

MSTP > 41 PART 01 DREAMS

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What does it mean when we dream?

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Dreams are stories and images that our minds create while we sleep. They can be entertaining, fun, romantic, disturbing, frightening, and sometimes bizarre.

They are an enduring source of mystery for scientists and psychological doctors. Why do dreams occur? What causes them? Can we control them? What do they mean?

This article will explore the current theories, causes, and applications of dreaming.

Fast facts on dreams

- We may **not remember** dreaming, but everyone is thought to dream between 3 and 6 times per night
- It is thought that each dream lasts between 5 to 20 minutes.
- Around 95 percent of dreams are forgotten by the time a person gets out of bed.
- Dreaming can help you learn and develop long-term memories.
- Blind people dream more with other sensory components compared with sighted people.

Causes

There are several theories about why we dream. Are dreams merely part of the sleep cycle, or do they serve some other purpose?

Possible explanations include:

- representing unconscious desires and wishes
- interpreting random signals from the brain and body during sleep
- consolidating and processing information gathered during the day
- working as a form of psychotherapy

From evidence and new research methodologies, researchers have speculated that dreaming serves the following functions:

- offline memory reprocessing, in which the brain consolidates learning and memory tasks and [supports and records](#) waking consciousness
- preparing for [possible future threats](#)
- cognitive simulation of real life experiences, as dreaming is a subsystem of the waking default network, the part of the mind active during daydreaming
- helping [develop cognitive](#) capabilities
- reflecting [unconscious mental function](#) in a psychoanalytic way
- a unique state of consciousness that [incorporates experience](#) of the present, processing of the past, and preparation for the future
- a psychological space where overwhelming, contradictory, or highly complex notions can be [brought together](#) by the dreaming ego, notions that would be unsettling while awake, serving the need for psychological balance and equilibrium

Much that remains unknown about dreams. They are by nature difficult to study in a laboratory, but technology and new research techniques may help improve our understanding of dreams.

Phases of sleep

There are five phases of sleep in a sleep cycle:

Stage 1: Light sleep, slow eye movement, and reduced muscle activity. This stage forms 4 to 5 percent of total sleep.

Stage 2: Eye movement **stops** and brain waves become slower, with occasional bursts of rapid waves called sleep spindles. This stage forms 45 to 55 percent of total sleep.

Stage 3: Extremely slow brain waves called delta waves begin to appear, interspersed with smaller, faster waves. This accounts for 4 to 6 percent of total sleep.

Stage 4: The brain produces delta waves almost exclusively. It is difficult to wake someone during stages 3 and 4, which together are called "deep sleep." There is **no** eye movement or muscle activity. People awakened while in deep sleep do **not** adjust immediately and often feel disoriented for several minutes after waking up. This forms 12 to 15 percent of total sleep.

Stage 5: This stage is known as rapid eye movement (REM).

Breathing becomes more rapid, irregular, and shallow, eyes jerk rapidly in various directions, and limb muscles become temporarily paralyzed. Heart rate increases, blood pressure rises, and males develop penile erections. When people awakened during REM sleep, they often describe bizarre and illogical tales. These are dreams. This stage accounts for 20 to 25 percent of total sleep time.

Neuroscience offers explanations linked to the rapid eye movement (REM) phase of sleep as a likely candidate for the cause of dreaming.

What are dreams?

Dreams are a universal human experience that can be described as a state of consciousness characterized by sensory, cognitive and emotional occurrences during sleep.

The dreamer has reduced control over the content, visual images and activation of the memory.

There is no cognitive state that has been as extensively studied and yet as frequently misunderstood as dreaming.

There are significant differences between the neuroscientific and psychoanalytic approaches to dream analysis.

Neuroscientists are interested in the structures involved in dream production, dream organization, and narratability. However, psychoanalysis concentrates on the meaning of dreams and placing them in the context of relationships in the history of the dreamer.

Reports of dreams tend to be full of emotional and vivid experiences that contain themes, concerns, dream figures, and objects that correspond closely to waking life.

These elements create a novel "reality" out of seemingly nothing, producing an experience with a lifelike timeframe and connections.

Nightmares

Nightmares are distressing dreams that cause the dreamer to feel a number of disturbing emotions. Common reactions to a nightmare include **fear** and anxiety.

They can occur in both adults and children, and causes include:

- stress
- **Fear**
- trauma
- emotional difficulties
- **illness**
- use of certain medications or drugs

Lucid dreams

Lucid dreaming is the dreamer is aware that they are dreaming. They may have some control over their dream.

This measure of control can vary between lucid dreams. They often occur in the middle of a regular dream when the sleeping person realizes suddenly that they are dreaming.

Some people experience lucid dreaming at random, while others have reported being able to increase their capacity to control their dreams.

Interpretations

What goes through our minds just before we fall asleep could affect the content of our dreams.

For **example**, during exam time, students may dream about course content. People in a relationship may dream of their partner. Web developers may see programming code.

These circumstantial observations suggest that elements from the everyday re - emerge in dream - like imagery during the transition from wakefulness to sleep.

Characters

Studies have examined the "characters" that appear in dream reports and how they the dreamer identifies them.

A study of [320 adult dream reports](#) found:

- Forty - eight percent of characters represented a named person known to the dreamer.
- Thirty - five percent of characters were identified by their social role ([for example, policeman](#)) or relationship to dreamer ([such as a friend](#)).
- Sixteen percent were **not** recognized

Among named characters:

- Thirty - two percent were identified by appearance
- Twenty - one percent were identified by behavior
- Forty - five percent were identified by face
- Forty - four percent were identified by "just knowing"

Elements of bizarreness were reported in 14 percent of named and generic characters.

Another study investigated the relationship between dream emotion and dream character identification.

Affection and joy were [commonly associated](#) with known characters and were used to identify them even when these emotional attributes were inconsistent with those of the waking state.

The findings suggest that the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, associated with short-term memory, is less active in the dreaming brain than during waking life, while the paleocortical and subcortical limbic areas are more active.

Memories

The concept of 'repression' dates back to Freud. Freud maintained that undesirable memories could become suppressed in the mind. Dreams ease repression by allowing these memories to be reinstated.

A study showed that sleep **does not help** people forget unwanted memories. Instead, REM sleep might even counteract the voluntary suppression of memories, making them more accessible for retrieval.

Two types of temporal effects characterize the incorporation of memories into dreams:

- the day - residue effect, involving immediate incorporations of events from the preceding day
- the dream-lag effect, involving incorporations delayed by about a week

The **findings of one study** suggest that:

- processing memories into dream incorporation takes a cycle of around 7 - days
- these processes help further the functions of socio - emotional adaptation and memory consolidation

Dream lag

Dream - lag is when the images, experiences, or people that emerge in dreams are images, experiences, or people you have seen recently, perhaps the previous day or a week before.

The idea is that certain types of experiences take a week to become encoded into long - term memory, and some of the images from the consolidation process will appear in a dream.

Events experienced while awake are said to feature in 1 to 2 percent of dream reports, although 65 percent of dream reports reflect aspects of recent waking life experiences.

The dream-lag effect **has been reported** in dreams that occur at the REM stage but **not** those that occur at stage 2.

Memory types and dreaming

Two types of memory can form the basis of a dream.

These are:

- autobiographical memories, or long-lasting memories about the self
- episodic memories, which are memories about specific episodes or events

A study exploring different types of memory within dream content among 32 - participants **found** the following:

- One dream (**0.5 percent**) contained an episodic memory.
- Most dreams in the study (**80 percent**) contained low to moderate incorporations of autobiographical memory features.

Researchers suggest that memories of personal experiences are experienced fragmentarily and selectively during dreaming. The purpose may be to integrate these memories into the long-lasting autobiographical memory.

A hypothesis stating that dreams reflect waking-life experiences is supported by studies investigating the dreams of psychiatric patients and patients with sleep disorders. In short, their daytime symptoms and problems **are reflected** in their dreams.

In 1900, Freud described a category of dreams known as "biographical dreams." These reflect the historical experience of being an infant without the typical defensive function. Many authors agree that some traumatic dreams perform a function of recovery.

One paper **hypothesizes** that the main aspect of traumatic dreams is to communicate an experience that the dreamer has in the dream but does **not** understand. This can help an individual reconstruct and come to terms with past trauma.

Themes

The themes of dreams can be linked to the suppression of unwanted thoughts and, as a result, an increased occurrence of that suppressed thought in dreams.

Fifteen good sleepers were asked to suppress an unwanted thought 5 - minutes prior to sleep.

The **results demonstrate** that there were increased dreams about the unwanted thought and a tendency to have more distressing dreams. They also imply that thought suppression may lead to significantly increased mental disorder symptoms.

Research **has indicated** that external stimuli presented during sleep can affect the emotional content of dreams.

For **example**, the **positively**-toned stimulus of roses in one study yielded more **positively** themed dreams, whereas the **negative** stimulus of rotten eggs was followed by more **negatively** themed dreams.

Typical dreams are defined as dreams similar to those reported by a high percentage of dreamers.

Up to now, the frequencies of typical dream themes have been studied with **questionnaires**. These **have indicated** that a rank order of 55 typical dream themes has been stable over different sample populations.

The **55 themes** identified are:

- school, teachers, and studying
- being chased or pursued
- **sexual** experiences
- falling
- arriving too late
- a living person being **dead**
- a person now **dead** being alive
- flying or soaring through the air
- failing an examination
- being on the verge of falling
- being frozen with fright
- being physically attacked
- being nude
- eating delicious food
- swimming
- being locked up
- insects or spiders
- being **killed**
- losing teeth
- being tied up, restrained, or unable to move
- being inappropriately dressed
- being a child again
- trying to complete a task successfully
- being unable to find toilet, or embarrassment about losing one

- discovering a new room at home
- having superior knowledge or mental ability
- losing control of a vehicle
- **fire**
- wild, violent beasts
- seeing a face very close to you
- snakes
- having magical powers
- vividly sensing, but **not** necessarily seeing or hearing, a presence in the room
- finding money
- floods or tidal waves
- **killing** someone
- seeing yourself as **dead**
- being half-awake and paralyzed in bed
- people behaving in a menacing way
- seeing yourself in a mirror
- being a member of the opposite **sex**
- being smothered, unable to breathe
- encountering God in some form
- seeing a flying object crash
- earthquakes
- seeing an Angel
- part animal, part human creatures
- tornadoes or strong winds
- being at the movie
- seeing extra - terrestrials
- traveling to another planet
- being an animal
- seeing a UFO
- someone having an abortion

- being an object

Some dream themes appear to change over time.

For **example**, from 1956 to 2000, there was an increase in the percentage of people who reported flying in dreams. This could reflect the increase in air travel.

What do they mean?

Relationships: Some have hypothesized that one cluster of typical dreams, including being an object in danger, falling, or being chased, is related to interpersonal conflicts.

Sexual concepts: Another cluster that includes flying, **sexual** experiences, finding money, and eating delicious food is associated with libidinal and **sexual** motivations.

Fear of embarrassment: A third group, containing dreams that involve being nude, failing an examination, arriving too late, losing teeth, and being inappropriately dressed, is associated with social concerns and a **fear** of embarrassment.

Brain activity and dream types

In neuroimaging studies of brain activity during REM sleep, scientists found that the distribution of brain activity might also be linked to specific dream features.

Several bizarre features of normal dreams have similarities with well-known neuropsychological syndromes that occur after brain damage, such as delusional misidentifications for faces and places.

Dreams and the senses

Dreams were evaluated in people experiencing different types of headache. Results showed people with migraine had increased frequency of dreams involving taste and smell.

This may suggest that the role of some cerebral structures, such as amygdala and hypothalamus, are involved in migraine mechanisms as well as in the biology of sleep and dreaming.

Music in dreams is rarely studied in scientific literature. However, in a study of 35 professional musicians and 30 non - musicians, the musicians experienced twice as many dreams featuring music, when compared with non - musicians.

Musical dream frequency was related to the age of commencement of musical instruction but not to the daily load of musical activity. Nearly half of the recalled music was non-standard, suggesting that original music can be created in dreams.

Pain

It has been shown that realistic, localized painful sensations can be experienced in dreams, either through direct incorporation or from memories of pain. However, the frequency of pain dreams in healthy subjects is low.

In one study, 28 non - ventilated burn victims were interviewed for 5 consecutive mornings during their first week of hospitalization.

Results [showed](#):

- **Thirty - nine percent of people reported pain dreams.**
- **Of those experiencing pain dreams, 30 percent of their total dreams were pain-related.**
- **Patients with pain dreams showed evidence of reduced sleep, more nightmares, higher intake of anxiolytic medication, and higher scores on the Impact of Event Scale.**
- **Patients with pain dreams also had a tendency to report more intense pain during therapeutic procedures.**

More than half did **not report pain dreams. However, these results could suggest that pain dreams occur at a greater frequency in populations currently experiencing pain than in normal volunteers.**

Self - awareness

One study [has linked](#) frontotemporal gamma EEG activity to conscious awareness in dreams.

The study found that current stimulation in the lower gamma band during REM sleep influences on-going brain activity and induces self-reflective awareness in dreams.

Researchers concluded that higher order consciousness is related to oscillations around 25 and 40 Hz.

Relationships

Recent research has demonstrated parallels between styles of romantic attachment and general dream content.

Assessment results from 61 student participants in committed dating relationships of six months duration or longer revealed [a significant association](#) between relationship-specific attachment security and the degree to which dreams about romantic partners followed.

The findings illuminate our understanding of mental representations with regards to specific attachment figures.

Death in dreams

Researchers compared the dream content of different groups of people in a psychiatric facility. Participants in one group had been admitted after attempting to take their own lives.

Their dreams of this group were compared with those of three control groups in the facility who had experienced:

- [depression](#) and thoughts about **suicide**
- depression without thinking about **suicide**
- carrying out a violent act without **suicide**

Those who had considered or attempted **suicide** or carried out violence had were [more likely to have](#) dreams with content relating to death and destructive violence. One factor affecting this was the severity of an individual's depression.

Left and right side of the brain

The right and left hemispheres of the brain seem to contribute in different ways to a dream formation.

Researchers of one study [concluded](#) that the left hemisphere seems to provide dream origin while the right hemisphere provides dream vividness, figurativeness and affective activation level.

A study of adolescents aged 10 to 17 - years found that those who were left-handed were more likely to experience lucid dreams and to remember dreams within other dreams.

Forgetting dreams

Studies of brain activity suggest that most people over the age of 10 - years dream between 4 and 6 times each night, but some people rarely remember dreaming.

It is often said that 5 - minutes after a dream, people have forgotten 50 percent of its content, increasing to 90 percent another 5 minutes later.

Most dreams are entirely forgotten by the time someone wakes up, but it is **not** known precisely why dreams are so hard to **remember**.

Steps that may help improve dream recall, include:

- waking up naturally and **not** with an alarm
- focusing on the dream as much as possible upon waking
- writing down as much about the dream as possible upon waking
- making recording dreams a routine

Who **remembers** their dreams?

There are factors that can potentially influence who remembers their dreams, how much of the dream remains intact, and how vivid it is.

Age: Over time, a person is likely to experience changes in sleep timing, structure, and electroencephalographic (**EEG**) activity.

Evidence suggests that dream recall progressively decreases from the beginning of adulthood, but **not** in older age. Dream also become less intense. This evolution occurs faster in men than women, with gender differences in the content of dreams.

Gender: A study of dreams experienced by 108 males and 110 females found **no** differences between the amount of aggression, friendliness, **sexuality**, male characters, weapons, or clothes that feature in the content.

However, the dreams of females featured a higher number of family members, babies, children, and indoor settings than those of males.

Sleep disorders: Dream recall is heightened in patients with insomnia, and their dreams reflect the stress associated with their condition. The dreams of people with narcolepsy may a more bizarre and **negative** tone.

Dream recall and well - being

One study looked at whether dream recall and dream content would reflect the social relationships of the person who is dreaming.

College student as volunteers were assessed on measures of attachment, dream recall, dream content, and other psychological measures.

Participants who were classified as "high" on an "insecure attachment" scale were significantly more likely to:

- report a dream
- dream frequently
- experience intense images that contextualize strong emotions in their dreams

Older volunteers whose attachment style was classed as "preoccupied" were significantly more likely to:

- report a dream
- report dreams with a higher mean number of words

Dream recall was lowest for the "avoidant" subjects and highest for the "preoccupied" subjects.

Who dreams?

Everyone dreams, although we may **not remember** our dreams. At different times of life or during different experiences, our dreams might change.

Children's dreams

A study investigating anxiety dreams in 103 children aged 9 to 11 - years observed the following:

- Females more often had dreams containing **anxiety** than males, although they could **not remember** their dreams as often.
- Girls dreamt more often than boys about the loss of another person, falling, socially disturbing situations, small or aggressive animals, family members, and other female people they may or may **not** recognize.

Pregnancy

Studies [comparing the dreams](#) of pregnant and non-pregnant women showed that:

- Infant and child representations were less specific in women who were **not** pregnant. Among those who were pregnant, these images were more likely in the late third trimester than in the early third trimester.
- During pregnancy, dreams were more likely to include the themes of pregnancy, childbirth, and fetuses.
- Childbirth content was higher in the late third trimester than early in the trimester.
- The group who were pregnant had more morbid elements in their dreams than those who were **not**.

Caregivers

Those that give care to family or people who have long-term **illnesses** often have dreams related to that individual.

A study following the dreams of adults that worked for at least a year with individuals at United States hospice centers [noted](#):

- Patients tended to be clearly present in the dreams of caregivers, and the dreams were typically realistic.
- In the dream, the caregiver typically interacted with the patient in their usual capacity but was also typically frustrated by the inability to help as fully as desired.

Bereavement

It is widely believed that oppressive dreams are frequent in people going through a time of bereavement.

A study analyzing dream quality, as well as the linking of oppressive dreams in bereavement, oppressive dreams:

- were more frequent in the first year of bereavement
- were more likely in those experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression

In [another study](#) of 278 people experiencing bereavement:

- Fifty - eight percent reported dreams of their **deceased** loved ones, with varying levels of frequency.
- Most participants had dreams that were either pleasant or both pleasant and disturbing, and few reported purely disturbing dreams
- Prevalent themes included pleasant past memories or experiences, the deceased being free of **illness**, memories of the deceased's **illness** or time of **death**, the deceased in the afterlife appearing comfortable and at peace, and the deceased person communicating a message.
- Sixty percent felt that their dreams impacted upon their bereavement process.

Does everyone dream in color?

Researchers discovered in a study that:

- About 80 percent of participants younger than 30 years old dreamed in color.
- At 60 years old, 20 percent said they dreamed in color.

The number of people aged in their 20s, 30s and 40s dreaming in color increased through 1993 to 2009. Researchers speculated that color television might play a role in the generational difference.

Another study using **questionnaires** and dream diaries also found older adults had more black and white dreams than the younger participants.

Older people reported that both their color dreams and black and white dreams were equally vivid. However, younger participants said that their black and white dreams were of poorer quality.

Can dreams predict the future?

Some dreams may seem to predict future events.

Some researchers claim to have evidence that this is possible, but there is **not** enough evidence to prove it.

Most often, this seems to be due to coincidence, a **false** memory, or the unconscious mind connecting together known information.

Dreams may help people learn more about their feelings, beliefs, and values. Images and symbols that appear in dreams will have meanings and connections that are specific to each person.

People looking to make sense of their dreams should think about what each part of the dreams mean to them as an individual.

Books or guides that give specific, universal meanings to images and symbols may **not** be useful.

However, for those who are interested in such books, there is [a selection available for purchase online](#).

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Drug withdrawal

One [study followed](#) the dream content of people who regularly use crack cocaine in Trinidad and Tobago during a period of abstinence:

- Almost 90 percent of individuals reported drug - related dreams during the first month, mainly of using the drug.
- Almost 61 percent had drug - related dreams after 6 - months, mainly of using or refusing the drug.

Vision and hearing loss

People with complete vision loss have fewer visual dream impressions compared with sighted participants.

People who have been unable to see from birth [report more](#) auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory dream components, compared with sighted participants.

The ability to see does **not** appear to affect emotional and thematic dream content.

Those with other abilities

One [small study](#) explored the dream diaries of 14 - people with impairments.

Four were born with paraplegia, and 10 were born unable to hear or speak.

Deafness: When compared with 36 able - bodied individuals, findings showed that around 80 percent of the dream reports of participants with [deafness](#) gave **no** indication of their impairment.

Many spoke in their dreams, while others could hear and understand spoken language.

Paraplegia: Similarly, the dream reports of those with paraplegia showed that the participants often walked, ran, or swam in their dreams, none of which they had ever done in their waking lives.

A second study looked at the dream reports of 15 people who were either born with paraplegia or acquired it later in life, due to a spinal-cord injury.

Their [reports revealed](#) that 14 participants with paraplegia had dreams in which they were physically active, and they dreamed about walking as often as the 15 control participants who did not have paraplegia.

Other research has suggested that the brain has the genetically determined ability to generate experiences that mimic life, including fully functioning limbs and senses.

People who are born without hearing or unable to move are likely tapping into these parts of the brain as they dream about tasks they cannot perform while awake.

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RELATED COVERAGE

Five weird things you might do in your sleep

Have you ever woken up in the morning to the sight of a disgruntled partner, upset that you gave them a long speech in your sleep? This is one **example** of the many strange things we can do while we're supposed to be oblivious to the world. Read on for our top five picks.

Although it is **not** clear exactly how many people experience parasomnias, or sleep disorders, it is likely that you — or someone you know — have faced at least one such event at some point.

Parasomnias are often associated with unsettling actions or behaviors, made all the more strange for being acted out in a person's sleep, while they are completely unconscious.

However, although some of the strange things that we do in our sleep may be connected with the presence of a sleep disorder, others are, in fact, normal physiological occurrences that are extremely common.

In this Spotlight, we look at five of the strangest things some people do while they're fast asleep.

1. Sleep talking

Sleep talking, or somniloquy, is a common physiological phenomenon, and it is reportedly more frequent in children and adolescents, though it is **not** an unusual occurrence in adults.

As Shelly Weiss notes in the book [Parasomnias](#), episodes of sleep talking **don't** tend to last very long, and they **don't**, in fact, always include intelligible speech.

"Sleep talking is usually brief and infrequent, but can range from a person making a few sounds during sleep that are brief and unintelligible, to full phrases with understandable content or even frequent and long speeches which sound hostile or angry."

A [recent study](#) conducted by Dr. Isabelle Arnulf of the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, France, investigated what sleep talkers are likely to say, and found that, in 10 percent of cases, sleep speech is rich in swear words and negative content.

In fact, swear words featured 800 times more often during sleep discourse than they normally did in an individual's daytime talk.

Dr. Arnulf **notes** that this may be because sleep talking likely occurs in response to a **negative** dream situation that makes such impulsive and unguarded speech excusable.

Weiss explains that sleep talking episodes can occur at any stage of sleep and that they are "only disturbing to others," that is, to bed partners.

And I can confirm — my partner's sleep talking episodes, in which he usually expresses distress, never fail to unsettle me. But since he never remembers these occurrences the morning after, they **don't** bother him at all.

But there are, according to Weiss, external situations that "may precipitate" sleep talking, so if you know that you — or your loved one — are prone to this, then eliminating these factors may help.

2. Sleepwalking

Sleepwalking, or somnambulism, is perhaps the best-known type of parasomnia, having captured people's imaginations for years, and featuring prominently in literature and movies.

This sleep disorder usually takes place during the [stage three](#) non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep; this is a "deep sleep" period in which brainwaves slow down, and breathing also becomes deep and slow-paced.

People **cannot** be easily woken at this stage, which is partly what makes sleepwalking so unsettling, as the somnambulist is physically active while still emerged in a deep state of slumber.

But the weirdness does **not stop** here

"[[Sleepwalking](#)] episodes often begin with the individual sitting up in bed, fumbling with bedclothes, looking about in a confused manner before getting out of bed and slowly beginning to walk around. The eyes are usually open, often wide open with a confused 'glassy' stare..."

They also add that "[t]he person often walks toward sound, light, or a particular room," and they may engage in complex behaviors, such as changing clothes, opening doors, or using the bathroom.

Sleepwalking behaviors

A related sleepwalking disorder is that of [sleep-related eating](#), in which individuals get out of bed, make their way to the fridge, and have a snack, all without actually waking up.

The eating behavior is usually compulsive, and the person could wake up the next morning to find a mountain of incriminating — and shocking — evidence, in the form of dirty wrappers and food containers, as in this [case study](#).

There are, however, some sleepwalking behaviors that are much more dangerous than overeating. One such example is that of [sleep driving](#), in which a person drives a motorized vehicle technically on autopilot, while fully unconscious of their actions.

Sleep texting?

Though **no** scientific studies have yet been conducted to address this issue, apparently sleep texting is **not** uncommon, especially among adolescents.

Over the past few years, various media outlets have reported cases of teenagers embarrassed to find out they had sent text messages to their friends or their crushes while asleep.

One young woman told [The Atlantic](#) that she woke up one morning to find that she had made plans to see her **ex**-boyfriend, which she **didn't** remember and immediately regretted.

Sleep specialists have declared that this is a [new feature](#) in terms of sleep disorders, and the behavior is **not** yet listed in specialized textbooks.

The specialists blame it largely on the fact that many teenagers have [poor sleep hygiene](#), having become glued to their smartphones, texting away late into the night, and allowing notifications to disturb their slumber.

3. Sleep starts

Many of you are probably familiar with the phenomenon of sleep starts, or "hypnic jerks."

These are characterized by a sensation of falling from a great height, or tripping, which causes the body to jerk and the sleeper to wake up — literally "with a start."

Weiss **notes** that sleep starts "frequently occur in normal people and at any age," with a prevalence of approximately 60 – 70 percent in adults; they are **not** considered a type of sleep disorder.

Typically, the muscle contractions last for less than 1 second, and they [occur](#) as a person is about to transition to a state of sleep, or during a stage of light sleep.

Some less common accompanying sensations listed by Weiss include "an auditory sound such as an utterance," and the terrifying perception of a "loud bang or flash of light," also known as "[exploding head syndrome](#)."

Although sleep starts are a normal occurrence, scientists suggest that certain factors may increase their likelihood. According to Weiss, these include, "[fatigue](#), emotional [stress](#), [sleep deprivation](#), vigorous exercise, and stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine."

4. **Sexual** acts

Some of the most controversial unconscious acts performed during sleep are those of a **sexual** nature, especially when the individual attempts to involve an unwitting co - sleeper.

These acts are characteristic of a parasomnia known as "[sexsomnia](#)," in which individuals "display **sexual** vocalizations, masturbation, fondling, or intercourse/attempted intercourse during sleep — followed by morning amnesia."

Similarly to sleepwalking, **sexsomnia** takes place during the NREM stages of sleep, and, according to a [case report](#) published last month, "only 95 clinical cases" have been documented until now. The report authors also add that most of these cases feature male sleepers.

In some cases, **sexsomnia** is just an embarrassing occurrence, but in other, more extreme **examples**, the sleepers can end up **sexually** assaulting a sleeping partner.

But due to the fact that they remain unconscious throughout these acts, and they **cannot** remember them the following morning, **violent sexual** acts committed during sleep remain deeply challenging when brought to court.

The authors of [one case report](#) **note** that, in the instance that they evaluated, the patient affected by **sexsomnia** managed to gain some control over these night-time occurrences by attending psychotherapy sessions targeting stress management.

5. Acting out dreams

Finally, the parasomnia known as rapid eye movement ([REM](#)) sleep behavior disorder is, much like sleepwalking, characterized by the performance of fairly complex actions while in a state of sleep.

However, there are also several differences between the two sleep disorders.

As its name suggests, REM sleep behavior disorder takes place during the REM stage of sleep, when most of the dreaming happens.

Individuals with this behavior disorder tend to "act out" or physically respond to whatever takes place in their dreams, which **isn't** always great news.

As Sujay Kansagra and Bradley Vaughn write in *Parasomnias*, "Dream content is [...] reported to become more violent with [[REM sleep behavior disorder](#)] onset, and involves the subject being attacked or having to defend a position or others."

Kansagra and Vaughn also **note** that most individuals with this disorder are over 50 years of age, though its incidence and prevalence rates are unclear.

Such troubled sleepers may make chaotic movements that correspond to their dream content, but fortunately, they are **not** usually physically violent, either toward themselves or others.

However, violent behavior is more often present in men than it is in women with REM sleep behavior disorder.

This parasomnia can be induced by an individual's first use of [antidepressant](#) medication, but stimulants such as alcohol, [coffee](#), and chocolate can also be at fault.

Moreover, Kansagra and Vaughn point out that more than 50 percent of individuals with [narcolepsy](#) — another sleep-related disorder — also report the symptoms of REM sleep behavior disorder.

If you or someone you know live with a sleep disorder and would like to learn more about it and how to manage it, you may find it useful to access the webpages on "[sleep and sleep disorders](#)" curated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/284378.php>

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9 Common Dreams and What They Supposedly Mean

What do your dreams really mean? By [Kendra Cherry](#)

Updated on May 13, 2019

Do dreams have a [deeper meaning](#)? A surprising number of people believe that the answer to this question is yes. According to a poll conducted by *Newsweek*, a whopping 43% of Americans believe that dreams reveal unconscious desires and wishes.

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Famed psychoanalyst [Sigmund Freud](#) described dreams as the royal road to the [unconscious](#) and suggested that by studying the [obvious content](#) of dreams, we could then bring to light the hidden and unconscious desires that lead to [neurosis](#).

Analyzing dream symbols and ascribing meaning has become a popular source of both entertainment and self - reflection in popular culture. Do dreams really have hidden meanings? Can you learn your unconscious wishes and desires by interpreting your dreams?

While most modern theories of dreams would suggest that the answer is **no**, this **hasn't** stopped interpreters and analysts from publishing a whole host of dream dictionaries that purport to identify what these common dream themes and symbols really mean.

Let's take a closer look at some of the most common dreams and what some of the most popular dream interpretation books have to say about them.

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9 Common Dreams and Their Interpretations

Dreams About Falling

Dreams about falling from great heights are very common. While there is a popular myth that if you hit the ground in your dream you will **die** in real life, it simply is **not true**. So what exactly could dreams about falling really mean?

According to many popular dream interpretations and at least one study, falling dreams are a sign that something in your life **isn't** going well. It might suggest that you need to rethink a choice or consider a new direction in some area of your life.

"Dreaming of falling is very common. It is a symbol of fear in real life - perhaps of failing at work or in your love life," claims Russell Grant, author of The Illustrated Dream Dictionary. "Falling often expresses a need to let yourself go more and enjoy life more."

2.) Dreams About Being Naked in Public

Have you ever have one of those awkward dreams where you show up at school or the office in your birthday suit? **Don't** worry. Dreaming about being naked is hardly unusual.

Penny Peirce, author of the Dream Dictionary for Dummies, suggests that dreaming of public nudity might indicate that you feel like a phony or that you are afraid of revealing your imperfections and shortcomings.

3.) Dreams About Being Chased

Dreams that feature being pursued by a known or unknown attacker can be particularly terrifying. These types of dreams are very common. But what do these dreams say about what's going on inside your mind? Dream interpreters often suggest that such dreams mean that you are trying to avoid something in your daily life.

Tony Crisp, author of Dream Dictionary, suggests that being chased in a dream might indicate a desire to escape from your own fears or desires.

The key to understanding what such a dream might mean depends partly on the identity of your pursuer. Being chased by an animal might indicate that you are hiding from your own anger, passions, and other feelings.

If your pursuer is a mysterious, unknown figure, it might represent a childhood experience or past trauma. If you are being chased by someone of the opposite **sex**, Crisp suggests that it means you are afraid of love or haunted by a past relationship.

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Dreams About Losing Teeth

Penny Peirce, author of *Dream Dictionary for Dummies*, suggests that dreaming about losing teeth can have multiple meanings. It might mean that you are worried about your attractiveness or appearance. It might also indicate that you are concerned about your ability to communicate or concerned that you might have said something embarrassing.

"The real essence of teeth is their ability to bite through, to cut, tear, and grind," she explains. "If your teeth fall out, you lose personal power and your ability to be assertive, decisive, and self-protective."

Dreams About **Dying**

Death is another common [subject of dreams](#) and one that can be particularly disconcerting. Dreamers sometimes dream of the **death** of a loved one or even dream of **dying** themselves. Popular dream interpretations sometimes suggest that such dreams reflect **anxiety** about change or a **fear** of the unknown.

"Like **death**, change can be scary because – also like **death** – we do **not** know what is 'on the other side,' of the change, which is why the dreaming mind equates change with **death**," suggests Lauri Loewenberg in her book *Dream on It: Unlock Your Dreams, Change Your Life*.

Loewenberg also believes that dreaming about the **death** of a loved one can reflect a similar fear of change, especially with regards to children reaching milestones and growing up. Such changes, she suggests, indicate that a child is growing up and a parent's mind begins to wonder where the younger version of the child went. Such dreams of **dying**, therefore, reflect a sort of mourning for the inevitable passage of time.

Studies have also shown that those approaching the end of life and loved ones around them experience significant and meaningful dreams, often relating to a comforting presence, preparing to go, watching or engaging with the **deceased**, loved ones waiting, distressing experiences, and unfinished business.

Dreams About Taking a Test

According to Craig Hamilton-Parker, author of *The Hidden Meaning of Dreams*, taking an exam your dreams might reveal an underlying fear of failure. Studies have also found that dreams of this nature are common.

"Examinations are stressful experiences in which you are made to face up to your shortcomings," he writes. "To dream of failing an exam, being late for one, or being unprepared shows that you feel unprepared for the challenges of waking life."

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Dreams About Infidelity

Dreaming that your spouse or romantic partner is cheating on you with someone else can be incredibly distressing. In some cases, people even start to wonder if the dream might really be **true**. Does dreaming that your partner is unfaithful mean that it might happen? Or that it is already happening?

While in some cases such dreams might be the reflection of waking **fears** of such infidelity, Trish and Rob MacGregor, the authors of the *Complete Dream Dictionary: A Bedside Guide to Knowing What Your Dreams Mean*, believe that such dreams probably **don't** mean that your spouse is cheating or will cheat.

"This is another 'what if' dream – you are testing the limits of reality," they suggest.

Eve Adamson and Gayle Williamson, authors of *The Complete Idiot's Guide Dream Dictionary*, posit that such dreams about infidelity indicate issues with trust, loyalty, and communication in a relationship. "If you or your partner cheated in your dream, one of you **isn't** getting what you need from that relationship right now," they write.

Dreams About Flying

Dreams about flying are experienced by many. They can be exciting and even liberating but they can sometimes be quite frightening (**especially for those afraid of heights**). According to Tony Crisp, author of *Dream Dictionary*, dreams about flying often represent two very different sides. On the one hand, such dreams can represent feelings of freedom and independence. On the other hand, they can also indicate a desire to flee or escape from the realities of life.

"Flying alone occurs most frequently," he writes, "showing the independent aspect of flying. But because it often involves **positive** feelings of pleasure, flying may depict our **sexuality**...especially aspects of it expressing freedom from social norms and restraints."

Dreams About Pregnancy

Dream interpreters often suggest that dreams about pregnancy represent everything from creativity to fear. David C. Lohff, the author of Dream Dictionary, believes that pregnancy dreams might sometimes represent a woman's **fears** of being an inadequate mother.

Author Tony Crisp, on the other hand, suggests that such dreams indicate that the dreamer is developing some area of potential or deepening a relationship. Dream interpreter Russell Grant writes that these dreams presage difficult times.

A Word From Very well

So what do you think? Do some of these dream interpretations seem accurate? If **not**, **don't** worry – your dreams are unique and high personal.

You are **not** likely to find anything more than simple entertainment in generalized interpretation books and dream dictionaries. Instead, consider your dreams a reflection of your waking life, mirroring your **fears**, **anxieties**, desires, hopes, and aspirations for the future. Consider the personal meaning of your dreams. In all likelihood, the things you experience in your dreams are probably a reflection of the concerns you face in your daily existence.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/understanding-your-dreams-2795935>

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You may have to do more Dream Research with in all the following 12 Dream Parts.

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Dreams. (More is being added in here – a lot more – later.)

Dream interpatation

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Join up with a volunteer non - profit program.

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, get some exercise, and involve yourself in a **positive** project that can lift your **spirit**. It also comes without a cost (**or very little**) to you and can provide a lot of entertainment and a fulfilling day when you're in the right mindset.

I've come to spend more and more of my time volunteering, serving on various committees and people helping groups in the community.

I am on a few local area towns and Church committees. It is hands-down the best thing I have ever done.

Be a volunteer with your local **Lions Club** or other Non - Profit Org. and you will feel much better about yourself. Be only a volunteer – for a time - if later you wish, you may later to join this local **Lions Club** it is later and it is up to you.

You'll be meeting other people who share your interests, which gives you an easy opener when striking up a conversation. Meet many new people and also maybe meet the next Him or the next Her for YOUR life. This Web Site is sponsored by a **Lions Club**.

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Note: Yes. For both single people and for people dating and married people have reviewed (**Well Pre – viewed**) this “Web Site” and its parts so far. As a summary of the parts and up-coming part drafts; most people are telling us that this information is also needed and wanted for them, yes, those married people too and many people found this as new information as they **didn't** even know about this stuff.

Subscription: One may have a Subscription as over age 18 Adult (**including the open part**) or the open or short PDF Web Site part for only a small fee of \$3 for each month. If you like these ideas and tips – please tell a few others.

Marriage Second Time Plus . **Org => A new** Web Site:

A new Web Site: <http://marriagesecondtimeplus.org/>

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Marriage Second Time Plus . Org => A new Web Site:

A new Web Site: <http://marriagesecondtimeplus.org/>

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Here is the link to the books (**stories PDF**) you can use.

The store files with the books (**PDF**) and checkout.

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If you have any comments, please E-Mail us: info@marriagesecondtimeplus.org/

Visit: Tri-CountyRegion.US

Visit a new Web Site: <https://marriagesecondtimeplus.org/>

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The End of Dreams # 41 Part 01