



## Why Dreams are Cryptic

People often wonder: if dreams are trying to teach me something, why are they so bizarre or different from ordinary experience? As another sensory organ or way of taking in experience, dreaming allows us to explore conflict and rehash events so we can make necessary changes. Anything is possible in the dreamscape and by providing an objective playground to explore potential, dreaming offers more freedom of thought than we would normally allow.

Like the hero of our ancient myths, we embark on an adventure through a strange landscape to discover bizarre clues that will reveal our real identity and therefore, our destiny. Just as the hero is often presented with a paradox or puzzle to solve, the bizarre nature of our dreams becomes an important aspect in understanding how dreams help us to move beyond our defensive walls.

Whether we look at the human body with all of its intricate systems, or the mind's ability to classify experience, we are creatures highly predisposed to classify experience in terms of what we already know. We prefer the tried and proven and shy away from exploring the unknown. At some point in our development, we began closing our minds to ideas that went against the beliefs we adopted about who we are or who we might become. Dreaming allows new information beyond the defense mechanisms erected by the ego. We generally dream of feelings and ideas that we would rather not face.

The cryptic nature of dreams has a way of taking conflict and allowing us to explore it in a way that is non-threatening. Whether the ego sleeps or is duped by the paradoxes, the freedom of growth is achieved. Dreams that appear threatening are only attempting to get our attention or break us free to explore. We awaken with a start and remember the dream and that is the point. Dream themes act like volume control to get our attention. The 'louder' or more frightening the dream becomes, the more we open to the idea that a type of change is in order.

Picture a fortress erected by the mind with a gatekeeper that specifically bars access to anything that might topple our inner kingdom. If life is trying to break us free to help us

grow, yet we reject new experiences, how can innovative and evolving ideas manifest? When we sleep, the gatekeeper or subconscious net is inactive, and information makes it past the walls of consciousness through dreaming. However, it is usually the bizarre imagery that becomes the most powerful 'food for thought' in effecting lasting changes within us.

Remember the soldiers of Troy and how they allowed the Greeks to gain access into their fortress because they were presented with a wooden horse that was not viewed as a threat? In the same way that we dismiss some symbols as nonsense, something profound has cleverly devised a way to fertilize the psyche and break through. Dreams condense difficult and complex ideas into symbolism which is often humorous. We may even wake up and ponder the strange symbol specifically because it was so weird. In this way, profound direction from the unconscious has begun to take root in the waking psyche.

When I work with clients, I find that they immediately want to dismiss these bizarre symbols as if they are meaningless. I focus on them specifically because I see it as a red flag, calling the hero into a type of initiation. Eventually the client too, will come to appreciate the kernel of wisdom hidden in the rich complexity of their bizarre dreams. We spend one third of our lives in a condition of sleep that allows us to explore our potential in a topsy turvy world of symbols. Just as the body is continually healing itself, dreams heal the psyche, tilling the soil of a hardened inner landscape to keep us growing in a changing world. Whether or not we remember our dreams, they are helping us to sort through outworn ways of thought so we can remain well.

Trust the power of your dreams to guide you and no matter how bizarre the symbol, explore the way in which it might be trying to teach you something about yourself.



**The Hero's Journey Through the Dreamscape  
Available for Iphone and Ipad**

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