



The Lucid Dreaming Primer
<http://www.LucidBlog.com>

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What is Lucid Dreaming?

You are walking down the street. The mid-afternoon sun is directly overhead, barely able to penetrate the high trees lining both sides. As you keep walking, you see someone turn the corner, whistling a tune. The person is coming toward you. You start to get a slight feeling of un-ease, but don't know why. As the person comes closer, you finally realize it. The person is walking backwards! As you look around more, you notice that everything is happening in reverse. What's more, you see that the person walking backwards and whistling, is YOU!

Then, you think to yourself, "Hey, this can't be really happening, right?!?!?". Then you begin to realize that what you are experiencing is a dream. Nothing in this "world" you're currently in, is even real. A feeling of exhilaration and liberation sweeps over you, and the dream scenery suddenly takes on a very crisp and clear quality. You, like others who have had similar experiences, feel as if this place actually feels more real than the real world.

This is what lucid dreaming is. It is knowing that you are dreaming, WHILE you are dreaming. It is, in a sense, becoming fully conscious in the dream state.

Has this kind of dream happened to you before? Want to learn to do it more often? Or, are you like the majority of people in the world who have yet to have this kind of experience? Want to learn to do this yourself?

How to Remember Your Dreams

Dream Recall is the very first skill to master if you are serious about having Lucid Dreams. It's believed that the average person has about 5-7 dreams each night. Being able to remember your dreams when you are awake greatly enhances your ability to realize that the dream you are dreaming is a dream. If your dream recall is less than desirable, it is actually possible that you could have had lucid dreams in the past and are not able to remember it!

There are several methods to remembering your dreams more. Here are three:

- Simply intend to remember more of your dreams
- Keep a dream journal
- Get really good at describing your surroundings (one of my favorites)

Intend to remember more of your dreams

This is so simple it is often overlooked. By simply holding the intent to remember more of your dreams, your chances of remembering dreams is greatly enhanced. I suspect this may just be some sort of pre-programming yourself as you fall asleep to remember more dreams. It works.

Keep a Dream Journal

This is one of the most often recommended techniques to boosting your dream recall. I think this ties in with the above mentioned step of intending to remember dreams. Each and every time I've started a dream journal (I've fallen off the wagon several times before), I noticed a virtually instant boost in my dream recall. The intent is there. Keep a notebook by your bed, under your pillow, wherever you want, as long as you can reach it without moving around too much upon waking up.

When you write in the dream journal, simply write down what happened in the dream. Don't try to interpret the dream itself. This usually kills the effect of remembering.

'Tis best to try and stay in the same emotional state you are in when you first wake up. Feelings and emotions seem to carry over from the dream into waking life. If you can keep that emotional state going as you write down the dream's events, you will remember a LOT more.

Remember, don't try and figure the dream out as you write. Save the interpretation for when you are in a lucid dream, so you can just ask your subconscious mind directly about it 😊

Get really good at describing your surroundings

This is something to do while awake. This method is beautiful because it can be done literally ANYWHERE.

As an example, assume you are walking on a busy crowded downtown street during lunch hour. As you are walking, just start describing aloud (it works best, if you can ignore the occasional stares from passers-by) what you are perceiving. Keep it in the present tense. You might say “I see a bunch of buildings, many of which are lined with glass”, and so on.

Sometimes, it might help to take along a tape recorder or recording device of some sort. This way, you can listen to it later on in privacy, with eyes closed, and attempt to remember in as much detail the experience of the walk itself.

Just remember to keep the descriptions in the present tense. The power of this method is that you will eventually be in a dream state, describing what you are perceiving, and you will suddenly start to describe the flock of birds (or are those pigs?) flying in circles. And then, it will hit you...PIGS (or are they birds?) DON'T FLY!

Each of these methods are powerful alone. Now, imagine making a successful habit of doing all three together.

That is basically all there is to boosting your own dream recall.

How to Know if You're Dreaming

Now that you've learned how to remember your dreams more, it's time to tackle another vital aspect of Lucid Dreaming: How to know if you're dreaming.

Reality Checking is the conscious act of determining if you are dreaming or awake. There are several methods of reality checks. In reality (pun intended), however, the basic function of reality checking is to notice something of place, and use this as proof that you are in a dream.

So, what to notice? Well, that is up to you. After you've written down the content of several dreams, you may begin to notice a pattern of emerging objects, people or themes that run through most or all of your dreams. These are called **dreamsigns**.

So, assume that one of my dreamsigns is a French Poodle. I may begin by setting the intention that every time I see a French Poodle, I will try out the reality checks which I'll discuss shortly. This is somewhat of a Pavlovian anchoring exercise, designed to install the habit of doing a reality check.

Along with checking for the presence of dreamsigns there is the possibility of noticing something that just should not be happening. Flying pigs, cars that drive themselves, or speaking to a deceased relative at a fun carnival are just a few examples.

In my experience, this is somewhat harder to do. You may want to give it an honest go and see if it works for you, though. In case you'd like to, it involves becoming more aware of your surroundings than you normally are. This is akin to the exercise of describing everything in as much detail as possible that I described in the section about [remembering your dreams](#). This is a powerful skill to have if you can get it to work for you.

A popular reality checking method in dreams is to look at printed or written text or words, then looking away and looking back to see if the words are the same. If the wording is different than the first time, you are probably dreaming. I've personally not ever gotten this to work well, because for the most part words and text don't change in my dreams.

In one dream, in fact, I was reading words on a whiteboard like you see the restaurant "specials of the day" on. I looked away, then back, and the words were the same. I ended up going lucid from another method I use that I will tell you about later on, as it warrants a post all by itself. After going lucid, I looked at the whiteboard, and the words were still the same! Once I noticed that, I was intrigued. Why would the words be the same for me? I then had an idea. I started "willing" the words to change to other words, but instead the entire thing just jumbled up into a bunch of smudged symbols. My personal favorite technique to do while awake is to look at my watch.

I have a G-Shock watch and I have a little litany I do with it. I'll look at the time on it, then I look at the words on it in a set pattern going around the face. Then I look away for a second or two, and look back and do the whole thing again. The whole process takes only about 2 or 3 seconds at most. The reason I like this so much is that it works for me, but also it meshes well with the next thing I'm talking about, which is the timing of your methods.

I've written before that these tricks and tips work best if they become subconscious habit. What better way to make it a subconscious habit than through lots and lots of practice?

An awesome way to do this is to set a timer of some sort, and perform your favorite reality checking technique each time the timer goes off. This goes hand-in-hand with the idea of doing a reality check each time you see one of your personal **dreamsigns**.

I prefer the watch method for two major reasons. First, because it can be set to go off whenever you want it to, so you're not at the mercy of finding a dreamsign or not. Second, and probably best of all, is that sometimes in your sleep, if you've got one of those watches that goes off every hour, you'll do reality checks each time it beeps. You will know that you've made it into a habit when you notice yourself doing dream checks without being consciously aware that the watch has gone off. 😊

So, in summary. If you want to be able to tell if you are dreaming or not, pay attention to your surroundings, look for your own personal dreamsigns and also keep on the lookout for things that are simply out of place. Try out the different methods for at least 3 weeks, to ensure each has a chance to turn into a habit. Find which methods work best for you and work with them.

How to Stay in a Dream as Long as You Want

Now that I've given you some tips on how to remember your dreams and how to know if you're dreaming, you're starting to get a grasp of the basic skills needed for lucid dreaming. In fact, if you were to start to apply those two techniques right now, you are practically guaranteed to have at least one spontaneous lucid dream. Congratulations!

What happens for the majority of people during their first lucid dream? Upon becoming lucid, they start to think something like this:

"Oh my God, I'm DOING IT! I'm DREAMING! Wow, I bet I could...." And they wake up from the excitement. This is an inevitable experience for most people. So, if this happens to you, don't worry about it. Be grateful that you were able to have the experience of your first lucid dream. To get an idea of what to expect, check out the report of my first lucid dream on my blog at www.LucidBlog.com

The key to staying in the dream for a longer period of time is to control your excitement level. The most basic advice one can give for this is "Don't get so excited."

There are a few techniques that are useful for staying in the dream as long as possible:

- **Spinning** (like a tornado)
- **Yelling out loud in the dream** (works for me)
- **Anchoring** (my personal **FAVORITE**)

Spinning is just that. In the dream, simply spin around really fast like you are a super tornado from hell. This serves to keep you conscious. Most of the time, this technique tends to take me (and many others) into entirely new dream settings. I don't find it useful as much as next 2 methods if I want to stay in the current setting.

Yelling out loud is a highly effective method. I have no idea why it works, unless it's just serving to focus yourself on the act of yelling. This method might not be nice to your significant other if you tend to talk in your sleep. I've never really played with that aspect of it. Might be interesting.

The next method is Anchoring, which I like to use most often, because it's just way cool. This basically borrows from the research of people like Pavlov, of dog fame. It is basically taking one stimulus and tying or anchoring it to an expected result, outcome or response. Here's how I came to use the anchoring technique I use to stay in the dream as long as possible.

In Summer of 2004, I was very heavy into lucid dreaming research at the time, and I still had the problem of exciting myself awake. I had been getting interested in Neuro-

Linguistic Programming (or NLP) a lot, because of the potential it has to develop excellence in skills very rapidly. One day, I came across a technique used by Ross Jeffries to develop unwavering confidence while dealing with women. I studied his technique for a few minutes, and wondered to myself “What can I do with this technique?

Improving my confidence sounds like a useful task.” And that is when it hit me, I could slightly modify his technique to learn to control my excitement levels in the lucid dreaming state!

So, I did it, and wouldn't ya know it? I had a Lucid Dream that felt like it lasted for about 45 minutes. Here's the technique I used (after modification).

- Close your eyes, and think back to a time when you did something you felt something very confident and proud of something you accomplished. Get as far back into that memory as you can. Remember how things smell, feel and look right then. Let that feeling of confidence you felt then come back into your consciousness.
- Once you are fully entrenched in that feeling of confidence, touch the index finger of each hand to it's respective thumb. Notice how the sensation of the tips of thumbs and fingers touching feels to you, while at the same time, holding that feeling of confidence. You may notice that the memory itself fades, while the feeling of confidence remains. This is what you want.

Do this simple 2-step process three to five times, each time using a different memory from your past, remembering each time to touch the fingers and thumbs together only when you get the full feeling of proud confidence.

Now, think back to your most recent lucid dream from which you excited yourself awake. Start at the beginning, and relive the dream in memory from start to finish, up to the point that you woke up, and remember frustrated you might have felt.

Now, rewind the dream and start it over, and this time, as you come up to the point that caused you to wake up, push through the experience while using the finger/thumb exercise to bring up the feeling of confidence.

Say, for example, that in the original dream, you were walking and became lucid and decided to fly, and once you got in the air, you got so excited that you woke up in mid-flight. Relive that dream once, so you remember the feelings of frustration you're about to poo-poo away forever.

Start the dream over, and as you start to fly, fire off the anchor of fingers/thumbs and think to yourself “I am flying in a lucid dream, and I am as calm as I have ever been. I can stay here as long as I wish.”

This last exercise may sound cheesy, but I guarantee it works. At least for me.

And THAT is how I am able to stay in a lucid dream longer than I ever used to be able to.

How to Control Your Dream

Once you are to the point of being able to have an occasional lucid dream, or even several per week, it's time to take control.

One of the most promising aspects of lucid dream is the notion of controlling the dream itself. What are some things you can do within the dream?

In order to help give you some ideas of what you can do once you learn the art of dream control, I came up with a list of a few things you may want to try out. So, here is a partial list of thing you can do (don't do anything I wouldn't do 😊):

- Spend some intimate quality time with the celebrity of your choice
- Study for that upcoming test/quiz
- Activate that book you just finished Photoreading
- Explore your spirituality

There are, of course, many many more things you can do once you are able to manipulate the dream itself.

In my lucid dreams, I'll admit that I rarely ever directly influence the dream. Lately, I've found it far more interesting to remain as a passive observer and simply walk around or sometimes fly around, and I explore the dream reality. Just because I DON'T control (for the most part), doesn't mean that I CAN'T. That's what I want you to realize here. Dream control is all about CHOICE. Same as in life.

Having said that, here is how to control the dream.

As you are lying in bed, simply visualize the dream you would like to have. Experience it as you would like to experience it. Get as far into the visualization as you can. Hear the sounds, see the sights, smell how it smells. As you are getting into this visualization, clench your hands into fists. Not tightly, but relaxed fists. Use it as an anchor.

Allow your brain to tie the feeling of clenching the hands into fists with the feeling of what your prospective dream feels like.

Next time you are lucid, clench your dream fists and remember the dream you want to have. Much like running a computer program, your dream will now "load up" for you.

And, since you are now altering the content of the dream, you don't have to stick exactly to the "script" you've made in your visualization. You can now make things happen by the power of sheer thought.

Conclusion

Thanks for reading this short primer on Lucid Dreaming. If you would like to read more information about Lucid Dreaming and what can be done with it, I highly recommend you check out the Lucidity Institute's website at www.lucidity.com or my own blog at www.lucidblog.com

DREAM ON!!!