

Dreaming to Survive

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Since my main focus in dream work is on my private, long term dream journal, I would like to tell you about events and dreams I had some years ago. This is an amplification and an echo of the statement Robert Van de Castle made during the research and theory panel “Do dreams have a meaning” at the IASD conference at Rolduc, Netherlands, 2011, where he told his dream which showed him that he would survive the fatal cancer in spite the prognosis of the doctors.

It was in late summer 2001 when my wife drew my attention to a little, irregularly shaped spot on the back of my elbow. Thoughtfully I examined it in the mirror. It was clear to me that it could be serious, but it was so small that I decided to wait and observe to see if it would grow or move in shape or color. I was alerted but not alarmed and forgot it during the day. The following night I had this dream:

8.13.2001 I was in a culture where suicide was an accepted decision. I was lying in the hospital waiting for my bandage with the killing poison, which would be placed over the vein on my left elbow. I was somewhat tense and the nurse said I should lie in a side position to avoid suffocating due to possible vomit. Then the bandage was put on my arm – the moment of destiny had arrived. I was somewhat worried and tense in waiting for the moment of death but did not remove the bandage, because it was what I wanted. Inside me it was very quiet - no thoughts. I was waiting for falling asleep as I knew it from the experience of previous narcosis, expecting my death and with the certainty to experience the most important moment of my life I woke up. My position in bed was the same as in the dream, waiting for my death. While starting my netbook to note my dream, the tense silence broke – tears rolled down my cheeks and blurred my view of the screen.

Interesting in this dream is that the left elbow was taken as a theme although the bandage was placed on the opposite side of the dark spot in question. Also the theme of waiting was put on the inner stage. But at that time I did not really understand the dream because I was somewhat proud about my courage!

After the dark spot was discovered, I looked at it from time to time over a period of two years. Then again, in late summer, I had the impression that it had moved somewhat and changed its shape. Now I was a bit more worried but did not decide anything. The following night I had this dream:

9.2.2003 Again, I was in a foreign civilization. This time it was an advanced civilization where I was trained for spaceflight. I learned how to navigate in various star systems and how to calculate correctly different axes of reality of various galaxies and universes because inter dimensional travel was common in that culture. Finally I went on my first journey which was a special adventure. When the spaceship had accelerated enough, everybody on the ship got a special anesthesia to

moderate the existential shock of crossing the speed of light barrier. Then, in order to fuse with the ship which accelerated rapidly, one was whirled into a light beam that was placed in the middle of the ship. It was a somewhat frightening procedure where one lost his human form but the anesthetic and an invisible being helped. I was whirled into the light beam and, by dissolving into the light, I was accelerating incredibly. I became pure accelerating and expanding energy. Because I experienced everything quite consciously, the overwhelming shock catapulted me out of sleep. I was wide awake.

As I woke I understood the dream immediately. The transformation of the human form into light was a death symbol. In the same morning, still shocked and motivated, I dropped everything and went to the dermatological clinic. There a melanoma was diagnosed and carefully extracted. It turned out that it was still limited to the spot and had not spread to any vessel to create a metastasis in the body.

For me these dreams were a very impressive teaching about how they can convey very clearly the situation, beside all mental rationalizations and personal blindness, and how they can indicate the state of the body and the fatal consequences. The second dream was very much a kick in my butt. I wonder how wide spread such dreams are in serious situations and how forcefully one has to ignore them by considering them as mere fantasies created accidentally by a reduced functioning brain. When will representatives of science and a wider public wake up to the reality of dreams?

Christoph Gassmann is a psychologist and dream worker in Switzerland. He keeps a long term dream journal with over 4000 dreams and is the author of the book „Träume erinnern“ [Remembering Dreams] and of many articles about dreams in German.