

Multiple Awareness in Simultaneous Dreaming

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<http://www.dreaminglucid.com/article/multipleaw.html>

“Have you ever had simultaneous dreams?”

Almost twenty years ago I had my first lucid dream. From that day on I began to have many new and exciting dream experiences and was eager to learn all I could about consciousness and dreaming. During this time I was fortunate to have met, through the Lucidity Institute, many other enthusiastic lucid dreamers. I was corresponding with several of them at the time and was enjoying the advice and suggestions I was receiving, not to mention the invaluable examples of lucid dream reports that everyone was sharing with me.

In April of 1988, I had an unusual experience with dreaming consciousness that I had not experienced before, nor had I ever heard about:

April 24 1988

[I think I experienced two dreams simultaneously.] In one dream, JI, someone else, and I go to some place like the Holiday Inn for a Sunday Service. It is dark out. The “someone else” could be M or L. We are all dressed up. JI has brought something to smoke. We begin to smoke outside a doorway. JMK shows up, stands in the doorway, and watches us. I try to not let him know about the smoking.

In the parallel dream I am in my apartment in Halifax. I am rushing around doing things; small household chores. The apartment is dimly lit. I go to the kitchen to replace a roll of toilet paper, which goes on a holder (which is on the wall) above the garbage [this is obviously not a reflection of the real life kitchen]. I see a “dot” on the holder so I say to any invisible helpers that may be around, “There, you hold it, that’s your job.” Apparently, the dot indicates that it is their job. I turn my head as I say this. In this moment, I also become aware that I am in my bed. A strong “force” pulls my head back into place. It feels very strongly, physically, like someone is slapping my head, rapidly and repeatedly, across what is sometimes called the crown chakra area, and like my head is being forced into my neck. It feels so real.

All the while, I am also, AT THE SAME TIME experiencing the smoking scene with JI and JMK. Several thoughts go rushing at super speed through my mind like “Well, I did want stronger contact with my spirituality, I guess I asked for too much, etc.”

I also became frightened and said mentally, “White Light! White Light!” in an effort to wake up out of the dreams. I then woke fully, in bed; the force and slapping ceased.

This was a strange and unique event and I wondered if others had experienced anything like this. I turned to my network of lucid dreamers and asked the question, “Have you ever had simultaneous dreams?”

I soon realized that I needed to clarify what I meant by simultaneous dreams. I recall receiving a letter from one dreamer who kindly answered my question. But as I read through her letter, I became disappointed. Yes, she said, she had simultaneous dreams all the time, just like in waking reality where she could (for instance) wash dishes, look out the window, hum a tune, and think about what to make for dinner - all at the same time.

She misinterpreted what I had meant. I obviously had not explained the question very well. Yes, I can hum, wash the dishes, think about dinner, and look out a window all at the same time too. But doing things simultaneously was not what I meant by simultaneous dreaming.

The next time I asked the question I tried to explain the question a little better. I used phrases like “at the exact same time” or “two places at once”.

Some dreamers thought I referred to a dual awareness that is sometimes felt between the sleeping body and the dreaming body; when sensations in the physical body are felt in the dreamstate. I knew what they meant, I had experienced what I believe was an out-of-body experience in which I momentarily felt my dream hip move while I was standing in a hallway, while at the same time I felt my physical hip of my sleeping body in the bed move slightly. But I didn't mean two places, as in being in bed and being in a dream at the same time.

Others thought I was talking about dreams within dreams, where you wake up from one dream to find yourself in another. I had experienced that too, (false awakenings would be a similar event) but that wasn't what I meant either, those events happened one after the other, not **all at the same time** .

What I meant was more like being in Alaska, out for a walk, while **also** being in Calcutta , having lunch, **AT THE SAME TIME** , being aware of being fully focused in both places at once. In other words, no switching between awareness from one place then the other.

The few that I think grasped what I meant, said that no, they didn't think they'd ever experienced anything like that. So I gave up, and stopped asking the question.

However, by a happy “coincidence” (if you believe in “coincidences”) I eventually came across the idea of simultaneous dreaming in two Seth books by Jane Roberts. In the first book, ***The “Unknown” Reality Volume One*** , Jane Roberts' husband Robert Butts mentioned that he believed he experienced two dreams at once. He too, became curious about them and wondered if others had experienced them, but he had better luck than I did in finding others who had had these “double” or “triple” dreams as he called them. As I continued to read, I discovered that he had later heard of nine people who had had two or more dreams at once, and judging by the descriptions of a few, I knew that he and I defined simultaneous dreaming in the same way.

I was delighted and relieved to discover that others were indeed experiencing this too. I was now also curious to see what Seth had to say on the subject. In ***The Nature of the Psyche*** , Seth explained:

“Many people are aware of double or triple dreams, when they seem to have two or three simultaneous dreams. Usually upon the point of awakening, such dreams suddenly telescope into one that is predominant, with the others taking subordinate positions, though the dreamer is certain that in the moment before, the dreams were equal in intensity. Such dreams are representative of the great creativity of consciousness, and hint at its ability to carry on more than one line of experience at one time without losing track of itself....

“In double dreams and triple dreams consciousness shows its transparent, simultaneous nature. Several lines of dream experience can be encountered at the same time, each complete in itself, but when the dreamer wakes to the fact, the experience cannot be neurologically translated; so one dream usually predominates, with the others more like ghost images.”¹

It wasn't until a year later, in April of 1989 that I experienced another simultaneous awareness event, but this one was a little different:

April 28 1989

[I can't remember my dreams specifically, but I remember seeing three separate scenes and then coming into my body and waking. I feel I must have come back to my body after experiencing three simultaneous dreams at a more conscious level. I was three separate points of consciousness, then I (all three "me's") merged into one and lowered into my body:]

I can see three scenes beyond three doorways that hang in a black void. The scenes/doorways seem to be receding into the distance, from my “main” point of view. (I don't seem to have a body, I am a point of consciousness.) Yet at the very same instant I am also three bodiless points of consciousness, each feeling wholly and completely “me,, moving away from each of the three doorways. The three me's merge into one at the “point” that was/is my main point of view (I guess that means there were really four me's in total.) Then the now “one me” point of consciousness lowers into my sleeping body into my forehead area. I feel myself “filling out” my body as I open my physical eyes, now fully wakened into physical reality.

This dream (or whatever it was) was not like previous dreams in which I have seen a probable or, if you will, “parallel universe” version of myself. Although I recognize other Lucy's as probable me's, they are separate consciousnesses – I am not aware of what they are thinking. But in the experience above, I (the I that I know intimately as my ego self) was aware of each of the me's as being the same ego-self, yet as three separate (bodiless) points of awareness.

Confused? Sorry, it's not easy to describe this sort of thing. I don't think the English language has invented the appropriate words yet. But I think Seth was able to at least introduce the idea when he wrote in *The Nature of the Psyche*:

“There are too many varieties of such dreams to discuss here, but they all involve consciousness dispersing, yet retaining its identity, consciousness making loops with itself. Such dreams involve other sequences than the ones with which you are familiar. They hint at the true dimensions of consciousness that are usually unavailable to you....”²

His description certainly fit. My consciousness was indeed dispersed, and yet, I did maintain a sense of identity, and a sense of awareness that I was not awake in usual terms. Although this experience, (and the one previously described) was not like a “typical” lucid dream, there was the awareness that I was not in ordinary waking physical reality.

Over the years of keeping a dream journal I began to notice some subtle things that were happening just on the edge of waking. For instance, I once caught myself censoring a dream. At the point of waking, while still more in the dreamstate than awake, I distinctly heard myself say/think “Oh no. No. I don't want to remember that dream,” and as I heard that, I knew that I (I? Or some part of me?) was arranging for me to forget the dream, so I focused as hard as I could and did manage to retain

details of the dream. But I'll never know if I retained it all or if I did indeed succeed in censoring out some possibly disturbing or frightening imagery.

I've also noticed that very often as I'm waking I'll be able to hold, just for the briefest second, more than one dream each with equal intensity and clarity in my mind, as I awaken from both of them at the same time. But as I become more awake, I can almost "feel" the dream images "rearrange" themselves in my mind until I end up recording one dream, but one with a lot of "this happened, yet that happened too," the images "feeling" like they are somehow mixed up. Yet I'm convinced that what I experienced were two (or more) simultaneous dreams, but upon waking, the dreams – or more accurately, the *memories* of the dreams – "telescoped into one" as Seth put it, to accommodate my linear based physical reality thinking.

Now sometimes the reason may be more simple. Perhaps I had two dreams in a row, very close in time to each other, and upon waking, I'm getting them mixed up. Or maybe I had one dream earlier in the night and I'm recalling events from it, but with respect to a more recent dream, and am getting those mixed up. Or maybe I had nested dreams, one occurring inside the other, but I don't recognize them as such.

But maybe, just maybe, simultaneous dreaming is far more common and natural than we might at first think. Maybe, as Seth implies above, we often have many dreams at once, and maybe to do so is a more natural state of dreaming consciousness and waking up simply puts us in a more limited, linear time based reality where we tend to order our focus of consciousness (and our memories) in a sequential fashion.

Maybe.

It's been many years since I had these two experiences, and though I believe I can "feel" traces of similar events as I wake, I have not experienced any as intense as those two mentioned above. But simultaneous awareness in dreaming (or in any other states of consciousness) still intrigues me, and so far I have only my own experiences and those mentioned in the Seth books to draw ideas from. (I won't say "draw conclusions" from, because I know my ideas on the topic are far from complete.) I still want to know if other people are experiencing simultaneous dreams and what they think of them. So, I'm going to ask the question again.

"Have you ever had simultaneous dreams?"

If so, I'd love to hear from you and I'm sure other LDE readers would too. Drop us a line at LDE and tell us all about your simultaneous dreams!

A note added July 2009: Earlier this year I was fortunate to hear from others who have had simultaneous dreams. See **The Lucid Dream Exchange** Issue Number 50, March 2009, *Dreaming Twice (or More) at Once (Examples of Multiple Awareness in Simultaneous Dreaming)* © Lucy Gillis 2009 at:

<http://www.dreaminglucid.com/articles/Dreaming%20Twice%20or%20More%20at%20Once.pdf>

¹ Roberts, Jane, *The "Unknown" Reality Volume One, Session 692*, Bantam Books, New York, NY, 1988

² Roberts, Jane, *The Nature of the Psyche, Session 794*, Amber-Allen Publishing, San Rafael, CA, 1995