

DREAM SHARDS

**Your Dreams Have Shattered ...
What Now?**

SHIRLEY BUXTON



Insignia

Sacramento, California

Dream Shards
Your Dreams Have Shattered ... What Now?
by Shirley Buxton

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Unless otherwise noted, all biblical references are from the King James Version. Other versions used include Berean Study Bible (BSB), New International Version (NIV), and The Living Bible (TLB).

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“I certainly endorse this well-done manuscript. My hope is that it is distributed far and wide.”

–Reverend Ken Bow, pastor Lake Taps, Washington

“Shirley Buxton has once again shown the gift of a rare artist, with *Dream Shards*, her latest offering. If you are reading this, you doubtless know several people that need to own a copy of this book. Even before I had finished my perusal of the manuscript, I began sharing it with others. Shirley Buxton gives deft treatment to the subject of what to do when our world is shattered. You will be inspired by her deep insight into how shattered lives can be re-formed and re-imagined by the power of grace.”

–Rev. Mark Grisham, evangelist Houston, Texas

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Especially indebted am I to those who, in this book, have been willing to share personal narratives of their dreams, and of their shatters. Thank you.

Both Matt Jones of *Insignia Publications* and Rebecca Monks have edited my words and my ideas and have refined them into the beautiful book you hold in your hands.

Thank you, everyone.

To Leah Doyle

Throughout the years, you have confronted multiple grievous challenges. In an exceptional way, you have bent low, gathered the ugly shards, and trekked onward. Your cheer, and smiling acceptance is nothing if not a steady blaze of light. Your remarkable strength and inner glow have illuminated the dark paths onto which you have been forced.

You truly are remarkable.
I dedicate this work to you.

Introduction

Dreams. You have them. We all have them. Night dreams, without which, doctors say, our emotional and physical health suffers. You squirm in your bed, eyelids aflutter, for even as you sleep, you work through life challenges, its mysteries, and its demanding decisions. Soft moans slip from throats during these darkened-room escapades, while some persons are noted for physical waving of arms or kicking of legs, even to the extent of causing bruises to a bed partner. A few even leave their beds and walk around, perhaps acting out their dreams. It is thought that babies dream, as do animals.

From antiquity, men have considered dreams and have ascribed significance to them. Dreams considered in this book go beyond those we have at night, although such experiences may on occasion be included in the classification of dreams with which this book will engage. We are speaking here of ambition and of aspiration. Plans. Vision. Accomplishment. Occupation. It is likely that at least once as a child, every person had an adult bend down and ask, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And you thought about it, even in your childhood, and replied, "*a doctor, a nurse, a truck driver, a candy-maker ...*"

The heart of this book presses past the mere dream itself, but dares, as well, to venture into the dreaded space of mutilated dreams, of foil and failure, of wretched disappointment. Dream shards. Broken pieces. That grand-scale strategy, once thought so stellar, is now seen as flawed with hopeless defect. Cruel challenges couple themselves with rank failure so that a successful outcome smacks of the impossible. Finally comes the glaring truthful conclusion: no amount of patching the dream is possible. Multiplied layers of paint cannot camouflage the ugliness of this shattered ambition. The only remainder of that once glorious vision is the distant sound of its wild howl as it cascades into a million pieces.

You can expect, though, that I will erect a considerable pedestal throughout this work that will showcase those whose trembling hands once held nothing but shards of glittering dreams, yet whose narrative now is a shout of success. We will focus on those dreamers who bravely gathered up the flawed pieces, who sighted a new target, and who took careful aim at the gleaming bullseye. Authenticity begs the chronicle of the aborted venture, but we will not linger there, we will not grovel

in the ruins with bent heads and troubled hearts, for if all behaved in such manner, a heavy blanket of despair and anguish would cover our world. Rather, an image of hope and of restoration is threaded throughout the book. Biblical examples are cited and other historical accounts are referenced, as are narratives of contemporaries who have faced such tests and prevailed. Concepts that speak with pointed insight to possible cause for floundering and for lack of success are tethered from Chapter One to the final word in the final chapter, for it is my goal that this book constitutes a hopeful platform where broken dreams may be acknowledged, but where new vision and new dreams may be birthed.

Prologue—A Night Dream

I awoke, or was I yet asleep? Prone, I focused my eyes where I thought the ceiling should be, rotating them, side to side. For a minute I lay there, then using my arms for leverage, I sat up, warm sheets rumpled about me. My breath came fast, jerked with shallow heaves, my mouth a wide desert, my throat a short tunnel of parch. I turned my head, and then in ever-widening swatches—feeling, searching—I moved my hands over the covers. The orbs? The glittering rounds? Were they here or had that been some other place? I had held them, I was sure of that ... but had that been a dream? Was I in my house? I turned my head and saw the outline of a person beside me. Jerry. I must be in my own bed. The room was dark, a spacious black square that gave to a shuttered window off my left. I glimpsed faint white light edging the blinds and though I had hoped for dawn, I figured the thin rays to be from our yard lamp. I turned to see the clock on my stand. The glowing numbers counted out the hour and the minutes: 1:45. I clutched my arms over my chest where beneath my ribs an aging heart battered.

The dreams.

Jerry's breathing was even. The room was quiet. I turned back my blanket, placed my legs over the edge of the mattress, then barefooted my way to the bathroom. I drew a small amount of water into the glass there, drank it down, then returned to my sleeping place.

They had been dreams, now I knew, and from them had come my pounding heart and my gasping breath.

Soft from their many washings, the sheets fell smooth beneath my body as I stretched out, then turned onto my side and assumed my favorite sleeping curve ... I drifted off

From a distance I saw myself. I stood again on a wide expanse where a meadow stretched far, ending at the feet of the distant mountains. The sky was wide, cerulean, with soft meanders of wispy clouds stretched out in irregular swaths. No noonday scene this, but whether it was mid-morning or mid-afternoon, I could not tell. My hair blew behind me, long and free, my billowed dress brushed the grass where I stood. I did not recognize the dress and I could not see my face. I was both inside myself and a viewer of the scene. I was young, and also I was old.

Laying about me, and spinning out as far as I could see, were baubles,

colorful as a summer garden of exotic flowers, rare but elusive, and whether to pick one or not puzzled me. As bubbles from a child's blowing toy, they floated on the gentle breeze, higher now, then a drift to the grassy earth. Rainbows glistened on their surface with hues of red and blue and golden. Marble-sized were some, while others were large, threatening to burst for their thinness, and then my image turned itself, and I saw I had gathered an armful of the balls.

A number of them were fashioned of glass, thin and translucent; others were opaque, of jeweled tones, purple and crimson and the deepest of blue. I knew them to be ornaments for holiday tree adorning. The gigantic ones which I did not attempt to hold were of those designed to hang from wires that crisscross city streets, where flashing lights play off and on, and where they glitter and gleam.

I was a nymph, now floating across the field, my feet barely in touch with the earth. I explored. I considered. I paused to gaze at the orbs gathered in my arms, and simultaneously I let one float away. I watched it leave me, slipping in the warm air, and then I took up another.

The sun moved, venturing now to the western edge of the land —this land festooned with baubles, thin and slippery. The long shadows told the time, so that I knew the day was edging into its finish. From my distance, I saw myself again. In that wide field, surrounded by thousands of circles, some small, some large, some of one color, some of another, I watched my self hold back now, as abandoning my flutter through the meadow, I grounded myself. I watched as I looked far beyond the myriad formations on the ground about me and as I focused my eyes on the mountains in the splendid distance. My image then turned its head to firmly gaze at the rounds I had gathered into my arms.

And then I knew. This was no ordinary field. This was a field of dreams.

“What alone remains is the last of human freedoms, the ability to choose one’s attitude in a given set of circumstances.”

Dr. Victor Frankl



Chapter One

The Anatomy of Dreams

You sketch your dreams, lay them out in lines, or in circles, or on the slant. You paint motifs and conjure themes, but it is possible that no pen or paper may be involved, for this is but the beginning of what may develop into detailed blueprints or pages of progress reports. The dream may be a family one, with its proverbial house encircled by a fence of white pickets, or of a diploma, or of prestigious employment. The yearning may have arisen from within your deep spirit and developed into a true anguish for peoples of the world. Whether by the tending of needy bodies, social challenges, or eternal souls, the aim of humanitarian intervention is being pondered.

Vision of treks deep into green jungles where mud huts abound or into the metropolitan areas of the world where skyscrapers cast long shadows of neediness may invade our senses. Faint may be the objects, and imprecise are the conclusions in this early formation of dreams, as we reckon with the thrust and pull of their urgency, while, at the same time, we consider the stuttering reality that comes with such experience. Conversely, on infrequent occasion, a vision may slip into view complete with fleshed-out strategy that points to a successful finish so that with fire in his fixed eye, seeing flashes of brilliance in the distance, the dreamer presses forward.

Although corporate action will likely be needed before its attainment, dreams are of the solitary and for long seasons may exist only in the psyche of the dreamer. Seeds. A fragment of an idea may evolve, whispered to no one, or only to a kindred soul whose judgment and faithfulness are respected. Over time, the thought attaches to another, goes through mental and soul testing to assure the concept is neither too whimsical or too lean, but, though elementary, has heft and substance. Finally, the vision is taken from its cocoon and is shown to others in anticipation of an unbiased exam and frank analysis. Yet the dream is individual, perhaps deeply personal, and at times, despite

negative assessments, the dreamer is wise to press forward, his eyes riveted on the future.

You will probably be astonished to read, as was I, in *Davison Inventing*, that the master inventor Thomas Edison was quoted in the *New York World* in 1895 as saying, “It is apparent to me that the possibilities of the aeroplanes, which two or three years ago were thought to hold the solution to the (flying machine) problem, have been exhausted, and that we must turn elsewhere.”

Davison Inventing goes on to emphasize, “Less than ten years later, the (Wright) brothers defied one of the most intelligent men in the United States, if not the world, and made two flights from level ground into a headwind gusting to 27 miles per hour.” Today, it is difficult to consider life without benefit of air travel. In the year 2010, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, a total of 631,939,829 passengers boarded domestic flights in the United States. This averages 1.73 million passengers who fly each day.¹

Business Insider reports that in 1911, Ferdinand Foch, a French general and Allied Commander during World War I, said, “Airplanes are interesting scientific toys, but they are of no military value.” Yet on this day, it is impossible to even think of a war being fought without the use of planes.

Dreams often exist in hazy obscure places where, after a time, scoffers may intrude. Such doubters may be well-intentioned, and their concerns voiced with the sincere hope of preventing the dreamer’s disappointment should the plan fail. Others have ulterior motives that may be driven by jealousy or other distasteful attitudes. In either case, the holder clutches his dream, careful now, a mother attending her newborn. Imprecise though it may be, perhaps fragmented in design, the meter of its conclusion not sounded, the dream is safeguarded. The dream is held.

Consider the well-known biblical story of Joseph, the personification of a dreamer.

One night Joseph had a dream and promptly reported the details to his brothers, causing even deeper hatred.

“Listen to this,” he proudly announced, “We were out in the field binding sheaves, and my sheaf stood up, and your sheaves all gathered around it and bowed low before it!”

1 www.transtats.bts.gov

“So you want to be our king, do you?” his brothers derided. And they hated him both for the dream and his cocky attitude.

Then he had another dream and told it to his brothers. “Listen to my latest dream,” he boasted. “The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!” This time he told his father as well as his brothers, but his father rebuked him. “What is this?” he asked. “Shall I indeed, and your mother and brothers come and bow before you?” His brothers were fit to be tied concerning this affair, but his father gave it quite a bit of thought and wondered what it all meant.

(Genesis 37:5-11 TLB)

Joseph's brothers were unhappy with him, and it may be that unwise parenting by Jacob had contributed to their attitudes. He made it clear that Joseph was his favorite child, and among other shows of favoritism, he designed a splendid coat for Joseph. As it was draped around his fine shoulders, he may have strutted among his less-favored brothers, and they had not taken well to the glamorous tunic. Now this baby brother was boasting of dreams of superiority, and it infuriated them. They hated him. An ugly scenario had set itself up, and even though Joseph's dreams were truly prophetic, had been given by God, and would come to pass, major trouble was brewing.

Came the day that Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers who were grazing cattle in Shechem. In the distance, the brothers saw the approaching image, recognized it to be Joseph, and instantly laid out evil plans. “Here comes the master-dreamer,” one of them said. “Let's kill him. Then we'll see what will become of all his dreams.”

Reuben, the oldest brother, pled for Joseph's life and convinced the brothers to just throw him into a dry well that was near by; leave him there to die alone. “That way we will shed no blood.” To his credit, Reuben had planned to return and release Joseph from the pit.

Having no idea of the trap into which he was walking, Joseph traipsed into the circle with his brothers and doubtless was smiling as he began to tell the loving words and the inquiries from their father. But no pleasant words extended to Joseph. Rather, prepared to do the evil they had planned, the brothers roughly grabbed Joseph, with passion ripped away the detested coat, and with no mercy threw him headlong into the abyss. It is hard to imagine that Joseph did not scream and fight against this surprise attack, but his efforts were futile, and he found

himself launched through dank air, and then thudded into the bottom of a dark hole.

What then of the dreams, Joseph? Dazed, no doubt in pain, perhaps still yelling at his brothers to get him out of the pit, Joseph lay on a bed of dirt and stone, wretched, seemingly defeated. What of the dreams, Joseph? What of the sheaves, the moon, and the stars? What of your family bowing before you?

Dreams are sometimes just that—dreams. Their mere existence in no way guarantees the desired finish, for in the middle—that long line between the genesis of a dream and its accomplishment—is a period, whether long or short, of negotiation, of brokering, and of hard work. We have the luxury of examination through the telescope of historical time and space in this story of Joseph and are able to ascertain that his dreams were of God and that they were certain to be fulfilled. All dreams that are sent from God *will* come to pass. There can be no argument about such premise, for it is basic to Judeo-Christian principle. David marked it so in his Psalm that scholars have numbered 119:89: *“For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.”*

But unlike we who know the delightful outcome of this story (which we will discuss in later chapters) Joseph, the star of the show, had no such advantage. Scripture doesn't tell us, but it would be within the line of reason to think that as his brothers waylaid him, jerking him about and ripping away his clothes preparing him for the downward pitch, that they mocked him. *We'll teach you, Joseph. Baby Joseph. Dad's favorite. We'll show you a thing or two about dreams. Think we're going to bow before you, do you? Well, take this. Take that.* So, not knowing the glorious outcome that for thousands of years would resonate through the world's history, Joseph sat in the black hole where he had been hurled. His back against the ragged sand, bewildered, hurt, and no doubt having a touch (or a lot) of anger toward his brothers, he assessed his situation, and, again, it is likely he thought of the past happy days ... and of the dreams.

As Joseph agonized in the dry well, the heartless brothers cooked up a meal. They sat down to eat, and in the distance, they saw a string of camels coming toward them. *Probably Ishmaelites, they thought, traders on their way out of Gilead heading into Egypt.* “I know,” said Judah. “Let's sell Joseph to them. After all he is our brother, and if we do kill him, we'll have blood on our hands.”

All the brothers agreed, except for Reuben who was away during this transaction. Joseph was hauled from the well, and as he became aware of the impending transaction, he no doubt protested in the strongest of ways. Grossly outnumbered and outmaneuvered, no one marked his words—no one paid him any attention. His outcries and protests were ignored. Rather, the brothers schemed with the traders, haggled over the price, and finally the merchants agreed. “Yeah, we’ll take him. Good looking, strong boy. Seems like a fine deal to us. Get a good price when we sell him.” Twenty pieces of silver would be a fair amount. The deal was struck. The sale was consummated. Joseph was now a slave.

Ghostly. A strapping young man, seventeen years old, from a prosperous family, dearly beloved by his father, and with the prophetic Word of God about him—struck down in this dastardly way. Unthinkable family wickedness had bound Joseph into slavery. The unfeeling sons of Jacob watched as the camel train resumed its trek across the desert, edging ever toward Egypt. Finally, the company of pack animals and men were so far in the distance they were but a thin line strung over the hot brown sand. Nestled among the business merchandise that swung back and forth with the rhythm of the camel’s plod, ever smaller now, was their brother, Joseph. A slave. Sold as an animal.

What of the dreams now, Joseph? What of the sun, the moon, the stars, the sheaves bowing down? Around him lay the ruins. Memories only now, aren’t they Joseph? Broken. Shattered. Dream shards.

Variation of dreams abound. Some come in the night and we recognize them to have little or no prophetic meaning. They come from within our minds, reflection of activities, of fears, of concerns, of anticipation of events. Many times they are curious, sometimes funny, and we often share them with our family. “I had the craziest dream last night,” we will say. Often they are nebulous and disjointed, and it is hard to read any meaning into them. We may awake disturbed from the vivid ones, with pounding hearts and apprehensive thoughts, or on another morning with chuckles and anticipation toward a happening about which we have dreamed.

Less frequently known than these ordinary ones are dreams in which God speaks to people. My husband, Jerry, had such a dream many years ago. We were pastoring in Garden Grove, California, had been there for sixteen years, and although we certainly were aware of our inadequacies,

and wished we had done more, we acknowledged that God had helped us accomplish a respectable amount to advance His kingdom. The city of Garden Grove, at a fair price, by eminent domain, had purchased the small chapel the church owned when we assumed the pastorate. We were then able to buy bigger property, a parcel that consisted of two and one half acres where sat a church building that seated 300, once we enlarged it, two spacious educational buildings with multiple rooms, and a kitchen. Scores of people had been baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost, and we had founded schools that served children from pre-school age to the twelfth grade. The property value had increased, and although I am not sure of its monetary value at that time, I do know of bare land less than a mile away that was appraised at more than a million dollars. Through the years, my husband had made wise decisions, and with the help of God had taken the church to a higher plane in all areas; spiritually, financially, and in attendance. God had been good to us, and we were incredibly thankful. Both of us, though, felt restless and slightly unsettled.

Then Jerry had the dream. In his dream, Jerry learned that his friend and colleague in ministry Rev. Murray Layne, who pastored a church in Rialto, California, a city fifty miles from Garden Grove, had left that church, assumed another pastorate, and that Jerry had been elected pastor of the church in Rialto.

The next morning, Jerry told me of the vivid dream. We stared at each other, and I believe from the beginning, although Jerry didn't seem to know positively it was sent from God, we both suspected this was more than an ordinary dream. For several days he thought of it—we both did—and prayed about it. It hung, almost a palpable entity in our home, this dream, this remarkable dream. Jerry was shaken. Disturbed by it, and puzzled, he mentioned it several times during the intervening days. Finally, I encouraged him to follow his feelings and contact Brother Layne.

You may easily imagine that Jerry was not eager to make the call. To reveal such a thing to his friend—a fellow minister—to intimate that perhaps his friend should move on and that Jerry would assume the leadership of the church Brother Layne pastored could easily be viewed as arrogant and overbearing. All seemed to be progressing well in Rialto. Reports were that the church was prospering. In recent years, Pastor Layne had purchased eight acres of land, extensive plot plans had

been drawn up, and the construction of a large sanctuary building was in progress. Neither of us knew any reason our friend would be considering a change in pastorate.

But Jerry could not rest. The dream filled our house, and one day, Jerry picked up the phone and called his friend. The two men exchanged pleasantries, then in a halting, almost apologetic way, Jerry recited his dream. When he was finished, there was silence on the phone, then Brother Layne spoke.

“You’re kidding me, right?”

“No, I’m serious. I dreamed this several nights ago.”

“Well, the dream is from God. I was just elected pastor in Mesquite, Texas and am preparing to tell the church in Rialto I am resigning.”

Stunned silence roared over the phone as both men struggled to take in what was happening in their lives. God, in a mystical way, to an unusual extent, had directed their very footsteps. Finally, they could speak.

“Can I tell the church of your dream?”

“No. I’d rather not at this time. I must prepare the church that I am pastoring.”

“Can I tell some key men of the church about your dream?”

“Yes.”

The two set up a time to meet. Jerry drove to Rialto, and the shaken men sat down to discuss this phenomenal occurrence and to decide how to proceed from that point.

On his way home, Jerry stopped to see his brother the late Herbert Buxton, who at that time was pastor of a church in Ontario. Jerry loved him deeply and highly regarded his spiritual insight.

“Herb, do you believe in dreams?”

“Some of them.”

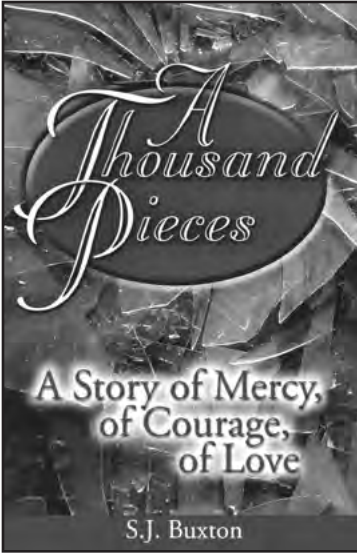
“Let me tell you of a dream I recently had.”

Herb stopped him. “Let me tell you the dream.”

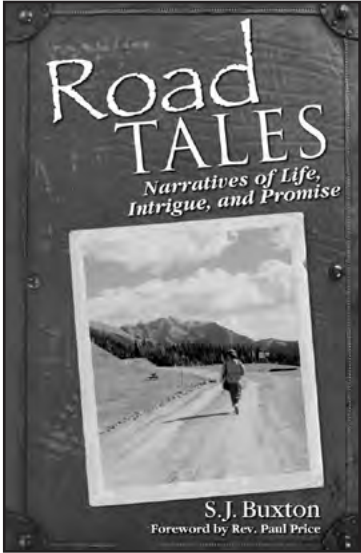
Jerry locked eyes with his brother. “But how can you tell me? I am the one who had the dream.”

“Let me see if I can. Murray is leaving Rialto and you are going there.” Speechless now, Jerry sat, unmoving, his eyes fixed on his brother. For a moment, all was quiet. No one could utter a word. Then the holy presence of God swept into that living room in such a powerful, indescribable way, that both men began weeping and speaking in tongues. From another world had come a vast divine visitation.

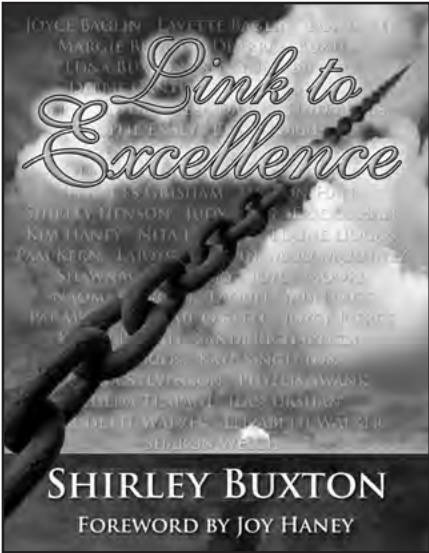
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