

DreamSpeak

An Interview With Line Salvesen

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Questions by Robert Waggoner

Through the internet, I became acquainted with a Norwegian woman who surprised me, by writing....

"I have logged close to 1,000 lucid dreams so far this year (I started keeping a dream journal in January/February,...), so I can only guess that I have had probably at least 8,000 lucid dreams, but the actual number might be more than double [that number]."

Now you and I know that the winter nights are long in Scandinavia, but 8,000 lucid dreams? Wow.... So join me in welcoming Line Salvesen to the LDE.

Line, forgive me, but do you pronounce your name like Lie - nee, or in some other way? My Norwegian consists of Oslo, fjord and lefse - maybe lutefisk too, but is that Swedish or Norwegian?

My name is pronounced Lee-neh. That's the best way I can describe it in text, at least. Lutefisk is eaten in both Norway and Sweden!

By your own count, you seem to be one of those people who have a lot of lucid dreams. So first, help us understand what you consider a lucid dream? Also how would a lucid dream be different than a non-lucid dream?

I consider a lucid dream a dream where I'm aware of the fact that I'm dreaming while still in the dream. In a non-lucid dream, I think I'm awake, or I don't question reality at all. When it comes to action, lucid dreams and non-lucid dreams are not always so different from each other because I have a tendency to just "go with the flow" of the dream when I'm lucid, especially when I have a low level of lucidity. However, when I do that, I will still manipulate my dream if I don't like where it's going. It seems that I can be lucid but still seem bound by dream logic, which makes me accept some weird choices when I have low level lucid dreams.

For example, I can dream of entering a restaurant/store and eat all the kinds of foods that I'm intolerant to, but I still pay the bill. Or I might summon a dream horse to ride, but then think that I need to warm up the horse. I even tried to sleep in a lucid dream the other night because I was feeling mentally worn out and I got the bright idea that if I went to sleep in the dream, then I would go into NREM sleep and stop dreaming. I just woke up from it.

When I'm not aware that I'm dreaming, I will think, behave and act the same way that I would in the same situation in my waking life. When I'm lucid, I will think differently, and I decide how I want to act. The higher my level of lucidity is, the more I will change and explore the dream.

Okay, but if you had to consider 100 of your lucid dreams, what percentage do you "go with the flow" (and not change the direction of the dream much), what percentage do you "change things a bit" and what percentage do you "make major changes in the dream or completely transform it?"

I'd say that probably 10% of them qualify as "go with the flow", 60% "change a bit", and 30% "completely transform", though it's hard to separate them into such categories.

Thinking back, when do you first recall becoming consciously aware in the dream state? Can you remember any of your first lucid dreams?

I recall becoming aware that I was dreaming when I was 3 years old. However, it's hard for me to tell which one was the first lucid dream. One I remember from the age of 3 is a lucid nightmare where my grandparents' salt and pepper shakers, which were shaped as wooden heads, had grown into human size and were chasing me around my grandparents' house. I eventually managed to wake myself up by closing my eyes. I also had several recurring nightmares that started out at that age, in which I gained lucidity and then woke myself up from by will.

So did you assume that everyone had lucid dreams? When did it first occur to you that you were dreaming differently than most others?

Yes, but since not all my dreams were lucid, I didn't find it strange when people talked about dreams where they obviously didn't know they were dreaming. I just assumed that everyone was like me, sometimes they would know that they were dreaming, other times they would have no clue. One reason that I came to this conclusion is that one of my school friends also had lucid dreams. And I wonder if she still does....

At some point, you must have heard about this thing called "lucid dreaming" and its scientific discovery? Can you remember how you came to realize that your special type of dreaming had a name and a scientific history and all?

I think I was around 16 years old when that happened. I stumbled upon a short article about lucid dreaming in a magazine, possibly the Norwegian version of *Reader's Digest*. My first reaction was pretty much "What, not everyone is aware in their dreams?" At the end of the article, it stated that only a fraction have the ability to have lucid dreams from early childhood, so I sure felt special when I read that! But I only started seriously to look into it and participate in online communities about a year ago.

Tell us (if you can recall), how lucid dreaming changed for you as you grew up? I assume that at first you just accepted it, but at some point that realization must have begun to change the way you interacted with the dream, right?

Most of my first lucid dreams were triggered by fear during nightmares, so the first thing I learned was how to wake myself up. I did that a lot during my first couple of years or so as a lucid dreamer... When my realizations grew, I managed to face my dream monsters now and then and I asked them to be my friend and play.

I was mostly rid of my recurring nightmares when I started school, and I discovered more about the possibilities of dream manipulations. I would no longer only manipulate nightmares, but also lucid dreams in general. I learned that not only could I fly and move objects by controlling the dream, I could also change my own shape. By the time I was 8, I had at least one lucid dream a night, and my lucidity frequency has gradually increased since then, to about 99% lucid dreams today

Another lucid dreamer with tens of thousands of reported lucid dreams is Beverly D'Urso (see her DreamSpeak interview in our archives). In her childhood, she was bothered by recurring dreams of witches - which ultimately prompted her lucid dreaming to some degree. Did you have any recurring nightmare type figures that caused you to become lucid?

I had lots of nightmares around the age of 3-6, but I had no recurring nightmare figures that I can recall. At first, I had several scary characters in my nightmares, but once I gained lucidity, I would offer my friendship, and my nightmares stopped being about getting attacked/chased/hunted by evil beings for the most part. After that, the fear in the nightmares was directed towards scary settings, like being surrounded by fire, trapped in darkness, or alone in a moving car. Still, I became lucid in them, and as previously mentioned, I woke myself up from them. But once I got a little older, I started to figure out dream manipulation, and I got rid of some recurring nightmares by changing the scary parts.

The recurring nightmares of being alone in a moving car started when I was quite young - still sitting in a booster seat. I did realize that I was dreaming because I knew that cars couldn't move on their own. I would always think that I would experience the car crashing, and I was scared because I had no control over the car. Once I learned how to wake myself up from dreams, that's what I did. But, at the age of 6, I started to realize that dreams were kind of like play-pretend, they could be changed. So one night when I had this nightmare, I pretended that some of my preschool friends were with me, and two of my 6 year old friends appeared in the front seat. Their presence alone calmed me down. They talked amongst each other, one reached down to the pedals while the other grabbed the steering wheel. The car stopped. I woke up quickly after, quite happy about stopping the nightmare without waking up! This recurring nightmare only happened a few times after that, and each time, I did the same thing to stop the car.

In my early lucid dreaming, I often found that I would become lucid and then get re-involved in the dream action and forget that I was lucid. Does this happen to you? Does it still happen in some lucid dreams?

Yes, this can happen to me as well. It only seems to happen when I wasn't very lucid in the first place, but it does happen from time to time. I sometimes also have false awakenings that are non lucid. It's especially annoying to wake up for real to find out that the notes I thought I had done during the night were only done in a dream.

Also I found in my early lucid dreams that I had to take care not to get too emotional. If I became emotional, then the lucid dream would end. Have you found this to be the case?

Yes, to some degree. If I get very excited/happy (especially if I have accomplished something that I wanted to try), then I might wake up. But I find that I'm even more likely to wake up when I try hard to remember something from my waking life. If I do end up accidentally waking up, I will at least have a great WILD opportunity!

As you look over your lucid dreaming life, what principles have you discovered for becoming lucid? Many people use dream signs to realize they are dreaming; some use suggestion to become lucid during their dreams, and some use the MILD technique -- what do you do?

Consciously, I do nothing. I usually just realize/know that I'm dreaming when a dream starts. I rarely think "Oh, I'm dreaming!", I just know. Basically, dreams feel dreamy to me, and it's this sensation that I pick up on that makes me lucid most of the time. If I fail to pick up on it right away, then something unusual or impossible happening will usually make me realize that I'm dreaming, or the unfamiliar surroundings.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention that the MILD technique deserves more attention by lucid dreamers. I see several aspiring lucid dreamers hardly giving it a try or not at all - they seem to think that it's so simple that it cannot possibly work. I use auto-suggestion to help me remember personal tasks that I want to try out in a lucid dream, with good success.

So when you say you just realize it, because it seems dreamy -- tell me how it seems dreamy? What specifically seems dreamy about the dream?

Dreams to me have a certain atmosphere about them that I can best describe as simply "dreamy". My consciousness and awareness will feel somewhat similar to what it feels like when I'm meditating; kind of like an altered state of consciousness. I've recently taken notice of how sounds "sound" in dreams; they sound a bit more flat than in reality, and they don't seem to come from any source. Colors can be just as vibrant as in reality, but when I'm outside in a dream, the daylight will often seem more whiter, as if you were outdoors on an overcast day in the winter with snow around you. Shadows will typically be more blurred and light than they would have been in reality.

In life, are you a person who concentrates on details? Or do you notice subtle things, like entering a room, it is a bit darker because the sun has dropped a little bit? I wonder "how" you explain your ability to notice "dreamy," when so many of us just accept the dream as real (and remain non-lucid).

I wouldn't say that I consciously concentrate on details, but I'm a person who notices details. I notice subtle things just like you describe. I also consider myself a curious person. If there is something I don't understand or something I'm curious about, I'll want to find out about it - whether it's a strange sound from the kitchen, or the answer to a quiz question.

Did you have any games of awareness that you would play, perhaps as a child, that elevated your recognition of states of awareness?

No awareness games, but I did like to daydream when I grew up. I especially liked to daydream about horses. I think this has helped me build my visualization skills, and that helps me with WILDs.

When you think about your lucid dreams, have you had any that were especially important to you, or marked a new growth, or high point in your lucid life? Please tell us about that if you would.

I recently experienced a definite new high point in my lucid life - actually thanks to you, Robert! Because I have anxiety, you suggested to me that I could tell myself in a lucid dream that I would be happy and anxiety free for a week. A few nights later, I remembered this intent in a lucid

dream. I was being bored in this dream because not much was going on. I had been talking to two women, but now I wanted to dream something else. When I changed the dream, I remembered my intent, and I said out loud that I will be happy and anxiety free for the next seven days. I started waking up, but I managed to get the message through to myself before I woke up completely. And it worked! I was anxiety free for the following week and only a little anxious at times when I was hungry and tired. A week later, I found myself in my old room, lucid and remembering my past week. I looked at myself through a mirror, and repeated to myself several times out loud, "I will be happy and anxiety free." I'm still pretty much anxiety free, and it's a whole new life!

I had another definite high point in my lucid life when I was around 22. One morning when I could sleep in, I wondered if it was possible to go straight from a waking state into a lucid dream without sleeping first. I had never heard about the WILD technique at this point, I discovered this technique online only a year ago. I was still in bed, and I knew that I had my longest and most vivid lucid dreams in the morning. So I closed my eyes and focused on keeping my consciousness as I was falling asleep. Not much happened until I felt a strong headrush and a falling sensation, and within a split second, I found myself standing barefooted on a green meadow in the sunshine. I could feel the wind on my face, the texture of the grass under my feet and between my toes, and the colors were vibrant. I was very lucid, and very, very surprised. I had not expected to pull that off! The surprise made me wake up within a couple of seconds. I didn't try it again until this year, when I had learned about the WILD technique.

Have you had any lucid dreams that seemed significant spiritually -- or made you wonder about the nature of life? Have you had any lucid dreams that really surprised you with something unexpected? Please give an example.

I have not had any lucid dreams that have been very spiritual. I'm sure that will change some day! My lucid dreams never cease to surprise me. Unexpected things happen all the time in my lucid dreams, and they can be quite weird and random.

I think my most memorable experience related to this would be a lucid dream where I was just standing by a beach and looking at a wonderful view over an ocean with lots of small islands, and the mainland was mostly covered by a forest. All of a sudden, I saw that several of the trees not far from me were freeing themselves from the ground and they were using their roots as feet to walk over to the beach. They reached the beach and went into the water, swimming and splashing around. I was amazed, and also very amused. I even tried to walk over to one of them and talk to it, but it ignored me and walked past me. They looked so realistic, the details were amazing. I also sometimes get unexpected results when I try to manipulate my dream, like the time I tried to summon a person, but a haystack appeared instead.

For some of us lucid dreamers, we like to experiment in our lucid dreams. If you wish, tell us about some of the things that you have experimented with in your lucid dreams, and the results or surprises that happened.

I'm certainly one of those lucid dreamers who love to experiment in my lucid dreams. I do it quite often. I test out all kinds of things, both tasks or challenges that I have decided on before going to sleep, and random little experiments that I come up with when lucid, like for example seeing how fast I can fly to test my control and limits.

Here is something I randomly decided to test out in a lucid dream, how emotions affect my dream control.

I was on a black horse, riding on an outdoor arena. There were several fences to jump. The horse seemed to be quite slow, and didn't want to follow my orders. I struggled to keep it at the speed I wanted. I experimented a little with noticing how my level of frustration and annoyance affected my control of the horse. I found out that allowing myself to be frustrated and annoyed made the horse almost stop, but it didn't help too much to just relax my mind, as it does with a bolting horse that I want to stop. However, when I focused a bit more on watching another horse and rider that appeared at the arena, it was easier to get the horse to do what I wanted.

Are there experiments that you would like to conduct in lucid dreams? Or something that you would want to achieve? Tell us about that.

I would like to experiment more with dream healing. The little experience I have with that has shown me that dream healing can be very powerful, especially on a mental and emotional level. I also want to explore my sense of smell and taste in lucid dreams, as I always focus on sight and sound, and somewhat on my sense of touch.

In Norway in the summer, the daylight lasts for many, many hours, while in the winter, it can be dark for a long, long time. Do the seasons effect your dreaming, or effect your lucid dreaming? Do you see any pattern to lucid dreaming and the seasons?

It doesn't seem to affect my dreaming or lucid dreaming, but it affects my sleep in general. I need up to an hour of extra sleep in the winter, and I sleep a bit more heavy in the winter as well. During the summer, I get around the sunny evenings and mornings by wearing a sleep mask. So in general, I have more dreams (and lucid dreams) in the winter because I sleep more, but my dream recall might suffer when I have a night of extra heavy sleep.

Thanks Line, for being so gracious and telling us about your lucid dreaming life.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share!