



Dreams in organizational coaching

Creative dream dialogs - an introduction and an example

by Bernd Schmid

I Introduction

Occasional dream discussions can be a useful medium of dialog for consultants with no specific psychological training. The Institute for systemic consulting, Wiesloch has created a specific method of working with dreams¹ which goes beyond common procedures. With the aid of this approach, the consultant will be able to work with the client`s relevant issues in a reassuring and stimulating way.

The relevance of dreams

Dreams can be interpreted as visualizations of and comments on important issues and challenges in personal and professional development. Dream dialog is conducive to refining the contours of emerging levels of maturity and the related developmental steps, or to identify and broach the issues of avoidance and crisis.

Working on and with dreams can serve to

- reflect and comment on professional development.
 - better comprehend development: understand what has happened in retrospect; prospectively grasp what is pending.
 - activate development on the level of story-telling using dreams as a means of expression.
 - control developments by influencing available currents, provoking new and alternative perspectives on old problems and correcting restrictive expectations.
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- ❑ sensitize to and expose behavioural patterns and patterns of experience from the internal and external organization of personality.
- ❑ correct and supplement existing patterns.

The success of consultation in general and of dream dialogs in particular depends on whether reciprocal intuitive sensitization and activation of the other person's intuitive knowledge occurs over and above what is being dealt with in a conscious-methodical manner. This exchange is partially conscious but mostly unconscious and can be best described in images². Visual dialog creates a favorable basis for an unconscious exchange between the people involved. In the final analysis, what happens during these processes is unfathomable, but is stimulated, focused and kept going by the creative process of the images on the surface level.

Dealing with dreams provides examples for symbolic understanding and working with symbolic material. Creative work with dream narratives can help us to understand the interplay between conscious-methodical and unconscious-intuitive work.

A careful exchange in a suitable professional group can help to ensure the quality of intuition for professional work and personal development.

Dreams tell stories. These stories can be tragic or comic, realistic or surrealistic, lyrical or prosaic, dramatic or grotesque. So what could be better than translating the events of the dream into the vocabulary of the theater³? This has two advantages: You gain access to a handy, vivid descriptive language and thus avoid or allay the tendency to treat dreams as an object for scientific analysis. If you then put the orchestration of the dream to the fore as well as its content, the dream events attain the dynamic quality of a lively and adaptable performance. Translated into the theater metaphor, the dream is a stage performance. In this era of new media, you can also refer to other audio-visual media such as movies or videos. The dreamer can then take on the role of viewer or co-actor, stage director or scriptwriter, producer or minister for culture and sometimes even several roles in parallel or in succession.

² When we speak of images here, the visual channel stands pars pro toto. It might also be words, melodies, movements and moods.

In the understanding of dream work presented here, an aspect of reality construction is added to the aspect of understanding and processing. Telling stories is always motivated by the current aim and follows twofold epistemological interests:

- ❑ The epistemological question: “What is the dream saying?” is primarily dictated by the motive of understanding. The dream makes reality tangible. The focus of working on the dream material is then interpretative.
- ❑ The action-guiding question: “How is the dream a medium for stimulating and governing development?” brings the motive of design geared to the future to the fore. At the same time, the dream is a plain of reality on which development can take place. The focus of the work on dream material is constructive.

II Case Study: Mr. MIDLIFE in crisis

Note: While following the case study, you may want to bring your own ideas into play and practice by exchanging them with others doing the same. If so, you can read the case study together, stop at the lines “Whisper Group” and first collect and then exchange your own impressions and ideas. Even those new to this field will establish from their progress that they have a keen sense of the essential. If you can't find your ideas in this version, it doesn't mean that your ideas are wrong. There are many meaningful footholds. However, it may be useful to present the reactions to the ideas to each other and to discuss their plausibility.

The following case description is intended to encourage you to experiment with dreams. If you want to use this on your own without instruction, it may be helpful to study the attached Guide to cooperative dream dialogs first. If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact the author. Email: schmid@isb-w.de .

Preliminary notes

The following case is based on a coaching session with a client from the top management of the human resources department of a global player in technology. The coaching relationship between the coachee and the author lasted for two and a half years and involved 9 coaching sessions of three hours each.

This is not a complete presentation of the procedure or of all subjects dealt with during coaching, but just of the strand in which working with dreams played an essential role. In particular, the interplay between the way dreams are dealt with and

personal development, as well as the relevance of both for professional development and the contracting organization will be illustrated.

As it is difficult to describe the complexity of this kind of encounter with dreams and experimentation with ideas and alternative orchestrations, not much explanation will be given at this point. A story that leaves much to the senses and premonitions comes a lot closer to intuitive understanding. In this respect, the narrative aspect of working with dreams and this presentation come fairly close to each other.

Assignment:

Mr. WISE, assistant head of human resources in a corporate technology group, phones in. He says that Mr. MIDLIFE is in line for promotion and is being considered for the position of human resources manager in one of the group's companies. The position is vacant and Mr. MIDLIFE has the necessary qualifications. However there are doubts in relation to his reputation. As difficult times are on the cards, this could be decisive. Mr. MIDLIFE has been informed and has agreed to coaching. The coach basically agrees to a first exploratory talk. Mr. MIDLIFE calls later on and an appointment is made for the first coaching talk so important for to author (see box).

BOX

Format for personality coaching with Bernd Schmid

The first coaching session lasts three hours and consists of three parts:

1. Occasion and current requirement for coaching. There is often a specific issue which constitutes the need for coaching. This current need and options for immediate aid are discussed first.
2. "Inspection" of the professional environment as well as of the previous and desired professional life. Important issues in relation to goals, roles, environments and current events are collected.
3. "Inspection" of the emotional models⁴ and personal characteristics that help make professional work successful and meaningful. From this personal background you can usually gain important criteria for questions in 1 and 2.

⁴ This paper does not go into working with inspiring background images in detail. For those who are interested, see: [Inspiring background images and the use of the "Theatre metaphor" in professional coaching](http://www.isb-w.de/service/schriften/I+II-studienschriften/englishpapers.html#107) (<http://www.isb-w.de/service/schriften/I+II-studienschriften/englishpapers.html#107>)

Follow-up sessions, provided they make sense, take place in the same format or a shorter one. Intervals between sessions can vary between 4 weeks and several months.

It is rare for more than 5 talks to be necessary.

Audio-recordings of the talks are provided immediately after the coaching session. If required, papers or audio-recordings on individual issues are recommended or provided.

Excerpt of the first session

Professional situation:

Mr. MIDLIFE (40) has had a successful career as an attorney in the staff division of the corporation headquarters.

As an expert in employment law, there are hardly any possibilities for promotion in the headquarters. In his rank, the next step would be the position of director of human resources in one of the corporation's companies.

Mr. WISE and the head of HR see him as a potential HR director, but at the same time they are also a little doubtful. In their view, he feels he is being put to the test by the corporation. Several times, he has crossed words with both in order to show them that he can meet them at eye level. He also publicly criticized the CEO in a committee meeting because he wanted to prove that he deserves to be taken seriously. However, he was given a really embarrassing ticking off. *"I must be doing something wrong, but what?"* If he had the winning personal charisma he dreams about, the bosses and other colleagues would accept him quite differently. He would like to change in this respect, but he is still unsure about how to achieve this goal and whether he is able and willing to keep abreast of the "ruthless go-getters" in the hierarchy.

Personal situation and appearance

Mr. MIDLIFE is married and lives in a small German town. He describes his marriage as very friendly and unproblematic. They have two children of preschool age, to whom he devotes his weekends. He has no other particular interests. *"I wouldn't have time for them anyway!"* The rather delicate man comes from a small-town milieu. His path of life had an intellectual focus and had been completely straight forward so far. He had encountered no particular burdens or challenges that he

couldn't handle by developing his strengths. His wife is irritated by his month-long apprehensive moods and doesn't want to hear any more about it.

Attitude towards Coaching

Mr. MIDLIFE likes the idea of being coached, while also feeling insecure because his bosses are questioning his personal aptitude for the position of HR director. He is prepared to adopt drastic measures if this would lead to rapid solutions and the end of the unfamiliar crises in his life. He tends to see only black and white and feels uneasy. Complex things going on in the background, things that can't be rationalized, are somehow interesting but also make orientation difficult for him. This is why he often tries to find a simple but short common denominator for complex events and meanings. If this doesn't work he feels disoriented. At the same time, he enjoys mulling over the search for meanings and is also keen to assimilate new aspects. Overall, Mr. MIDLIFE seems unsure about who he wants to be, who he can be and what paths he needs to take to achieve this. He would much prefer to do something totally different, but he has no idea what this might be.

Mr. MIDLIFE has had no previous experience with counseling. He is open-minded about clarification and development and is prepared to let someone else lead the way. He always carefully examines and confirms what he has understood and what he recognizes as applicable and what not. He clearly stores away suggestions he feel might be useful. But outwardly he presents himself as complaining and helpless because his crisis doesn't seem about to disappear in the near future.

He uses generalizing and concrete language which leaves it unclear who does and experiences what how, or who deals with what emotionally and how. For this reason it is often necessary to specify and to concretize by asking: "Who is doing what when and how?" and to identify what experiences, feelings and judgments are behind these generalizations..

Mr. MIDLIFE is very cooperative, listens to the audio-recordings and reads the recommended texts. He reacts with interest to the invitation to write down his dreams and bring them to the coaching sessions and to the explanations of what use this might be, but also fears he wouldn't have anything to offer because he can't usually

remember his dreams. However, working with inspiring background images stimulates him to be attentive.

3rd session (week 8)

Mr. MIDLIFE reports that he has been proposed for the potential position of HR director for a specific company in the corporation. He has just been to a meeting there. He is not sure what impression he made at the meeting. Nor has he received any feedback as yet. He himself describes his performance as “filtered”.

In this context, he remembers that before his presentation at this meeting he had a dream that he has often had before in lots of variations.

(Recurring) dream 1:

I have been invited to a meeting where I have to present myself. The people I have to talk to are in front of me on the left. Directly before me is the lectern and further away on the right, behind a high table, are several men who I think are evaluating me critically. Among them is a coarse man with a pair of boxing gloves hanging over his seat. I am staring at this “jury” awaiting judgment.

I wake up irritated and feeling bad.

“Whisper groups” 1 (see note in the box: What is this dream about and what might be its context?)

Mr. MIDLIFE immediately recognizes the connection between the dream experience and the real meeting. In the dream it was obvious that he was standing before the male court like a “rabbit in front of a snake”. The boxing gloves probably stand for the high demands being made on him. Although he can see no outward evidence for it in the real situation, at the actual interview he was afraid of being weighed and found lacking. Accordingly, he felt very inhibited and probably didn't come over too well.

We talk about his feeling of not being cut from the same cloth as MR. WISE, for example. During the time of the former head of HR, MIDLIFE was on the same level as Mr. WISE. MIDLIFE had had a good relationship with the former head. He was a sophisticated and sensitive man. The new head is more robust, more in tune with WISE, which is presumably why he made WISE his assistant.

He had always sensed this difference between himself and Mr. WISE, but up until now it had not been a problem. He believes more in values, which might make him a softy in the eyes of some. On the other hand, he does not want to be one of those “Rambo”-types, although this is what seems to be expected nowadays. For this reason, the job as HR director is maybe not suitable for him. But if he gives up now, he would feel defeated. And what else should he do? **At this point he is in danger of being caught up in polarizations and unsolvables which might end just like the dream:** Paralysis while awaiting the probably negative judgment from the group of men. So as not to be subjected to this, he searches for the right strategies to enable him to stand his ground in the real situation and to feel better.

The coach emphasizes that dreams mirror attitudes that might need reviewing. In addition, he emphasizes understanding on the subjective level, according to which everything that happens in dreams may be understood as part of one's own personality, even though it is depicted by tools and figures from the outside world. From this point of view, conflict in the outside world is also a mirror of a clash between the different poles of one's own personality. Conflicts on dream stages, as on the stages of the outside world, provide the opportunity for new conflict with one's own disposition.

One focus might be a new relationship to other men or to himself as a man. In this way, he might be able to get away from stereotypes and polarities and begin an integrating development. The coach offers to re-orchestrate the dream with him, so that the client can test alternative experiences that bring positive movement to the scene. He is offered positive reinterpretation and sample arrangements.

Whisper groups 2 (Which elements occur to you for this kind of reinterpretation?)

New Narration of dream 1:

The coach suggests arranging the situation in a different “topographical” way: He should place the “jury” in a position that lets him feel he is on the same level, then turn his back on them so as to “put them behind him” . He should imagine that they are there to support him rather than to judge him.

The boxing gloves can be interpreted as being there to protect the boxers from really hurting themselves when testing their strength. So boxing gloves are for protection.

The guy with the boxing gloves becomes a tentative sports pal, boxing becomes a body-building sport, even for flyweights. By analogy with a number of exercises in systems constellations, the client is invited to sense the other men's support physically. Other men from his own history (e.g. his father who died at an early age) can be there to give additional backing.

At first, Mr. MIDLIFE agrees to the reinterpretation and re-orchestration hesitantly and then with increasing interest, goes through it all in his mind and finds an inner connection to support from the other men and a more positive understanding of the guy with the boxing gloves. Moments of argumentative talk alternate with moments in which he is positively surprised and moved by the inner experiences that have been stimulated.

4th session (week 13).

When asked, Mr. MIDLIFE reports that he dreamed about a meeting again, but awoke with a good feeling. At first he has difficulties remembering the dream. However, more detailed questioning gradually brings the dream back to him.

Dream 2 (two weeks after session 3)

This meeting again. But mothers of preschool children seem to be there, too. The right side of the room is empty. I went directly to the lectern and spoke to the people. This way I could see them better and was better able to bring my point across. I have a good feeling. The scene changes.

A "lady in white" stands next to the lectern facing towards me. In front of me and opposite her is a man with his back to me. I don't know either of them. The woman is younger (about 30), and with her jeans and white T-shirt is probably dressed too casually. We are just standing there.

Further questions reveal memories or create more narration:

She looks at the man/me in an open, friendly way. I am not sure whether this is a competitive situation, but it means something to me and I feel good when I wake up.

Whisper groups 3 (How do you understand the changes in the orchestration of this dream?)

Discussed perspectives dream 2:

The place otherwise occupied by the group of men is empty and is possibly free for something new. At the same time, the audience, perception and atmosphere, self-esteem and self-presentation have changed. Now the scene changes. This often indicates new levels of an issue and the continuation of a theme with a new quality. Changes in the level of presentation, the characters, the references and the procedure reflect development. When these changes are big, it is sometimes not easy to find the theme in them again.

The men become one man standing at his side, in fact somehow (in contact with the woman) identical with him. And now there are women in his dream (which is new for him), motherly women as well as one rather mysterious younger woman more as a counterpart to the man/ him. The paralyzed expectation of a judgment has now become an interesting encounter, mainly initiated by the woman. His being unsure about the nature of the situation seems like an insignificant side note. The final situation in the dream seems to be open, as yet without dynamics, but promising.

The job as HR director

Someone else landed the job as HR director. MR. WISE did not engage in any discussion about it. However, when another job as HR director became vacant in a few weeks time, Mr. MIDLIFE would be considered for it.

At a meeting for HR directors Mr. MIDLIFE had given a speech. The mere fact that Mr. WISE was there as well made him self-conscious. He held his speech but didn't feel good about it and didn't really convey his point at all. He is angry that Mr. WISE is so important to him. Mr. MIDLIFE wants to learn to ignore him.

Instead of talking about this situation in the external world, the coach invites Mr. MIDLIFE to orchestrate the whole thing as a dream. Mr. MIDLIFE agrees and orchestrates the story as a variation of his recurrent dreams:

Experience orchestrated as dream 3:

Somehow there is another meeting. Mr. WISE stands on the right facing me and the other participants. To me he seems critical, as though challenging me in front of the meeting.

Orchestration of an “external” experience as a dream has the advantage of enabling a person to be free to shape the symbolic experience. It is now possible to create an alternative idea, suggesting different experiences and attitudes with which a dialog can then be started. This also challenges the coach to develop the ideas for a positive alternative orchestration and offer it to be tried out.

Whisper groups 4 (What script would you suggest for further development, what attitudes and orchestrations would you offer for trial?)

In the alternative offered by the coach, Mr. WISE is defined positively as Mr. MIDLIFE's ally. This connects with the former positive definition of the guy with the boxing gloves as an ally. Mr. WISE is to be positioned on stage like a cenotaph and his words represent a constructive warning. Mr. MIDLIFE is asked to formulate the words of warning.

MIDLIFE: WISE'S warning *Variation 1*: “There are doubts whether this man is the right person for the job”. The coach says this is hardly constructive and requests a more positive alternative: WISE'S warning *variation 2*: “*At the age of 40 this man should have a different personality!*”

At this point it becomes clear that the problem is more extensive doubts about the development of his own personality. But at this point Mr. MIDLIFE has no access as yet to a more constructive tenor for the warning.

So the coach suggests the following *variation 3*: “*MIDLIFE is on his way, but hasn't found himself yet!*” MIDLIFE tries this out. Although this alternative is unfamiliar, he adopts it after several repetitions, at least to test it. This results in a change in his attitude towards Mr. WISE. Mr. MIDLIFE decides to have a candid conversation with Mr. WISE and the company's head of human resources to inform them of the problems he himself sees in his performance in the first company and at the HR director meeting. In addition, he will tell them that he is on the right path and would like to remain in dialog with them about these matters.

Further development

4 more sessions and one year have gone by

Mr. MIDLIFE got the position as HR director with the other company of the corporation. However, at first he is still unsure whether this position is right for him. There were no other attractive alternatives, though. If he didn't try it, he would see it as chickening out.

The company gave him a friendly welcome, he established a good relationship to the director and he obviously did a good job, even if it was still an effort. He even got through clashes about manpower cuts and played his part in finding tolerable solutions that were spoken highly of in the media.

However, it remained doubtful whether the whole situation was right for him. All in all, though, he seemed to be getting more robust and capable of more emotional tolerance towards his sense of crisis. During coaching he still tended to present his old style of problem-solving, but found it easier to see the problems in perspective.

During this period, he seems to have found a way to integrate critical and uncritical attitudes towards his job. This can be concluded from the following report: *In the past, I came back from my vacations as a man, and my professional environment seemed ludicrous. But just one week later, this critical person had vanished and I identified with it all again. After my last vacation, though, everything was different. I got involved in my job, but remained the person who accompanies me critically at work. Somehow this is good, but it hasn't made my life any easier.*

Dream 4 during this period:

I am on a hiking tour. I have come to some crossroads. I had assumed that the ascent to the left would be impassable because a mountain slide had swept the path away. But to my surprise a wooden bridge has been built over it. So I can take this path after all. After a long climb, I come to a village I don't know and hadn't expected to be there. The church spire in the center catches the eye. As I reach the first houses, I see a coffee house on the right hand side, in which there are only men. They call me over and I join them.

Whisper groups 5 (If you see this dream as a mirror of vocational and spiritual development and of the coherence of coaching, how would you understand the dream? What themes shimmer through?)

In this dream, the coach sees confirmation of a constructive development. This can probably be understood intuitively even without knowledge of depth psychology. However, knowledge of symbols can support this understanding⁵: Climbing a mountain – a common symbol for personal development – can be continued at a point where a landslide has swept away the original path. The bridge has been built by the work of men, by helpers and assistants. The dreamer uses them, follows the path to the left (in the direction of integration of unconscious terrain) and so comes to a village (like the city, this is often used as a symbol of one's own essence). The spire, a symbol of spiritual masculinity, is clearly to be seen, and it is the men of the village who invite the dreamer to join them. It is easy to recognize the group of men from earlier dreams. But now he experiences a sense of belonging rather than judgment. The fact that masculinity is firstly presented as an impersonal symbol (church spire) and secondly as a collective (men in the coffee house) suggests that this is a positive approach to masculine individuality. The next steps of this approach would be a community of individually recognizable men, and then the encounter with himself as the man in a mirror relationship (men next to him and women opposite)⁶. The dynamics of the relationships have also changed.

A new life crisis

7th session: crisis meeting

Mr. MIDLIFE and his wife separated because of another man. She had felt frustrated for many years, the relationship had not been fulfilling for her. She had now found true love and turned her back on him abruptly. It is a real setback for MIDLIFE'S self-image as a man and for the outcome of his life. At first he reacts with severe insomnia, adverse effects in his work, total self-questioning and finally with "last thoughts". The latter do not seem to be seriously life-threatening, they seem rather to

⁵ I refer here primarily to the analytical psychology of C.G. Jung and his followers. For coaches I recommend easily understandable literature from this field, such as C.G. Jung et al.: Man and his symbols, or more recently, the articles and audio-recordings by Verena Kast.

⁶ For particulars see: Schmid, B. (1989). *Impact of being a man or being a woman on the therapeutic system* <http://www.isb-w.de/service/schriften/I+II-studienschriften/englishpapers.html#201>

be a kind of self-dramatization. Clinically it could be put down to a depressive stress disorder⁷.

He now (rhetorically) questions his efforts towards personal development: *Was all this crisis-training worthwhile, if I feel so bad now?* In reference to his wife, he speaks of a “dramatic reaction” on his part, but it was only in his mind and temporary. On the outside, they are gentle with each other. He tells his wife he will reorganize his professional life in order to keep her, but at the same time he is not sure whether he really wants her to agree. She has already made her decision, anyway. He should not raise his hopes They were a good team for while, but never real lovers. Finally, his wife moves out with the children. He is allowed to visit or have the kids whenever he wants.

Personality development in the background

8th session in the middle of the external crisis – dream 5:

In absolute contrast to his external situation and the related mood, he awakes warm and happy. Investigating this feeling, he remembers the dream he had during the night.

There is a swing on the left at the back. In front of the swing is my ex-girlfriend in a white T-shirt. I am standing opposite her and can somehow see myself from behind at the same time. I am wearing a blue T-shirt. We are both young. She smiles at me and throws something at me teasingly, and then we happily throw it backwards and forwards between us..

At school she was his first great love, although she was not beautiful or socially attractive. They really swung well (the swing). During his studies, he got to know other “more attractive women” and abandoned her. It must have been very hard for her.

MIDLIFE: *“In this dream I encountered qualities I have been missing for a long time.”*

⁷ In this case, a well-trained coach has to be encouraged to trust his feelings. But if there are any doubts, a competence- and solution-oriented psychotherapeutic evaluation is recommended. A pathology-oriented psychotherapy entails the risk of the coachee withdrawing into psychotherapy instead of coping with his life.

Whisper Groups 6 (How do you evaluate dream 5 and the personal development?)

In this dream the coach sees the continuance of personal development. Unimpressed by external events, he comes closer to an inner wholeness.

The woman can now be related to his personal life story and marks a time when he was more lively and playful with the other gender and thus more himself as a man. The love of his youth, which he left behind for something seemingly more desirable, stands for emotional female qualities⁸ on which he turned his back. They have now come to life again and put the ball in his court. Here, too, the changing appearance of female qualities is a sign of development.

The “audience of men”, against whom he has to stand his ground, changes to an audience of (men and) women, which then changes to an unknown woman, who is dressed casually and regards him and his double. Finally, she turns into a single woman who addresses him personally and invites him to play. Both in the scenery, the figures, the encounters and in the feelings activated by them you can observe change and a new attitude to himself. In addition to this, memories of earlier dreams arose and helped him to a better understanding of his whole development as a man. However, this is only relevant for conscious historical consolidation and not for actual development.

Although several things still needed to be seen to on the external level of reality, the coach considered the work to be finished. The coachee was prepared for these tasks.

Follow-up

After having rearranged his life on the outside, the coachee decided on comprehensive people-oriented further education in the area of human resources, in order to adapt the personal experiences he had gained to his professional self-image and to complement his qualifications in the area of hard factors. Both this training and his continuing job as HR manager gave him great pleasure. In addition to this, he entered into a new partnership, which brought new vitality and joy to his private life as well.

⁸ Analytical depth psychology talks of Anima as the female part of the soul and about Animus as the male part. Both should be lively and in good contact with each other.

Conclusion

Are dreams or the creative dialogs using dreams described here suitable for coaching? For training consultants? For professional communication? Or even as a conversation level in organizations?

We say: yes! Although, in this case, the coach in this example was equipped with a lot of therapeutic background experience, a coach with less psychotherapeutic experience but more sensitive and worldly-wise could have understood this coachee and essentially worked with him in a similar way.

This is not always the case, and so good supervision or a psychotherapeutic expert should be available if needed. Coaches can and should pluck up the courage to set out on these levels and take the risk of the often more decisive work of using dreams openly and creatively. The attitude promoted by a correctly understood way of using dreams complements a culture of dictators and dogmatists with aspects of a culture of understanding and creating sense.

II Guide to cooperative dream dialogs

A few guidelines:

It is not a question of dream interpretation, but of a gentle way of dealing with dream experiences and contexts. I.e. Exploration and visualization of

what is going on in the dream and

what is going on round about the dream, as well as

the meanings the dreamer gives his dream.

Resonances in encounters with others.

It is, then, also a question of the way the dreamer deals with dream occurrences as an example for the way he deals with experiences, of dialogue using dreams as an example for creative dialogue in other contexts.

- ❑ It is a question of creative experimentation with dream orchestration and also alternative orchestrations. Dreams are exempt from the laws of the real world,

are surreal in character. This opens up a multi-layered field of meaning and structure that can be utilized in dialogue.

4. So it is not a question of systematic analysis, but of a “narrative” dialogue with dream realities and between the partners in dialogue. Questions and observations may be unsystematic and selective like the exploration of an unknown, dark room with a narrow beam of light. But they may also reflect a general impression, even one that seems to appear completely unfocused on the edge of one's field of vision.
4. When talking about dreams, answers should be able to be given as “hidden answers”. The dreamer confirms that relationships are being addressed, experiences activated, may give key words, but has the right not to reveal more.
5. Dream dialogues ought to create contrasts in which meanings and impulses can be glimpsed. What is important is creative testing of ideas on transforming the orchestration of the dream as an example for other realities of life.

We can distinguish between:

- **horizontal transformation:** Alternative orchestrations are drawn up and gone through within the dream scenario.
 - **Vertical transformation:** Variations in the kind of orchestration and in the interplay between elements of other life scenarios and the dream scenario are gone through.
6. Dream dialogues, then, are an accepted mixture of the dreamer's world of experience and the dialogue partners' worlds of association. Each one takes what makes sense.

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7. It is a matter of unbiased dialogue as offers of possible meanings without resorting to any kind of expert authority.
 8. For the dreamer, situational plausibility is decisive and is complemented or corrected in the subsequent search process.
 9. Dream dialogues can be important for the dialogue partners as well as for the dreamer, because their experiences and worlds of meaning are activated in the dialogue. Everything offered to the dreamer can be examined as an offer to oneself.
 10. The message perspective of the dream:
 - Is it more likely that the content of the dream is retrospective? (Saying goodbye and paying tribute to past phases on transition to new ones)
 - Does the dream show a reflection of or a supplementary perspective to the present?
 - Does the dream mark a just beginning future development? (Even if this is not yet represented or only just beginning to reveal itself in real life)
 11. What would help to put things in the right perspective and in complementary relationships to each other?
 12. Experimental perspectives:
 - When difficult or alarming things are presented in the dream: how would it need to be re-orchestrated in order to make it bearable or even beneficial?
 - When in a dream a certain style of orchestration predominates, how could it be orchestrated to a different extent or in a completely different style? If the dream seems insignificant, how could it be enriched to make it interesting?

- When events or people in a dream are stylized as exaggeratedly beautiful or ugly, how might more moderate, everyday dimensions closer to real life look?

I Procedure: Putting in concrete terms, specifying, spontaneous resonance

13. Go through the dream narrative once more and ask after more specifics or details, in so far as memories can be found. Anything unclear or undefined can remain as it is.

The following can be of particular importance

- the beginning of the dream (scenario when the curtain goes up)
- the end of the dream (scenario when the curtain goes down)
- prospects at the end of the dream (Where does the situation seem to be going?)
- mood on waking and aftermath
- other outstanding items of the dream

14. Inquire about the quality of the dream elements:

- Descriptive: How can the person, the atmosphere, the room, the relationship be characterized?
- Differentiating: Why is it orchestrated this way and not, for example, in this or that other variation?

15. Spontaneous resonance:

- Where is the dreamer's interest crystallized?
- Where is the listener's interest crystallized? (Metaphor: Where does the divining rod dip, where does the Geiger counter tick louder?)
- Do the spontaneous interests of the dreamer and the listener fit? If not, where do they differ?

16. The dreamer's own interpretation:

- What is the dream about?
- Compare the dreamer's own interpretation with the occurrences in the dream: do they correspond to the dreamer's depiction/emphasis during his own interpretation?

17. Novelty value:

- Does the dream represent familiar experiences/observations?
- Where are there contrasts to familiar experiences?

Experimenting with context references

It is all about experimenting with possible connections between elements of the dream orchestration and orchestrations on other life stages. These references are as varied as life itself. A few are set out below as examples.

Context: Time

When did the dream occur?

- *What was going on at the time in the dreamer's life?*
- *What external events or inner experiences of this time are reflected in the dream?*
- *Assuming the dream was a commentary on or continuing narration of these experiences, what would it be about?*

18. Context through “quotes”

Subjective contexts that elements of the dream may be pointing to:

- *Which places, props, people, moods occur in the dream?*

- *Are elements of these familiar from other contexts or do they awaken associations with other contexts?*
- *Which worlds, times, themes does the quote possibly point to?*
- *Assuming the quote was a deliberate means of expression, what is the (dream) director trying to express?*

19. Context through cultural importance, relationship to “objective” contexts

Enrichment of meaning from cultural knowledge (amplifications) are explored as a supplement or replacement for subjective meaning classifications.

Example: Assuming there is an open fireplace with a fire in it in the dream:

- *What kind of thing is it? (e.g. technical equipment making the elements as a source of power controllable)*
- *Which basic function is embodied in the process of burning? (e.g. transformation sets energy free and makes it usable)*
- *What is its relative importance in civilization and in the dream? (e.g. an open fireplace is the simplest form of producing energy with a low degree of efficiency and high amount of work involved, in the dream it may be a romantic element probably not really used as a source of heat)*
- *What is the cultural importance? (e.g. a lot of fairy tales, narrative atmosphere, security, pensiveness, contact with the uncanny have grown up around fire)*
- *Why is it staged in this way and not in any other?*
- *Is there anything else conspicuous? (e.g. conspicuously high fire and empty wood supplies)*
- *In what other stories does this kind of element play a role?*
- *Assuming this means of expression was deliberate, what is it for?*

IV Context: Stages of professional and organizational life

20. Assuming there is a connection between the occurrences of the dream and professional problems, what could it be?

21. Assuming there is a connection between the dream and the situation in your company / in a partner's or customer's company, what could it be?

V Context: Private world as well as dream-dialogue relationship

22. Assuming there is a connection to stages in private life, which ones?

23. Assuming there is a connection between the occurrences of the dream and dream dialogue, between what happens during consultation, in a relationship within which dream dialogues take place, what would it be?

24. Are the connections between the dream and the various worlds of life very different? If so, what does that tell us?