



**Glynis Downey, 50**  
Integrative and transpersonal  
psychotherapist

"I was on a beach and I got on a cow and it threw me off. Then I met a tall man. I felt there was a message for me in that dream, but I couldn't see it."

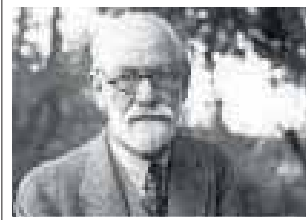


**Dario, 40**  
Fashion designer

"I was in a beautiful house and I met a wise man. I felt very energised after my dream. I want to have it again."

**BIG BUSINESS**

**Growth of the dream industry**



Ever since Sigmund Freud, the granddaddy of psychoanalysis, published *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1899, nocturnal visions have been big business. From books and films, to courses and candles, an entire industry has sprung up just to capitalise on mankind's obsession with dreaming. People will pay good money to attend workshops such as the one today at the Academy of Dreams to seek tips on how to achieve lucid dreams, a hallowed state of reverie when you know that you're dreaming. Dream therapists charge up to £80 an hour, while for £235 you can even purchase your very own dream diploma.



**Peter Cox, 61**

"I had been flirting with young women but I realised all the smiles were false."



**Bob Roope, 67**  
Optician

"I was being accused of something. Messages in dreams are cleverly disguised to make them palatable so that you can take things you don't want to hear about your life."

# Dream academy

Secrets of the subconscious unlocked

Seeking self-awareness by sharing your dreams with total strangers is becoming more popular. By **Susie Mesure**

**A** man sits in a courtroom, accused of what he knows not. His lawyer, one Erwin Rommel, the Desert Fox, looks at the judge and insists: "This man is innocent." A few minutes before, a stranger slashes her wrists in a toilet and dies. Not, in fact, scenes from a Hollywood thriller, but just two of the vivid images recounted to a respectful audience at Friday night's meeting at the Academy of Dreams in London. Bob Roope, 67, an optician from St Albans, Hertfordshire, is the man in the dock; Field Marshal Rommel, one of the few Germans to emerge from the Second World War with anything approaching a good reputation, his "shadow", according to a Jungian interpretation of Mr Roope's reverie. Glynis Downey, 50, a former nurse who lives in Hammersmith, is the unfortunate woman who finds the corpse: a "sinister" end to a dream that had

start- ed out promisingly, with a sandy beach and a "cosy" session with a tall, handsome man called Lone. Dream groups, such as the one Debbie Winterbourne runs each month in north London, are cropping up all over the UK as people seek an alternative route to self-enlightenment. The quest to interpret nocturnal visions may not be new, but the global fascination with the dream industry certainly is. Christopher Nolan's new sci-fi thriller *Inception*, which opened this weekend to almost universally euphoric reviews, is one big dream sequence that sees the star, Leonardo DiCaprio, and his fellow thieves hop from one dream to the next. Ms Winterbourne, who set up her Academy of Dreams two years ago and charges £10 per session, said interest had doubled in the past year. "People come as a form of therapy. A lot of dream theory says dreams are metaphors for what's happening in your life," she said. As well as running her monthly sessions and regular workshops, she teaches at the College of Psychic Studies in Kensington. Carole Murray, a dream therapist and hypnotherapist, said her clients often come because they want help analysing a dream that has

affected them deeply. "Women come more than men. They come from all sectors and from all ages. Most people have a good degree of intelligence about them," she said. "The benefits are that you know yourself better; you can work things out - who you're angry at, for example." Mr Roope, who has been interpreting his dreams for the past 30 years, said attending a dream group "brings things to life for me". He added: "I find this group very creative. It helps me get very much in touch with myself." Chatting through his recurring dreams of Rommel had helped him to "realise how to take care of the dark

side in myself. I need to make it an ally". Peter Cox, 61, also left happier on Friday despite sharing a dark tale of social rejection. He had described how dancing with women who later blanked him in two recent dreams had left a "bitter after-taste of unfulfilled potential and dashed hopes". But he was cheered

after Mr Roope pointed out that "at least he had got a dance in his dream" - progress compared with an earlier dream that had seen Mr Cox cycle through the Valley of Death. Louise Chunn, the editor of *Psychologies* magazine, said she could imagine dream groups taking off, in much the same way that "today's narcissistic society" is addicted to talking about itself on Twitter. "I can imagine talking about your dreams becoming a trend in the way that people photograph their food. Is this just another way to validate ourselves?" She warned that the upshot could be to leave those with less exciting dreams feeling inadequate. Some psychologists and psychiatrists worry that dream groups might cause harm if the distressing emotions turned up by the subconscious mind are mistreated. Patrick McNamara, associate professor of neurology and psychiatry at Boston University and author of *Nightmares: The Science and Solution of Those Frightening Visions During Sleep*, believes that dreams shouldn't be shared with anyone who lacks due regard for their complexity. Personally speaking, I'm just glad that my dream about this story not making it into the paper and all my colleagues disappearing to a music festival without me occurred after I'd attended Ms Winterbourne's dream academy; I'm not sure I would have liked her interpretation.

Additional reporting by Pavan Amara  
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**INTERPRETATIONS**

**Real life vs the subconscious - what the most common dreams can mean**

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|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Falling or sinking</b><br>Symbolise insecurities or feeling a lack of support in one's waking life.   | <b>Nudity</b><br>Perhaps you are feeling awkward or vulnerable.  | or afraid of being hurt. If someone else dies, it symbolises your wish that the person would go away or you fear losing them.                                | you are struggling over an important decision.  |
| <b>Flying</b><br>Flying with ease suggests that you are on top of a situation. Flying with difficulty or fear indicates a lack of power in controlling your own circumstances. | <b>Being chased</b><br>Typically suggests that someone or something is making you feel threatened or scared. | <b>Missing an important event, plane, train, etc</b><br>You feel you have missed out on an important opportunity in your real life. It will often occur when | <b>Failing a test</b><br>You may feel that you are unprepared or playing the wrong part in life.                    |
|  | <b>Illness or dying</b><br>You are emotionally hurt  |  | <b>Being lost or trapped</b><br>Often occurs when you are having a conflict in real life and can't make a decision. |

**NHS**  
*Blood and Transplant*

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