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Spring 2016

DREAMTIME

M A G A Z I N E



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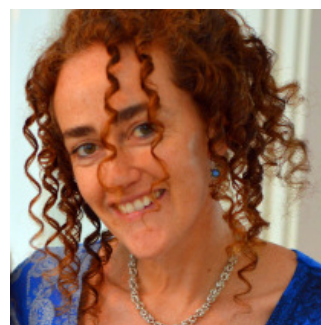
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Amazing Dreamers:

Interview with Beverly D'Urso

Clare Johnson, PhD



Beverly D'Urso, PhD, is a lucid dreamer extraordinaire. She started working with Stephen LaBerge at Stanford University in 1979 and helped him set up the Lucidity Institute in 1987. Once, she even appeared on a TV commercial with electrodes strapped to her head while singing "Row, row, row the boat . . ." One of her claims to fame is being the first woman to have an orgasm in a lucid dream while being monitored in a sleep lab. In her lucid dreams, she has eaten fire (salty!), fallen into the pit of hell, and had sex with the earth.

Unsurprisingly my first meeting with this intrepid lucid dreamer, at the 2004 IASD conference in Copenhagen, was unforgettable. We clicked instantly—and not just in the waking state! As a talented dreamer, Beverly was in charge of transmitting the target image for IASD's annual telepathy contest. That night, in a lucid dream, I saw Beverly and she flung her arms wide like tree boughs and said she'd been shouting the target word inside her head. I lucidly recalled that in my previous dream, I'd heard a woman's voice repeatedly shouting "Tree!" We discussed the nature of the colour green, and finally I stood before a huge, leafy tree. In the cold light of morning, I was astonished to discover that the target image *was* a tree, and that I'd correctly tuned in to the ways in which Beverly had transmitted the image. She and I were totally jazzed by all these connections, as were the judges.

As we talked during the conference, one thing that struck me was Beverly's preference to "surrender" in her lucid dreams—although having control helps her to become more lucid, surrendering can precipitate powerful experiences. She explains: "I started what I call 'surrender flying,' where I lean back and let an invisible force pull me upwards from the heart. This very ecstatic sensation often leads to places of great peace and power that remain after I wake up."

Beverly's lucid dreaming surrender technique stems from her first lucid dream at the age of seven. Working courageously with frightening dreams as a child can empower us right into adulthood and Beverly is a wonderful example of this. She teaches how lucidity in the sleeping state serves as a microcosm of self-realization in the waking state, and has been giving presentations on "lucid living" for over thirty years. Here, she describes how those formative nightmares shaped her life and taught her to live life as if it is a dream.



CJ: Beverly, your childhood nightmares profoundly influenced your life. Could you share them?

BD: At the age of seven, I had nightmares for as long as I could remember. In these dreams, gruesome witches, who lived in the back of my dark and scary closet, would sneak out and come after me. I'd scream and run through the house, trip on the stairs, and then fall on the cement at the bottom, spread-eagled on my back. Just as the witches started to devour me, I'd

wake up. I'd find myself pleading, with the witches hovering over me, "Please, spare me tonight. You can have me in tomorrow night's dream!" At that point, I'd wake up. I always hated going to sleep, although I began thinking about how the witches only came in dreams.

One night, I found myself back in my bedroom and noticed the closet door creaking open. I knew at once the witches were coming, and I began to run for my life. I barely made it through the house.

As I raced across the porch and down the stairs, I tripped as usual and immediately those horrific witches caught up to me. The instant before I started to plead with them, the thought flashed through my mind, "If I ask them to take me in tomorrow night's dream, then I must be dreaming now." I faced my fear and looked the witches straight in the eye saying, "What do you want?" They gave me a disgusting look, and I demanded, "Take me now. Let's get this over with!" I watched with amazement as they quickly disappeared into the night. I woke up feeling elated and the nightmares ended. I consider this my first "lucid" dream.

CJ: How did these dreams transform your life?

BD: I believe that my choice of surrendering to my fear, controlling only my reaction, and leaving the witches to do what they pleased, served as an excellent choice for my first lucid dream. Most importantly, after this dream I learned to recognize that I am dreaming while I am dreaming. Safe in the dream, I can do things I'd never do when awake. Whatever I desire, seems possible. Whatever I think, will occur. I can face fears, heal or nurture myself emotionally, resolve conflicts or blocks, have adventures, help "others," or just have fun. I can fly, visit endless places, people, or time periods, and generally "do the impossible." I later discovered that all this seems possible with lucidity in the "waking" state as well.

In the years after my first lucid dream in 1960, I had many adventures in my dreams, including bringing the witches back into my dreams as my creative power. In 1994, doctors gave my husband and I terrible odds against having a child.

It made sense to try and get help in a lucid dream, so I called upon the witches once again. I dreamed that I took my husband to my childhood home and told him to look in the closet. He did, but he could find no witches. "There they are," I told him. "In the mirror!" I approached the witch, touched its face, and then brought it into my body. Soon after this dream, I got pregnant with my son.

In 2000, I had the biggest challenge of my life when my mother had a sudden, massive stroke and never regained consciousness. A year and a half after my mother's death, the lease was up on my childhood home. I needed to sell the house. But could I? Spontaneously, I dreamed that I found the witches in my childhood home. I surrendered to them, and they pulled me under the closet door where they originated. I merged with the witches and resolved the biggest fears of my childhood. In my earliest dreams, I feared going with the witches. In my waking life, I feared my mother's death. At last, I could sell the house easily, and I felt healed. In a later dream I had of my childhood home, I flew out the picture window as a powerful witch.

CJ: I love the way those witches accompanied you through your hardest moments and became a symbol of creativity and strength. Could you crystallize how lucid dreaming has helped you to develop your philosophy of life?

BD: I have used lucid dreaming to develop and teach what I call Lucid Living, a form of self-realization. Whenever I find myself in a body, separate from others, I know that my truer self must be dreaming because in my view an ultimate true self, or what some call God, cannot get divided. In other words, I view

life as a dream. By viewing life as a dream, I now better understand the paranormal and my relationship with the divine.

Lucid dreaming also gives me a spiritual perspective on death. In non-lucid dreams, I used to think of my "dream body" as my "self." Because I did not have awareness of my expanded self, I believed that if my dream body died, I died. I continued to feel this way until I woke up out of the dream. I now see death as "waking up out of life."

I feel that lucidity expands my sense of self and potential in life. With lucidity, I can live the most illuminating, clear, and conscious life possible whether asleep or "awake."

CJ: What is the most valuable thing you have learned from your rich dreamlife?

BD: Dreams, especially lucid ones, have provided me with amazing adventures, helped me mature as a person, and allowed my spiritual growth. Most importantly, whether asleep or awake, I experience a world with endless possibilities, where I have less fear, and I understand everyone and everything as aspects of my truer self.

Materials for this interview were taken from: <http://wedreamnow.info>

Clare Johnson, PhD (Clare Jay) The first doctoral researcher to explore lucid dreaming as a creative writing tool, Clare has written two lucid dream-based novels, *Breathing in Colour* and *Dreamrunner*. Her new website explores all areas of lucid dreaming, from problem-solving and creativity to deep space lucidity and lucid dreaming in the dying process.

www.DeepLucidDreaming.com

DREAMTIME

A Publication of the
International Association
for the Study of Dreams

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Web site

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Purchase Price: \$10.00

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