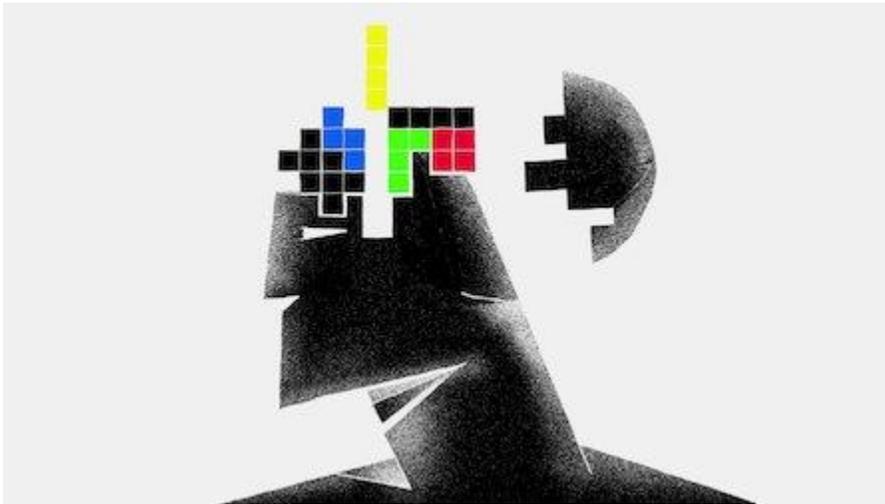


## The Mind, Explained Episode 2: Dreams



The Mind, Explained discusses how REM sleep relates to memory, particularly when it comes to solidifying things that you've learned during your waking life. Interestingly, it also seems to play a pivotal role in helping you forget traumatic events such as those experienced by people suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The episode also explains the history of dream interpretation going all the way back to ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, where they recorded dreams. They scribed their dreams in hieroglyphics, believing they were instructions from a higher power. It turns out people have been fascinated by their own dreams for a very long time.

One interesting thing that I learned is that, until relatively recently, most experts believed that you didn't actually dream during sleep, but rather that all dreaming took place during the moment that you woke up. We now know that this is false, and that dreaming occurs during REM sleep.

While dreaming your body is paralyzed but your eyes move rapidly. The way your eyes move relates to what you're seeing while dreaming, for example if someone is dreaming of a tennis match then the sleeping person's eyes will move back and forth as if they're watching a tennis match. If they're dreaming of walking up the stairs their eyes will move up as they ascend the staircase.

Furthermore, they talk about lucid dreaming which is particularly interesting. Lucid dreaming is when you are completely aware that you're dreaming while it's happening. In many cases the lucid dreamer can actually control the events that transpire during their dream state.

There are various dream theories discussed, for instance Freud and Jung believed dreams are the brain's subconscious activities that give one insight into innermost feelings and thoughts, while Cajal thought dreams are meaningless electrical impulses that create equally meaningless visions.

### Differences in dreaming between men and women:

Unsurprisingly, men and women dream about different topics. Men more frequently dream of other men, while women tend to dream about men and women in equal measure. Children tend to dream about animals most frequently.

The current understanding of dreaming is that you dream about the people, places, and things that you most frequently encounter in real life. The purpose of dreaming seems to be to make connections and form ideas that you wouldn't normally think about in real life. As one person in the show put it, "without the constraints of logic". That's why most of your dreams tend to be extremely weird. It's your brain's way of thinking through solutions to problems you're dealing with in your everyday life.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sleepline.com/the-mind-explained-episode-2-dreams-summary/>