

# Dreams decoded

From being naked in public to your teeth falling out, we unravel the mystery behind your most common dreams

**D**uring our lifetime, we'll spend a quarter of a century sleeping, about six years of which will be spent dreaming. In an average year, we can have up to 1800 dreams, but we only vividly remember a few. However, the dreams that linger are often confusing and confronting. Thankfully, they don't have to be such a mystery. "Dreams are messages from our subconscious that help us to work out real life issues," dream analyst Rose Inserra explains. "They're not literal and often come to us in symbols and images, which is why sometimes they don't make much sense." Here are her interpretations of a few of the most common dreams.



Rose Inserra  
Dream analyst

## BEING NAKED

You'd be hard pressed to find someone who *hasn't* had a dream in which they're starkers. "This dream will come up at various stages of your life," Rose explains. "Naked dreams often happen when you're starting a new phase in your life, such as a job or relationship or you are about to move or travel. It's about fear of being scrutinised or ridiculed for revealing who you really are." On the flip side, if you're happy being naked in your dream, it signifies a free spirit and confidence.

## CHEATING ON YOUR PARTNER

If you're having lusty dreams about a male friend or colleague, don't worry; your subconscious isn't trying to reveal a secret crush on them. "This dream means you're looking for a more physical or emotional connection with your current partner," Rose says. "For example, a dream in which you're having an affair with an older man means you're looking for more security and stability in a relationship."

## Tame the terrors

Adult nightmares can be very distressing, especially when they're frequent. "They're the manifestation of our worst fears and the build up of the stress and anxiety in our daily lives," Rose says. To stop nightmares recurring, try dream re-scripting, which aims to change their outcomes.

**STEP 1** Choose a recent nightmare and re-write the ending on a piece of paper. Choose a positive ending that will make you feel empowered and confident.

**STEP 2** Before you go to sleep, sit up in bed and relax your body and mind for a few minutes.

**STEP 3** Once you feel calm, visualise the dream you're re-scripting and go through it in your head as if it's a movie. Now add your new ending. Remind yourself that you're confident, strong and in control of the patterns in your life.

## FALLING

Ever woken in fright from a dream with that dreaded stomach-churning feeling you were falling? According to Rose, this common dream stems from feeling unsupported. "It means you need to take a leap of faith, but you're scared because there is a lot of self-doubt and negative talk going on with you," she explains. "You need to look at what's been going on in your life in previous weeks, examine where you're lacking support, and remove yourself from that situation or ask for help."

## DYING

While dying in your dream seems like the worst possible scenario, rest assured it's often a good thing! "Generally it means there is an ending in your life, such as a job or a relationship or even old habits," Rose says. "Death dreams also represent new beginnings and growth." These unnerving visions signal your subconscious urging you to reconnect with yourself and prepare for change.

## SHARKS

The real reason you dream of these marine predators isn't because of *Jaws*, but because sharks signify feeling unsafe in your waking life. "You're out of your depth and the person or situation causing you to feel this way is being represented as the shark," Rose says. "Think of sharks as being unethical people or organisations. The dream is warning you to be careful who you surround yourself with, especially in your career, business and work."

## RUNNING

"This is the number one anxiety-ridden dream," Rose says. "This occurs when we're feeling stressed and threatened." Rose suggests asking yourself, "What am I running from in my life? What am I trying to avoid?" This can be anything from money issues, such as falling behind with bills, to feeling under pressure to commit to a relationship you're not sure about. "It all stems back to our waking life," she adds.

## TEETH FALLING OUT

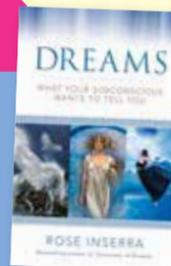
Losing your teeth is seen as a metaphor for losing control. "It stems from people having a lack of confidence and not saying what's really on their mind," Rose says. "This dream is more common with women than men as it also stems from fear of ageing." If you look at your waking life, it might be time to speak up and start backing yourself.

## Sleep on it

As part of one of the world's biggest social experiments, free app Dream:ON lets you decide what you dream about. By listening to one of 40 themed soundscapes before bed, you can alter your dream settings from, say, a serene garden to a pool party.

## Useful read

*Dreams: What Your Subconscious Wants to Tell You* by Rose Inserra, Rockpool Publishing, RRP \$27.99



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