

Our Most Common Dreams

Dreams can be a gateway to understanding yourself. Socrates famously said, 'A life unexamined is a life not worth living.' Something to think about when examining your reasons for studying your own dreams.

The purpose of examining your dreams is to be able to link your conscious and unconscious making it possible to be free of your preconceived ideas about who you are and take a close look at your true self.

Dreaming is the only time we're disconnected from living – from our busy waking life and from NOISE! Your subconscious can only speak to you while you're quiet or asleep so use this blissful 'out' time to gain perspective on what's really going on in your life.

Analyzing our dreams is not a problem-solving device but more of a process to help identify the feelings they can bring to the surface which need to be dealt with. Once we gain understanding of a feeling or issue, we can choose to deal with it or choose to deny it.

The fascinating thing about dreams is that we all have them – even animals! Yes, your pets dream too. Remembering dreams is another thing altogether. What's even more interesting is that there have been international studies on dreams and amazingly there are at least 20 dreams we all share around the world.

THE TOP 20 DREAMS IN THE UNIVERSE

1. Being chased/attacked/paralyzed
2. Being hurt/injured/ill/suffocating
3. Driving or riding in a car – mostly out of control
4. Property loss – money keys, wallet, valuables, children
5. Exam – poor performance, being late, being unprepared
6. Falling/Drowning
7. Flying/swimming
8. Being naked in public/having no privacy with toilet
9. Missing bus/train/plane/boat
10. Machine or phone malfunction

11. Being lost, trapped, stuck
12. Natural disasters – fire, flood, earthquake
13. Losing your teeth, breaking teeth
14. Animals especially horses, lions, snakes
15. House
16. School – going back to school, university
17. Babies – giving birth, dying, losing, in company of
18. Death – of a loved one, you think you are going to die, a ghost
19. Infidelity – sex with strangers, same sex, erotica
20. Spiritual guides, guiding light, alien beings, angels

Many of these common dreams occur during changes in your life – transitional or even traumatic events can bring up volatile emotions that have lain dormant within you.

It's no surprise then that the top dreams we all share are highly emotional and mostly negative.

See how many of these dreams you've experienced. You may have not dreamt them often, but in our lifetime, you will have dreamt these at least once. For many people, these dreams keep coming back as a reminder of things not dealt with or as a reflection of something happening in their life at that moment. For example, if you only dream of being chased when you are under stress, then every time you are under stress, there will be the dream.

Once you gain insight into what's going on in your emotional world, you are empowered to do something about it. Your subconscious has revealed all that you need to know at this point in order to gather information about your life matters. How you then deal with your life situation is up to you – your conscious, rational 'you'.

Dreams shine a torch on what we have suppressed in our conscious minds for many reasons. It may be that our ego has not wanted us to become fully aware of parts of ourselves we weren't ready to deal with earlier. However, our 'soul' or subconscious self feels otherwise. Once you begin to receive guidance from your inner self, you just have to do something about it.

Common Dream 1: BEING CHASED/ATTACKED

Emotions associated with/experienced in this dream:

Anxiety, fear, inability to cope, lack of self-acceptance, powerlessness

General meaning:

Being chased and or attacked as a result of the chase is our most common dream world wide. It is an anxiety dream reflecting insecurities or fears we experience in our waking life. It is also a very ancient dream going back to people's earliest encounter with being chased by wild animals – so it's a familiar emotional response to the 'flight or fight' situation we still have today.

We don't have wild beasts chasing us but we do have other monsters that chase us and certainly won't let us get away. On a wider scale and on what we all feel collectively in the universe, we're running away from the greatest fear we all share as humans – DEATH.

It's not so much the physical death which we know is inevitable, but endings – death of a relationship, death of a lifestyle, death of a career. Just as there are endings there are beginnings. Change is just as terrifying as death.

If you dream of being chased, ask yourself:

Is there something or someone you are running away from in your waking life?

Could it be someone or something that you are afraid of or are unwilling to face?

If it's not an external situation or person, then the monsters chasing you could be parts of yourself - *the hidden or shadow self* - that you do not want to confront or acknowledge in waking life.

Emotional beasts such as fear, anxiety, anger, envy and aggression can seem to overtake us at times. Maybe you don't want to 'own' these scary qualities because you won't know what to do with them. By running away from these volatile emotions, you avoid having to face them.

However, it's best to remember that these dream 'beasts' won't give up and they'll keep hunting you down, if not in this dream, there are always those recurring dreams which keep coming back.

They're always the same: sometimes you're attacked, sometimes you're paralyzed and can't run any more, but *always* chased. Whatever the outcome of the dream, it's not going to go away until you've dealt with the emotions it has brought to the surface. Then it's time to face your conscious self in real life and confront the issues that the dream has dredged up.

Breaking down the dream

Typical scenario: 1. You are being chased by someone you know/a shadow or stranger/animal/creature.

- You are able to escape either by special powers or by outwitting the pursuer
- you are caught and/or attacked and come face to face with the pursuer
- you are paralysed and can't run or you run in slow motion with the pursuer just out of reach
- you stop and face your pursuer and/or attack him/it
- you wake up with the chase is still on

(a) the chaser

Keep in mind the emotion you are feeling in this dream. Ask yourself who is chasing you. Is it

- Someone you know
- A shadow or stranger
- An animal or creature

If it's **someone you know** ask yourself what this person represents to you in real life and how you feel towards this person.

Sometimes family members, partners, friends and work colleagues turn into uncontrollable psychos in your dreams and won't leave you alone – no matter where you run or hide. Ask yourself why you feel the need to escape and what is it that you don't you want to deal with.

If it's **work**, look at your relationship with your boss and colleagues. Is there someone hounding you for work you haven't done or not done well? Are you trying to avoid some aspect of your work? Perhaps there's competition and you're running the race, which is making you feel under

pressure to succeed. How you are feeling in the dream can give you a clue.

If it's related to **home** there may be chores that you need doing but you have avoided or family issues that simply won't go away.

In terms of **relationships**, you might be feeling guilty that you have been neglecting your partner, spouse, children or friends. If you look at the words 'catch' or 'pin down' see if these words apply to you. How easy are you to catch or pin down to make a commitment? It may be just in socializing or being emotionally unavailable.

"Let's catch up" might be a catch-phrase you often hear. If you dream of being paralysed while you are being chased, it could indicate that you may be feeling trapped in a relationship. You may be feeling overwhelmed by anxiety and fear as demands are being placed on you.

It may be that whoever is chasing you represents your **health and fitness**. Fear of ageing and illness is an anxiety most of us will admit to having. Appearance and the obsession with youth are an unfortunate and debilitating symptom of our society today. Is age 'catching' up with you?

Guilt or fear of this ageing process where the dreamer feels helpless or overwhelmed by the demands to look good is likely to be another reason for the chase fear. If you fear ageing, it may be for a different reason altogether.

Many women who've put off having children are faced with infertility or an absence of a partner who will provide them with children. *Perhaps it's the biological clock that's chasing you.*

If you dream of being chased by a **stranger or shadow** and you feel threatened with violence or rape, it may firstly reflect your real life fears. The dream therefore can be treated as a warning: be careful whom you trust and be mindful of your surroundings. Don't put yourself in danger.

On the other hand if you see the shadow/presence or **faceless person** as parts of yourself – your shadow self which you try to disown,

Look for clues in your dream to see whether any of these feelings resonate with you.

Explore what parts of yourself

- You're afraid of
- Don't like
- Don't want to face
- Suffocate you or stifle you
- Overwhelm you
- Don't want to own negative parts of yourself? Think of the seven deadly sins

Ask yourself what you're going to do about them. Will you suppress them and continue to put up a front so everyone sees only the good side, which you've manufactured? How long will you hide the dark self – the parts of you that make you feel bad, flawed, imperfect, not good enough, not up to other's expectations?

What about those bad habits or addictions like alcohol, drugs, gambling or smoking etc? Anything that makes you co-dependent is causing you to run away from the truth.

To accept your whole self –by looking at your imperfections, processing them and finally yielding them refined –is precious insight.

If you dream of an **animal or creature** chasing you it could be relating to an external factor – someone aggressive is out to get you, someone who embodies these animalistic behaviors.

Consider someone around you who might be making you feel threatened or who displays animal-like behaviour. It may be someone who's on the prowl, trying to get to hunt you down or a pest who won't leave you alone.

On an internal level, the dream could be pointing out your own 'animalistic' or primal instincts that you don't acknowledge or have forgotten to use. Animals act as symbols of our deepest fears, urges, repressed or neglected parts of ourselves.

Ask yourself what animalistic or primitive traits aren't you comfortable with owning or bring into awareness. As long as we reject the animal within us, we cannot be at one with the world around us. After all it's a jungle out there and only the fittest survive!

You may feel disconnected with your environment, particularly if there has been a change in location or situation. Life transitions, such as marriage, parenthood, divorce, work relocation etc can make us feel disconnected and not part of the old order of things.

Changes need to be implemented. To understand what this animal means to you in your dream, think about what animal instinct you need to adopt or access in yourself to gain insight into your situation.

Is the dream telling you to be more adaptable to your new environment? Think of all those amazing animals that use camouflage and change their bodies to survive in hostile environments.

Secondly, consider what the animal represents to you. You might associate a lion with authority and power – think of who embodies these qualities in your life. If you are feeling frightened of this animal, it's likely that it is considered a potential dangerous or aggressive wild animal. It can also be a domestic animal that has gone feral – wild and uncontrollable. What's 'gone feral' in your life?

(b) Symbols and language

If you still haven't worked out what your anxiety is in the chase dream, let's look closely at the scene of your dream. Where does your dream take place? Is it in a deserted street, an alleyway, at home or an unfamiliar area? Look at other objects or people around and what they might represent.

Water

Water is a powerful imagery in dreams. Generally, it represents your emotions on a practical level. Ask yourself why you are running away from your emotions – are you feeling as if they will drown you and as a result you will feel helpless and out of control? Perhaps you are running away from the intuitive part of yourself.

Building including parts of a house

Who hasn't had the terrifying dream of being chased and the door is locked or the door handles come off, the stairs are broken, the elevator is stuck or goes to the wrong floor, the corridor is endless and you can't choose the right door to escape? Your heart is in your mouth, you sweat and tremble. Being chased in a building where you are unable to find

your way out is one of the most common scenes in a chase dream. An abandoned building mirrors our own sense of feeling abandoned and alone.

If you dream of being chased to the attic, it suggests that the situation in your life is literally occupying your mind. The attic represents your mind and thoughts – being located at the highest part of your body, your head. Are there matters that you've been trying to store away from your conscious mind that you don't want to deal with?

Perhaps your dream had led you to the attic because there's nowhere else to go – you can only jump! You have to take a leap of faith and get on with facing your life issue.

A basement, on the other hand, is where you keep most secret fears or undeveloped side of yourself. However, being chased down a long narrow corridor reflects how restricted you feel in real life. The dream might be pointing out that you're afraid of being aimless and getting nowhere fast.

Open field

Fields indicate your hopes and your unlimited potential for growth. If there's a fence in your dream, it represents an obstacle that you need to overcome. Something is fencing you in and not allowing you to get reach safety. Perhaps you need to 'get over' a relationship or work situation. Fences can also be boundaries or our own inhibitions. If your boundaries aren't being challenged, then perhaps you are anxious to overcome your inhibitions.

Forest

Forests symbolize our feelings of uncertainty about the future. The trees obstruct our view and we can't see far ahead (can't see the forest for the trees). Trees in the forest represent our old thought patterns or value systems that no longer work because they block out the big picture in our lives. Ask yourself why the chase has brought you to the forest – a place generally associated with a place of hiding, overgrowth or dangerous encounters with the wild.

In other words, a dreamscape that represents both negative and positive forces in our lives. It may just be that you need to unclutter your real life or your mind and let go of things that don't matter anymore so that you can see clearly ahead. Then you can get to see the big picture.

Mountains

Mountains are larger than life obstacles that, once we climb, we conquer. A chase dream in the mountain indicates a fear of success or that you might lose your lofty or ‘top’ position. It may suggest that you can’t meet someone else’s high expectations. Look to the emotion in the dream to guide you to understanding.

Alley or deserted street

Like the corridor image, an alley or back street is narrow and has potential escape routes such as unlocked doors. However, in many chase dreams the alley is cluttered with a dead end, resulting in feeling trapped and vulnerable to your attacker.

In a chase dream, the alley is giving you a snapshot of your ‘inner landscape’ – that is, where you’re at in real life. The alley is isolated and abandoned – just as you might be feeling. The pursuer in your dream could be showing your real fear of straying or of standing apart from the rest.

In other words, fear of using your individuality as this may change the way you see things and live your life.

Words are powerful. They create realities. Every language has its particular expressions and can offer another type of clue in dreaming. In English, there are a number of popular expressions on the topic of *chase*. They may give you more clues into the meaning of your dream, whether it’s advice you should be listening to, the state of a situation or strategies to put in place.

Chase your own tail: This is an endless chase – something futile and completely worthless where nothing is achieved. You’re getting nowhere fast.

Cut to the chase: Procrastinating. Think about whether you’re putting off doing something. Perhaps you’re doing something the hard way and there’s a short cut.

A wild goose chase: Looking in the wrong places. Shift your focus and adopt a new perspective.

Thrill of the chase: Do you want something badly enough or is it just the exercise in getting it that’s exciting? Think of your relationships, how you commit and the part your ego plays.

(c) outcome of chase

If you are caught and struggling to escape your captor, it may suggest that the issue you haven't been able to get away from has finally pinned you down. There's obviously some issue or parts of yourself you need to confront and accept. There's no point struggling because it will only make you feel victimized and disempowers you.

It's common to feel as if you are running in slow motion or your legs are as heavy as lead and won't move. You may even lose your voice.

If you are caught and you face your pursuer, this will empower you to face your worst fears and resolve some underlying issues that you hadn't previously dealt with effectively.

If you are attacked, it is a perceived threat. Dreams of being attacked typically represent feelings of being attacked emotionally, physically or verbally in our waking lives.

If we able to identify the attacker in our dreams, we will learn who or what is causing the distress. If you are attacked by someone you know then you might feel threatened emotionally by this person.

If you dream of being paralysed or trapped, it's a natural body response when we are in REM sleep. Our body is physically paralysed but our brain is at its most active. This is to protect us from becoming physically violent and agitated in dreams where we are being attacked or threatened.

You may feel paralysed, trapped or running in slow motion because the dream is telling you that you have to face a problem or an unresolved issue and won't be allowed to run away. Running away is no longer an option in your waking life. It could also be pointing out how you are emotionally feeling in real life – trapped and powerless. Think about whether you are feeling overwhelmed by some aspect of your waking life and what demands are being placed on you.

The *endless chase* in the dream when you wake up and you're still being chased is the most frustrating of all. It's showing you that your ego won't be pinned down. You don't want to face something that is now staring at you.

In fact, you are in denial. Instead of confronting the situation, you are running away and avoiding it.

As this is a typical recurring dream, it would be best to try lucid dreaming whenever it occurs – that is – try to take control of your dream.

Make yourself stop and face your pursuer and then ask, “What do you want?” Once you do this, you will get find an answer, If not in your dream world, then in your real world once the conscious has been made aware that there’s a question to be answered You may not be able to manage the first few times, but lucid dreaming is like everything else, with practice you can it.

Dream insight for life strategies

The chase dream is about making changes. Changes are good for us, therefore running away is futile. If you dream you are being chased by dream characters out to get you, it can symbolize the running away from the inner voice telling you it’s time to grow and change and let go of your old identity or the notion of who you’ve told yourself you are.

To grow and change, you have to get away from what’s no longer working for you. That’s what your unconscious is telling you, but your conscious self – your ego – doesn’t want to let go. It’s frightened of change. Hence the chase.