

Dreams and Well-Being

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of Tasmania

Statement of originality

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain material from published sources without proper acknowledgement, nor does it contain material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any university.

signed: _____

Sue Gilchrist, July, 2013

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Chapter 2:

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Chapter 6:

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Abstract

Anecdotal evidence abounds of the connection between improved well-being and understanding of one's own dreams. Unfortunately, evidence often comes from dream workers, dream interpreters, or other people with a particular interest in dreams who cannot be viewed as impartial; the evidence usually does not have a basis in scientific study. The objective of the research and studies reported in this thesis was to bring scientific rigour to the exploration of the effects of dreams on participants. This objective of robustness was achieved across three studies by using longitudinal and cross-sectional, quantitative and qualitative approaches investigating several areas: the source of dreams, contributory factors to the nature of dreams, emotions in dreams and in waking life, and methods for recording dreams. A definition of well-being had to be established, methods found for measuring well-being, methods of working with dreams both individually and in groups, and experiments devised to record any changes in affect attributable to participant's exploration of their dreams. The first study ($N=123$) looked at the connection between personality characteristics, waking events, thoughts and emotions, with those experienced in dreams. A strong correlation was found between the emotions experienced in waking life and those present in dreams. Only a few weak relationships were found between dream emotions and well-being measures. The second study investigated the intra-individual relationship between waking and dream emotions, using data collected from 32 participants over an eight week period. Analyses were carried out to investigate correlations between waking emotions and the dream emotions experienced that night, and between dream emotions and the waking emotions experienced the following day. The results of this study were inconclusive. The third study considered the effects of participants working in a facilitated workshop or in one-on-one sessions with a goal of making sense of their dreams in relationship to

their waking life. This study provided evidence of positive changes in participant's well-being, particularly in normalisation of participant's own dreams, better insight and understanding of their own life, and increased awareness and acceptance of their own emotions. Together these studies provide support for the premise that dreams are strongly connected to waking life and that through the use of techniques to interpret and draw learning from one's dreams, an improvement in well-being can be achieved.