



# Dreams and Dreaming

**Michelle Zetony, DO, FCCP, FACO**

Board Certified Pulmonary, Critical  
Care, Sleep and Internal Medicine

# What are dreams?

- Varying definitions
- Varying experiences
- Generally classified as an experience of envisioned images, sounds, or other sensations during sleep
- Why?
  - Memory consolidation
  - Emotional regularity
  - Threat simulation

# DREAMS ARE DIFFERENT



# Why we dream: the theories

- FREUD

- Occur in a time of “ego collapse”
- Freud’s theory about ID, EGO and SUPEREGO
- Dreaming will occur when the unconscious wish is bound to the preconscious instead of just being discharged



# Dream theories

- JUNG
  - Involves analyzing the dreams over time, not just each one in isolation
  - Mind is composed of three parts, unconscious, personal unconscious and the conscious
  - Dreaming is particularly that personal unconscious that does not get disregarded
  - Focused on attention to things IN THE DREAM
    - What is the shape of the image?
    - What is the function of the image?
    - What alterations does the image go through?
    - What does the image do?
    - What do you like and dislike about the image?

# DREAM THEORIES

- CAYCE
  - Believes in purpose
  - Dreams are the bodies way of “self edification” to build up mental, spiritual and physical well-being
  - Thus doing, a good night’s sleep, any person cold develop mature values, stretch their thinking and right one’s self
  - 5 levels of dreaming:
    - Body level
    - Subconscious
    - Conscious
    - Superconscious
    - Soul level

# Dream Theories

- EVANS
  - Dreams are a way to disengage with the world
  - Felt that during REM in particular when the brain becomes isolated for sensory and motor neural pathways.
  - Our “data banks and program files” are opened and become available for modification or re-organization
    - In other words, we are able to scan and sort ideas and information during sleep

# Dream Theories

- CRICK-MITCHINSON
  - Theory is that the cortex in it's connectedness uses sleep and dreaming to connect messages from neural pathways
  - Thought that too many memories in one network may produce bizarre associations to a stimulus by creating fantasies/obsessions or associations triggered without stimulus (creating hallucinations)
  - Dreams are a way that the body uses to “debug”



# Dreams

- Can occur during any stage of sleep
- REM brain more active than during wake but not all in conscious areas
- When occur during REM typically we remember them (even if only for fleeting moments)
- Only about 6% of dreams are retained from NREM

# How do I know if I am dreaming??

- Dream illiteracy test
- Flying method
- Past Recall Method
- Hand breathing technique
- Control of unchanged

# Deprivation of Sleep

- Often the way that dreaming is studied
- When REM deprived
  - Become overly sensitive (irritated easily )
  - Poor memory
  - Unable to concentrate
  - \*\* Trouble coping with stress over long periods
- When NREM deprived
  - Clumsy
  - Sluggish
  - “Look tired”

# Dream Incubation

- Refers to variety of techniques that supposedly aid practical problem-solving or creativity
- Participants who practiced a dream incubation technique in a study just prior to sleep were able to report improvement in the problem that is the focus of the dream incubation
- In theory this should cause people to be
  - less distressed about the problem
  - Report more solvable problem compared to participants who merely relaxed
- It is hypothesized that this night incubation effect should improve problem outcomes beyond any effects of waking cognition directed towards problem resolution.

# Why don't I dream

- May not actually be the case but it may have to do with when you wake up/arousals
- People that report dreams versus those that don't report dreaming

# Better dream recall

- Before going to sleep
  - Expect to remember your dreams
  - Review any remembered past dreams
  - Get ready to record your dreams
  - Be prepared to stay awake and make a record of your dream
  - Review the previous day back to morning

# Upon waking in the morning ...

- Follow your dream backwards
- Try and remember all the dreams you had from the night
- Think of events that may have triggered dreams
- Don't be discouraged if you can't remember any dreams
- Don't forget the dream before you write it down

# Attitudes toward dreams

- Value each dream
- Accept all dreams
- Approach recall as a skill (if you so desire)
- Expect to recall dreams during the day
- Don't compare your recall or dreams with other people