The meaning of dreams

We are fascinated by our dreams. And it is usually our own dreams we're fascinated by. When another person launches into a lengthy exposition of the dreams that graced their night, our eyes are liable to glaze over quickly. But for many of us, our own dreams provide an endless source of intrigue.

Nowadays we are less likely than our ancestors to believe that dreams have a predictive function. But it is probably part of the 20th-century neurologist Sigmund Freud's lasting legacy that we can't quite shake off the idea that they somehow hold the key to our hidden hopes and desires. Incredibly enough, the idea that the symbolic meaning of our dream is there, waiting to be interpreted, remains very appealing.

There are, of course, alternative views, including the one that dreams have no meaning whatsoever and result instead from the brain's attempts to make sense of neural processes that occur during sleep.

But adopting such a scientific attitude to dreams doesn't imply that they are no longer a source of fascination to us. We could simply relate to them differently. Instead of seeking to decipher the symbols that our unconscious is supposedly messaging to us, we could use them as a starting point for reflection.

Whether or not the content of our dreams actually reflects our waking concerns, thinking about them could be a helpful way of exploring our own thoughts. While we may be disappointed that we can't consult a dream dictionary to explain what the things we've dreamt about mean, by thinking about them we might gain insights into our own lives. In other words, the important thing is not what the dream means in an absolute sense, but what it means to us personally.

Questions 1-4
*Complete the summary using the list of words **A-G**, below.*
*Write the correct letter, **A-G**, for each question.*

1 The idea that dream-is can foretell the future

2 Freud's idea that it's possible to interpret the meaning of dreams

3 The idea that dreams have no meaning at all

4 The idea that it is worth thinking about our own dreams

A has been the subject of extensive scientific research.

B shouldn't make them any less interesting.

C is no longer taken as seriously as it used to be.

D seems more relevant when we hear about other people's dreams.

E may be a useful one for the individual to pursue.

F has never gained wide acceptance.

G is still surprisingly influential today.

LIVEWORKSHEETS