

Working with Dream Color

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Research in the field of Color Psychology has shown that humans respond both physiologically and emotionally to color; the autonomic nervous system and brain respond directly and subliminally in a fairly predictable manner as a person is illuminated with specific colors. This phenomenon may involve the limbic system which associates emotional memories with whatever our senses take in. This author's research has shown color to relate to the same neurological processes and thus the same emotional associations in the dream state as in the waking state. It is likely that the limbic system is involved here as well, because it is highly active in the dream state. The author has found that dream color more often relates to inner FEELINGS the dream is dealing with, and less often to what the color reminds you of, although any associations or memories that arise as you work with your dreams are worthy of exploring.

Because color in the dream and waking state relates to similar emotions, a table of common subliminal emotional responses to color is provided (reverse side) to help stimulate your own associations with your dream colors. The table was derived from color psychology research and literature, in large part the *Color Test* by Dr. Max Luscher, augmented with the works of C. G. Jung. The statements in the table are NOT the "meaning" of dream color and should not be used as a dictionary of color meaning – they are simply designed to trigger your own personal "aha" or "connection" with feelings or a situation in your life that the dream might be dealing with. They may or may not describe your situation exactly since they are based on responses from a general population. You may find that only one or two statements within a color cell relate to your specific situation, whereas the others do not. This is exactly how it was designed. The statements are variations around an emotional theme reported to be associated with that color. They provide a spectrum of emotions, from being filled with the emotion, to needing more of that emotional stimulus. If the table does not trigger an association then try freely associating by imagining being totally illuminated by your dream color and asking, "how do I FEEL in the presence of that color." First explore the feelings that surface before pursuing memories or what the color reminds you of.

- 1) **Select the colored images from your dream** that you feel are important or that you feel emotionally drawn to. It is best to work with something that is not a commonly colored object (like green grass), unless it stands out. Work with a colored image where the color is optional (such as a red hat, a blue car). Also if you notice the presence of a grouping of the 4 "psychological primaries" (Red, Yel, Blue, Green) it may relate to the dream's attempt at finding completion or closure related to something happening in your life. Work on whichever color appears most active, or if it appears that one color is obviously missing (only 3 colors present in the group), then work on the missing color as if it is something missing in your life needed to bring about closure or harmony.
- 2) **Pick the color in the table** that best matches the color of the dream image. Don't worry if there is not a perfect match. The tables are not intended to reveal the meaning of that color but rather to trigger your own associations from the general emotional themes.
 - **Single Color:** use the table to select the closest matching color.
 - **Color Pair:** If an image contains a pair of colors, explore the possibility that the two colors might represent conflicting emotions about a situation you are in. Use the table on each color separately and contrast the associations and feelings they trigger.
- 3) **Read each expression** for that color (or better yet have someone else read them while you listen) **and ask yourself:** "Does this statement relate to a way I have felt recently or describe a situation in my waking life?"
- 4) **Relate to Waking Life:** Pick the one or two statement(s) that create the strongest "aha" connection or that reminds you of a recent situation or way you have felt lately. Describe the situation, and your feelings at the time.
- 5) **Reflect on the Dream:** How might the situation or feelings you recall above, relate to the dream. Do they clarify or complete the other dreamwork you may have done? If you selected a pair of colors, do the 2 sets of statements relate to conflicting feelings surrounding your situation?

For more information on the dream color research go to www.dreamscience.org and click on either the Science of Dreaming or Dreams and Color buttons. The topic is also covered in depth in the book *Dream Language* by Robert J. Hoss, published by Innersource 2005.

Common Emotional Themes Associated with the Human Response to Color

Note: statements are designed to trigger your own personal associations; they are not the “meaning” of color

RED	1) I feel intense, vital or animated. 2) I feel transformed. 3) I feel assertive, forceful. 4) I feel creative. 5) I want to live life to its fullest. 6) I want to win, succeed, achieve. 7) I feel sexy or have strong sexual urges. 8) I have a driving desire. 9) I need something to make me feel alive again. 10) I need to be more assertive and forceful. 11) I need to get out and enjoy myself. <i>12) If red appears as blood or inflammation – it may relate to a physical condition, illness or injury</i>
ORANGE	1) I want to expand my interests and develop new activities. 2) I want a wider sphere of influence. 3) I feel friendly and welcoming. 4) I want more contact with others. 5) I feel enthusiastic, outgoing and adventurous. 6) I am driven by desires and hopes toward the new, undiscovered and satisfying. 7) I feel driven but need to overcome my doubts or fear of failure. 8) I must avoid spreading myself too thin.
YELLOW	1) I feel a sense of joy and optimism. 2) I feel alert. 3) I am seeking a solution that will open up new and better possibilities and allow my hopes to be fulfilled. 4) I feel the new direction I am taking will bring happiness in my future. 5) I am hopeful. 6) I need to find a way out of this circumstance or relationship. 7) I need a change. 8) I may be compensating for something. 9) I am acting compulsively.
GREEN	1) I need to establish myself, my self-esteem, my independence. 2) I want recognition. 3) I need to increase the certainty of my own value and status, through acknowledgment by others of my achievements or my possessions. 4) Hard work and drive will gain me recognition and self esteem. 5) My opinion must prevail. 6) I must hold on to this view in order to maintain my self-esteem. 7) I want what I am due. 8) I must maintain control of the events. 9) Things must not change. 10) Detail and logic are important. 11) I need to increase my sense of security. 12) I need more money to feel secure. 13) I want to withdraw or retreat into my own center. 14) I feel healed or I need healing.
BLUE	1) I feel tranquil, peaceful and content. 2) I feel a sense of harmony. 3) I feel a meditative awareness or unity. 4) I feel a sense of belonging. 5) I need rest, peace or a chance to recuperate. 6) I need a relationship free from contention in which I can trust and be trusted. 7) I need a peaceful state of harmony offering contentment and a sense of belonging.
VIOLET	1) I like to win others over with my charm. 2) I feel an identification, perhaps a "mystic" union with something/someone. 3) I have a deep intuitive understanding of the situation. 4) I feel a sense of intimacy. 5) The feeling is erotic. 6) I seek a magical state where wishes are fulfilled. 7) I yearn for a "magical" relationship of romance and tenderness. 8) I seek to identify with something or someone. 9) I need intimacy. 10) I often engage in fantasy perhaps because I feel a bit insecure about the situation.
BROWN	1) I seek a secure state where I can be physically comfortable and relax or recover. 2) I am uneasy and insecure in the existing situation. 3) I need a more affectionate environment. 4) I need a situation imposing less physical strain. 5) I want to satisfy the physical senses (food, luxury, sex). <i>6) If it is a Natural or Wood Brown: a) I am concerned about matters of family, home, or my "roots". b) I am concerned with a son or daughter. c) I am searching for my true self or natural state of being.</i> <i>7) If Dirty Brown: it may relate to a physical problem or illness.</i>
GRAY (Free of Color)	1) I want to shield myself from those feelings. 2) I feel emotionally distant, only an observer. 3) It is as if I am standing aside, watching myself mechanically go through the motions. 4) I want to remain uncommitted, non-involved, shielded or separated from the situation. 5) I do not want to make a decision that will require my emotional involvement. 6) I have put up with too much and wish to avoid any further emotional stimulation. 7) I am trying to escape an anxious situation. 8) I am compensating for something.
BLACK (Negation of Color)	1) I am anxious and don't know why. 2) I am fearful of or intimidated by the situation. 3) I have been dealt an unacceptable blow. 4) Nothing is as it should be. 5) I refuse to allow it/them to influence my point of view. 6) I can't accept the situation and don't wish to be convinced otherwise. 7) I feel the need for extreme action. 8) I am in revolt perhaps to compensate for my situation. Jung: Black and Darkness represents the unconscious realm. Moving into darkness = suppression, turning within, or a "death of the ego" (first stage of transformation). Beautiful Shiny Black = a positive view of the unconscious from which a new self emerges.
WHITE	1) This is a new experience. 2) I'm becoming aware of new feelings. 3) I'm experiencing a new beginning, a reawakening a transformation. 4) I have a new outlook, a new awareness. 5) I feel pure and innocent. 6) I feel open and accepting. 7) I feel unprepared. 8) I feel alone, isolated. 9) It feels cold or sterile. White grouping or mixing (pastels): with a color can be a transformation of the emotions represented by the color, adding a calming, a newness, enlightenment, emergence or re-emergence theme.
PINK	1) I feel romantic or loving toward someone or something; 2) I am feeling very sensitive about something; 3) I feel nurturing and /or gentle and soothing; 4) I am feeling compassionate; 5) I am avoiding aggression or want to calm my aggressive feelings; 6) I need romance; 7) I need nurturing; 8) I need something to calm me down; 9) dealing with this feeling of assertiveness is new to me; 10) the driving energy I feel is new to me.
COLOR GROUPS (Jung)	RED/YEL/BLU/GRN – a grouping of the 4 “primaries” may represent completion or a balancing of something within the personality. A missing color, may be associated with an emotional element missing from the dreamers life that is needed for closure. BLACK & WHITE (patterns) - may represent the forces of unification, an integration of conscious (white) and unconscious (black) from which a greater self emerges; a unity of opposites; an internal change. GOLD & SILVER - Integration of the masculine & feminine qualities of the conscious & unconscious.