

A full-page background image of a misty forest path. The path is covered in fallen red leaves and leads into the distance. The trees and bushes are heavily laden with bright red flowers and leaves, creating a vibrant, autumnal scene. The mist adds a soft, ethereal quality to the image.

Dream Catching:
**HAVE A LITTLE
ADVENTURE EVERY DAY**

"The deepening dusk opens to a night blue sky with stars and so much room. I'm sitting on a park bench illuminated by a warm light shining from an exotic lamppost from a long-ago era. Talking to my brother about how we can have a relationship that is more enriching, I notice it's not his face, but the handsome face of a much younger man, perhaps from a tropical land."

I wake up from this dream with a knowing; this is a big dream, and I was not talking to my brother in this dream. My brother was named after my grandfather, a man I never met and knew little about. My father was raised in foster homes, and his missing family was a mystery to me. This felt like an invitation, one I decided to accept.

So, in the bright morning, I did an online Google search of my grandfather's name. A photo from 1913 appeared, of a freshman high school football team, and one of the players was my grandfather. As I recognized the face I had dreamed the night before, I felt a blast of energy in my solar plexus and burst into tears, tears for the ancestors I didn't realize I needed to know in order to feel whole and to understand my place of belonging in this world.

I embarked on a genealogical treasure hunt that revealed three generations of my family, two generations of healers and their children, who lived in India, where my grandfather was born. The dream revealed my need to have a relationship with my lineage. The dream brought deep healing and practical information. It came to help me and had the power to change my life.

We are born dreamers. We dream in the womb, and research indicates that by the time we are eighty years old, we have spent twenty years of our lives dreaming. This is a vital part of our lives that we don't want to miss. Even though dreams may be mysterious, scary, or we simply don't remember, there are gems of insight waiting to be uncovered.

Dreams guide us, help us make decisions, remind us of things we've forgotten, tell us about relationships, show us what our soul needs to thrive, move blocked energy and help us heal. They warn us of

challenges, tell us about our physical and emotional health, inspire and entertain us, and bring creative gifts. Larry Page knows about the creative gifts of dreaming.

"When a really great dream shows up, grab it."

- Larry Page

Describing how he woke from a dream and was inspired to act on it, and Google.com was born.

Dreams are magic, and everyday life can be too. This is what your dreaming self already knows, that dreams come to inspire and enchant your life, to guide you. They serve you, even the frustrating or scary ones, and sometimes, the especially scary ones bring especially deep healing. Your dreams are a reliable gauge of what is going on inside of you and in the world around you.

And dreams are not just for us individually. In Bali, important dreams are shared with the family or the community, and dreams of beloved departed loved ones are visits from the other side. When the ancestors come calling in dreams the family wants to know about it. They live in sacred family temples in the family compounds, where one can communicate with them on a daily basis, in a tradition that goes back beyond memory. When an ancestor is reincarnated, many Balinese believe they are reincarnated back into the family, and the cycle continues.

Dream sharing is part of the practice of becoming a skilled dreamer, and we can increase our connections with others this way. Creating the space within our busy lives to share dreams within the family is a wonderful gift we can give each other. Children love to tell their dreams. Dreams are stories and learning how to become a storyteller is one of the benefits.

Dreams bring information for others and this is one reason to share them. Sharing dreams builds community and helps us understand them as we

explore them further. Dreams come to tell us things we don't already know.

"I'm with a group of friends in a restaurant. A friend is holding his head because he has a headache. In the dream I understand he suffered a head injury. I wake with an inner voice telling me he will heal from this, but he will need patience because it will be a long process."

Two weeks later I learned this friend had been in an accident overseas and was still in the hospital with a significant concussion. I contacted him and told him my dream, and that I had a message for him that he will be fine with time, to have patience and faith in his ability to heal. He deeply appreciated this message and it gave him hope. He eventually recovered. A year later I was at the same restaurant as in my dream, with the same group of friends, and the dream unfolded in waking life as I saw my friend holding his head in the same way I observed in the dream a year before. My dream was for my friend.

Researchers theorize the feeling of *déjà vu*, that sensation we've experienced something before as we are experiencing it in present time, is linked to precognitive dreams. We dream something and later it happens in waking life, and we get a sense that we've done this before. If you keep a dream journal you may find you have proof your dreams and waking life blend and the boundaries between the two are not absolute.

Dreams are ultimately creative. In order to discover more of the magic in our dreams it's important to understand that dreams are not just about individual psychological processes, which many of us have been taught in the West. Although this too is a valuable approach for understanding dreams and should be a part of the dreamer's tool kit for dream exploration, we can have so much more fun with them than just analyzing them. Skillful dreaming is much more than psychology. It is about creatively and actively engaging with the real dream experience and looking for ways we can bring the creativity and the healing of the dream into waking life.

What we call a dream is a memory of a much larger experience our dreaming self has had. It has validity in its own way, with its own logic, and is an existential experience this part of our consciousness has undergone. A dream memory is similar to a snapshot we may take of a vacation. It is a picture of an experience, but it is not the whole story. This is why we can open up dreams, go back inside them to have a look around, and discover new insights hidden in the dream memory.

In Bali, as in many cultures, dreams are journeys and we travel beyond the body when we dream. While dreaming, our dreaming self is exploring beyond the confines of our body and its limiting five senses. We use other

senses out there in the dream worlds and we can do anything.

In Bali it's easy to have a waking dream, a waking experience that is rich with the meaningful symbolism of a dream, and that can lead us to the same kind of personal insight that a spontaneous nighttime dream can have. Moving through a day in Bali is often like moving through a dream, full of rich sensory experience and deep meaning. Some visitors to Bali remember fewer dreams while here because waking life is so colorful. And other visitors remember more vivid dreams here because the dreaming self is awakened and stimulated, sensing into the special magic of place. And when we leave the island, our dreams may keep us connected to her.

So it's important to expand our definition of what is a dream. A dream is more than just what happens spontaneously during the night. Your imagination and dreams come from the same creative source. Dreaming includes imagination, daydreams, fantasies, meditation, reverie, moments of spacing out, inner voice experiences, images, visions, body sensations, intuitions, and anything else that expands our way of sensing the world. This includes waking moments that are dreamy. We live in a world of symbols.

That “Aha” moment is a feeling of healing.

What does it mean to have a dreaming practice? Skillful dreaming is learned and practiced, like yoga, meditation, or hula hooping. It's not hard to do and it's FUN! It's creative. What is trying to come through for you in your nightly forays into the deepest parts of yourself? What kind of adventure is your dreaming self experiencing? How are your daydreams, your imagination, your fantasies, your wise inner promptings, and your reveries informing your life? What about those funny coincidences you notice in your day? They all have something for you.

When developing a personal dreaming practice you expand your awareness and meet a part of yourself that is ready to help you live a richer life, with more vitality and a touch of magic. You receive guidance and catch unexpected ideas. You live a bigger life, one that includes more of your deep story.

Are you a dreamer? It's romantic to be a dreamer. It brings in play and enchantment and a feeling of magic. With dreams we remember anything is possible. We remember things we knew when we were children. Something in us becomes young again.

“As they went on, the moon rose and threw a pale mist of light over the whole, and the diamond drops turned to half-liquid pearls, and round every tree-top was a halo of moonlight, and the water went to sleep, and the flowers began to dream.”

-George MacDonald (1824-1905)

Dreamers have changed the world in practical ways. Jeff Taylor is a dreamer. He woke from a dream of a “monster” job bulletin board and proceeded to write his idea for Monster.com. Innumerable artists, writers, scientists, and other creative people have used their dreams to enhance all of our lives. Your dreams may hold answers for yourself and for the world, if you can only remember them.

Everything we’ve created was dreamed or imagined first.

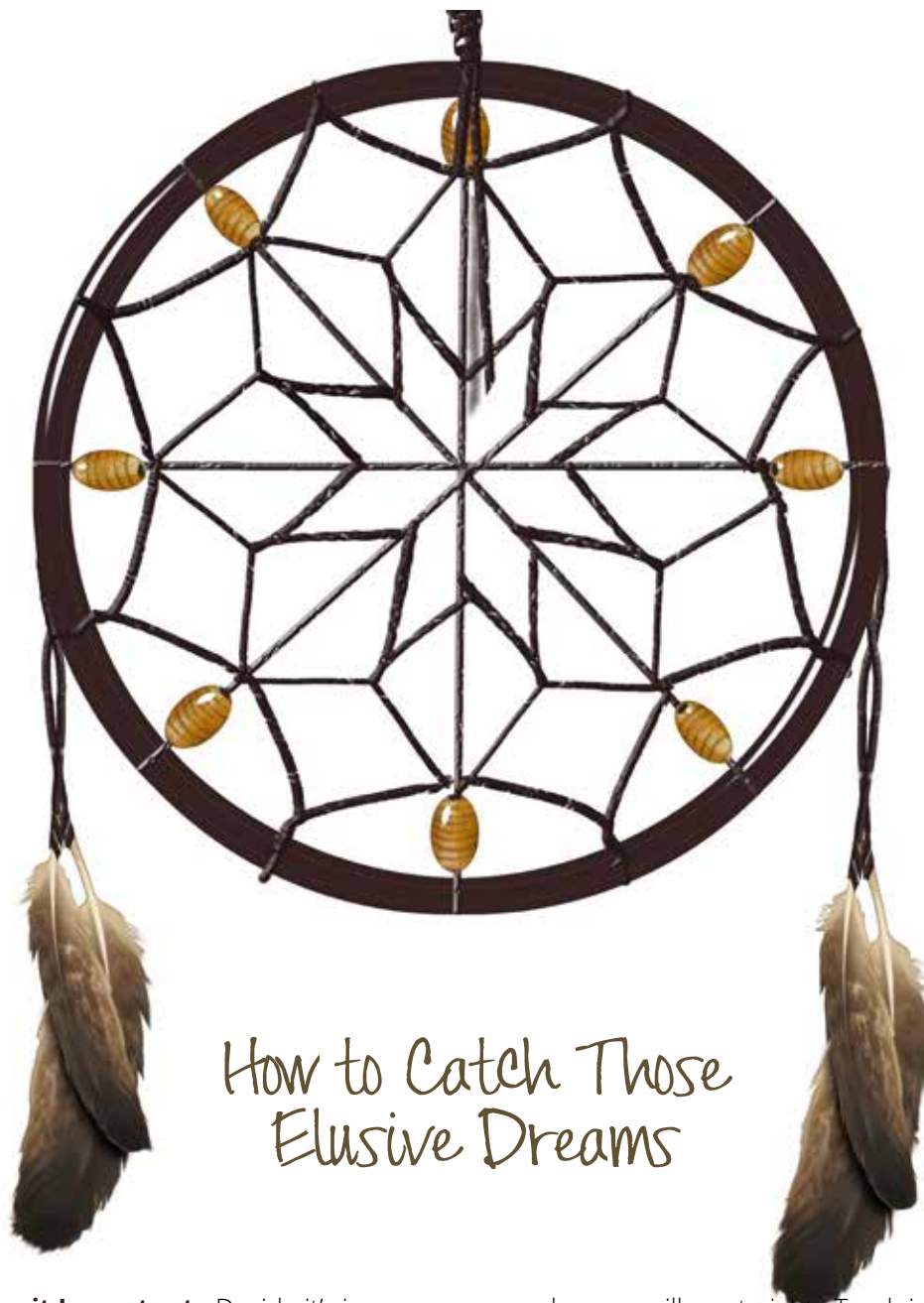
It all starts with catching your dreams. “But I don’t remember my dreams.” I know, but when you decide it’s important, and you provide yourself with a few tools to do this, you will begin to remember them.



ABOUT JANE

Jane E. Carleton, MA specializes in dreams as an international consultant, educator, and workshop leader of creative dreaming techniques, and is a gifted intuitive facilitator of healing and personal transformation. She guides individuals on a fascinating cross-cultural experience of the power of dreams and imagination to enhance and transform daily life.

“One of my favorite dreams is a recurring one, in which I’m behind the counter in a fancy pastry shop in Belgium, fork in hand, taking one bite of each of the beautiful and delicious cakes, the flavor very much alive, each bite different. The taste is real and the experience is delightful. Much as both dreaming and waking life can be.”



How to Catch Those Elusive Dreams

» **Make it Important:** Decide it's important to remember your dreams. This in itself alerts your dreaming self you're ready to remember. Select and organize your tools by your bed: dream journal, pen, colored pencils, iPad, and/or tape recorder.

» **Incubate a Dream:** Ask for a dream before you go to sleep. Do this every night, and be persistent; it may take some time to wake up to your dreaming self. You can put a slip of paper with a dream request, or any other symbol,

under your pillow at night. Try doing this with a crystal, a little figure, a picture, or anything that will remind you of your dreaming self. Some people like the fragrance of the herb mugwort as a dream enhancer.

» **Dreams are Experiences:** Revise your concept of what is a dream. What we call a dream is a memory of an experience our dreaming self has had. This dream memory is a glimpse of a larger event, and is similar in ways to the photos we take of a vacation, which

gives us a view of something we've done, that is now a memory. There is more there in the dream experience that is unseen and forgotten. Even a fragment of a dream can be expanded. Fragments, snippets, and flashes are all bits of dreams that are valuable.

» **Scan:** Get in the habit of scanning your body and your awareness both before you fall asleep and when you wake, and even while moving through your waking day. Watch for images, sounds, emotions, body sensations, words, unexpected sentences, fragrances, and memories. Do this every time you wake. Pay attention to these gifts and write them down, draw or record them. You may come to recognize the distinct physical sensation you experience when you wake, alerting you to start your scan.

» **Stay Still:** Don't move immediately when you wake. Try to stay in the same body position you were in when you were dreaming. If you use an alarm, set it close enough to reach the snooze button without changing your body position. Dreams may linger longer if we keep our body still. After we've scanned, more of the dream may return if we get into a body position we experienced in the dream. Try assuming the position of a dream character other than yourself and see what comes to you. Play at becoming that character.

» **Add the Hypnagogic State:** This is the layer of consciousness we experience briefly as we are transitioning from being awake into sleeping. Practice becoming aware of what is happening when you dip into this state. It is a richly creative initial phase of sleep and it brings images, ideas, words, advice, feelings, memories, and sensations. Try to sustain it and see if you can catch something.

» **Include the Hypnopompic State:** Watch what happens in this short period of

consciousness we experience just as we wake, between sleeping and waking. Do you have a physical sensation of re-entering this world? Where have you just been, or are you still there? What does it look like? Is it day or night? Who are you with? How do you feel physically? Do you feel any emotions? Do any words come?

» **Look for Nightly Gems:** Instead of expecting a fully formed dream story every night begin to look for some kind of a "gem from the night" when you wake. What did the night bring? Was it a dream, a memory, an image, interesting squiggly lines, a powerful word, an inspiring phrase, some words of wisdom, an idea, a deep knowing, or a good night's sleep?

» **What's Happening in Your Day?** Watch for coincidences and symbolic appearances in your waking life. Is a life question somehow answered? Does something happen that you dreamed previously? Do you experience a Déjà Vu feeling? You may find you dreamed the event before it happened, and these events can be very simple and mundane, or important and big. Look for these in your dream journal. Precognitive dreams may be clear and unmistakable, or the precognition may be hidden in the symbols of a dream that looks nothing like what unfolds in waking life, but the tone, the feeling, of the dream is the same. Look for symbols in your day that have meaning for you, and engage with these in some way.

» **What do you do with your dreams after you have a journal full of them?** We'll look at that in future articles. We'll learn something about the anatomy of dreams, the layers of meaning in a dream, and how to work and play with them. Now that you are ready to remember more dreams, have fun, and have a little dream adventure every day.