

How To Lucid Dream:

My Top Ten Techniques

Andrew Holecek



Introduction

Lucid dreaming is a world of tremendous potential, unrivaled in its transformative capacity. It's full of such promise, but anything this revolutionary has to have a catch, and the catch, of course, is having these special dreams. It's not always easy to dream lucidly. But in many years of teaching lucid dreaming, I can assure you that with the proper methods and the jet fuel of strong motivation, *anybody* can have lucid dreams.

I have gathered for you my top ten induction methods. The point isn't to master them all. The point is to find the one that works for you, then stick with that. We're all different. Lucid dreaming induction is not a "one-size-fits-all" practice. And remember, lucidity is the point, not the technique that gets you there. If you have your methods, just stick with those. But for many people, it's good to have options and to zoom in on the ones that work for you.

Lucid dreaming is like any other skill, like playing the piano, learning golf, or mastering a new language. It does take time and effort. A dose of humor goes a long way, along with an attitude of curiosity and openness. In the techniques that follow, I recommend you stick with one method for several weeks. You have to give it a chance to work. If you hop around from one technique to another too quickly, nothing may work. If a technique isn't working after a few weeks, try another. Even if it's spread across several methods, the effort accumulates. That's the good news. Sooner or later, your accumulated effort will push open the door to lucidity, and a new world will unfold before you.

The other good news is just by trying to have lucid dreams you're starting to change your relationship to the dream world and therefore your unconscious mind. You're opening the street between your conscious and unconscious mind, where a flood of beneficial information can now begin to flow. So, while it may not seem like anything is happening at first, whether you know it or not, something is happening.

It's like heating up a big pot of cold water, where the cold water represents a lifetime of non-lucid dreams. You're putting a lot of energy or "heat" into it, trying to have lucid

dreams, but nothing seems to be happening. Then one day, the water starts to boil. All that effort was heating the pot of lucidity. So by merely trying, you're getting warm. This is important to understand, otherwise, it's easy to get discouraged. You're heading toward the boiling point of lucidity just by trying, even if nothing seems to be happening. So the trick to lucidity is determination and dedication. As the Dalai Lama says of anything important: "Never give up!"

With lucid dreaming, you're learning a new language, the language of the night, and some perseverance is necessary. Believe me; it's worth it. The time you invest in learning how to awaken in your dreams can have benefits beyond your imagination.



Technique #1: Belief

The ten techniques I will present below are all powered or catalyzed by our beliefs. What we believe can either hold us back or propel us forward. In medicine, belief is the basis of the nearly miraculous power of the placebo effect, which is a "belief effect."

Just by believing in medicine, the medicinal effect can be delivered, even though it's a sugar pill (the placebo). The following techniques are *not* sugar pills, they're real medicine, and they work. But belief can supercharge their effects.

In lucid dreaming, we replace the popular saying "I'll believe it when I see it" with "I'll see it when I believe it." Perhaps the biggest reason we don't have lucid dreams is we don't believe in the importance of dreaming, let alone lucid dreaming. "It's just a dream" is a dismissive comment, after all. We're simply not trained to honor our dreams and to realize that an amazing world is waiting for us in the stillness of the night.

Believing in our dreams and the transformative potential of lucid dreaming creates a fertile field — a "field of dreams" -- where the induction techniques can take root. Belief is therefore, the first of ten super techniques which together generate the field of lucid dreaming. Without this cultivated field, the specific induction techniques are like seeds falling on frozen dirt. Nothing grows. The mind is too iced-up and solid. That's why I'm spending time farming, fertilizing, and warming up this field with these preparatory comments. When the following techniques are planted in a fruitful field, lucidity naturally flowers. Lots of lucid dreaming programs have tons of hip techniques but few results. It's because the techniques are falling on icy ground or an unprepared mind.

So believing in your dreams and that *you* can have lucid dreams is our first super technique. It helps create this magical field of dreams. "If you build it, they will come." I guarantee it: if you create the proper field or environment for lucidity, lucid dreams will naturally come. This is why people who want the quick fix and expect lucid dreams right away, are often disappointed. Yes, the expectation is important and is part of a good field of dreams, but it has to be balanced. If you're too ambitious and therefore impatient, it's easy to get discouraged. Be realistic, understand what's required, and cultivate the thermonuclear power of believing in your dreams and that you can have lucid dreams.



Technique #2: Intention

The second technique is intention. Intention is something that is cultivated by the conscious mind during the day, but that stretches deep into the unconscious mind to act as a “pop-up” within your dreams. With strong intent, you will discover “pop-ups” appearing in your non-lucid dreams that will clue you into the fact that you’re dreaming and immediately flip a non-lucid dream into a lucid one. It’s simple. This simplicity is partly why we don’t believe it can work. But it works the same as setting the intention before you go to sleep that you absolutely positively must wake up at 3:00 am to catch a flight, and you usually will wake up at that set time. Setting this strong intent is almost as good as setting a literal alarm.

So to set this internal alarm for lucidity, say to yourself throughout the day, especially when you lie down to sleep: “Tonight I’m going to have many dreams; I’m going to remember my dreams; I’m going to wake up within my dreams.” Don’t just think it. Say it out loud. Write it down. And mean it. One Tibetan dream yoga master told me to recite it like a mantra twenty-one times during the day, then seven times when lying down to sleep.



Technique #3: Meditation

What I'm trying to do with these techniques is to show you how to have lucid dreams, and, just as importantly, why you don't naturally have them. If you understand the thinking behind these techniques, you will empower them – because you'll believe in them. That's why I'm taking a few minutes to explain them. They won't carry as much power if you don't believe in them or understand why they work. Once again, your beliefs, as harbored in the power of your unconscious mind, can either propel you forward into the world of lucid dreams or hold you back.

If you engage in these techniques, no non-lucid dream can withstand their accumulated force. The third technique is meditation or the daily practice of lucidity. One big reason we're not lucid to our dreams at night is that we're not lucid to the contents of our mind right now. What is found then is found now. Or, more accurately, what is not found then is not found now. We're unaware of, or non-lucid to, around 98% of what occurs in our mind. It's no wonder we're non-lucid to our dreams!

For those who like logic: dreams are to dreaming consciousness as thoughts are to waking consciousness. So, if we become lucid to our thoughts during the day, we will naturally become more lucid to our dreams at night – because it's the same mind, the same consciousness, at work. (To substantiate this claim, the esteemed dream scientist Stephen LaBerge proclaims that waking consciousness is dreaming consciousness with sensory constraints; dreaming consciousness is waking consciousness without sensory constraints. The point: it's the same underlying mind, the same consciousness, at work, day or night.)

Just look at your mind. Most of what takes place in your mind take place without your awareness or lucidity. You have a constant undercurrent of subconscious thought that streams by non-lucidly, which is precisely why you have a constant current of non-lucid dreams. So the practice of meditation is truly the practice of lucidity. This is why many studies have shown that meditators have more lucid dreams. It makes total sense. This practice is so central to lucidity that I'm including a complete set of instructions from my book, *Dream Yoga: Illuminating Your Life Through the Tibetan Yogas of Sleep*, to guide you through it. [See the "Appendix" below.]

Meditation masters are lucidity masters, and virtually all their dreams are lucid. You can join this elite club of lucid dreamers by developing a lucid relationship to the contents of your mind now through the art of meditation.





Technique #4: Illusory Form

Another technique comes from Tibetan Buddhism, where lucid dreaming and dream yoga have been practiced for thousands of years. They got this lucid dreaming stuff down. For the Tibetans, the main daily induction practice outside of meditation is the practice of Illusory Form. It's a simple practice: throughout the day, as often as you can, constantly remind yourself that everything you're experiencing now is just a dream or illusory.

I've got sticky notes posted in drawers, on my computer, where my toothbrush is, etc. that say, "You're dreaming," or "This is a dream," or my favorite, "Be a child of illusion." There are deep philosophical reasons for doing this that are beyond our scope; the idea for us here is that by reciting this as often as you can, you're planting seeds that will sprout while you're dreaming. And then you will flash onto the fact that "Hey, this is a dream!" and instantly become lucid. It's the pop-up theme again. You want to create a bunch of pop-ups during the day that will ping into your dream and alert you to the fact that you're dreaming.



Technique #5: Wake and Back to Bed

The “wake and back to bed” method has been shown to increase your chances of lucidity by up to 2000%. This is because it takes full advantage of primetime dreamtime, which starts around two hours before you normally get up. So for this technique, set your alarm to go off two to three hours before you would normally get up. Stay up for 20 - 40 minutes, then go back to bed. You can meditate, read about lucid dreaming, or just stay up in a relaxed manner. But don’t go to your computer, check your email or texts, or watch TV. You don’t want to get pulled too much into waking consciousness and then be unable to drop back to sleep.

I’ve had terrific results with this technique. You can play with it and see what works for you. Again, we’re all different; there is no “one-size-fits-all” technique. Maybe getting up earlier and staying up longer works for you. Maybe getting up later and staying up shorter works. Don’t be afraid to explore and trust your experience.



Technique #6: MILD technique

This technique was developed by Stephen LaBerge, the father of Western lucid dreaming. With it he was able to have lucid dreams at will. See if it works for you. It's called the MILD technique, or the mnemonic induction of lucid dreams. This technique is something you use when you wake up during the night and can play with as you fall back asleep. There are four steps to the MILD technique.

First, when you wake up from a dream in the middle of the night or in the morning, keep your eyes closed and repeat the dream several times until you have it memorized. It's easy to do. Just hit the re-wind button of your mind and recapture the dream. Then go over it a few times, burning it into your hard drive.

Secondly, while lying in bed with the intent to fall back asleep, say to yourself, "Next time I'm dreaming, I want to remember to recognize I'm dreaming." Say something like this over and over, which of course, is planting the seed for lucidity and rebooting your intention.

Thirdly, visualize yourself as being back in the dream you just rehashed. Only this time, see yourself realizing that you are dreaming. See yourself in the dream you just memorized, but now see yourself as lucid in that dream. Fourth, repeat steps 2 and 3 until you feel your intention is fixed or you fall asleep.



Technique #7: Sleeping Lion Posture

The next three techniques come from the East and are based on the subtle body system of channels, the winds that flow through them (lung, prana), the “drops of consciousness” (Bindu, thigle) that are carried by these winds, and the chakras or energy distribution centers where the drops gather. According to Tibetan Buddhism, the subtle dreaming mind is supported by a subtle body, and by targeting this subtle body, we can induce lucidity. Before I came across the Western techniques presented above, I relied solely on these Eastern methods with great results. Once again, see if they work for you.

With our first Eastern technique, you assume the “Sleeping Lion posture,” which is the posture the Buddha took when he died, but which is also highly conducive to lucid dreams. It’s easy: you lie down on your right side with your legs slightly bent, rest your left arm on top of your left side, and (if it works for you) block off your right nostril by closing your right into a fist and resting it up against your nose. By assuming this posture, you’re closing off the extroverted “masculine” winds that tend to keep you up, and simultaneously opening the introverted “feminine” winds that are more conducive to lucid sleep. It’s part of the family of “inner yogas” that work with the subtle inner body. For those with a connection to yoga, this may be for you.

Once you assume this posture, you can add technique #9 below, or simply hit the refresh button on your intention by saying: “Tonight I’m going to have many dreams; Tonight, I’m going to remember my dreams; Tonight I’m going to become lucid in my dreams.” In other words, the Sleeping Lion Posture works by itself or can be used as a foundation to do other induction practices.



Technique #8: Sitting Lion Pose

This inner yoga technique comes from the Hindu Kriya Yoga tradition, and the first time I tried it I did indeed have a lucid dream that night. It's called the Simha or Sitting Lion Pose (what about lions and lucid dreams!?). With this technique, you kneel and sit back on your calves, either with your feet pointed back or if that's too uncomfortable, with your toes curled under. Stretch your arms out straight and place your hands in a fist on top of your knees. Keep your back straight. It's like a proud and fearless lion sitting on its haunches.

Take a deep breath, tip your head back slowly, and roar like a lion. (The "Lions Roar" is often used as an image for the proud and fearless proclamation of the truth, or dharma.) As you roar, open your fists and splay out your fingers. Do these three or seven times. According to the inner yogas, when we're dreaming, the drops of consciousness are gathered in the throat chakra. By tipping your head back, exposing your throat, and roaring, you're stimulating this dream chakra. It works for me. You may want to tell your family that you're doing this one in advance of doing it!



Technique #9: Red Pearl Visualization

With this technique, which can be done while lying down normally or in the Sleeping Lion Posture, you visualize either a red pearl or the red letters AH at your throat. In the inner yoga systems, each chakra is associated with a “frequency,” or sound and color. The dreaming throat chakra is “red,” and its sound is “AH.” According to Tibetan Buddhism, where the mind goes with a body visualization, the winds go; where the winds go, the bindus go; and where the bindus go, so goes consciousness.

While awake, the bindus are gathered in the head chakra. When we fall asleep, we literally unwind or “un-wind.” As we unwind, the bindus drop from the head to the heart, which is where consciousness rests in deep, dreamless sleep. When we dream, the bindus are gently blown up from the heart and into the throat. This process happens naturally, and usually unconsciously or non-lucidly. (I have no proof for this, but I believe this may be one reason why we have so many flying dreams because the inner winds that lift us out of dreamless sleep then continue to lift us into dream flight.)

With this technique, you can direct this process to happen lucidly, or under your conscious control. Dream yoga masters can become so adept at this movement of consciousness (the bindus) that they can go from waking to dreaming within seconds. It’s due to the power of their visualization and their ability to control the movement of these drops of consciousness. This technique is part of a family of practices LaBerge calls WILD, or “waking-induced lucid dreaming.” And it is quite wild. I use this one every single night.



Technique #10: Galantamine & Dream Masks

This final technique is a small grouping of supplemental methods from the West that I have found extremely helpful. It's in the "tips and tricks" category. The first tip is using galantamine, a substance that has been used for thousands of years for the enhancement of memory and, more recently, for having longer and clearer dreams. When we're dreaming, the neurotransmitter acetylcholine is in high concentration in the brain. Galantamine inhibits the breakdown of this neurotransmitter, which keeps it in your brain longer, which results in longer and clearer dreams. I've had fantastic results with this.

The best way to use it is to take 4-8 mg (one or two caps) about six hours after you go to sleep, which, just like the "wake and back to bed" method, takes full advantage of primetime dreamtime. If you add galantamine to this wake and back-to-bed method, you've added serious octane to lucidity. I don't recommend using it often, but now and again it can jump-start your lucid dreams. Some purists argue against its use, and I would certainly argue against regular use, but as an occasional boost, it works.

The other supplemental method is to use a dream mask. There are many these days, the Nova Dreamer, Remee, and even online instructions for how to build your own. Stephen LaBerge came up with the original idea, which is based on the fact that when you're dreaming, you're in REM sleep, or "Rapid Eye Movement" sleep. A sensor in the dream mask detects the eye movement and triggers a soft light to turn on and off. You train yourself to associate this

pulsing light as a dream sign, which means that you'll notice something like a car in your dream pumping its brake lights or a street light flashing, and that will remind you "Hey, I must be dreaming!" It's a very clever device with several variations (sometimes the clue might be auditory instead of visual). I've had good results, but others find it a bit cumbersome. Again, see if it works.

So these are my top ten methods. Play with them. Explore. But mostly, have fun. If you don't enjoy it, you won't do it. A standard instruction for lucid dreaming is "not too tight, not too loose." If you're too tight, you'll tie yourself into knots trying too hard and won't fall asleep. If you're loose, you probably won't have lucid dreams. Learning proper lucid induction methods and how to apply them is like tuning a guitar. Tune it too tight, and the string snaps; don't tune it enough, and you get a soggy sound. With some practice, patience, and a big dose of humor, you'll find yourself making beautiful night music.

Stick with it. Don't give up. That's the secret ingredient. Advanced practitioners never give up – that makes them advance (and advanced). It's worth the trouble. Lucid dreaming can wake you up not only to your dreams but to your entire life.



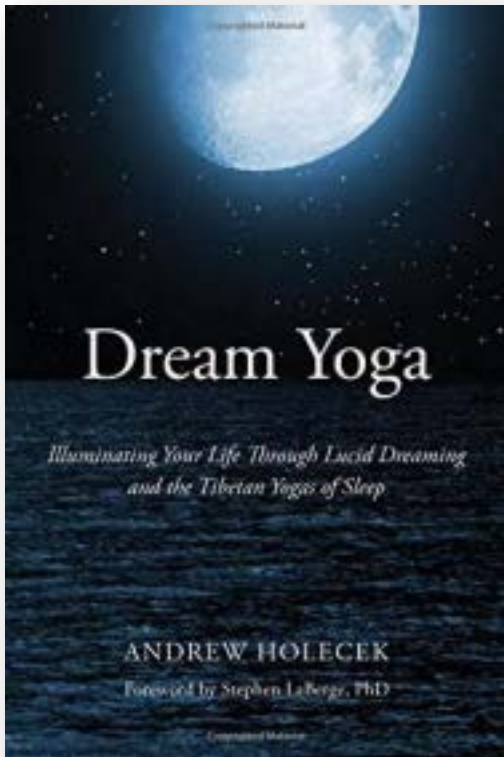


About Andrew

Andrew Holecek offers seminars internationally on lucid dreaming, dream yoga, and meditation. He is the author of many books, including *The Lucid Dreaming Workbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Mastering Your Dream Life*; *Dream Yoga: Illuminating Your Life Through Lucid Dreaming* and the *Tibetan Yogas of Sleep*; *Dreams of Light: The Profound Daytime Practice of Lucid Dreaming*, as well as the audio learning course, *Dream Yoga: The Tibetan Path of Awakening Through Lucid Dreaming*. His latest book is the forthcoming *Reverse Meditation: How to Use Your Pain and Most Difficult Emotions as the Doorway to Inner Freedom*. Dr. Holecek is a member of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, and the author of scientific papers on lucid dreaming. His work has appeared in *Psychology Today*, *Parabola*, *Lion's Roar*, *Tricycle*, *Utne Reader*, *Buddhadharma Magazine*, *Light of Consciousness*, and many other periodicals. Dr. Holecek also hosts the popular *Edge of Mind* podcast and is the founder of the international Night Club community, a support platform for the nocturnal meditations. He holds degrees in classical music, biology, and a doctorate in dental surgery. For more information go to andrewholecek.com.

Resources

[Dream Yoga: Illuminating Your Life Through Lucid Dreaming and the Tibetan Yogas of Sleep](#)

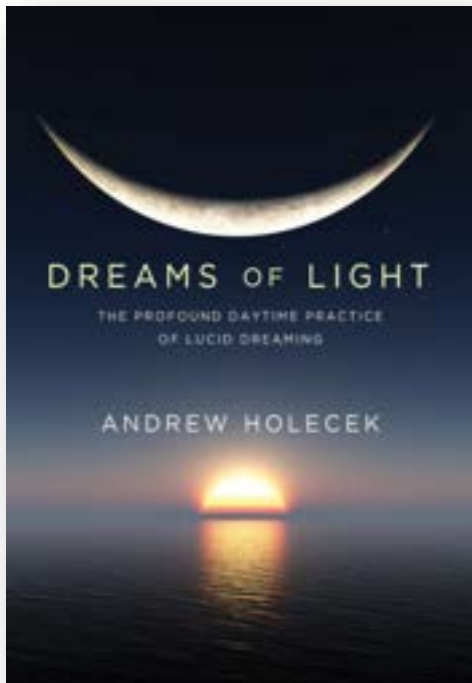


This is the most comprehensive book yet on the nocturnal meditations. Joining science and spirituality, East and West, in a full-spectrum exploration of the night, it explains how lucid dreaming develops into dream yoga, which can evolve into sleep yoga, which further develops into bardo yoga. Diving deep into the Buddhist nighttime practices, this dream yoga book will show you how to have lucid dreams and what to do with them. It is a practical guide for meditators, seasoned dream travelers wanting to go deeper, and total beginners eager to experience lucidity for the first time.

“Don’t miss your opportunity to realize some of the very deepest and highest of all human potentials from a real master of these realms!” - *Ken Wilber, author of “The Fourth Turning”*

“At once profound and pragmatic, traditional and contemporary, a fine contribution to the growing literature on ways of exploring the nature of the mind and its role in nature by way of awakening to our dreams.” - *B. Alan Wallace, author of “Dreaming Yourself Awake.”*

“Between these words, one can sense a deep enthusiasm that comes from personal experience with the practice. This informative book will be very beneficial for dedicated dream yoga practitioners.” - *Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, author of “The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep”*



[Dreams of Light: The Profound Daytime Practice of Lucid Dreaming](#)

This is a deep dive into the heart of all the nocturnal meditations, which includes dream yoga, sleep yoga, and bardo yoga. This book is a rigorous exploration of the daytime practice of Illusory Form, and why this practice is so important. Many people struggle with lucid dreaming. So much is promised, so little delivered. And unlike lucid dreaming, the daytime practice of Illusory Form is easy. Anybody can practice it.

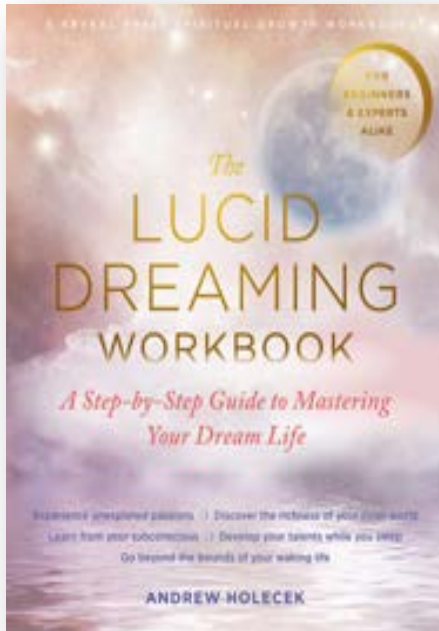
This is a no-holds-barred and no-nonsense look at the illusory nature of reality, how lucid dreaming and the practice of Illusory Form lead you to that view, and why this is so important.

“Dreams of Light is a profound exploration of emptiness, illusion, and the clear-light mind. Andrew’s deep scholarly knowledge, poetic prose, and compassionate heart illuminate every page of this fascinating book. Dreams of Light will raise your awareness and bring lucidity into every part of your life.” — Dr. Clare Johnson, author of Llewellyn’s Complete Book of Lucid Dreaming.

“Andrew Holecek is a master of the dream yogas and lucidity practices, and I have learned more from his writings than from the many related books I have studied. I highly recommend his new work, Dreams of Light, and all his other books as well.” — Roger Walsh MD PhD, University of California, author of Essential Spirituality: The Seven Central Practices

“This is an important and very pragmatic book for bringing daytime practices into the realm of lucid dreaming. Through the apt use of metaphor and clear examples, Holecek’s wisdom shines forth as he gives useful instructions for the reader to follow in his footsteps. I enjoyed this book immensely.” — Judson Brewer, MD, PhD. Author of “The Craving Mind”

[The Lucid Dreaming Workbook: A Step-By-Step Guide to Mastering Your Dream Life](#)



An introductory level book on the nuts-and-bolts of lucid dreaming. The workbook format is unique, and invites readers to explore topics through contemplations, exercises, and meditations peppered liberally throughout the book.

The reader's written responses to these exercises also serve to provide a baseline record where they can track their progress and celebrate the successes on their journey into lucidity. This book is designed to give you everything you need to know to have lucid dreams, and what to do with them. It's a great book for beginners, or for more seasoned dreamers seeking to refine and enhance their skills.

"Another brilliant addition to the lucid dreaming canon! This book actually feels more like a workshop than a book, as you are constantly being asked to reflect on your experience and to write notes as you go. A must-read for all who want to learn how to become lucid in their dreams!" - *Charlie Morley, lucid dreaming teacher, and author of "Dreams of Awakening"*

"Highly recommended! Andrew Holecek offers readers a rare, semisecret pathway into the world of lucid dreaming. Grasp his hand through the dark descent from the white of normal thinking through the red of the throat, until you reach the blue of the true heart and its secrets."
- *Patricia Garfield, PhD, doctorate in clinical psychology from Temple University; author of the Los Angeles Times bestseller, "Creative Dreaming"; and cofounder of the International Association for the Study of Dreams*

"The Lucid Dreaming Workbook provides a spirited collection of Eastern and Western lucid dreaming techniques, along with solid advice for those traveling the lucid dreaming path. If you are wishing to add some Eastern induction methods to your personal repertoire, then you should definitely take a look!" - *Robert Waggoner, author of "Lucid Dreaming"*



About Night Club

Night Club is an international community of students and teachers interested in meditation, lucid dreaming, and the nature of reality. Spiritual teachers, scientists, scholars, and authors offer you the latest on lucid dreaming and the study of mind. Night Club offers daily events ranging from a Meditation Group, a Book Study Group, to a Q&A Session live with Andrew. Education, community interaction, and even entertainment are available at your fingertips. Have questions? Need advice along the way? Connect directly with Andrew and other experts to get their thoughts around any inquiry.

"I love being connected to this group. I feel nowhere in the world are ordinary people getting what we are getting. Such rich and seemingly infinite source of Dharma."

"I so much appreciate this offering and Night Club as a kind of 'meeting place' for us who are seriously interested in nighttime practices. I also appreciate how well you are moderating the live calls and how organized they are, while at the same time they remain so relaxed and fun to be in/with. I'm thankful that you also provide the recordings (for those of us in different time zones). This simply is such a good combination of things."

About Edge of Mind



Candid conversations with leading edge thinkers in the fields of science, philosophy, spirituality, psychology, health care, integral studies, and the arts to explore ancient teachings and modern topics about the nature of mind and reality. Recent guests include Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, Tsoknyi Rinpoche, Daniel Goleman, and more. [Edge of Mind Podcast](#)

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