

## **Interview with Robert Moss** **Author of *The Three “Only” Things***

**You have pursued several careers – as a foreign correspondent, a bestselling thriller writer, and a history professor. What inspired you to follow your present path, for which – as you say – “there is no career track in our society”?**

Although dreaming has been central to my life, I did not take the decision to become a dream teacher - a path for which there is not (yet) a career track in Western society - until I moved to a farm in upstate New York in the mid-1980s and started dreaming of an ancient Iroquois Indian *arendiwanen*, or "woman of power", who insisted on communicating with me in a language that was not my own. This proved to be an archaic form of the Mohawk language. The Mohawk dream shaman reminded me that dreaming is all about soul - that our dreams show us what the soul wants, as opposed to the clutter of the everyday mind and the petty agendas of the ego, and that it is the duty of decent people in a humane society to create and hold a space where dreamers can tell their dreams and can then be helped to take action to honor the wishes of the soul.

My dreams of the ancient woman healer and of soul recovery led to a BIG dream - a watershed dream - that finally gave me the courage to give up previous definitions of success. Over the past 15 years, I have helped more than 15,000 workshop participants to remember how to dream, and in so doing to find and follow the voice of the heart, and to recognize the deeper stories of their lives.

**When did your interest in dreams and coincidence begin?**

As a child, growing up in my native Australia, I survived three near-death experiences that made me very strongly aware that the physical world is not the only reality. The first person I knew who was able to confirm my experiences was an Aboriginal boy who came from a tradition that teaches that the dream world may be more real, not less real, than the world of ordinary physical existence, and that our true spiritual teachers - and the nature of our soul's purpose - are to be found in the Dreamtime.

I have kept dream journals for most of my life, and have always used dreams and coincidence for guidance on an everyday basis. When I was in high school, I found that I could sometimes dream exam questions before I took the exams - which certainly eased my way! I came to recognize that our dreams are constantly coaching and rehearsing us for challenges and opportunities that lie in the future.

Similarly, coincidence has guided my life at every turning. I once bought a property because a red-tailed hawk dropped a wing feather between my knees as I sat under an oak tree behind the house. I was invited as a keynote presenter at an international conference in the Netherlands in 1994 – the first world platform for my original Active Dreaming techniques – because I missed an airport shuttle and met someone on the “wrong bus.”

As a writer and teacher, I very frequently find direct inspiration in my dreams, and also the solution to practical problems, such as choosing a publisher or selecting a workshop venue or rehearsing for issues that will come up within the workshop itself.

**What is the single most important gift dreaming has given you?**

I learned from a dream guide in my childhood that the most important knowledge comes to us through *anamnesis*, which means "remembering" the knowledge that belonged to us, on the level of soul and spirit, before we came into this world. Dreaming is the best way I know to practice *soul remembering*. We live differently when we remember that our lives have a purpose, one we consciously accepted before we came here, and that the ups and downs of our present lives are part of a bigger story.

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## **What do we do if we are not in touch with our dreams?**

Before you go to bed, write down an intention for the night. This can be a travel plan, or a specific request for guidance, or a more general setting of direction (“I ask for healing” or “I open myself to my creative source”). You might simply say, “I want to have fun in my dreams and remember.” Make sure your intention has some *juice*.

Having set your intention, make sure you have the means to honor it. Keep pen and paper (or a tape recorder) next to your bed so you are ready to record something when you wake up.

If you don’t remember a dream when you first wake up, laze in bed for a few minutes and see if something comes back. Wiggle around in the bed. Sometimes returning to the body posture we were in earlier in the night helps to bring back what we were dreaming when our bodies were arranged that way.

If you still don’t have a dream, write something down anyway: whatever is in your awareness, including feelings and physical sensations. You are catching the residue of a dream even if the dream itself is gone. And as you do this, you are saying to the source of your dreams, “I’m listening. Talk to me.”

## **You say, “We dream the future, maybe all the time”? How can we learn to work with dreams of the future to make choices?**

First off, we watch to catch as much dream material as we can, and *scan* all of it for possible information about the future. Future messages may be literal or symbolic. They may be for us or for others, even for the world.

We’ll need to learn to recognize that while some of our future dreams are precognitive, showing us events that *will* happen, many offer glimpses of a *possible* future – sometime scary, sometimes wonderful. We can learn to use information from early warning (or early opportunity) dreams to change the future for the better. I think it’s like this: if you don’t know where you are going, you are likely to end up where you are headed!

Say you dream of a plane crash, or a car accident. You want to try to stick your head back inside the dream and see whether the dream feels more literal or symbolic – is the airplane dream about “flying too high” or “being on another plane” or does it feel like you are on a literal aircraft? If the dream feels literal, you want to look for *time markers*. See if you can figure out when this might be happening. Get more information. In this way, you may be able to escape an unwanted future event, or help others avoid an unhappy future.

Dreaming the future is also about claiming a brighter and better future that is sometimes revealed in dreams. My book *The Three “Only” Things* contains a beautiful story from a schoolteacher, Marybeth Gurske, who dreamed of “Mr. Right”. She saw him in a doorway. In the dream, her heart was opened, and a beam of loving energy streamed from her to the heart of her dream guy. She painted that scene to hold its energy in her life, and imagined herself hauling herself along that cord to her dream lover. For fourteen months, she checked the energy of guys she met against what she had felt in the dream, and rejected all of them because they fell short – until she met the man she was sure was the one in the dream. They are now very happily married. This is a lovely example of how we can follow the energy of a dream of the possible future.

## **Talk to us about how dreaming has been central in the history of scientific breakthroughs and discovery.**

Many of our greatest scientists and inventors – Newton, Einstein, Niels Bohr, Wolfgang Pauli – have been world-class dreamers and imagineers. Kekule dreamed the secret of the benzene ring. Elias

Howe dreamed up the modern sewing machine needle, ushering in a new phase of the industrial revolution. Modern cryptography and the first military aircraft were both inspired by dreams.

Wolfgang Pauli, a Nobel laureate and one of the pioneers of quantum physics, said that throughout his life dreams were his “secret laboratory.” Pauli’s dreams coached him on his scientific work, and in dreams he frequently found himself holding discussions with colleagues that took them beyond their current level of understanding. His dreams helped him to pursue an immense life project: a unified theory that would explain that there is no separation between psyche and physics at any level of reality. Its nature became clear to him in his mid-thirties, when he dreamed that Einstein came to him and told him that must accept a new dimension to reality, the psycho spiritual depth of things.

**You write that the idea for monster.com came to its founder, Jeff Taylor in a dream and that dreams have been the source of many other great business ideas. More, please?**

Jeff Taylor woke in the middle of the night from a dream in which he created an electronic bulletin board that was lit up with eager job-hunters logging in from all over the map. He scrawled the phrase “Monster board” on a pad in the dark, then rushed to an all-night coffee shop and roughed out the plan for what became the stunningly successful Internet job agency, Monster.com.

Great entrepreneurs and innovators are dreamers, in one sense or another. Nineteenth-century financier and railroad baron Arthur Stilwell got the plans for his railroads and the site of Port Arthur, Texas from his dreams. Starbucks founder Howard Schultz says of himself, “My most marked characteristic is the ability to dream more than most people think practical.”

**You say, “the body believes in images and those images can make us well.” Tell us more.**

An image sends electrical sparks through your whole body. This shows up when an EEG records brainwaves. At the same time, an image sends a stream of chemicals washing through you. If you dwell on images of grief and failure, you are manufacturing “downers”. If you can shift your mind to a relaxing scene you produce a natural tranquilizer whose chemical structure is very similar to Valium. If you summon up images of triumph, you mobilize neuropeptides that boost your immune system.

In its internal workings, the body does not seem to distinguish between a strong image and a physical event. There is immense potential for healing here – as is increasingly recognized in the healthcare community, if we choose to give our focus to positive images that are right for us.

**You say that dreaming is not so much about sleeping as about “waking up” and that this has been the understanding – and the survival strategy – for most human cultures before the modern era. Have we lost contact with ancestral wisdom?**

In the language of ancient Egypt, a dream (rswt) is literally an “awakening”. For many ancient and indigenous cultures, dreaming is not fundamentally about what happens during sleep. Dreaming is fundamentally about WAKING UP to a deeper reality. This can happen when we are asleep or when we are awake, or in an altered state of consciousness.

From this perspective, being a “dreamer” (a highly respected function, by the way) not only means that you are active in your sleep dreams and remember them, but that you can embark on wide-awake conscious dream journeys and that you are constantly alert to the dreamlike play of symbols and synchronicities in everyday life.

Another shared understanding of ancient and indigenous traditions is that in dreams, we go traveling, and we receive visitations - that in dreaming, we are not at all confined to the body or the rules of physics, but can fly off to other times and other dimensions and may play host to visitors who are similarly unrestricted by physical laws.

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Go into the words used for "dream" in different cultures and you'll find that - as with the Egyptians - the ancients were quite clear that dreaming is about far, far more than Western psychology generally grasps. For example, an Iroquois phrase that means "I dream" also means "I bring myself good luck". The implication is that if you don't dream, you will be unlucky because you won't be present at the creation of the events and situations that will manifest in your life.

Our ancestors – in *all* cultures – were dreamers. By reclaiming our dream life, we reclaim access to ancestral wisdom.

### **You say you “live by coincidence.” What does this mean, in everyday life?**

I play the game of assuming that *anything* that enters my field of perception could be a message from the universe, large or small. I love playing simple coincidence games like opening a book at random and seeing what pops up on the page, or scheduling five minutes of *unscheduled* time a day to pay attention to whatever is going on around me – on a busy street or a quiet wood – and see what the world is saying.

I've learned that coincidence may be wild, but it's never truly random. It follows certain rules. One of these is that every setback offers an opportunity. Another is the law of attraction: our thoughts and feelings are actions, and they produce results. We are ready for a juicier, more creative life when we take that concept further and recognize that the passions of the soul work magic, and will draw fabulous events, people and opportunities to us if we can only trust ourselves to follow our deepest and truest desires.

### **How can we learn to “navigate by coincidence”?**

We can invite coincidence to be our guide by putting our questions to the world. Say there is an issue in your life on which you would like guidance. Write it down as a request. You may want to use this simple format: “I would like guidance on –“ (and keep it simple). Now give yourself a fixed period of time – ten minutes, half an hour, the length of the commute – and see what comes up during that period. Play the game of pretending that anything unusual or striking that enters your field of perception will be a response from the world.

This game generally works best when we are in motion. I especially like to play it when I am in my car. As you are driving along, your message from the world may come through the vanity plate on the car in front of you on the road, or the pattern of traffic, or the flight of a hawk, or first song or commercial that comes on the radio.