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The Mystery Of A Dream

By Susan Rutter

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Dream Appreciation

The minute parsing of dream meaning can be revelatory. As the same time, if we are not careful, it can become another way of distorting the image, like a lepidopterist mounting a butterfly on a trophy board rather than marveling at its living presence. It is a convention in psychology to talk of "dream mechanisms," but the psyche is not a steam engine or a computer. We are investigating an ecosystem, not the innards of a device. What I am referring to as the appreciative mode of dreamwork involves a vivifying encounter with the imaginal realm. Here the images not only stand for something, they exist in their own right. Instead of labeling and sorting them, extracting their meaning and discarding them, one enters open-handed into their world.

Jung used a technique he called active imagination to participate in a dream's living presence. He describes his discovery of this method in his autobiography. While sitting at his desk one day, trying to come to grips with his own intractable fears he abruptly had the sensation of letting himself inwardly "drop" to a deeper level of imagination. He felt himself plunge down, "as if the ground literally gave way beneath my feet," eventually landing in a dark cave where he encountered various mythological creatures, personages, and symbols — dwarves, glowing red crystals, enormous black scarabs.

Dreams can have such an authoritative feel — their presentation as deliberate, exacting, and inalienable as the director's cut of a film — that the dreamer's first challenge is simply accepting them as they are.

Psychologist Mary Watkins counsels against imposing a burdensome conscious structure upon a spontaneous creation: "Try to take the image as a given and as completed," she writes, "rather than a play which you, as ego, must rework and finish." This, she adds, counters "ego's attempts to consume the image as the bird would the spider."

The act of appreciating is in the spirit of what the poet Keats once characterized as "being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable grasping after fact and reason." We take the

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position of opening ourselves to the dream without unsheathing the sword of interpretation. I have often found myself returning to certain images I have allowed to live, gratified that they still retain the power to inwardly move me, and have not been "analyzed to death".

Indeed, a hallmark of this mode of living encounter is an upwelling of feeling, for here we are seeking the emotional, not the intellectual, center of the dream, that place where wordless transformative energies pool and stir. Sometimes an image arouses a full-fledged mood state — a catch in the throat, a gut feeling, the sudden pounding of our hearts in "irrational" fear or "wild" passion. Then we know that the imaginal creatures, which are intimately connected with the body, are hungering to be part of our lives.

Another aspect of appreciating a dream involves sharing it with others. When we work on a dream

alone, we tend to repress those aspects we don't want to see. To encounter a dream in the company of others helps us see what we would otherwise gloss over. The Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz writes, "Dreams generally point to our blind spot. They never tell us what we already know ... The trouble with interpreting your own dreams is that you can't see your own back." We require companionship with others who have become sensitized to the imaginal dimension, for we may see more through their eyes than we see through our own.

If we open our hearts as well as our minds to the dream, then its entire world — and by analogy, our "real" world, too — is revealed as a living plenitude. The simplicity of an open gaze is itself transformative. Then life willingly bears us beyond our habitual viewpoint, showing us where faith sleeps in a mustard seed, and a cosmos really does glimmer in a grain of sand.

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Author, instructor, nutritionist, public-speaker, expert dream interpreter

Take the "Mystery" Out of Becoming a Mystery Shopper

By Ted Belfour

Many people all over the world are making money as a mystery shopper. Thanks to the Internet, details on how to become a mystery shopper are widely available, taking the "mystery" out of the process.

Mystery shoppers provide a great service to retailers and service businesses. By walking into a business as an unknown $\frac{1}{2}$ the basic, average, every day customer $\frac{1}{2}$ mystery shoppers relate their experiences to corporate headquarters. Why would a big corporation rely on people they don't know? Because their opinion counts! Mystery shoppers can get a more accurate look at the day to day

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operations of a business than a CEO can on a yearly visit. It's a known fact that employees put their best foot forward when their boss is in the building. Mystery shoppers are an effective way for corporate offices to learn about the service, employee attitudes, and cleanliness of a business. If a customer walks into a fast food restaurant and is greeted by an indifferent employee and the place is a mess, that customer will likely tell other people. Word of mouth from one unsatisfied customer can kill business. That's why mystery shoppers are so important.

There are many mystery shopper programs that enlist the help of average people every day. Some are scams and others are for real. How do you separate the two? Follow that old basic rule of thumb: If they ask you to pay to work for them, it's a scam.

A legitimate company will not expect you to pay them in order to work for them. You wouldn't expect to pay a doctor's office to let you be a receptionist or a convenience store for the opportunity to be a cashier. Mystery shopping is a job, so there is no difference.

There is a mystery shopping certification available. The Mystery Shopping Providers Association of North America offers such certification. With two certifications to choose from, potential shoppers may test online for certification that proves they have the basic skills needed to be a mystery shopper. A more expensive plan also covers some training for mystery shoppers. It is important to note that certification is not required to be a mystery shopper.

So, if you are looking for a way to make money part time, consider a career as a mystery shopper. Assignments might have you sampling yogurt, going to a movie, or eating out at a restaurant you might not normally go to!

Dave is the owner of

and

websites that

provide information on mystery shoppers.



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