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Interpreting job dreams

They can reveal your aspirations and anxieties related to work

If you have ever had dreams ? or even nightmares ? about your job, you're not alone. In a 2003 survey of 1,000 adults conducted by British bank NatWest, 80 per cent of women and 60 per cent of men said they dream about work. Moreover, 65 per cent of women and 43 per cent of men reported waking up in a cold sweat, worried about their jobs.

Another 2003 survey of more than 1,000 adults by British education company Learndirect revealed that 57 per cent of the respondents said they suffer nightmares about their jobs. Fully 25 per cent experience those nightmares once a week or more.

The Learndirect study asked participants what their work-related dreams were about. Here are the responses (in order of frequency):

- Arguing with the boss.
- Lusting after a colleague.
- Going to work naked.
- Losing files in a computer crash.
- Getting fired.
- Killing the boss.

What dreams mean

That we sometimes dream about our jobs isn't in question. But whether or not we should take our work-related dreams seriously is a matter of continuing debate. Some experts argue that dreams of any kind are essentially meaningless. But dream expert Craig Hamilton-Parker says, "Dreams can highlight things that are worrying in our lives and can help us? sort out our problems."

Your full potential

"For example, when you have a nightmare, it is your subconscious letting you know that you are more preoccupied with a given issue than your conscious mind is letting you believe," Dalfen

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writes in her book.

Decoding dreams

To understand and benefit from your work-related dreams, you need to learn how to read between the lines, says dream expert Gillian Holloway, author of *Dreaming Insights: A 5-Step Plan for Discovering the Meaning in Your Dream*.

For example, suppose that you have the relatively common dream about showing up for work or an important meeting naked. "This dream usually dramatises a feeling of vulnerability and exposure in waking life," Holloway notes on her website.

"It is particularly common to people who have accepted a promotion, gone off to a new school or who are coming into public view for some reason." The dream suggests the dreamer may be focusing deeply on some area of his life where he's taken on a new role he hasn't gotten used to yet.

Similarly, you might have the common dream about being unprepared for some job-related task. "This dream is most common to people who never allow themselves to be unprepared," Holloway stresses. "The people who have it are generally competent professionals."

You may or may not buy into the idea that your work-related dreams symbolise something deeper. That's just fine. If nothing else, your work-related dreams are fascinating to ponder ? and perhaps even learn from if you're open to trying.



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