

Swimming and dreams

Alper Sevinc

Gaziantep University, School of Medicine,
Department of Internal Medicine,
Division of Medical Oncology, Sahinbey
Medical Center, Gaziantep, Turkey

Swimming is great fun for those who practice this fantastic sport. However, have you ever thought of the stress incurred by those who cannot swim? For years and years, I focused myself on learning how to swim. However, every effort failed. I am also myopic, which makes things difficult for me when I am unable to wear my spectacles in the sea.

Dreams sometimes reflect real life. Although I rarely thought of swimming or considered it to be a 'problem', the subconscious attacked during sleep and I often dreamt about swimming. Basically, this can be interpreted as a reflection of a desire. However, the interesting point in my dreams was the fact that I did not swim in the way swimmers usually do. I therefore began to think that it was clearly impossible for me to learn how to swim, as even in my dreams I could not swim normally. I scrutinised the reasons for such dreams and developed an unbelievable taste of swimming. I then gave up the idea of ever learning how to swim. My idea was clear: It should only be a gift in the heaven presented to me.

This summer my wife wanted us to spend the holiday at the seaside in the villa of my sister in law. Her husband is a gynaecologist. My intention was to rest and read books. I definitely had no intention of swimming. I

was content to admire the excellent sea view from the villa, but my colleague insisted I try swimming or at least walking in the shallows. Finally, for the first time in my life, I overcame my phobia and removed my glasses and walked through the sea at a depth of one metre and thus learned how to move in the water. Yes, of course, I was fitted out with 'Sun & Fun' sea cuffs fastened tightly round both my arms. Due to the encouragement given by my colleague, I began to practice "swimming-like" movements. It was unbelievable! In the mornings, I improved my swimming style day by day and was finally able to remove the arm cuffs. In the evenings, I made notes for the rest of medical staff who did not know how to swim or were frightened by the mere thought.

- The only thing you should do is 'to do nothing', allow yourself to be lifted up. If you are nervous, you will sink
- Say again and again 'No panic, no excitement' to yourself
- Everybody around should encourage you without making fun
- You should encourage yourself by talking to yourself
- The arm cuffs give you confidence and allay the fear of drowning
- Do not listen to those around you, especially children laughing at you, concentrate ONLY on yourself
- A rough sea with lots of waves is always difficult; try to practice on calm, "un-wavy" days
- After 3-4 days, the arm cuffs will become a hindrance. After removing them go through the above items once again.
- You are then ready for 'Sun & Fun & Run'

According to experts, there are four stages in learning to swim. Stage 1 is water orientation (learning to be comfortable and move in the water). Stage 2 is skill development (basic movements and orientation). Stage 3 is skill improvement (improving all four strokes and increase endurance), i.e. the subject learns how to swim. Stage 4 is skill refinement (motor coordination) [1]. Colleagues who have not yet learned how to swim but wish to do so need to combine this expert opinion and my 'lecture' notes.

I was curious about the effect on my dreams. Four months later I thought that the reason why I have had no further dreams about swimming is that I had learnt how to. In my last dream, surprisingly I was swimming 'in' the sea and swimming better than the best swimmer in the world championship and not as the "normal" swimmer I had always wanted to be.

Correspondence:

Alper Sevinc, MD
Gaziantep University,
School of Medicine
Department of Internal Medicine
Division of Medical Oncology
Sahinbey Medical Center
Gaziantep, TR-27310
Turkey
E-mail: sevinc@gantep.edu.tr

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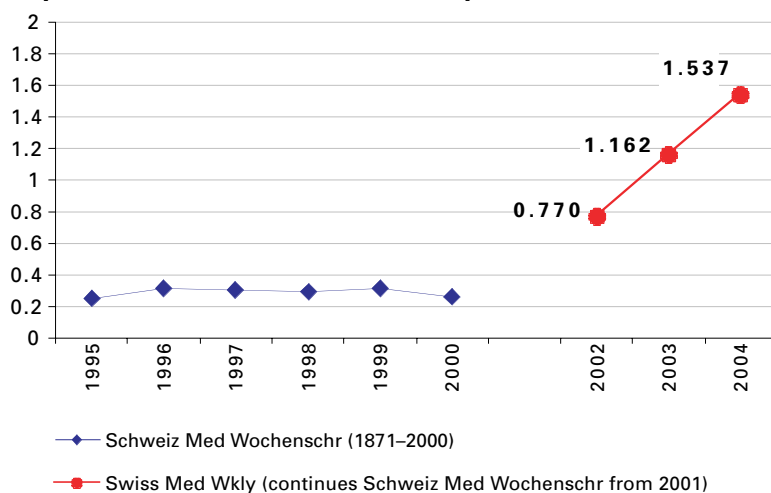
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