

30 Common Dream Symbols And Their Meanings.

By Rebecca Turner



Dreams are like personal letters from the subconscious mind. If only they were written in the same language we use in waking reality!

Fortunately, we have the ability to study our dreams and interpret the common dream symbols they contain. Although there is no hard and fast rule book of universal definitions, the following dream meanings offer a sound starting point for most people. It's worth stating that dreams are not psychic premonitions of the future. They are subtle, subconscious thought patterns expressing information and emotions we aren't aware of while awake. All dream symbols are programmed by your own subconscious self (even in lucid dreams, where the conscious mind is allowed to play a role).

Recognizing common dream symbols is a good way to start lucid dreaming. For instance, if you repeatedly dream of cars, running away, or flying, you can attach each of these triggers to a reality check. Anytime you experience or think of the stimulus during the waking day, do a reality check. You'll soon repeat the check during your dreams when you encounter these symbols and become lucid.

How to Identify Dream Symbols

To identify common dream symbols in your own dreams, keep a dream journal. Write in the present tense as if you're actually re-experiencing the dream, and underline any unusual or poignant aspects (eg, "the frog is sad because he knows a drought is coming").

Next, refer any emotional or recurring dream symbols to a dream dictionary or the list below. Remember - don't take these definitions as read, because they do depend on the context of your dream, your personal psychological attachments to the symbols, and your current life circumstances. Just let this be a starting point for fuller personal analysis...

30 Common Dream Symbols

- 1. Animals** often represent the part of your psyche that feels connected to nature and survival. Being chased by a predator suggests you're holding back repressed emotions like fear or aggression.
- 2. Babies** can symbolize a literal desire to produce offspring, or your own vulnerability or need to feel loved. They can also signify a new start.
- 3. Being chased** is one of the most common dream symbols in all cultures. It means you are feeling threatened, so reflect on who is chasing you (they may also be symbolic) and why they are a possible threat in real life.
- 4. Clothes** make a statement about how we want other people to perceive us. If you dream symbol is shabby clothing, you may feel unattractive or worn out. Changing what you wear may reflect a lifestyle change.
- 5. Crosses** are interpreted subjectively depending on your religious beliefs. Some see it as symbolizing balance, death, or an end to a particular phase of life. The specific circumstances will help define these dream symbols.
- 6. Exams** can signify self-evaluation, with the content of the exam reflecting the part of your personality or life under inspection.
- 7. Death** of a friend or loved one represents change (endings and new beginnings) and is not a paranormal prediction of any kind. If you are recently bereaved, it may be an attempt to come to terms with the event.
- 8. Falling** is a common dream symbol that relates to our anxieties about letting go, losing control over a situation, or somehow failing after a success.
- 9. Faulty machinery** in dreams is often caused by your language centres being shut down while asleep, making it difficult to dial a phone, read the time, or search the internet. It can also represent performance anxiety in life.

- 10. Food** is said to symbolize knowledge, because it nourishes the body just as information nourishes the brain. Food for thought?
- 11. Demons** are sneaky evil entities which signify repressed emotions. You may secretly feel the need to change your own behaviours for the better.
- 12. Hair** has significant ties with sexuality, according to Freud. Abundant hair may symbolize virility, while cutting hair off in a dream shows a loss of libido. Hair loss may also express a literal fear of going bald or becoming unattractive.
- 13. Hands** are always present in dreams but when they are tied up it may represent feelings of futility. Washing your hands may express guilt. Looking closely at your hands in a dream is a good way to become lucid.
- 14. Houses** can host many common dream symbols, but the building as a whole represents your inner psyche. Each room or floor can symbolize different emotions, memories and interpretations of meaningful events.
- 15. Killing** in your dreams does not make you a closet murderer; it represents your desire to "kill" part of your own personality. It can also symbolize hostility towards a particular person and the desire to see them suffer.
- 16. Marriage** may be a literal desire to wed or a merging of the feminine and masculine parts of your psyche.
- 17. Missing a flight** or any other kind of transport is another popular dream, showing your frustration over possibly missing out on important opportunities in life. It's most common when you're struggling to make a big decision.
- 18. Money** can symbolize self-worth. If you dream of exchanging money, it may show that you're anticipating some changes in your life.
- 19. Mountains** are obstacles, so to dream of successfully climbing a mountain can reveal a true feeling of achievement. Viewing a landscape from atop a mountain can symbolize a life under review without conscious prejudice.
- 20. Nudity** is one of the most common dream symbols, revealing your true self to others. You may feel vulnerable and exposed to others. Showing off your nudity may suggest sexual urges or a desire for recognition.
- 21. People** (other dream characters) are reflections of your own psyche, and may demonstrate specific aspects of your own personality.
- 22. Radios and TVs** can symbolize communication channels between the conscious and subconscious minds. When lucid, ask them a question...
- 23. Roads**, aside from being literal manifestations, convey your direction in life. This may be time to question your current "life path".
- 24. Schools** are common dream symbols in children and teenagers but what about dreaming of school in adulthood? It may display a need to know and understand yourself, fuelled by life's own lessons.
- 25. Sex** dreams can symbolize intimacy and a literal desire for sex. Or they may demonstrate the unification of unconscious emotions with conscious recognition, showing a new awareness and personal growth.
- 26. Teachers**, aside from being literal manifestations of people, can represent authority figures with the power to enlighten you.
- 27. Teeth** are common dream symbols. Dreaming of losing your teeth may show a hidden fear of getting old and being unattractive to the opposite sex.
- 28. Being trapped** (physically) is a common nightmare theme, reflecting your real life inability to escape or make the right choice.
- 29. Vehicles** may reflect how much control you feel you have over your life - for instance is the car out of control, or is someone else driving you?
- 30. Water** comes in many forms and can symbolize the subconscious mind. Calm pools of water reflect inner peace while a choppy ocean can suggest unease.