

One-with-One Dream Work: A Method

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Assumptions of Dream Work Methodology

- 1) This is one of several methods of helping others gain insights related to a dream through projection. You do not need to be trained as a counselor or therapist to talk with others about their dreams, just as people have done for thousands of years.
- 2) One-on-One dream work training at the Haden Institute does not equip you to work with dreams as a therapist or a counselor, nor do we suggest in any way that our training be viewed or used as clinical training. While dreams often touch on therapeutic, even trauma-related areas of the psyche, a projective methodology such as that taught by the Haden Institute does not enter the therapeutic or clinical realm.
- 3) Friends and family who know of your interest and training with dreams will ask you to help them with their dreams. One-on-One training at Haden is intended to empower you to be supportive of these requests without doing harm.
- 4) One-on-one dream work training provided by the Haden Institute is NOT a method for Dream Group work! In dream groups we NEVER ask the dreamer for waking life information or associations.
- 5) There is more than one way to do this projective one-on-one work. This method is typical of what I do with Dream Work and Spiritual Direction clients. Other faculty and mentors at Haden have different methods, though all within the projective realm, some of which you will see demonstrated.

Step-by-Step Process

- 1) Ask the dreamer to share the dream in first person, present tense, as if they were experiencing the dream in this moment. You will be most effective if you take notes during this entire process. Record as much information as possible about the dream as it is shared. Ask for a second sharing of the dream and use the time to fill in the information gaps, and to become aware of your own energetic associated responses.
- 2) Affirm the dreamer. For example: “Great dream...you remembered a lot of detail!” “Interesting dream...let’s see what it has to say.”
- 3) I often ask the dreamer if they recall what they were thinking about as they went to sleep the night of the dream. Were they concerned about an issue? Were they trying to solve a problem or find an answer? Was there a significant event that happened that day?
- 4) I often ask the dreamer for waking life associations. For example, the dreamer may say, “The house reminded me of the home where I grew up.” Or, “The woman in the dream reminded me of my friend Susan,” or “I think this dream might be about a conversation I had with my partner.”
- 5) I often ask for 3-4 adjectives to characterize each of the significant characters, objects and actions in the dream. I am curious about every detail, and always encourage the dreamer to stay in the dream.
- 6) I share my projections on this dream using “In my dream...” language. Be sure to emphasize and re-emphasize that what you are about to do is to project your own feelings and experiences onto their dream. For example, I often say, “I’m not going to tell you what your dream means to you, I’m going to pretend I had this dream and I’m going to talk about what it means to me. Notice what resonates with you. For everything I say that doesn’t resonate, let it go. It’s not for you. It’s mine alone.”

- 7) Ask the dreamer to share what resonated while listening to your projections. In a back-and-forth dialogue, explore the dream symbols that held the highest energy. Ask for any possible waking life connections to those symbols. Have an attitude of profound curiosity. Do not analyze. Be aware that the energy you are feeling about certain symbols is YOUR energy, not the dreamer's. For example, I may say, "I wonder what part of you is...?" "I wonder where that quality is showing up in waking life?" "I wonder what...?" "I wonder if...?" "I wonder where...?"
- 8) In your dialogue with the dreamer, circle back, sometimes more than once, to the symbols with the highest energy for the dreamer and explore those with continued curiosity.
- 9) Remind the dreamer that dreams come to tell us something that we don't yet know at a conscious level. I often ask, "What do you think this dream has come to tell you?"
- 10) Remind the dreamer that it is likely they will have a dream tonight or soon that is a commentary on what they learned during this session. Encourage the dreamer to expect a new dream and even to ask for a new dream. Also, I suggest to the dreamer that they expect a dream to arrive just before we meet again.
- 11) In this process, A DREAMER MAY BECOME EMOTIONAL AND POSSIBLY OVERWHELMED. IF IT HAPPENS BE PREPARED. If the dreamer experiences a strong, painful emotion, acknowledge the feeling with compassion and suggest a pause in the process. For example, I often say, "I see that this is painful for you. I want to honor that feeling now with a time of silence. I invite you to close your eyes, put your feet flat on the floor and feel the ground under you. Slow your breathing. Deepen your breathing. Imagine being held in a safe place within yourself. Give your attention to following your breathing."

When the dreamer seems ready, suggest closing the silence with a bell or a word or a prayer. Explain to the dreamer that if they discovered an issue that feels unfinished and/or needs further exploration that it should be taken up with their therapist.

Redirect the energy back to one of the dream symbols that had energy for the dreamer. (It may be a good idea for you as a dream worker to have a list of qualified therapists who can assist a dreamer with further work to which they may be called.)

Amplification, Active Imagination and Ritual for Homework

(These are techniques for carrying the dream forward. Some of these might be done during the session if there is time. If not, they are good as homework assignments for the dreamer.)

- 1) The Seven Magic Questions. This exercise can help the dreamer identify the object, character or action with the highest energy during the session. You can facilitate this exercise, or the dreamer can work the exercise on their own.
- 2) Journaling Dialogue. The dreamer is invited to have an imaginative dialogue with the object/character they wish to learn more about. Rather than becoming the object, in this exercise the dreamer switches roles in a dialogue asking questions and making statements. No analyzing. Imagine being a reporter recording a conversation during which you have no idea of where it's going.
- 3) Ritual or Creative Expression. Some dream symbols don't give up their meaning until they are embodied. Paint, draw, collage, sculpt or invite a positive image to move your body. Perhaps a representation of the object/character needs to be placed on your altar. Perhaps it needs to be ritualized by burning or burying it. Perhaps it needs to be walked or danced with music. Give yourself permission to be imaginative.