

Counselor's Corner: A Royal Road

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In a counseling session a man told me, "I had a dream about my house. I knew it was my house even though it didn't look like it. There was a door in the laundry room I had never seen before. I opened it and went up a flight of winding stairs into this beautiful room, a garden really, with high ceilings and lots of sunlight. I had the sense it had been there all along but I had never noticed the door that led to it... I love that dream."

Dreams are the "royal road" to self-understanding according to Sigmund Freud. Carl Jung called dreams such as the one above, "big dreams," ones we remember and whose significance we can feel.

Dreams are a potent source of knowledge of one's self. They illustrate or symbolize our attempts to understand the depth of ourselves. Troubling emotions are sometimes safely expressed in dreams — emotions of fear, rage, and grief, for instance. A murderous dream does not make the dreamer a murderer but it may help dissipate intense feelings of anger. A dream about fleeing from someone does not put the dreamer in mortal danger but may bring a better understanding of real-life feelings of anxiety.

I encourage people to keep a dream journal during momentous or difficult times. The suggestions of our dreams can be illuminating. At night the unconscious is unleashed and during REM sleep (a time when our emotional responses are similar to what they are when we are awake) we can be curious onlookers or participants in the usually hidden contents of our deepest feelings. Writing down our "big dreams" and/or sharing them with someone we trust can be a source of healing and transformation.

To keep a dream journal, have a notebook and pen ready by your bedside. Remind yourself before you fall asleep that you want to remember your dreams.

Immediately upon waking, whether during the night or in the morning, write down what you can remember. Making just a broad sketch of the story can help you fill in the more of the dream when you are fully awake. Sometimes the small details can be especially revealing. Telling the dream out loud can also bring out more detail.

You are the author, creator and best interpreter of your dreams, but a few techniques can be helpful. Since the dream comes from your own experience, one method of interpretation is to see every person, animal or thing in the dream as carrying some information or truth about yourself. A common symbol of the self (or sometimes a relationship) is a house. The condition of the house, the rooms, the doors, the people in or outside the house, and other details are clues to what is going on at a level below consciousness. Going down (stairs or a mountain, etc.) can suggest going into the unconscious or unknown parts of the self. Going up may symbolize conscious thought, or as one goes higher, a spiritual awareness.

Just as God is present in your waking life, God is present in your dreaming life. The gift of dreaming is the gift of discovering something you didn't know you knew. A dream is God's assurance that even the darkest depths of your being have meaning for your becoming. Thanks be to God.



Margaret McCray

Goodbye from Nikki Goulet Jordan

Dear Members and Friends of Westminster,

It is with mixed emotions that I announce my resignation as Youth Music Director at Westminster. As many of you know, in addition to my position at Westminster, I am a choir director at Kennedy High School in Bloomington. Watching both of these programs grow has been an amazing journey, but the demands of these positions combined have become too great. As my life is changing and Albert and I hope to start a family soon, I have had to reevaluate the amount of time I spend at work.

This program has grown and changed so much in the last seven years. I leave with many wonderful memories of singing in worship, Christmas Eve Pageants, and musicals. I will treasure these memories and the relationships I have made for the rest of my life. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with your children and to worship with you. It has truly been a joy! I have grown so much as a teacher, musician and a Christian during my tenure and I leave knowing that great things are in store for the Youth Music Program at Westminster. I am certain the choirs will continue to grow and be nurtured by people who know the importance of music in the lives of children, as well as the presence of children in worship. I will miss you all!

Nikki Goulet Jordan