you know how to get at the nuggets they contain!

And in the context of a coaching relationship, you actually can use many of the techniques professionals use to unearth the meaning of their client’s dreams—as long as you make it abundantly clear it’s not for the purpose of diagnosing, curing, or preventing any disease or condition. And as long as you don’t hesitate to refer them to a licensed professional if you should find yourself over your head. In other words, this is “dream coaching,” NOT psychoanalysis, counseling, or therapy.

The bottom line is—once you know how—working with your clients on their dreams can provide very significant insights into what’s stopping them from achieving their goals. More importantly, dreams can and often do provide potent, creative solutions to overcome these obstacles. So dream work is fair game for coaches.
Moreover, if working with clients’ dreams intrigues you, you might also consider specializing in dreams as a niche in and of itself. Dream coaches work with clients across a wide spectrum. Most clients are interested in what might be holding them back from accomplishing their goals in life. And when you know the right questions to ask about their dreams you’ll hold a key to unlocking the secrets they contain… secrets which can help them move forward in ways you never dreamed of!
(All puns intended)

What the Heck are Dreams Anyway?

Well first of all, you should know this is NOT going to be an incredibly scientific treatise. That’s because our primary interest as coaches is on how to USE dreams to solve problems, not how to defend a doctoral dissertation and/or “prove” that any given dream means any given thing.

That said, you might want to know I did indeed write my doctoral dissertation on dreams 😊

More specifically, it was on the relationship between creativity and dreams.

When I was in graduate school, I was still considering becoming a professional jazz-fusion composer instead of a psychologist—and I got curious about dreams because I used to hear music in my sleep.

Well…it turned out I wasn’t the only one! The literature is full of stories of composers who composed in their sleep. Tartini’s “Devil’s Sonata” is perhaps the most famous example.

And when I looked deeper into what was going on with dreams and creativity I found something truly amazing: There are dozens, if not hundreds of creative dreams which literally changed the world.

Not just small changes… radical changes without which were foundational for the society we see around us today. Dreams, it seems—when correctly nurtured and utilized—can and often do provide solutions to very significant problems.

The problem is, very few people in modern society value them enough to leverage this power, and even fewer know the simple secrets to unlock it.

But before we get to that, let’s look at just a few dreams which literally changed the world:
Dreams Which Literally Changed the World

- **Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity**: Einstein had a very long, weird dream about watching cows being electrocuted. There were two observers watching this rather sadistic event from two very different locations… and the strangest thing was, when they talked about it they totally disagreed about when and how it happened. *(This, in part, is what led to his understanding of time dilation in special relativity)*…

- **Our Understanding of DNA**: Dr. James Watson actually reports dreaming the famous Double-Helix structure before he wrote it down. Of course, this discovery radically altered science and forever changed the way we think about evolution…

- **The sewing needle was invented in a dream**: Elias Howe dreamed of Red Indians attacking another tribe with arrows. As some of the flint-heads on the arrows pierced the tents he observed they snagged threads with the tips and drew large loops behind them…

- **So was the theory of chemical transmission in the nervous system**: Otto Loewi dreamed the exact experimental design which first supported this hypothesis…

- **Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde**: Robert Louis Stevenson dreamed a scene in which Hyde took the powder and underwent the change in the presence of his pursuers…
• Jack Niklaus claims to have perfected his golf swing in a dream…

• So were cornflakes…

• And the scientific formula for the Benzyne Ring: Kekule dreamed of a snake curling in upon itself and taking its tail in its mouth…

• The Periodic Table in chemistry also came from a dream! Dmitry Mendeleyev had all but given up on a solution when he took a “cat nap” and dreamed of an arrangement of elements which changed modern chemistry forever!

And these are just a few! But do you know what the most interesting thing is about all these dreams which literally changed the world?

The Most Interesting Thing About Dreams Which Change the World

The most interesting thing about dreams which have literally changed the world is this: These famous inventions and paradigm-shifting insights did NOT arise by asking “What does my dream mean?”…

Instead, the dreamers solved major problems in science, the arts, and industry by asking “How can I use this dream to solve practical problems and achieve real goals in my life!?”

If you take nothing else away from this short book, please let it be this: Your clients will naturally want to know what their dream means. Your job is to skillfully shift them away from the paradigm of “what does it mean?” to a paradigm of “how can we use it?”

I’d like to invite you to look at dreams as a source of inspiration, insight, and practical solutions to everyday problems. NOT as a “mysterious secret message” with ONE particular “meaning” to be debated and interpreted.

You see, the very question “what does my dream mean?” puts people in the wrong frame of mind. It stimulates “classroom like” thinking which seeks ONE right answer, when the perspective people need to take about their dreams is that they are a rich fountain of literally dozens of ideas and solutions to their most significant problems, obstacles, and goals.
The “What does my dream mean?” question also places you MUCH more in the realm of psychotherapy and psychiatry than coaching. It lends itself to historical interpretations of early family conflicts, sexual misgivings, and unprocessed trauma…

“What might I use it for?” is much more forward looking question. And it’s much more consistent with a coaching approach too because it’s more likely to yield practical, forward movement towards client goals.

Moreover, I think most people give up on their dreams (in every sense of the word) because they become the subject of debate rather than possibility. Or they think of them as a mystical realm which only psychics and shrinks could possibly understand. This downplays their value tremendously, and causes people to dismiss dreams as “nighttime crazies stimulated by something bad I ate,” or “weird stuff to laugh at with my friends and talk about at parties”, etc.

Worse yet, this rather tragic understanding of dreams also leads people to cut off their creative unconscious in everyday life. It prevents them from tapping into the rich source of possibilities and solutions which is our birthright…

And in a slow, sad way, it kills off a little piece of our souls 😔

Geez… didn’t mean to get up on a soapbox! But I do feel passionately about all this. And for all the reasons above I believe the science which attempts to prove what dreams “are” is boring at best, and destructive at worst.

In consideration of all the evidence above, isn’t it time to stop asking “what does my dream mean?” and ask instead “what can I do with it?”

So let’s get to the heart of the matter…

Next Page Please
Here’s the Very Least You Need to Know to Help Your Clients USE Their Dreams to Solve Real Problems and Achieve Real Goals

OK, so if you’re with me so far, you’re probably convinced that dreams are important and valuable. And hopefully you agree the traditional route to scientific dream investigation and therapeutic interpretation isn’t really what you want to focus on with your coaching clients. Instead you’re interested in the practical value of dreams, and how to lead your clients step by step to see these solutions.

Accordingly, we’re NOT going to spend a lot of time on dream theory. There are dozens of books you can read if that interests you. Instead, here’s the least you need to know in order to USE your clients’ dreams (and your own) to stimulate problem-solving-goal-achieving insights:

**Dreams are a way we talk to ourselves while we’re sleeping.** Most of them are full of very strong thoughts and feelings we’re not capable of having when we’re awake. These thoughts and feelings are so strong, we worry we might act on them without considering the consequences. So we believe the only safe place to have them is while we’re sleeping. And thankfully our brains have evolved to disguise them from us so they don’t wake us up!
The fact that we’re able to have thoughts and feelings during sleep without the risk of impulsive action makes it possible for us to more fully experience the possibilities. Which is what makes dreams such a rich source of inspiration for overcoming obstacles, achieving goals, and solving problems.

Read the bolded paragraph again please.

When you do, you’ll recognize that it’s actually a little mean to remove the disguise too quickly—even when you’re positive you know what the dream “means.” This is because doing so leaves the dreamer with those “naked” thoughts… the very ones (s)he felt necessary to disguise in order to sleep soundly.

Dream “interpretation”—or insisting you know what your client’s dream means before they’re ready to see it themselves—should be understood as a mild to moderately aggressive and un-empathic act.

Yet another strike against the “what does my dream mean?” approach!

What you want to do instead is learn how to SUPPORT the disguised symbolism contained in the dream while you help the client take little peaks at the pieces and parts—until they see the connections and possible solutions to real life problems for themselves. You’ll generally also find yourself very surprised that where this takes them is NOT exactly what you were going to point out in the first place.

**A Simple Approach to Unlocking the Possibilities in Dreams**

In this introductory book on working with dreams for coaches, I’m going to show you a very simple yet incredibly powerful technique for unearthing the possibilities in your client’s dreams.

I call it the “Dream Fragments” technique and here’s how it works:

- **First, be SURE you’ve explained the difference between coaching and therapy to your client, and that you’ve got a contract in place which documents this.** In addition to standard coaching language (e.g. you don’t treat, prevent, or cure and disease or condition) make sure you tell them you work with dreams primarily for goal achievement. You believe
dreams contain solutions to everyday problems and ways to overcome obstacles, and your goal in dream-work is to uncover these solutions. You don’t use dreams to interpret historical family conflict, trauma, etc. This is very important in order to set the right mindset, allay the client’s fears that you’re going to “shrink them” *(which is more worrisome with dream-work than regular coaching)*, and open the door for their creative unconscious to do the work!

- **Make sure both you and client are thoroughly grounded in their goals.** What do they want to accomplish? What’s been getting in their way? **NEVER engage in dream work before you’ve fully assessed what the client wants to accomplish and their perceived obstacles.** Dreams are like paint and the client’s goals are the canvas. Without a canvas your only option is to splatter paint all over the place which might be fun for a little while, but doesn’t produce anything useful and is generally just a big mess.

  - Here’s another way to look at this: If the purpose of dream-work in coaching is to uncover solutions and overcome obstacles, then looking at client’s dreams without knowing what their goals and obstacles are serves no purpose.

  - **Dream work in the absence of a coaching goal is a confusing, directionless, energy draining pursuit.** But when you’re clearly focused on a goal, dream work should be incredibly energizing, freeing, and inspiring. The goal makes all the difference. *(Write this on the inside of your eyelids please. OK, don’t really write it there, but you get the point…this is a rule you should remember!)*

- **Make sure the client is reasonably well grounded and relaxed.** It’s difficult to work on dreams when clients are unusually upset or anxious. If they are, it’s fine to let them talk about a dream if it comes up naturally, but don’t purposefully expand that conversation, and don’t bring it up yourself. Take note of it and come back to it another day.

- **Next, ask the client to present their dream in the present tense.** Take as many notes as you can without interrupting their natural flow. You can occasionally interject a FACTUAL question to help them clarify the experience if they seem to get stuck. “What color was the hat?”, “How big was the field of flowers?”, etc. Steer clear of opinion, feeling, and interpersonal questions at this stage, however, as they have the potential to prevent the client from fully articulating the details of the dream. *(Opinion, feeling, and personal questions carry with them the fear of judgment, which has the capacity to shut people down when they’re describing details. Factual questions tend to eliminate the fear of judgment, which allows them to go into greater depth when putting the dream in words)*

- **When the client is done presenting, ask them if they’d like to work on the dream a little more, or was it enough for them to just get it out.** This might seem like a stupid question, but please remember dreams contain powerful thoughts and feelings people are uncomfortable experiencing while they’re awake. So getting permission ensures the client is fully in charge, and makes it safer for them to continue. Always respect their decision.
If the client is amenable to going further:

- Get a new sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle. On the left, you will be rewriting the symbols and sentences of the dream one at a time. On the right hand side you will be writing their associations.

- Then you tell the client: “OK, you know, it’s usually really hard to uncover everything in a dream when you take it all together. But if you do just a little at a time it’s amazing what can happen. So let’s forget about the whole dream and just look at the first sentence and see what it makes you think of, OK?

- Read back their first sentence. If the first sentence was really long and contained a number of different symbols in it—and every person, place, or thing is a symbol!—break it up into even smaller bites. Ask the magic question: “Forgetting everything else in the dream, what OCCURS to you when you think of _____ (symbol or sentence fragment)?”

  ▪ Important Note: The question is NOT “what does this ____ mean?” because this kind of question is impossible for a dreamer to genuinely answer when they’re first getting started with a dream. Always frame your dream questions in terms of “what occurs to you when you think about _____?” or “what might that make you think of?”

- On the right hand side of the paper, take detailed notes about their answer. Let them talk as much as they wish about it.

- When you’re done going through the first sentence, make a judgment about whether you need to read the whole sentence back to them again and ask them for more thoughts or whether they’ve discussed it enough already and are ready to move on. Remember, in addition to people, places and things, sentences also contain verbs. So there’s often more to learn by asking about the action in the sentence in addition to the symbols.

- Keep going sentence by sentence asking the “magic question” and taking notes. When they get stuck and say “I don’t know” you can either say something like “Oh, I totally believe you when you say you don’t know. I’m just asking what it MIGHT make you think of. Make something up if you want, just for the heck of it” (Don’t push too hard, however. If the client really is insistent that they don’t know then just say “OK, we’ll come back to it” and move on to the next part. Do make note to come back to it however)

- After you’ve gone through all the sentences, go back to anything the client was stuck on previously. Often their associations will be freed up when they get towards the end of the dream, and they’ll have some thoughts about the things they skipped over.
• When you’ve gotten through the whole dream—or when you’re starting to run out of time in the session—read the clients associations back to them and ask the solutions question “**What MIGHT any of this suggest as a possible solution or way forward towards your goal of ______?**” → *Take notes for them!*

  o Be sure to leave at least 10 minutes at the end of the session for this part, because this is where the client starts to see solutions and feel that the exercise was worthwhile.

• At this point it’s Ok to offer a few GUESSES regarding how the dream might be used based upon your own associations as the coach. However, it’s very, very important to couch them softly, letting the client know these are YOUR imaginations, not an authoritative interpretation.

• Don’t be too disappointed however, if you don’t get to a solution the first time you go through a particular dream. Sometimes clients *(and coaches)* need to think about it for a while.

• SAVE the dream, the client’s associations, and your notes. Old dreams can be wonderful fodder to use in later sessions when the client feels stuck or uninspired. Clients are usually happy when their coach says “You know, I was thinking about your dream about ________ and I had a few more questions for you about it” in a later session—*particularly if the client is talking about something relevant to the themes uncovered the first time.*

This reason this technique works is because it allows the dreamer to remain ignorant of the totality and strength of the underlying thoughts, feelings and impulses in the dream as a whole while they begin to contemplate the possibilities. It gives them time to maintain the protection of the dream-disguise while they just take little peaks…

It’s kind of like looking at a big scary monster in a cage covered by a dark blanket with a few holes in it. You give your client a little peak through one hole, then another, then another, kind of “stalking” the cage with one eye open…

Until finally it becomes clear to her “This isn’t a monster at all! Take the damn blanket off and let’s look it square in the face”…

And suddenly all the creative energy of the thoughts, feelings, and impulses you thought you needed to be frightened of—and all the possibilities they contain—is let loose and put back into the dreamer’s control to do with as *(s)he* pleases!

But without the initial cover of darkness, *(s)he* would have NO interest in looking—really looking—into the cage. *(S)he* would just continue to do what most people do with dreams, which is to laugh them off and dismiss them as a meaningless—*occasionally entertaining*—nuisance.

The Dream Fragments technique also works because you, the coach, are right there with your client, monitoring their comfort level, and helping them move at just the right pace. Your job is to make judgments about how big a hole to poke in the dark blanket, how long to get your client looking through it, and when to move on to another hole on another side of the monster’s cage to take a peak from a different angle…*until the magic happens.*
And the more you do this with clients on both the individual dream level AND across multiple sessions with multiple dreams, the more willing they become to entertain powerful thoughts, feelings, and other ideas which turn into goal-achieving insights.

Before you try it with a client, however, you should DEFINITELY work on several of your own dreams so you experience what it’s like. Or practice with your own coach or colleague. *(However you do it, experiencing this technique on your own dreams is crucial to developing the sensitivity to administer it correctly with clients. Without doing it yourself you won’t know what it feels like to “get stuck” for associations, prefer not to go on, etc.)*

OK, so let’s bring this all home with a very practical example.

Here’s one of my more memorable, life changing dreams. The solution it contains will very likely seem trivial to you as an outside observer. But at the time of the dream the problem it addressed was causing serious consequences, and the solution was literally life changing. Which is a point I make so you’ll remember that your clients’ insights will usually have a dramatically different impact on *them* than they do on you. *Their* perception is what counts!

**The Black and Orange Tarantula– an Example of Dream Value in Every Day Life**

I’m lying at the side of the road next to my smashed-up car after a very bad accident. My forehead is bleeding.

There’s a giant black-and-yellow tarantula coming towards me! I slowly try to inch myself away from the spider by dragging myself along the pavement with my arms… but the tarantula is clearly winning the race.

As it gets closer and closer, I catch myself thinking “Oh no! I’ve gotta wrestle this disgusting tarantula!”

But then I realize my LEGS are perfectly fine. I can just stand up and walk away!
The next day I started working on the dream myself using the Dream Fragments™ technique. The nice thing about this technique is you CAN do it yourself, on your own dreams too! It’s a little easier when you’re working with a coach because they can help you move forward when you get stuck. But because you’re always free to move from part to part of the dream, there’s always another angle to chip away at until you can see what’s inside the cage.

I’m going to present this all in the present tense, even though the dream and the Dream Fragments work occurred almost 20 years ago. Oh, and just one more important note before I do: Like all dreams, this one is VERY WEIRD on its surface, and very clearly illustrates the power of dreams to DISGUISE IMPORTANT THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS.

To drive this point home, and to help you remember that it’s really only the dreamer who can tell you what purpose the dream is for, I’d really like you to pause for a moment and write down a few guesses about what the dream might be about. This might be your only chance to do this before I spoil it for you, so please DO pause and write down a few guesses!

Did you do it? OK, so here’s how it went.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DREAM FRAGMENT</th>
<th>FORGETTING ABOUT THE REST OF THE DREAM, WHAT OCCURS TO ME WHEN I THINK ABOUT _____?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m lying at the side of the road...</td>
<td>Lying by the side of the road? Well, I know I’ve been lying to myself lately about how much I’ve been eating. I’m 60 pounds overweight and my triglycerides are through the roof. It’s kind of like I’m in the middle of a busy highway just waiting for a car to run me over. I’ve REALLY got to stop lying to myself, and take myself out of harm’s way!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>next to my smashed-up car...</td>
<td>Next to my smashed-up car... I don’t fit in that car. And I recently had a very bad accident... was hit by a drunk driver. I might not have gotten hurt so badly if I wasn’t so ego-driven insisting on driving a 300Zx that I didn’t fit in, with my head up against the roof. Arrrrgh!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after a very bad accident.</td>
<td>After a very bad accident... I was indeed in a very, very bad accident. I will never be the same. I’m not a bad person, and the accident was entirely the other driver’s fault...but I still made a BAD mistake driving that car. And I feel like I’m in the middle of a dangerous road being as heavy as I am now. It’s bad for my clients too... I need to be a role model. I hate this f____g dream!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My forehead is bleeding.</td>
<td>My forehead is bleeding. It’s like I’m not thinking right when it comes to food now, just like I wasn’t thinking right when I decided to drive the 300Zx. Plus, “forehead” makes me think of that joke about guys not having foreheads when they get older and start balding... they get five-heads instead. (I’m getting older and I have to deal with it!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s a giant black-and-yellow tarantula coming towards me!</td>
<td>There’s a giant black-and-yellow tarantula coming towards me!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and yellow. Hmmm... candy corn. Indian Candy Corn! Halloween is coming up and I’m scared of eating too much of that black and yellow sugary crap. And of all my eating issues SUGAR is the most “Giant” one too! Coming towards me? Halloween is coming towards me and that black and yellow stuff (and sugar in general) is going to be all over the house. It feels like a monster coming at me!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I slowly try to inch myself away from the spider by dragging myself along the pavement with my arms... but the tarantula is clearly winning the race.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I slowly try to inch myself away from the spider by dragging myself along the pavement with my arms... but the tarantula is clearly winning the race.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like the sugar monster is too powerful. I keep trying to get away, but I’m too slow and can’t. It’s going to catch up to me and poison me sooner or later. (Tarantulas are poisonous) I’ve been trying to find a way to “inch myself away” from sugar for years now, but obviously I’m SUPER FAT and UNHEALTHY so this way just isn’t working!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As it gets closer and closer, I catch myself thinking “Oh no! I’ve gotta wrestle this disgusting tarantula!”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As it gets closer and closer, I catch myself thinking “Oh no! I’ve gotta wrestle this disgusting tarantula!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t avoid wrestling with the sugar monster. I’ve got to face this one way or another, but how?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>But then I realize my LEGS are perfectly fine. I can just stand up and walk away!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>But then I realize my LEGS are perfectly fine. I can just stand up and walk away!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy crap that’s it. I can and should just walk away from sugar. The only reason I’m “wrestling” with this poisonous monster is because I keep trying to figure out how to control and limit it in some way. But my “legs” are perfectly fine... there’s NO nutritional need for sugar in my diet and I can absolutely just walk away. It seems so simple, and it should have been obvious all along but it wasn’t!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you see how that worked?

Just a few important notes:

- It took me about an hour to get through that dream. I felt stuck at first and for the life of me I couldn’t figure out what the car wreck reminded me of or made me think of. So I jumped around from symbol to symbol and landed on the Tarantula. And things started to fall in place once I realized a Tarantula was “black and yellow poison” (*Indian candy corn.*) So feel free to jump around in your own dreams, and with your clients. Don’t get discouraged if one part is too hard at first.

- This is a good illustrative dream because the solution was evident in the last sentence. But this won’t always be the case. Sometimes you’ll have to talk about the associations for a while with the client before things become clear.

- To make the insight even more powerful and actionable once it’s clear, I recommend turning it into a “Dream Power Statement™” A Dream Power Statement expresses concisely and symbolically the paradigm shift which represents the solution.
  - In this case we might say something like “Just Stand Up and Walk Away from the Black and Yellow Tarantula!”
  - Dream Power Statements don’t have to mean anything to anyone else besides the dreamer. But they’re incredibly useful because they represent a concise way the dreamer’s mind has of encapsulating the message. For example, I’ll NEVER forget what “Just Stand Up and Walk Away from the Black and Yellow Tarantula” means to me. It started with sugar, but came to represent the freedom to walk away from poison in every way, shape and form… no matter how sweet it might appear!
  - Some coaches go even further with this and have the dreamer draw or paint something which symbolizes their Dream Power Statement. Since that’s not where my talent lies I’ll confine myself to this brief mention here 😊

The above is just one practical example from my own life of the power of dreams to move forward in life. You’ll amass dozens of your own, and hundreds as you start working with clients… it’s very rewarding!

Now, hopefully you took a few moments to write down your guesses about what my dream could be used for before you read my own associations. If you did, the odds are your guesses had nothing to do with overcoming my sugar addiction. Which not only underscores the power of the dream disguise, but also highlight a very important fact…
Nobody Really Knows Anything About a Dream but the Dreamer!

The best anyone can ever do about anyone else’s dream is guess. The internet is filled with psychics who will gladly relieve you of responsibility for your own dreams by telling you what they “mean”… but as you hopefully now realize, their unsuspecting clients don’t realize how much they’re giving up by handing over this authority.

The cardinal rule in dream-interpretation—*from my not-so-humble perspective*—is that ONLY THE DREAMER CAN ULTIMATELY KNOW THE JOURNEY WHICH BECKONS FROM WITHIN THEIR OWN DREAM.

All you can ever offer as a coach are guesses and guidance. This is a really critical concept. It’s where the vast majority of rookie coaches, therapists, and amateur dream interpreters go wrong!

You can visit websites and buy books which will tell you what different things “mean” in a dream.

These are representations that, like Freud and Jung, some believe are common to most people. Some of these may be useful as springboards or ideas when the dreamer is stuck. In fact, I developed a dream-analysis software program decades ago which scanned people’s dreams for these symbols and made these kinds of suggestions… but with the goal of jumpstarting their associations, NOT presenting an authoritative meaning.

But even for universally common symbols, each dreamer has their own particular interpretation based on their own life experience. Because of this, most professionals who use dreams in coaching or therapy agree most “authoritative” dream information should be ditched because it will be inaccurate most of the time.

Moreover, even when it IS accurate, simply handing it over to the client fails to consider whether they’re READY to accept it. More often than not these kinds of cookie-cutter interpretations are rejected before they’re seriously considered. In short, they’re usually not helpful even when they’re right.
Another way to understand the problem with straight out telling people what their dream means is this: Dreams are filled with thoughts, feelings, and impulses your client isn’t quite ready to see in their waking life. If they were...they would have just talked to you about those thoughts, impulses and feelings directly in hopes of finding a solution to their problem or moving closer to their goals. And there would have been NO need to discuss the dream.

**The very fact a client presents a dream to you means they are in an ambivalent state.**

On one hand, they're saying they're interested in taking a peek at the underlying thoughts and feelings which might be contained in the dream. On the other hand, they're telling you they feel a need to disguise these thoughts and feelings from their own consciousness. It's your job to gently guide them to reveal these thoughts and feelings without forcing them back underground with invasive meaning statements.

**Who is the Best Candidate for Dream Work?**

Studies have found some people are more willing to work on their dreams than others. Of course, just because a client doesn't fall into any or all the categories doesn't mean (s)he's not a candidate, but if your client has some of the following traits, (s)he might benefit from dream work:

- Women are more likely to get benefit from dreams than men...
- People who report vivid, colorful dreams...
- People who remember their dreams in great detail...
- People who have a positive attitude about her dreams...
- People who are open to new experiences and adventure...

Recent studies have found men are generally somewhat resistant to dream work. Part of the reason why is women have better dream recall than men. Men also tend to have more negative dreams, often filled with violence, aggression and anxiety. By focusing on the benefits of dream work, you can often get male clients on board. They just may need some help recalling their dreams first.
What About Nightmares?

There are two things you should know about working with nightmares using the Dream Fragments technique. The first is that when you do it correctly, it’s incredibly powerful and even more insight producing than less frightening dreams. The reason is the “peak at the monster a little at a time” technique is perhaps nowhere more applicable…

But the second thing you should know is that coaches shouldn’t work with nightmares unless the client is also seeing a professional counselor, therapist, or psychiatrist who has approved it. Much more often than not everything will go smoothly… but that one time in twenty when it doesn’t you don’t want to find yourself over your head. It’s not fair to the client, and it’s a little over the line into the realm of psychotherapy and psychiatry.

And Daydreams?

Daydreams are perfectly fair game for the Dream Fragments technique, just like night time dreams. As a matter of fact, one interesting exercise is to ask a client to have a daydream right there on the spot. “Just make something up” (Or use guided imagery to walk them through it)

Because they occur during the day however—without the protective cover of sleep—daydreams tend to be just a little less powerful for our purposes. Still, they’re quite worthwhile to explore!

Getting Started

You’ll want to help clients remember more dreams if you’re interested in dream work. And you will personally benefit from remembering more dreams yourself.

Most of the time if we remember our dreams at all we’ve forgotten them within an hour or two. Even parts of the most vivid dreams will have pieces missing by the time your client tells you about it. Give you clients these simple tips to maximize dream recall:

- **Keep a journal and pen by your bed.** Get clients in the habit of writing down their dreams as soon as they wake up. They don’t have to write a term paper. All they have to do is briefly jot down what they remember. Ask them to pay attention to colors that seem odd *(like a black-and-yellow tarantula!)* or anything else that seemed unusual or significant. And if they still don’t remember a dream when they wake up, have them right down the first thoughts and/or images in their head in the morning!

- **Write down what you want to dream about.** Researchers have found that if you want to dream about Brad Pitt, you have a 50 percent chance of doing so if you write it down or even think the thought right before you go to bed. Ask your clients to think about problems they want
to find a solution for right before they climb into bed and turn off the light.

- **Read your dreams from the previous week.** Some professionals believe connecting with your past dreams before you go to sleep can reinforce dream recall in the future.

- **Create an environment conducive to sleep.** Don’t leave the radio or television on. Make your pets to sleep outside of your bedroom. Get some room-darkening blinds, curtains, or drapes to keep the streetlight outside from shining in your room. All of these things help to create an environment that lets you sleep uninterrupted. If you do wake up in the middle of the night, try to remember to write down you dreaming before you awoke.

- **Ditch the alarm clock.** If you can do it, get rid of your alarm clock. The jarring noise waking you up *(even if it’s music)* hinders your ability to remember your dreams.

- **Get a good night’s sleep.** The vast majority of Americans don’t sleep well. Don’t expect to get four or five hours of sleep every night and experience great results remembering your dreams. You need seven to nine hours a night to go through two REM phases.

- **Be patient.** It may take a week or two before your clients can begin to remember anything about their dreams well enough to write it down. Ask them to be patient with the process.

**When The Client Isn't Ready**

It’s OK if the client isn’t ready to see or accept the insights in their dream. The work wasn’t wasted. You got some new insights into your client and now are aware of areas where you need to gently push your client to grow. It’s important that clients know that it’s perfectly OK to have thoughts and feelings that they are afraid of or don’t like. That’s part of being human.

And remember, you can also go back to the dream work at a later date to see if the client is ready to pick up any insights. One of the most fascinating things about working with dreams is that you can go through the same process on the same dream again a couple of months later and the client will have completely different thoughts and feelings. Try doing that with a client who is stuck and see if they are willing to accept some of the insights after a few sessions of your gentle pushing.

**When People Get Stuck and Moving to a Different Part of the Dream Doesn’t Work**

When people get stuck and can’t seem to associate to ANY of the elements of the dream, no matter how many times you move around, questioning them about the specifics of the symbol can help. Remember you’re looking for “thoughts behind the thoughts,” and sometimes this takes some digging.

For example, suppose our client mentions the movie "Old Yeller." What occurs to them about THAT dog from THAT particular movie? How is Old Yeller different than Lassie or Benji or Beethoven, or some other movie dog? Did they watch the movie recently? Who was with them? How did it make them feel?
The Day Residue

Because dreams are a way of processing real life events, many dreams take their symbols from things which actually happened the previous day. This doesn’t mean the dream is only about that event… it’s just these symbols are the most easily available and pressing information the brain has to process.

So it’s often helpful to ask the client about the day before their dream. Did anything unusual happen? Who did they spend the day with? Was there any conflict? Anything particularly joyous?

The Quiet Client

Another way you can use dreams in your coaching practice is to get some insight to your clients who don't seem to want to talk very much. It makes a good jumping off point to start getting them to articulate what motivates them, what keeps them from moving forward, and other critical information you need as a coach to help them move a little closer to achieving their goals.

With the quiet client you don't necessarily have to do a full-blown dream analysis. You can just start out asking them about any unusual dreams they've had recently. Then casually ask them—without taking notes or formally engaging in the Dream Fragments technique—questions about specific images in their dream, what might the image remind them of or make them think of, what may have triggered it from the previous day's events, and, of course, what insights the image gives them about who to achieve their goals.

If your client has been really reticent to talk, don't even ask these detailed questions. Sometimes just getting them to talk about their dreams is enough to trigger them to open up more.

Not Every Dream Has to Be a Gold Mine

You really don’t have to have a “eureka” moment from every dream you work on. Sometimes dream work is just an exercise is “finding thoughts behind thoughts” and building the associative muscle. You can think of it like a regular vitamin where you see the results in the long haul, not like a cup of coffee where you feel it instantaneously.

Dream work can have it’s impact in the long run in the same way a regular workout with a personal trainer does. You don't build muscle overnight, but if you incorporate a strength training routine and stick to it, you'll wake up a different person every three months or so.

It can be helpful to share this with your client so they don’t expect a miracle every time—and so you don’t feel pressured to perform every time.

One Last Time: Be Sure to Make It All About the Client's Goals

Because dreams are so intriguing and involving, it’s very tempting for coaches to try to look brilliant by providing the right answer. Hopefully I’ve made it abundantly clear why this is a problem in this short introductory book…

The dream coach is NOT a wizard, they’re a guide.
It’s tempting and perfectly natural to want to look magical and powerful when you see something a client can’t see. But this WILL backfire on you, I promise.

Most coaches want their clients to like them and continue to come to them for coaching, and sometimes that need causes them lose focus. So even if you’ve produced amazing results for your clients with dream work, remember it’s about them, not you...

Your clients are working hard to look at issues they haven't been willing to face in the light of day… Issues they need to face in order to move forward. Keep that in mind.

Conclusion
While we're asleep, we're all busy trying to solve obstacles in our sleep. Whether it's a roadblock to inventing the sewing machine or trying to be a better salesperson, our dreams reveal information that we can use to meet those goals.

Coaches are perfect for helping clients pick through their dreams and find clues about what their unconscious is keeping from them until they are ready to deal with it head-on. After your client has connected the dots, you can help them integrate their findings into their plan to meet their goals.

Consider doing some dream work on yourself or with another coach. Everyone can benefit from analysis, and you may uncover some insights that will help you grow your or improve practice.
Click here to learn more about the book: "Never Binge Again: Stop Overeating and Binge Eating and Reprogram Yourself to Think Like a Permanently Thin Person...on the Food Plan of Your Choice!"

Or click here to learn more about his coaching program.