

BY HENRY REED, PhD

Paranormal Dreaming in Cyberspace: The Edgar Cayce Dream Helper Circle Succeeds Online

The purpose of psychic ability, from the perspective of the Edgar Cayce readings, is to receive guidance.

Making ESP practical in our daily lives would support the normalizing of the paranormal. Members of the A.R.E. went a long way in that direction in the 1970s, as described in my first article of this series (VI, Jun-Aug, 2016), by showing that they could, on their own, make constructive use of their dreams for personal guidance, thus setting in motion a dream-work revolution, freeing us from complete reliance on professionals to analyze our dreams.

The ideal of the Cayce material is to use psychic ability not so much for getting ahead in the world, but more to harmonize with it, as the soul-driven psychic abilities help our consciousness to evolve, and in doing so, to embrace the reality of oneness. Children attending the A.R.E. summer camp pioneered in that direction, by showing how they could reach out, in their dreams, to provide a helping hand to someone in need. As described in our second article, (VI, Sep-Nov, 2016), the “Dream Helper Circle” stands as a perfect ambassador to the Cayce work. Countless folks have experienced this healing process at A.R.E. events, and some at home in their study groups. Since the appearance of that article, I’ve been working with a few dozen interested A.R.E. members to develop a method of more widely sharing this special process. We hope that this report will encourage more of you to join in our adventure.

Since their inception in the mid-1970s,

all the dream helper circles occurred in a face-to-face context. There’s a lot of drama involved in such a situation. At A.R.E. Headquarter conferences, for example, a crowd of over 100 people provides for about a dozen circles to operate simultaneously. Folks who volunteer to be the focus of dreaming put their name in a hat and the crowd prays together that the most suitable among them be drawn. The crowd breaks up into small groups, people choosing for whom they wish to dream. Imagine all the feelings that are evoked as participants empathize with what might be the troubling situation facing the focus person who has volunteered for help. There are lots of good feelings stirred up, and much to stimulate the altruistic urge to help the focus person. Dreamers make face-to-face personal promises to the focus person to remember a dream, and most everyone shows up the next day to share their dreams and find out how things worked out. This raises a question: How much of the success of the dream helper circles over the past decades can be attributed to such face-to-face emotional arousal? Can the positive effects of these circles be recreated in a more remote, online context?

To help spread the experience of this special dream circle, and its benefits, our project began by testing to see if the same profound results could be achieved in an online context. Being able to conduct a circle online would mean that folks wouldn’t be required to be in the same physical space or to respond at the same time,

thereby expanding the space-time platform. Yet there would be no face-to-face interaction to build motivation. Would the circle still succeed? To research this question, I’ve had the cooperation of several dozen A.R.E. members who have asked to join our project to create an online version of the dream helper circle. Here is a report of what we have learned so far with eight groups over a four-month period in the late summer and early fall of 2016.

The bottom line: Folks were amazed at how wonderfully the online circles functioned!

Here’s the story of what we experienced. We began with a simple format, employed over a seven-day period, involving a series of seven daily instructional emails:*

- 1) The first email asks participants in the circle to consider volunteering to be a focus person.
- 2) Participants are informed of the chosen focus person and they send an email promising to dream for that person that night.
- 3) The dreams are shared and dreamers compare the dreams for commonalities.
- 4) The dreamers create hypotheses concerning the focus person’s dilemma.
- 5) The focus person reveals the secret dilemma and responds to the dreams and commentaries.
- 6) The dreamers report on what they have learned about themselves in their dreams.
- 7) Participants discuss their experience in the circle.



Putting the Plan into Action

For each circle, we chose the focus person from among the volunteers using a random process. Participants repeated a prayer, “May the person whose question or concern will bring the most light and healing to all be the one chosen.” Each volunteer submitted a four-digit number. An online random-number generator provided the winning number. The volunteer whose chosen number was closest to the randomly produced number became the focus person. Dreamers received instructions on how to better insure they remember their dream, and they each sent an email to the focus person promising to remember a dream that night for them.

As the circles progressed, we continued to refine the instructions and add supportive material. For example, to add extra support, at three points in the process the “Inspired Heart” meditation was added. (As described in my previous article: “I can be aware of my breathing and let it be. I’m learning how to let go and let Spirit breathe me. I’m learning to trust these inspirations...” from VI Jan-Mar 2017.) Participants used this meditation to decide if they wanted to volunteer to be chosen as a focus person. Then, using a combination of the Inspired Heart meditation and inspirational writing, the focus person refined their question or concern and explored why it would make a difference in their life to have good guidance on this topic. Finally, using the same meditation, the dreamers answered the question about their own dream, “What am I learning about myself that pertains to my understanding of the focus person’s concern?”

Besides the dreamers, there was also an “administrator” for the circle who was responsible for sending out the email instructions. This job also included receiving the responses from the dreamers, collating them, and sending the collective response back to the dreamers. I served as the administrator for the first two circles. I then recruited from those circles four participants who volunteered to serve as administrators for the remaining circles.

The role of the administrator was essentially clerical. The fact that administration proved to be such an easy task is significant. For one thing, playing this role required no special knowledge of

dream work. Furthermore, given the set of instructions for using the email format, most anyone can host a dream helper circle. This accessibility will contribute significantly to the circle’s adaptability to spread to the mainstream.

We learned a lot from the new administrators’ participation in the process, things I would not have thought of myself. The administrators did not restrict themselves to handling the pre-written emails. They naturally introduced some words of encouragement or expressed interest in creating some “bonding” among the dreamers to encourage the performance of their tasks. It is something we will continue to explore, as empathy seems to be an important dimension of the circle.

We experienced some challenges, things that stimulated gradual improvements in the email format. Some participants dropped out. We subsequently discovered that they were using their smart phone to read the email instructions, but could not open attachments. We then revised the instructions to eliminate attachments. Some of the instructions were lengthy, so we added an “End of Message” note at the end of the instructions, with an upfront notice to be sure to read the instructions to that end note. Other participants were having conflicts with the schedule which created delays in the process, therefore we included the schedule in our invitations, so they could plan ahead. We decided to increase the group size to allow for ten participants, so we could move along as soon as seven of the dreamers had responded. In a face-to-face circle, such a large group makes it hard to analyze all the dreams in the allotted time. With the online format, however, we didn’t have that same constraint, and if all ten dreamers responded, we could still handle all the information. Time zone differences also created complications, which we are still working on.

Despite these challenges, the dream circle works in cyberspace! We have found that the meaningfulness experienced in face-to-face dream circles can be replicated online. All the groups were successful in a productive manner. The people who served as the focus for a group’s dreams were all pleased with the helpful results. The dreamers found a lot of satisfaction in their participation, and reported an in-

crease in their enthusiasm for dreams and putting their intuition to use. And, that the sense of oneness can occur through the remote medium of emails surprised the participants, and is itself an important finding.

Feedback from participants included statements such as, “This was incredibly helpful and I am so glad I participated.”

One focus person explained, “I found that going through the dream helpers circle as the person of focus to be more amazing than I could have imagined. The dreams and the dreamers’ insights, as they contemplated the area of my concern, were helpful along every step. Reading through the comments as they posted provided some alternative ways of looking at my situation that would not have occurred to me because they were very different from my usual way of thinking (which is why I was stuck in the first place).”

Another focus person wrote, “I was really amazed when, during the group analysis (before I’d revealed my issue), someone accurately summed up my issue in a way I’d never considered before. It really resonated and stuck with me for several weeks. The end result is that I felt like I gained a new perspective that I wouldn’t have gotten by myself.”

The dreamers were also impressed by the results: “I’m awestruck; the quantity and quality of the dreams seems like it was a higher activity. Even though we are separated by time and distance we sense a oneness among us.”

Another wrote, “I’m new to dream work and I’m just floored about this process, how we can bond together over the internet. I feel a bond with everyone.”

They also found new inspiration in the process of dreaming. For one thing, it showed them that given the necessary motivation, dream recall comes more easily.

One dreamer wrote, “I was nervous that I would not remember any of the dreams, yet I had the pleasure of remembering two. I very rarely remember my dreams, so this really blew me away.” It proved valuable: “I’ve never done dream work before, but I found the process very worthwhile.”

Another dreamer wrote, “My own dreams have increased in number and intensity.”

Those who served as administrators also reaped rewards. With one exception, none of them had ever been in an official helping/guide role before.

One administrator wrote, "It was great to find that I could use myself to be of help to people using their dreams."

Another wrote, "To know the Spirit is alive and working in such a beautiful way, through our dreams, is really encouraging. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to administer a circle."

Confidentiality became a factor. One person had a dream about being involved in a research project and wondered what the scientists would do with the data. Participants made a pledge of confidentiality, but given the news media reports about emails being hacked and made public, we wanted more data security. We changed our email exchange procedure to eliminate "reply all"-type emails among the participants. Instead, we adopted an approach which resulted in only the administrator and the focus person having the email addresses of the dreamers. We are now migrating our research to a discussion board format to further protect confidentiality.

We can share one story from our online circles. Mary Agnes Twomey had past experiences with circles in her A Search for God study group and was interested in experiencing the online format. She notified me that she had written a letter to the editors of *Venture Inward* about her experience but she was willing to go into a bit more detail for this article. She writes:

My issue/concern was "How can I be free to pursue creative work when both my children need me to do some intensive baby/toddler-care? And, how many good years does this 70-year-old have left?"

The dreams coming in from the dreamers were amazing! It was as if they had a front row view of my life and even my subconscious. One person's dream accurately described the peaceful green area in which I lived. Another saw a woman going back and forth between two houses babysitting. There was a half jug of milk in another and shark's teeth in one more dream.

I started to really see my situation and how I felt about it. I knew I had to get more clarity in myself and be more honest about what I could and couldn't comfortably do, and find time when my children

could talk with me. The comments and suggestions from the dreamers helped me with this. Even after the circle was over, deeper insights and levels of meaning were revealed to me.

So far, I have spoken with my daughter, who encouraged me to do only what was best for me. Suddenly I felt empathy for Myself! Now I'm realizing how this entire scenario is actually a wonderful gift! My relationships with my children and myself are headed in a much better direction! What a great opportunity to gain help and deep insights this Circle is. Thank you so much for this opportunity for healing myself and ultimately my whole family.

We might note that two other participants in our online circles had previous experience in face-to-face circles. Both felt that the two formats compared favorably. One noted that while the face-to-face format created a livelier discussion of commonalities, the online format, by providing written material, made it easier to study the material.

One way to assess the success of the online circles is to compare the participants' responses to five yes/no questions that were also asked of people who had participated in a face-to-face circle. Larry James Walsch, MA, of Troy State University, interviewed 20-some participants from several such circles at an A.R.E. Camp session I conducted. Here are the five questions he asked and how often the campers and 20 online participants responded with a "yes:"

Q1: Do you think the focus person was helped by your dream?

Camp: Y-95%; Online: Y-95%

Q2: Were people's dreams related to the focus person's issue?

Camp: Y-85%; Online: Y-77%

Q3: Did the focus person's issue relate to things in your life?

Camp: Y-70%; Online: Y-77%

Q4: Would you do it (repeat DHC) again?

Camp: Y-77%; Online: Y-91%

Q5: Did you learn something new about dreams?

Camp: Y-100%; Online: Y-91%.

The results are comparable and they give us some indication that the online version is viable. There are still improvements to be made. There's good reason to

focus on empathy and its contribution. One focus person noted to a dreamer, "Your dream describes exactly how I feel in this situation!" It is interesting that many folks were disappointed that the circle didn't continue until every person had a chance to be the focus person. One reason given was: "So we could get to know one another better." This, as well as understanding each other's life situation from a personal perspective, and bonding, are all important aspects of feeling empathy, and seem to be facilitated by this form of intuitive communication.

Consider participating in an online Edgar Cayce Dream Helper Circle. We hope that additional A.R.E. members will join us in evolving and validating this wonderful introduction to Edgar Cayce's perspective on dream work and the spiritual potential of the small group, even in cyberspace. The phenomenon of feeling empathy (and ultimately, the experience of oneness), seems to be a fruitful topic for further research in our circles. Now, more than ever, the ability to gain understanding of people who are different from ourselves seems to be vitally important. Were the Dream Helper Circles to go mainstream, it might help stimulate the empathic compassion our shared humanity so vitally needs in these times. 

To participate in an online Edgar Cayce Dream Helper Circle, or to receive the instructions on how to administrate a circle yourself, please email henry.reed@atlanticuniv.edu

*For author's notes, an audio recording of the Inspired Heart meditation, web links, and opportunities to participate in the dream circle app or our A.R.E. membership research projects "Normalizing the Paranormal," please visit Edgarcayce-intuitionschool.org or contact henry.reed@atlanticuniv.edu.

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HENRY REED, PhD, is a research psychologist by training, and the author of several books and scholarly articles describing his research developing ways of applying the concepts in the Edgar Cayce material.