

HOW TO INTERPRET YOUR DREAMS

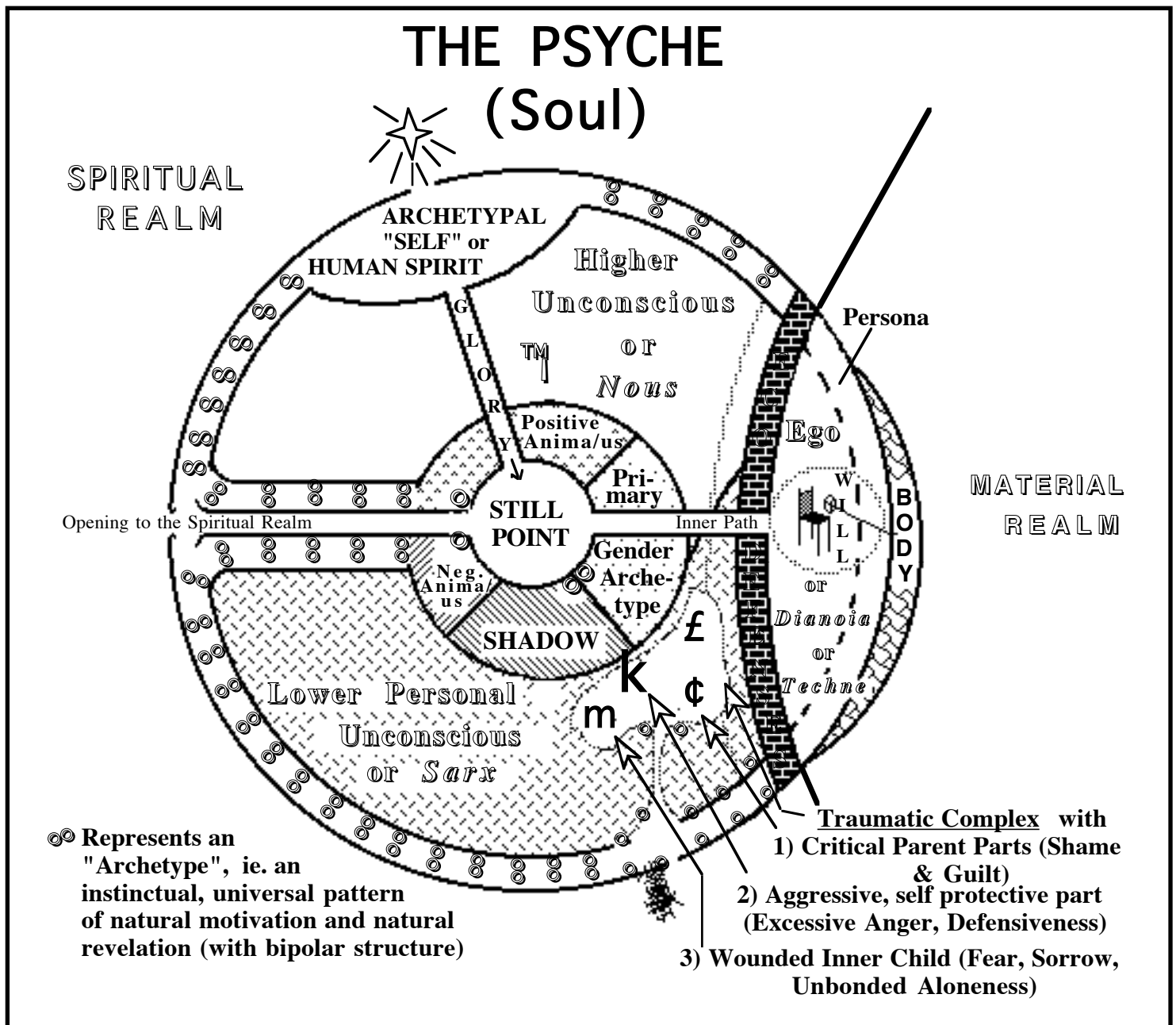
by Troy Caldwell M.D.

I. Go to Your Still Point

- A. Start out connected to God and your intuition.
- B. Ask the Holy Spirit to enliven and guide your intuition so you can hear, see, and respond to His message in the dream.
- C. Use techniques of promoting centering & stillness such as worship with music, the Jesus Prayer, the Cloud of Unknowing Prayer, etc to promote recollection.

II. Remember the Basics

- A. Dreams are **symbolic**, not literal.
- B. Dreams are about **you**, not someone else. (usually)
- C. Dreams are about the **inner world** and only *indirectly* about the outer world. (usually)
- D. Dreams are there to stretch and grow you and not just tell you what you already know or flatter you. Approach them with respect and humility. Remember Joseph's errors.
- E. Dreams reflect how your soul looks (its patterns, interactions, and structures) from an objective Wisdom higher than your ego (ie. a Dove's eye view).



III. Two Levels of Interpretation

A. Personal

B. Archetypal (Universal)

IV. Associate to the Setting and Overall Mood

A. What region in the soul might this be? (See diagram of Psyche on previous page).

1. *Sarx*?

During the Purgative Way, the healing of the *sarx* is a repetitive theme. This is our "lower unconscious" or that part of us that has been rejected from our conscious awareness (ie. repressed) or has not yet been activated in our development but needs to be. It has been referred to as "our un-lived life". The Greek word "*Sarx*" is translated "sinful nature" or "flesh" in Romans 7. The "law of sin" is the operative principle in this "body (ie. region) of death" (Rom. 7:24). The "old written code" is embodied in the critical parent part. Fear, anger, guilt, and shame originate here. The *sarx* is in polarized conflict with the "*nous*". Those who are "in the *sarx*" cannot please God (Rom. 8:6). *Genuine* Christian motivation must come from elsewhere. The *sarx* has been called "our un-lived life". It contains a great amount of positive human potential, but when we reject these energies, they turn negative. The spiritual journey takes us through experiences of redeeming and sanctifying these forces. Dreams help you see this happening. While we must "die to the flesh" as a whole, this means merely to no longer identify with it, not attack it (see Romans 5-6)---to let go of our attachment to what the *sarx* desires, since those desires are no longer "me". If we take a hostile attitude towards these energies and potentials, the *sarx* just gets worse. This would be trying to destroy the *sarx* using the power of the *sarx* or ego. It cannot be done. Only the transforming power of God through the *nous* will enable the *sarx* to become "captive to Christ". (2 Cor 10:5)

2. *Nous*?

The Greek word "*Nous*" is translated "mind", however its meaning is more specific than our English word. It is the "inmost self" (Rom. 7:22) that delights in the law of God but is sometimes overwhelmed by the *sarx*. It is the creative imagination and symbolic mind that longs for higher meaning and synthesis. It operates according to the inspiration of the "new life in the Spirit" (Rom. 7:6) for its motivation, rather than than fear of punishment. "*Nous*" correlates with the psychological term "higher personal unconscious". The *Techne* or *Dianoia* contrast by being analytic, technical, and more related to the more common, Western mode of alert, defensive, or effortful consciousness as opposed to a more open, meditative or contemplative consciousness which the spiritual journey promotes. Through the *nous* we receive spiritual enlightenment and guidance. It draws our ego consciousness toward wholeness and integration. The *sarx*, by contrast, contains our more fragmented self.

3. Ego level?

Although the ego is not mentioned directly in Romans 7, it is implied. The part of the self that is aware of the struggle between *sarx* and *nous* is the ego. We are "in the flesh" when we identify with the urgings of the *sarx*. We are "in the spirit" when we identify more with the promptings of the *nous* and its higher organizing center, the human spirit. It is through these psychological instruments that the Ego hears and sees the movements of "The Great Dance". It must properly discern, and then decide how to respond with its will. In dreams, the image or perspective of your own self can usually be considered the ego consciousness.

4. Persona?

This is the false front or mask that we wear for the public. Sometimes our dreams warn us that we are over-identified with our mask. We need then to be reminded that the mask is not the true self. The more we confuse this public self with our innermost self, the stronger and more negative the *sarx* will grow. It will then undermine or humble our false self which has become prideful. This dynamic embodies the principle, "Pride comes before a fall".

5. Personal unconscious level?

Sometimes it is useful to differentiate whether a setting or symbol suggests the personal or universal unconscious. Personal symbols exist because of events in your life and your particular reaction to them. Healing of memories might be appropriate here. These symbols appear less caricaturized than archetypal ones. They are often familiar people doing human-like things. They are often more singular and less group in nature. All personal symbols have archetypal "roots"--ie. there is something about this that is common to all mankind, but your personal associations will likely bring forth the meaning of these symbols because of the plentiful associations already in your mind to them.

6. Archetypal level? (Collective Unconscious)

You can likely attribute a more universal or archetypal meaning to a symbol when it is very generic, caricaturized, or group oriented. Also, you likely will have few personal associations to the symbol unless you have studied its typical meaning in some way. These have more to do with impersonal forces acting within you rather than personal decisions you have made or events in your life. Your ego attitude toward the force may be colored by personal experience, but the force itself is universal. To understand these, symbol books and study enable you to understand them.

B. Example: Note how the structure of the dream imagery corresponds closely with the diagram of the soul. The diagram can often be used as a kind of template for seeing the layout of the dream as it relates to different parts of the soul.

Theophany dream of Troy Caldwell, September 1, 1986

I was climbing up the front steps into an old church. Below the stairs, in a storm sewer, there was a corpse wrapped in newspaper. There was a bag-lady on the street speaking psychotically to something down in the storm sewer. I wonder if she's talking to the dead man. She says, "No."

Justin, my then 4 year old son, was with me, and I had to negotiate some treacherous ways. A joker-like Satan figure was there, and I needed to capture or nullify him somehow. I go into the church and enter the hunt.

I climb stairs higher. I must carry Justin into a priest's chambers through a very narrow hallway. I step over a stair that's missing. An abyss is below. We succeed in entering. The chambers are located behind a baptismal tank. They don't reveal much.

I go higher and am just under the metallic roof in a narrow almost crawl space. I open a door and there is radiant light. I am unsure, but it appears to be from God.

The contest between me and the joker-satan heats up. He has substituted his false furniture and statues for the real ones. I'm impressed by his joke but pursue. I and an unknown other person find him and keep him from getting away.

Jesus and I now have Joker-satan trapped in a room like a racquetball court. We are viewing him from a glassed in sound booth half a story elevated from his level. I worry about the lock on the door. I want Jesus to magically turn the deadbolt, but it does not seem right for me to ask, so I must go face Satan myself and lock it. Satan later breaks out in spite of the lock. He is recaptured but before he scatters his counterfeit furniture.

A woman with long fingernails who is a country & western singer sings a song accompanied by a guitar especially for Satan. He melts. It is as if only this song sung by her has the appropriate effect. Her fingernails awkwardly get in the way of her guitar playing. God gave her this song just for this task.

I was playing a marble game with Satan in which each of us held to an end of a tray with holes in it and sought, by tipping the tray, to avoid letting your marbles fall down holes. I consider tilting the board at a severe angle so that my marbles are not really on the playing surface but against the rail surrounding the tray. It is, however, a point of honor that I do not. I realize that Satan has no honor.

Important points:

The *sarx* is represented by the sewer and psychotic woman.

The church building represents the *nous*.

The radiant light is the spiritual sphere and God.

The Joker-Satan is highly caricaturized and thus likely archetypal.

The country singer is somewhat caricaturized, but I have a number of personal associations to her as well that amplify the meaning for me personally beyond the universal meaning.

C. What overall theme might the setting and mood suggest?

In the example, it suggests a movement of consciousness through the *nous* toward God and dealing with various obstacles along the way.

V. Associate to the key symbols: people, objects, creatures, etc.

A. Let your intuition flow freely at first and write connections it makes for you. Enjoy the element of surprise at what comes to mind..

B. Only move one or two steps away from the original symbol, like kicking a ball on a tether.

C. Next rein in your thoughts slightly and write 3 positive and 3 negative connections your mind has to the symbol. (Joseph's method)

VI. Dialog with the symbol: let your imagination give it voice. Alternatively, picture yourself with the symbol and let action flow.

The creative fantasy response to the ego's questions and interactions will tend to come from the creative unconscious or higher if the ego has let go of the fantasy creation process. The fantasy will likely reflect symbolic or literal truth about inner reality.

A. You may do this with people, places, things, activities, the higher wisdom that sent the dream, etc.

B. Some sample dialog questions:

1. Why are you in my dream?
2. Who are you in my soul?
3. Why have you come to me today?
4. How are you trying to protect me?

Ask this of even threatening figures. These often are warnings about inner conflicts between your ego and a part you need to accept, help sanctify, and integrate.

5. What shortcoming or defect in me lets you take over?
6. When did this feeling or part or pattern start? Can you tell me some things that make me feel or behave this way toward myself?
7. What changes must I make to reconcile you into myself?
8. What grace do I need from God to overcome this?
9. What steps must I take to make this change?

VII. Questions to Ask Yourself

A. What part or process of my soul is like this symbol or action?

B. What part or process of my outer life is like this symbol or activity?

C. What spiritual entity, psychological part, or psycho/spiritual process might this symbol represent?

D. Draw a scene from the dream. What does the image suggest to you?

E. Could any of the symbols be word plays or puns? Can the humor of it free me up from any over-serious self-importance and allow me to let go to fuller participation in God's epic in my life?

VIII. When Personal Associations are Exhausted, then Consider the Universal (Archetypal) Meanings.

A. What does this symbol mean in great world literature & stories?

1. The Bible?

- a. Use a concordance
- b. Use a Bible dictionary
- c. Use *Vines Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
- d. Use a Bible computer program

2. Fantasy, Epic, Mythic literature, spiritual literature?

3. Cross cultural studies of ceremony, story, myth?

4. Cross cultural studies of dreams & psychology?

5. Books like *Man and His Symbols* by Jung and *A Dictionary of Symbols* by Cirlot are good here.

B. Does the symbol link to major recurrent symbolic themes found in psychological and spiritual growth? If so, where does it suggest I am in my growth?

1. What things need to be purged?

2. What things are being illuminated?

3. What things need to be redeemed and healed?

4. What things need to die, be transformed, and rise again?

How am I doing at processing my grief about this?

5. What things need greater union with my growing wholeness and with God?

6. How are these things working for my Good according to Romans 8:28-29?

7. How does this show me participating in the epic of God?

C. Does the symbol link to recurrent themes in myself?

1. Keep a table of contents in your journal of 1-2 sentence or phrase summaries of God's messages. Go back regularly and notice themes. Are you following through on earlier insights or leadings?

2. Possibly do regular summaries of messages from God using a form like this:

DATE	EXAMEN	STILL POINT	DREAMS	LECTIO DIVINA
	2 Concerns; 2 Consolations; 2 Calls to Grow, Triumph, Endure; 2 Commitments	2 (What God wants me to do today about myself)	(Where God is taking me and what I need to Address)	(God's words to Guide, Comfort, Sustain me)

By doing this kind of cross validation of messages, you diminish your chance for error.

D. Invite Jesus to the dream and see if He will actively interact imagistically with a dream image or inspire new, spontaneous images that suggest a more favorable resolution or movement toward wholeness.

IX. Example of Universal Themes (Archetypes)

A. The Man/ Woman: Images of the same sex.

Masculine instincts tend toward the following traits, therefore non-specific male figures will likely represent some of these. (Important note: actual human men and women may or may not have these traits. An individual man is a mix of both masculine and feminine traits. Remember; instincts and archetypes are caricatures and one-sided. Whole people ideally are a balance of traits.)

Positive

- Initiative taking
- Focused
- Linear, logical
- Analytic more than synthetic
- Left brained
- Positive energy
- Goal oriented
- Strength of Purpose
- Self disciplined

Negative

- Intrusive, pushy
- Unwilling to yield or deviate course
- Unimaginative,
- Overly skeptical
- Unable to make new associations or connections
- Negative, destructive, or fragmenting force
- Driven to achieve
- Overly-forceful
- Violent

Individuated
 Confident
 Penetrating power
 Overcomer of obstacles
 Able to let go of old patterns, habits, traditions
 Fearless
 Orderly
 Successful
 Conquering
 Territorial
 Boundary making
 In the head/ intellect
 Emphasis on doing rather than being

Narcissistic, ego-centric
 Power hungry
 Entitled by force of power
 Heavy handed
 Inflexible
 Grandiose
 Isolated
 Cocky
 Unwilling to bond or commit
 Insensitive to others' suffering
 Unbonded
 Over intellectual; Unfeeling/ heartless.
 Driven; unable to rest or be still

Feminine figures might represent as follows:

Passive; receptive
 Diffuse
 Non-linear; wholistic; associational
 Synthetic more than analytic
 Right brained
 Gentle energy
 Flexible
 Purpose is to respond to the moment
 Responsive; contemplative
 Bonded
 Loving
 Power to attract; receptive power
 Able to respond with grace to unexpected needs
 Able to form close attachments
 Sensitive to possibility of harm
 Responsive to entirety of circumstance
 Supportive of achievement of others
 Enjoys being swept off one's feet or conquered by love
 Protective of the child
 Inclusive
 Lives from the heart or feeling
 Emphasis on being rather than doing

Unable to use force
 Unfocused; disorganized
 Illogical
 Gullable; unable to discern
 Impractical; idealistic; lost in imagination; head in clouds
 Easily pushed aside
 Unable to strive for a goal
 Never able to plan ahead or set goals
 Unable to get mind out of inwardness in order to accomplish
 Unable to separate oneself
 Over-concerned for others to the exclusion of oneself
 Easily intruded upon; overly seductive
 Unable to push aside obstacles to stay on task
 Unable to let go of attachments; dependent; symbiotic
 Fearful
 Disorganized
 Spoiling
 Too easily swayed; seducible
 Indulgent to the child
 Unboundaried
 Sentimental; sloppy in thought
 Lazy; overly passive

1. Consider the "Great Stories": 4 Masculine & 4 Feminine Archetypes.

- a. What archetype is being corrected for its excess?
- b. Is the opposite of your primary archetype depicted as your shadow (sarx) that needs redemption and growth?
- c. How are the typical strengths and weaknesses manifested in my dream figure?
- d. What typical pattern might God be working in my life in light of where I now see this archetype?
- e. For further study read *About Men and Women* by Guzie & Guzie (Paulist Press)
- f. Review the instructional outline titled "Archetypes as Guideposts on the Spiritual Journey" by Troy Caldwell

2. Example: DR: A Central American death squad leader was flying on a plane.

Interpretation: Depending on the context and associations, the death squad leader is a military leader, thus suggesting a Warrior archetype. It is depicted in a negative mode, so this might suggest a destructive masculine Warrior aggression is active in the dreamer. The dream figure then might carry all of the traits of Warrior's dark side. That the Warrior figure was a passenger in an airplane suggests the dreamer may think the Warrior is part of the higher unconscious, when in fact it is not. The dreamer should be on the lookout for temper flares, or competitive urges that he thinks are noble or right or justified but which in fact are destructive.

B. The Persona

1. Our mask for the public

2. If problematic, the way we use a false self to cover up or hide our true self from ourselves and others.

Fakeness; facade.

Reference to how we are living to please others.

C. The Shadow--conflicted, darkened, deficient, or hostile images of the same sex

Our undeveloped side which could be integrated into our ego capabilities and perspectives but which is currently rejected from our potential wholeness. The more we consider the Persona the true self, the darker and more powerful the Shadow.

1. Dr. Jekel and Mr. Hyde
2. Spooks & goblins
3. Skeletor
4. Superman III in which superman fights his mean alter-ego
5. My El Salvadoran death squad leader
6. 90% pure gold unless ignored
7. Satan/ demon symbols

Note: If these are the real Satan or demons and not merely the shadow, they will come with *numinous* power, and you probably do best to deal with them according to principles of spiritual warfare and not much dialog.

8. A dimension of the *Sarx*

D. The *Animus/ Anima*--images of the opposite sex

1. Act as spiritual guide or doorway into the higher unconscious
2. Lead to transcendence of ego limitations
3. Relate to inspiration
4. When projected to an outside person, tends to inspire attraction or romance.

Note: this is one of the few avenues to transcendence left available and socially acceptable to Western Culture. Romance & *Anima/us* can tend to become idolatrous gods.

5. Has major role in sexual attraction and other forms of *Eros*.

- a. When related to in sexual imagery, can help us see what of the opposite sex traits need to be developed or united with in ourselves.
- b. This aids integration and diminishes urges to act inappropriately and is different from lust.

E. The Wholeness (The "Itself" or archetypal "Self" of Jung)

1. Related to concept of human spirit and image of God within us.
2. Operates as the master program of our soul promoting wholeness, individuation, consciousness, and growth.
3. Its symbols can signify God sometimes.
4. Mandala symbol
5. Circle
6. Hermaphrodite

F. The Journey, Pilgrimage, Quest, Adventure

G. The Sexual Union

1. Intimate, affiliative relatedness of parts
2. Resolution of conflict and subsequent union
3. We are the bride of Christ
4. Consider the sensual imagery of Song of Solomon.

H. Death & Rebirth

1. Baptism
2. Shift of identification from one archetype (pattern of life and identity) to another
3. Phoenix, caterpillar to butterfly, etc.
4. Letting go of the old way of being in order to receive the new way.

I. Wind & Water

1. When water is running like with a river, it often symbolized sth flow of the Spirit. Running water is called in the Bible, "Living Water". "Out of your innermost being will flow rivers of living water..." Jn. 4
2. Water that is in a body like a lake or ocean often represents the unconscious mind, particularly in its feminine aspects but not necessarily.
3. If the water is stagnant, it suggests a stuckness or lack of movement to a part of the soul that is cut off or dissociated--a place where foulness can grow.
4. Wind can often represent the Spirit or a feeling state or an attitude. A foul wind might represent an evil spirit or destructive attitude, etc. Raging winds might represent anger. A refreshing wind might be the Holy Spirit.

J. Pregnancy

1. Gestation; a time of waiting for something to come to fruition.
2. Pregnant with possibilities.
3. Hope of new life.
4. On the verge of becoming fruitful.
5. Preparing to give birth to something in the soul

K. Union of opposites

1. Resolution of paradoxical or contradictory parts of ourself.
2. Similar to sexual union.

3. Bringing together things of different types.

L. Earth/ Sky; Sun/ Moon

1. Earth refers often to our earthly instincts--not bad; merely human--archetypal or instinctual. Movement in this direction brings us close to the "ground of our being" who ultimately is God. Yet, the danger is to become earthbound through attachment to some instinctual attachment that is less than God, a guidepost rather than the road itself. Often feminine.

2. The sky would be a movement toward the spiritual, higher unconscious or *nous*.

a. However, if you fly too high or without proper support, you can lose your "grounding" or ability to be "down to earth". You may become like Icarus.

3. The Sun would thus often be the spiritual bringer of light

a. God--particularly God the Father as bringer of the light of consciousness or insight or truth.

b. The Father archetype

c. This light sees distinctions and detail & is thus more analytic

4. The Moon would thus often be a bringer of a gentler, more diffused light.

a. This more diffused consciousness is more like a feminine consciousness which sees the broad outline of things. More synthetic and wholeistic knowledge.

b. Mother; Mother archetype

c. Femininity

d. Oceanic awareness

e. Sexuality/union

M. The Child

1. That which is young within us

2. Inner child

3. Innocence

4. Vulnerability

5. Naiveté

6. The Divine Child is like a new dimension of Christlikeness within us.

N. The Old Man/ Woman

1. Something old within us

1. Maybe nearly worn out and ready to die

2. Yet may contain much experience or wisdom.

O. The Wise Man/ Woman

1. Often a personification of *nous* wisdom

P. Trickster

1. A representative of the Shadow principle.

2. The court jester had the purpose of making fun of the king in such a way that the king could laugh at himself and thus remain humble.

3. That which humbles, or if you resist the humbling message, undermines the ego purposes

Q. Shaman

1. A healer archetype

2. A guide into spiritual awareness--either good or evil

3. The Wounded Healer archetype

R. Animals

1. Often earthy or instinctual

2. Often represent a trait similar to that animal's character that is present in your soul

S. Vehicle or mode of transportation

1. Often a "power" within you that carries the ego or consciousness.

2. Are you driving or is something else driving you?

T. Snake

1. A strong archetypal power from the deep unconscious

2. Can be used for destruction like Satan or for healing like the snake lifted up on a pole in the wilderness

U. Back/ Front

1. Back often is toward the unconscious

2. Front is often toward consciousness

V. Up/ Down

1. Up is often toward the *nous* or spiritual
2. Down is often toward the incarnated or instinctual

W. Right/ Left

1. Right often is toward wholeness
2. Left is often toward the fragmented, destructive, or “sinsiter” or shadow.

X. Teeth

Teeth, as with all symbols, can have multiple meanings depending upon the dreamer's personal associations with the symbol. A common association to teeth is "biting". This is an aggressive and tearing act. Teeth may thus have to do with aggressive urges. Alternately, mental use of "teeth" in a figurative sense might have to do with analysis of an issue, since analysis, in contrast to synthesis, bites things into little pieces to look at them. Thus teeth falling out might mean a person is being under-aggressive or forgetting to analyze properly. Alternately, teeth might be used for chewing. Thus, chewing over a problem or meditating (literally 'chewing a cud') may be problematic if one is missing teeth.

If we think of idioms using teeth, we "sink our teeth" into challenges or problems we need to solve or learnings we are undertaking. Without teeth, one may thus be having trouble with a challenge or a learning.

In a more positive vein, for a person who is overly aggressive, if they lose their teeth, it might be a good thing. Sometimes women are underaggressive, however, so depending on context of life and the rest of the dream, it might be a suggestion of a needed correction.

X. Once Each Symbol is Analyzed, next try to make a synthesis of the entire meaning of the dream when all pieces are put together.

A. Each symbol should be consistent in its meaning. If you find inconsistencies, go back and see if an alternative synthesis or meaning of a symbol would make more sense.

B. Try to put the interpretation within the flow of similar dreams throughout your life.

Example: a 747 jumbo cargo jet was the vehicle for travel through my higher unconscious in an important 1991 dream. It represented the bulky, complex concepts I was trying to fly with and having trouble getting down to earth. A subsequent dream in 1993 showed a more agile F-15. By contrasting the two, I concluded that I had more successfully streamlined my concepts into teachable form. This then became an encouragement.

XI. Examples

Expanded Interpretation of Dream in Section IV: You are taking your inner Child of God (a Christian archetypal form) into focused preparation for baptism with God's power (ie. receiving more immersion in God) and your Ego (conscious, rational mind) must learn to discern Satan & Satan's furniture in the houses of religion (ie. false teaching) as well as in yourself. God and Christ are showing themselves to you in preparation for a confrontation with Satan. Your *Anima's* earthy song will be a major tool against him, that is, you will need to learn to harmonize your earthy instincts (a *Mediatrix* function).in order to dissolve the power of the false ideas within you.

See also “Archetypes as Guideposts on the Spiritual Journey” by Troy Caldwell-- especially the dreams at the end.

XII. A Spiritual Analysis

This technique is considered advanced spiritual direction. It is based on nine themes of spiritual direction teachings about growth phases.

A. The Awakening of the Soul

1. What is God awakening in your soul with this dream?
2. Does it shed light upon WHO you are as a child of God?
3. Does it shed light upon your call to be holy?
4. Does it suggest ways to become more centered upon God?
5. Is there a new dimension suggested for turning over my heart, mind, and soul to God?
6. Is there an arrow prayer I can send to God?

B. The Conversion of the Heart

1. What in my will needs to be converted?
2. Does it shed light upon why I am not holy in some area?
3. Does it suggest a commitment I need to make to God?
4. Does this fit with or need to be a part of my spiritual inventory or examen?
5. Does knowledge of the three spiritual types shed any light upon the direction of my needed change as suggested by this dream?

C. The Mercy of God (Conversion of the Mind)

1. How can these changes be done mercifully toward myself?
2. What must I ask grace for?
3. How can these changes be done mercifully toward others?
4. How can I become more aware of God's forgiveness through this?

5. How does this show the ways God's mercy is extended toward us?
6. Would a formal confession be wise here?
7. Would a review and renewal of my baptismal vows help here?

D. The Language of God

1. Is there a particular symbol that God is using that seems individual with me?
2. What language of God would help right now? Can you ask Him for it?
3. Does any of this help answer WHAT we are as people of God?
4. Would prayer therapy (inner healing prayer or prayer with others) help here?
5. Would the Jesus prayer help here?

E. Acquiring the Mind of Christ--Meditation

1. How can the mind of Christ be a help or a model?
2. Is a change of attitude, action, or thought needed?
3. Do stories or phrases from scripture come to mind?

Do *Lectio Divina* with these.

4. Does an illumination of defects or resources occur?

F. Dark Nights of the Soul--Meditation

1. What is my suffering suggested here?
2. Does this dream reveal a separation from God?
3. Is there a virtue that needs developing suggested in my spiritual inventory?
4. Will I abandon myself to this suffering? (ie. lean into God's hedge trimmers; let go of an attachment?)
5. In what way is this suffering a resource from God?

G. Contemplation

1. Having meditated upon all of these things, from your still point, open yourself to the experience of Christ.
2. Receive His love in self abandonment.
3. Review His power for transformation and ministry.

H. Spirituality and Sex

1. How does this dream emphasize or demonstrate that my sexuality, my masculinity and/or femininity is a gift from God to be used for His glory?
2. As I am experiencing the love of God in contemplation, how is this like a mother with child affirming who your inner child as a boy or girl?
3. Is this love affirming you helping define what you are and giving you boundaries in the world like a father?
4. Is this love wooing you like a lover and the feminine bride of Christ in His masculinity?
5. Can you let this make you feel more whole and complete as a man or woman?
6. Can this help me in my life relationships with the opposite sex?

I. Evangelism / Ministry

1. Do any of the images of your dream suggest a growing area of potential ministry that God is empowering?
2. Do I need to surrender to this in any way?
3. Is there anything I need to do to predispose my soul to receive gifts to perform this ministry?
4. Do I need specific spiritual direction?

XIII. A Discernment of Transcendence

These questions apply more to those in an illuminative phase or mode of spiritual experience--ie. when God is bringing predominantly revelatory experiences and light into our souls rather than predominantly purgation.

As you do your examen, following your awareness of your two major concerns, ask the following questions about the dream:

A. To what area of reality and discernment is God calling me?

B. What truth is this dream asking me to share?

For later illuminative as God gives you a ministry.

C. To what degree is the dream asking me to become flexible or forgiving?

D. Where is God asking me to increase or decrease my caring?