



DREAM WORK: Eugene Gendlin's 16 Questions—Somatic Approach

After completing a dream recall, sit quietly and answer the following questions in your journal, spending no more than one minute on each. The first question shall always be answered. The others are discretionary. As you respond, allow yourself to be open to noticing any somatic reaction—that is, feelings or sensations in your physical body, such as tingling, goose bumps, chills, catching your breath, butterflies in your stomach, etc.

1. What comes to mind as you think about the dream?
2. **Feeling.** What do you feel in the dream? What in your life feels like some part of your dream?
3. **Yesterday.** What did you do yesterday? What were you inwardly preoccupied with yesterday, i.e., the day before the dream?
4. **Place.** What is the main place in the dream? Have you ever been in a place like that? How did it feel? What other places have felt like that?
5. **Story.** Summarize the story-plot of the dream. What in your life is like that story? Summarize the events of the dream in two to three sentences.
6. **Characters.** Who is the most important character? Are any of them unknown to you? Who do they remind you of?
7. What part of you is that? What feelings arise when you consider any particular character? What adjective could be used to describe that person? Is any part of you like that?
8. **Be that person.** Imagine yourself to be a particular dream character. How would you feel and act?
9. Can the dream continue? Vividly visualize the end of any important sense of the dream. How does that feel? Watch and wait for any change in images and feelings.
10. **Symbols.** What kind of things were in your dream? Pick a symbol and ask yourself what the object stands for? What is it used for? Can it be used for something else? Is it shaped like something else? Does it sound like something else?
11. **Body Analogy.** Could something in the dream be an analogy for the body? Such as: a House—the body, an attic—thoughts or being in your head, downstairs—lower level feelings or being grounded, a basement—the unconscious or something invisible. Any odd looking machines or items could be body analogies as well, explore this without judgment and see what arises.
12. **Counterfactual.** What in the dream is specifically different from the actual waking life situation? Why would the dream make these changes?
13. **Childhood.** What childhood memory comes to mind in relation to the dream or any part of it? What went on in your life at that time?
14. **Personal Growth.** How are you trying to develop? What do you wish you could be or do? In what way are you one-sided or not well-rounded?
15. **Sexuality.** Could the dream be a story about whatever you are currently doing or feeling about your sexuality?
16. **Spirituality.** What creative or spiritual potential of yours might the dream be about? Are you failing to take account of some of your human dimensions?