

The Four Stages of Creativity in Lucid Dreams

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Introduction

When you fire up a videogame and become immersed in the settings, activity and goals of the video reality (e.g., stopping zombies, exploring a new planet, fighting dinosaurs), your focus narrows to the actions, movements and resulting outcomes. Within the contextual setting of the video game, you help create the vibrant nature of this perceived reality.

But as you play, a part of you knows, *'Someone coded this programming.'*

As a lucid dreamer, have you ever asked yourself: *'Who codes the lucid dream?'*

Behind the videogame scenes, someone helped structure the look, feel and potential actions. Someone pre-determined the mission, unexpected surprises and glorious goals. The breadth and depth of the perceived reality seem constrained by someone's coding, design and programming.

But who or what calls forth the images, situations, figures, actions and sometimes incredible knowledge *within a lucid dream?*

Four years ago the *Lucid Dreaming Experience* magazine (which I co-edit at DreamingLucid.com) received a lucid dream from Brian Aherne, which he says literally rocked him to his "foundations!" His edited lucid dream report:

"I had been watching nature programs on the TV and one of my questions was about the incredibly long annual migration of turtles to their traditional breeding grounds, a journey involving thousands upon thousands of miles. Why do they do it, was what I really wanted to know; why do they travel so very far indeed just to breed?..."

Anyway [after performing WILD], the [lucid] dream began, and after adjusting myself to the now fairly familiar surroundings of the dusty orange room, I quickly asked out loud:

Why do turtles travel so very far in their migrations compared to other animals?

For a few moments nothing happened, no response...

I prepared myself to ask the question again as sometimes it takes two or three times to begin to get any answers, but before I could actually voice anything I suddenly found myself looking at what seemed to be an older map of the Earth comprised of a single continent...

*And then, in open-mouthed amazement, I watched as it broke up into several continents in a slow time lapse. Turtles, breeding only several hundred miles away originally, gradually being forced to travel farther and farther as these land masses gradually drifted apart over what must have been countless thousands of years. **Until by now, these poor turtles are literally travelling several thousand miles each year just to reach their original breeding grounds! I was astounded to say the least!***

There were no words to this series of images, just the images themselves that appeared to be self-explanatory. And to this day I still don't know if this revelation is actually correct or not, but it certainly was a completely unexpected plus very startling result at the time."

How do you explain what Brian saw in his lucid dream, after asking the question, "Why do turtles travel so very far in their migrations compared to other animals?"

Did Brian tap into Carl Jung's collective unconscious? Discover some level of inner knowledge? Or did he unknowingly craft a clever reply to his own question?

This paper will explore the issue of 'accessing creativity' in lucid dreams and how you can benefit from lucid dreaming's special access to deeper levels of inner creativity. Along the way, you will see why this should matter for yourself, psychology and the world.



First Stage of Lucid Dream Creativity: Unconscious Automatic Creativity

While giving a lucid dreaming workshop in Los Angeles last year, a participant asked me, “Can you explain how to understand the differences between conscious, subconscious and unconscious?”

I replied, “You seem consciously aware of asking a question of me right now. Simultaneously, you feel subconsciously aware of your rear end sitting on the chair and the pressure there. Finally, you seem unconsciously aware of your fourth grade teacher.

But now that I have drawn your attention to your fourth grade teacher, you feel consciously aware of that previously unconscious information. As you can see, what was unconscious or subconscious can suddenly become ‘conscious’ by a shift in the focus of your awareness.”

These three levels of conscious awareness exist within you simultaneously, but your focus largely determines which level you acknowledge or activate. For lucid dreamers this seems very important, as they learn to lucidly observe the first stage of lucid dream creativity: Unconscious Automatic Creativity.

Below, notice the lucid dream examples of Unconscious Automatic Creativity randomly selected from submissions to the Lucid Dreaming Experience magazine (June 2018):

“I was in my classroom at school when suddenly I did a reality check and became lucid. I looked around the room and noticed a pile of bread on the teacher’s desk... When I got outside, I had to sit in amazement of how real and vivid everything was. I looked at my hands with full conscious awareness and they were indescribable. My fingers were bubbling and growing faces and arms and hands.” Matt J. (pg. 25)

“[After landing on a beach, N. Rae becomes lucid] I walked out of the sand and onto a college campus, across the quad and into the library. I was just having fun looking around me and at all the people, at the shelves of books, the dark green industrial carpet. There were large windows and the sunlight filled the room.” N. Rae (pg. 27)

“Now convinced of having become lucid, I hurry down an alien staircase and enter a park with people milling around aimlessly.” Alexandra E. (pg. 17)

As each lucid dreamer moves through dream-space, automatically and without conscious intent, new settings and objects appear. Bread piles up on a teacher’s desk. A book-filled library with green carpet and large windows shows up. Emerging from the staircase, a park appears with people milling around.

All of this creativity simply happens automatically and unconsciously. The lucid dreamer does not ‘control’ it. Because it appears naturally and automatically, we rarely focus on this level of creativity.

Who or what coded all of this creativity? Does this lucid dream creativity occur randomly, or does it seem guided by hidden principles?



Second Stage of Lucid Dream Creativity: Conscious-Action Creativity

A lucid dreaming colleague, Joy Fatooh, shared a lucid dream in which she recalled a goal from the book *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Becoming lucid, she saw a solitary flower in a nearby vase. Determined to make more flowers appear, she tried to make it happen. None appeared. Feeling a bit frustrated, she began to jump up and down while mentally insisting a flower appear. With each jump, another flower suddenly appeared created in the vase!

The Buddhist dream yoga tradition encourages lucid dreamers to increase or decrease the number and quality of objects in a lucid dream to develop flexibility of mind, noting “As we are conditioned by the apparent solidity of thoughts, they should be dissolved by the limitless freedom of mind.” (pg. 126) By using the mind to create and de-create in a lucid dream, one sees how appearances change through connection to mental activity.

Here, the lucid dreamer normally uses what I called the ‘Reality Creating Principles’ of Belief, Expectation, Focus, Intent/Will and X to create the perceived experience (see my first book, *Lucid Dreaming – Gateway to the Inner Self*).

Briefly stated, if you believe that you must swim through the air in a lucid dream (because you believe physical effort seems necessary for movement), then you will breast-stroke through dream space! But if you believe that gravity does not exist in the mental realm of lucid dreams, then your belief allows you to fly upside down or feet first! Your belief conditions and helps create your experience.

Similarly, if you expect the dream figure in the dark coat to be dangerous, then he will turn and have a knife to threaten you! However, if you switch your expectations and expect the dream figure in the dark coat to be a priest, then he will turn and be wearing a clerical collar and carrying a holy book.

If you become lucid and suddenly ‘focus’ on finding a desirable mate, then normally an attractive figure will emerge, who reflects your desire. Potentially however, you have the capacity to focus on most anything within the freedom of lucid dreaming.

The energy of your beliefs, expectations, focus and intent/will help to 'co-create' your experience of dream objects, figures and situations. Seeing this, you begin to realize that you cannot understand the lucid dream without understanding your own beliefs, expectations, focus and intent/will in that moment. The lucid dream experimenter seem embedded in most every lucid dream experience, and helps co-create the perceived experience.

But how can this explain Brian Aherne's lucid experience of watching the single land mass break apart into continents as turtles continued to swim farther and farther to reach ancestral breeding grounds?

To explain that, we need to introduce this:

Third Stage of Lucid Dream Creativity: Accessing Your Larger Awareness

In the third stage of creative action, the lucid dreamer asks a question within the lucid dream to a non-visible aspect which then responds (e.g., the unconscious mind, one's larger awareness, the inner self).

For example, Brian asked, *"Why do turtles travel so very far in their migrations compared to other animals?"* To be clear, he did not ask a random dream figure. Instead, he asked the non-visible awareness within-the-dream and then observed an answer being created in response.

In my first book, I explain my 1985 lucid dream realization that an 'awareness behind the dream' existed and would respond to requests or questions in a lucid dream. Stephen LaBerge also vaguely alluded to this in his first book (published later in 1985), when he noted his lucid request "To seek the highest" led to sudden profound changes and some of his most incredible experiences. However LaBerge downplayed this, stating that who or what responds does not really matter at this point.

With the 1993 release of Carlos Castaneda's book, *The Art of Dreaming*, you see this same issue brought up again. Castaneda, a UCLA anthropology grad student, asks his shamanic teacher Don Juan about the non-visible voice that responds to questions in lucid dreams. Don Juan replies that he calls this voice, "the dreaming emissary" adding, *"The emissary didn't tell you anything new. Its statements were correct, but it*

only seemed to be revealing things to you. What the emissary did was merely repeat what you already knew." In essence, one might say the dreaming emissary serves as the functional representative of your knowledgeable inner self.

For lucid dreamers who are new to this idea, I suggest that they begin with a simple request, such as "Dream, show me something important for me to see!" Normally, something will appear in the lucid dream (or, the entire lucid dream will change), which will be symbolically or literally 'important' for the person.

However for those seeking access to creativity, the discovery of a new layer of creativity (as well as evidence for another layer of self/Self awareness) seems truly profound!

As you go deeper, you discover that you can lucidly explore concepts, ideas and information outside of the ego's knowing. I recall feeling stunned when I ignored the dream figures, looked up and asked in a lucid dream, "Hey I want to hear my feeling tone!" (note: Jane Roberts book, *The Nature of Personal Reality*, stated everyone had a 'feeling tone' which constituted the essence of themselves in this life). Suddenly, high above me a small dark spot appears, and from it comes an "Aaahh" sound. As I watch, it grows into a conical shape, vibrating this "AAaaHHhh" with greater intensity – until finally it vibrates 'me' out of existence! Years later, I learned that "ah" serves as the mantra sound connected to the Buddhist dream yoga tradition.

In an online workshop years ago, a chemistry and physics student, Marcelle, told me that she wished to experience the reality of an electron in a lucid dream. I told Marcelle it seemed possible but only if Marcelle could let go of personal beliefs (which would tend to distort or limit the actual experience). On the fifth lucid dream attempt, Marcelle first asked the 'awareness' to take her to the sub-atomic level; once there, she asked to experience the reality of an electron – with extraordinary results!

For those who believe that the lucid dream simply 'makes up' a plausible response, numerous examples exist of this unseen awareness telling the lucid dreamer that "You do not seem prepared for an experience of this type..." or the lucid dreamer's request is based on an errant assumption, whereupon the awareness gives a corrected analysis.

So What?

To this point, you can see how lucid dreaming reflects 'creativity' in the stages:

- 1) The **Automatic Unconscious** level which creates new scenes, figures and activity,
- 2) The **Conscious-Action Creativity** in which the lucid dreamer uses their belief, expectation, focus, intent/will to create objects, figure and situations,
- 3) And then the stage of **Accessing Your Larger Awareness** – reaching out to your conscious-unconscious mind or inner self and seeing its enormously profound and unexpected response.

At each level, you see a new facet of creativity's expression along with the movement into deeper layers of the self's knowing:

- 1) Unconscious, 2) Ego/conscious self, and then 3) Aware inner self.

When you realize the enormous problems and challenges facing the world, accessing the third stage opens up the use of lucid dreaming to explore solutions, concepts, inventions and ideas which could profoundly and constructively touch society and the planet!

Moreover, a recognition by psychology of the third stage (accessing an inner awareness) would serve to expand the conceptual view of the self -- away from the extremely limited and materialistic view of an ego/conscious self -- and towards the expansive view of an accessible and aware inner Self!

This explains why lucid dreaming matters – it allows access to normally unconscious creativity – and it shows the actual nature of an aware inner Self.



Fourth Stage of Lucid Dream Creativity: Creativity's Essence

In the final stage of creativity, the lucid dreamer seeks out the 'source' of this inner awareness's knowing and creativity. One might call this becoming a type of 'source-erer' – or following creativity all the way to the Creator.

In what realm does the source of creativity exist? Does a realm exist free of the projected influence of belief, expectation, focus, intent/will and one's mindset?

Normally these deeper lucid encounters with the essence of creativity involve light, sound, geometry and/or energy. Some show elements of a loss of ego/conscious self-identity and a more expansive and selfless awareness. As I sought out this realm, I would fall asleep and the entire night was 'blue light' – no me, no action, no symbols – just blue light. In my first book, I explain how this eventually led to the goal of *dream yoga* as explained by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, "An experience of the clear light of awareness by awareness itself.

Through experience, lucid dreaming can show you distinct layers of creativity, couched in layers of the self. Accessing that creativity may be mankind's greatest hope to face epic challenges.

Questions

Have you noticed these stages of creativity in your own lucid dream experience?

Where does the creativity come from? Does it seem random or purposeful?

Have you ever ignored the dream figures and asked a question of the unconscious mind or awareness behind the dream? What happened?

Could you see how accessing creativity through lucid dream could help bring new inventions and ideas into the waking world?

Who codes the lucid dream?

I look forward to hearing your experiences and discussing this more deeply with you!

Resources

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Robert Waggoner wrote the acclaimed book, *Lucid Dreaming – Gateway to the Inner Self* (now in its tenth printing), and co-authored *Lucid Dreaming Plain and Simple* with Caroline McCready. Both books are in Audible, Kindle and CD/Mp3. His books have been translated into French, German, Chinese, Korean, Czech, Finnish and other languages.

A past President of the International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD), Waggoner serves at co-editor of the online magazine, *The Lucid Dreaming Experience*, (ISSN 2167-616X); the only ongoing publication devoted specifically to lucid dreaming. A lucid dreamer since 1975, he has logged more than 1,000 lucid dreams.



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