

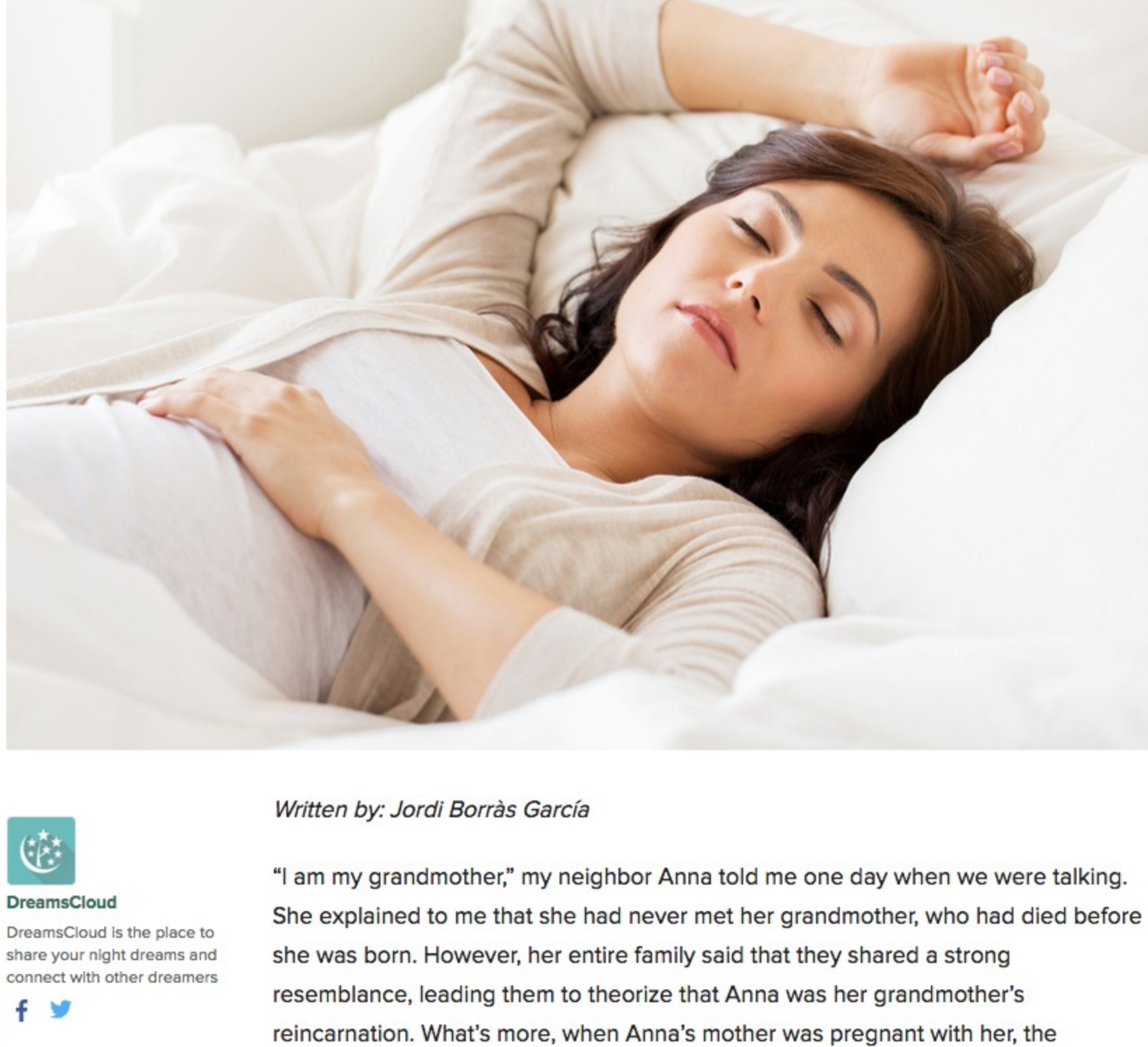
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# Nine Months To Dream

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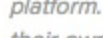


Written by: [Jordi Borràs García](#)



DreamsCloud

DreamsCloud is the place to share your night dreams and connect with other dreamers



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"I am my grandmother," my neighbor Anna told me one day when we were talking. She explained to me that she had never met her grandmother, who had died before she was born. However, her entire family said that they shared a strong resemblance, leading them to theorize that Anna was her grandmother's reincarnation. What's more, when Anna's mother was pregnant with her, the grandmother had appeared repeatedly in her dreams. When Anna shared this detail with me, I told her it reminded me of a belief that is fundamental in other societies, even though it may strike many people in our culture as odd. The Tlingit, for example, who are an indigenous people of the northwest coast of North America, firmly believe that if a pregnant woman dreams about an ancestor who died some time ago, it means that the ancestor's soul is entering the baby she is carrying.

It isn't hard to find societies where the dreams of pregnant women are listened to carefully. We know that in South Korea, for example, such dreams traditionally are shared for a number of reasons, including to predict the baby's sex. Such predictions are based on the characteristics of elements appearing in the dreams, since some symbols, culturally, have a feminine connotation, while others are more associated with a masculine energy.

## Men get pregnant too

In any case, regardless of our particular beliefs, the dreams we have during pregnancy are interesting for a variety of reasons—and this is true of the man's dreams as well as the woman's. My wife and I intuitively paid particular attention to our dreams throughout her two pregnancies. Because we were paying such close attention, both of us were able to have distinct dream experiences that were truly moving. Even now, the consequences of those experiences continue to touch us. One night, for example, I had one of the most beautiful dreams I can remember. I was walking down the street, when suddenly I heard a man's voice saying, "And now, I'm going to dedicate a song to Júnia!" At first, I was surprised, but then I immediately realized that I was dreaming. Lucid and excited, I sat down among the people who were around him, and I prepared to listen to the song. The singer-songwriter in my dream, who was dressed in white, passed out sheets of paper with the song lyrics, so that we could read along as he was singing. When I woke up, I remembered the song perfectly. So I recorded it with my guitar, looking forward to singing it to our daughter, Júnia, once she was born—something I still do every so often.

As the neuropsychiatrist Louann Brizendine noted years ago, men respond to the chemistry of pregnancy by inhibiting the production of testosterone, in response to the pheromones that the mother emits through her skin. These hormonal changes are responsible for Couvade syndrome, or sympathetic pregnancy, which can cause some men to put on weight (until the baby is born) or become more sensitive to a baby's cries, for example. I've known more than one man who has dreamed that he is the one who is literally pregnant. This new stage of life affects fathers in various ways, too, even though it may seem less apparent with men than with women. Among other things, their dream become more intense. Some of these dreams may be truly enjoyable. At the same time, however, many of them stem from the concerns that come with this new stage. I remember one time when a man called in to a radio show where I worked regularly, and he recounted a dream that his daughter-to-be was born with all of her teeth. It was causing him a lot of anxiety. I explained to our listeners that a dream like this could be expressing worry about the baby's health. However, the image of a baby with teeth also reminds us that no matter how wanted a baby may be, he or she also represents a sort of "threat," because the baby's arrival will force us out of our comfort zone and into a very different place than we were before the birth.

Fathers-to-be ask themselves many questions (sometimes without even being fully aware of it), and these questions are expressed, one way or another, in their dreams. Will the baby be healthy? Will I be able to support my family financially and emotionally? As the pregnancy progresses, it isn't unusual for the man's own father to appear repeatedly in his dreams. This seems to be an invitation from the dreamer's unconscious to address any unresolved issues in his relationship with his father, and to evaluate his own abilities as a parent. The man may also have dreams where the predominant emotion is a feeling of rejection. Such dreams stem from the dreamer's fear that when the baby is born, his place in his wife's life will diminish. Without a doubt, the new reality will involve many changes. Dreams help us prepare ourselves and approach these issues with greater clarity, before the family grows to include another person.

Clearly, though, dreams during pregnancy are particularly significant for the woman. On more than one occasion, I have seen pregnant women at my office who have told me about dreams that they find deeply worrying. Understanding that these dreams are part of a natural process helps women avoid becoming unnecessarily concerned—a useful thing during such an intense time.

## A common process

Various studies have shown that, during pregnancy, women tend to recall their dreams more easily. Moreover, their dreams are more intense and vivid, richer in detail, and often end up turning into nightmares. This tendency may have various explanations: hormonal changes affecting the biochemistry of the body, new and irregular sleep patterns—not to mention the flood of emotions that pregnancy entails. This is truer than ever nowadays, when many women are working professionals, in addition to being mothers and wives, and are striving to do it all perfectly. From this perspective, a pregnancy may feel like quite a challenge.

Any time we talk about dreams, it is important to remember that dreams are related to each person's individual circumstances. Nevertheless, dreams during pregnancy have several common characteristics. These distinctive features, which I discuss in greater detail below, can occur any time during pregnancy, but many of them tend to happen more frequently in one of the three trimesters. In any case, these dream experiences do not indicate that there is any problem with the pregnancy.

## The adventure begins

Emotionally speaking, the first trimester is truly intense, and dreams reflect this fact. During a woman's first pregnancy, her dreams may be related, in particular, to the physical changes that she will experience. It is not uncommon to see architectural elements (rooms, tunnels, etc.), which may refer, symbolically, to these physical changes, to the baby's "home" (the uterus), or to the birth canal.

References to the fetus are also frequent—including metaphorical references, such as images of aquatic animals (small fish, tadpoles, etc.), small mammals (kittens, puppies, bunnies, etc.) or even small objects that symbolize the baby. A woman may feel that she is in a vulnerable situation, perhaps involving the presence of intruders or burglars in her dreams. Nightmares involving blood, or falling, suffocating, etc., are also common, and may simply express the expectant mother's fear of losing her baby.

Other recurring symbols at this stage include plants and flowers (clearly referring to fertility) or water. Water may symbolize the amniotic fluid in which the baby is suspended, or, as Dr. Angel Morgan suggests, it may even represent the pregnant woman's own mother. Based on the appearance of the water, the dreamer can evaluate where her relationship with her mother stands. In any case, the dreamer's mother may play a more prominent role in the second trimester.

## Am I ready?

A pregnant woman may be assessing her ability to take on the new role that awaits her. Her own mother is her main point of reference in this regard, and addressing any unresolved issues with her mother will help her as she becomes a parent herself. As a result, her mother will appear frequently in her dreams—sometimes helping, sometimes making things harder.

During this time, the woman may be experiencing more doubts about her ability to handle her new situation. So, many of her dreams may involve unresolved conflicts from her past—as if inviting her to take stock of them and sort them out. This is probably why women also see former boyfriends in their dreams most frequently during this trimester. In fact, women also dream that their husbands are having affairs—perhaps because they are concerned that their new circumstances will have a negative impact on their relationship. At the same time, some women worry that the physical changes they experience may make them less attractive.

Along these same lines, we can interpret the appearance of cars and other vehicles, or big houses, as symbols that represent the woman's changing body. Also, although animals may have been more common during the first trimester, now more babies and children appear. This is especially true beginning in the sixth month, which is when the mother begins to really notice the baby's movements, and it becomes clearer that this is for real.

## The home stretch

A woman may feel especially intense worries towards the end, especially if this is her first pregnancy. These worries may be related to the birth, the change in her relationship with her husband, the baby's health, or the challenges that she expects parenthood to bring. She may have dreams where she is lost, or even unable to find the baby.

Surprisingly, the baby may be represented in her dreams by large animals (lions, grating apes, etc.). Sometimes, the baby appears in human form, but with physical characteristics that are unusual for its young age (heavier than normal, for example), or the baby may have a strange ability to walk or talk. References to the body suggest weight changes (perhaps symbolized by big buildings, for example), and in dreams, the body may be burdened with heavy objects or carrying "excess baggage."

The unconscious seems to prepare the woman for the experience of giving birth—as if the unconscious itself were doing part of the work. On the one hand, intense natural phenomena (eruptions, earthquakes, etc.) may appear. On the other hand, the mother-to-be may be surprised by an almost magical birth, dreaming that the baby is born with the utmost ease. Clearly, some of the dreams associated with pregnancy are not unpleasant at all. Many are luminous, exhilarating, and uplifting. Sometimes, parents may even have moving experiences in their dreams—for example, the name that they will end up giving their baby may come to them in a dream.

## Beginning a new stage by sharing dreams

Pregnancy seems to be a particularly propitious time to work, with the help of our dreams, on our relationship with our own parents and the emotional shortcomings of our childhoods. It is a time to review our personal history, the feelings holding us back, and any patterns we have outgrown—things that may be preventing us from continuing to grow and pursue the path to abundant happiness and peace. During a first pregnancy, the parents-to-be experience a profound change in their identity. They can take this opportunity, during the pregnancy and the first years of parenthood, to explore these issues. Doing so will help make subsequent pregnancies more calm (and their dreams will reflect this fact).

Some studies suggest that when a woman is pregnant, if she experiences confusing and contradictory emotions, she tends not to show her emotions openly. For example, she may feel truly sad or worried occasionally, but she may assume that she should feel nothing but happiness, given her situation and the social expectations that go with it. But dreams—not being subject to social conventions—will express those tensions clearly. It is very interesting to see how some women, who resist acknowledging their emotions, feel freed when they do so indirectly, by sharing dreams where they have felt fear, anxiety, or profound sadness.

Sharing those dreams with their spouse can also be a great way to strengthen the bond between them. Moreover, by giving expression to internal tensions, sharing bad dreams actually helps diminish them, leading to a greater sense of peace. There's no question about it—approaching your baby's birth calmly, and with greater mutual understanding, can be a wonderful way to welcome the baby of your dreams to this world.

## About the author:

*Jordi Borràs García is a psychologist, a Advisory Board Member at [DreamsCloud](#), the founder of [mondesomnis](#) and a Board Member of the International Association for the Study of Dreams.*