BOOST YOUR DREAM RECALL

Exploring Your Dreams Made Simple
Gary Goodwin, founder of the Armchair Dreamer
Introduction

This is Gary Goodwin, founder of the Armchair Dreamer and welcome.

This is the place to come for tips tools and techniques for increasing your ability to visualize, to imagine, and to do dream work. At the Armchair Dreamer you will find detailed training and discussion you won't easily find elsewhere. Search no further! The Armchair Dreamer has it and the library of videos, guides, checklists, and news is growing every month.

Come on over to the Armchair Dreamer and take a look.

See you there,

Gary Goodwin, founder, the Armchair Dreamer, armchairdreamer.com
WATCH THIS GUIDE - SEE THE VIDEO VERSION. This book was built from an Armchair Dreamer video on dream capture and recalling. Everything I go thru here is also covered in the video so pick one or pick both to study. For the video, go to www.armchairdreamer.com and look for the "Dream Work" tab.

People come to me and say they have no dreams. I let them know that yes, they do have dreams, in fact several a night. I know of only two case studies that show an exception to the rule that everyone dreams. In both instances, major brain injury had occurred. If you have an reasonably intact brain, you are a dreamer.
We all are dreaming four, five, or six times a night. That can total more than an hour or two of dream time. There is plenty of content that's being produced; enough to fill a book if we could capture the dreams and their details. Aware of your dreams or not, You are quite the prolific creator. What varies from person-to-person is the ability to recall dreams.

Some of us can be called *low recappers*. We go for weeks and months without a memory of a dream. Sometimes we can catch a dream fragment here and there, but otherwise our night sleeping is blank to us. At the other end of the range of dream recalling is the *super recaller*. Super recallers report remembering two or three dreams per night. Supers may also have memories of these dreams that go into great detail. Why the big difference? There has been no lack of research to figure out why. A hundred years of research has ruled what doesn't seem to make any difference on recall. IQ or artistic ability. Add to that spatial memory or various positive or negative psychological traits. Nothing showed up so that means: we all have the potential to master dream recall.
Why the big difference? There has been no lack of research to figure out why. A hundred years of research has *ruled out what doesn’t seem* to make any difference on recall: No to IQ, artistic ability, ease in producing fantasies, spatial memory or various positive or negative psychological traits. So something isn’t fixed in our DNA or our mind that only a few people have to make super recallers or at least above average dream callers. But something else showed up: actions we all can take does boost dream recall.

What the considerable dream research did find we all can take steps to boost our dream recall. There are three broad effective general behaviors we can adopt, explore, and practice.

*Evidence-based behaviors for increasing recall*
Boost Your Dream Recall

WHAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN DREAM RECALL:

1 - Developing a **positive attitude** towards dream potential

WHAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN DREAM RECALL:

2 - **Practicing** the steps of dreaming awareness, recall, and capturing
There you have it. What to do to change your dream life. I'm going to help you but I have to do it in steps. In this guide book you will learn mainly #2. practicing dream recall (and capture). This is the core of what you need to set up before sleep, during sleep, and after you wake up. Look for other guides to learn about recall methods #1 and #3 dream at: www.armchairdreamer.com.
You are about to start a great adventure. Take your time, trust the process, and don't overdo it. Welcome to this new world.
Dream RECALL and Dream CAPTURE, what are these?

Dream RECALL - Use of your short term memory to hold on to whispy dream images to capture them or at least think about them later in the day. Also involves having awareness that we had just been dreaming and we need to move the images to memory.
Dream **CAPTURE** - Recording some or all of your dream on paper, on audio, a drawing, etc.
7 Getting Ready for Dream Recall-Capture Steps

We need to set a few things firmly in our mind before we start our dream work journey. If we can get these clear we can jump in with our mind and heart in sync. If we don't we might to bump into an inner conflict: part of us is ready for this work and another part wants be working on something else. This conflict will take a lot of our energy and blow our focus on what we need to do. Odds are high we won't continue dream work for long. Dream work is subtle and feels like an add-on to everything else we are doing. Everything else is likely to be high priority feeling and subtle stuff like dream work will fade away. We need to get a good sense of why we are going to this effort. That will provide some counter pressures to the call of our higher priorities.

1. Clarify your why.
Why do you want to do dream work. Yes, it is work, work that requires practice, goal setting, and working with a part of yourself that just wants to sleep. Revise your why as you learn more about and from your dreams.
Here are the basic whys and most likely you're going find one that fits you.

**Whys:**

You want to know what you might know in a place outside your daytime awareness.

You need to add more mystery, discovery, creativity to your life (your yin-yang is out of whack).

You want to extend your abilities to visualize and imagine.

Once you have your why, you need to test it. You test it by checking in with yourself to see if you get a sort of "ok" signal. If you don't know what I'm talking about give this process a try any way. Don't confuse self doubt or a lack of clarity on how to do dream work, look for a feeling that you have way too much going on at the moment and you don't have the energy to add more work, mystery, and uncertainty right now. If you don't get any of that then now is time to do dream work.
2. Check in and find out if this is a good time to remember your dreams.

3. Put off *dream decoding* until later; target increasing *dream recall* first.
I know what you want to do: figure out the meaning of your dreams. I understand that but I suggest you hold off at least for a little while. Put mastering dream recall and capture first. This will give you more dreams, and more dream details to work with. Dream decoding is a specialty unto itself and will take plenty of time. Start here.

Putting off dream meaning work by learning dream recall/capture will not hurt dream meaning work later. In fact you will have many more dreams to work with and with greater details. When you get dream meaning you will be all ready to go.

4. Set your capture goal and repeat it to yourself a few times.

Note: Even fragments are important and therefore worth capturing.

You have capture options…from light to heavy…

How many dreams do you want to recall per night?

This probably is something you have never thought about before. "I have a choice about this? I thought I only got what I got each morning and that's it." With work that will change. You can shoot for light to heavy amount of recall each night.
Options:
Light capture
Get a dream or fragment each day to work on.

Options:
Medium capture
Get a dream or two and record all details.

Options:
Heavy capture
Get every dream that comes up and/or record all details.
The heavy option means you get a lot of content but you will have to learn how to capture it without wrecking your night of sleep. It can be done but this is another practice you will need to take on. Most people should start on the light side and get good at that and then move onto recalling and capturing more.

How much detail do you want to capture per night?

If you want to get everything that happens in your dreams you will have to use something to record it (i.e. paper, digital recorder). That takes effort at a time you will naturally resist moving around. Some people prefer to keep things simple, seeking to remember what happens in their dreams and then write it all up in the morning.

Write down your target recall number and level of detail and review it every night.

5. Commit to dealing with a bit of discomfort that comes with writing dream notes very first thing in the morning or during the night.
6. Lay out your recording equipment. Phone for its recorder, or journal, pen, and flashlight. This will be your dream capture station.

Determine how you're going to record your dreams. Is it going to be: on your phone and just hitting the record button or is it going to be writing notes? Get what you need and try various locations to keep in your bedroom or where you can go to capture your dreams. I keep a small zipper bag with two easy to write with pens (felt tips), several 3 x 5 inch cards, and a small flashlight. I can grab this bag for use in the bedroom or for moving into an adjoining room.
One last preparation step: setting up your bedroom for good sleeping and for good dreaming. Those two don’t exactly have to go hand and hand. We know of nights with wonderful sleep but without any dream recall. We know nights of terrible sleep with great dream recall. What seems to work best: 1.) is a good night of sleep when we aren’t totally exhausted by the day’s activities. This leaves some energy left over for being aware enough to detect that we are dreaming. 2.) At the other end we don’t want too much breaking up our sleep but a bit of disturbance can bring a heightened awareness of dreaming. Dreaming is closer to being awake than it is to being in deep sleep. A disturbance pulls us towards wakefulness right through a dream or where our brainwaves would be if we were dreaming. If is only a mild disturbance, we will linger at that place between wakefulness and sleeping. Another brushing up against dreaming. Lastly, falling asleep will take us thru similar brain territory. Alertness and more dreams boosts the chances for dream recall.
3 Bedtime Steps

1. As you coast off to sleep, remind yourself that tonight you want to remember your dream(s).
2. Remind yourself again of your capture goal(s) for the night in terms of number of dreams/amount of detail.

And number three, we need to end our preparation with a positive attitude towards the dream work. Look forward to your night's dreams. Be curious about what you will experience and what you will learn.
3. End with curiosity about what will show up in tonight’s dreams.
8 Sleeping Time Steps

1. When subtle or strong dream imagery comes up, remain very relaxed but also be alert enough to pay attention to what unfolds.

At last we made it into sleep. We first must develop skill at noticing dreaming as we are dreaming. This is not as hard as it first sounds. Our unconscious is very capable of taking a request: "I want to remember a dream tonight so I will become aware that I'm in a dream." Put this request in before you fall asleep and whatever the mechanism is in the unconscious uses to track things such as a change of mind will run. When you get the signal, don't become too awake. Relax but keep your eyes and mind open to what is unfolding.
2. Don’t move. Watch what is going on.

Let the dream build a bit. You may not want to grab the first details you see after you become aware you are dreaming. You probably are coming into the dream well after it has begun. See if it can become more vivid as you simply watch. To allow it to build and become more vivid it’s best not to move. Movement may increase our level of awareness and make the dream evaporate. Just remain there as a quiet observer.
3. Don’t skip over non-images such as what you are feeling in the dream or what you detect with your other senses.

As we develop our ability to capture dreams, we should also look beyond just dream images. Images are what most of us talk about or think about when we’re talking about dreams but there are other things going on. We can be aware of our feeling tone, our intuitions, and even to our other senses. What all is going on in the dream?
4. Watch for awhile but at some point slowly become a bit more alert. Just a bit, don’t try to wake up yet. Tell yourself you want to remember this dream. Hold your position in dreaming so the dream doesn’t start to diminish.

5. Bring the dream into a bit more alertness (you asking yourself to remember these details). Hear your inner intention and amplify it so you really can hear/feel your commitment to get this done. Getting this right will take practice.
Note: Don’t automatically trust yourself to remember the dream in morning. Frequently, we tell ourselves we will remember but... don’t believe it. This is a trick we play on ourselves to get back to sleep fast. Our default is to sleep not record dream notes. It will take practice to overcome this resistance.

I think there's some part of our mind that just doesn't want to play along with wake up and record a dream thing. It just wants us to sleep and ignore any unnecessary distractions. "Leave me alone; I just want to sleep." This son of gun will say in a very convincing manner: "Don’t worry, you will remember this dream just fine in the morning. You can write it down then. Now let's get back to sleep. Everything is going to be fine. Don't you believe it! We need to push against this trick of our mind. "I'm gonna get this done!" This will require practice saying no to yourself and driving yourself to action. Stick with it.
6. (If you have decided to capture in the night), hold your dream memory as you gently shift to getting your recording equipment. Once you have it, throw down, even out of order, what you have. Try bullet points first and then go back and add detail second. At least capture the major elements.

7. Ease back to sleep and expect resistance against capturing more dreams that night. Everything in you will say: “No more, stop it. Go to sleep!” The message will feel imperative and you are likely to over rule your previous commitment. You will have to practice resisting the resistance.
Note: Before you go back to sleep, remind yourself you want to catch the next dream.

If you can sleep a few minutes longer the benefit will be significant. It is in the later portion of our sleep period that we are dreaming longer. We are also more rested and have energy to be alert to our dreams. I'm talking about after five and half hours to six and half hours of sleep. Sleeping towards 7 hours or more boosts the odds you will notice a dream and be able to capture its details.
8. In the morning sleep a little longer to see if vivid dreams come up. This is the time within your sleep time when you are switching between dreaming and being almost awake.
5 After Sleeping Time Steps

Ok, you made it thru the night! You recall or captured a dream. The work is now beginning in the after sleeping part of your life. Five more steps to go.

1. Feel appreciation to your mind for anything you captured during the night.
2. Contemplate the mystery, creativity, and poetry of dreams when you can over the next week.

3. Remind yourself of your intention to increase your recall throughout the day for the next 2 weeks.
It also helps to honor in little ways what came up in a dream. If there's a local location that came up in the dream, go to that location spend some time there. You don’t necessarily have to do anything special there but this will bring your waking life closer to you dreaming world. If someone comes up, you don't have to seek them out unless you want too. You can always spend a bit of time listing out their qualities or your memories involving them. If an object comes up and you can find one (and afford one), do give that some consideration. These little things help prepare your mind to recall more dreams.
5. Find little ways to explore or honor dream places, memories, objects, etc.
Wrap Up

DON'T FORGET. SEE THE VIDEO. This book was built from an Armchair Dreamer video on dream recall and capture. In the video I go thru everything covered here, but you may prefer to watch a video than reading this thing. Go to the Armchair Dreamer to see it and other related videos, news, articles, and more on dreaming, visualizing, and imagining.
Painting by: 
John Anster Fitzgerald, 
1819 - 1906

The Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of
(Cira 1860)

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