Dear Alice,

Sometimes at night I'll have a dream, and then it'll happen! There's no knowing if or when it will happen, but if I have a realistic dream one night, it's bound to come true at one point or another. For example, in first grade, I dreamed that I was in a place I had never seen or been in my life. I didn't even know it existed. Then, in third grade, I walked into the room that I dreamed about in first grade. It was the computer lab of my new school. Or I could be walking down the street and meet someone I have only met in a dream, in the exact same scene as the dream. It is all very confusing, and I think it may be either some sort of precognition or a mental disorder. Could you please tell me why this happens?

Yours,
True Visionary

Answer

Dear True Visionary,

You may have envisioned this response before it was published, huh? In all seriousness though, the extrasensory perception (ESP) you're experiencing has a long recorded history but little hard science to explain it. Although it's difficult to tell exactly how or why you may be able to envision places and circumstances before you consciously experience them, the cognitive processes involved in ESP are completely normal.

Every second of the day, humans receive and process tacit and explicit information from the world around them. Much of this occurs unconsciously otherwise human brains would be overloaded with information. Thanks to evolution, humans have developed the ability to prioritize what information to focus and act upon. When it comes to ESP, scientists believe that the brain somehow receives and processes "anomalous information" from future events. When the future event actually occurs, memories trigger recognition, and this is what you may be experiencing and what many people call "Déjà vu" experiences.

Some spiritual disciplines explain your experiences in a different way. Human perception of the world around them consists of information experienced through the five senses, emotion, and intellect. However, the "subtle world" that cannot be experienced in this way may be accessed through honing spiritual senses. Some in this camp believe spiritual practice allows people to tap into this "sixth sense" or ESP, while this ability may also be passed from one life to the next. Within this belief system, your experiences may be explained by the fact that in a
past life you were able to develop this skill through spiritual practice. Although scientific
evidence doesn't back this explanation, religious and spiritual sects around the world support
it.

Regardless of the explanation (or lack thereof) for the precognitions you're experiencing, both
scientific and spiritual communities (as well as popular culture) have embraced the
phenomenon of ESP. Hypotheses ranging from the fields of physics to parapsychology
continue to propose explanations, but none have been proven. However you're able to
foresee the future, embrace that unique ability. And make sure to write down any lottery
numbers that show up in your dreams!

Alice!
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