She dreams about ex? Should I lose sleep over it? [1]

Dear Alice,

I have been going out with my girlfriend for well over a-year-and-a-half and have been living together for around seven months of that. The thing is, as of late (don't know if it happened sooner), she has had dreams with her ex-boyfriend in them (they dated like three years or so). She tries to tell me they are nothing, and I'm not asking for a prediction of dreams. Though they sort of worry me, like she is missing the guy or something, or would like to go back to him. He was and probably still is a complete (expletive omitted). Should I not worry about this and take it with a grain of salt, or probe further into it?

Thanks for your time.

? Hoping for the better

Answer

Dear Hoping for the better,

Take that grain of salt, and leave the probe behind? sort of. Whether we remember them or not, we all have dreams filled with an infinite number of people, places, and things? and situations where they all get mixed together. Logical connections can be made between some dreams and reality, i.e., fly in an airplane today, dream about flying in an airplane tonight. Less certain hypotheses are also abound, i.e., anxiety while awake about going to the dentist, dreams of teeth falling out while flossing in your father's recliner. Still, the origins of other dreams are inexplicable.

Let's leave your girlfriend out of this for a minute while we turn the mattress and focus on your night flicks: have you ever dreamt about old partners, long lost friends, or your third grade teacher? more than once? If so, was it because you're attracted to them in that special way? maybe even enough to give ol' Ms. Smith a call to see if she's available for a play-date on Saturday night? Didn't think so; that's why dreams aren't the best evidence of what's going on while we're awake.

Since your girlfriend has told you that these dreams don't mean anything, maybe that probe you mentioned can be used to explore why you are feeling insecure in your relationship, and what you can do about it? The two of you have been together for a while now, and it looks as though you're able to discuss issues that come up in your life together, so why not expand this chat you've already started by working to get past your dream-inspired doubts? Do the two of
you regularly talk about how you feel about each other? Do you value, show, and make compliments to one another, and commit to doing your best to work out differences in the name of making your match a long-term one? Perhaps doing this before bedtime will make for more sweet dreams about each other? betting that your mate dreams about you, too.

You know, it's possible that your girlfriend does miss her (expletive omitted) ex ? not necessarily in a longing way, but because they did spend three years together. When you're with another person for that long, s/he is bound to make appearances in your daydreams and night ones from time to time. And, it's best not to ignore the fact that your girlfriend told you about these dreams? assuming you didn't learn about them when she called out the dude's name in the middle of the night. If she really does still have something for him, or if she has something to hide, she probably wouldn't readily fill you in on his presence when she's in dreamland.

You're right not to dwell too much on the inconclusive “science” of dream interpretation. Continuing to build your relationship by sharing your feelings, fears, concerns, and dreams may be the security blanket you need to sleep easier.

Alice!

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