

Yet adventure may prove to be the least important of a variety of reasons you might find it rewarding to cultivate the skill of lucid dreaming. (p. 2)

Lucid dreaming is a discrete altered state of consciousness that is radically different from ordinary dreaming. The term was introduced in 1913 by Frederick Van Eeden, a Dutch physician, to describe a class of dreams in which you "wake up" in terms of your experience of the way your mind functions but remain in a sensorial real dream world. Typically, you are having an ordinary dream when suddenly you know that you are dreaming, your mind becomes much clearer, your memory of your waking identity and knowledge returns, and your will returns.

In 1969, I reprinted van Eeden's classic article in my book, *Altered States of Consciousness*; although lucid dreaming became more familiar to psychologists, it was generally not taken seriously by those who had not experienced it themselves. Perhaps they thought lucid dreams were just moments of vivid imagination during a brief waking from sleep.

LaBerge's pioneering laboratory work, reported in very readable form in *Lucid Dreaming*, established that lucid dreaming occurs in a Stage 1 electroencephalograph (EEG) state with binocularly synchronous rapid eye movements (REMs), like ordinary dreams. At a minimum, lucid dreaming includes a clear recall and understanding of waking state experimental objectives and volitional control of dream action.

In one experiment that is described in this volume, a subject agrees that during lucid dreams, he or she will signal to the experimenter who is monitoring the polygraph that he or she is then lucid. This is not an easy task, given the general paralysis of almost all muscles that normally occurs in Stage 1 sleep! The experimenter measures the EEG, REMs, as well as electromyographic potentials on both wrists. The dreamer, on becoming lucid, sends the prearranged signal. The (dream) eyes are rolled vertically three times (pure vertical REMs are rare in Stage 1), and then the dreamer sends his or her initials in Morse code by tensing the (dream) muscles of the (dream) hands. If the right wrist is used to signify dots and the left is used for dashes, for example, LaBerge (a proficient lucid dreamer) would send his initials by tensing his right fist thrice (S = dot, dot, dot), pausing a moment, and then tensing his right fist once, his left fist once, and his right fist twice (L = dot, dash, dot, dot).

Enlarging Our World of Experience

Stephen LaBerge
Lucid Dreaming
Los Angeles: Tarcher, 1985.
287 pp. \$15.95

Review by
Charles T. Tart

Stephen LaBerge received his doctorate from Stanford University and is currently engaged in dream research at the Stanford University Sleep Laboratory. ■ Charles T. Tart is professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis. He is author of States of Consciousness and is currently editor of The Open Mind.

If someone offered to obliterate 6% to 7% of your conscious experience, would you accept?

This has already happened to many of us in the course of being enculturated as Westerners. About 1½ hours of each 24 of our experience are dismissed as "just dreams," because they occur at night and usually do not meet the standards of culturally approved "rational" experience.

I have always found this cultural in-

validation of dream life silly and possibly pathological. LaBerge's book is an excellent presentation of an attitude that allows dreams to be a positive part of life, and it goes on to show the reader how to further develop ordinary dreams into lucid dreaming.

Being awake in your dreams provides the opportunity for unique and compelling adventures rarely surpassed elsewhere in life. . . .

LaBerge describes many experiments about the nature of dreams that are enormously more efficient with a dreamer who is an active coexperimenter. At what rate does dream time flow? Have a lucid dreamer signal lucidity, then count off an agreed on number of seconds in the dream, then signal again. Now compare the polygraph marks signaling a dream time interval with clock time. The author describes several other fascinating experiments in this vein.

For those of us who are not lucid dreamers, LaBerge explains numerous techniques he has devised that have en-

abled several people to become lucid dreamers. He also discusses possible practical applications of lucid dreaming.

LaBerge and a handful of other researchers are opening up a new altered state for investigation. This is one of the most exciting developments in the psychology of consciousness. If you have any interest in dreams, this book is must reading.

Reference

Tart, C. T. (Ed.). (1969). *Altered states of consciousness: A book of readings*. New York: Wiley.