

Dream Doubles

Billie Ortiz

An interesting phenomenon that shows up often in dreams is the appearance of identical pairs or “twins” of certain objects. The dreamer will relate in telling the dream that they noticed two dogs in the yard or two cars in the driveway or for instance that the kitchen came equipped with two stoves.

These double images are always intriguing to me, as I have learned over the years that these “twins” are an indication that something new is rising to the surface of understanding in the dreamer’s waking life; something that was previously unconscious that is now ready to be integrated into their conscious awareness. At first, this is a difficult concept to grasp, as the questions we ask ourselves are, “Why does the dream need to show the image doubled? Why is it necessary to show the image not only once but twice and pair them together?”

We live in a world of duality. We have become accustomed to defining the world through contrasts and comparisons. We cannot fully understand the warmth and lightness of daytime without the coolness and peacefulness of nighttime, nor can we relate to the softness and yin of the feminine without the contrast of the solidness and yang of the masculine. We have learned to view the world through opposites, and, thus have difficulties experiencing the wholeness of anything when viewed independently.

As Jeremy Taylor explains in his book, *The Living Labyrinth*, “The appearance of “twos” and “twins” is an example of the tendency of freshly surfacing, previously totally unconscious archetypal contents to emerge into the first tentative formulations of conscious awareness in the form of perceived opposites.”

When we are ready to integrate a new energy, ability, trait or understanding into our psyche, we have to be willing to accept it fully and completely, all of the positive qualities, including what we perceive as the negative aspects too.

“When it happens that the twins are completely identical [exact] doubles or copies of one another, in these circumstances they are an expression, no less, of the oneness of a perfectly balanced dualism. They symbolize the inner harmony gained by reducing the manifold to the one. Once dualism is overcome, duality is now no more than apparent, a mirror-image, caused by manifestation.”¹

When we realize that everything in the Universe is whole, that the “twins” appear in the dream to show us that it is impossible to separate one from the other, we must accept it entirely and unconditionally. For example, if I am planning to retire from my job of many years, part of me will feel elated to finally experience the freedom of not being tied to a daily job while working under someone else.



Yet part of me will feel frightened that I am losing my identity and worthiness in the world. As a different example, if my daughter is planning to be married, part of me is ecstatic that she has found love and is beginning her adult life. Yet I can also feel deeply saddened that she is no longer my little girl and has grown into a woman. I cannot have the joy and triumph of one without the pain and loss of the other.

This also applies to the wholeness of our psychic nature. We need to give as much care to our mystical/intuitive/untamed self as we do to our civilized/rational/prepared self. Our dual natures are inextricably bound together and one cannot live without experiencing the other. As Clarissa Pinkola Estés explains, “The power of Two is very strong and neither side of the duality should be neglected. They need to be fed equally, for together they bring an uncanny power to the individual. When both sides of the dual nature are held close together in consciousness, they have tremendous power and cannot be broken. This is the nature of the psychic duality, of twinning, the two aspects of [our] personality.”²

Armed with this understanding, we can go forward with the task of deciphering the metaphoric language of the dream and begin to explore the deeper meanings of the symbolism of the objects that appear as twins. These double images hold the clue to the energies and understandings that are on the verge of surfacing into our awareness. By accepting them as a whole, we gain their power and richness that is waiting to unfold into our consciousness.

¹ The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols, “Twins” Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, Paris, 1982.

² Women Who Run With the Wolves, Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Ph.D., 1992.

Billie Ortiz is a certified dreamworker who, since 1997, has helped scores of dreamers on the path to self-discovery through a better understanding of their dreams. She offers private sessions, workshops and bi-annual weekend retreats featuring dream book author Jeremy Taylor. Contact her at wakeuptoyourdreams@earthlink.net or 303-929-6122 for more information.

“I wish I could quit my job!”

“I’ve thought about starting my own business.”

“I wish I had an extra \$200 a month.”

“My boss is driving me crazy!”

“I wish I had more time to spend with my kids.”

“I would love to work from home!”

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