

# Scripted Role-Play (the "6 Magic Questions")

## Protocol for Exploring Emotion in Dream Imagery

Robert Hoss, M.S.

Prepared for personal work but [brackets] provide instructions for a trained practitioner.

### Step #1 – Re-telling the Dream:

Close your eyes and re-enter the dream (or if a long one, enter the most significant or emotionally important segment) and re-experience the dream as if it is happening now. [If you are working with the dreamer have them re-tell the dream in the first-person present tense and audio record it.]

### Step #2 - Pick a Dream Image or element 'X' to work on:

Look around the scene of the dream and pick something 'X' (an inanimate or animate thing or character) that curiously draws your attention, that you felt drawn to. It doesn't have to be the dominant image. You might pick more than one dream image to work on - one at a time.

### Step #3 - Give the Dream Image 'X' a Voice

Now stay within or re-enter that dream scene again and bring that dream image, character or element 'X' into your mind's eye. Now take 3 deep breaths and with each breath move into and "become" that thing or character 'X'. Feel what it feels like to be in that role. If it is difficult to "become" that dream image then imagine how 'X' might answer the questions that follow. It is important to remain in role (the situation 'X' is in in the dream), and answer in the first-person present tense (using "I am or I feel statements) – not to think about the answers – just let the first feeling related answer that comes to mind come out (just one or two answers to each). Audio record the answers or if you write them down go back into the dream and re-enter the role of 'X' before going on to the next question. [If you are working with the dreamer ask them to raise a finger when they are in role and only then begin asking the questions. Tell them to stay in the role and in the dream scene while you slowly ask the questions and carefully record the answers exactly as the dreamer states them. It is usually not useful to let them give more than a couple of answers to each before proceeding to the next unless it appears important to do so.]

Speak as if you are 'X' in the first person, present tense, answering the following questions:

- 1) Who or **what are you**, and how do you feel in that role: "I am \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_\_"  
(Alternatively, **if X is a person you know** from waking life, become that person and state: "my most notable personality characteristics are...." "The way I am most like and different than the dreamer is....". Note if they are acting differently than they normally would.)
- 2) As X what is your **purpose or function**: My purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_"
- 3) What do you **like** about what you are and what you do as X? "I like \_\_\_\_\_"
- 4) What do you **dislike** about what you are and what you do as X? "I dislike \_\_\_\_\_"
- 5) As X what do you **fear** the most, what is the worst thing that can happen to you? "I fear \_\_\_\_\_".
- 6) As X what do you **desire** the most? "What I desire most is to \_\_\_\_\_"
- 7) **Dialog** (optional): Spot the dreamer in the dream and think about what you or they need or are doing, what would you tell them (first thing that comes to mind)?

#### Step #4 - Relate these Statements to a Waking Life situation:

Now open your eyes and shake off the dream image 'X' and come back to being fully present within yourself and your surroundings. Read (or listen to) each answer that 'X' in the dream stated – but switch perspectives - listen to them now, not as 'X' but as if they are YOU speaking about a feeling or situation in YOUR life. Does any statement(s) sound like they describe a feeling or situation in your life?

- Do the **“I am”** and **“My purpose”** statements sound like a role you are playing in waking life?
- Do the **“I like”** versus **“I dislike”** statements sound like conflicting feelings, or an argument going on inside your head, regarding a waking life situation?
- Do the **“I fear”** and **“I desire”** statements sound like fears and desires you have regarding that situation, perhaps fears and desires that keep you stuck in the conflict?
- Does the statement from the **dialog** sound like it might be practical guidance?
- If the dream figure is a **known person**, focus on their personality characteristics and ask yourself: “Am I acting like that?” or better yet “How would they approach the situation I am dealing with?” If they are acting abnormally that is likely a surprise or *compensating* event to be explored.

**Pick the statement (s)** that most you had the most impactful or meaningful “connection” with and focus on one specific situation in your life when you felt that way. Note that the statements might be metaphors, or analogies to that situation so describe the situation and your feelings in your own words. Relate the insight to the rest of the dream.

[Note: if you are working with the dreamer, read the answers back to the dreamer while they keep their eyes closed, and ask them to raise a finger if they get a “connection” or “aha!” to any of them and note them. If any question evokes an unusually strong response or emotional outpouring, stop at that point and explore the connection, or if it appears that it would be harmful to continue then cease the process and work the help calm the dreamer. Do not continue. If the questioning recalls a generalized situation or a specific incident have them describe it and record that and their feelings at the time.]

**Note that proper ethical practices, appropriate clinical monitoring and informed consent must be used in applying this protocol when working with a dreamer or research subject using this protocol. This is not a substitute for therapy and if a dreamer is emotionally vulnerable or susceptible to identity issues it should never be used with or by a dreamer. All responsibilities for its proper and healthy application of this protocol lay with the user.**