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Capturing Dreams with Dream Catcher

By Jennifer Ambrose

Do you want to have full control over your dreams? Do you want to avoid nightmares and just have good and sweet dreams? Well, there may not be an object that would allow you to fully control your dreams—not today and not in the past. Legends and history, however, have it that our ancestors know about a thing that allows them to filter dreams. That object is called the dream catcher.

Native American traditions tell us that dream catchers are symbolic webs hung over a sleeping person, especially over a sleeping child, so that his dreams will be filtered. In particular, the dream catcher would allow the person to have good dreams but would protect him from having bad dreams or nightmares.

Structure of a Dream Catcher

Dream catchers would take the form of a circular wooden hoop containing a handcrafted web design with a hole in the center, with two or more feathers attached to the bottom of the hoop. If crafted in the traditional manner, a dream catcher would have a natural willow hoop and a web design made of sinew.

Traditional dream catchers would also have the interior web attached to the circular hoop on eight points, symbolizing the eight legs of the spider. It is not uncommon, however, for one to find a traditional dream catcher with seven contact points. These points are said to represent what the Native Americans would call the Seven Prophecies.

Origin of the Dream Catcher

There are many legends governing the origin of the dream catcher and these legends are the key to understanding how a particular dream catcher would work, at least as believed by the natives. One legend traces the object's roots to the Ojibwe or Chippewa tribes of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Ontario, Canada. Another legend would trace its roots to the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota tribes, or the Sioux, as many would call them.

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Many studies have pointed that the dream catcher really originated from the Ojibwe Nation. Ojibwe dream catchers can easily be identified because of their small center hole, with the hole usually featuring a tiny feather. Ojibwe legends have it that the dream catcher's web traps bad dreams but allows good dreams to slip through its small center hole. The bad dreams trapped on the web would then be cleansed by daylight comes morning. The tiny feather in the Ojibwe dream catcher's hole symbolizes breath or air, which is essential for life.

Lakota dream catchers are believed to have emerged from a later date and were supposed to be the product of the intermarriage between Native American tribes. Lakota dream catchers are different from the Ojibwe variety in that they have larger center holes. The feather in the center of the Ojibwe dream catcher is also absent in the Lakota version.

The Lakota natives have a different interpretation on how the dream catcher works. According to Lakota customs, the dream catcher allows bad dreams to pass through its center hole while the web

catches the good dreams so that it would stay in sleep. But Lakota dream catchers are not only used for catching dreams. Lakota legends have it that the dream catcher also holds good visions, ideas and opportunities that may help a person in the future.

The Dream Catcher Today

Today, dream catchers are viewed either as a New Age tool or as a plain decorative ornament. For those who see the dream catcher as a New Age tool, they would still believe that the dream catcher could really filter dreams. New Age practitioners would even recommend the use of dream catchers for those having frequent nightmares and recurring bad dreams.

As a decorative ornament, the dream catcher tells us of the rich culture and tradition that our ancestors have. Having a dream catcher in our homes would constantly remind us of the mystic ways of our ancestors.

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Jennifer Ambrose is the author of the ebook "Unlock the Mystery Of Your Dreams" which teaches you how to interpret your dreams and understand them. Download it at

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Origins and Uses For Dream Catchers

By Johann Erickson

Dream catchers are a part of the tradition and culture of many of the native people of North America. The stories of the dream catcher's origin and use are as different as the tribes who used them, but the most common story goes like this:

Long ago Spider Woman (whose name and description varies by tribe) showed her people how to weave a web to catch their dreams. She took a hoop and began weaving from the outside until she reached the center. At the center she left a hole. She told her people that the web would catch their dreams. The dream catcher should be hung above the sleeping area, where it would be hit with the first morning light. While her people slept, the dream catcher would catch their dreams. The good and useful dreams would easily make their way through the web and fall through the hole to the dreamer below. The bad and useless dreams would be caught in the web and evaporate in the morning light.

Traditionally, dream catchers are made out of natural materials, preferably red willow and animal sinew. Native Americans hang them above their beds and smaller dream catchers are often hung above babies cribs.

Today, decorative dream catchers are made from many kinds of materials, traditional and non-traditional. Dream catchers are a beautiful object of art to add to your home. They come in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes, and fit into nearly any style of decor. You needn't have a southwest style home to have a dream catcher. There are red, white, and blue dream catchers for a country americana look, and black and brown dream catchers for the modern earth-tone look.

Simply choose a dream catcher that coordinates with the colors in your home. Enjoy the beauty, history, and tradition of a dream catcher by adding one to your home.

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