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Dreaming of Department Stores

By Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein

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I would like to share a childhood dream of my own that came true, and how it sparked many wonderful enchanted memories!

Recently we took a short vacation break that included three nights in London. But where to stay? My husband mentioned hotel names to me that the supplier had offered. I couldn't help but be intrigued with the name "Selfridge's". After all, wasn't that the name of the biggest department store in London? I remembered it being equal to Macy's in New York City. I said, "Let's go with that one." And we did.

I was hoping the hotel was close to the department store but I never dreamed it would be so close! It was literally outside the back door of the store --- about 50 feet from all the giant food halls that are a part of the store. I was shocked! This was a dream come true. I could wake up and go for breakfast by roaming food halls that brought in delicacies from around the world, and I could stop there after touring and have a snack or lunch, again from anywhere in the world!

Suddenly old memories of my love of department stores floated to mind. I remembered going with my mother to Malley's in New Haven when I was a young child. I remembered my anticipation as we got off the trolley and neared this glorious store. It was full of giant wrought iron elevators and pneumatic tubes that ran overhead. I loved the sounds of those tubes rushing money and receipts back and forth. I also loved standing in the elevator as the attendant named all the wonderful possible purchases available on each floor! Of course, I was particularly interested in children's clothes and toys! Yes, let me off at those floors! I couldn't wait.

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Later, as I grew older, we moved to Bridgeport and then it was another department store. Reid's had a lunch counter and my mother always took me for a tuna fish sandwich and/or coffee ice cream. I even got my hair cut there and the toy department was endless. My real dream was to sleep overnight in the toy department! I would hide out with all those wonderful Alexander dolls. This was a dream that went unfulfilled in childhood.

So, here I was as an adult — almost living out an old dream. And live it I did, except instead of tuna fish I ate delicacies from Thailand, and as I lingered over my cafe latte I had a chance to watch people from all over the world pass by. Instead of toys I shopped for cosmetics! It was a lovely experience. Those early memories layered themselves so nicely on top of my 'adult' vacation making a three-day hotel stay really something special.

Have you ever had something positive come around again? Perhaps the shape had changed but the essence was almost the same? If you have, can you share it with us as I did? Or if you can't think of anything in particular, try to remember several wishes of childhood and think about how they would reinvent themselves now. This can be fun to do and can even lead to a determined effort to finally make an old wish or desire come true.

Dr. Holstein is the originator of The Enchanted Self and a psychologist since 1981. She is the author of two books: The Enchanted Self, A Positive Therapy and Recipes for Enchantment, The Secret Ingredient is YOU! Dr. Holstein speaks on radio, and appears on television in NY and NJ. She gives lectures, seminars, retreats and audio interviews on LadybugLive.com and is in private practice in Long Branch, NJ with her husband, Dr. Russell Holstein.

Lucid Dreaming

By Dr. Barry Burns

Lucid dreaming is simply being aware that you are dreaming while you are in a dream. Learning how to do lucid dreaming intentionally is a personal growth tool. It may help you resolve personal problems because you're able to consciously take an active role in your dreams. It can also be a lot of fun!

Lucid dreaming is a challenging art to master, but there are steps that can be taken to help you achieve the state.

As you go to sleep, use the suggestion: "As I am dreaming tonight, I will realize I am dreaming" (use your own words).

It's important to do this as you are drifting off to sleep, but you can do it throughout the day as well. Sometimes as you are making this suggestion you may actually have a memory of a previous dream come to mind! Your attitude should be one of positive expectation, but gentle inviting rather than insisting or applying any type of pressure or anxiety.

Next, work on remembering your dreams after you wake up. By getting the mind used to remembering

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your dreams, you are creating a more deliberate connection of awareness between the conscious and unconscious mind. In fact, it's possible that you may already be having lucid dreams, but you aren't remembering them!

The final step is to attempt to stay in the twilight sleep state for as long as possible upon awakening. You will often have a dream just before you awake in the morning so if you can stay still and keep your eyes closed, you may be able to enter back into the dream, but with more conscious awareness - thus creating a type of lucid dream as you balance between the sleeping and waking states.

A common problem some people encounter with lucid dreaming is that they wake up as soon as they realize they're dreaming. This is because the work of making conscious choices while sleeping causes the conscious mind to rise from its slumber, thus arousing the waking state.

This can be overcome with practice, but there is a technique that can help. Before you go to sleep, plan on what you will do in your lucid dreams. This removes an element of conscious choice during your dreams, which may help you stay in the dream state.

Dr. Barry Burns received his doctorate from the American Institute of Hypnotherapy. He studied Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Hypnosis and Dreams. Dr. Burns founded Wellspring Hypnotherapy, conducts seminars nationwide and is author of "Wide Awake," a book on dreams. For more on the meaning of dreams, visit:

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