

# DreamSpeak

## An Interview With Nick Cumbo

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Questions by Robert Waggoner

*From the land of the Dreamtime, LDE goes way down under to chat with Nick Cumbo. A lucid dreamer, educator, and moderator of the on-line lucid dream forum, [www.sealifedreams.com](http://www.sealifedreams.com), the LDE welcomes Nick.*

**You're way "down under" in Australia. So how did you become interested in lucid dreaming? How did you hear about it?**

Good question. I think we have some common ground here. I remember reading that you found out about lucid dreaming through the writings of Carlos Castaneda. My journey with lucid dreaming began one afternoon, when my dad pulled down a dusty copy of Castaneda's "Tales of Power" from the bookshelf.

It was summer. I'd just finished high school and had lots of time to read. I became fascinated by the book - one of a series in which Castaneda writes of his apprenticeship with a Yacqui sorcerer/shaman called Don Juan. I was particularly drawn in by what Don Juan had to say about dreaming. I started a dream journal, and began to follow some of Don Juan's suggestions for gaining command of my dreams.

My dreams became more vivid and I began flying in them too. Eventually I had my first lucid dream.

**Tell us about your first lucid dream? What was special or fascinating about it?**

My first lucid dream took place in somewhat unusual surroundings - I'd conked out on a couch after a house party.

It was great though. I loved the feeling of realizing I was dreaming - almost like being in two places at once. In my dream, there were these people on the other side of a room. At first there was an unusual sense of distance between us, but when I became lucid, they each came up to me and shook my hands. It's almost like they were welcoming me to the world of lucid dreaming.

One of my other early lucid dreams is still a favorite.

*Come and See the Heaven (Jan 20, 2002)*

*I'm at the bottom of a stairwell when I realize I'm dreaming. I wake up, but returning to sleep come back to the very same scene. Again I become lucid. The only problem is I can't move. Thinking of something Castaneda wrote about the power of intent, I decide to focus my attention*

*and energy on the midpoint of my body. As I do so a phosphorescent green glow begins to form there, expanding, altering the entire context of the dream.*

*I see myself transforming, become younger - like a child, then a baby and still going back. There's a sense of time spiraling in on itself, and before I know it, it's as though I've pushed through the eye of the vortex. I'm no longer in a body at all, but instead exist purely as mind.*

*Before me, a tunnel/portal now opens up. I glide into the tunnel at an incredible speed. Along its walls I see odd collections of imagery - plant life, mushrooms, and little creatures you might expect to see on the sea floor. I'm zooming through, totally mesmerised by all I encounter. I'm so amazed by it all, that I am thinking of telling my friend Jesse (whose house I was staying at that night). I don't recall coming to the end of the tunnel - only that I receive a special message when it's over.*

*When I awake, it's as though it's the next morning. My friend Jesse and another of his friends are here. For some reason they are very excited and are very eager to tell me their dreams. However I'm feeling impatient.*

*"Yeah guys, that's cool, but I need to tell you mine before I forget it".*

*Somehow I end up listening to their story instead. They both start at the same time.*

*"There was... and then there were these 2 dolphins".*

*As they say it, I see their eyes meet, and a sparkle in Jesse's eyes like something I have never seen before. It's as though I can see into their minds - I watch as two dolphins appear in their mutual mindscape, jumping into the air and crossing from one friend to the other.*

*At the same time, I hear the dolphins speak. A synthesised voice reveals their message, waves of sound overlapping one another.*

*"Come and See the Heaven, Before You Forget It".*

This was a great dream, and it's message definitely stuck with me. The particularly curious thing about it was the way the dolphins spoke. Upon looking for information about dolphins on a site called Fusion Anomaly (<http://fusionanomaly.net/dolphins.html>), I was astonished to learn that "when two dolphins speak, it sounds like four voices" - much like they had in my dream. This discovery really got me thinking about the possibility that the dream may have involved some genuine contact with the spirit of the dolphin.

**So what did you make of that? Have you seen that (quality or aspect) in some other lucid dreams over time?**

Well, animals have been frequent visitors and guides in my lucid dreams since then, so this is something that I feel is worth drawing attention to.

Some Indigenous peoples claim relationship or kinship with particular totem animals. They see the animal spirits as holders of certain spiritual powers or qualities, which we inherit or can learn from. A few years ago, I decided to explore this for myself. I felt deeply motivated to find out my own totem animal, and saw that my lucid dreams might offer a way forward.

### Don't Leave Your Face Lying in the Dirt

*In my dream, I'm at the top of a big hill, which neighbors my own family's house. I'm out in the bush, and becoming lucid I start to fly down the hill, passing by the old gum trees, all the way down to the valley below. Coming to a tree, I lay my hands against it.*

*At this point, something unusual happens. Now, I feel the energies of the galaxy pulsing or perhaps breathing through me. While the tree seems to be perfectly capable of holding this energy, my sense of self begins to dissolve. I step away from the tree. Both amazed and also frightened.*

*Now on solid ground, I enter the driveway of my home, and onto the grass that lies in front of the house. Remembering my intention, I find a place on the ground to sit and meditate. I hold my intention in mind - "What is my totem animal?" I allow my awareness to merge with the Earth below - asking the Earth the question.*

*I must fall into a trance, because when I "wake", I'm listening to my ex-girlfriend speak. She tells me, quite plainly,*

*"Your totem is the pigeon. It left you a message - it said it was important for your future health, that you "don't leave your face lying in the dirt."*

The next evening when I became lucid, there was a pigeon waiting in a tree outside my house! In the dream, I learned to shift into the form of a pigeon and even began to take flight. It was awesome, and a great followup to the previous experience. Since then, I've continued to dream with the pigeon - learning a lot more about the ins and outs of flying as a bird only can. I guess what I'm saying is: take notice of the animals in your lucid dreams. They might have something to show you.

### **At some point, you began to realize that lucid dreams held greater significance. What happened in your lucid dreaming life that helped you see their greater significance?**

A few years ago, I had a dream in which I became lucid. I was paralysed, and couldn't move. I looked to the walls of the room - and saw that there were messages written up on each side of the wall. Some in images, some in symbols, and some in a language I couldn't understand. Finally I turned to the window. There above it, were written the words "Teach the Children."

I didn't know what to make of it at the time - I was studying a course in telecommunications and Internet technologies. However a year later I became frustrated with that choice, and started a degree in primary school education. The message of the dream was simple enough, but it actually acted as a major factor of change in my life.

### **Fascinating. From that, you began to look deeper. How did you search? What did you find?**

The experience made me more interested in the idea of working with children and their dreams.

In 2007, while in the USA, I attended a workshop with dream teacher, Robert Moss, called "Dreaming a Life with Heart". While camping out before the final day of the workshop, I became lucid, and entered a visionary state.

I found myself called back to a building in Melbourne - a notable landmark of sorts. The building was covered in large panes of glass, and light seemed to rain down from above. Inside the building, I saw many young children. They were learning about their dreams by making sequences of related movements with their bodies. They seemed very enthusiastic about it.

Further across the building, I saw some older primary school children, perhaps 10 years and above. They were working with their dreams, by talking about their experiences.

I woke from the dream very excited. It was really good to be able to celebrate the dream by sharing it at the workshop - the dream gave me a great vision of what dream work with children could actually look like in the future.

**When we non-Australians think about dreaming in Australia, we think about the 'dreamtime' -- an idea that native Australians often refer to. From your perspective, what does the 'dreamtime' mean to the native people of Australia? How would you explain it?**

When I hear the word "Dreamtime", I understand it as a time before time, a time of creation. Many cultures have their creation stories. The Dreamtime, in my limited understanding of the term, seems to reveal stories about the Australian landscape, how it was formed and the beings that shape or belong to a particular place.

There's an interesting collection of Dreamtime stories told by Indigenous elders, which I think is worth checking out:

<http://www.dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/storylist.htm>

**In what ways does lucid dreaming intersect with the larger idea of the dreamtime? Is it through greater awareness about the invisible or mental realm, behind physical appearance? Or is it that lucid dreaming may indicate that individuals can consciously exist in a dream realm - that another dimension may exist?**

I like the second point you raise - that lucid dreaming and the concept of the dreamtime both point towards the possibility of existence in a dimension beyond the physical. I had an interesting experience in this regard, while attending a "Day Out of Time" festival in 2005.

The festival was held in Northern NSW, along the Eastern coast of Australia. A very beautiful spot. The Bundjalung people are the traditional owners of the land, and one of the elders came out to tell us a dreamtime story by the campfire one of the nights of the festival. It was a pretty intimate gathering.

I didn't get a chance to talk to him, but the next morning I joined a few other people in a dawn meditation. We sat by a small river or stream to meditate. Though we had a small fire, it was still fairly cold. Just as I was about to open my eyes, and 'come out' of my meditation, something unusual happened.

I felt the presence of an Aboriginal spirit being - wily and agile. I knew this river was their home. As their hand pressed down against my left shoulder, I was transported. Suddenly I was there with them - in some other "time". In that moment, I knew that I was trusted and welcomed on the land. Then I opened my eyes again, and suddenly I was back in the "real world". I usually have a habit of simply telling and sharing my experiences immediately, but this one was different - I had a strong sense that I had to hold onto it for myself for a while.

**In your dream life or lucid dream life, have you had any experiences that made you wonder if information, knowledge or awareness did exist in the realm of dreaming?**

Yes - I've had a number of experiences like this. Some dreams are very clear and some are harder to make sense of, or at least relate back to my personal circumstances. I do feel that we can bring through information and ideas from our dreams, and like the idea of doing so intentionally.

One example that I can describe took place after visiting an Aboriginal cave site with a few friends. The cave we visited was based in Victoria (the state of Australia in which I live), and was home to Aboriginal Rock art. We'd gone out to the park to camp together, but we also spent some time as participants in a global meditation for peace taking place around the world.

When I returned home from the site that night, I had a dream.

*Lost Friends (Nov 10, 2003)*

*I'm in my high school, watching an old Aboriginal woman. She is telling me a story about the people who come to her land. I get the impression of white people, scientific types. They come to the land, interpreting the tools and implements used by her people.*

*She seems distressed by this. She is a strong woman, an elder amongst her people. Why don't they come to her if they have questions?*

*As the dream ends, she seems to dance or whirl around, saying:  
"They pretend to be Lost Friends of the Wadja".*

Her words hung in the air, as I woke.

There are hundreds of Aboriginal tribal groupings in Australia, and I had never heard of the Wadja, yet when I turned to the Internet I discovered that they were indeed a real Aboriginal group. They had not lived in the state of Victoria, but rather thousands of kilometres north in Central Queensland. I was amazed.

This dream felt like a calling, and I knew I had to take some action on it, but wasn't sure how. I couldn't imagine myself just showing up on the streets of a remote community, asking for someone to make sense of my experience. However, four years later, I got my chance. I managed to arrange a teaching placement in an Indigenous community based on Wadja land.

It was an awesome experience. I learnt more about Aboriginal culture in a few weeks than I ever had from a textbook. I was even invited to share the story of how I came to be in the community, with students, around a campfire.

**How did that experience change your view of the world, your view of dreaming?**

I realised that our dreams may be more real than we think. It was really satisfying to reflect on the fact, that in following my dream, I'd been able to cross into a first-hand understanding of Aboriginal culture.

I began to more deeply appreciate the value of where I was born, and take a more active interest in Aboriginal history, rights and culture.

**You administer the on-line forum for lucid dreamers, [www.sealifedreams.com](http://www.sealifedreams.com)  
Tell us about that.**

Sea Life is a forum for teams of people to dream together online. People can apply for spots in Dream Teams.

Each Dream Team has about 8-10 members, and is designed as a private space where the people in the group can share their dreams with each other. Because there are people from all around the world involved, it's also a good chance to get to know other dreamers.

Lucid dreaming can be quite an individual pursuit, so it's nice to learn from each other's experiences and approaches. Not everyone who joins Sea Life is a lucid dreamer - some simply enjoy sharing and receiving responses to their dreams. Sea Life is really a means of celebrating dreams and their place in community.

**At Sea Life, dreamers explore different topics and different goals together. Tell us about some of the lucid dreaming topics or goals. Any interesting results from their explorations?**

Sea Life began in 2003, so we've run a great variety of projects during that time.

Our first project involved traveling to the year 2012 in a lucid dream. That's actually where the name of the forum came from. The forum was at that time called "Dream Teams", however I was interested in finding a name that better reflected a philosophy of "dreaming with and for the Earth itself".

In my lucid dream, I surfaced in the year 2012, and found myself at a computer. There was a program all ready to go - it was called "Sea Life". When I clicked on it, I saw an animation of sea creatures mutating and transforming.

I guess they're the dreamers of Sea Life.

Other projects we've done have included group dream journeys to places like Mt. Shasta and the Lucid Crossroads. The Lucid Crossroads is a really interesting site ([www.lucidcrossroads.co.uk](http://www.lucidcrossroads.co.uk)) - it's a virtual meeting space for lucid dreamers, created using 3D graphics.

As part of our project to visit the Lucid Crossroads, one of my friends, Richard, ended up talking to a dream guide. I'll include a snippet of that dream, since I think it gives some impression of how interesting it can be to dive into one's lucid dreams with a particular question or intention in mind.

*"Is shared dreaming/mutual dreaming possible?" The man laughs, "Of course, you have had one too." I nod, "OK. Places like the crossroads, how are they created; in the astral world, or are they just in our minds?" He doesn't even hesitate with the answer "If they are created for the purpose of mutual dreaming, then, even subconsciously, they are created in the astral world and people can go there. Your world, Richard, even though you have thought it doesn't, exists, and a few people have already gone."*

**Where do you see the future of lucid dreaming headed? What will lucid dreamers be doing 20 years from now that most of us never consider?**

I'm not entirely sure what we'll be doing in the future. Pushing the boundaries, I bet. My big hope is that dreaming will be more widely celebrated. I'd really like to see our dreams acknowledged as a source of creativity and guidance in our lives.