Karma as Response to Life: The Role of Ideals and Intention in Freeing Us from the Past

G. Scott Sparrow, EdD, LPC
DreamStar Institute
www.dreamanalysistraining.com

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The Foundation for Everything

Dream reliving and meditation as a way to enhance reflectiveness and constructive engagement in dreams

Gregory Scott Sparrow¹,², Mark Thurston³, & Ralph Carlson¹

¹University of Texas-Pan American Faculty, USA
²Atlantic University, USA
³Center for Consciousness and Transformation, George Mason University, USA

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Exploring the effects of galantamine paired with meditation and dream reliving on recalled dreams: Toward an integrated protocol for lucid dream induction and nightmare resolution

Gregory Sparrow², Ryan Hurd¹, Ralph Carlson¹, Ana Molina¹
A False Assumption

I said to my friend, Richard Otto one day after my second experience of white light.

“Richard, we must be close to enlightenment, don’t you think?”

He replied with fearful intensity, “Don’t say that. Don’t ever say that!”
Karmic Awakenings

• Remember the passion play that HLC invited me into? I happily said yes to the real nails!
• Remember that I was not ready when the star lady appeared.
• Remember that Jesus told me to “go out and do what you know to do,” if I didn’t want to die.
It is easy to believe that something has gone terribly wrong.

- Henry Suso and the baby
- Ken Wilber and his wife’s cancer
- My Benny dream
- Jesus and the gladiator
Looking at “Failure” Differently

- Underhill’s premise that the dark night follows the awakening
- Lama Govinda’s warning—the gap
- A two-dimensional view of Spirituality
  - You are anointed!
  - You are divided and must be united!
Looking at “Failure” Differently

• The guru who screamed
• Arjuna on the plains of war

“Some people neglect their duty in life for the sake of a spiritual life while others excuse themselves from spiritual practices because they believe that they have no time. Krishna’s message is to sanctify the entire living process.”
Looking at “Failure” Differently

• The levels parallel each other, but represent different domains.
  • One represents a necessary awareness of our spiritual nature.
  • The other represents the requirements of embodied life.
• We need both!
• Our struggles do not invalidate the awakening—it is a consequence of awakening!
The Crucible

The combination of…
• Awakening of Presence +
• Continuing Practice +
• Recognition of sacred Place +
• The surfacing of karma =

*The Crucible*, that is, the ideal life context for dynamic struggle, initiation, and resolution.
Meeting Karma in the Crucible

- We usually think of karma as “what happens to us.”
- Govinda’s definition—our response to a burning house, not the burning house
- Govinda’s plight of the spiritual seeker.
- Cayce’s said that the spiritual ideal was “not of conditions,” but rather who and what we serve.
- Every situation provides an opportunity to respond in a new way.—a great example is Victor Frankl
- My clients who have experienced infidelity
Meeting Karma in the Crucible

• I went up for full professor three years ago.
• A new chair with whom I had no previous relationship took a dislike to me, and tried to subvert my promotion.
• She “lost” my 200-page dossier—I had to recreate it.
• She contacted an external reviewer and probably asked her to trash my dream research.
• I had to appeal a decision made by a higher-up committee that included a “plant” of hers.
Meeting Karma in the Crucible

• But...I endeavored to understand my role in the conflict
• My colleague told me I was silly to take any responsibility—said I was acting like a battered spouse.
• I never took my eye off how I’d challenged her, what I could have done differently.
• Today, I am a full professor, and I work closely and harmoniously with her. (She was demoted)

You have to be the change you wish to see in the world—Ghandi
Karma is Our Response

• Karma, on one hand, expresses itself as a “reactive adaptive response” designed to protect us from being hurt again, at the expense of being fully alive and available. Examples:
  • Becoming silent when someone gets upset at us.
  • Cracking jokes or goofing around when intimacy is imminent.
  • Attacking when we feel criticized
Compliant Adaptive Responses

• Karma also expresses itself as “compliant adaptive responses,” designed to win love and approval at the expense of not expressing your own authentic opinions and aspirations.
  • Putting yourself last and taking care of others
  • Saying yes when you don’t mean it so to protect another person’s feelings.
  • Never challenging viewpoints that have been imposed by your family
Adaptive Responses

• Let’s break into triads and take a minute and share a reactive or compliant behavior of your own.
• What have been the effects of this response?
• Discuss the personal and interpersonal consequences of responding differently, based on your spiritual ideal.
Becoming a Conscious Initiate

• Every ordeal is an initiation, an opportunity to break out of reactive and compliant patterns.
• A new response can be nurtured through clarifying our ideals (intention).
• By setting our ideals, and embracing our ordeals as opportunities, we become initiates.
Becoming a Conscious Initiate

• I wanted to make amends with my ex-wife.
• I didn’t know how to do it, but prayed about it.
• I dreamt of her mother, who had died only months before.
• I decided the best way to make positive contact was to share the dream.
• It moved her deeply, and it opened a conversation about forgiveness.
Dreams Provide an Arena

• There is no better place to diagnose karmic patterns than in our dreams.
• There is no better (or more forgiving) place to practice new responses than our dreams.
• When we fail to respond according to our ideals, we can “intervene” with conscious intention.
Analyzing chronic dream ego responses in co-creative dream analysis

Gregory Scott Sparrow
University of Texas-Pan American Faculty, USA; Atlantic University, USA

Summary. With the advent of the co-creative dream paradigm, which is based on the principle that dreams are indeterminate from the outset, and co-created through the reciprocal exchanges between the ego and emergent dream content, the analysis of the dreamer’s responses becomes an important new dimension in dream analysis. In this paper, the author develops the hypothesis that chronic dream ego responses can be traced to two sources in the individual’s prior experience: 1) trauma and loss, and 2) introjected parental and cultural ideals. The individual’s efforts to prevent trauma and loss from recurring accounts for “reactive adaptive responses,” and attempts to emulate introjected ideals results in “compliant adaptive responses.” Both of these types of chronic responses can be identified with the dreamer’s help in dream analysis, and facilitative alternatives can be formulated in dialogue with the dreamer. The author presents a sequence of steps that can be used as a standalone method, or incorporated into existing dream work methods.

Keywords: co-creative dream analysis, lucid dreaming, adaptive response, dreamer response analysis, imagery change analysis
Dream Reliving

• The dream of Edgar Cayce, Mark, and the bumble bee.
• Upon awakening, I regretted my unfortunate reaction.
• I affirmed a new response.
• I was able to experience the fruits of my new intention immediately.
Frankenstein, Werewolf, Dracula

• The dream of an ARE member illustrates that our response to initiation can occur in stages.
• From this standpoint, resolving karmic patterns is an evolving, developmental process.
• We must be sensitive to what we (and others) need to do based on where we are in this process.
What Your Dreams Tell You

• Any distressing dream is a gift—an indicator of where you are arrested in your spiritual journey.
• If you can identify the response you are currently making, and revise it according to your ideals, then you will be preparing for a life-changing breakthrough.
Let’s Take a Look

• Break up into triads
• Share a distressing dream from any time in your life.
• Identify your response to the perceived threat.
• Discuss what you could have done differently, based on a developmental perspective.
• Discuss what the outcome could be.
Resolution of karma involves a developmental process.
It depends on appropriate responses at various junctures.
When the final step is fulfilled, Light and energy infuses the soul.
Light at the beginning, Light at the end of the journey.
Which leads us into the topic of tonight’s presentation...

The Destiny of the Soul—What Dreams, Lucid Dreams and Out-of-Body Sojourns Tell Us About What to Expect
More On Dreams and Initiation

If you are interested in reading more about dreams and initiation, you can go to my website and read a variety of papers on related topics.

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