

An Interview with Julie-Anne Michael, The Dream Alchemist

Q. How long have you been interested in dreams?

A. Ever since I was a child. Children have such profound dreams.

I had a recurring dream that started when I was about 13 and continued until I was 30. I didn't really understand what it meant until I was in my 40s. In the dream there was a white mansion, it was grand but in some disrepair. The paint was beginning to peel and dead leaves were blowing around the veranda but the gardens were immaculately manicured. I always appeared beneath a tree standing with Dracula who gave me an apple to eat. The message the dream was conveying was that I would rather befriend my greatest fear than look within my own mind. The manicured lawns implied that I was keeping up appearances on the outside even though something on the inside needed to be addressed. That recurring dream was really what sparked my interest in dreams. A few days before my 40th birthday, I began recording my dreams and have done every night since. In my quest to investigate my own consciousness I have studied counselling and esoteric psychology. I am a big fan of Carl Jung who was an absolute master at dream interpretation.

Q. How did The Dream Alchemist come into being?

A. In hindsight, I am sure it was one of those things that the universe conspired to bring about. While I had been recording and working with my dreams since 2001, I had just used them for my own personal and spiritual development and hadn't given thought about doing anything else with what I had learned from that process along the way. One day a friend of mine, who at the time was running spa days for ladies once a month, asked me to do a dream catcher making workshop at her spa day. I'd never created a dream catcher before but she insisted I do it. I went about learning how to make them and something wonderful opened up for me. I now create very unique dream catchers which I call dream portals because they do far more than just catching. Not long after that I attended a workshop called Guerrilla Business Intensive where we had to create a new business in the workshop. I was guided to base my business on dreams and The Dream Alchemist was born.

Q. What exactly does the term dream alchemist mean?

A. Dream alchemy is the process of working with dreams to achieve transformation: turning the lead within us into gold - the darkness into light. The number 5 is associated with alchemy, which is one of the reasons that I chose to have the 5 stars of the Southern Cross in my logo. I chose to have the moon and the feminine warrior image because dreams inspire our intuition, which is the feminine aspect within us, whether we are male or female.

Q. Why are our dreams important?

A. Our dreams provide a gateway to our own inner worlds, to our subconscious mind, our super-conscious mind, and to deeper levels of self-understanding. They are our compass, companion and divine guide on that inner journey that we all at some point must take. From dreams we can learn, grow and evolve into more enlightened versions of ourselves. Dreams show us how we are moving through life and what we need to change to maximise our potential. These dream messages come from our soul and when we connect to that source with ever increasing frequency, we find ourselves in a happy and peaceful place.

Q. What if people don't think their dreams mean anything?

A. Each person is always entitled to believe whatever they wish, that is what free will is. But they may find that if they don't listen to their dreams and are off track in life, those dreams that they're not paying attention to will eventually become nightmares that can't be ignored. It's our soul's way of hitting us over the head so we'll pay attention.

Q. What do people do if they are having nightmares?

A. All dreams require action. We will continue to receive the same message through different dreams until we take the required action. Nightmares are a more forceful method that our soul uses to prompt us toward that action. We will be out of balance internally until we do. Such an inner imbalance can cause all manner of problems including: sleep disturbance, loss of appetite or great increases in appetite, anxiety, a rise in blood pressure and ill health. People having nightmares should address them without delay. Some people may feel comfortable doing that by themselves and others may choose to work with a dream coach. Working with a coach is always a good idea because a coach often has a much wider perspective to see things the dreamer may not see or understand. A coach can also help the dreamer feel safe and prevent them from falling into self-delusion.

Q. What about people who can't remember their dreams? Are they able to work with dreams?

A. When a person says they can't remember their dreams they are really repeating a negative affirmation that creates exactly that. This is quickly and easily turned around by replacing the affirmation with a positive one. For example, "I remember all of my dreams in vivid detail." Saying this 10 times before sleep and setting the intention to recall and record their dreams by placing a pen and notebook by their bed usually brings immediate results. If not, something usually appears after two or three days, provided they continue the positive affirmation.

Q. How will people know what their dreams mean?

A. Once the dreamer has started remembering dreams it is important to write them down or voice record them in as much detail as possible before any attempt at interpretation is made. Often one small detail can change the entire meaning of a dream. Once the detail is recorded the dreamer needs to look at each symbol and decide what that symbol means to them. A symbol is any item, colour, number in a dream. At the beginning level of dreaming we are dealing with personal symbols – fire, for example, may mean devastation to one person and something else entirely to a person who has spent 30 years working as a firefighter. Perhaps to them it means security, or even social structure. As we develop personally and spiritually, our dream symbols also evolve. As we move towards our highest expression of consciousness, a consciousness that is shared by all on the soul level, our dream symbols move towards becoming universal archetypal symbols. This is why a dream dictionary is really of little use; everyone assigns a different meaning to symbols based upon their personal experience with that thing and when the person evolves that same symbol means something else entirely. I encourage people to create their own personal dream dictionaries which become a valued and sacred record of the person's evolution of consciousness.

Q. What exactly is a dream coach and what qualifies you to be one?

A. A good question. A dream coach is essentially a life coach that uses the client's dreams as a platform for personal understanding and inner change. Everyone needs a teacher and guidance when they embark on something new. Working with dreams is no different. I try to teach clients how to record and interpret their own dreams - after all, they are the experts. No one else will know the meaning of their symbols better than they will. Using dreams as the coaching platform works really well because sometimes a person doesn't know what they want or why they feel unhappy; their dream is the voice that they can't find. That voice can lead us on quite a deep and wonderful journey of self-discovery. We don't have to look far to see that people around us are unhappy, unfulfilled or are broken and don't feel whole. The state of our planet echoes this. I believe that if people paid attention to their dreams they would find themselves and heal, become whole and joyful again. Thousands of years ago it was commonplace for people to sit around the morning campfire and discuss their dreams and from these nightly sojourns came great and wonderful stories, legends. We need to find our stories again, our soul. As The Dream Alchemist I have made it my mission to raise consciousness by assisting people through coaching and dream work to develop a strong connection with their soul, that they may not only accelerate their personal and spiritual development but also find their real stories, their soul song. I am very passionate about dreaming, about stories and about spirit.

That last sentence right there is what qualifies me to be a dream coach – my passion. I diligently record and work with my own dreams every day – as a coach it's important to be your own best client. I have also done diverse things in my life, from 14 years as a volunteer firefighter to crawling through caves and mapping them, from writing books and articles to painting portraits. These rich life experiences allow me to understand and connect with a diversity of people. I also have deep understanding of the inner world and the spirit world and how dreams work, all of which are required of a dream coach.

Formally though, I have certifications in life coaching, master coach, hypnosis, NLP and Time Line Therapy. I am a life member of the American University of NLP. I have a Bachelor of Science and Honours degree from the University of Wollongong and will soon complete a diploma in counselling with the Australian Institute of Professional Counselling. I've also experienced and studied Raw Nutrition and for the past 7 years have studied Esoteric Psychology, which forms the basis of the counselling and coaching that I do. I am a firm believer in continuous learning and I apply myself to that.

Dream Portals

Q. You mentioned that you create dream portals. Can you tell us about that?

A. Yes absolutely. To most people they look like dream catchers but I prefer to call them dream portals or dream allies because there are some fundamental differences between the dream catchers traditional to Native Americans and what I create, even though they look similar. Traditionally, dream catchers were created to catch bad dreams in the web and were expired once the first rays of the sun struck the web. Positive dreams were able to slip through the central hole and slide down the feathers to the dreamer. They were created in earthy colours, browns and greens, from leather and feathers with the web made from gut string. The dream portals that I create are usually (but not always) far from being earthly, they come from the higher realms, from the angelics. Each portal is absolutely unique; even if I made two to look the same, the energy of them would be very different. I am usually guided as to what materials to put together and during its creation, its story will unfold. Each portal represents something significant that a dreamer may choose to improve their life. Once it is created, the dream portal goes through a sacred ceremony to cleanse it of any stray intentions or energies that may have stuck to it during the creation process. It is smudged with white sage, incense or essential oil and I place into it the intention for it that was revealed to me during its creation. Then the Archangel Michael steps in and places his intention into it as a gift to us. I am usually not aware of what Michael places within the dream portals unless I use them myself for several months. I am always delightfully surprised. I also place particular energetics into the portals during the ceremony so that they are self-cleansing – the high vibrations transform any negative energies into light. The dream portals are multidimensional two-way portals. This means that they will bring dreams to the dreamer as well as extract dreams from the dreamer. If a clairvoyant looked at them they would see an energy vortex in the centre; they are a living energy. While the dream portals that I create look beautiful, they are not to be used as a decoration; this makes them most unhappy. They desire to be used as a transformational tool.

I have been guided to create videos and a workbook for each type of dream portal so that many wishing to use these for personal and spiritual development can use the portal without me needing to make hundreds of the one portal. This means I also have great scope in how they are presented, whether that be individually or by grouping similar portals together. As far as I am aware this has not been done by anyone else anywhere in the world. With September being Save The Koala month I thought it would be a great time to launch the Koala Dreaming video and workbook – a dream portal that is all about the inner journey of finding and living our life purpose.

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