Prophetic Dreams

Prophetic dreams are one of the most mysterious topics in human history. While science says dreams cannot literally predict the future, our brain is capable of incredible analysis and coincidences.

Here is how dreams are created, how sleep phases work, and how science explains "prophetic" dreams.

🧠 How Do Dreams Happen?

A dream is the result of your brain working while you rest. The brain never fully sleeps; instead, it **cleans up and organizes your memory**.

1. **Information Processing:** During the day, you take in a huge amount of information: faces, emotions, and worries. At night, your brain decides what to delete and what to keep.
2. **Random Signals:** The lower part of the brain sends random electrical signals to the upper part (the cortex), which is responsible for thinking.
3. **Creating a Story:** The cortex tries to connect these random signals into a logical story. This is how dream plots are born—sometimes strange, sometimes very realistic.

💤 The Phases of Sleep

Every night, our sleep goes through cycles. A full cycle lasts about **90 minutes** and repeats 4 to 6 times a night. It consists of two main phases:

- **Non-REM Sleep:** Your body relaxes, your temperature drops, and your brain rests. Dreams here are rare, quiet, and logical. This phase is necessary for physical recovery.
- **REM Sleep (Rapid Eye Movement):** Your eyes move quickly under your eyelids, and your brain becomes very active. This is the phase where we see the **most vivid, emotional, and memorable dreams**.

🔬 Real Explanations for "Prophetic" Dreams

Science offers several psychological explanations for why some dreams seem to come true:

- **Subconscious Analysis:** Your brain is a great detective. It notices small details during the day that you ignore (like a friend's slight cough or a strange sound in your car). At night, the brain connects the dots and creates a dream: "my friend is sick" or "the car broke down." When it happens in real life, it feels like magic, but it is just logic.
- **The Law of Large Numbers:** You see thousands of dreams in your lifetime. Statistically, some of them are bound to match real-world events. We forget 99% of

normal dreams but perfectly remember the one that came true.

- **Memory Tricks (Déjà Vu):** Sometimes, when an event happens in real life, your brain makes a mistake and tells you: *"Hey, you saw this in a dream a few days ago!"* even if you never actually dreamt it.

📜 Famous Historical Examples

- **Abraham Lincoln's Dream:** A few days before his assassination, the US President dreamed of walking into the White House and seeing a coffin. When he asked who died, a soldier replied, "The President. He was assassinated." Since Lincoln lived under constant threats, his brain simply visualized his deepest fear.
- **Mark Twain and His Brother:** The famous writer dreamed of his brother Henry lying in a metal coffin, wearing one of Twain's old suits. A few weeks later, Henry tragically died in a steamboat explosion. Henry worked in a dangerous environment, and Twain constantly worried about his safety.

There were indeed documented cases of people who cancelled their tickets or refused to board the *Titanic* because of terrifying dreams and bad feelings.

Here are the most famous real-life examples, along with a scientific explanation of why this happened.

📜 Real Examples of Titanic Premonitions

- **J. Connon Middleton:** This British businessman booked a ticket to travel on the *Titanic*. In late March 1912, he had the same nightmare two nights in a row: he saw a huge ship floating keel upwards in the water, surrounded by passengers trying to swim. A few days later, he received a business cable suggesting he delay his trip, so he happily cancelled his ticket. He told his family and friends about the dream *before* the ship sailed, and they later confirmed his story.
- **Alex MacKenzie:** He was a young man from Scotland whose parents had bought him a ticket for the maiden voyage. As he was walking up the gangway to board the *Titanic* in Southampton, he distinctly heard a voice in his head warning him that he would die if he got on the ship. The warning repeated, and he became so terrified that he turned around and went back home.
- **The "Just Missed It Club":** After the disaster, thousands of people claimed they had missed or cancelled their trips. In fact, humorists joked that if everyone who claimed to have cancelled a ticket had actually been on board, the ship would have sunk from the weight. However, historians verified that over **50 people** officially cancelled

their bookings last minute for various reasons (illness, business changes, or family warnings).

🔬 How Science Explains It

How could people dream about the catastrophe before it happened? Psychologists explain it using concepts we discussed earlier:

1. **Collective Anxiety (Mass Worry):** The *Titanic* was an experimental, massive ship. It was advertised as "unsinkable," which actually made many people nervous. In 1912, ocean travel was still quite dangerous. People who were naturally afraid of the ocean or maiden voyages experienced high stress, which their brains turned into nightmares about sinking ships.
2. **The Law of Large Numbers (Statistics):** Every single day, thousands of people around the world dream about shipwrecks, plane crashes, or fires. Most of the time, nothing happens, and people forget these dreams. But when a real disaster happens, the few people who *did* have a nightmare suddenly look like prophets. [1]
3. **Hindsight Bias (Memory Adjustments):** After a massive tragedy, our memory can play tricks on us. Many people who simply felt a little nervous before the trip later convinced themselves that they had a "powerful prophetic dream," even if it was just a normal, vague worry.