

WARNING DREAMS ABOUT CANCER:

An Interview with

Larry Burk, MD

Venture Inward columnist and author Jerry Lazarus joined dream-diagnosis pioneer Larry Burk, MD to discuss *Dreams That Can Save Your Life: Early Warning Signs of Cancer and Other Diseases* (Findhorn Press, April 2018) that he co-authored with Kathleen O’Keefe-Kanavos, a three-time breast cancer survivor, television and radio producer, and author of the international bestseller *Surviving Cancerland: Intuitive Aspects of Healing*. Burk, co-founder of the Duke Center for Integrative Medicine (Durham, North Carolina) in 1998, and integrative medicine education director there, until 2004, was notably the principal investigator of a research study in 2013 conducted for women who had warning dreams of breast cancer.

Jerry Lazarus: Your book focuses on dreams about cancer—one of the biggest epidemics of our times. And you’ve shared many dreams indicative of dreamers’ inner guidance about potential cancer. How did you get into dream work?

Larry Burk: I started keeping a dream diary in 1986 after moving to Philadelphia and discovering my first metaphysical bookstore. Then in 1991, I moved to Norfolk, Virginia, and met medical intuitive Carolyn Myss at an A.R.E. conference. This stimulated my interest in intuitive diagnostic methods.

Lazarus: Why the emphasis on cancer in your book?

Burk: Three of my close friends all had dreams warning them of breast cancer before having any symptoms, so it was the natural place to start my research. Once my 2013 dream research study paper was published, I started getting reports about dreams of other types of cancer which led to the book concept.

Lazarus: Were there any surprise findings?

Burk: A couple of women had biopsies based solely on their dreams when the mammograms and ultrasounds failed to reveal the cancer. Wanda Burch from my study was fortunate to find an open-minded surgeon who biopsied right where she marked her breast based on the dream images. His needle hit a hard mass that proved to be an aggressive cancer which was successfully treated with surgery and chemotherapy. Wanda had another healing dream where the toxic chemotherapy turned into energy food as it passed into her arm. She created a guided meditation from the dream that she listened to during treatments and had fewer side effects than other patients. These stories in my book are excerpted from Wanda’s wonderful *She Who Dreams* book that describes her healing dream journey with breast cancer in great detail.

Lazarus: From your book, can you share examples of dream imageries and their significance to the dreamers?

Burk: One of the most compelling stories from the book is about my friend and former MRI technologist, Ann Charles, who had a dream about giving birth after completing menopause. Since she knew that being pregnant was impossible, she thought it might be a metaphor for a new creative project she was starting in her art career. However, being an experienced dreamer, she knew to ask for a clarifying dream the next night as it was also possibly an indication of a problem with her uterus. The next night she was taken in a dream to a graveyard in Ireland where she saw a headstone surrounded by daisies. She heard a voice say, “If you don’t take action on the dream from last night, you will be pushing up these daisies soon.” That dream compelled her to go to the gynecologist who did an ultrasound revealing an endometrial cancer. It was subsequently cured by a vaginal hysterectomy where the tumor was “delivered” through the vagina, essen-



Larry Burk and co-author of *Dreams That Can Save Your Life*, Kathleen O’Keefe-Kanavos.

tially giving birth to it just as in the dream.

Lazarus: Your co-author Kat herself is a cancer survivor. Can you tell us more about her experience?

Burk: Kat had amazing dream guides in the form of robed Franciscan monks who insisted that she go back to her doctor for further evaluation when they initially missed her cancer and recurrences on several occasions. She had routine dreams where the scene would freeze like a computer screen and a pop-up window appeared through which the monk entered her dream with important instructions. When her initial mammograms failed to find the cancer revealed in the dreams, the monks gave her a small dream feather to use as a sword to fence with her doctor and convince him against his better judgement to do exploratory surgery which did find the cancer. A dream of a scary circus clown five years later prompted her to get an MRI scan which found a recurrence in her other breast. Following double mastectomies and chemotherapy, two decades later, she is alive and well.

Lazarus: What are some conclusions from your research?

Burk: Warning dreams frequently induce feelings of threat, menace, or dread, often contain the actual words cancer or tumor, sometimes include a sense of physical touch on the breast, and occasionally involve a message from a dream guide.

Lazarus: What was the most exciting part of this study?

Burk: Finding out that some women were able to not only diagnose their cancers, but exactly locate them within the breast very accurately. My first two friends who told me about their breast cancer dreams

were told by the radiologist who read their mammograms that there were no abnormalities, and they could come back in a year for their next studies. The first one demanded an ultrasound, but the radiologist initially refused saying there was no clinical indication to do it. My friend wouldn't leave the office without the ultrasound being performed and much to the shock of the radiologist, knew exactly where to find the cancer from the dream. The second friend, a physician, didn't look happy with the reassuring news from the radiologist, who was perplexed by her reaction. She insisted on reviewing the mammogram herself and pointed out a suspicious area from the dream that had been overlooked by the radiologist which turned out to be the cancer.

Lazarus: Do you teach medical professionals dream interpretation?

Burk: I teach both medical professionals and lay people through my Medical Intuition and Symbolic Healing workshops. Event details are on my website: LarryBurk.com.

Lazarus: What message would you like to share with readers about breast cancer dreams?

Burk: I recommend everyone keep a dream diary and share any warning dreams with their doctors.

Lazarus: How do you differentiate between symbolic and literal dreams?

Burk: The best method is to ask for a clarifying dream the next night to find out whether it is a physical problem or an emotional metaphor. Beyond that, more research needs to be done to determine how to tell a benign dream from a malignant one. I have actually just started another pilot study of dreams in women undergoing breast biopsies at Duke University Medical Center to see how often such dreams occur. That information will lay the groundwork for future research to see if dreams can predict which biopsies will show cancer versus some benign condition in the breast. I've been pleasantly surprised by the enthusiastic response from the breast imaging radiologists and technologists at Duke to the new study, and some of the responses from the patients have been intriguing. All I can say at this preliminary point is that cancer warning dreams are not rare—but not common either—occurring in a small minority of breast biopsy patients. We hope to inspire other physicians around the country to do similar studies and attract

funding to support them. At the moment, we are the only medical center studying dreams and diagnosis.

Lazarus: What has been the medical community's response to studying dreams as a source of diagnosis?

Burk: Some physicians just ignore the anomaly, while others are intrigued and have had such dreams themselves.

Lazarus: What is the future of intuition and health guidance in the field of medicine?

Burk: Like yourself and your A.R.E. friends, I hope that doing more research will restore dreams to their rightful place of honor in medicine. 🌊

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



JERRY LAZARUS is a spiritual teacher and counselor with a Master's Degree in Religion and Meditation. He leads workshops and small groups in Southport, North Carolina. Jerry is the author of Dreams: Listening to the

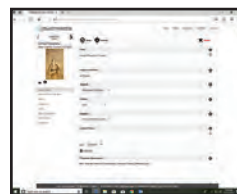
Voice of God, and Saint John Bosco—Dreams: The Guiding Voice. Visit his website: JerryLazarus.com and join Jerry at the Spring Seabeck Retreat in Washington state, March 29-31, 2019.

EDGAR CAYCE FOUNDATION

The Edgar Cayce Foundation has been working on several major projects in the last few months. Generous support from our donors has enabled E.C.F. to house the materials in its care in folders and boxes that adhere to professional archival standards, as well as undertake basic conservation tasks.

One of our most pressing projects involved stabilizing the archive's preservation environment. The vault housing the Edgar Cayce readings and historical records of E.C.F., A.R.E., Cayce/Reilly® School of Massage, and Atlantic University is now protected by a gaseous fire suppression system. The system uses Novec 1230 gas (safe for living things) to put out a fire in ten seconds or less. In addition, the installation of a new climate-control system means that the vault is cooled to the archival standard of 64 degrees Fahrenheit. This cool temperature will extend the life of these precious archival materials.

E.C.F. has also implemented Collective Access database software to record our updated inventory. This open-source software, created by the Whirl-i-Gig team and its partners, consists of a staff-accessible cataloging interface as well as a public website. The staff interface is now live, containing data on sixteen archival collections. A new blog for the archive as well



as dynamic online exhibitions are in development. An updated digital platform will streamline records requests, give E.C.F. an online presence in the archival and research communities, and foster new discoveries in the vault's diverse collections. (Look for an exciting announcement in the next *Venture Inward!*)



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To learn more about E.C.F., please contact Jessica at Jessica.newell@EdgarCayce.org, 757-457-7204, or visit edgarcayce.org/ecf. If you would like to know how you can contribute to the preservation of materials in the vault, contact Patrick Belisle in our Office of Philanthropy at pat@edgarcayce.org or 757-457-7216.