



Dreams, High Performance, and Mental Health

Dreams are a necessary part of reality. They fasten you to your mental health.

Lincoln Stoller, PhD, 2023. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)
www.mindstrengthbalance.com



“The real life of knowledge and understanding is played out on the borderline between the ascertainable and the unascertainable.”

— **Carl Jung**, from *Atom and Archetype* (111-117).

Dreams

All dreams are premonitory, a combination of predictive and creative. They are predictive of how you’ll feel given what’s going on, not predictive of what’s going to happen. But how you act and react affect what will happen, so dreams are predictive in that regard.

We confuse what’s going on inside us with what’s going on outside, and I suspect that’s why we forget our dreams. If we remembered dreams too well, then we’d confuse our dream memories

with the recollections of real events. After all, it's more our feelings that we remember about real events than the events themselves, and feelings are what we remember from our dreams.

I tell my clients to pay attention to their dreams, but most people's lives are not dream friendly. To be dream friendly, you must sleep frequently. You must have many awakenings, not just one each morning. You must weave your dreams into your life.

I meet and comment on my clients' lives once every week or two. This gives them a chance to adjust their directions. Their directions are set in the periods of their dreams, as dreams are the consolidation of our inclinations.

The most creative person dreams a lot. You might even equate creativity with dreaming, though we normally think of productive creativity as something that's more attached to reality than dreams. But this is a mistake.

Dreams are quite attached to reality, but indirectly. They are a hybrid thought-form that combines real symbols with evoked emotions. Dreams symbolize our chaotic emotional reality. Our emotional reality defines our feelings, and our feelings guide our actions and create our reality.

Achievement

I tend to work with high-achievers. To me, a high achiever is anyone who strives to resolve old issues and redefine themselves. A high achiever could be entrepreneurial in building a new product, or psychological in building a new reality. The issues will differ, but the courage and convictions are similar.

The entrepreneur has less psychological material to work with, as he or she believes their struggle is external. This person is analytical because analysis works best when applied to the world of narrow causes, intentional events. Their emotional problems are internal, so personal change focuses on getting them to see things from an internal perspective.

Confusion

The emotionally challenged person—which could be anyone but is primarily one who recognizes the internal aspects of their struggle—is navigating a landscape that makes little sense and, to bend the metaphor, is not sense-able. They do not connect their internal landscape with their external sense perceptions. They do not see their confusions as signs they have built into the real world.

Those of us in the external world encourage this delusion. We don't feel responsible for the psychopath's paranoia or the neurotic's depression. We offer solace and support, but we don't take responsibility for what drives other people crazy. This creates the unstable situations we see all around us, where perfectly rational people create perfectly unworkable situations.

When people act irrationally, we say, “What are they thinking? What are they trying to accomplish?” That’s the wrong question because irrational actions are not designed to achieve a solution, they’re designed to realize a problem, and the problem is larger than what we consider is reasonable.



Illusion

The exception is psychopathy, which, though somewhat of a spectrum condition, can be considered a class unto itself. The psychopath projects their internal dysregulation onto the world and mistakes their projection for reality, rather than a reflection of it. The psychopath is like the wild turkey I watched attacking its reflection in a window. In the human world, we are the reflection in the psychopath’s window.

This can be the “shoot the messenger” syndrome, as we often do this. But in real life, the messenger is a righteous, willing actor who deserves the heat, such as a soldier, teacher, or boss. The situation is pathological when the agent is your own fantasy.

We all weave our reality from the threads of our illusions. Our identity is a composite of what we’ve been told, learned, and shown ourselves to be. Like the tip of a growing vine, we climb a trellis without knowing how we got here or exactly where we’re going. Built into the vine’s genetics is an attraction to light and a sense of reward in movement, but it doesn’t know why. We don’t know why either, which is where dreams fit in.

Dreams will tell you what you're going to feel. Not what you felt, but what you might in a kaleidoscope of possibilities. Dreams show you combinations of situations and emotions. What you rarely realize is that these dream scenarios are choices for the future, not simply reflections of the past. They're built of memories, but they're premonitions of what may come.



Low Achievers

We deceive ourselves into thinking that reality makes more sense than dreams. Reality is just the dream we've realized, but it may not make any more sense. The new war in Israel is the realization of a repressed nightmare. The only "objective" of this war is to make real the conflict that's been repressed by people who don't know what or could do nothing about it.

Many people I speak with are not high achievers because they do not want to be. They are not ready to reframe their situations and, instead, need to make things worse. They insist their conflicts are real, their enemies are real, and conflagration is necessary. These people will hurt themselves and those around them. They don't need my help, and I don't want to help them in their effort.

I tell these people they have a choice between picking a different reality or committing a kind of violence. Where the high achiever is open to change, the low achievers are prone to violence. I rarely need to tell them to go elsewhere. I simply tell them where they're headed. The pitchfork mentality is easily attracted to the darkness.

The new war in the Middle-East is a war between intransigents, not entrepreneurs. There are no new rewards, only old hatreds. The result is clear: more hatred. The aim is clear too: deal with

the hatred. Until something good is on offer, there will be no positive solution.



High Achievers

The entrepreneur sees a promising path to a rewarding goal. These people are more open to problems and are more proactive in addressing them. The high achiever is motivated by reward, even when the path is unclear. The reward may be material or personal. It may even be uncertain, but there is a willingness to move in a positive direction.

I view my dysregulated clients as potentially high achievers. Their potential high achievement is insight, direction, and power. I will put off prospective clients if I cannot make this clear: I am not interested in realizing their disability. I see disability as a lens to better focus on a problem which, most likely, seems nonsensical.

I will say the same to high achievers, that their problems need greater focus. We create greater focus by achieving greater resolution. We work to see our goals more clearly. This creates the resolve to progress, but it does not create the resolution that will result from it.

This is an important distinction: the high achiever recognizes the need to focus without a solution. The low achiever demands a solution without a clear path. The low achiever is ready to fight a war that leads to nothing.

Looking for solutions is fine if you're dealing with the right problem, but, most of the time, we're dealing with a contrived problem that's not realistic. War is an example of an extreme

delusion, but so is battling to the top of the corporate ladder, or simply struggling for a higher grade.

This brings us back to dreams, which create neither focus nor resolution. Dreams suggest potential realities, emotional realities, not material ones. I want my clients to become high achievers by realizing their dreams. I want them to loosen their grips and consider what is at the tops of the ladders they're climbing.

The mental health of the analytical person lies at the end of a rainbow. The path is real, but the goal is not, and the solution is not to expect your goals to be real things. Goals are things you make up as you go along. Satisfaction is something you stand on, not something you reach for.

There will always be the potential for future satisfaction, and it will always lie in the future. You never get to the future, but it is always there. Your satisfaction is made from how you resolve your dreams in the present.

You can create satisfied dreams. We experience these as lucid dreams, dreams that deliver the security we're always looking for. These come as dreams in which we're in control; dreams of safety and satisfaction. You will have them when you create safety and satisfaction. You do this both in your mind and in your world.

A high achiever is someone who achieves a high state. It is not a material distinction; it does not require money or recognition. It is a state of peace with oneself. We sometimes call it mental health.

References

Meier, C. A. (Ed.) (2001). *Atom and Archetype: The Pauli/Jung Letter, 1932-1958*. Princeton University Press.

If you'd like more peace in the world, then consider your paths and goals.

Call me for a free discussion:

<https://www.mindstrengthbalance.com/schedule15>
