

THE CRUCIBLE OF AWAKENING

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SPECIAL ISSUE: LUCID DREAMING

When our dreams are emptied of us
We're all that we see, free of all the fuss
What needs doing is done best
When in utter mystery we rest
Settle thus in undressed being
Until the dreamer of dreamers is seen

Eternity's offspring we seem to be
Playing hide-and-seek with our history
With more than enough time
To show up as every possible design
If appearing as all things is our destiny
Being awakened by all things
Is how we're set free

A lucid dream is a dream in which we know that we are dreaming.

Lucid dreaming may be just a momentarily interesting experience — playing a very minor role in our lives — and it may also be a profoundly enlivening and even transformative experience, blasting us out of our somnambulistic trance.

To wake up right in the midst of the three-dimensional, shapeshifting, endlessly creative wonderland of dreaming, and to look upon (and through) it all with undreaming eyes — what a marvelously illuminating experience this can be!

Recently I was interviewed (by Arthur Gillard) for The Lucid Dream Exchange (www.dreaminglucid.com). What follows is taken from that interview.

Arthur: Do you remember your first lucid dream? How old were you?

Robert: I don't remember what was probably my first lucid dream — in large part because in my early years I had trouble separating waking state and dreaming state phenomena — but I do remember becoming lucid during two types of dreams that started when I was about 5 or 6. In the first, I would find myself at the top of a tree or standing at the edge of a cliff...I'd leap off, feeling ecstatic, totally unafraid of hitting the ground below (which invariably received me the way that a pillow receives a weary head).

The second type of dream in which I'd become lucid was far from pleasant: In it, I'd be in my bed, tucked under the covers, feeling a strange chill in the air (and here I'd become lucid), a grey-lit iciness that was very familiar — for I had this dream hundreds of times — and into the room would come my mother, initially looking like herself, but soon mutating into a hideous, malevolent creature bearing down on me, trying to tear the covers from me, at which point I, in heart-thumping terror, would wake up. The fact that I was lucid did not seem to make any difference; I felt consistently powerless.

Not until I was 8 or 9 did I free myself from this lucid nightmare: One night, as my monster-mother drew near me, I got up and attacked her; she fought back, but I persisted, and she faded into the background. It was the last time I had the dream.

Arthur: Has the nature of your dreams changed over time?

Robert: My dreams have changed as I have changed, and I have changed as my dreams have changed. My dreaming self and my waking state self have

been, and are, inseparable. Looking at, into, and through what's arising with undreaming eyes, whether waking or asleep, continues to be both grace and a discipline; the actual process of selfing (that is, of animating, occupying, and reconstituting "me") has been and is an object of awareness, however infrequently, both in dreaming and waking states.

During times of intense dream exploration, I have had an abundance of deep and amazing dreams. When I became interested in lucid dreaming in my early 20s, such dreams arrived quite often; for a while, I'd exploit their possibilities, but eventually I tired of such adventuring, and more often than not simply let them go their own course. Sometimes dreams have arrived that have dramatically altered my life course. For example, when I was 22, unhappily immersed in a doctoral program that didn't really interest me, I had a dream of drowning — a deeply surrendered, blissful drowning — that led me to, in a matter of just a few hours, to leave my doctoral studies for good.

Mirror dreams come to mind... As a child, I had a recurring dream of looking into a mirror and seeing my reflection slide and eddy into freakish contortions. The face I'd see looked terrified, its horror eloquently expressed with bizarre flourishes borrowed from whatever had most recently frightened me, be it an ad for a Frankenstein movie or the witch scene from Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. I knew what was going to happen before I stared into the mirror, and yet I always looked. The mirror, usually outlined with a compelling brilliance, dominated whatever room in which I found it. Only in these dreams did I truly face my fear; in the daytime I did whatever I could to avoid it.

I had no such dreams (as far as I can recall) as an adolescent, but had further variations of them arise once I got a bit older. When I was 22, I had the following dream:

I'm at a party, moving from room to room, socializing. Someone offers me some LSD; without any hesitation, I take it. Soon the party is blazing with hypervivid color, crawling with archetypes, seemingly bursting with untranslatable significance. The walls melt and writhe. Finally, I move (or am moved) toward the bathroom. The ten-foot journey is as hilarious as it's weird; before I complete it, I realize that I am dreaming. My experiencing seems to be concentric rather than sequential. The bathroom. As I close the door, I feel very excited and almost painfully alert.

There's a mirror on the wall. I immediately recall my childhood dreams of looking into a mirror. The mirror beckons, widening. Looking into it, I see my wide-eyed reflection. Its features wriggle and shift into a series of faces, some of them incredibly hideous and far from human. But I'm not afraid, for I know that these visions are LSD-induced.

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I continue looking, as my ancient fears parade by, showing their faces. I relax, settling more and more deeply into my seeing.

Three years later, I had another mirror dream:

I'm in a dimly lit house, feeling very uncomfortable. The mood is both sluggish and sinister. I go into my room, and lock the door, then enter its bathroom, and look into the mirror over the sink. My eyes seem to be extraordinarily close together; in fact, there's no gap between them. I realize that I am dreaming. In the mirror there is one large eye, between and slightly above the place where my eyes ordinarily are. Dread and fascination fill me.

The eye is a glowing blue, unblinking and unwavering, and of immense though unexplainable significance to me. I feel as though I'm drowning in its gaze, which I very dimly intuit is my gaze. I force myself to look below the eye, at the smooth pink flesh where my everyday eyes ought to be. For a while I see only skin. Then, as if through a poorly focused lens, I see my two eyes. They are firmly and tightly closed. I leave the bathroom. My room is too small. I decide to leave the dream, and it immediately shatters.

It took me a while to understand why my lucidity in the dream had not lightened or freed me. Though I'd become aware of the overall dream, I had been utterly unaware that the self (“me”) of the dream was also part of the dream. My identification with that fearful, isolated “I” kept me feeling afraid and isolated. My lucidity in the dream had been like a vast moat, surrounding but not touching the role I had assumed in the dream. The mirror gave me an opportunity to see what I was doing; the eye in the mirror was an “I” that saw through me. When I finally noticed my two “regular” eyes in the mirror, I saw only skin-deep, not seeing that I was asleep to my situation.

Here's another mirror dream, from when I was 48:

Becoming aware that I'm dreaming, I leap up to fly, but fall back, twice. Then I surrender, inwardly asking to be taken where I most need to go. I'm in the air, a few feet above some pavement. Suddenly I'm pulled backward and downward at a tremendous speed, my body almost totally vanishing during my “flight.” I land in an underground, poorly lit room. Its walls are all floor-to-ceiling mirrors, all equally sized and all bizarrely distorting my reflection. Though fairly large, the room feels quite compressed. I'm in the middle, afraid but not panicked.

Slowly, I walk toward one wall, seeing all sorts of mirrored “fragments” of myself. A dark, eerie, heavy feeling saturates the room. Everything is sickeningly greyish. I gaze into my reflection's eyes, seeing less of the hallucinatory than I expected. Then I walk into and through the mirror, finding myself in an even more compressive space. It's

extremely uncomfortable; if I wasn't still aware that it was a dream, I would surely escape as quickly as possible.

No exit in sight, though — just claustrophobic greys, amorphous and hideously alive. I keep moving, as if through jelly — fatly quivering, ever denser protoplasm — existing both as a dreambody and a disembodied observer. Finally, I can barely move.

In despair and helplessness, I drop down on my knees, crying and wordlessly praying, aching for release. As the observer, I see my eyes turned up, my hands in prayer position in front of my chest, my face deathly pale. Surrender. Suddenly, I am vaulted into another world, vaguely sensing that I am in a hospital, watching a group of doctors tending a covered-up patient. A series of events transpire [which I cannot recall], ending in joy.

In many lucid dreams, I have moved or have been pulled toward places of luminosity, often dissolving in their radiance. Sometimes, though, I have gone in the “opposite” direction, going deep into the Earth, into mineral and dense dark. In the preceding dream, I’m being pulled below the surface.

Let’s permit the image of being in the grey, underground room to unfold itself, to “speak”:

When underground, I don't appear to myself as I usually am. When I see myself reflected all around, I don't appear to be myself.

Wherever I look, I see my reflection, so long as I remain in the center of the room. Though there is a lack of illumination when I am underground looking at myself, there is enough light to see. The ceiling and floor are the same; above and below are the same underground. I am mirrored from all around when I am below the surface.

My surface appearance is broken into many components when I am below the surface. When I remain in the middle, I can see, but am distant from what I see. Wherever I turn, there I am.

When I leave the middle, thereby decentralizing the space, I can more clearly see particular reflections. When I no longer occupy the center, I can pass through what I am looking at. Stepping through one self-image puts me behind them all, and this happens when I am below the surface, and am willing to “face” myself, however unpleasant that might be. When I remain in the center, when I am the center, I am encircled by what I fear.

(Note: I have no explanatory summary for all of the above — its insights are intrinsic to its totality as an image. It speaks not of one meaning for me, but of many, from prenatal to transpersonal, each of which could be mined for more significance.)

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Once “I” am through the mirror, things get worse — but did I not ask to be taken where I most needed to go? Only when I am “decentralized,” down on my knees, no longer fighting my helplessness, does “release” occur. I haven’t so much given up — submission being but a kind of collapse — as surrendered (surrender being more expansion than collapse), opening to a sacrifice of self that’s anathema to the usual me.

Arthur: What do you see as the nature of dreams — are they models of reality constructed by a brain unconstrained by sensory input and interaction with the environment? Are they visits to a subtle energy realm or astral plane? What do you think of the view, held by some spiritual traditions, that the dreaming process is similar to what we experience when we die?

Robert: To me, dreams are the mind’s contents made visible through three-dimensional story-like formats while the body sleeps. Psychoemotional theater fleshed out and broadcast by the mind, constellated around and expressive of certain feelings, urges, intentions, pulls. Self-made, self-starring, self-revealing private motion pictures. The original home movies, usually forgotten before they’re really seen.

Like movies, dreams range from the banal to the sublime. Some films can open us to unsuspected or dormant dimensions of ourselves; so too with some dreams. There are movies that can make us look deeply at ourselves while we watch (and also indirectly participate in) them, just as there are dreams that serve the same awakening function. Dreams may just be internal noise (like most of the thoughts we have, or that have us, while “awake”), and they may also be profoundly relevant harbingers of needed changes. Dreams can simply be hangovers from the previous day’s activities (both outer and inner), no more meaningful than the random thoughts creating mini-logjams behind your forehead on a busy day, and they can also be doorways into unimaginable vistas of being, portals to and from What-Really-Matters.

Dreams don’t so much tell us about ourselves, as they *are* our selves (our multi-selved selfhood), all dressed-up for the part; various aspects, dimensions, qualities, elements, and action tendencies that constitute us intersect and interact with each other, as if they are in fact discrete entities/things independent of each other. We ordinarily identify with one of these, dreaming that we are indeed that. This is true not only of everyday dreams, but also of most lucid dreams.

Prior to truly awakening, we are simply dreaming (including dreaming that

we are not dreaming), whether physically awake or not. This, however, does not mean that dreams are not real; they are just as real as the self-sense about which they are arranged. A dream is a real mirage, just like us. The more real things get, the more dreamlike they seem.

A dream is a story (ranging from simple cartoon to complex myth) that we are telling ourselves, a story through which we are constructed and reconstituted. Becoming aware of the actual story doesn't necessarily end it, but rather simply allows us to participate in it in the best possible way.

Let's now go into more detail regarding body, self-sense, and dreaming.. The sense of literally being inside our physicality can be extremely convincing. Not surprisingly, our dreams generally display much of the same sense of "within-ness." In dreams, our waking-state body is perhaps most commonly represented — besides as itself — through the metaphors of dwelling-places and vehicles, with the dream's "I" (or what we might call the dream-ego) usually appearing more or less as a replica of our waking-state "I," ordinarily located inside somewhere, whether in a long-ago living room or behind the wheel of a suddenly brakeless car.

In our dreams, our body is a perceptual convention, a bit of theater, as much a prop as anything else in the dreamscape. We could, while dreaming, view our dream-body as a metaphor, a choice, a creation, but instead we usually just identify with it in the very same way that we identify with our physical body in the so-called waking state.

"I," now taking stage as the dream-ego, is still preoccupied with being at the helm of the body, while at the same time being lost in the dramatics of the dream, taking everything therein as real. While dreaming, we may engage in activities that would be impossible or extremely unlikely in the waking state, yet we — while dreaming — rarely see anything unusual in this. We look, but usually don't look inside our looking.

As in the waking state, all that will usually alert us — or snap us out of our trance — is some sort of crisis, a not-to-be-denied intensity of perceived danger, as perhaps best demonstrated by full-blown nightmares. We may awaken for a few moments within a nightmare, but ordinarily not so as to explore and make good use of it — rather, our common intention then is still to flee, to escape, to get back to sleep or at least into a more comfortable or secure circumstance.

Even in lucid dreaming we still generally take ourselves to be the "I" of the

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dream, regardless of “our” apparent freedom of choice. Much of the appeal of dream lucidity lies in the possibility of having more power and control in our dreams. Such power or control can be very useful when “fleshing out” the intention to turn around to face a dream adversary or difficult situation we have been fleeing, but not so useful when it merely reinforces the dream-ego.

In fact, the very desire to be lucid during a dream, to be a somebody who can lucid-dream, creates the same difficulties as the desire to be awake during the so-called waking state, to be a somebody who can meditate or be aware.

The “I” who stars in or centers a lucid dream is actually just part of the dream, no more than a convincing personification (and embodiment) of the witnessing or self-reflective dimension of the dream. However, when the dreamer becomes the object of awareness in the midst of his or her dream, then the dream itself, at least in my experience, usually can no longer hold its form, and all its contents dissolve into unmapable, space-transcending Luminosity.

Short of such dissolution, there is usually some sense of embodiment in lucid dreaming (although there sometimes may be a sense of being a self without any body, existing as a point of attention in the dreamscape, a point that may or may not be personified).

For many years, I experimented with intentionality in lucid dreaming: jumping from great heights; flying far and wide; dissolving my body; suffering lethal injuries; traversing space instantaneously; diving deep into solid earth; passing through walls; letting my body be as malleable as plastic; meeting various spiritual teachers; having archetypal encounters; facing adversaries with violence, love, shapeshifting suddenness. Nevertheless, however unusual or thrilling my lucid dream-doings were, they were still mostly centered by the very same sense of self around which my daily activities were generally organized.

After a while, it became more interesting to leave the dream alone, to simply abide in the midst of it, and see where it took me. Dreaming or waking, lucid or not, ecstatic or depressed, the work was basically the same, to simply be as present as possible, uncommitted to — and unidentified with — the intentions of any particular “I.” And what did this do to my dreambody? Freed it, at least to some extent, from what I “normally” took it to be, thereby permitting it to more fully be a medium for simply maintaining relationship with my environment.

Arthur: Do you see consciousness as continuing in some form in deep,

dreamless sleep? Have you ever experienced lucidity in that state, and if so, what was it like?

Robert: Consciousness continues in deep, dreamless sleep, but without any form. No objects, no appearances, no self. In this state, we are almost always unconscious of being conscious. Nevertheless, we can be awake during deep, dreamless sleep, as various sages have taught. I've had direct experience of this, though it was not the "I" of everyday discourse. The phenomenology of this is without sensation, feeling, cognition, or any temporal or spatial sense, bearing no discernible characteristic other than that of unbound, featureless, effortlessly sentient presence. No-thing-ness.

Here is what I have experienced as the state of deep, dreamless sleep spontaneously metamorphosed into the state of dreaming sleep: First, out of nowhere and nothing, there arose color and movement, without any discernible shape. Then vague forms began appearing, diaphanous and softly swirling, taking on a bit more solidity. When "I" — in the form of alert, undivided attention — "entered" this nebular fluxing of color and shape-making, it almost immediately became more densely three-dimensional and vividly real in a conventionally sensory manner, literally taking on substance all around me, including as a dream-body closely resembling my physical body.

Arthur: What role have lucid dreams played in your spiritual life, or your life in general? Have you, for example, had insights or spiritual breakthroughs in dreams? Has a lucid dream ever anticipated developments in your consciousness or understanding which occurred later in your waking life? Have you had shifts in perspective or values as a result of lucid dreaming?

Robert: Lucid dreams have played a big role in my life. Being in them and experimenting in them taught me firsthand that I am more than my body, more than my mind, and more than my sense of self. Facing difficulties and challenges while lucid dreaming has deepened and stabilized my ability to face difficulties and challenges while in the waking state. Deep insights and realizations have often arisen during lucid dreaming. I remember a dream I had when I was 34:

I'm lucid and flying to meet a spiritual teacher I love. I am being knowingly propelled by my desire to see him, my movement being so fast that I cannot see any scenery. A few seconds later I find myself sitting in a room in the upper floor of an unknown stone building. I am waiting, but without any tension. There's a window in the room, and the air is very fresh, and the colors remarkably bright. I feel something touching my

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lower torso, and look down. To my surprise, I see a baby boy, no more than a month or two old. I am holding him, cradling him, already in love with him. He meets my eyes, and I start to weep, leaving the dreaming state in ecstasy.

The next morning, I told my partner at that time that I'd met our son; prior to this, we'd had no desire whatsoever to have children, but within days had mutually and easily arrived at the decision to conceive him. A few months later, she was pregnant. Six months into her pregnancy, I had the following lucid dream in which I was in a unknown yet very familiar room. A boy, perhaps six month old, was sitting on the floor gazing at me. As I looked into his eyes, I said without any hesitation, "Hi, Dama."

Before this we had not considered any name for our baby-to-be, and nor did we know that that little one would be a boy. Three months later Dama arrived. He did not cry once during his delivery and arrival; a short time later, he was in my arms, gazing at me as he had in my dreams.

Arthur: Could you tell us how you incorporate dreamwork into your therapy sessions or workshops? How does your approach relate to the various schools of therapy (gestalt, Jungian, etc.?) Are there any examples you'd like to share?

Robert: I frequently incorporate dreamwork into my session and groupwork, using a number of approaches. I may use Gestalt, having you act out the relationship between various parts of your dream; I may use psychodrama, having you play out a part of your dream; I may use bodywork (in conjunction with fitting psychotherapeutic tools), having you deeply experience and openly express different emotions and states that arose in your dream; and I may use all of these, and more, in working with one dream at one time, making room for you to really "get" your dream, and not necessarily in just one way.

An example: A woman in a group describes a dream in which she is being pursued by a very large and aggressive bear. She is clearly frightened by it, and awakens before it reaches her. I talk with her for a bit about her dream — she is nice to an extreme, meek-voiced and energetically small — then ask her to get on all fours and act like she's the bear. She is embarrassed, but goes ahead.

Move around, I say, and let some sounds emerge. Again, more discomfort, but she does as I ask. She continues this for a bit, then I ask her, as the bear, to immediately speak to the frightened woman (her) in the dream. Without hesitation, she says, "Don't run away from me," and says it with considerable emotion. I ask her to say it again, and she starts to cry. Now, I say, imagine you

are that frightened woman, and respond to the bear. She does, and goes back and forth for a while between the two positions. Finally, she doesn't need to move anymore, for both positions are now easily coexisting within her, and she, on her own, is starting to realize what the bear actually is — an expression of her own disowned power, literally enlarged by her fear of embodying such power. Her voice is fuller now, her presence much stronger. As she reclaims her “bear” energy, she fills out more, laughingly saying that she wants to give all the women in the room big bear hugs. And she does.

Another example: A man (in a group session) is describing a dream in which he is prone, seemingly limbless, struggling to move forward. Limbs do eventually materialize, but only as flimsy, stick-like things viewed as from a distance. His voice is low and monotonous, tinged with a remote sadness. He sits as though defeated. I listen closely, noticing no intention in myself to speak. We gaze at each other in a not-uncomfortable silence.

His eyes are a bit more open now, still distant but seeming to call from somewhere behind the distance. There's increasing movement in me now, amorphous but gathering momentum. I don't feel any desire to talk about the dream nor to “interview” him — something far more compelling is inviting me to act. My breath is a little fuller now, my belly looser; the feeling of presence in the room is getting stronger.

Now the waiting-time is over.

I ask him to lie face-down on the carpet, and to attempt to move forward without using his limbs. He struggles in silence, and cannot move forward. Breathe more deeply, I whisper in his ear, and let your struggling have a sound, a sound that expresses the actual feeling of it. He groans and writhes with great intensity, looking as though he's pinned to the spot. Or stuck. His back appears rigid yet oddly soft, his spine like a suffocating serpent. My own back is subtly writhing, my hands tingling. My intuition to touch him suddenly intensifies, and I begin to massage his back, loosening the muscles on either side of his spine.

Soon he is crying very hard, his sounds both adult and baby-like. I have him reach out in front of himself, but he still cannot move forward. Then I ask the group, all of whom are very moved, to make a kind of tunnel over him, everyone on hands and knees, alternatingly positioned (shoulders next to neighbor's hips), pressing down on him, but not so heavily that movement is impossible. Everyone knows what to do; there's an unspoken link between all of us, centered by an obvious caring for him.

He starts to panic. I have him exaggerate his sounds for ten or fifteen seconds,

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then tell him to move forward, using his legs, his arms, everything he's got. For a minute or so, he struggles, moving ahead very slightly, wailing like a newborn, and then suddenly he explodes with strength, lifting up the bodies curled over him, screaming very loudly. Adrenaline surges through me, not in fear, but in readiness.

I make a triangle-shaped opening with my hands and press it against the top of his head, encouraging him to keep coming. He pushes mightily, still screaming, moving forward, pushing and surging, his movements serpentine, his body feeling to me more like cascading rapids than solid flesh. Another minute or so, and through he bursts, spilling into my arms. I hold him close, while he cries uncontrollably.

At this moment, I am both mother and father. And the newborn I am holding is not only him, but all of us, including me. My interpretations of what has happened pale beside the raw presence of his pain, his need, his sheer bareness of feeling, and — when he at last opens his eyes — his love.

He didn't move; he *was* movement. Birthing-movement, ancient and yet so nakedly now, messily precise, eventually unclouded by amniotic or psychosocial shrouding, eloquently transparent to Being. Nothing special in all this — just a few trembling petals of the everfresh, hyperbole-demolishing Wonder of being here...

Arthur: In many of your books you mention dreams in the context of the spiritual path of awakening. What do you see as the connection between our experience of dreaming and lucid dreaming, and our experience of life while physically awake? Or our experience of death, for that matter?

Robert: Our dream-life reflects our physical waking life, and our physical waking life reflects our dream-life; the two realities may seem very different, but in fact they are remarkably similar, and share considerable overlap. The mind I have while dreaming is basically the same mind I have while physically awake. The bodies in the two states may seem to be very different, but at the level of body-image — where we spend a lot of our mental time — they are very similar. The “I” at the center of our dreams is pretty much the same “I” that's at the center of our physical waking experience. Dreaming is what the mind tends to do when it's disembodied — daydreams while “awake” and sleep-dreams while, well, asleep.

At death and after death, no longer anchored to the body at all, the mind — and this is just my intuition — doesn't do much else other than dream,

and it's not the kind of dreaming we can pinch ourselves out of, for there's no body to which to return; what's called for is real lucidity, the capacity to recognize that what's happening is dreaming, on whatever scale. The content doesn't really matter; a dream is a dream.

Given that what happens after death is what is happening right now, we might as well stop flirting with awakening practices, and really get into them, regardless of the state we're in, doing whatever work is necessary so that such practices can take deep root in us. Lucid dreaming, lucid waking, lucid living, lucid being...

Arthur: You have some familiarity with entheogens/psychedelics and much experience with the naturally occurring "altered" states of dreaming and lucid dreaming, as well as vast experience with states of consciousness reached through meditative and other spiritual practice. How would you compare lucid dreaming with entheogens and meditative experiences as tools for exploring consciousness or to promote growth or awakening?

Robert: Where entheogens tend to dynamite the gates, lucid dreaming and meditative practice help open them, the key being in our hands. Once we're through the gates, we're usually presented with an abundance of experiential possibilities, ranging from the merely sensory to the ineffably revelatory. With entheogens, we're mostly just awe-filled spectators, however intimately connected we are to what's going on, at an impossibly rich banquet of sights, sounds, feelings, and perspectives; with lucid dreaming, we're much more likely to be participants in what is unfolding, seeing it alter in accord with what we are doing; with meditative practice, especially deep, stable meditative practice, we are neither spectators of nor participants in what is happening, but rather clearings of consciousness at once apart from and profoundly intimate with what is occurring.

Such meditative practice may also occur, albeit rarely, during lucid dreaming (you might, for example, try closing your dream eyes during a lucid dream and letting yourself rest in Being) and entheogenic intoxication. There's no substitute for meditative practice and meditateness, which can be accessed during any state or experiential possibility, even if we dream otherwise.

Entheogens may catalyze some degree of awakening, and lucid dreaming may give it a stage, but meditateness gives it the ground it needs to truly take root.

Arthur: Thank you for a fascinating interview, Robert. Do you have any

parting words of advice for those pursuing lucid dreaming in the context of personal or spiritual growth?

Robert: Experiment. Take risks while you are lucid. Pay attention to the role or roles you are playing in the dream; notice what hooks or attracts you, but don't forget to examine the you who is feeling hooked or attracted. Remain aware of the dreamer as much as you can, whatever state you are in. Experiment some more.

Move from lucid dreaming to lucid being, letting awakening's alchemy get so far under your skin that you have no choice but to fully participate in it.

FREEDOM THROUGH INTIMACY

A Weekend Intensive For Couples

January 20th & 21st, 2007

with Robert Masters & Diane Bardwell

Intimate relationship has immense transformational possibility, especially when we approach its difficulties as opportunities instead of as problems. Opportunities for what? To know ourselves more deeply, to love and live more fully, to become intimate with *all* that we are — in short, to be freed from our suffering.

In the liberating bondage of committed intimacy, we enter the One through the two, finding the Beloved in both depth and surface, so that the very details of daily life become a potent awakening path. Freedom through intimacy.

This group is for couples who want a more conscious, loving, and liberating relationship with each other, and are ready to cut through whatever's in the way.

Even if you already have a good relationship, consider coming, and taking your relationship from good to great to what it really can be.

Individual work will be given as much emphasis as couples work, using a spontaneously structured approach that creatively mixes psychotherapy, bodywork, dream exploration, spiritual practices, and dyadic deepenings.

TUITION & LOGISTICS: 10am to 6pm both days. Limited to 5 couples only. \$1250 plus GST per couple. \$300 deposit required.

***For more information or to register, contact
info@RobertMasters.com***

(Note: There is room for one more couple for the November 18th & 19th couples group.)

RADICAL OPENING

**THREE DAYS OF GROUPWORK DEVOTED
TO DEEP HEALING & AWAKENING**

with

Robert Masters & Diane Bardwell

December 1st - 3rd, 2006, at Brew Creek Lodge, BC

This 3-day residential intensive is for those who want to make wise use of their difficulties and who are ready to work through whatever is obstructing their liberation.

It is especially suited for those whose longing to be truly free is stronger than their longing to continue distracting themselves from their suffering.

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The group will be small and intimate, being limited to 14 participants only, so that there is enough time for everyone to receive in-depth attention.

The group will involve therapy (in its focus on personal history), and will also involve much more than therapy, given its integral nature. Deep catharsis, psychodrama, and spiritual breakthroughs will flow in and out of each other during the group, in spontaneously apt ways. All emotions are welcome.

All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seemingly trivial — will be dealt with, through a dynamic, creative mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, spiritual disciplines, conscious movement, dreamwork, and group practices.

The atmosphere will be one of deep trust; the group will be a safe place to let go of being safe, providing a crucible not only for personal healing, but also for awakening from all of our entrapping dreams.

Participants will learn to become more intimate with all that they are — dark and light, high and low, shallow and deep, neurotic and transcendent, dying and undying.

The structuring of the group will not be preset, but instead will arise in accordance with group and individual needs. Each participant will have an opportunity to work, in relevant detail and in sufficient depth, with his or her particular issues, and not necessarily just once in the group.

LOCATION: Brew Creek Lodge (15 minutes south of Whistler, BC), a magnificent, secluded resort featuring rustic luxury set amidst lush forest. Buffet breakfasts start the day; gourmet lunches and dinners (three courses) follow group sessions. A river flows directly below the group meeting room; previous participants have especially enjoyed braving the river's cool depths after spending some time in the hot tub right beside the river.

FEE: Tuition: \$775 plus GST. Lodging & all meals: \$250 (includes all taxes). A deposit (nonrefundable after October 15, 2006) of \$200.00 is required.

To register, contact info@robertmasters.com. Early registration is advised, as there are only 6 spaces left.

Letting Go

A DAY OF DEEP HEALING

October 14th, 2006, in White Rock, BC

**with Robert Masters
(assisted by Diane Bardwell)**

Real happiness takes root when our longing to be truly free is stronger — or permitted to be more central — than our longing to be distracted from our pain. In entering our pain, we lessen our suffering.

In this group we'll face, move toward, and learn to make wise use of our pain and difficulties. The group will involve therapy (in its focus on personal history), and it will also involve much more than therapy, given its integral nature and intention. Deep catharsis, psychodrama, and spiritual breakthroughs will flow in and out of each other during the group, in spontaneously apt ways. All emotions are welcome.

All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seeming trivial — will be dealt with, through a dynamic, creative mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, spiritual disciplines, dreamwork, and group practices. Each participant will have an opportunity to work, in relevant detail and in sufficient depth, with his or her particular issues, and not necessarily just once in the group.

TUITION: US\$265, or CDN\$275 plus GST. \$100 deposit required, payable to Robert Masters, at 16133 9th Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 1A5.

LOGISTICS: 10am to 6pm. Limited to 8 participants only. **3 spaces left.**

**For more information or to register,
contact info@robertmasters.com**

Embodying the Deep Masculine

A ONE-DAY GROUP FOR MEN

with **Robert Masters**

November 25th, 2006

Embodying the Deep Masculine is about doing what's necessary to reclaim our balls without armoring or numbing ourselves, becoming warriors who, finding a source of strength in their vulnerability, can take needed stands with both heart and full-blooded power.

To enter our true manhood, we need to stop turning away from the wounded boy in us, both protecting him and giving him what he needs to heal. We also need to become more emotionally literate, not turning our anger into aggression, nor our shame into guilt, nor our hurt into an excuse to shut down or get heady.

As we assume our real power, we must at the same time step more fully into our heart; otherwise, we won't be capable of real intimacy. No more hiding out in cognitive strongholds, no more avoidance of our raw strength, no more bypassing of our wounds, no more avoidance of the Deep Feminine. In short, birthing the man.

This group is about working through whatever's in the way of entering and living our full manhood, through a dynamic, spontaneously structured mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, dyadic encounters, dream exploration, and spiritual deepening practices.

TUITION & LOGISTICS: US\$250 or CDN\$275 plus GST. A \$100 deposit is required. Limited to 8 men only. Early registration is highly recommended, as previous men's groups have filled quickly.

**For more information, or to register,
contact info@robertmasters.com**

Reclaiming Your True Voice

A ONE-DAY GROUP FOR WOMEN

October 28th and December 9th, 2006

with Robert Masters and Diane Bardwell

Many women do not have full access to their true voice, and as a result have not sufficiently represented themselves, attracting situations and relationships that have only reinforced their inability to truly speak for themselves.

This group is about taking back power that originally was given away in order to survive difficult conditions, and taking it back not just cognitively, but physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Doing so involves expressing, *fully* expressing, what has been held back in the name of fear, insecurity, and social pressures.

Part of what is needed is a reclamation of anger (plus a clear differentiation between anger and aggression), so that it becomes a resource, a guardian of boundaries, a potent catalyst for needed change.

This group'll involve deep letting go, through a creative mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, and spiritual deepening practices (led by Robert), and it will also involve toning, chanting, singing, and healing through sound (led by Diane). The release-work facilitated by Robert will let loose *your* voice, and the sound-work guided by Diane will wing, fill out, and celebrate *your* voice.

TUITION & LOGISTICS: US\$250 or CDN\$275 plus GST. A \$100 deposit is required. Limited to 8 women. Early registration is highly recommended.

Diane (Robert's wife), is an intuitive energy healer and Reiki master, using sound to deepen healing and well-being. She is a songwriter and professional singer, with a gift for accessing the Sacred through sound and song. See www.dianebardwell.com.

**For more information, or to register,
contact info@robertmasters.com**

An opportunity to learn (1) unique and exceptionally effective psychotherapeutic, spiritual, and bodywork skills; and (2) how to combine these in counselling work.

Integral Psychotherapy Practicum

2007 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The purpose of this training is to deepen the capacity of participants to effectively counsel others through a dynamic, intuitively structured approach that integrates body, mind, emotion, and spirit.

To this end, the training will blend deep work on oneself and equally deep work with others, in personal, social, and spiritual contexts. Healing will be the primary intention and activity. Approaches that are taught and practised will be held, as much as possible, in a perspective that transcends them.

You'll learn to not rely upon nor necessarily impose structure, but rather to let it naturally arise from your relationship and interaction with those you're counselling. Working this way weans us from the security — the eventually deadening security — of operating from behind a preset structure or methodology, leaving us in a position that requires an appropriately creative response from us. Such creativity keeps us fresh, open, and alert.

Throughout the training we will be working with body, mind, emotion, and spirit. Love, integrity, and presence will be the cornerstones of our practice.

The training will take place over 6 three-day weekends, beginning February 2nd, 2007. Tuition is \$5400 plus GST. A deposit of \$750 is required. The training is limited to 10 participants.

The training is a prerequisite for further trainings, including the annual **Bodywork-in-Psychotherapy Training modules**.

Applications for the 2007 Practicum are now being taken.

Practicum Schedule

Feb. 2-4, April 6-8, June 1-3, July 27-29, Oct. 5-7, and Dec. 7-9, 2007

To view previous newsletters, go to the links below:

- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/May05.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/June2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/July2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/August2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/September2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/October2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/November2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/December2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/January2006.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/Feb2006.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/March2006.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/April2006.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/May2006.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/June2006.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/July2006.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/August2006.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/September2006.pdf>

Contents of Previous Newsletters

April 2005: Issue #00 (Introductory Issue)

Poetry: The One Moment That Is All Moments

Essays: Introduction to Body, Mind, Emotion, & Spirituality
Suffering Versus Pain

May 2005: Issue #01

Poetry: Don't Lose It In The Translation
Seeing What Is Out Of Sight

One Fine Morning

Essays: Working With Fear
Choices Without A Chooser
A Cartography of Scentuality: Rose and Jasmine
What Is Truth?

Movie Review: Fight Club

June 2005: Issue #02

Poetry: All This In A Moment
Back, Back Goes He
Your Flaws No Longer In The Way

Essays: A Cartography of Scentuality: Sage and Frankincense
Patience: To Wait Without Waiting
Heat, Madness, & Sacred Fire: The Psycholinguistics of Anger
Taking Charge of Our Charge

July 2005: Issue #03 (Special Issue on Terrorism)

Essays: Revisioning Terrorism
No More Turning Away
Getting Intimate With Anger

August 2005: Issue #04

Poetry: There Was A Long And Unbreathing Time
When We Stop Trying To Make It Make Sense
Sacred Hymn

Essays: Sometimes What's In The Way Is The Way
Freedom Through Limitation
Prayer: A Divine Personal
What Do We Know?

September 2005: Issue #05

Poetry: What Seems Real When We're Doing Time
And Again
When I'm My True Size
Airport Blues II

Essays: Komodo
A Cartography of Scentuality: Cinnamon Bark and Angelica Root
Thank God For Dragons

October 2005: Issue #06

Poetry: Don't Stop Short
Blue Burns the Night
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What You Do To Me
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Essays: Tarzan Must Weep: Toward A Deeper Manhood
Behead Your Hope

Movie Review: A History of Violence

November 2005: Issue #07 (Special Issue: Intimacy)

Poetry: Your Face A Landscape
It's Not Our Heart That Cracks
Wallflowers Suddenly In Bloom
Undressing Me From the Inside
I'll Meet You There
Long The Wait Has Been

Essays: What's Right About What's Wrong In Relationships
Keeping In Touch When We're Out of Touch
The Importance of Safety In Intimate Relationship

December 2005: Issue #08

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O Breathe Us
To See This As It Is

Essays: Anger-In Versus Anger-Out

January 2006: Issue #09 (Special Issue on Sex)

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Eternity's Kiss
What Then Shall I Call You?

Essays: An Inside Look At Eroticism
Pornography Undressed

February 2006: Issue #10

Poetry: Bow To It Until There Is Only Bowing
When Cracks Appear In Reality
Forever's Gypsies

Essays: Being Messed-Up Doesn't Have To Mess Us Up
Spiritual Shortcuts

March 2006: Issue #11 (Special Issue: Shame & Guilt)

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Husband of Your Heart

Essays: Shame: The Exposure That Shrinks
Guilt: One Hand on the Candy, The Other on the Whip

April 2006: Issue #12 (Special Issue: Greed & Desire)

Poetry: Gone, gone beyond gone

Essays: Greed Revisited
The Anatomy of Desire

May 2006: Issue #13

Poetry: Take Me to the Bottom of Your Pain
This Is Love's Doing
When the Night Pulled Back the Bedcovers
Airport Blues I

Essays: When Spiritual Life Really Begins
No More Turning Away
A Cartography of Scentuality: Mugwort and Myrrh

June 2006: Issue #14

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Essays: Why Groupwork?
The Blows Are Not the Problem

July 2006: Issue #15 (Special Issue: Mature Monogamy)

Poetry: This the Beauty
The Husband of Your Heart
In the Long Darkness You Come to Me

Essays: Immature & Mature Monogamy: An Initial Look
Exclusion & Inclusion in Mature Monogamy
Mature Monogamy: Further Thoughts

August 2006: Issue #16 (Special Issue: Faith & Doubt)

Poetry: The Final Detox

Essays: The Anatomy of Doubt
The Anatomy of Faith

September 2006: Issue #17

Poetry: Coming Through the Gates
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Essays: The Dream's Petals Cradle Many a Viewfinder
What is Poetry?

Robert's Remaining 2006 Work Schedule

Oct. 7 Embodying the Deep Masculine: White Rock, BC
Oct. 14 Letting Go: White Rock, BC
Oct. 28 Reclaiming Your True Voice: White Rock, BC
Nov. 3, 4, 5 2006/2007 Practicum: White Rock, BC
Nov. 11 TBA
Nov. 18 & 19 Freedom Through Intimacy: White Rock, BC
Nov. 25 Embodying the Deep Masculine: White Rock, BC
December 1-3 Radical Opening: Whistler, BC
December 9 Reclaiming Your True Voice: White Rock, BC

Robert's 2007 Work Schedule Jan. to March

January 5-7 2006/2007 Practicum: Whistler, BC
January 13 Letting Go: White Rock, BC
January 20-21 Freedom Through Intimacy: White Rock, BC
January 27 Embodying the Deep Masculine: White Rock, BC
February 2-4 2007 Practicum: White Rock, BC
February 10 Reclaiming Your True Voice: White Rock, BC
February 22-25 Advanced Integral Psychotherapy Practicum: Whistler, BC
March 2-4 2006/2007 Practicum: White Rock, BC
March 10 Letting Go: White Rock, BC
March 17 Embodying the Deep Masculine: White Rock, BC
Mar. 30-Apr. 1 Radical Opening: Whistler, BC