

Body Symptoms & Dreaming by Don Ollsin

Satisfy nutrition, reduce inflammation, improve circulation and enhance detoxification.

As these areas of our body get taken care of we can turn to clearer dreaming. It is like talking spirituality to a starving woman. As long as our body cells are in a state of starvation they are not as interested in the dreaming. One of the challenges and opportunity that dreaming offers us is an awareness of the many dream figures that inhabit our psyche. We probably have at least one dream figure who is in total support of us living as healthy as we can. I'm willing to bet that we have at least one other dream figure who doesn't give a shit, in fact he\ she or it may be doing all it can to destroy us. The most potent nutrient or force that I have ever found is love. This love includes ourselves and our bodies.

Now to the dreaming process.

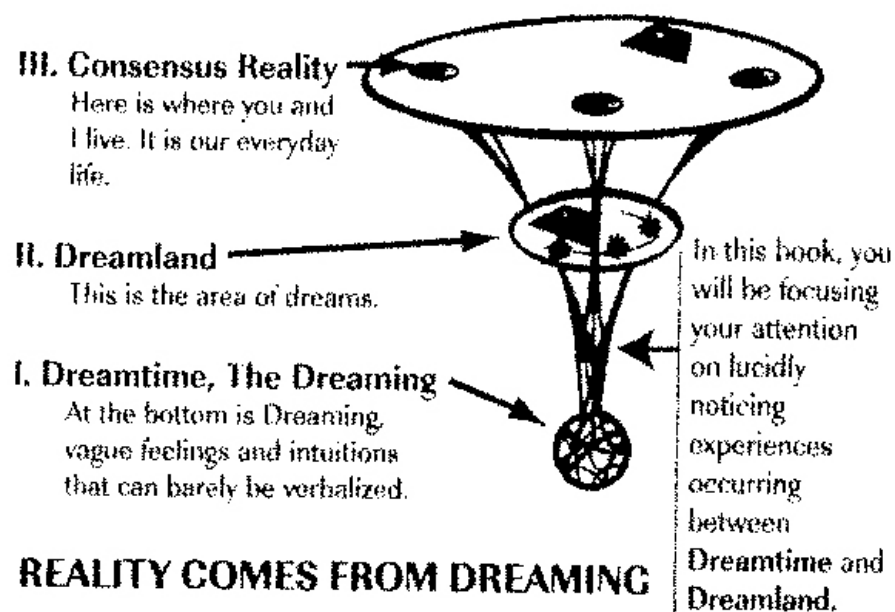
"According to old assumptions, the body is merely a machine. Currently there is a great deal of concern with the body, but most people have not yet discovered that special kind of bodily sense that is the "sense of a situation".

Why does focusing work? How does "the process" come to be so wise? It is the body that is so "wise," but of course it is not the body reduced to physiology, not the body-as-machine, but rather the body "from out of which you are living". This body is not one thing while you are another, a second thing. Your body enacts your situations and constitutes them largely before you can think how. When your attention joins this living, you can pursue many more possibilities and choices than when you merely drive the body as if it were a machine like a car. The body lives inherently with others. The body is born into interaction and physically implies moving toward and with people. When the body first arrives, it implies nursing and being held, and after the body absorbs all the complex human circumstances, it can suggest an intricate new move in an unheard-of predicament if we allow it.

The interactional nature of the "body-in-situations" is contrary to most theories. But even if we reject the theories, the old assumptions remain; they are built into common words and phrases. In my philosophy I find a way to devise phrases and sentences in which words come to be used in new ways, so that we can go on from here, to think further. I have built a theory with concepts of a new kind that have both logical and experiential connections. With those concepts I am able to build a new understanding of the physical body as continuous with and capable of, animal behavior, then of language, and at last of focusing." Gendlin

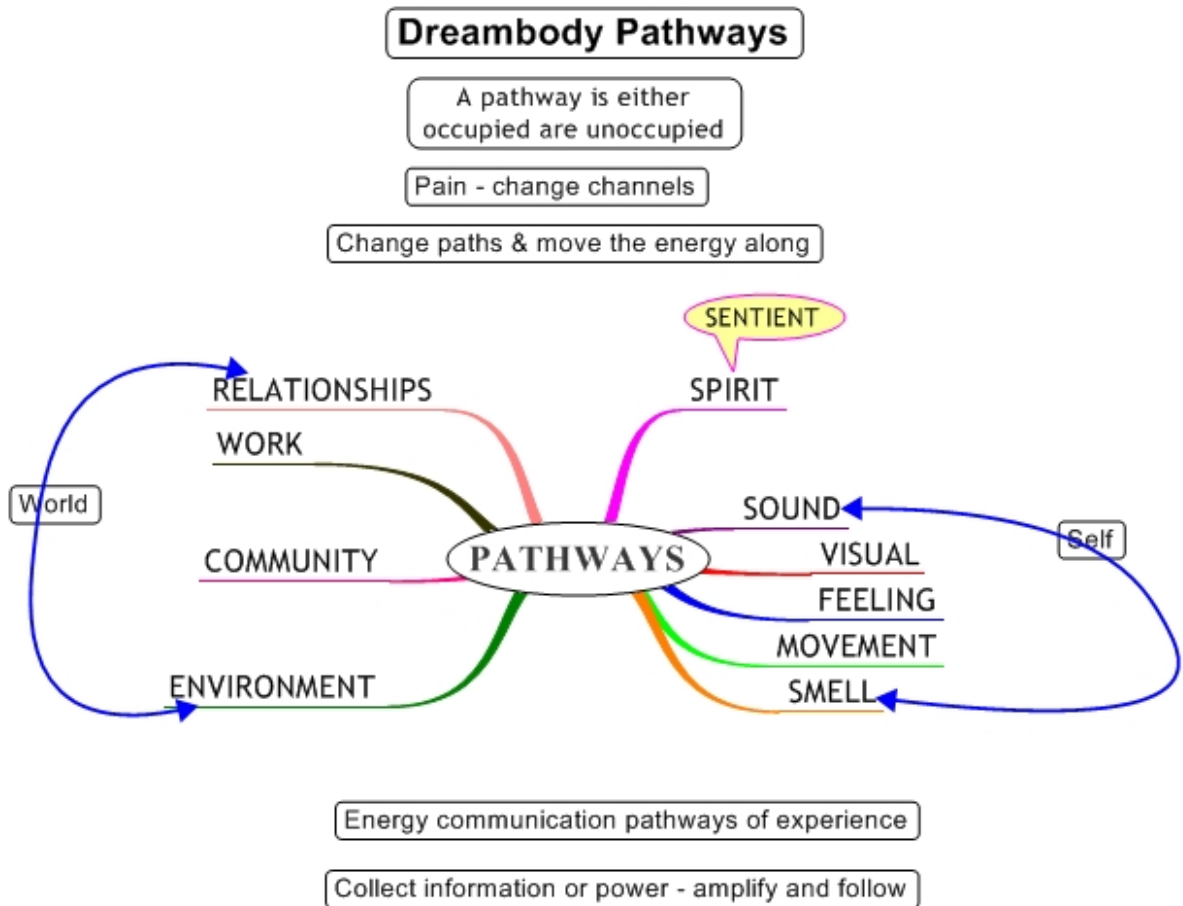
This exercise is something that can be done in almost any circumstance or situation. For the purpose of training I will recommend an ideal setup. Set aside a period of sufficient time, say 10 to 15 minutes. Make yourself comfortable but not so comfortable that you will fall asleep. Turn your attention to the inside. Asked "what wants my attention today?" For the purpose of this exercise choose a body symptom. We can apply this process to strong emotions, moods, sensations and situations. The first skill that we need to develop is one of a warm welcoming attitude. We do this by saying "hello" to what ever we encounter. We welcome it. We talk to it in a warm and friendly manner. We ask it if it's OK to hang out with it today. Once we have established contact and we feel that we are in a healthy relationship with our body dreaming we can go on. I find it helpful in this work to have the three levels of awareness in the back of my mind.

Dreaming While Awake



To start with, we will be working in consensual reality and dreamland. Later on we'll explore dreamtime and the sentient level. So we all generally agree that a body symptom is a disturbance in our body that is usually aggravating and probably interfering with our over all sensation of well-being. Generally, we consider body symptoms as undesirable. In this paradigm, we are going to consider body symptoms as body dreams and see if they're dreaming has a message or purpose for our over all wellness. To access the dreaming we are going to establish a relationship with our body dreaming. We consider the body symptom as a doorway to dreaming.

Now, we are going to enter in to dreamland via the body symptom. We have mapped out a number of different pathways in dreamland.



Some of the simple ways that we can work with the symptom is to explore it in different pathways. Ask your symptom of what kind of sound it would make. Allow your symptom to express itself through you as a sound. Ask your symptom, what it looks like and allow it to express itself through you as a drawing. Color allows greater expression, so you may want to have crayons, pencil crayons, pastels, paints or markers available. Modeling clay can also be an excellent medium for the dreaming to express itself. Ask your symptom if it has a movement and allow it to move your body. Start with small movements and if it feels right, slowly expand them. You may or may not want to stand and allow your whole body to move. Does your body symptom have a smell associated with it? These pathways relate directly to our self. Some of them will be more familiar and easier to access. The other pathways are more related to the world. You can ask yourself the following questions and explore the answers.

How does this body symptom relate to my relationships? Who is wrong with me? What does this body symptom in my work have to do with each other? If the body symptom was a part of my community what would it say? How does my body symptom relate to the environment that I live in? These questions may or may not reveal information that is important to you at this time. The last pathway that we will explore is the spirit pathway. This is the dreamtime or sentient level of awareness. What was the symptom before it was a symptom? The simplest method of exploring this pathway is to ask "what the symptom was before it was a symptom" as a Zen koan and see if you can get into a state that preceded the symptom. This is a lucid foggy nonverbal preverbal state without duality. This is the quantum level without form, the formless. Vagueness and fogginess are important tools to access this level. "In *Dreaming While Awake*, Arnold Mindell defines lucidity as awareness of sentient experience, which precedes everything you think, see, hear and do. When you are lucid, you sense tendencies as well as actualities. Lucidity is a detached, diffuse state of mind that is essential for working with sentience. It is adept at catching the merest suggestions of experience. Consciousness involves writing or knowing the notes of a song, while lucidity is awareness of the feeling background that gave rise to the song. Mindell also refers to lucidity as "cloudedness" to emphasize its loose, relaxed, not knowing quality. Like peripheral vision, is not focused on any one object or point of reference. It does not involve working or searching for meaning; nor does it try to achieve, understand or clarify." Julie Diamond 1

The shamans call it "stopping your story." What is this energy without any story attached to it? Another way to explore this pathway is through movement. It is a little trickier. You need to imagine something creating the symptom. We call this the symptom-maker. Once you have discovered the symptom-maker, you need to embody it. As the symptom-maker you allow your body to move. When your awareness is well anchored in the movement, you begin to slow it down. Using your awareness notice what most fascinates you in this movement. Find the impulse to make that movement. Right at that pre-movement, notice what flirts with you. It could be anything. Again, vagueness and fogginess are important to the process. We are like Alice in Wonderland. This is the rabbit hole. This is the unknown. It may or may not be weird or wonderful. Part of the process is to suspend the rational part of our mind. The healing if there is to be any healing is to be in the pure state of awareness prior to the existence of the symptom. In this unformed state, form can change. We are dipping into the world of spirit.