



# Dreams For Life

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“Stop consuming images and start producing them.”

— Terence McKenna

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## Reason

We live in a scientific age where things are certified by scientists, but dreams will never be. The standard needs revision, if it's to be applied to dreams. To understand what dreams are, you have to understand what it means to be. There is the one main thing lacking and it keeps us from understanding dreams.” We can fix this.

Dreams are autopoietic: they are new things entirely of themselves. They cannot be understood in terms of smaller things. The very notion of dreams having pieces is misleading. Breaking a dream down is a destructive exercise, a hangover from our preoccupation with being reductive. A dream is what it's leading toward, not where it's coming from.

Autopoietic refers to what takes place, not what is acted upon. A dream creates feelings, it does not act on thoughts. It cannot be decomposed into thoughts. You do not understand what a dream “does” to

anything, you can only understand what a dream creates. It is generated from memory bits but it is not made of them. It is not just more than what it comes from. If it were, it would be a synergy of memories. It's different from where it came from, which makes it autopoietic.

Just as a chicken is not a construction of eggs, ideas are not accumulation of words, and life is not an assembly of chemicals, a dream is different from the ideas, memories, and attitudes we find inside it. The crucial point that will help you understand all things autopoietic--including dreams--is that they are not defined by what's inside them, but what's outside them, by what they create. Dreams are fundamental entities born from confusion.

## Novelty

Denying your powers of reason may make you feel overwhelmed, but it's much simpler than you might think. You cannot understand dreams by analyzing where you came from, but you can understand them with regard to where you're going. Dreams are forward looking.

We spend most of our lives looking behind us, arranging the detritus we've created. We endlessly puzzle about the future, but always in terms of who we are and what we've done. We're invested in what we've made ourselves to be, and we strong arm the future into the context of our past. In these collages of past junk nothing fundamentally new is created.

Novelty emerges from connecting things that don't connect, or that didn't connect before they were connected. We often assert that new things are made out of old things when we recognize the old in the new, but the old things are no longer what they were. Like the adult who grows from a child, or a special person who evolves from a stranger, what is new is different.

## Relevance

We play little role in the formation of our dreams because we're ignorant of the process, but we can play a greater role. We can have a positive effect if we know what's going on.

We exist in a part of our brains that operates rationally. Reasonable behavior holds our identity together. We react sensibly to the world as it is dangerous to react based on emotions alone. We base our actions on the reasons we infer from what we see, which results in a lot of barely reasonable behavior. We explain away what we don't understand using the nonsense reasoning we find so cute in children. We do the same as adults, but we do it in a social context where we all agree.

After the day is done, we're left with a story of who we are, how we acted, and why. From this, we create a reasonable picture of what we think and how we'll deal with what's to come. We are disturbed by conflicts that don't make sense: psychopathic behavior, rioting, and the so-called "acts of god." Unfortunately, many of our explanations are half-cocked, and some of them are pure nonsense.

When we go to sleep our deeper mind, the part of our mind that really has to sort things out, confronts a mess of contradictions: explanations that do not fit, and attitudes that are contrary to emotions. It's from this mess, with the goal of making more useful sense, that we dream.

## Construction

The world changes when you exit consensual reality, a reality defined by all the thoughts and deeds culture and good judgement forbid. Exiting consensual reality is daunting, it's frightening, and that boundary continues to exist in your dreams as a source of trepidation. We all would like to stay within these walls. It's safer here and, despite it's already being a somewhat post-apocalyptic world, it's home.

We see and feel conflicts around us. All of these conflicts have some resonance in our own attitudes, in fact, they exist as an extension of our own attitudes. If they didn't, they'd have no meaning to us. The fears we harbor of what might happen to us are the same as the fears we carry of who we might be. This material insists itself upon us in our dreams.

We all harbor some divine spark, but we're all rather dull. It's dull to be reasonable. We could be so much more, but we are inventions created by committee carrying too much thought-baggage. We're attached to ideas that prevent us from evolving.

Our dreams are this struggle, not the good versus the bad or the old versus the new, but a disorganized chaos involving the hopeful, naive, bitter, wise, bestial, and godly parts of us. To play a useful part in your dreams, step into this arena. You'll be forgiven if you feel overwhelmed, most people do.

## Engagement

Playing a constructive role in your dreams involves loosening your hold on what you think, and disengaging yourself from those who like you just the way you are. You need the strength and freedom to follow your feelings into places that are not like yourself, and you need to do this without anyone understanding or accepting you.

Every foreign, repugnant, silly, uncomfortable, ugly, loving, hateful, and irrelevant character in your dreams is you. You must become a master character actor and mirror the thoughts and feelings of each of them.

Every situation in your dreams is a situation you feel you might encounter. The only way to avoid those that are unpleasant is to enter and change them. The only way to enlarge those that are pleasant is to seek permission and make yourself feel at home.

A dream is a conflict of symbols. The symbols are thought forms that can be thin, transparent, and brief or they can be thick, opaque, and enduring. You are a higher thought-form that swims through them but, at the same time, you are composed of them.

This struggle proceeds largely outside your awareness and you are simply the result of the combinations that prevail. But you can play a role by gaining awareness of the forces at play and entering as an actor in the fray. You don't need to become lucid in your dreams, in the traditional sense

of waking up and giving orders, you can simply and intentionally decide how you feel about those conflicts that are likely to occur but of which you might otherwise be oblivious. Simply by recognizing the actors and their conflicts and by stating your feelings you have an effect.

We all need to be recognized, loved, and appreciated. This is a thought-form that defines us, but there is a part of us that could be free of it. Be deciding how you feel about this need, and by recognizing that this need is itself a living thing, the feeling begins to recognize and respond to you.

There is a part of us that needs to love ourselves, and this part is weak in many of us. We must recognize this as a separate in order to understand how it determines how we love and be loved. It may take a lifetime for this part of ourselves to flower, but we should recognize it as a separate part of ourselves. In doing so, we come to better understand how to nourish and protect it.

Dreams are your peek into the solar system of your personality, composed of the planets of your attitudes like constellations of the ecliptic. They are a kind of dynamic astrology in which you can play a role. This is the goal of dreamwork.

“Imagination is the goal of history. I see culture as an effort to literally realize our collective dreams.”

—Terence McKenna



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