

Summary: TWENTY-ONE BASIC HINTS FOR GROUP DREAM WORK

1. Always remember that only the dreamer can know what a dream means. The "tingle" or "aha" or "flash" or "bell ringing" of the dreamer himself or herself is the only reliable touchstone of dream work.
2. Remember also that the "tingle test" is only a positive test. If the dreamer does not respond to any of the questions or suggestions of group members, it simply does not matter if those ideas are "correct" or not. Dreaming has an inherent tendency to self-correct and, pursued with an open heart, will always bring the important truths to the surface of consciousness.
3. For groups that meet regularly, it is a good idea to begin each meeting with a period of "touch in" where group members regularly say something brief about their internal/emotional state and what they know about the multiple reasons for their feelings.
4. It is also a good idea to have a brief period where all in the group participate together in a centering exercise to relax, cut down mental chatter, and evoke the intuition. Such exercises are also a good idea at the close of group meetings.
5. Everyone who comes to a dream group with a dream to share should have a chance to share it. Failure to share a dream at a group meeting "because there isn't enough time" or for whatever reason often results in a dramatic drying up of dream memory until the dream has been shared. One good way to proceed is to have everyone in the group share a dream and/or a list of titles of dreams, right after the centering exercise, without comment, before proceeding with work on any particular dream.
6. Share dreams in the present tense as much as possible. Refer to your written records, or read them verbatim, to make sure that nothing is forgotten. Share any expressive work you may have done in association with the dream at the same time you share the dream. (However,

the dreamer may wish to withhold any particular insights about the dream reached outside the group until after group members have had a chance to react and comment in order not to prematurely close consideration of the dream's possibilities.) Do not interrupt anyone sharing a dream unless you have a compelling reason.

7. Remember always that every time we share a dream, we reveal more about ourselves than we consciously realize. It is important to be sensitive and remain aware of your own and others' feelings.
8. Remember that every dream has multiple meanings. One of the reasons why group dream work is so rewarding is that the different ideas, projections, and intuitions of group members are likely to touch a much wider range of possible meaning than can easily be reached working alone or with only one other person.
9. Remember that what is said about a dream always reflects the personality and symbol structures of the person making the comment as much as or more than anything in the dream itself. It is often useful to preface any comment about a dream with the idea: "if it were *my* dream . . ."
10. Remember also that "spooky" and seemingly "supernatural" things frequently occur in dreams (things like "telepathy," "precognition," "past life recall," encounters with "spirits," etc.). Don't be frightened if and when such things seem to happen to you or others in your group. These things happen so often that they are clearly *natural*, and we must learn to develop language and structures of thought adequate to discuss and share these experiences. Don't ignore or repress *any* aspect of your experience simply because you don't understand it.
11. Encourage yourself and others to give further creative expression to the ideas, images, and energies of dreams. Help think of ways to do this. Seek suggestions about what expressive exercises might be most productive in further constellating and releasing the best energies of the dream. Insight is often evoked by cooperating in the

- dramatic enactment of a dream. Making and using masks of important dream characters is often interesting and productive.
12. While a dream is being shared, pay attention to imaginative, imagistic, feeling, emotional, and intuitive responses. Pay attention to it with as much of your whole being as possible.
 13. After a dream has been shared, try to deal first with any questions of clarification in the narrative. Feeling responses, intuitions, ideas about meaning and metaphor, suggestions for expressive work, Gestalt and Active Imagination exercises, dream drama enactments, and what-have-you should follow for as long as seems appropriate and productive.
 14. Understand that you can never come to the end of the possible meanings of any dream, so get used to deciding clearly when you have done your collective best with a dream and it's time to move on.
 15. After someone has shared a dream and worked on it—particularly if he or she has had any flashes of understanding and insight—that person is very likely to be more withdrawn and less attentive than usual and he or she "takes it in." Expect this and allow it to happen without hassle.
 16. Be as honest and conscious with each other as possible. Remain aware of group process. Speak the truth. Treat each other with respect. (This is not a bad idea any time, but it is particularly important when dealing with dreams and the intimate feelings evoked by dreams.)
 17. If the dreamer is drawing a blank, try having someone else read the dream account aloud. Often hearing one's own words with someone else's intonations is a trigger to insight.
 18. Don't ignore your body. Pay attention to your needs to stretch and move around.
 19. Watch out for misunderstandings. If you or anyone in the group is continually misunderstood, devote some thought to why that may be happening.
 20. Many groups have had positive experiences develop

around decorating their dream journals. When time and materials are available, this is often very enjoyable to undertake as a group activity. Collage is a particularly appropriate and flexible medium for dream art and dream journal decoration. Use clear contact paper (or some other medium) to protect the collages and make the dream journal as comfortable in the hand and rugged as possible. Color photocopies also are a particularly effective and relatively inexpensive way to work with collage.

21. Enjoy yourself.