

DREAM WEAVER

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According to the American Sleep Association 80 – 90% of people suffer from nightmares at some point in their lives. Nightmares are common in young children and generally lessen as we become adults. Nightmares as a chronic problem are not common, and affect only 5% of adults.

I asked some adults if they continue to have nightmares, and if so to see if there were common themes. I found lots of people dream about snakes. Some of the reported nightmares were:

- 1. Being left behind**
- 2. Snakes jumping out of trees**
- 3. Being caught in a tornado; and nightmares about snakes and spiders**
- 4. As an adult being closed up in a drawer; seeing a bald man with a knife at the foot of my bed and trying to reach a destination but never quite getting there. As a child a frequent dream of being lowered into a pit of snakes.**
- 5. My brother dying in a variety of ways.**
- 6. My parent's house is on fire and it's easy to find my way out. However, the moment I'm outside the trees and grass are thriving with snakes of all kinds and I'm frozen to the ground as they slither to me.**

Follow the tips below to weave the nightmares out of your dream world:

If you have a repetitive nightmare, come up with an alternate ending to the dream. Then think of this ending before going to bed, reminding yourself how you want this ending to occur in the next dream.

One way Deirdre Barrett, a psychologist at Harvard suggests to deal with a nightmare is to attempt to decipher its true meaning. Analyzing a bad dream can help a person see its correlation to their daytime worries.

Another researcher, Elizabeth Mohkamsing-den Boer, believed dreams prepare your emotions. Nightmares may provide guidance when a difficult decision needs to be made.

You should speak with your healthcare professional if you continue to have anxiety from your dreams during your wake time; or if you are not able to sleep due to fear of the dream reoccurring.