

The GIFT of the LION

Dear Connie,

I've been having bizarre dreams lately and I don't know how to understand them. Last night, I dreamed I was walking in a jungle, and suddenly there was a huge male African lion in front of me, not more than ten feet away. He stared at me, then opened his mouth and roared. I was terrified. I woke up with my heart pounding, scared out of my wits! I've never been to Africa, so why would I have a dream like that?

Thank you,
—Belinda

Dear Belinda,

I can understand why that dream would terrify you! Your curiosity as to why you would have a dream like that is also understandable. Let's see if I can help you make sense of it.

I recently completed Robert Moss' three-year *Dream Teacher Training* program, and one of his favorite and effective dreamwork techniques is the Lightning Dreamwork Process. This is a quick way to gain understanding

of a dream. Along with *Dream Re-Entry and Tracking*, *Dream Theatre*, and *Shamanic Journeying*, Moss' methods are designed to help people use dreams one-on-one or in groups for personal

keep a journal by your side and take your time recording your answers one by one, I have a feeling you will better understand the meaning of your dream:

⇒ First, give your dream a title. This helps bring focus to what follows.

⇒ How did you feel in the dream, and when you woke up? Your feelings are a very important clue toward understanding the dream.

⇒ What in your real life—past, present, or future—might relate to the images in the dream? For example, if you had just watched the movie, *The Ghost and the*

Darkness, a dream of roaring African lions might easily have been stimulated. Are you considering going on an African safari?

Is there anything scary going on in your life right now that has nothing to do with lions? Another way to look at the dream is to consider whether the lion symbolizes some hidden aspect of your own psyche that is frightening to you.

What do you want to know about the dream? Then, in this process, I would say to you, "If it

growth and healing. People learn to trust their imagination and intuition in working with dreams and come to know that all dreams—even nightmares—come in the service of healing.

Even though I've been working with dreams for many years, I cannot tell you what your dream means. Only you can decide that. But I can help you get to an AHA!

So let's play the *Lightning Dreamwork* process. I will ask you the questions, and if you can



were my dream..." and in this case, I might say (if you hadn't just watched a lion movie, and you couldn't identify anything scary in your life, nor were you planning to go to Africa), "I wonder if there's some part of me that is threatening to my self image, that is fierce and frightening and has been unconscious until now. I would wonder if the dream came because I need to know more about this part."

You might at this point have a glimmer of understanding about why this lion has appeared in your dream—or maybe not. So the next question is: *What would you like to do with this dream?*

There are several possibilities. You could imaginably go back into the dream and have a conversation with the lion. This isn't as silly as it may sound! You could go back into the dream and let your imagination take you beyond the point where you woke up when you first had the dream. You might be surprised and amazed at what will happen if you do this. With a friend, you could do *Dream Theatre*, in which your friend would play the part of the lion and you would be you. This is an energizing and wonderful way of bringing the meaning of the dream to life. You could also draw the scene; creative expression is a fun and revealing way to work with dreams.

If you do one or more of the exercises described above, you are likely to have an *AHA* moment that says, "I got it!" Remember that all dreams are gifts. They are meant to be opened, understood, and appreciated; they help us to become more conscious and whole.

Good luck exploring this dream. May its meaning enrich your life. ■

Blessings,
—Connie

Do you have a relationship question? Connie is now offering sessions in person and by phone from Bozeman and leads regular groups and workshops. (see ad at right). Call Connie at 406-582-7450 or e-mail mtlionlady@gmail.com.

E-mail sent to Connie is read only by Connie and will be held in strictest confidence. No identities will be published. **Disclaimer:** The responses to questions in this column are for information only. Never disregard professional advice or delay seeking it because of anything you read here. Working with a skilled professional is highly recommended.

Connie Myslik-McFadden, MSS, LCSW, is a psychotherapist with 30 years of experience working with individuals, couples and groups. She leads workshops and retreats, and teaches Dreamwork and Pathwork. Connie devoted 9 years to Jungian



analysis, training, and supervision, after graduating from the Bryn Mawr School of Social Work. She went on to graduate from the Barbara Brennan School of Healing, and Society of Souls, a kabbalistic school of healing. She is the author of "Gathering the Soul, a True Story of Spiritual Healing." Pathwork (Pathwork.org) and Imago Relationship Therapy

(GettingTheLoveYouWant.org) are two easily accessible sources for the theories upon which much of this column is based.

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