

WHY DREAMS?

Dreams are a powerful opening to the inner life. Before my own therapy, I had little grasp of how to explore my own inner life, still less awareness of how to lead others to do so. Even during my years in Chicago at the Urban Life Center, I was more of a teacher, with concrete goals and methods and results in mind.

But in therapy, I had bitten the apple. It was a watershed for me. I began a lifelong exploration of the inner workings of my psyche. The pieces written in this section illustrate what a strong attraction this inner journey has held for me.

Of the many avenues leading to this underground stream of inner life — conventional therapy, body-oriented process work, reading ancient myths and mystical writings of contemplatives, going on retreats in silence and solitude—none were more pervasive and powerful than my learning to pay attention to dreams.

Jung took religious symbolism seriously, and when I began listening to my dreams, a door opened to a rich interior world I had never dreamed (pun intended) existed. Night after night, in Technicolor, with scenes and interpolations of assorted persons from my past and present, and intriguing and mystifying symbols, I found that sleeping one-third of one's life away is emphatically not a waste of my time on earth.

Because dreams are not the product of conscious thought and intention, they spoke fresh truth I did not know. They were cinematically interesting (I sometimes mistakenly refer to them as movies!) and they use a different language—primarily the language of symbol, though I was delighted to find that puns occasionally appear.