

I wrote a book on lucid dreaming...

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## Becoming Lucid

He “races along, knocking shoppers out of his way, and crashes through a plate glass window before successfully carrying out his first goal of rubbing the pavement and hugging an oak tree... and goes on to his third goal: dream sex, and finds his third-grade crush (now all grown up):

‘It was like kissing a zombie. Her head lolled to the side and her eyes were blank. My characters were terrible. What the hell was wrong with me?’ “

- Jeff Warren, quoted by Claire Johnson, in *Llewellyn’s Complete Book of Lucid Dreaming*.

I’ve written a book called *Becoming Lucid, Self-Awareness in Dreams and Waking Life*. It’s an exploration of lucid dreaming, what it means to be lucid, and – naturally – an exploration of awareness.

We all know a little about lucid dreaming: the fascinating idea of waking up in a dream with all your wits about you. Over the years I've read much about lucid dreaming, but I've been frustrated that it's mostly portrayed as an amusement park ride. Surely, there has to be more to it than spectacle and entertainment.



*“(Nikola Tesla) would do it through lucid dreaming. He would dream up the engine, forget about it, come back, and then discover where it was wearing. You know, where the parts were wearing out. That was the secret of why he did so many inventions.”*

- Paul Laffoley, Visionary Artist (1935 - 2015).

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Image: Secret Universe, Paul Laffoley

There have been attempts at being scientific. Experiments in which lucid dreamers use eye movements to communicate with awake observers, or communicate with each other telepathically. There have been magical claims of the most implausible kind – visiting other dimensions, teleportation, and speaking with the dead – as if being awake in your imagination is license to make any claim you ever wanted. People who wake up in the new territory of sleep think they can assert anything, like disembarking after an ocean voyage to claim this land in the name of Queen Isabella.

*“I’m walking into this diner, an awakened being, hallelujah! I’ve seen the light, this is a dream! I was so thrilled, it brought out the evangelist in me, not to convert to any creed, but if you’re awake you want everyone to be awake, you know, it’s better.*

*And so I went around the diner, to one person after another, and I said, “Do you know this is a dream?” And they’re all hunched over their hamburgers, their cokes, and their french fries. I went from one person to another to another in the dream, and not one person had any interest in what I was saying. They were much more interested in their hamburgers and french fries, and that surprised the heck out of me. I mean, this is my dream! Don’t you know this is my dream? You should be... you know, I’m awake!”*

- Alan Wallace, speaking at [“A Panel On Lucid Dreaming”](#), the 2015 Science and Nonduality Conference.

Lucid dreamers carry their world view, and – should we be surprised? – with it, find in their imaginations what they wish for: scientists make measurements, Tibetan Buddhists find enlightenment, shamanists talk to nature spirits. What is most interesting, I find, is that when you're lucid in a dream, all of these worlds seem equally real, and they are equally false. I wrote this book to say, "Hold on! Where is this going, at what are we arriving, and how are we getting there?"

In true head-first fashion, I offered to teach a course based on a book I had not yet written. That way, I had a time-frame and an interested audience who would listen, look perplexed, and ask questions. As they say, "If you want to learn something, teach it." To which I added, "If you want to make it valuable, charge for it." Eight people paid me \$100, so I had to deliver the goods.

I'd already written a book on sleep in which I'd explored aspects of science, medicine, and psychology ([The Path To Sleep, Exercises for an Ancient Skill](#)). Here, I wanted to focus on what it means to be awake, to dream, and to be awake in a dream. I found "being lucid" doesn't really say much by itself, which explains why lucid dream enthusiasts don't have much to say.

Lucidity is not a state – in fact – it's the process of gaining awareness. Any transition from any state of awareness to any greater state of awareness involves "becoming lucid." To claim the new awareness you've gained is more than the old awareness you've lost is as naive as claiming North America for the Queen of Spain. I don't mean lucidity is false; I mean that when you first become lucid you don't know much of anything. That's the way it is with any discovery.

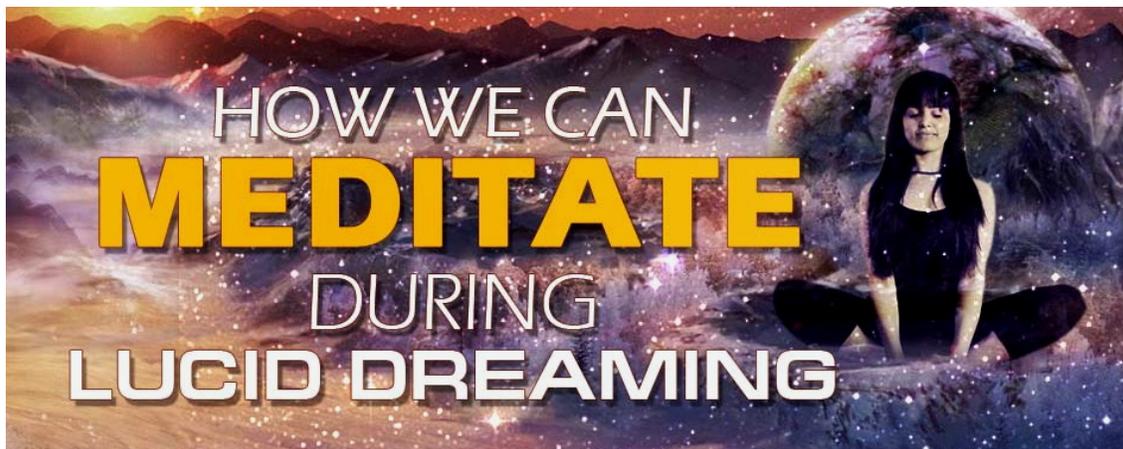


In addition to the uncertainty of where you've arrived, there is the problem in knowing which state is more aware. It's a serious question, and I have yet to hear a good answer. In most cases, the more "aware" state is the state of greater power and more inclusive knowledge. In this case, it's clear that "waking up" in a dream is a state of greater awareness than dreaming without being aware you're dreaming. However, according to this measure, the lucid dream may be more "lucid" than your normal waking state. This is not as ridiculous as it sounds, and it raises interesting questions.

One could say, “That’s silly! In my waking state I’m in touch with all I’ve ever learned, and I can explore anything around me.” However, in truth, “all you’ve ever learned” is just an idea, just a statement. And your notion of intellectual free will – the will to focus your attention anywhere – is no more real than the free will you feel when lucid in a dream. Free will is just an attitude; you seldom avail yourself of it.

It is a fairly common experience for lucid dreamers to wake up from their lucid dream only to find themselves in another lucid dream. This can happen repeatedly, giving the impression that you might not be able to wake up at all! It is not a simple matter to know whether or not you’re awake.

At the same time, the world you’re in touch with in a dream is a real world, too. It’s the world of your emotions, an important world to which you’re weakly connected when awake. The multi-dimensionality, fluidity, and seeming illogic of your dream world – as it’s viewed from your waking state – accurately express these aspects of your emotions, which defy placement in a linear sequence or logical map.



Your dream experiences are not lost, despite your waking mind’s habit of forgetting them, which is partly chemical. Dreams are integrated into long-term memory. As a result, where your waking experience contributes to what you know, your dream experience contributes to who you are.

Being aware and lucid in a dream, then, adds a rational aspect in your connection to an illogical world. If we could compare apples to apples, the lucid dream awareness could be “larger” than your awareness in your waking state. And – you must admit – in most of your waking state you are not particularly aware. Of the time you spend in your waking state, you remember practically nothing at all. Oh yes, it seems so full and detailed now, but what do you remember about yesterday? How much of it do you dream about?

Lucidity is no easier to define than consciousness. But by comparing different states of awareness we can more vibrantly experience the contrasts between them. Exploring lucidity in dreams does a great deal to shed light on what we consider normal and pathological states of wakefulness.

One of the first things we can do is create different measures of lucidity, such as how much can be remembered, the scope of “free will,” and by what logic things fit together. We can immediately apply these measures to other states, to other people, and to other people’s states. I’m working on that project.

*“I was in the void, ... being pulled along by this mysterious wind force... a very beautiful rainbow-colored sphere came rolling past me and it was very clear and well defined in appearance... I had never actually seen an object in the void, and I began to wonder what was going on... I was surrounded by subtle arrays of colored patterns... the patterns seemed to be behind the darkness... I have no words to describe what I was seeing.”*

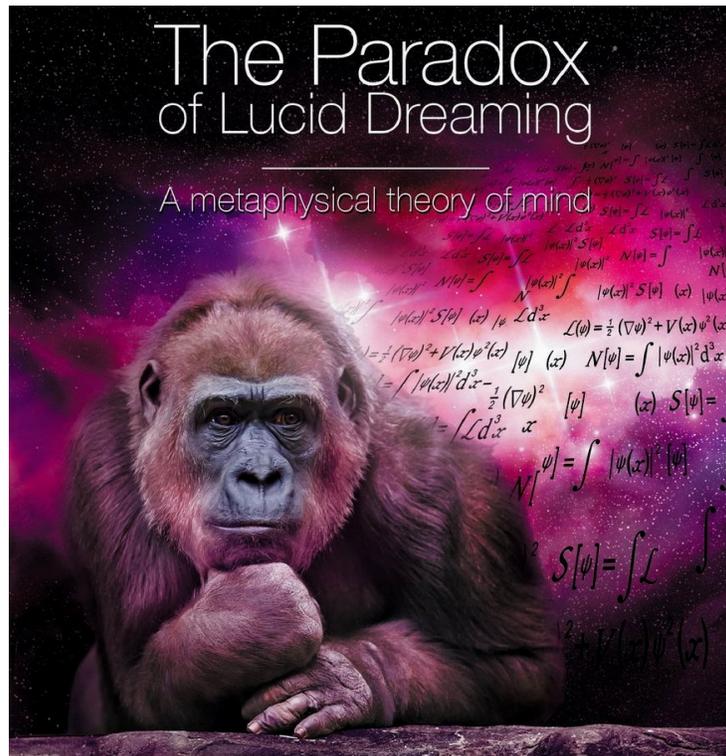
- Daniel DeGracia, reported in LaBerge, S. & DeGracia, D.J. (2000). “Varieties of lucid dreaming experience.” In R.G. Kunzendorf & B. Wallace (Eds.), *Individual Differences in Conscious Experience*.

We can ask a dream character if it knows that it is in a dream, and we can inquire about its history and purpose. We can tabulate the lucidity of our inner landscape, and plot the answers. Similarly, we can ask characters in our waking reality if they know the extent to which they inhabit a dream, and inquire of their history and purpose. If we take this project seriously, and insist on serious answers, then we can map the landscape of our own lucidity.

*“I am walking with my friend ... I suggest to him that even though he is only a dream character, perhaps he could realize that he is dreaming. Maybe he does, for I wake up!”*

- Stephen LaBerge, reported in LaBerge
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& DeGracia, Ibid.



What's most interesting to note is how rarely we push the limits of our lucidity, to explore outside the norm. That is, not unless you took my class, read my book, or generally wander around questioning reality. This is something that I now do, and I find many rewards in doing it. For one thing, it's made me a lot more observant. For another thing, it's made me a lot quieter. I'm still thinking, but I'm not thinking with words.

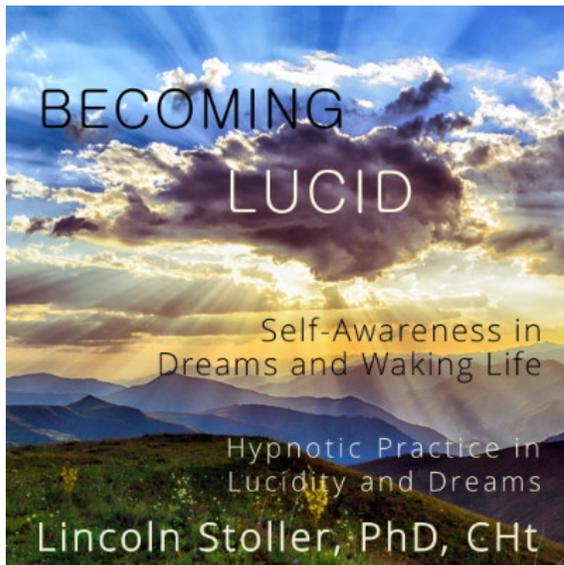
““You cannot plough a field by turning it over in your mind.”

Author Unknown

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*Becoming Lucid* consists of 9 (mostly) short chapters. Each chapter has a 15- to 20-minute hypnotic induction that you should listen to half a dozen times in order to embed the learning in your subconscious.

You can view chapters and hear a few of the hypnotic inductions by clicking this link to the [SAMPLE PAGE](#)



(<http://www.mindstrengthbalance.com/becoming-lucid-prologue-and-sample/>).

From that page, if you want, you can buy the book for US\$40.

### AND...

For one month, until the end of July 2018, you can get *Becoming Lucid* for US\$20 by using the discount code "LUCIDSUBSCRIBER".

*"At the words 'letting go,' I realize that I'm dreaming, and that the real solution is to trust and let go. As I do so, leaping into the beautiful sunrise sky, I am overwhelmed with feeling, and awoken with tears of joy."*

- Stephen LaBerge, reported in LaBerge & DeGracia, Ibid.

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