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The Writer's Game

1. Write a short description of what happened in your nightmare.

2. Now, write down what happened in more detail, as if you were the writer of a play. Use the third person - i.e. write 'he' or 'she' or use your name. Describe the feelings, thoughts and physical expressions of the main character (and other characters), but don't identify with them. Write it in such a way that actors would be able to play the characters. You can also make a storyboard if you like.



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3. Think of a new ending - what would be a satisfactory ending for you?

4. Now rewrite the 'script' of your nightmare, again from the perspective of the 'writer'. Write down the events as they happened in the beginning but give it a twist one-third of the way, or halfway through, to bring it to your new ending. Remember, it's a dream so anything and everything is possible!

5. Consider both stories for a moment. Just let them sink in and breathe...

Allow emotions to run through you, without doing anything with them. Just allow whatever wants to happen, to happen. Stay with your breath. If you get an insight, write it down. If you don't, that is also fine. Let it be.



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Tips

- Repeat the new story as often as possible. Write it down, or tell it to yourself out loud. Stick to the same satisfying ending. The power of repetition will help your new dream come into play at night.
- You may not always notice your new dream, but you may find that the old nightmare isn't reoccurring. Positive dreams are not always remembered, as unlike nightmares, they don't disturb your sleep - instead, they reinforce your rest and relaxation.
- Your new dream should have the same beginning as your old dream, so that when your old dream gets triggered by habit, it now has an alternative continuation.
- When the nightmare is gone, keep repeating the new dream for another week or so.
- Use your repetitions to add more detail, like colours, scents, sounds and physical sensations.

More about the Writer's Game:

Nightmares disturb and disrupt your sleep, making you restless, uncomfortable and tense. When nightmares wake you up you often remember the nightmare very clearly. Even when they don't wake you up, you can carry the 'residue' of those miserable and tense emotions long into your day.

Positive dreams are generally not as vivid as nightmares and usually don't wake you up. In fact, unless you are woken in the middle of your dream by your alarm, it is likely you won't even remember your positive dream but instead you'll feel well-rested and hopefully notice that you didn't have a nightmare.

The more you repeat the Writer's Game, the more likely it is that the subconscious associations that normally trigger your nightmare, now start the alternative, positive dream that you created.