

DreamSpeak

An Interview With Lucy Gillis

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Questions by Robert Waggoner

Lucy Gillis has enjoyed lucid dreaming and writing about dreams for many years. She has a Bachelor's degree in astrophysics, has authored and co-authored two books on dreaming, and has had several dream-related articles printed in various publications. She currently works for a scientific research company in British Columbia.

So Lucy, how long have you been lucid dreaming? How did you begin?

I've been remembering lucid dreams for almost 15 years now. I began after I read one of Jane Robert's Seth books in which Seth said that you could become conscious in your dream. I was fascinated by the idea and wondered if it could really be possible. Then a few months later I did it - spontaneously.

Tell us about your first lucid dream.

It was very brief, and I became lucid only at the very end, seconds before I woke:

*Meeting My Inner Shelf
December 14 1987*

A young woman and I are in a university dorm room, getting ready to go to a lecture on Edgar Cayce, when all of a sudden the features in the room are gone and the young woman has become sinister-looking. She is dressed in tight black leather and wears an elaborate ornamental headpiece. She now stands about two metres above me, holding a shining sword, raised and ready to strike. I discover I am now tangled among thick ropes, pinned against a wall, holding on tightly to keep from dropping. There is no floor below me, only a dark void. I know that with one slash of her sword, the ropes will break and I will fall into the nothingness below. She begins to chant something Satanic; one word over and over. I look down into the blackness and think "Shelf. I need a shelf." I release my grip and somehow know that a shelf will appear below me. It does so instantly. When I land, I look back up at the woman, with a slow triumphant smile. I know I'm dreaming. She begins to vanish, like mist, as I open my eyes to purposely end the dream.

What did you think when you woke up?

To say I was excited is an understatement. I was ecstatic! I could feel a tremendous rush of excitement, like electricity coursing through my body. At the time I couldn't adequately articulate the new sense of freedom, and personal power I felt. It was almost overwhelming. I felt

transformed, awakened. I became more and more interested in dreams and consciousness studies and began to read as much as I could on the subjects.

Did you know any other lucid dreamers at the time?

No. Not one. But the Seth books were an incredible comfort and a great source of information as I explored my dream world. A few years later I read Stephen LaBerge's "Lucid Dreaming" and I was hooked even more! I had no idea that there was a "name" for these conscious dreams and that they had been scientifically verified in sleep laboratories in England and the States. Through the Lucidity Institute I met and corresponded with other lucid dreamers and learned a tremendous amount from them.

What were your early goals in lucid dreaming?

Well, basically just to get lucid! I participated in many Lucidity Institute experiments and therefore at the time, my goals were determined by the instructions in the experiments. As for personal goals, I did what most other new lucid dreamers do; fly, walk on water, walk through solid objects, change scenes at will, do outrageous things that I'd never dream of doing while awake! (Pardon the pun.)

I recall reading about your use of singing to engage the lucid dream - tell us about that. How did that get started?

That started ten years ago. Again, I have to refer back to Jane Roberts and the Seth books, but this time more specifically to Jane's husband, Rob. In one of the books, I read that when he first began trying out of body or projection experiments, he once found himself hovering above his sleeping body but he couldn't seem to move anywhere. He noticed that he could hear his physical body snoring and decided to use the sound of his snoring as a way to propel himself away from his body. I thought that was such a great idea! The next day I used his technique. Here is part of that dream:

*Skates Flapping/Singing to Fly/Remembering Rob Butt's Technique
July 6 1992*

...I hop up into the air trying to fly. I get up only a few centimetres. For some reason I am afraid to fly too high. I think of how I'd like to go into outer space but I'm nervous of trying that just yet. I don't even want to go higher than the buildings. I begin to sing "Aaah" as I jump. I take a breath, jump, and sing again. I recall reading yesterday that Robert Butts used the sound of his snoring to try to propel himself elsewhere while in the "astral state." So I sing louder, and sure enough, I can fly higher. I keep this up and soon I am flying down the street.... I sing "aaah" as loud as I can, but know that my sleeping body is soundless. I can feel the head and throat area of my sleeping body; it is motionless. I marvel at this feeling of duality; my solid sleeping body not moving while my lighter dream throat vibrates. I can't tell which throat is inside the other. At this point I know that I can go on with the dream or wake. I choose to wake so I can write this down immediately.

Now when I say I am moved by a particular piece of music - I really mean it!! I use singing mostly for flying (I begin to sing and simultaneously I'll rise higher in the air, and usually my control of flight becomes better). But mostly I will sing about what I see or do, maybe to the tune of a popular song, or a tune I make up. This sometimes helps me to remember the dream when I wake. I won't always recall the exact words I sung, but the images and events I sang about are

easily remembered. Perhaps someone versed in brain physiology could explain if this has any scientific basis. I recall Stephen LaBerge wrote about his experiments with singing and counting in lucid dreams and the corresponding brainwave patterns. I was very fascinated by the results. I'd be interested to hear if there has been any more research in this area. I hope to do more personal experimentation with this. If sound can help me to fly, remember my dreams, keep the dream going, what other things could it do? What about self-healing? Could singing or producing particular sounds in a lucid dream stimulate healing, or memory?

**What kind of songs would you sing - rock, pop, show tunes, Gordon Lightfoot ballads?
(Note: Lucy is from Canada.)**

"The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down, of the big lake they call 'Gitchee Gumee'"
Whew! Good thing you can't hear me belting out "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" as I type this up! I like some Gordon Lightfoot - I admit it! - but I've never sung any of his songs in my dreams. I grew up in the 70's listening to hard rock and metal, so I am more likely to sing songs from that era. Judas Priest, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, etc. are always great to soar with! Sometimes I will just hum, or sing notes to the tune of a familiar song. For the requisite Canadian Content, (Canadian readers will know what I mean!) I have flown, swooping and soaring, while singing k.d. Lang's "Constant Craving." And of course the "Hockey Night in Canada" theme.....!!!

I also recall that in lucid dreams, you felt that you might be dealing with "probable" events? What do you mean by "probable events" and what lucid dreams brought that idea up?

This could take a long while to explain, but I'll try to be as concise as possible. Once again, I have to point back to the Seth books, for it is in those books that I learned about probable realities. Jane Robert's friend Sue Watkins had many lucid dreams of this nature, and it was in reading about her experiences in Robert's book "Seth, Dreams and Projection of Consciousness" that I got interested in this topic. (Several chapters were on the topic of dreams and probable realities.) As a very basic definition, think of a probable reality as a parallel reality. Almost identical to this world but with some differences. Now think of an infinite amount of them. Seth spoke of the probable field as one in which events are "rehearsed" before they are materialized in physical reality - if they are chosen to materialize at all. Those that aren't materialized here, are actualized in another probable (parallel) reality. Of course this is not done at an ego awareness level, but by the inner or higher self. (I'm really generalizing here.)

Seth is not the only one to speak about ideas like these. Several theories of quantum physics support this too; the idea that for every decision made the alternate choices happen in other parallel realities. In other words, you walk down the street and chose to go right at the intersection. In some other reality, you have gone left. Any readers out there familiar with the British Comedy "Red Dwarf"? Ace Rimmer (what a guy!) is a probable version of Arnold Rimmer. The antics of the "Red Dwarf" crew often demonstrate beautifully some of the more interesting theories of quantum physics; time travel, parallel realities, multiple dimensions, consciousness creating reality, etc. But I digress.....(however, in another probable reality, I just keep rambling on about "Red Dwarf" and about how brilliant the writers are, and how the episode with the dream recorder was so cool....!)

In some lucids I have met probable versions of myself, and probable versions of family and some friends. It is kind of difficult to explain how I know that they are probable versions and not just "regular" dream characters. The dream feels different. It is just a knowing. Some probable events are quite easy to spot. For instance, in one of my lucids, I literally say that "we are re-doing the

probability," as we (myself and other dream characters) make slight alterations to the sequence of events, to see how simple changes can affect the outcome. In another instance, I watch as a building blows up, over and over again, each time I am in a different place, and wonder if I will survive or lose consciousness "this time."

According to Seth we enter the probable field all the time in dreams, and that is how some events in our waking world get "created." We just don't recognize that we do so. But in a lucid dream, we are much more alert, and therefore, I believe, more likely to "catch ourselves in the act."

Whether Seth and some of the quantum physicists are correct or not, makes no difference. These dreams are delightful and a heck of a lot of fun!!

Do you think that your interest in physics entered in here - or anywhere else - in your lucid dreaming?

Absolutely. I've always been intrigued with some of the philosophical implications of quantum physics, particularly those that deal with parallel universes, or probable universes and how consciousness creates reality. If these theories are correct, (and I'd like to think they are!) then I feel that consciousness studies is the next step in discovering what we, and the universe(s) are all about. And what better way to study consciousness than from within the dream state?

And as an aside, astronomy has always intrigued me, and since it is highly unlikely that I will ever travel to distant worlds or galaxies, then from a purely aesthetic point of view, lucid dreaming allows me my flights of fancy (another pun to pardon) and the opportunity to see what the wonders of the universe may look like.

Nowadays, what techniques do you use to become lucid, or is it most likely to happen naturally?

Most likely it will happen spontaneously, but some gentle suggestions to myself throughout the day and just before sleeping have proved to be successful too. And it doesn't hurt to reality check once in a while. I can't count how many dreams in which I've done a reality check, out of habit, and been shocked and delighted to discover that I'm dreaming! Trying to read text or clocks is the usual check for me. Sometimes if there is no text or clock nearby I'll try poking my fingers through walls - but a lot of the time it doesn't work, so I'll assume I'm not dreaming. Funny, I never try poking my fingers into walls when I'm awake, though!

What is it about lucid dreaming that intrigues you?

That you can live in two (or more!) worlds at once. Consciousness fascinates me. How we can dream in such detail, such wonderful scenes and activities, never ceases to amaze me. As I mentioned, I believe that consciousness creates reality. I feel closer to this process when lucid dreaming. When I am lucid I feel as though I am about to be let in on some great secret. When I awaken from a lucid I feel like I have accomplished something very special. It is a real morale booster that leaves me energized and in high spirits for the rest of the day.

Tell us about one of your most personally interesting lucid dreams?

Since you brought up probable dreams, I'll include my favourite probable dream below, as it appears in my dream journal:

The Probabilities Meeting

May 15 1998

[Order of events may not be correct. I am staying over at a friend's apartment. I have many false awakenings, but always catch myself and continue to dream lucidly.] I am in Mark's living room. I realize that I am dreaming. I go out into the small hallway by the kitchen. I float and fly up and down the small hallway, wondering what I should do next. I think about going outside, but I don't want to go out in the cold morning air. At some point I find a small round mirror and I look at my image and the room reflected in it [I did not notice if the reflection was accurate], I try to get inside the mirror to see what I'll find there. After a few attempts I give up. Also at some point, a phone rings. I let the machine take the message, knowing it is from or about someone or something named Fabula Caprila.

I look back into Mark's living room. I am not surprised to see two Karen's, a few other me's, and one or two other people. I know that I am dreaming and am seeing probable versions of people, myself included [from probable realities]. I am not perturbed, when some of them pop in and out of existence. I don't let the "non-linearity" or "non consistency" bother me. I know that that is just an aspect of the state we are in. Then I am standing on or above a large round table. There are at least two me's, and two or more Karen's and multiple other people as well as a couple, a man and a woman. The man and woman seem to stand out in my perception. I am at a meeting, a probabilities meeting.

Expertly I quote from a Seth book, about learning to operate in the probability system. In my mind I "see" the title of the book as "The Search for Seth," but smiling, I remind myself that in "my" reality those quotes come from a book titled "Seth Speaks." Some of the other people here, would have "The Search for Seth" in their reality.

I notice that the couple are not paying attention to me. They seem unaware that I'm here, or perhaps more accurately, unaware that they are here. Glancing around the table I become curious as to how many people here are aware that they are dreaming. I ask those who are listening how many of them realise that they are dreaming right now. I am pleased to see a few hands go up, pleased also to see a me with her hand up. The couple continue to talk between themselves, oblivious to their surroundings. I am satisfied that at least some of us are consciously present, and know that those who are not, are still learning and participating here on at least some level of their psyche.

At the "end" of the meeting someone falls. We seem to be in a conga line, dancing and having fun. [Does the line represent our going back to a linear-time based system?]

Then it seems I am waking. As I look to my right, [I am sleeping on a couch] I see that the chair has different upholstery on it. Immediately I know that I am dreaming. At another time I "wake" to find yet a different upholstery on the chair, and again I know that I am dreaming. Once or twice I "awaken" to find no chair, and again I smile to myself, smug that I am catching myself each time. Once I "wake" up and everything looks as it should. But I bounce up off the couch and pick a book off of the bookshelf and try to read and reread a sentence. I'm thrilled and a bit surprised to find it distorting, again indicating that I am still dreaming. Once again, I "wake" and reach down to pick up a book in which to write out the dream. I don't have my dream journal handy, so I will write on the back empty pages of a SCI-FI novel I'm reading. I slide a bit back on the couch, getting more comfortable. I know it's still a dream, as I have a

pencil by the book now, not a pen as I have in "real" life. Except for the pencil, the room looks exactly as it does in "waking life."

I am enjoying this. It is like playing a game! Next time I wake for real, pick up the pen and scribble out the dream in the back of the novel. [Could the many false awakenings be symbolic of many probable realities - almost identical to this reality, but with differences?]

What advice would you give to new or aspiring lucid dreamers?

Never give up! Always honour your dreams - lucid or otherwise - and never compare them to someone else's, or rate them as "poor" or "not good enough." You are unique and no one can have the dreams that you do - it's impossible. Some dreams might seem boring, or uneventful, but always remember that with each experience of lucidity you are expanding your conscious awareness and are growing with each new dream. As for just getting lucid, don't try too hard. I found that when I put too much pressure on myself I had the reverse effect and no lucidity would develop. Gentle, but firm suggestions to myself that I would be lucid in my dream, repeated throughout the day (plus some reality checking) and just before sleeping seemed to work the best for me. Find or develop whatever technique feels the most comfortable for you and go for it!

What plans do you have for the LDE?

I have no specific plans at the moment, and am certainly open to suggestions. But in general, I'd like to see LDE grow and flourish and reach out to more lucid dreamers. It was my early contact with lucid dreamers and then with LDE, (when LDE founder, Ruth Sacksteder was publishing it) that greatly influenced and shaped my lucid dreaming experiences and ambitions. I learned so much from others and am very grateful to them all. I'm still learning from the readers of LDE. Lucid dreamers never cease to amaze me with their creativity and unique perspectives. I hope that LDE will continue to be a source of information, guidance, and entertainment for fellow dream explorers, and a friendly forum where dreams and opinions can be shared openly.