

A dream job

Local workshop leader helps explore nocturnal musings

by **Bonnie Benjamin Skopinski**

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From ancient Egypt to biblical times to today, dreams have fascinated people. Long ago — and even in some cultures today — dreams were considered messages from God.

The messages might bestow wisdom, warnings or prophesy. Others believe dreams reflect the state of a person's health; still others postulate that external stimuli prompt dreams and their significance is nil.

Sigmund Freud theorized that dreams were desires unacceptable to the waking mind.

Carl Jung believed dreams were the unconscious mind sending the conscious mind messages to facilitate personal

growth and that the language of dreams was universal.

To dream workshop leader Irene Clurman, the expression "It was only a dream" dismisses "as profound a connection to one's self and truth as one could have. It's a gift of information."

Clurman has worked with dreams for 17 years. She employs methods learned from veteran dream worker and Unitarian Universalist minister Jeremy Taylor. A yoga teacher for many years, Clurman often includes easy meditative yoga movements in her dream group workshops at the Body Mind Awareness Yoga Center in Evergreen.

Taylor takes his cue from

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EVERGREEN'S IRENE CLURMAN leads dream workshops and likens interpreting dreams to interpreting poetry.

Climb aboard the dream weaver train

Irene Clurman is offering a local dream workshop from 2 to 5 p.m. Friday, April 21, at the Body Mind Awareness Yoga Center in Evergreen. The workshop costs \$35 in advance and \$45 after April 18. Call 303-674-6047 to register or for more information about this and upcoming dream interpretation events. Other information is available in the book "Dream Work" by Jeremy Taylor. The first of three books by the author, it is a guide to working with dreams. Also, the website Soulfuture.com includes a dream dictionary.

Dreams

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Jung but emphasizes the benefit to society as a whole if individuals "become more conscious and more responsible for ourselves and our society," as he said in an interview in *The Sun* magazine last month. Unlike Jung and others, he advocates doing dream work in groups.

When Clurman leads a workshop, she reviews with the group Taylor's six basics about "working" dreams.

- Dreams, even nightmares, are positive in that they are trying to help us grow. In fact, Clurman said, "in my experience, the nightmares have the most gold for us."

When self-knowledge comes packaged as a nightmare, it is because our unconscious is

saying: This is important; pay attention.

- The dreamer is the only person who truly knows what the dream means. Dream workers like Clurman speak of the "aha" moment when in the meaning "clicks."

- Dreams have multiple meanings. Clurman tells her workshop participants that a dream may have significance at any number of levels — personal, global and spiritual, for instance.

- Dreams don't tell you what you already know. Even dream fragments and dreams that seem like nothing more than a reflection of the day have nuggets of insight waiting for the dreamer to mine.

- Group members must maintain anonymity when discussing dream work outside the group.

A safe, supportive environment is essential, Clurman said. Subjects that arise in dream work are often very personal, and the dreamer may feel very vulnerable.

Clurman likens interpreting dreams to interpreting poetry. As time goes on, dream workers get to know the language of dreams. That's not to say that the same symbols mean exactly the same thing to each person. For instance, she said, "horse" is a universal symbol, but what a horse means to a cowboy and to a *New Yorker* are different.

For Evergreen resident Gloria Hader, sharing and learning from her dreams is nothing new. Her father was a psychologist, and the entire family would discuss their dreams. She does the same with her children now.

She and two women from Evergreen and Idaho Springs have

been getting together for more than two years to share their dreams. They meet about once a month, enjoy a little social time then get down to business.

Although Hader has recorded her dreams for about 15 years, she finds the group process helpful.

"I come away with insights I couldn't have gotten on my own," she said.

Others in the group tease out details of the dream that add clarity. They provide points of view that may not have occurred to the dreamer.

You begin to see patterns over time, Hader said.

She describes a particular real-life person who kept reappearing in her dreams over the course of a year or so. She had mixed feelings about this person. At a workshop in Loveland, the group helped

her realize that some of that person's characteristics were traits she didn't like in herself. Once she became aware of this and owned these characteristics, the woman disappeared from her dreams.

To the skeptical, one might point out that most everyone has experienced going to bed with a stubborn problem on their mind only to find clarity the next day upon awakening. That's the unconscious working on the problem unhampered by the conscious mind.

Some people think that a collective unconscious exists as well. As global issues arise, people worldwide experience similar dreams related to that issue.

Others feel they are connecting to their inner spirituality or a cosmic one through dreams.

"It's like the last frontier," Clurman said.