



Informative Essay

Reasons As To Why People Dream

Science has made it possible for deepening of our understanding about dreaming. Different research findings have explored the various reasons as to why people dream, and it can be stated that fundamental; answers are yet to be found about the same. Different theories, however, are in place regarding reasons as to why people dream (“Why do we dream? | HowStuffWorks,” 2016). Some scientific findings indicate that dreaming has no direct function but rather, it can only be taken as a consequence of other biological functions that take place during sleep. Different people that study dreams and sleep indicate that dreaming only plays a primary function. The different theories of dreaming that have been set in place span different scientific disciplines that that arrange from psychology and psychiatry to neurobiology.

Some research findings indicate that there is no real purpose as to why people dream. Some, however, indicate that dreaming plays a role in the physical, emotional and mental well-being of individuals. According to the theory by Sigmund Freud, it is through dreams that people are in a position to depict their unconscious desires, motivations, and thoughts (“Why do we dream? | HowStuffWorks,” 2016). Sexual and aggressive instincts are some of the components that drive people according to Freud’s psychoanalytic view of personality, and they are usually repressed from conscious awareness.

Because such thoughts are not in a position to be consciously expressed, it is only through dreaming that they find their way in individual’s awareness (Nielsen & Levin, 2009). Dreams are used to depict repressed wishes that are usually taken as disguised fulfillments. It is only through the hidden psychological meaning of a dreaming is referred to as latent content whereas manifest content is used about actual

thoughts, images, and content that is contained in a dream. A different perspective that gives a reason as to why people dream concerns the activation-synthesis model of dreaming proposed by J. Allan Hobson and Robert McCarley. During the REM stage of sleeping, circuits in the brain get activated that affects the regions of the limbic system that are involved in sensations, emotions, and memories including hippocampus and amygdala to become active. The function of the brain in this process is to synthesize and interpret this activity that is usually internal, and there is an attempt by the brain to find meaning that is attached to the signals, and this leads to the process of dreaming.

The suggestion put forth by the model is that dreams among people emanate a result of internally generated signals and hence dreams cannot be stated as being entirely meaningless. Dreaming is therefore depicted as the most creative conscious state of an individual through which a spontaneous, chaotic recombination of cognitive elements leads to a novel configuration of information that can be regarded as new ideas (“Why do we dream? | HowStuffWorks,” 2016). Majority or many of the ideas can be termed as being nonsensical, and few of the ideas can be termed as being useful, and hence dreams need not be regarded as a waste of time. A different theory that explains as to why people dream is the information-processing theory where the process of dreaming makes it possible for people to consolidate and process all the information that has been collected by people in the previous day. Suggestions by some researchers indicate that dreaming can be regarded as an active part or a by-product of the information processing process (Nielsen & Levin, 2009). On a daily basis, people deal with a multitude of memories and information, and it is due to the above aspect that the mind is involved in a continuous process of creating impressions, images, and narratives for the management of all activities during sleep.

Other theories have delved into an analysis of why people dream and one of the theories suggests that dreams are as a result of brains trying to explain external stimuli in the process of people sleeping. For example, the sound of a priest preaching can be incorporated in the dreaming process (Nielsen & Levin, 2009). A

computer metaphor is used in a different theory when accounting for the process of dreaming. In theory, it is stated that the role of dreams is to ‘clean up’ clutter from the mind of people. The process is likened to the cleanup process that is usually common with computers. The mind, therefore, is involved in a fresh up process for the next day. A different perspective is that dream plays the role of psychotherapy. A safe environment is used by a dreamer through which he/she can make a connection between different thought and emotions.

Conclusion

It can be noted that there isn’t a satisfactory explanation in place that states concisely why people dream. It is, however, clear that researchers and scientists continue to put in place efforts that will make it possible to unearth some of the core reasons as to why people dream. There is still potential for a clear explanation to be offered in future, but momentarily, it will be to use existing findings.

1. Nielsen, T., & Levin, R. (2009). Dreams, Dreaming Theories and Correlates of Nightmares. *Encyclopedia of Neuroscience*, 663-669.

2. Why do we dream? | HowStuffWorks. (2016.). Retrieved from <http://science.howstuffworks.com/life/inside-the-mind/human-brain/why-do-we-dream.htm>