

**Kathleen Sullivan's  
Dreams, Another Way of Knowing**

**How Are You? Check Your Dream House.**

From a reader: *I find myself in a huge house, everything in place, but no one around. I hear the sounds of many people talking and engaging in various social activities. They seem to be coming from the other side of the wall, as if this house is a duplex. My side is quiet. I wander from room to somewhat familiar room, and in some versions (of this recurring dream) I interact with an occasional person. At the end, I discover a room or suite of rooms that I've never seen before. It or they are always perfect, clean, decorated, but totally unused, like a model home. I go in and explore, checking out the sleeping area, bath, and wardrobe.*

The reader continues: "I finally deduced that the house is a metaphor for my life. All the rooms are all the facets of my personality, talents, abilities, and interests. The room at the end is that hidden aspect of myself that I'm always just about to discover, that brand new insight into who I am. The dream is quite vivid."

The reader did not address the first part of the dream about the sounds from the duplex. *If this were my dream* I would wonder what kind of energy my ego is connected to but not living with. I'd notice the quiet on my side in contrast to the various social activities on the other side of the wall. In addition, I imagine a split or separation from the social milieu.

Dreamers usually report a great deal of excitement about an undiscovered house dream. Often the unknown portion of the house is another entire floor, a basement or an attic. What unknown potential is waiting to be discovered? Will you choose to activate it after it has been discovered?

Dream houses present themselves in conditions that would challenge any architect: dilapidated; lacking doors, roofs and walls; filled with rats and garbage; too big for the foundation or too small for the lot. In our dream theaters we see splendid glass structures stretching to the heavens and neat, quaint fairytale cottages nestled in the forest. Whether a log cabin in a town or a tenement in the slums, house images usually stir up the emotional pot. The bubbling feelings may erupt from the anticipation of developing potential or, paradoxically, the dread of physical disaster.

These extreme responses arise because a house is the place in which we live. Therefore, dream houses may reflect or predict the dreamer's psychological or physical condition. Images of new construction may thrill and entice while a crumbling dream house may lead the dreamer to a medical doctor or a psychotherapist. Consider the relevance of the very common symbol of overflowing toilets or stopped-up sinks. If a dream house represents literal physical distress, does this metaphor suggest a blockage in

the alimentary canal or an emotional block that needs attention to ensure a smooth flow in life? Examining the full content of the dream usually provides the clues necessary to identify the dream as literal or symbolic.

Rooms or areas within dream houses can represent aspects of the dreamer's psyche (or personality) because houses have areas designated for specific activities. Accordingly, each dream room represents a different aspect of life. A problem in the kitchen of the dream house may signify a need for attention to physical nourishment (diet), to nurturing (food as comfort/mother), to the entire alchemical process of transformation (food is transformed when processed in the kitchen). A remodeled dream bedroom may reflect or suggest the changes that are needed or already have taken place in the areas of intimacy/relationship (sex), self-care (sleep/recuperation) or personal space.

My favorite house dreams return me to the homes from my childhood. These dreams show the transformations that have occurred since those early years, which were replete with difficulties and even severe trauma. Always the former houses altered in very positive ways. During the years when I was learning to nurture myself appropriately, the kitchen from my past changed deliciously. The original kitchen, too small to hold two people at the same time and insufficient for preparing full meals, expanded to a kitchen fit for Julia Childs.

Former houses may alert us to our mood or emotional state. My family once lived in a cabin with a very leaky roof. Now, when I'm dealing with a collective or personal grief, that rickety old roof is attached to my present house, threatening to flood either my living or working space. Thus alerted, I know it is time to consciously devote time to processing political anguish, national or world sorrow or an important personal loss.

Dream houses destroyed by earthquake or threatened by hurricane or tornado alert us to dramatic transformation. This can be a good thing or a bad thing. A woman reported a series of earthquake dreams that flattened her marital home prior to her decision to leave her marriage. In this case, the earthquake was valuable to her individuation despite the shocking trauma involved.

House dreams are as valuable as real estate in Santa Cruz! Don't lose them.