

A lucid dream is a dream in which you know you are dreaming. Typically this happens when the dreamer experiences something strange, and when they stop to question their reality, they realize they are in a dream. Lucid dreams happen naturally on occasion, although some people may have them naturally more often than others. The definition of lucid dreaming may be simple, but there are a lot of misconceptions surrounding it.

Misconceptions

The definition of lucid dreaming may be simple, but just like many other things which are relatively unknown by the public, there are a lot of misconceptions surrounding it.

A dream isn't lucid unless you control it

There is some confusion about the difference between lucidity and dream control. The two are related, but one can happen without the other. For example, many lucid dreamers experience little or no control in some dreams. On the other hand, it is possible to exercise some dream control without being aware that it is a dream. Typically the dream plot will explain this by making the dreamer believe that they have some sort of god-like power over everything. Dream control, by our definition, can be either conscious or unconscious.

Lucid dreaming is new age

Because almost everyone has lucid dreams naturally every once in a while, we know that lucid dreaming is not limited by any one viewpoint. There are historical records which speak of lucid dreaming going back thousands of years--so it is hardly a new phenomenon. There is no need to have any spiritual beliefs to enjoy lucid dreams.

Lucid dreaming advocates escapism

Lucid dreaming occurs while you are sleeping; it is not meant at all to infringe upon your involvement in the real world. While many lucid dreamers enjoy writing down their dreams, talking about their dreams, and planning fun lucid dreams, this is generally no different from any other hobby. In fact, playing a video game or watching a movie will take you out of the "real world" more than lucid dreaming will.

Lucid dreaming is unnatural, involves "dark arts," or is occult related

Many religious or spiritual sects lump lucid dreaming in with occult practices and activities. Lucid dreams often occur naturally and there is nothing occult about them. On the contrary, many great religious epiphanies and messages came in the form of dreams; sometimes lucid dreams. Our dreams are what we make them; whether we wish to give them spiritual significance or not is up to us.

Dreams contain messages that are lost with lucid dreaming

As of this writing, there are many theories about why dreams exist and what purpose they serve, but so far none of these theories has been proven. One theory is that our dreams contain important or useful messages about our lives. Considering that many people do not even remember their dreams, let alone pay them any attention, changing the dream plot in a fraction of one's dreams is in comparison not nearly as problematic for any message-sending done through dreams. Lucid dreaming also requires very good dream recall, so even if a fraction of these messages are lost in lucid dreams, you are likely remembering many more regular dreams than you ever did before, and on top of that, giving them more attention than ever. Lastly, if we consider that it is our mind that gives us the message through dreams, even if lucid, there is high chances that the message will show regardless.

Levels of Lucidity & Dream Control

Lucid dreaming was defined as becoming aware you are dreaming; the actual level of awareness varies, however. When the level of lucidity is high you are well aware that nothing you experience is real, and you realize that you have nothing to fear—you cannot be harmed by any situations that may seem precarious. With low-level lucidity, although partially aware you are dreaming, you are not aware enough to have a great impact on your dream—you may accept some aspects of your dream that you would not normally accept in the ordinary world (you may not find it at all strange that your dog flies around the living room, etc.) With low-level lucidity your realization may also quickly fade and you may accept the whole dream as reality.

A lucid dream is a completely natural and healthy experience. It is just like any other dream except for the small difference of your knowledge that it is a dream. It has nothing to do with new age, the occult, or escapism, nor can it harm you any more than a regular dream could.