

## FEELING EXPRESSION AND THE INCORPORATION OF PRESLEEP EVENTS INTO DREAMS\*

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### ABSTRACT

The expression of feelings about events occurring immediately before sleep was expected to increase the influence of remote memories on dream content and to decrease the influence of immediate presleep events on dream content. On each of two successive nights, twelve participants were asked to 1) view an emotionally involving film, 2) select the film segment that felt personally most important, and 3) rate the film segment using adjectives descriptive of affect. Participants in the feeling expression condition were then instructed to reflect on and characterize the feelings they experienced during the film, whereas participants in the no feeling expression condition were instructed to reflect on and analyze their impressions of the film's aesthetic quality. All participants were subsequently awakened from REM sleep and asked to 1) describe their sleep mentation and 2) rate the affect accompanying that mentation. As hypothesized, participants in the feeling expression condition were less likely than participants in the no feeling expression condition to have dreams with actions and scenes similar to those from the presleep films. They were also more likely than participants in the no feeling expression condition to have dreams with affect comparable to that experienced while viewing the presleep films.

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