

Carol Ann – Special Brew

I hear my friend Janet's voice say to me, "Your coffee is so much better than mine. The packages are small but concentrated—each pack makes eight cups—a whole pot of coffee."

Carol Ann's note: I don't think I see my friend--only hear her voice. I don't use coffee packets and my coffeemaker makes more than eight cups.

Background: Both Carol Ann and Janet are self-employed with offices at home. A couple of days before this dream they were commiserating about difficulties with their work schedules. They noticed a few differences in approach as to how they spend their days.

Carol Ann is project-oriented and likes to structure her work early in the day. If she goes out early in the day for appointments or errands, she is not productive after returning home. One of her challenges is estimating the amount of time it takes to complete her work. She is often frustrated at not putting in a "full eight-hour day" which she sees as a carryover from her former job. At times she wishes she were more like Janet, until her friend shared her issues.

Janet is time-oriented and views her work in terms of hours. Initially, her goal was to work full eight-hour days as she did before starting her home business. She also finds outside appointments distracting, so she schedules them in the mornings, leaving the rest of the day for work. However, her *scheduled* work time is not in sync with her creative thought processing, as those ideas tend to come early in the morning. Both women tend to underestimate how long it will take to accomplish their workload and sometimes fail to meet their self-imposed deadlines. They are frustrated..

Dream Discussion: This is one of those dreams that is easy to dismiss because it might sound trivial, but can provide valuable results with a little effort. Although an actual setting is replaced by a voice, the dreamer described picturing the coffee maker on her kitchen counter during her dream. In waking life, the only time she drinks coffee is in the early morning, which happens to be when she likes to start her work day and when creative ideas come to Janet. The real subject of this dream is not coffee but what it represents, using Janet, an unconscious or feminine aspect, to convey this message. While the dream statement affirms Carol Ann's morning work schedule, it also encourages her to tackle her work in smaller, concentrated segments and stay with it until completion before moving on to something else.

This gave Carol Ann a boost of confidence and removed the "punch clock" mentality. She also realized that it wasn't only outside appointments that interfered with her schedule. She admitted to some careless habits like mixing in household chores or taking care of personal correspondence—what she used to do in the early evening or on weekends when she worked outside the home. The coffee metaphor speaks of stimulation, early morning, wake up and smell the coffee, but the packet suggests a quantity apportioned, enough for eight cups at a time. The "eight-hour day" is Carol Ann's mental image of a workday—not necessarily in terms of *hours* worked, but what makes up a productive day. The number eight can refer to the effective use of energy and resources, especially as manifested in the material world and here it is also the number of hours both women associated with the "old workday."

Talking out the dream helped Carol Ann realize that her real issue was priority not time. Her task-oriented, structured schedule was after all, the best option, and she needed to stick to it. She also needed to pay closer attention to her priorities and focus, and let her projects flow out from that. She saw the coffee dream as a good "wake up call" and used it successfully to rethink her time management arrangement. It was a bonus for Janet, too. After the two women discussed the dream, Janet modified her own work habits, again emphasizing priorities and focus. A few months later, gaining more experience and improving as they went along, Carol Ann and Janet were more productive and satisfied.