

HYPNOTIC INDUCTIONS FOR LUCID DREAMING

Frank D. Young PhD., C. Psych.1 [1]

Full Abstract

This workshop is designed to acquaint you with the exciting world of Lucid Dreaming. You will learn what lucid dreams are, why they are important for many applications, and the abilities you can develop using the skills of lucidity. Of special interest to hypnotists is a discussion relating lucid dreaming to trance states, including similarities and differences. Finally, participants are led through a multiply embedded induction designed to promote lucid dreaming. Commercial audiotape versions of this induction have assisted the development of lucid dreaming in people who use it regularly and record their dreams in a dream journal. You are invited to join in the experience of a world beyond limitation, in the land of lucid dreams.

Condensed Abstract

Recent developments and research in the field of lucid dreaming have led to interest in the use of hypnosis to cultivate readiness and development of this skill. Similarities are drawn between trance and dream states. Dreaming is located on a continuum of consciousness, and lucid dreaming is integrated with the skills of mind state management. Participants are invited to discuss lucidity phenomena and applications, then they are led through a multiply-embedded induction designed to promote lucid dreaming.

AudioVisual requirements: Overhead projector, flip chart and felt pens.

The purpose of this workshop is to acquaint you with patterns of possibility through the use of trance so that you can prepare yourself for lucid dreaming.

LUCID DREAMING DEFINED AND APPLIED

Lucid dreaming is a state of mind where you are aware that you are in a dream and because of that awareness you are free to observe it. You are also free to change the dream as you wish. You can go to nice places, live an enjoyable lifestyle. Experience all kinds of sensations and fun that you wouldn't experience in the ordinary waking state. You can use lucid dreaming for stress management, for example, go for an evening to an out-island in Hawaii and come back relaxed, refreshed, no jet lag, no travel expenses and you have all the benefits. You can use lucidity for creative problem solving, posing a dilemma or problem to yourself at night and finding yourself in a lucid dream and wondering if there's anything that you can do in that dream to do a simulation or model of the problem, and tumble that problem through your mind. You can also use lucid dreaming the same way as you would use imagery training; to rehearse an optimal or peak performance state; in giving a speech or in performing well in an athletic event; of doing just about anything you want and playing it through in such a way that you feel that, when you go to do it in real life later, it's almost like a *deja vu*. It's almost like you actually have been there in virtual reality; you have a built-in memory of the exact experience already.

You can use lucid dreams to overcome nightmares and fears. You can face objects and people in your dreams, and know that they're merely extensions of yourself, extensions of your mind. You can ask them, "What is your positive intent in chasing after me or terrifying me, or frightening me?", and that part of you can communicate back its positive intent or its protective nature. It is trying to teach you an important lesson, or protect you from something that threatens your current way of being. Once you know what that is, then you can ask that part of you to become a friend. The two of you become a team, comrades, allies in working through life together in both the working and the dream state.

You can also use lucid dreaming for spiritual development, for exploring parts of yourself, parts of the universe that are sacred, that are wondrous, that connect you in a transpersonal way with the whole universe beyond yourself.

A CONTINUUM OF LUCIDITY SKILLS

In order to learn how to lucid dream there's a whole continuum of skills that I think would be quite handy to know. Most of these skills have been outlined in several books like, for example Stephen LaBerge & Howard Rheingold's (1990) book called "Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming." There are a number of other books, tapes and guides that have been prepared that are quite good, and many of them cover a continuum or gradation of dream skills. So let's look at some of them now.

The first one, of course, is dream recall. We all dream many times per night, but we all differ in our abilities to remember what we've been dreaming about. So, I recommend using a dream journal, so that you write down every bit of your dreams that you can remember. Now, if you sleep very soundly, you might have to set several alarms during the night and wake yourself up a number of times and write down what the dream was that you just had. Because, as you know, if there are frequent awakenings, there is a greater probability, and certainly the possibility, that you will be awakened either during a dream or immediately right after one, so you'll have a good chance of recalling it. Now, if this is inconvenient or impractical for you, one of the things you can do is wait until next morning and lie awake in bed and don't get up immediately. The first thing you do when you awaken is to say to yourself, "What was I just dreaming about?" and lie still. Don't change your body posture, just lie still and even if you say to yourself, "Gee, I wasn't dreaming anything," say "No, no, " Just repeat the question now, "What was I just dreaming?" and you wait a moment, and sure enough, the dream fragments start to drift back. The memories start to come back and you write each little memory down, each little fragment or whatever. You don't have to record absolutely everything at this time, but bring your dream journal around with you during the day because once you've recorded some of the original dream fragments, the rest will kind of fall into place and develop themselves as the day goes on, whereas if you don't do any recording at the beginning of the day, virtually all of your dreams are erased by the events of the day.

The second skill that you need is how to identify dream signs. Dream signs are events that occur that are crazy or out of context that just wouldn't fit or happen during ordinary waking consciousness. When you have identified those dream signs, you underline them or highlight them as events to watch for in your next dreams. To give you some examples: exaggerated height, being on the edge of a cliff, or overlooking a valley, being in a highrise looking down, or seeing people in dreams that don't belong there, or people wearing crazy clothes and doing crazy things out of context, out of the way they usually would be.

An interesting thing that happens with dream signs, when these bizarre events are occurring, is that you or other dream characters may have a tendency to rationalize them. Your unconscious mind tries to make sense of what it's seeing, so you rationalize it in a strange kind of

way. For example, I used to smoke cigarettes so I'd wake up in a dream and I'd have a cigarette in my hand and I'd say, "Gee, how did I ever start this again?" and I'd say, "Oh well, I don't know, but anyway I'm smoking again." and "Oh well, I might as well finish this cigarette and just carry on," and then I'll carry on in the dream. Perhaps I might say, "Something's kind of strange here." but if I don't put it together that I am in a dream, I probably will just allow strange things to happen but I won't get too upset about them. This is what I would call a pre-lucid dream. A **pre-lucid dream** is where you kind of take for granted what's happening even though it's unusual and you might even be tacitly aware that things are strange, but you don't really challenge the state, you don't identify the state and you don't talk to yourself about the state as being a real dream state.

When you underscore these dream signs day after day in your dream journal, the next thing you do is you prepare yourself by cueing intent during the day, that whenever you see these dream signs, you are going to check your reality state, you are going to check whether you are in waking consciousness or the dream state. There are a number of reality checks that are recommended. For example, as you might know, most dream images are highly unstable; they change from moment to moment. In particular, the written word or the printed word really changes as do many other things in dreams, but one change that's quite reliable is to read anything that's printed. Look at it, look away from it for a moment, okay now look back at it and read it again. Does it say the same thing? If it does, okay, you are probably right now in the waking state, and that's just fine; but if you were in a dreamstate, chances are extremely likely that it would have changed. It's quite startling when you do this for the first time, but believe me the words do change. Almost everywhere in our culture you can see the printed word somewhere, or if you can't, you just use your own finger. Wet your finger and write something on the carpet or in the sand or somewhere on the dirt, look away, look back down again and it will change.

Now you can prepare the intent for future actions, such as reality tests. You can also incubate or prepare an intention or desire to be in a certain place, or to have dream about something. Famous creative people often do this, where they can dream that a symphony will come to them or dream that a painting or vision will come to them. Similarly, playwrights or screenwriters will dream that a plot for a new movie feature will come to them in a dream and often it does, and that's yet another creative application of dreams. A lot of these creative productions of dreams are cued or incubated, and that, in fact, is what this tape is all about. You may not fully know it, but you are incubating by listening to this tape, the idea that the next time you are dreaming you **will remember to check your reality and to identify that you are in a dream state**.

Another important skill is maintaining the lucid dream state, that is, both the dream and the lucid awareness of dreaming. For example, sometimes you become aware and lucid, but then

are mystified by the dream elements and get lulled back into a non-lucid dream. On the other hand, you could become so excited about becoming lucid that you have an adrenaline rush and pop right out of your dream into waking consciousness. Alternatively, you can try so hard to hang onto a lucid dream that you fade and fragment it. The dream starts to fall apart by the fading of the sensation of touch or the dissolving of the visual image. Sometimes it feels like you are walking the sometimes thin line between the suction of the dream world, and the solid but boring world of waking consciousness. For this dilemma, what I can recommend is first of all, talking to yourself in a regular way every few moments in a dream. Talk to yourself, "Now I'm aware that I'm in a dream, now I'm aware that I'm dreaming" and keep this monologue going on, this mantra if you wish, and that can help you from stopping the talking to yourself, because when you stop talking to yourself, that's when you start to lose your lucidity. On the other hand if you become too alert and awake you can become so awake that the dream starts to fade. At that point I could recommend that you start turning your dream body around in space. Turn your dream body around and around and rotate several times, as you're rotating saying "I'm spinning in a dream, I am spinning in a dream." Then when you stop, you know **the next thing you see** will be the beginning of a dream or the continuation of the dream you were just in. Don't worry! Be confident! I can assure you that the next thing you see, the probabilities are so high that the next thing you see will be a dream. So don't forget to test your reality when you get there.

Speaking of reality tests, another reality test is running along and jumping through the air and finding out whether you float above the ground. You likely will find that you have no difficulty suspending gravity, because you can float, and in fact you can begin to fly. So flying is a very common way of testing your dream ability, and is one of the most frequently mentioned lucid dreaming skills. There are also many other more advanced or complex lucid dreaming skills and abilities that you can develop with practice. For example, you can learn how to materialize new objects or people in dreams. Often they are merely around the next corner or behind the next door. You can interview people by bringing them into the dream. For example, you can look around the corner and there will be a person that you haven't seen for a long time. You can also change roles in a dream, you can be one person and then go into the other person's shoes and look back at the first person. You can go through walls; you can go through space and even travel through time to the past, to the future. You can do simulations of people in your family, in your life, in your business arena, you can do any number of things. You can interview the guru in you; you can explore all kinds of realms. **The possibilities are limitless. In fact, this is the very appeal of lucid dreaming: it allows you to transcend virtually all limitations, to travel in a world of infinite possibilities.** You can suspend the rules of gravity, of logic, of social convention. You can do outrageously funny things, and creatively combine a wide array of different elements to form new concepts and systems. In a sense you are removing the filters and the narrow lens of linear logic, and allowing yourself to open the curtains and gain access to your creative unconscious mind. When you go into that state gradually you become more and more absorbed in it, almost like you would in a state of trance.

TRANCE AND LUCID DREAMING

Now there are many ways that you can incubate lucid dreams, and perhaps a valid question is why you use trance in the training of lucidity? What about the use of trance in dreams? Well, one of the reasons why I am fascinated about trance is the trance state and the dream state in many ways are quite similar. For example, in the trance state you are gradually losing your awareness of things around you, the incoming attention to external situations is gradually reduced and you begin to reduce and simplify your life and have one focus; very simple and focused, and everyone has had the experience of everyday trance. You can be going down a highway having a conversation and you'd be driving and you'd forget exactly where you are, because you are so absorbed in the conversation, and yet you are driving quite safely. There are so many other examples of being absorbed in trance. You can be watching a hockey final and be so absorbed in that, that you don't even notice who is going into and out of the room and walking around you. Another similarity between trance and dreams is that rules can be suspended - rules of context. For example you can jump up in the air and keep floating in dreams, and you can keep floating in trance. In trance basically what's happening is that you are gradually removing the filters of linear logical awareness that one single lens, the lens of logic, you're taking off that lens and allowing yourself to kind of open the curtains and gain access to your creative and conscious mind. When you go into that state gradually you become more and more absorbed in it. That's what the trance state is about.

Hypnosis is merely one way of obtaining the trance state, and hypnosis merely means the use of a conversation or some kind of use of language to promote that kind of focussed awareness where you let go of everything else. As you let go of conscious, logical analytical way of looking at life, and open the curtain to the creative possibilities tumbling through your visual, spacial and conscious mind, many more new things happen, many new opportunities await. One of those opportunities is taking into that creative state the memory of reactivating in a small way that analytic part of your brain. Not to censor or edit everything that is happening in your dream. That's not what it's for, but just maintaining enough of that analytic part so that you can witness what is going on. Make a few notes, change a few things here and there. have fun with them - play them out a different way if you wish, and keep that part of your brain active so that you can maintain your lucid witness to the dream experience and cue yourself that you can bring back this witness of your dreams into waking consciousness, so your waking consciousness can be an extension of your dreams. In terms of our construction of reality, that's what it's all about anyway. We are all constructing the reality in which we live. It's just sensible to take responsibility for that construction and to know that you can influence it and it can influence you in a reciprocal loop.

HOW TO USE A LUCIDITY TRAINING TAPE

In this workshop, of course, we will be doing a live hypnotic induction for lucid dreaming. From my previous experience, likely one out of every six of you will have a lucid dream in the coming week, perhaps even tonight. Nevertheless, the probabilities of lucid dreaming are even better when you practice on a daily basis using a tape with similar content, even a tape you can make yourself with your own hypnotic voice, using something similar to the workshop script. Whatever tape you use, I have some ideas that might help increase your probabilities of having a lucid dream soon. The best way to practice is to take some time during the day, especially just after you finish work. For one thing, this tape is excellent for stress management and unwinding, leaving the strains and problems of the outside world far behind. It is also important to practise this tape while you are awake enough to follow it through to the end. Most people, in fact, fall asleep before they get to the really good parts, because they wait too late in the day to play it. If you play it only before going to bed, you will find it excellent for overcoming insomnia. In fact, that is how I use it with many people who suffer from sleep disorders. If you use the tape just before you go to bed, you will likely be quite tired, and chances are you will not make it to the end. You'll just start down the stream of consciousness and the next thing you know.....zoom, you're gone. That's okay, it's a great way to get to sleep, but the problem is that you've lost a lot of the inductive power of the incubation of lucidity because you've gone out of rapport with the tape. Now, that's not a dangerous thing of course; it's just a little bit less effective, that's all. So what I would recommend is that you listen to the tape a little bit earlier in the day so that you have more alertness and more of an ability to concentrate and stay with the themes of the dreams that you are incubating in the tape. There's no such thing as using the tape too often but I can tell you that the most effective way of using this tape is use it every day, day after day after day. It's like playing the piano. There's a real stacking or consistency effect, that if you play it regularly you'll just be amazed how your skills steadily get stronger and stronger. But, if you miss for a few days and try to cram it all in and get massed practice at the end, it just doesn't pay off as well. **Remember that lucidity is a learned skill that we all can acquire.** Some people are naturals; but most of us have to learn it gradually but thoroughly. Remember, virtually everyone who practises consistently will attain this ability; it just gets better and better - just like any other skill. When you practice consistently it's virtually inevitab