

# LDE



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# LUCID DREAMING *EXPERIENCE*



**MEETING MY MAIN CHARACTER  
USING LUCID DREAMING TO CREATE MUSIC  
KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCKING ON CREATIVITY'S DOOR  
AN ANCIENT COGNITIVE TOOL FOR CREATIVE INSPIRATION  
OPENING THE TREASURE CHEST: CREATIVE INSPIRATION IN LUCID DREAMS**



# Opening the Treasure Chest: Creative Inspiration in Lucid Dreams

by Clare R Johnson, PhD



Lucid, I recall my intention to find a ‘magic box’ of images, ideas, and inspiration. I

immediately see a treasure chest lolling open behind a tree. There are two big guard dogs near it but I shoo them away. To my surprise, the treasure chest is bursting with material – scraps of silk, twines of coloured wool, armfuls of slippery saris, thick ribbons all in a sumptuous tangle.

Following this lucid dream I started to create collages from the materials I’d seen in the treasure chest. It turned out to be engrossing and exciting to make a fabulous mess and get all sticky and covered in acrylic paint. Even today, I regularly make space in my life to create a new multi-media collage.

Did you notice that the lucid dream treasure chest was already lolling open when I found it? Those creative riches were just sitting in dreamland waiting to be discovered: barely hidden and sloppily guarded! Each of us has our own version of the lucid dream treasure chest and its accompanying guard dogs, and it’s a version that grows and changes as we do. Some people may find their biggest creative burst comes after surfing giant waves in a lucid dream; others might visit a particular meditative room or dream space which recharges their creative energy. Every inch of a lucid dream is crawling with creativity, and if we know how to, we can allow this creativity to respond to our current needs in highly specific ways.

In 2003 I began my doctoral research into lucid dreaming in the creative process, and discovered that lucid dreamers can get project-specific help from their lucid dreams. Doing this can be as simple as asking the dream outright: “What is the missing element in my presentation?” Or: “Show me my next sculpture in all its creative splendour!”

We can also just go with the lucid flow. Lucid dreaming often gifts us with experiences which surpass our waking life experiences, and we can bring this new knowledge into creative projects. One of my PhD case studies, novelist John Locatelli, reported the following lucid dream sensations which helped him with his novel descriptions:

‘moving upward, away from the earth at enormous speed... the amazing physical effort it took to move my arms outward as they seemed tied to my body with strong elastic bands. I used only the part of

moving at high speed in my book, but in my next book I plan to use the difficulty in moving my arms outward.'

### Creativity in the Lucid Void

One type of lucid dream that is often underappreciated is the lucid void. This often manifests as infinite black or grey space, or millions of dots of light. People tend to complain when they end up there – “Hey, where did my lucid dream go? This is boring!” Or they start to feel frightened of the nothingness and the loss of the sense of self as it sinks in that they are apparently alone and bodiless with almost no sensory input.

Yet the void is a space of creation. Or at least, it is if we relax and allow it to be. In *Lucid Dreaming: New Perspectives on Consciousness in Sleep*, I wrote:

As a lucid dream experience, the void offers possibilities for in-the-dream creative experimentation such as observing the transition from void to dream imagery and back again, or even composing music.

Back in the days when the void was not a common experience for me, I once found myself floating in infinite black space. I hung there for a while wondering if this was an OBE or just a very boring lucid dream, before amusing myself by building up an invisible orchestra, instrument by instrument, to thunderous and realistic effect, despite the fact that the height of my waking-life musical ability amounted to playing ‘Three Blind Mice’ on the recorder when I was seven.

The crescendo was so loud that I woke up... to a silent bedroom.

In the lucid void, creativity can arise in the most unexpected forms. Instead of battling to get out of this state, it might do us a whole lot of creative good to float happily and simply experience it with a sense of curiosity. Or meditate – after all, what else is there to do? The void is my favourite place to meditate as there is no physical distraction, no pain: only the mind. After a calm, meditative session in the lucid void I tend to feel creatively recharged and rejuvenated. Ideas begin to flow again. There’s a sense of expansiveness and

mystery in the void that fuels the creative process by inspiring us to take creative leaps.

### Overcoming Creative Blocks

It’s amazing how many people who turn up for my creativity courses are actually still harbouring a deep fear and suspicion of reaching out to their creative source. Objections are voiced:

“I’ve never been any good at drawing.”  
“I’m not an imaginative person.”  
“I never get good ideas.”

Yet once we start drawing with the non-dominant hand, sharing dreams, and practising my Lucid Writing technique, suddenly the creative treasure chest seems within reach. People’s eyes start to shine. They start to play again. Adults are altogether too serious! Playing is excellent and lucid dreaming is a wonderful playground.

If we don’t work on dissolving creative blocks while awake, they are likely to surface when we first attempt lucid dream creativity. For example, the dreamer may find the lucid dream unresponsive or downright obstructive when the idea of creativity is raised. An unhelpful dream figure might appear and sneer at them. Sketching once in a lucid dream, I noticed a woman watching me critically from the doorway. Since I knew she represented my inner critical voice, I was able to calmly ignore her and continue with my artwork. If your lucid dream doesn’t seem to be fully behind you when you try to get creative, try one of the following:

\* If things are really not working out, don’t push for the treasure chest/creative dream. Instead, ask the dream what you can do to dissolve any creative blocks you may have.

\* Challenge the critical presence in the dream. Ask them why they are there, invite them to help you!

\* Remain calm and unruffled. Know that it is really up to you if you want to pursue creativity in a lucid dream. Carry on creating! The more energy we give to creative blocks, the more powerful they become. This ‘lucid ignoring’ can be a good way of stilling your own critical inner voice in the waking state.

\* If you feel fearful or insecure while trying to reach your creative source in a lucid dream, dive into the fear. Get to know it; allow that energy to become your friend and fuel you rather than hold you back. Take the fear and put it to good use!

### Manifest a Creativity Portal

If you want a fast-track to creativity, try setting up a portal through the power of intent and expectation. Once in a stable lucid dream, say something like: "A Creativity Portal appears behind me." Then turn around and look for it. It can take various forms – a giant swirling hole, a mirror or pool, a neat door inset into a rock. Once you've identified it, dive in!

Repeat to yourself, "I am lucid, this is a dream," as you go through the portal, because depending on the portal it may be a crazy ride. Sometimes however, all you have to do is gaze into a portal to find yourself seeing or experiencing a new dream. In one lucid dream, I saw my face in the mirror and there was a brown circle on one of my cheeks. I recognised this as a portal-within-a-portal and dived into it... straight into another lucid dream scene.



Lucid dream portals are fascinating, and the more we look out for them, the more they seem to spring up seemingly of their own accord in lucid dreams.

Waking up in a dream can help us to engage consciously with our deepest source of unconscious creativity. We can choose to access this creative source by floating in infinite dream space, asking a lucid dream figure or object for guidance, creating a portal, going with the flow, or directing a question or request to the dream in general. It's good to experiment to discover what works best, remaining open to surprises and new ways to tap the source.

A hybrid state of consciousness, lucid dreaming combines the untamed creativity of the unconscious with a clear-headed mindset. Lucid dreaming is the key that opens our creative treasure chest.

Dr Clare R Johnson is the author of two lucid dream-inspired novels, *Breathing in Colour* and *Dreamrunner*, and was the first person to write a PhD on lucid dreaming and creativity. Her deep lucid dreaming website has many portals into different aspects of lucid dreaming. Look for circles or moving windows. Dive through the portals to explore lucid dreaming more deeply! If you have an amazing lucid dream to share, or an interesting experience manifesting a Creativity Portal while lucid in a dream, Clare would love to hear from you. [www.deeplucid dreaming.com](http://www.deeplucid dreaming.com)

