

# DreamSpeak

## An Interview With Janice Brooks

© Janice Brooks  
Questions by Robert Waggoner

*Janice Brooks is a prolific lucid dreamer, and something of a "founding member" of The Lucid Dream Exchange in that she suggested that title to Ruth Sacksteder, LDE's first editor. Janice and her husband, Jay Vogel song, wrote a book on lucid dreaming *The Conscious Exploration of Dreaming* and have deep and wide-ranging views on lucid dreaming.*

**Janice, as I recall, you were quite young when you began to experience lucid dreaming and OBEs?**

I'd say about 7 for lucid dreams and about 13 for OBEs.

**What were those first experiences like? What did you do?**

I can only remember four of my earliest lucid dreams. Judging by those, as a child I mainly used lucid dreaming to overcome fear in dreams, or to wake myself up if it came to that. In what was I think the first one ever, I was walking past my next-door neighbor's house with trepidation, thinking that it was the abode of a vampire (this was way back in the days of *Dark Shadows*). Then I remembered that I had dreamed such a thing before, so concluded this must be a dream now. I continued on my way without fear.

The OBEs were what I'd now call sleep paralysis experiences with partial OB sensations like floating or stretching duplicate limbs. These terrified me and all I did with them was pray and struggle to end them.

**At that time, were you doing some intentional practice or trying to have lucid dreams/OBEs? Or did they simply happen?**

The OBEs simply happened. I certainly didn't want them to; they scared me witless. I can't recall whether or not I tried to have lucid dreams as a kid. I did do some deliberate dream incubation--trying to dream about specific things--as well as deliberately try to have what I now know as hypnagogic visions. Back then I could "project" those into the air and onto the walls, which was super cool.

**Also, did you have the experience first and then try to read about it, or did you read about it first, and then have the experience?**

I couldn't have read about lucid dreams before having them. I was just too little. I had read and heard a bit about OBEs before I started having those, though.

**For me, once I taught myself to become lucid when I was 16, then within a few months, I began to have the classical OBE feelings; I would hear buzzing noises and feel vibrations, etc. Did it take you a while to get comfortable with the noise and energy?**

Yes. Eight wasted years.

**When you think of lucid dreams and (what people call) OBEs, do you think they are basically slightly different aspects of the same thing? How so?**

For me they are. I wouldn't just assume that all OBEs absolutely must be lucid dreams, but mine definitely are, so it stands to reason that at least some experiences that other people think of as OBEs may be misidentified lucid dreams as well, if not necessarily all of them.

When I finally got brave enough to explore my OBEs instead of just making assumptions about them, I found out that once all the vibrations and such were over with and the experience actually got underway, the end result was not significantly different from a lucid dream. This ended my fears and I came to make extensive use of OBEs as a lucid dream induction technique.

**For someone who hasn't experienced this, how would you help them distinguish between a regular lucid dream and an OBE type lucid dream?**

OBEs seem to be the result of remaining conscious while otherwise falling asleep, and focusing on bodily perceptions and the development of a dream body as a first step. As such you're likely to notice certain odd sensations that are probably due to psycho-physiological changes involved in the process of falling asleep, such as the loss of muscle tone that causes paralysis. If you pay too much attention to them you may end up feeling stuck in your body the whole time, so it's best to get on with it and go through with the "separation." The most important thing to remember is that there's really nothing to fear.

**A lucid dreaming friend told me that he feels one difference between lucid dreams and OBEs involves the memory. He says that he can't always recall every detail of a long lucid dream, while an OBE seems very easy to recall and is almost burned into his memory. Have you noticed this "memory" contrast between regular lucid dreams vs. OBE lucid dreams?**

Not really. I'd say that on average my awareness level, which affects recall, is a bit higher in OBE-type lucid dreams than in regular lucid dreams, but not that dramatically. I know that the degree of difference varies from person to person, however. At one time the difference was a bit greater for me than it is now.

**As I recall, you have recorded more than 1000 lucid dreams. Is that right?**

I recorded 1000 lucid dreams in the time period when I was collecting them for my book. That was only a portion of the lucid dreams I had during that time period, and doesn't count the years before and since then, so a full count would be much greater. It would probably not be unrealistic to estimate that I averaged two to three lucid dreams a day during one ten-year period.

**Is there a special technique or philosophical/spiritual interest responsible for so many lucid dreams? Or do they just come without any effort?**

I used a variety of techniques: OBEs, recognizing false awakenings, WILDs, counting, etc. Eventually they did come without effort. There have been phases when I've been sick of them and

actually programmed myself not to have lucid dreams! Nowadays I don't have them all that often, maybe two or three a week at peak times.

**Tell us about some of your most interesting lucid dreams.**

I've had a number of interesting conversations with dream characters. For example, I remember having a discussion with a handsome lucid dream vampire once. He lived in the sub-basement under a girls' dorm. Although his stomach could not handle solid foods, he did sometimes drink fruit juices. Garlic repulsed him, but not magically; he just didn't like it. Interestingly, he considered himself to be a Christian. He spoke of his race as an old one, with a bloodline that had become diluted through sexual interbreeding with humans. I bowed out when it became clear that where he was going with this was to suggest breeding with me, since I showed signs of having some vampire ancestry.

Another memorable conversation took place with a dream character behind the counter in a shop who asked me why I went around controlling things. I said, "Because I am the dreamer, the self." He asked on what basis I considered myself a self. I said this was the point through which I organized experience. He asserted that he was a self, too. I asked, "So on what basis do you consider yourself a self?" But he couldn't answer, got all irritated-looking and vanished.

**Now, is it true that you would often meet the same exact dream characters over and over in your lucid dreams - kind of like a lucid dream soap opera? Did this begin intentionally? Did you "will" the characters back or did they just show up in your lucid dreams?**

Yes, it's true that I had serial lucid dreams in place of a social life for a number of years. When I started having recurring dreams about the first of the serial characters, they were spontaneous and not particularly connected, but it didn't take long for me to get the idea to try to induce them intentionally and develop a continuing storyline. Sometimes the characters just showed up, but more often I went looking for them.

There's an entertaining article on my website that discusses the soap, beginning at <http://www.geocities.com/janice240obe/soap1.html>

**What was that like to interact with the same dream characters? What did you do?**

Visited with them, watched them do things, chatted, embraced a lot. It might seem surprising but I don't think there were many sexual encounters with them.

**After so many lucid dreams, did the dream characters begin to develop personalities? Were some happy and some sad? Did they act volitionally or disagree with you?**

Yes, they had distinctive personalities, and variable moods. Sometimes I scripted what they said and did, but that happened more often in the early years, or on occasions when they were particularly vague. They could act volitionally, and surprise me, and disagree with me, and refuse to cooperate with me; heck, I thought one of them wanted me dead for a while there.

**So now, when you become lucid, what do you find yourself doing? Are there waking goals that you practice in the lucid state?**

Nowadays I'm pretty laid back in my lucid dreams and usually prefer just to fly around and sing, or maybe ride horseback now and then.

**If you were talking to an intermediate lucid dreamer, what are some of the principles or guidelines that you would suggest to operate successfully in the lucid dream environment?**

Learn to monitor your thoughts and emotions, because they affect what happens and what sort of imagery appears. Learn to watch for and take advantage of those few critical seconds of interpretation after the first appearance of a dream character. How you decide to react to it has a major impact on how it will behave. Be creative; you have a lot more response options to a situation than you may think at first.

**Well, I know that you and your husband, Jay Vogel song, have written a book entitled, *The Conscious Exploration of Dreaming*. I think we will have to interview Jay about it in a later interview, but would you care to mention the main idea/s of the book for our readers?**

It's a book critiquing existing dream theory and presenting our own, the suggestion theory of dreaming, which maintains that a variety of factors, such as thoughts, emotions, associations, habits, memories, and sensory intrusions, are in constant competition with one another influencing the way our dreams play out.

**Where can readers purchase copies of your book?**

The cheapest place to buy it is directly through the publishing service, 1stbooks Library, using their website at <http://www.1stbooks.com/bookview/2754> . They have a downloadable version in .pdf format for only \$4.95, and they sell the paperback at the wholesale price of \$12.95 plus shipping. Major online booksellers such as Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble also carry it, but they hike up the price. Another alternative is to order it through a bookstore. Just tell them that it's listed in Ingram's "Books in Print," with ISBN 1-58500-539-8.

**Finally, what advice would you give a young person who is beginning to experience lucid dream/OBEs in their teenage years?**

Put aside any fear. Your mind will almost certainly create imagery in keeping with it, which can make for a vicious cycle. Try not to be overly influenced by other people's opinions; explore, push your own limits, and come to your own conclusions. Do whatever you want. It's your dream.