

# DreamSpeak

## An Interview With Ed Kellogg, PhD

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Questions by Robert Waggoner

*This issue's DreamSpeak interviewee and creator of the LDE's Lucid Dream Challenge, Ed Kellogg earned his Ph.D. in biochemistry from Duke University. A proficient lucid dreamer, he has a long-standing interest in the phenomenology of dreaming. He has presented numerous papers and workshops on such topics as the lucidity continuum, lucid dream healing, and mutual dreaming. In 2002, 2003, and 2004 Ed organized and hosted IASD's online PsiberDreaming Conferences.*

**Ed, I believe that you and I first met at an Association for the Study of Dreams Conference in Berkeley about 10 years ago. When did you first learn about conscious dreaming or lucid dreaming?**

Up until about the age of twelve or so I experienced occasional semi-lucid flying dreams, as well as what I now can identify as Out-of-the-Body Experiences. However, as a teenager I had few if any lucid dreams or OBEs - although I still had vivid dreams. In college, after reading some entertaining books about "astral travel" from authors such as Sylvan Muldoon, Oliver Fox, and Robert Monroe, I made an intentional choice to regain the dream life I'd enjoyed as a child. I read as many books on the subject as I could lay my hands on. I especially enjoyed Celia Green's *Lucid Dreams* and *Out-of-the-Body-Experiences* books in which she took a more scientific view, and the reprint of van Eeden's classic and inspiring paper "A Study in Dreams" in Charles Tart's *Altered States of Consciousness*.

Unfortunately, I did not find the methods presented in these books particularly effective. I spent many nights during my senior year in college, and in the summer before entering graduate school, developing and testing my own techniques. I invented a technique that allowed me to intentionally succeed in having an OBE 1 out of 3 times. I also invented techniques that allowed me to intentionally have lucid dreams about 1 out of 10 times, but that required much less effort than the OBE technique, and as a side effect also increased spontaneous lucid dreams. I did my postdoc at U. C. Berkeley, and at that point heard about LaBerge's work - in fact I even obtained a copy of his dissertation before the publication of his first book.

Over the years I've intentionally, and I think creatively, developed and deepened my lucid dreaming skills, to the point where I can now consistently succeed - under defined conditions - in having lucid dreams. The lucid dreams that I have now have also changed in the degree of lucidity that I can attain. As a child, lucidity consisted of just enough awareness to know that I dreamed and that the rules had changed - so that I could go flying for example. In many of my lucid dreams today I become fully awake and aware while dreaming - as awake and aware as in physical reality.

### **Can you recall your first lucid dream experience? Tell us about that.**

Although I vaguely recall having lucid dreams as a boy, I don't remember any specifically. On the other hand, I clearly and vividly recall a number of OBEs, where I would go flying around and about our house, over the lawn and across the back field - usually at low altitude - less than 6 feet. These experiences felt intensely real - just as real as if I had physically flown. Which, for me as a child, led to some confusion.

On the one hand I knew - absolutely knew - that I could fly. Yet for some strange reason I could only manage to do this at night, while asleep. And yet I had little success doing so when awake - as an attempt that I made of flying from an upper bunk bed one night proved pretty dramatically! <g> However, this set up an early awareness for me of on the one hand, "knowing with inner certainty that I could do something", and on the other hand, "finding out that in practice I could not actually do it." The tension between these two indisputable facts created in me a need, and a drive, towards understanding.

### **How do you distinguish lucid dreams from OBEs?**

First, I do not consider OBEs - of which I've had over a hundred - as simply a kind of lucid dream. Over the years a lot of controversy has arisen on the nature of lucid dreams as compared to out-of-the-body (physical) experiences. By definition OBEs fail to meet the most basic criteria of lucid dreaming, that you realize *that* you dream *while* you dream. Also, the two experiences have many distinct phenomenological differences. In my early pre-OBE experiences, I often felt waves of energy rushing up and down my body, and heard a buzzing vibration sound. My consciousness dissociated to a degree from my physical body and associated with a second non-physical body, but this second body still felt attached to the physical. I can see and hear, but although it seems like I do this physically, I often see and hear things not physically present. If I intentionally speed up the vibration/ wave moving up the body, the second non-physical body becomes unstuck, and I can move away from my physical body, which remains in place. During all of this I feel fully awake in an almost identical way that I do when physically awake. In fact, unlike in after even fully lucid dreams where I experience a real shift in consciousness when I "wake up", when I return from an OBE I do not feel like I've awakened - but instead merely shifted viewpoints.

Also, although my state of consciousness in an OBE seems very similar to that in a fully lucid dream, my memory of an OBE after the fact seems almost indelible. This stands in marked contrast to my memory of even fully lucid dreams, which tend to quickly fade unless I make an intentional effort to remember them. The clear and unforgettable aspect of the experience acts as a reliable validation to me that I have had an OBE.

Furthermore, environmental stability in OBE reality behaves much more like physical reality than dream reality. When I take a second and even a third look at objects during OBEs, the objects stay very much the same. I generally find myself in a very close counterpart to my physical body, but sort of a semitransparent white color, that can feel very light or very dense depending upon how much I speed up, or slow down my "vibrational rate". I feel a very strong and defined sense of embodiment, directly comparable to that felt in my "physical" body. My body shape seems relatively immutable, and although I can fly (and go through walls) if I speed my vibrational rate up sufficiently, I've had very poor success with other kinds of dream magic tasks which I can easily do in lucid dreams.

Unfortunately, once one has had enough OBEs, the situation can become a little more confusing, because one will begin to have dreams of OBEs, just as one has dreams of waking physical reality experiences! Often times I find that paranormal researchers (especially those who have little or no personal experience of OBEs themselves) will include "dreams of OBEs" in their OBE data files, which often leads them to the mistaken belief that OBEs just seem a type of dream.

Curiously, I've occasionally had spontaneous partial OBEs, where for example, my OBE legs have detached and float above my physical legs. I can sense both pairs of legs, but can only intentionally move the "astral" pair. Also, when I have an OBE, until I move about 10-15 feet away from my "physical body", I usually experience myself, to some degree, in both bodies simultaneously. Once I've moved that distance, I only experience myself in my "non-physical" body. In between, I feel to some degree embodied in both, depending upon the distance between the two, and where I focus my attention.

Finally, usually people who have OBEs believe they have actually left their physical bodies. Lucid dreamers usually do not. And OBEs - but not dreams - will often absolutely convince the experiencer that they can exist without a physical body. They often lose their fear of death. Those who have had OBEs quite often find that they enjoy life much more, with a different core attitude towards it - an effect that can last a lifetime.

#### **How do lucid dreams relate to OBEs then? Any ideas?**

Well, I do have a theory. Just as an OBE body apparently comes out of the physical, so does the dream body come out of the OBE body. The physical body seems the densest and most stable, the dream body the most subtle and changeable, and the OBE body in-between. I've even experienced the three bodies in sequence, like a series of Chinese boxes. Lucid in my dream body, then returned to my OBE body, floating outside of the physical, and then back to my physical body, in a two stage "waking up" process. Some metaphysical systems teach that we have seven or more bodies, like layers on an onion, each more subtle than the next. I can't speak to the existence of any of the "higher bodies" but I have experienced three.

#### **What methods did you use to bring conscious awareness into the dream state? Has that changed over the years?**

I started off using a self-hypnosis approach, and even made up a series of programming tapes to listen to before I went to sleep. Because I had a lot of flying dreams, I set up "finding myself flying" into a cue to realize that I dreamed. So I incorporated this key post hypnotic suggestion into my self-hypnosis sessions and tape scripts: "Whenever you find yourself floating or flying in a dream, you will realize that you dream." This worked - if sporadically. To this day, if I have a flying dream, or find myself floating, it will often serve as a cue for me to do a reality check. I created different, and I think improved, programming tapes as time went on, experimenting with techniques from sources as diverse as Milton Erickson and Carlos Castaneda. I also tried a number of dream incubation techniques. I found the MILD technique promoted by LaBerge quite effective, and combined with everything else I did, it increased my frequency of success for intentional lucid dreams to about 1/5. After noticing that the lunar cycle had an effect on my lucid dreaming ("Correspondence," E. W. Kellogg III, *J. Lucid Dream Research*, 1(1), 48-49 (1983), I intentionally looked for other factors that might have positive or negative influences. Eventually I developed my "*Lucid Dreamer's Checklist*" as a mean of systematically ferreting out my own set of optimal conditions for successful lucid dreaming. (*Note: if you'd like a copy, email requests to [alef1@msn.com](mailto:alef1@msn.com)*) I found for example that, getting up at about 3 AM, reading for a half hour, meditating, and then using a specific dream incubation technique to set up lucid

dreaming works very effectively. And of course, as far as increasing the number of lucid dreams goes, as with any other skill, practice makes perfect.

### **Why have you devoted so much time to lucid dreaming? What motivates you?**

Why do I have a particular interest in the development of lucidity? Although beginning lucid dreamers often see lucid dreaming simply as a kind of entertainment, for me lucid dreaming has become a kind of spiritual practice. In essence, I see lucid dreaming as a kind of yoga (meaning union). "Individuation" (in a Jungian sense) refers to a type of psychic growth, that usually occurs slowly over a period of years, and through which the fragmented self - consisting of many separate and even antagonistic parts - becomes more and more whole through a process of integration. Dream patterns reflect this process, and over a lifetime will show slowly evolving patterns of growth in dream content and theme.

On the other hand, in my experience lucidity also requires a kind of "individuation", in that for the lucid dreamer, two disparate "selves", the "waking self" and the "dreaming self", will integrate to a greater or lesser extent into the "lucid dreaming self". If the "waking self" predominates, the dreamer seems prone to either wake up, or to find themselves in a lucid but powerless state. If the "dream self" overly predominates, lucidity can become marginal - one may have abilities, but it doesn't occur to one to use them.

For me true lucidity brings a third self into the mix - the "Spiritual Self." The more truly lucid I become, the more I've integrated these three aspects of self, and the more of my Beingness the lucid dreaming "I" brings into play.

The waking self brings in my thinking aspect, the dream self my feeling aspect, and the Spiritual Self my knowing/creating aspect. True lucidity for me requires a balance, but once the lucid dreaming self has integrated these three aspects and made this state of beingness habitual, one need not let go of a predominant waking ego control to fly, because the waking ego does not exist separately, but has become an integrated and valued part of a greater Lucid Dreaming Self. One need not 'let go' to fly - one just flies.

However, this seems just the beginning, as the continuing enhancement and deepening of lucidity to me in essence seems a spiritual quest without real limits. A quest for the Holy Grail of Authentic Being. Even in the most super-lucid states I've experienced I realize how far I have to go - and considering how valuable I've found the journey so far, I expect to encounter far greater wonders as the process continues.

### **Would you share one of your super-lucid dreams that significantly changed your perspective?**

Sure. This dream occurred during an eight week group of mine in November of 1996, that focused on exploring the Kabbalistic Tree of Life through lucid dreaming. That week we focused on the sefirah Tifareth, in many ways the "heart" of the Tree, and the energy center that corresponds to the level of the soul. It also has an association with the Sun. In the first part of the dream, I'd tuned into the afterlife of a disincarnate man, trapped in a sort of Earthbound limbo, who had just "woken up" some 29 years after his murder. I won't get into the details of this part of the dream, but the situation resolves itself, and suddenly I jump up a level to become part of a Greater Entity:

"He/I now sits at a large desk or an impressive table. He/I seems in charge of a group of incarnates and disincarnates, a sort of Oversoul. He/I feels extremely competent, self-confident,

and powerful, but He/I still takes orders from an even Higher Level. Out of a clear tube He/I gets hundreds of cards relating to instructions for different sefirot, blue cards, green cards, orange cards. He/I feels a sense of having Eternity to work in. Now I (*the Ed Kellogg part*), become fully lucid. Although I feel very curious about the cards, and even though it might not seem appropriate ("*the tail wagging the dog*") I decide to try taking advantage of this opportunity to do my predetermined task. I chant SHH AHH MASHH (*Shamash, the Hebrew word for the Sun*). As I chant I intend Integration, for me to tune into the Oversoul entity and become one with it. I feel a powerful vibration on both sides of my head, like two speakers over-volumed and ready to blow. My head feels ready to explode or come apart from the powerful vibrations. I intend the bridges (*connecting pathways*), and manage to chant *Shamash* one more time before returning to waking physical reality."

This bare bones account needs some commentary. First, both I (Ed Kellogg), and the disincarnate man, belonged to the group of entities over which this Oversoul had charge. His/It's attitude (which I felt) seemed benevolent in a purely nonattached way - He/It cared about his charges as parts of a larger picture but had little concern for their individual well-being as such. And as far as their physical well being went, He/It cared no more about the duration of their physical lives, or the state of their physical bodies, than you or I might care about that of a pair of paper shoes. (The disposable ones they give you at health spas to walk around in. Once the shoes have served their purpose, or show any wear, you throw them away and get another pair if you need one. And you do so without slightest thought or regret for the fate of those shoes.) The Oversoul lived in Eternal time and could not view the physical situations of his charges as they did. Unless the physical condition of their bodies had to do with the greater purpose or pattern, it simply had no relevance or importance.

Up to the point of this super-lucid dream I had a vaguely anthropomorphic concept of my "Higher Self". I felt that It's concerns had at least some kind of similarity to my own, and that if I could find some way of communicating my needs to It, It would respond in a positive fashion. After this dream I realized that living in Eternity, that the purposes of this "Deeper Me", had very little to do with my own temporal and physical concerns. Not out of a lack of caring or compassion, but simply through a fundamental difference in viewpoint. Some might argue that I could have come up with a similar insight if I'd taken the time to consider the matter logically. Granted, but this misses the point. After this dream I did not understand this in a tentative or abstract way - I knew it experientially and with certainty.

**From your lucid dreams, I also notice that you use "chants" and "spells" to achieve desired ends in the lucid dream. Did you develop this technique? What value do you see in it?**

As any lucid dreamer knows, in dream reality "magic" works - dream [mind] can and routinely does directly affect dream [matter]. However, for me simply wanting, hoping, or intending for something to happen did not produce very reliable results. Reliable magic requires a way for the dream magician to focus intent. So taking my cue from the wizards and witches of legend, and inspired by one of my favorite fantasy books (*The Incomplete Enchanter* by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt), I decided to give rhyming spells and incantations a try. I found that they worked quite well - not all the time mind you, but far more often than my simply wanting or wishing for something to happen did. Focusing my intent through verbalizations has allowed me to perform many of the feats attributed to the most famous magicians and wizards in fact and fiction, from Merlin to Harry Potter, and with special effects that would make George Lucas or Steven Spielberg envious. Teleportation, visiting the dead, levitation, conjurations, materializations, and transformations of one's body and environment have become a routine part of my dream life. Although some people assume that "anything goes" in dreams, in practice

certain techniques work far better and more reliably than others. And in my case incantations not only work, but they keep me amused.

**Have you ever had a lucid dream experience in which the dream characters responded unexpectedly to a chant? Have they ever chanted back at you?**

In contrast to spells, I use chants (verbally repeating a simple name or phrase) as a means of tuning into something or to someone, or to resonate with something, the way that you might use a mantra in meditation. On the other hand, I use spells to create a particular effect or type of phenomenon.

I have had quite unexpected responses from dream entities, when I've pronounced certain kinds of chants. For example, I've worked a lot with Hebrew "God-Names" as a means of exploring the Kabbalistic Tree of Life in lucid dreams. Certain names, if chanted with a specific pronunciation AND with a special kind of authentic intent (Kavanah) on my part have resulted in a beautiful chorus of hundreds of other voices joining in. I've also had occasions where dream entities have made fun of me, or have simply told me to shut up!

**Do you predetermine a spell or do they spontaneously come to you?**

Both. I prefer having the time to work on incantations beforehand - so that I can optimally work out their "feel", a combination of word choice, sound, rhyme, meter, and meaning. On the other hand I've improvised spells many times in dreams, creating spells "on the spot" that worked quite well in producing an effect. I've also found that not all incantations work equally well - for some reason some spells work far more effectively and more reliably than others, even when I designed them for the same purpose. I can only determine which spells work, and which ones don't, by trial and error. And even the most reliable of spells don't always work the way I expect every time I use them.

**From your presentations and writings, it appears that "healing" in lucid dreams seems of special interest to you. What brought about that interest?**

I have a long-standing interest in the mind-body field, as well as in the greater process of reality creation and how that relates to consciousness. Even as a high school student I'd read about the psychophysiological effects seen in scientific studies on biofeedback, directed visualization, and hypnosis. And while many "dream experts" believe that they know the limits of dreaming, and what "having a dream" means, because of my phenomenological orientation I assume - emphatically - that I do not. And as I like to "push the envelope" with regard to what one can do in dreams, the idea of experimenting with lucid dream healing came quite naturally to me. Although I'd not seen any reports of any lucid dream healings, given the vivid multisensory impact of dreams, it seemed likely that they could produce positive mind-body effects.

**Have you had successes with healing yourself in lucid dreams? Also, do you think it possible to heal others, when in a lucid dream?**

Over the years I've had many successes, and some failures, in healing both myself, and others, in lucid dreams. I first used lucid dream healing in 1984 to heal an infected tonsil (I'd skewered it while overenthusiastically eating a fish shish-kabob). I decided to try the LDH technique myself as an experiment. The pain decreased markedly immediately after the dream healing, and when I checked the tonsil a few hours later, the swelling and redness had almost entirely disappeared.

I've learned quite a lot about the phenomenon since then. However, rather than trying to go into detail here in this interview, I'd rather beg off for now with the promise of writing up a fuller account of lucid dream healing for some future issue of LDE.

At this point I will say that the experiences I've had of successfully healing other people in lucid dreams adds credence to the idea that dream reality has a consensual and intersubjective basis, something that the phenomenon of mutual dreaming (where two or more individuals have similar dreams about each other at the same time) also supports. It also brings up the troubling "can of worms" issue that psi-dreaming might not simply involve remote viewing, but remote influencing as well.

**Aside from lucidity, in your work you also have focused quite a bit on psi-dreaming. Why?**

In my view what we today call "psi" and "spirituality" comprise two aspects of the same thing. We separate them linguistically, but in actuality they seem inseparable.

Let me try to make my viewpoint clear. Spirituality in essence requires a type of interconnectedness between all beings, and that we as individuals have a Greater Aspect of Self - a "soul" or "spirit" if you will, that transcends the limitations of space-time.

The accumulated evidence of parapsychological research has demonstrated that psi seems a non-local phenomenon (e.g. it transcends the limitations of space-time), and that it serves as an encompassing medium that connects each of us to one another. Without psi, spirituality becomes an empty shell. To me psi does not seem "an extra", something "tacked on" to spirituality, but an inescapable and integral element, without which authentic spirituality as such can not exist.

For many in our culture dreaming seems the only practical way in which people can access their greater, non-local selves. Unfortunately, modern culture for the most part trivializes dreaming and minimizes its importance. For the individual, a single instance of validated psi-dreaming can act as a powerful counterforce, that not only highlights the potential importance of dreaming, but that can open pathways towards self-knowledge and the first hand experience of inner spirituality.

**What do you feel keeps science from looking in that direction?**

Muggles.

**You have decades of experience in lucid dreaming and a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Duke University. If you chaired the Department of Lucid Dreaming, what experiments in lucid dreaming would you suggest to your faculty?**

I'd set up a three phase program. First, a program to identify those individuals who have the potential to become adept lucid dreamers, and second, a program to develop, test, and, improve techniques that train people to become adept lucid dreamers.

Once we had trained a group of adept lucid dreamers, a third phase would kick in - using adept lucid dreamers to explore - and reproducibly map - the potentialities of the lucid dreaming state. This program would focus primarily on exploring psi-dreaming, such as mutual dreaming and remote viewing, and of lucid dream healing. I believe that well designed protocols, and a cadre of trained and adept lucid dreamers, could establish the scientific validity of psi-dreaming and of dream healing beyond any reasonable doubt through a series of robust and reproducible experiments. This would, at the very least, accelerate the shift away from the reductionist-materialist mindset that still hinders mainstream scientific thinking and research.

## **When you think of the cutting-edge issues in lucid dreaming, what do you think of?**

I think of using trained lucid dreamers to systematically explore – phenomenologically - the nature of dreaming *while* dreaming, and to explore the larger issues of the nature of reality and the full potentialities of consciousness. This kind of work requires experienced lucid dreamers who still have open minds about dreaming. If they think they know "all about" dreaming - what they can, and can not do in a dream, they end up in ruts, and rarely if ever try anything new. Because of my own open minded phenomenological orientation, I've felt willing to try many innovative tasks that I had not heard of anyone else even trying before. Someone who believes that dreams only take place "in your head" would not even consider attempting such tasks, even as experiments. For theories on the nature of dreaming, the repeated experimental validation of dream-psi seems the equivalent of the Michelson-Morley experiment in physics, with the exception that few have realized the profound implications. Psi-dreaming has made such strictly subjective, solipsistic, theories of dreaming outdated and untenable. We need to change how we think about dreams, and to understand that dreaming involves a kind of perception.

Still, in one sense it doesn't matter what sort of unexamined assumptions one operates under - scientific or metaphysical. In either case, once someone "knows" what a dream "is", these unquestioned beliefs will limit not only the scope within which they can act, but their ability to perceive without distortion anything that "does not fit". As Goethe put it: "*The most difficult thing of all is to see what is before your eyes.*" In my groups I try to teach lucid dreamers to let go of their preconceptions about dreaming - to experiment with open minds, and see what happens.

For myself, right now I enjoy exploring the idea that we actually live in an information universe, where at the deepest level we input the universe primarily as code, an information pattern, a code that we learn to habitually translate and then experience in terms of sight, sound, touch, etc. A computer does this in a simple way when it translates a stream of binary code information - a pattern of 0 and 1's - into an animated visual display on your computer screen. We as humans do something very similar when we read an engaging story, where the text presents us with an arrangement of arbitrary shapes (letters and numbers) arranged in a meaningful pattern that we ignore as such while reading, experiencing people, places and situations instead. The movie *The Matrix* illustrates this idea in an entertaining way, where the characters live in a virtual reality experienced and only perceived as physical, but which at its root consists of a mathematical code.

Might we tune into this information universe directly when we dream, when we bypass the physical senses? Can we, as lucid dreamers, like Neo in *The Matrix*, find a way to perceive a mathematical universe underlying the sensory dreamscapes that we usually perceive? Stay tuned.

## **Thanks, Ed, for your observations into lucid dreaming. Any parting thoughts?**

The idea of "lucid dreaming" still poses an existential challenge to many in our culture. As you know, until recently mainstream psychology considered this phrase a contradiction in terms. However, to those who have experienced lucid dreaming first hand, the psychological impact can seem extraordinarily profound. Although researchers minimally define a lucid dream as one where dreamers have a vague awareness that they dream, a truly lucid dreamer can also enjoy powers of intellect, memory, and free will that approximate and even exceed those of the everyday waking state. Mainstream scientists frequently use the term 'reality' as a synonym for the 'physical universe'. In contrast, I take a phenomenological point of view, that uses the term reality to refer to the world of direct experience, where reality includes not only my waking experiences but my dreaming experiences as well. And although I now feel that I live in something like *The Matrix*, I still don't know "how deep the rabbit hole goes."