
Dream journalling

Freud called dreams “the royal road to the unconscious”. Dreams are a treasure trove of guidance.

When you wake from a dream, try these tips:

- buy a dream journal and keep it by your bed
- make recording your dreams a daily habit, preferably first thing in the morning
- when you wake up, keep your eyes closed for a few moments to avoid any extraneous material entering your mind before you can record your dream
- make a note of the emotion you felt when you woke from the dream ~ this is sometimes the emotion you need to ‘wake up to’
- if you can only recall a tiny scene from the dream, just record that
- withhold all moral judgements about your dreams
- don’t edit elements which don’t seem to fit into the story
- draw what you saw
- give the dream a title ~ this can help you notice emerging themes
- look out for unintentional puns

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- take your dreams along to your therapy and try presenting them early on in the session, rather than mentioning them at the end; this way, you can work with your dreams and become your own dream interpreter, using your sleeping hours to guide and enrich your life.

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Optimising the therapy hour



*Integrative,
transpersonal and
relational
psychotherapy &
counselling.*

The therapy hour

Clients sometimes ask what they can do in between sessions to keep the momentum going.

In this leaflet, written in response to many requests I've had over the years, I've tried to give you an idea of what you can do to optimise the therapy experience.

To begin with, talk to your therapist. It may be that doing little or nothing between sessions is perfect for you right now. However, if you're in a place where you feel you'd like to support the process, here are some suggestions:

- keep a journal
- make a timeline of life events
- draw a genogram (an emotional family tree — a visual way of depicting familial relationships, designed to help identify hereditary patterns and psychological issues) ~ clients — ask for a sheet outlining the symbols and giving an example of how to draw your own genogram
- make a list of things you've achieved during your lifetime and a list of things you'd like to have done better

- make a note of any interactions that didn't go as well as you'd hoped ~ who said what to whom and how you *felt* and *behaved* as a result
- if you're depressed or anxious, keep a daily schedule of activities that made you feel better or worse over the course of a week and bring it to therapy
- reflect on what happened during your therapy session
- if you're anxious, try out some of the suggestions on my Client Hub section to help with reducing anxiety
- dig out some childhood photos of you and your family to bring to your therapy session so we can look at them through a psychological lens
- if you begin to notice meaningful coincidences, these can be noted and brought along to your session for exploration

Journalling

Keeping a journal can be a transformative experience and is a very useful tool when you are in therapy. Journalling is the practice of writing down your thoughts and feelings for the purposes of self-reflection and self-discovery. It's an ancient practice, dating back thousands of years. Once you've tried it, you won't want to stop. It's a superb way of recording your memories, feelings, thoughts and desires. Try doing it without worrying about whether you're spelling correctly, or whether your grammar is good. Write as if no-one will ever read it (no-one needs to).

Here are a few 'starter' questions:
How am I feeling?
What issue(s) do I face right now?
Is there a *lesson* in this situation that I'm currently experiencing?
What *qualities* do I need to dig down and unveil in order to deal with it?
What unhelpful *thoughts* are triggering my current feelings?