



AN ENTHEOGENIC UNIVERSITY/DMT-NEXUS PRODUCTION BY  
ENOON ET AL.

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## The Open Hyperspace Traveler

A course handbook for the safe and responsible management of psychoactives

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First edition, 2014. Please report any errors you may find to the authors.



*Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different.*

William James

# Introduction

## 1. Why this Manual

Welcome to the Open Hyperspace Traveler Course. If you are reading this, you presumably have an interest in entheogenic drugs - psychoactive compounds found in plants and fungi - often referred to as psychedelics or simply entheogens. In this manual we have tried to collect and provide unbiased information, backed by both experience and scientific evidence, on the various entheogens out there; on how they can be used safely, responsibly, and beneficially, what risks they present, and potential strategies to handle any problems that may surface when using them.

This manual is not meant to encourage the reader to use entheogens, which sadly are still illegal around the world and considered by many as far more dangerous than scientific evidence indicates. Rather, it is meant to fill a void; a need for education and systematic approaches to these substances, in order to reduce the harm that can be caused by improper use and/or ignorance. In this respect (and many others), prohibition has failed. Entheogens are, and most likely always will remain, available and by making entheogens and other so-called drugs unavailable from reliable sources, prohibition has encouraged the distribution of unreliable products of questionable content and purity, potentially presenting severe health risks to the end user. Additionally, by legislating away reliable information concerning these substances, prohibition has propagated a great deal of misinformation, ranging from hearsay and myths to outright propaganda and lies. This has resulted in harm and trauma to people interested in exploring entheogens due to their ignorance of, generally speaking, avoidable issues.

The current situation clearly shows that prohibition is not effective at keeping people safe, and is even less effective at preventing them from exploring entheogens. The experiences of many explorers of these compounds as well as scientific studies indicate that much of the harm that we see resulting from the use of entheogens can be reduced, or even entirely avoided, by following a few basic steps concerning safety and planning. At the same time, more and more scientific studies indicate that people can actually benefit from using entheogens in certain situations - something that explorers of these compounds have been claiming for a long time. In order to prevent more harm and to help people benefit from using entheogens, this manual provides information that is easy to read and utilize, so that future explorers - also called travelers - can use these compounds safely and responsibly.

## 2. For Whom Is the Course Intended

This course is primarily directed at those who wish to explore entheogens themselves and those that wish to assist others in exploring them. It contains information that can be valuable and interesting for both novice travelers and seasoned explorers, including procedures for testing substance purity, management of emergencies, and techniques for integrating and benefiting from the experiences.

Even if you feel you know all there is to know about entheogens, you can give this manual to friends who would like to learn about the experience, and could use extra pointers and ideas to benefit more from it.

If you are not interested in exploring entheogens yourself, but have been asked to assist someone who would like to try them, this manual will provide you with plenty of information that can help you be a good sitter, and can help you share responsibility and keep your friend(s) safe.

Finally, if you are not interested in exploring entheogens yourself but know someone who is and you need to know whether you should worry or not, this manual will provide you with relevant information about how entheogens work, the actual risks involved, possible benefits, and plenty of considerations so that you can make up your (informed) mind on the issue.

## 3. Course Structure

The Open Hyperspace Traveler Course Manual is presented as a course. In theory, people finishing the course have earned the title “Open Hyperspace Traveler.” The course is part of the Entheogenic University, but does not have to be taken in this context. It is a stand-alone book providing information for anyone interested.

The manual is split into five parts, each part containing two to three chapters with various sections. Each chapter begins with a box in which the learning objectives are stated.



At the end of every chapter there is a knowledge review containing several multiple choice questions that may be answered as exercises for the interested reader. If you are completing the course as part of the Entheogenic University program, the knowledge reviews must be taken online here: [www.oht.me](http://www.oht.me).

**Knowledge review**

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Questions about the chapter?<br><input type="checkbox"/> answer1 <input type="checkbox"/> answer2 ... | 3. another question?<br>... |
| 2. ...<br>...  | 4. another question?<br>... |

Following the knowledge review, each section suggests exercises to help create awareness and routine when planning the safe and responsible use of entheogens. None of the exercises involve or encourage using entheogens; rather, they ask about hypothetical situations that the reader must evaluate, or presents tasks that the reader would perform if they were planning an entheogenic journey. These exercises can be discussed with designated members of the Entheogenic University, if so desired.

The content of the text in the subsections is supported by images and occasional green text boxes with additional information, such as definitions for or elaborations on certain terms.

**Entheogenic University**

The Entheogenic University is a project initiated by the Dmt-Nexus to provide educational resources for the safe, responsible, and beneficial use of entheogens. Its motto is "learn, share and expand".

**How to Use this Manual**

In general, the information presented in the chapters and sections builds upon itself and is meant to be read and studied in the order presented. However, it is not strictly necessary to read all prior sections in order to understand any one section in particular. If you already are an experienced/knowledgeable traveler, you may find sections useful for quick reference, rather than studying them in their full length.

In order to complete the OHT Course within the Entheogenic University, all knowledge reviews must be completed online.

If you are new to entheogens and want to try them for the first time, we recommend reading the whole manual before ingesting any entheogenic compound. In this manual, you will find a wealth of information for getting the most out of your experience(s) and avoiding unnecessary risks.

**Artwork**

Unless otherwise requested by the artists, all artwork is referenced in the [List of Figures](#) in the appendix on page [147](#) of this document.

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# **Part I.**

*The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible.*

Arthur C. Clarke

# 1

## Hyperspace

### 1. Hyperspace

By the end of this section you will...

- Have an idea of what to expect from various entheogens
- Comprehend the basics of how entheogens work on the brain
- Understand the health risks concerning entheogens

The term hyperspace is used in several fields to describe science-fiction scenarios where faster than light travel is possible, mathematical n-dimensional space, the physical Minkowski space (4-dimensional space), and in our case, the place you go after the breakthrough. Originally, this term was used mainly for DMT, due to the otherworldly experiences often facilitated by this substance. Here, we will loosely use it to describe the altered states, mindscapes, and the “other worlds” we sometimes appear to travel to during entheogenic experiences, including but not limited to DMT. That is, any time you ingest a psychoactive compound that significantly alters your mind you are, by this loose definition, entering hyperspace.

#### **Hyperspace**

The place you go to after breakthrough, can be any place and time imaginable. Where the impossible can easily happen, extreme geometric explosions of color, sound, emotions, information, also the feeling of it being hyper-real.



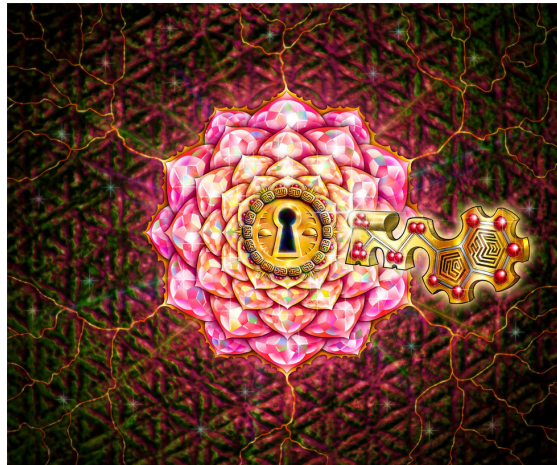
**Entheogen**

A plants or substance that is psychoactive and can be used in an entheogenic way, i.e. for healing, growth, and/or experiencing “the divine” - psychologically and spiritually.

**Breakthrough**

The state a traveler experiences after ingesting a breakthrough dose of DMT. Often accompanies out-of-body experiences/astral-travel-like experiences, or complete loss of body and self. Often described as “beyond life or death”. Sometimes entity contact ensues.

The ontology of these experiences and hyperspace in general will not be discussed here. This is something you will have to investigate and figure out for yourself. Before taking an entheogen and thus entering hyperspace, you probably want to know what you can expect from this experience. How do they work, how will it feel, how will it look to bystanders, what routes of administration are effective, and how safe are these substances physiologically? Trying to answer these questions by gathering as much information as you can should help you determine, for yourself, how far down the rabbit hole you want to go.



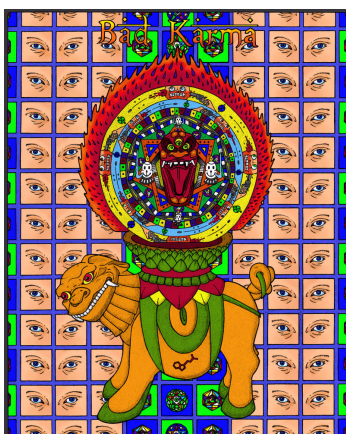
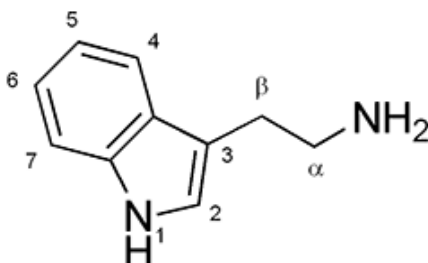
## 2. Signs and symptoms of various substances

When ingesting entheogens, things will change. You will feel and behave different. There are certain changes that can be observed from the outside - behavioral, but also physiological - by people who are not the traveler him/herself. These observables are termed *signs*. The subjective things you will experience are called *symptoms*, which can be physiological and psychological/emotional.

The common entheogens discussed in this handbook will be grouped into four categories, corresponding to their chemical properties: Tryptamines, Phenethylamines, Cannabinoids, and Salvinorins. The occurrence, duration, and severity of both the signs and symptoms of administering substances belonging to these categories is, of course, dependent on the dose and route of administration, among other things. Below, we will discuss the signs and symptoms generally associated with the ingestion of substances/entheogens belonging to each of these categories. For a more detailed view of individual substances and their effects, please check the appendix [A](#) on page [130](#).

By reading through the signs and symptoms of these substances, you can get an idea of what you might expect to experience when ingesting a certain type of substance. However, listing the signs and symptoms cannot do justice to the actual subjective experience when under the influence. It does not explain how the mind, beyond the obvious perception, is changed. To gain a better feeling of this subjective aspect, it is advisable to research experience reports, which are readily available online.

### 2.1. Tryptamines



Most of the known and commonly used entheogens belong to the tryptamine family. The list includes DMT, 5-MeO-DMT, LSD, Psilocybin/Psilocin, and Ibogaine. Chemically, these compounds share structural similarities, such as an indole ring and similarity to the amino acid tryptophan. Besides psychoactive substances, many neurotransmitters also belong to the tryptamine family.

Aside from LSD, which is created synthetically, these compounds are typically found in various species of plants and mushrooms and can be isolated by extraction procedures.

## 2. Signs and symptoms of various substances

Traditionally, various tryptamines have been used in rituals of shamans for healing and spiritual purposes, where they are considered “plant teachers”. Today, shamanic use of tryptamines still persists, while scientists additionally investigate their usefulness in things like helping patients cope with death, anxiety, or overcoming addiction (among other medicinal applications). Individual use, though illegal in most countries, is generally based on healing, learning, exploring, spirituality, psychology, and/or recreation. Though the effects of each of these substances vary, some general signs and symptoms are common to most of them. None of these signs and symptoms, however, are guaranteed to occur.

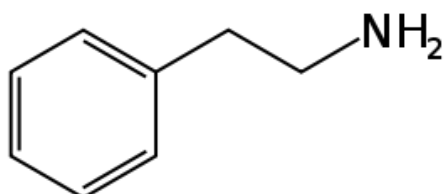
### Signs:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Pupils slightly dilated, slight trembling, slurred speech, tear formation, yawning	Pupils greatly dilated, slurred speech, incoherency, trembling, jaw clenching	Pupils greatly dilated, strong incoherence (inability to form sentences), trembling and shaking, cold hands and feet, sweating, diarrhea, vomiting

### Symptoms:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Colors appear brighter, edges sharper. Light-headedness, muscle tension, nervousness. Altered thought-processes/internal dialog. Closed-eye visuals (patterns, colors),	(Geometric) patterns appear on uniform surfaces, walls seem to be breathing. Patterns and structures may seem to shift or move. Things may appear novel or more wondrous, events more intense. Difficulty in understanding how things work (e.g. Computers). Difficulty in following conversations. Thought loops. Loss of sense of time. Intensification of preexisting emotions. Closed eye visions. Euphoria.	Geometric 3-dimensional patterns appear, difficulty in focusing the eyes, Synesthesia, Visions, Intensification of emotions, insights, time dilation, inability to tell which position the body is in, mystical experiences, nausea

## 2.2. Phenethylamines



Another very common group of entheogens is the phenethylamine family. Chemically, they are made up of a hexagonal phenyl ring, an ethyl (-CH<sub>2</sub>-CH<sub>2</sub>-) side chain, and an amino (NH<sub>2</sub>) group.

Phenethylamines can be psychoactive drugs, including stimulants, psychedelics, opioids, and entactogens, which exert their effects primarily through modulation of the monoamine neurotransmitter systems. Others, such as dopamine and epinephrine, are neurotransmitters<sup>1</sup>.

The primary entheogens of this category are mescaline, found in various cacti species such as Peyote or San Pedro, and MDMA (the primary constituent of ecstasy), as well as the synthetic 2C-family of compounds created by Dr. Alexander Shulgin. Mescaline has a tra-

ditional history of use within Native American tribes, who used it in ceremonies for spiritual purposes. Suggested medical usage includes treating alcoholism and depression.

MDMA, which induces euphoria and intimacy, is currently being investigated in clinical trials by MAPS to help cure PTSD in combat veterans and anxiety related to terminal cancer. It has also been suggested that MDAM can facilitate psychotherapy by reducing the fear of self-examination, and was used by several psychologists in this manner before it was criminalized.

### Signs:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
dilated pupils	very dilated pupils, sweating, slight hyperthermia, increased heart rate	coordination and articulation problems

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<sup>1</sup>URL: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenethylamine>.

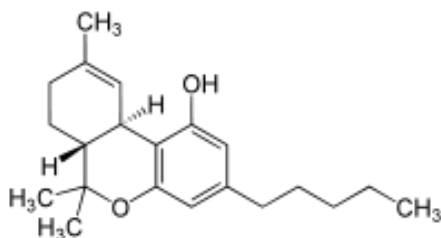
2. Signs and symptoms of various substances

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**Symptoms:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
altered thought processes, altered sense of color, mild euphoria, sensibilization	closed eye visuals, altered sense of time and self-awareness, fractals, euphoria, sympathetic arousal, altered sense of compassion, fear and connectedness to others	open-eye visuals, complex fractals, overflowing love

### 2.3. Cannabinoids



Cannabinoids are a class of diverse chemical compounds that activate cannabinoid receptors. These include the endocannabinoids (produced naturally in the bodies of humans and other animals), the phytocannabinoids (found in cannabis and some other plants), and synthetic cannabinoids (produced chemically by humans). The most notable cannabinoid is the phytocannabinoid  $\Delta^9$ -tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the primary psychoactive compound of cannabis.

Concerning use world wide, cannabis is probably the most popular entheogen in the world. This is most likely due to the mildness of its effects at lower doses and the observed pleasantness of these lower doses.

Contemporary use is generally religious/spiritual, recreational, or medicinal. Medically it has been shown that cannabis has positive effects on stimulating hunger in cancer and AIDS patients, reducing nausea, and reducing pain.

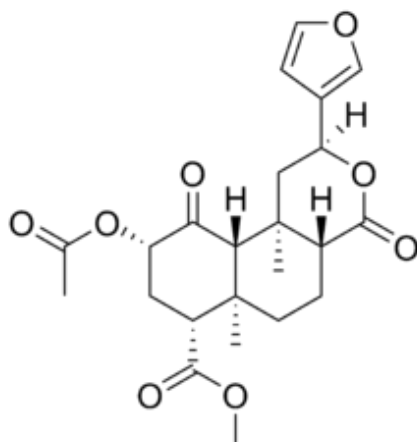
#### Signs:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
slightly decreased reaction	red eyes, eyelids low (as with very tired people), slow reactions, enjoying food more than usual, relaxed body-language and vocalizations	lethargy, incohesive sentences, lower blood pressure

#### Symptoms:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
feeling relaxed, altered thinking process	dry mouth and eyes, decreased short-term memory, creative thought process, things appear funnier than usual, strong desire to eat	visions, strongly altered thought process, altered perception of time

## 2.4. Salvinorin



Salvinorin A is the main active psychotropic molecule in *Salvia divinorum*, a Mexican plant which has a long history of entheogenic use by indigenous Mazatec shamans. Salvinorin A is considered a dissociative exhibiting atypical psychedelic effects.

It is structurally distinct from other naturally occurring hallucinogens (such as DMT, psilocybin, and mescaline) because it contains no nitrogen atoms, hence it is not an alkaloid (and cannot be rendered as a salt) but a terpenoid. Salvinorin A can produce psychoactive experiences in humans, with a typical duration of action lasting from several minutes to an hour or so, depending on the route of administration.<sup>2</sup>

It is active at doses as low as 200  $\mu\text{g}$ , making it the most potent *natural* hallucinogen.

**Signs:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
	meditative like state, body movements similiar to yoga (nothing hard, stuff like childs pose that feels good and requires no balancing), very relaxed mood and body language. Possible giddiness.	

<sup>2</sup>URL: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvia\\_divinorum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvia_divinorum).

## 2. Signs and symptoms of various substances

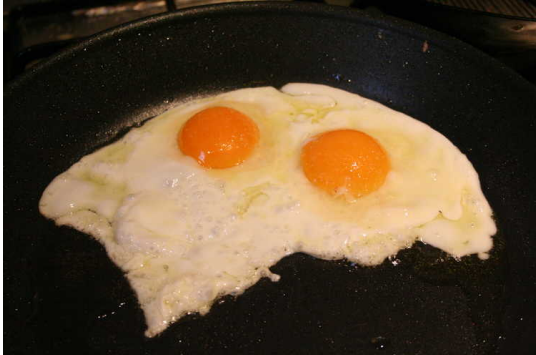
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### Symptoms:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Tingling sensation, slightly altered perception	seperation from physical body, out of body experiences without break from reality. Enhanced feeling of gravity, feeling of pins on skin. Closed eye hallucinations. Euphoria. Sexual arousal.	Complete seperation from physical body and break from reality. Feelings of confusion and fear. Demonic voices. Sometimes headaches and lethargy after peak that linger until sleep



### 3. How do entheogens work

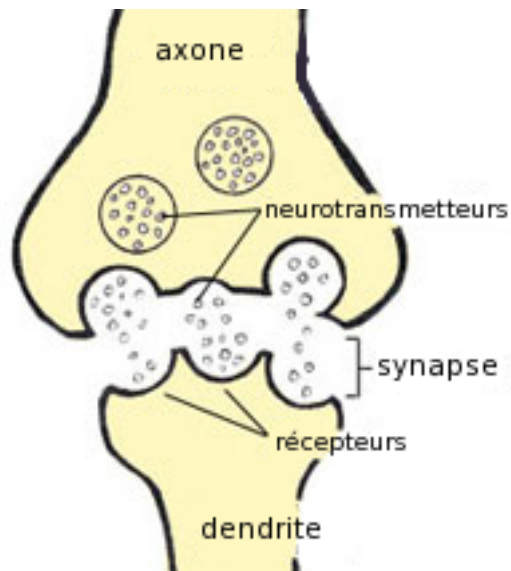


According to the famous anti-drug campaign of the 1980s, your brain on drugs resembles an egg in a hot frying pan, implying that drug use is physiologically harmful to the brain. In the following subsections, we will take a closer look how the different entheogen families work on the brain and what this means in terms of long-term effects and potential harm/damage. After reading the following sections, you should be able to answer for yourself whether or not there is any

truth to the implications of the fried-egg campaign.

As stated above, in the short descriptions of the different categories of entheogens, these psychoactive substances are structurally related to neurotransmitters and interact with specific binding sites/receptors in the brain. Neurotransmitters are endogenous chemicals that are vital for signal transportation between neurons. The difference in effects of the various substances may be attributed to the various receptors with which they interact and the mechanism of interaction. While some substances, for example cannabis, bind to only a few types of receptors, others, such as LSD, bind to and interact with a wide array of receptors.

*Tryptamines* due to their structural similarity to the neurotransmitter serotonin, bind mainly to the serotonin receptors or 5HT receptors. The serotonin receptors mediate both excitatory and inhibitory neurotransmission and are normally activated by the neurotransmitter serotonin, which acts as their natural ligand. They modulate the release of many other neurotransmitters, including glutamate, GABA, dopamine, epinephrine/norepinephrine, and acetylcholine, as well as many hormones, including oxytocin, prolactin, vasopressin, cortisol, corticotropin, and substance P, among others. The serotonin receptors influence various biological and neurological processes such as aggression, anxiety, appetite, cognition, learning, memory, mood, nausea, sleep, and thermoregulation. The serotonin receptors are known to regulate longevity and behavioral aging in the nematode, *Caenorhabditis elegans*.



### 3. How do entheogens work

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Main importance is given to the 5HT2A receptor as the primary target of psychedelics. The psychedelic effects of entheogens are, in general, attributed to their interaction with this receptor. However, how these neuro-chemicals interact in conjunction and lead to the forming and alteration of thoughts and thought processes, visions, etc. remains a great mystery.

It is thought that 5HT2A activation by psychedelics leads to an increased release of BDNF, which is a protein that is active in the hippocampus, cortex, and basal forebrain areas vital to learning, memory, and higher thinking. BDNF itself is important for long-term memory and nerve growth and preservation.<sup>3</sup>

*Mescaline* is also known to bind to 5HT2A and 5HT2C receptors and to interact with dopamine receptors. *MDMA* acts as a serotonin releasing agent, which in turn activates the 5HT receptors. *MDMA* is also believed to cause the release of the hormone oxytocin - a hormone usually released in actions such as hugging, orgasms, and child birth, and is thought to facilitate bonding and the establishment of trust.

#### **Psychedelic:**

A substance that causes changes in cognition and perception. Substances generally act upon 5HT2A receptors.

#### **Dissociative:**

A substance which distorts perceptions of sight and sound, and produces feelings of detachment from the environment and self.

#### **Deliriant:**

A Substance producing delirium characterized by stupor and utter confusion with minimal or no control over ones actions.

Atypical for the strong entheogens, *Salvinorin A* from the *Salvia Divinorum* plant does not act on the 5HT2A receptor. Rather it acts as a kappa opioid receptor agonist. The kappa opioid receptor is responsible for mediating the effects of endogenous opioids, such as altering the perception of pain, consciousness, motor control, and mood. The kappa opioid receptor may provide a natural addiction control mechanism, and therefore, drugs that act as agonists and increase activation of this receptor may have therapeutic potential in the treatment of addiction.

The effects of *Salvinorin* are said to be dissociative and deliriant, and are often described as dysphoric. Although it is considered a hallucinogen, it is not labelled as a classic psychedelic, due to its different form of action in the brain.

*Cannabinoids* act upon the CB1 cannabinoid receptor, located mainly in the central nervous system, and the CB2 receptor, mainly expressed in cells of the immune system. They act as neuromodulators for a variety of physiological processes, including motor learning, synaptic plasticity, appetite, and pain sensation.

While not generally used as hallucinogens alone, *harmala alkaloids* such as harmine, harmaline, and tetrahydroharmaline, found in plants such as *Peganum harmala* (Syrian Rue) and *Banisteriopsis caapi*, are often used in conjunction with tryptamines, especially DMT.

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<sup>3</sup>Franz Vollenweider. "Neurobiology of Psychedelics". In: *Nature PERSPECTIVES* 11 (2010), pp. 642-651.

They function by inhibiting the metabolism of monoamine compounds such as serotonin, which incidentally also inhibits the metabolism of DMT, allowing it to become active via oral ingestion, where otherwise it would be metabolized before reaching the blood brain barrier.

Harmala alkaloids are thus so-called monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI). They differentiate themselves from other MAOI by being reversible and selective in their inhibition, lessening certain risks related to MAOI and tyramine-containing food, for example. Hence, they are more correctly referred to as RIMA - reversible inhibitors of monoamine oxidase.

**Knowledge review**

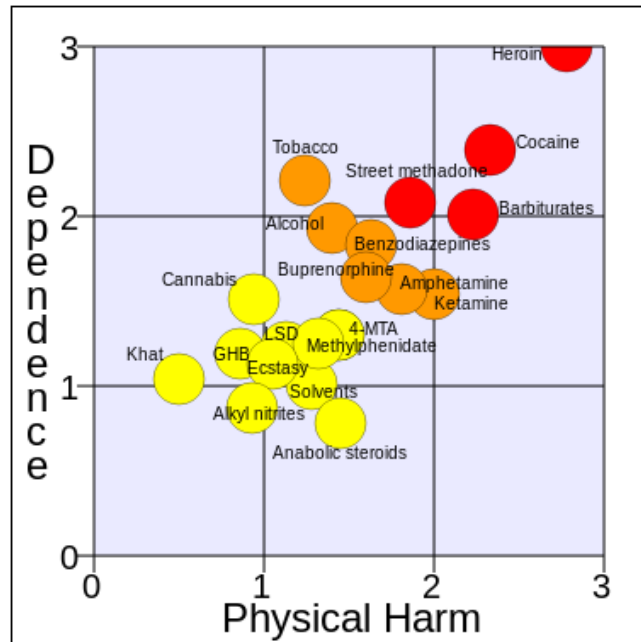
1. What is an entheogen?
  - A psychoactive substance that can be used beneficially.
  - A drug that gives you colorful hallucinations.
2. What are the chemical categories of entheogens discussed here?
  - Tryptamines  Phenethylamines
  - Canabinoids  Salvinorin
3. What are contemporary reasons for using entheogens?
  - healing  recreation  exploration
  - spirituality
4. What neurotransmitter do tryptamines most resemble?
  - glutamate  dopamine  serotonin  histamine
5. How do tryptamines work on the brain?
  - Tryptamines bind to the kappa opioid receptor
  - Tryptamines bind to the 5HT receptors
6. What possible medical uses for entheogens have been suggested?
  - Help cope with death
  - Treat addictions
  - appetite stimulation
  - Pain and nausea reduction

**Suggested exercises:**

1. In a few words, explain your own reasons for wanting to use or learn about entheogens and who or what made you interested in them.
2. In a few words, speculate on what benefits (medically/psychologically) entheogenic use could have. What are some limitations you can think of? Use the information from this handbook to base your answers on.

## 4. Safety and health risks

Just as with any medication that we decide to take, it is always prudent to understand the risks and possible side effects involved with using entheogens. Popular opinions about entheogens, usually referred to as hallucinogenic drugs, involve many myths due to widespread anti-drug propaganda. These myths and the fact that these substances are very poorly understood by the general public creates the perception that taking entheogens is extremely dangerous, self-destructive, and irresponsible. People choosing to explore these compounds are easily mistaken for “addicts” even though the actual addiction potential for entheogens is extremely low - significantly lower than alcohol or nicotine (see image on the right side).<sup>4</sup>



In most cases, there is little evidence indicating any physiological long-term damage caused directly by entheogens (most fatalities, for example, are due to accidents rather than the toxicity of the substance ingested). However, prior to beginning their journeys, there are a few risks that every traveler should be well aware of, in order to prepare accordingly and take responsible safety precautions. Some of these dangers are immediate (during the actual journey); In Chapter 7 there is a full section dedicated to reducing problems and emergencies during your experiences. The significant long-term negative effects are mostly psychological in nature.

In general, entheogens are among the safest substances to ingest with respect to undesired physiological side effects and lethality. This being said, any reckless consumption or pre-existing medical conditions can still lead to serious problems. It is strongly advised to read the following subsections carefully to understand the risks related to entheogens.

<sup>4</sup>David Nutt et al. “Development of a rational scale to assess the harm of drugs of potential misuse”. In: *www.thelancet.com (Health Policy)* 369 (2007).

## 5. Short term/immediate dangers of one-time use



Various immediate dangers or potential problems during the trip are further discussed in chapter 7. The ones listed here are directly related to your physiological and psychological health.

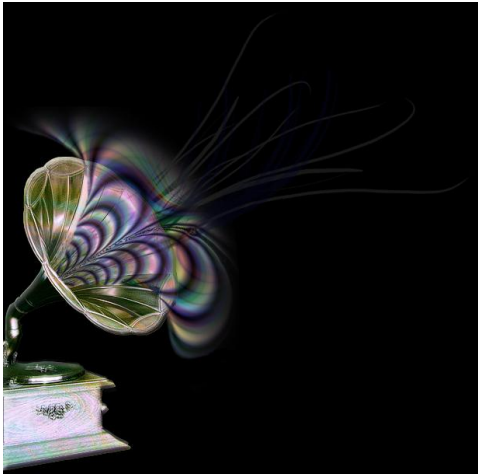
**Serotonin Syndrome (SS)** or Serotonin Poisoning is a predictable consequence of excess serotonergic activity at central nervous system (CNS) and peripheral serotonin receptors. Psychedelic substances listed as possible causes for SS are MDMA and LSD, however the occurrence is rare and only appears in cases of very high doses and/or in combination with other substances that may cause further release of serotonin or inhibit its metabolism such as MAOI, RIMA, or SSRI. Severe symptoms include dramatic increases in heart rate and blood pressure that may lead to shock or hypertensive crisis. Temperature may rise to above 41.1 C (106.0 F) in life-threatening cases.

**Tachycardia** (increase in heart rate) and **hypertension** (high blood pressure) can be direct results of the consumption of certain entheogens, DMT for example. While this usually returns to normal once the effects wear off, pre-existing medical conditions (especially heart and blood pressure related) might yield problematic results.

**Hyperthermia, dehydration, and hyponatremia** – especially occur with MDMA use at parties. Due to dancing and sweating added to the effects of the substance, body temperature rises (hyperthermia) and the body loses large amounts of water (dehydration) and minerals. To counter dehydration, occasionally travelers have been known to drink pure water in large amounts, leading to hyponatremia (low electrolyte levels in the blood plasma) which can be a life threatening condition. Please make sure you supply your body with liquids and electrolytes.

## 6. Long term dangers of one-time or occasional use

Long term effects after one-time or occasional use are rare, but can occur, due to predisposition or traumatic experiences, for example.



**Hallucinogenic Persistent Perception Disorder (HPPD)** – also known as flashbacks can occur even after one-time use. In most cases this disorder is very mild and not considered a problem. Symptoms can be anything from experiencing rare visual disturbances, similar to when under the influence, to severe cases where these disturbances persist almost permanently. Any hallucinogen (LSD, MDMA, Mescaline, DMT, Psilocybin, etc.) has the capacity to cause this disorder, but LSD seems to be the most common culprit. So far it is not clear what causes HPPD. HPPD in its severe form is very rare.

A condition similar to **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder** can result from a particularly bad or traumatic experience. To minimize the risk of such traumatic experiences, it is essential to be aware of your mind set before beginning a journey, as well as your surroundings. These two factors will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

There is a small percentage of the population that is susceptible to **psychotic reactions** or what is termed a **schizophrenic break** when ingesting entheogens. In general, it is thought that this occurs only if a predisposition towards schizophrenia already exists in the individual. Milder cases can show signs of delusions, paranoia, and messianic complexes. Again, paying attention to your mental state before beginning your journey is essential to prevent this. If you have a history of mental illness related to psychosis or schizophrenia, entheogens in a non-therapeutic setting might not be the right choice for you.



Popular opinion suggests that using entheogens brings about significant personality changes. This is true to some extent: All experiences (entheogenic or not) alter your personality. This is not necessarily a bad thing, nor is it necessarily something drastic. In fact many people who use entheogens deliberately seek to improve their personality or their self in general through

## 7. Long term dangers of chronic or frequent use

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their use. In general, there is no difficulty adjusting and returning to the real world, if you had any grasp on it in the first place, and you follow integration procedures (see chapter 9).<sup>5</sup>

### 7. Long term dangers of chronic or frequent use

Chronic or frequent use can be problematic with almost all substances, psychoactive or not. Luckily, as stated above, entheogens have very low addictive potential and most entheogenic substances have very few physiological risks concerning frequent use. Even so, one can form habits leading to unhealthy usage patterns. Naturally, all of the risks of one-time use are increased with the frequency of usage.



Additionally, some of these substances - when taken frequently - can exert stress on the immune system, leading to colds and other common sicknesses. Taking substances can be taxing on the body by changing metabolism, heart rate, brain chemistry etc.. This alone can require a few days of recovery in order to retain one's good health. Furthermore, some substances decrease appetite and increase the desire to move, which can lead to expending more energy than usual. Please remember to let your body and mind recover after your journeys by giving it enough nutrition, time, and rest.

Due to the increased release of Serotonin or activation of 5HT receptors caused by the effects of several entheogens, once the substances wear off, travelers may experience temporary depression/serotonin depletion, which generally returns to normal within a week. With chronic use (especially with MDMA), Serotonin down-regulation can become an issue, leading to longer lasting depressions. This condition is generally cured by abstaining from substances related to serotonin release and time. Depending on severity, it can last from a month to years.



High or repeated-dose MDMA regimens have been shown to produce long-term changes in indices of serotonergic and axonal functioning in animals. Increasing evidence supports the view that these changes are at least partially the result of damage due to serotonergic neurotoxicity. The magnitude of these serotonergic changes varies with dose, species, and route of administration. Rodent studies have shown that changes in the core temperature of animals

<sup>5</sup>Erowid. URL: [http://www.erowid.org/chemicals/lsd/lsd\\_info7.shtml](http://www.erowid.org/chemicals/lsd/lsd_info7.shtml).



can increase or decrease MDMA neurotoxicity. The sustained acute pharmacological effects of MDMA may exhaust neuronal energy sources and antioxidant defenses, leading to damage. Metabolites of MDMA are another possible source of oxidative stress. It is unclear if these effects can be fully extrapolated to humans.

A growing number of studies describe cognitive differences between ecstasy users and nonusers. These studies have serious limitations, but suggest that some ecstasy users experience serotonergic changes and cognitive alterations. A recent study<sup>6</sup> (2011) however, failed to demonstrate marked residual cognitive effects in ecstasy users. The investigators suspect that previous findings to the contrary may have been due to poor study design and interpretation flaws. However, the possible risks of neurotoxicity must be considered when assessing the potential administration of MDMA to humans.

Another risk for frequent use is a noticeable decrease in short term memory abilities. This is true for the habitual use of cannabis and MDMA. Other substances so far have not been shown to cause any decrease in memory functions beyond their acute effects. Memory functions usually recover with time and abstinence, though it may take months.<sup>7, 8, 9</sup>

## 8. Special risks concerning ibogaine

Ibogaine is probably the longest-lasting entheogen of the tryptamine family, with effects lasting from 36 hours up to an entire week, for high doses. Aside from effects like coordination problems, dry mouth, and nausea, which are present in many entheogens, ibogaine has been suggested to have negative effects on pre-existing heart conditions. One study shows that ibogaine use was associated with severe lengthening of the QT interval and ventricular tachyarrhythmias, which normalized after 42 hours of ingesting ibogaine. While there may be no real risk involved to a person with a well functioning heart, someone suffering from a heart condition may endanger their life by ingesting iboga.

Another very dangerous aspect to ibogaine, when used in the context of assisting overcoming addictions, is its ability to reset brain chemistry in such a way that tolerance for other substances drops to zero again. This means that previously "normal" doses of a compound, for example, heroin, could be lethal for someone who has undergone ibogaine treatment.<sup>10, 11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John H. Halpern. "Residual neurocognitive features of long-term ecstasy users with minimal exposure to other drugs". In: ().

<sup>7</sup> stormloader. URL: [<http://hppd.stormloader.com>].

<sup>8</sup> "Short-term memory impairment in cannabis-dependent adolescents." In: (). DOI: ([PMID:2801665](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/2801665/)).

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Baggott and John Mendelson. *Does MDMA Cause Brain Damage? (from Ecstasy: The Complete Guide ed. Julie Holland/Spring 2001)*.

<sup>10</sup> DW Hoelen. "Long-QT syndrome induced by the antiaddiction drug ibogaine". In: *N. Engl. J. Med.* 360(3): (January 2009). DOI: [NEJMc0804248.PMID19144953](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19144953/)..

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth R. Alper. "Treatment of Acute Opioid Withdrawal with Ibogaine". In: ().

## 9. Dose-fatality rates

When considering the safety of a substance, we might also want to know how likely a fatal overdose is. As is well known, any substance, including water, can cause death at high enough doses. In order to estimate the safety of a substance and a given dose, the median lethal dose (LD50) is often used as the first estimate of toxicity, which is established in pre-clinical research within a rodent population. Specifically, the dose-response relationship is documented by plotting the number of deaths occurring among the group of experimental animals against the range of drug doses administered. The LD50 is simply the dosage at which 50% of the animals die within a specified interval of time.



### Drug Tolerance

To have tolerance to a specific substance means that your physiological response is reduced, i.e. when experiencing tolerance, the same dose does not give the same effect. Many entheogens produce tolerance effects which wear off after approximately one week.

While this can give an indication as to at what point the drug may become dangerous, another very important factor is the steepness of the dose-response curve - which plots the dose against intensity of effects. If the curve is very steep, meaning that the difference in dose between mild effects and strong effects is very small, then the difference between an active dose and a fatal dose will also be small, making accidental over-

doses much more likely. To quantify this, the so called safety ratio is used. This is the ratio of a usual active dose and a usual fatal dose. A low ratio means a steep curve and thus more danger of a lethal overdose, while a high ratio means a flat curve and less danger.

The doses indicated in the table below are the estimated quantity for an average, healthy 70-kg adult human who has not developed tolerance to the substance, and who does not have residual amounts of the substance present in their body from previous administrations. Note, however, that individuals vary greatly in terms of physical and psychological vulnerability; therefore, the information in this table should not be used as a dosage guide.

9. Dose-fatality rates

Substance	LD50 (mg/kg)	# fatal human cases selected	Usual lethal concentration in blood (mg/l)	Usual lethal dose reportedly administered	Usual effective dose (and range) for non-medical purposes	Safety ratio
Alcohol (or)b	mouse (or) 6800; rat (or) 10300	894	3600 (2200-5000)	330g (276-455)	33g (22-40)	10
DMT (or)	mouse (or) 280; mouse (ip) 47	0	-	-	40 mg (34-70)	50
LSD (or)	mouse (iv) 46; rat (iv) 17	2	4.8 (-)	100 mg (extrapolated)	100 $\mu$ g (25-200)	1000
Marijuana (sm)	mouse (or) 22; monkey (iv) 130	2	(180315)	> 15 g (extrapolated)	15 mg (12-22)	>1000
MDMA (or)	rat (or) 160; guinea pig (ip) 26	27	3 (0.04-8.5)	2 g (150-1250)	125 mg (15-150)	16
Mescaline (or)	mouse (or) 880; rat (im) 330	1	0.48 (-)	8.4g (extrapolated)	350mg (200-450)	24
Psilocybin (or)	mouse (ip) 285; rat (ip) 280	1	4 (-)	6 g (extrapolated)	6 mg (-)	1000

Abbreviations used: im = intramuscular, inh = inhaled, in = intranasal, ip = intraperitoneal, iv = intravenous, or = oral, sm = smoked.<sup>12</sup>

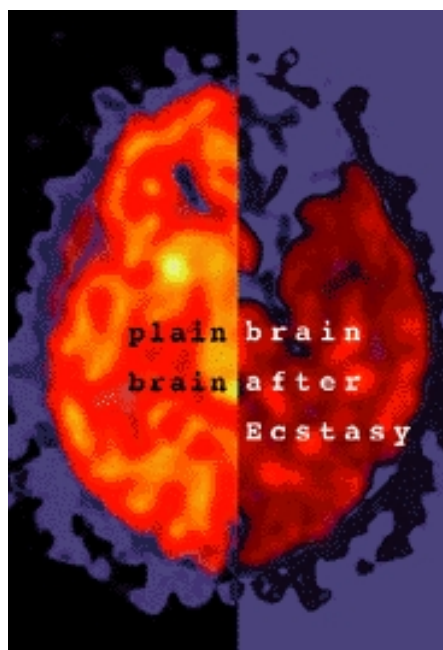
<sup>12</sup>URL: <http://www.oht.me/redirect/toxicity>.

## 10. Myths

Owing to decades of government-sponsored anti-drug propaganda and fear mongering, a lot of myths about entheogens exist. These myths are interpreted by many as truth and are used to fuel fears, making the war on drugs seem justifiable. We will take a look at a few of these myths in order to supply you with accurate information.

**Myth: LSD causes damage to your chromosomes.** This was a hypothesis suggested in 1967, due to some tests where LSD was shown to affect chromosomes of cells growing in test tubes. There were several problems with the conclusions of this test. First of all, cells in test tubes behave differently than they do in living beings. Secondly, the doses administered to the cells were significantly higher than a living cell would ever receive during ingestion. Third, and most significantly, many things affect chromosomes in these kinds of set-ups, even aspirin and chlorpromazine. In a follow-up study correcting these and other logical flaws, no correlation between LSD and chromosomal damage could be shown.

**Myth: MDMA creates holes in the brain.** A high profile study showed ecstasy caused brain damage using PET brain scans. However, this study was highly critiqued and quickly shown to be very flawed. Although subsequent studies could not back up the claims of ecstasy use causing holes in the brain, the message was still used by anti-drug organizations. The hugely influential National Institute on Drug Abuse near Washington, D.C. even distributed postcards picturing these brain scans. The cards set a normal brain, looking bright and radiant, alongside a “brain after ecstasy” – a lump with dark blotches that look like holes. It is said that these scans were based on experiments “so irretrievably flawed that the scientific community risked hemorrhaging credibility if it continued to let them inform public policy.”



**Myths: LSD stays in your body forever; Using psychedelics can make you go insane after just one use; You can get stuck on a trip.** These are common myths, probably based on the existence of HPPD and the rare cases of people experiencing psychotic breaks triggered by psychedelics. Although the body does store some toxins in fat tissue, and residues of some drugs and toxins can be found in spinal fluid, LSD is not among these. LSD is metabolized by the liver, and has an elimination half-life of around 35 hours. Cracking your spine will not trigger flashbacks and drug tests will not be able to tell that you have taken LSD any more than a week after ingestion.

**Myth: Users of psychedelics are drug addicts.** As stated above the addiction potential of entheogens is very low; much lower in fact than alcohol, caffeine or nicotine, and by far lower than substances such as cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamine. This being said, there

will always be some people that overuse entheogens and end up losing grip on their life. However, this is more of a personality problem than a problem with entheogens.

**Myth: Mushrooms make your brain bleed.** There is no evidence whatsoever that this is true. The claims are that hallucinations caused by mushrooms are due to making the brain bleed. However this is simply not true. Mushrooms contain psilocin and psilocybin which, like all other entheogens of the tryptamine family, function by interacting with the 5HT receptors, most notably with the 5HT<sub>2A</sub> receptor. There is no evidence that psilocin or psilocybin cause any kind of physiological damage.



**Myth: Marijuana kills brain cells.** The idea of brain damage from cannabis may have its origins in a few studies performed on monkeys and rodents in the 1970s. However, the rodent studies involved 200 times the psychoactive dose of THC, and the monkey studies involved insufficient sample sizes and controls and the misidentification of “damage.” In fact, the most (in)famous study finding evidence of brain damage involved forcing the monkeys to inhale huge amounts of cannabis smoke over several minutes straight, every day, causing potentially confounding oxygen deprivation and carbon monoxide poisoning. More recent studies, however, failed to show any brain damage from cannabis in monkeys when better experimental techniques were utilized.

In ongoing studies at this point in time. evidence is actually growing for the opposite: Marijuana is suspected to have neurological benefits, including the treatment of certain neurologic diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease<sup>13</sup> and Parkinson’s disease.

#### Fun stuff:

**Myth:** Using LSD in space will result in a thought paradox and the universe will cease to exist. Well, no one has ever tried this yet, so we won’t know until it happens. We suspect however that it is DMT that will cause this and not LSD.

**Myth:** Testing LSD on spiders resulted in spider webs looking exactly like Da Vinci’s Mona Lisa. No, but it was a pretty good imitation.

**Myth:** Measuring the brain waves on someone who is on LSD produces music that sounds like “White Rabbit” by Jefferson Airplane. This is simply not true. It produces Pink Floyd’s the Dark Side of the Moon, but only if the person on LSD is watching the Wizard of Oz at the same time.

<sup>13</sup>Lisa M. Eubanks. “A Molecular Link Between the Active Component of Marijuana and Alzheimer’s Disease Pathology”. In: *Mol Pharm.* 3(6) (2006), 773777. DOI: [10.1021/mp060066m](https://doi.org/10.1021/mp060066m).

**Knowledge review**

1. What can cause serotonin syndrome?
  - all entheogens
  - high doses of MDMA or LSD mixed with other substances
2. How can you avoid hyponatremia?
  - Don't drink alcohol
  - Instead of pure water, drink mineralized water or fruit juices.
3. Which entheogens can cause HPPD?
  - Only LSD
  - Only Mushrooms
  - All of them
4. How can you avoid stress on your immune system?
  - Take anti biotics
  - Give your system time and nutrients to recover
5. What should you do if you suspect serotonin downregulation or reduction of short term memory?
  - smoke cannabis
  - abstain from drug use until recovered
6. What is the LD50?
  - The median lethal dose measured in rodent population
  - A variation of LSD-25
7. How is the safety ratio calculated?
  - The ratio between a regular dose and a high dose
  - The ratio between a regular (effective) dose and a lethal dose.

**Suggested exercises:**

1. Using the appendix **A** and the information above, create a profile for a substance of your choice that includes: traditional and contemporary use, potential medical usefulness, general function on the brain, and general risks as well as dose recommendations. You may use external resources as well, but make sure your information is scientifically backed, when stated as facts.
2. Think of other myths you might have heard concerning entheogens. Can you debunk them?

*DMT is a mirror. What one sees when they peer into that mirror is a personal reflection, a reflection only relative to the one peering in. And how they deal with that reflection is up to them.*

fractal enchantment/Jamie

# 2

## Setting

### 1. Setting

At the end of this section you will:

- Have an idea of how to avoid problems related to location
- Be able to evaluate a location for its safety with respect to journeying
- Know what variables can influence your personal comfort and thus the journey

When you are ready to begin your journey, one of the first questions that will enter your mind will be, "Where am I going to do it?" Is the party your best friend is throwing a good place, the festival next weekend, the camping place up in the mountains, or your home? Of course the answer to all of these is: it depends. It depends on the substance and the dose you are planning to ingest, it depends on the people that you will be around, your personal experience with the substance, and why you want to take it.

We will go over several considerations to help you evaluate different options in order to find the setting that suits you best. Choosing a good setting is essential to your journey because it can greatly influence your experience.

#### **What is your Setting?**

The setting is the location that you will use for journeying. Beyond this, it includes all the people, objects, the music, the lighting, and everything else that goes along with the location. Sometimes entheogens can make you hyper sensitive to the details of your surroundings and even little things can become extremely interesting or equally troublesome. Be sure to assess the setting before you dose to see if it is really suitable for you.

## 2. Considerations concerning the law

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A bad setting can easily turn your journey into a horror trip, while a good setting can give you the opportunity to arrive just where you intended or needed to go.

Many people consider journeying in nature to be one of the most rewarding experiences, while others prefer darkened rooms, and others again enjoy festival settings. All of these are valid locations that have their merits. Journeying in nature can help you reconnect to nature, can allow you to feel the life populating this planet. Festival settings can allow you to connect to other humans; entering collective trance, aided by the music and ambiance. Darkened rooms where you journey by yourself can facilitate deep, introspective experiences. Your intention should determine the type of setting you choose. The following considerations should help you to decide upon one that is the most suitable setting for a journey.

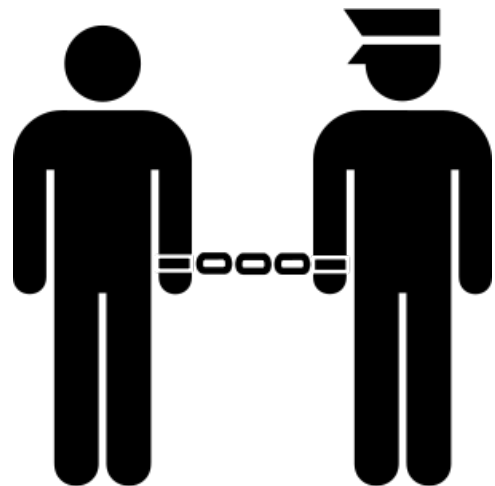
## 2. Considerations concerning the law

Unfortunately, almost all classical entheogens are illegal to possess in most countries around the world. You should therefore minimize carrying these substances. Simply being under the influence of these substances will usually get you in considerably less trouble than getting caught with the substance(s) on you. However, as you can easily imagine, it is not a terribly comfortable situation to be questioned or arrested while under the influence of psychedelics.

This is why, when choosing a location, you should assess the risk of anyone, but especially law enforcement, interrupting your activities. Public places, parks with security guards, etc. all pose a certain risk of being apprehended and should be analyzed well before being selected as your location for journeying. With low doses and adequate control over your actions, you can easily avoid most problems, even in crowded places with the police passing by. However, on large doses your behavior and your physical appearance might easily give away the fact that you are under the influence of entheogens.

Make sure you can handle the chosen dose around people. Don't take doses that will make it very hard to walk or talk if you know you will have to appear normal throughout your journey. In general, make sure you are not a disturbance to the public. If you find that the dose is more than you can handle in the situation you are in, try to find a more remote place. It's a good idea to plan ahead and know how to get to a place you can relax at, before you take the dose.

Also, in case you do get apprehended by security or law enforcement, it's best if you don't have any additional substances on you. Bring only what you need, if possible. If someone asks you if there is something wrong, due to strange behavior on your part, you might want to have a good story that won't get you in trouble to tell them. Also, remember to consult with a lawyer before admitting to anything in the event that you are detained or questioned.





### 3. Considerations for personal safety



As you have seen with the signs and symptoms of the various entheogens and as you have surely heard about, entheogens can cause visual perturbations, hallucinations, and motoric problems. All of these can elevate the risk of you hurting yourself accidentally through tripping, falling, slipping, walking into traffic, not being able to react adequately to moving objects or people, etc. When choosing a suitable setting, you should keep in mind your expected capacity to move around, your expected awareness of

physical objects in your surroundings, and the dangers of the location you are assessing. Bodies of water, cliffs or steep slopes, streets with heavy traffic, and dangerous machines among others are things you should be aware of, if they exist in the vicinity of your setting, because they may present considerable risks.

For some doses and substances, it may be unwise to have any of the aforementioned potential hazards around, while on others they may not present any problem. However, a certain risk always remains. Naturally, you will not want to be tied to a bed every time you journey for the sake of protecting yourself from accidents. You should simply make sure that you understand the risks of a given location so that you can choose one where the risk is acceptable, while it suits your wishes and needs for the intended journey.

One very important rule concerning your own safety is to never attempt to operate any type of vehicle under the influence of entheogens. Aside from risking your own life, you are also endangering the lives of every other driver, cyclist, or pedestrian on the road with you. The same goes for operating dangerous machinery. If you are under the influence and don't trust your own judgment, make sure that you will not get into a situation where this becomes an option. It is also advisable to keep any kind of weapon out of reach for the duration of the experience.



## **4. Considerations concerning comfort**

Probably - of all the setting considerations - your personal comfort during the journey will have the most influence on the experience itself. If the setting makes you uncomfortable in any way, this feeling will most likely be intensified by the substance that you have ingested. This can cause anxiety, panic, paranoia, etc. and the cause for this is not always evident. That is to say, you may not always know that it is your surrounding causing you the discomfort.

Some of the more obvious things to consider with regards to comfort are temperature and exposure to weather, opportunities to sit or lay down, if necessary, and having sanitary facilities around. Other things that can be important but are often overlooked are the people that will be accompanying you, the people you may encounter or that will surround you in general, the music (if any), the lighting (strobe lights, colored lights, visibility, etc.), how well you know the location (might you feel lost or disoriented?), any previous experiences you've had in this location (bad memories, trauma, etc.), noise, bugs or other nuisances, etc.

We cannot really predict what will cause discomfort during an experience. It makes sense to have a plan B in case you notice that you are not feeling well in your surroundings, so that you can change your location and see if that helps. Having a refuge planned out, or a way to get home quickly in case you are close enough, are just some options you can think of when planning your journey.

On the other hand, if you feel entirely safe and comfortable in your setting, this can greatly assist you in exploring your altered state of mind, in letting go and enjoying the journey in its fullest - since you will not be distracted by worries, physical discomfort or other factors. Also, having good company with you, such as someone you really connect with, can be a wonderful experience. It can give you many insights into communication in general, relationships to other people, and the friendship you share with this particular person.

## **5. Considerations for the safety of your surroundings**

Another thing that should be considered, aside from your own safety, is the safety of your surroundings. This includes objects and persons. It may not be the best idea to journey on a high dose in a room with valuable porcelain plates on the shelves or other objects that can easily break.

When journeying, you might not have the same value for objects. You might find that you lose or break things that you have with you or find in your immediate surrounding. To prevent this from becoming problematic, don't bring or journey in proximity to things that are of great importance, such as official documents or treasured heirlooms, for example.

You should also be cautious journeying around small children that could accidentally get hurt by uncoordinated movements you make or by bad judgment due to being under the influence. You will most likely not be in any state to be responsible for other people while you are affected by the entheogens, so please plan ahead and make sure that you do not have to be.

**Dissonance between you and your company?**

Unfortunately, you will not always be on the same wavelength as the people you journey with, whether they are also under the influence or not. They may be behaving in a way that you find annoying or frightening, or you may feel like you simply cannot communicate with them at all. Sometimes this can cause considerable discomfort.

Sometimes the only way to fix this is to separate yourself from them for a while. Expressing what bothers you can also help, but can equally cause stress for your fellow travelers and yourself by creating a confrontational situation.



**Knowledge review**

1. What things can be hazardous to personal safety?  
 bodies of water  cliffs  traffic
2. How can you avoid becoming a disturbance to the public?  
 Don't take high doses in public if you cannot handle yourself on them.  
 Dress in camouflage
3. What should you never do while traveling?  
 Operate vehicles in traffic or dangerous machinery.  
 Share views on profound questions.
4. How can being comfortable help you in your journey?  
 It prevents bad experiences.  
 It can keep you from being distracted and let you focus on the experience
5. How can you be a hazard to your surroundings?  
 Uncoordinated movements  
 bad judgement  
 altered sense of value.

**Suggested exercises:**

1. Create an assessment for a location of your choice. What is the setting like? For what kind of substance/dose would it be suitable? What are the safety risks? What factors could add to discomfort and how could they be avoided?

*DMT can't supply enlightenment any more than anything else; all it does is offer up to the user a radically alien perspective. What you do with that in the aftermath is strictly up to you. Just like traveling to India, falling in love, surviving a plane crash, etc. - these things alone won't transform who you are; they can, however, serve as catalysts towards growth and transformation. You can call it divinity or call it a con, but I choose to see it as a mirror. The experience is nothing more or less than that which I bring to the table. I am both the creator and passenger. It's me scrambled up and thrown back at me.*

Art Van D'lay

# 3

## To Have or Not To Have a Sitter

### 1. The trip-sitter

At the end of this section you will:

- Understand the functions and responsibilities of a sitter
- Know how to sit for someone else
- Know different options you have for sitters
- Know the pros and cons of having a sitter
- Know how to choose a sitter

#### What is a sitter?

A *sitter* is a person who accompanies you physically when traveling, but usually remains sober in order to help out if needed and to make sure that you are safe. Having a sitter is highly recommended, especially when taking high doses, when taking entheogens with which you have no prior experience, if you have very little experience in general, or when there is any kind of elevated risk involved.

Remember the last time you were sick and someone - a good friend, your partner, a family member - came over and helped you out? They brought you some food, made you tea, and took your temperature? This is kind of what a sitter is for as well.

Your sitter can help you out with all of the little things that would either distract you from your experience or that you find hard to do because of visual perturbations, cognitive difficulties, or coordination problems. They can be a great asset to your

## 1. *The trip-sitter*

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comfort during your experience by being there to talk you through difficult moments. You can share your thoughts with them just as they come up, and they can take care of any needs you may have.

The sitter can also provide safety to your trip. They can help you move around without hurting yourself, make sure you are hydrated and physically well by checking up on you now and then, and keep you from getting into trouble with other people. They can also manage emergencies in case any come up. Since they are usually sober, they are in a much better position to evaluate the situation and take necessary measures.

On the other hand, having a sitter might make you feel uncomfortable especially if they have not ingested any entheogens. It might feel like their presence is keeping you from fully going into the experience, that it is keeping you back. Interactions with the sitter might feel disharmonious and you might feel that you should interact with him/her even though you would rather not. You might feel you cannot connect to them and that you would rather be alone. You might even feel judged by the sitter for acting strange or for taking entheogens altogether. This is especially worth noting if your sitter has no experience with psychoactive compounds him-/herself.



Another concern may be that you don't want to tell other people about your use of entheogens, either because you feel it is a very private issue or because you fear the social stigma that can come with this. While it may seem obvious, it is quite important that the sitter knows she is a sitter rather than finding out you are traveling by accident, otherwise she might not be able to fulfill her role properly. The following lists present some pros and cons for using a sitter so that you can make up your mind for yourself as to whether you want one or not.

To have or not to have a sitter	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can help reduce distractions and nuisances</li><li>• Can look after you physically</li><li>• Can manage problems and emergencies</li><li>• Can keep you out of trouble</li><li>• Can talk you through difficult experiences</li><li>• Can help reduce anxiety</li><li>• Can support you after a rough experience</li><li>• Can provide company</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can cause distractions</li><li>• Can cause discomfort</li><li>• Can be hard to communicate with</li><li>• Can be hard to find one you are willing to admit your use to</li><li>• Can influence the trip in an undesired way</li><li>• Requires asking someone to do you this favor</li></ul>

## 2. How to be a good sitter – responsibilities and conduct

What defines a good sitter, how can you be one to your friends, and what are the do's and don'ts of a sitter? This is what we are going to be looking at in this section.

The most important responsibility you have as a sitter is keeping the traveler safe and making sure he/she is in good health. Should the traveler show signs of physical distress, the sitter should act upon this. Chapter 7 is dedicated in its entirety to problem management. This information is designed for both the sitter and the traveler and can be used as a reference for how to respond. In most cases, supplying the traveler with something to drink, a purge bucket, or something equally simple will be sufficient. In other cases, more action may be required.



If the journey takes place outside, it is a sitter's responsibility to make sure to keep the traveler away from situations that could be dangerous or harmful. **Be vigilant but don't be overprotective** - give the traveler space to breathe and explore as she wishes. Only step in when there is imminent danger.

*This also means not continually asking if the traveler is alright or if she notices the effects.* This goes for both outside and inside settings. Aside from being annoying and possibly creating uncomfortable interactions, these questions can suggest that not being ok is a definite possibility, and thus cause distress.

Any responsibilities beyond the immediate safety and health of the traveler should be discussed before the journey, because this depends very much on what the traveler wants. The traveler may want you to act as a guide, similar to guided meditation, may want you to take care of all kinds of logistics like food, water, music, air, etc. or may want you to drop out of the picture entirely unless needed. Try to be respectful of the traveler's wishes as long as they are reasonable and possible. Go through any possible scenarios and the various options you have, voice doubts and ask questions **before the journey** begins to avoid any misunderstandings.

Most of the times your role as a sitter will be passive. You might even want to bring a book if you are going to be indoors, or watch a movie. During the journey, your role could change as the needs and wishes of the traveler change. If there is any psychological distress, you may want to intervene by calming the traveler. However, it could be that the traveler does not desire this.

Therefore, it is a good idea to establish beforehand under what circumstances you will go against the travelers wishes and intervene, and in when you will let the situation play out as it may. There might be some actions in specific that the traveler has told you to intervene





with e.g. leaving the house, even though under the influence he might be of a different mind. Try to follow prior agreements, but don't use force or violence to do so.

Certain actions or attempted actions require definite intervention because they put the life of the traveler or that of others in danger. One example is wanting to drive a car while under the influence of entheogens. As a sitter, you should never allow this to take place. Be creative in finding ways to prevent this without having to restrain your traveler.

In some cases, your role as a sitter will be more involved. Perhaps you are guiding the journey in a ritualistic setting or perhaps the traveler's intention is to experiment with communication or intimacy. In this case, as a sitter, you should respond as naturally as possible without focusing on the fact that the traveler is in an altered state. If you feel uncomfortable with any situation as a sitter, let the traveler know, but be sensible so as to not provoke unnecessary tension.



After the experience is over, you might be the first person the traveler relates their experience to, looking for help in interpreting and integrating the experience. Remember that the traveler is most likely still slightly affected by the entheogen and thus more vulnerable than usual. Try to be understanding and without judgment concerning the experiences. Offer emotional assistance and reassurance where needed.

### 3. Different sitter options

When planning your journey and deciding that you would like a sitter, there are a few options to consider. The sitter does not have to be physically present in the same room as you during the whole experience. If having the sitter within close proximity makes you feel uncomfortable or distracts you from what you wish to achieve, have him or her chill out in a different room close by, or anywhere within calling distance. Every now and then he could come and check up on you to see if you are ok, or if there is no apparent risk, not even this.



You can ask your sitter to be silent and passive - as invisible as possible. This can greatly reduce a lot of the negative sides to having a sitter. If you are worried about feeling judged or ridiculous in the eyes of a sitter, you can have him stay distant unless called by you. Or, if you are entirely opposed to having someone around you while you are traveling, you can consider having a sitter on-call - someone who knows what you are up to and who is in the neighborhood, close enough to rush over should you need them for any reason.

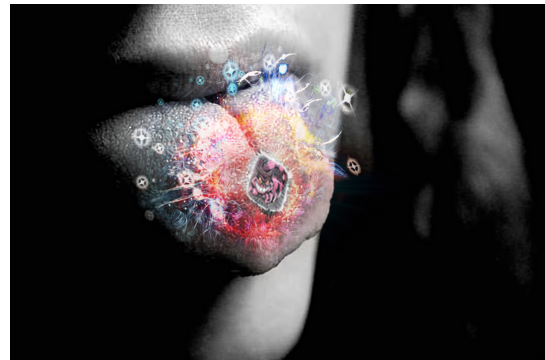
### 3. Different sitter options

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For this, you should make sure you have your phone set up to dial their number on quick-dial, this way you can avoid the distress when you find out you don't remember how to use the phone. Of all the options this one is obviously the least safe one, but still safer than dosing entirely alone, without anyone knowing about it.

It is likely that after you have gained some experience that you feel you no longer need or want a sitter in many cases. This is for the simple reason that if you are reasonable in your planning and have a controlled setting (like your home), there is not much for the sitter to do and you may feel like you are wasting the other person's time. In this case, it is good to have some sort of plan in the unlikely case of an emergency. Chapter 7 speaks about this in detail.

Another option for your sitter is that they take a smaller dose of the entheogen you are ingesting. This way the sitter still maintains a reasonably clear mind, but at the same time can relate better to the altered state you are in and is less likely to cause dissonance. Also, this way it might be more interesting for the sitter to join you.



## 4. Choosing a good sitter – what to look for

Now you know what a sitter is responsible for and what options you have when it comes to using one. The final question that remains is, who makes a good sitter? The answer to this, as you might well expect, does not only depend on the potential sitter, but also greatly on the traveler, and of course the substance in question.



As a traveler, you will want to select a sitter that you know can handle the responsibilities and can respect your wishes as to how much interaction and help you expect from them. Furthermore, it should be a person you trust very much, since you will be in a vulnerable state both physically and mentally. You will not want anyone with a dubious relationship towards you around in such a condition.

A sitter should be well informed about the substances being ingested. Ideally, your sitter has also read this manual (particularly

the sections about risks and problem management) or has a relevant understanding of the topic at a sufficient level. Knowledge about the actual safety of these substances and the potential risks involved is an essential trait in order to react adequately to any signs of distress rather than panicking or not reacting at all. First aid training and basic knowledge of emergency management for these particular situations could also come in handy.

If possible, choose a sitter who already experienced altered states in some form or other. This way they will have a better idea of how to interact with you. This is especially important if you are thinking of having your sitter use a smaller dose of what you are ingesting. Never use a dosing sitter who has no experience with entheogens. Finally, the sitter should also trust you to some degree in order for him to avoid becoming overly worried or constantly checking and asking if you are ok, thereby possibly provoking doubts in you. The following offers a brief checklist for choosing and using a sitter and what things should/could be agreed upon.

Sitter Checklist	
<b>Personal</b>	<b>Sitter Type</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Interactive <input type="checkbox"/> Silent <input type="checkbox"/> Invisible
<input type="checkbox"/> Trusted <input type="checkbox"/> Experienced <input type="checkbox"/> Informed <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful	<input type="checkbox"/> On Call <input type="checkbox"/> Dosing <input type="checkbox"/> Guide
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Agreements You've Discussed</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid <input type="checkbox"/> Problem management	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychological Distress Handling
<input type="checkbox"/> Supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Interventions with certain actions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Routine check-ups <input type="checkbox"/> Other

### Knowledge review

1. When is a sitter recommended?
  - When using new entheogens
  - when using high doses
  - when you have little experience
  - If there is an elevated risk
2. What can a sitter help you with?
  - Safety  comfort  supplies  crisis  trouble
3. What are the downsides of having a sitter?
  - Distraction  dissonance  hard to find  costs
4. What are the main responsibilities of a sitter?
  - Make sure the traveler has fun
  - Keep traveler safe and in good health
5. When should the sitter ask questions or voice doubts?
  - During the journey
  - Before the journey
6. What is a dosing sitter?
  - A sitter who takes a small dose of the same entheogen to be on the same wavelength.
  - A sitter who takes the same dose as the traveler.
7. Should your sitter be a friend of a friend?
  - Yes  No
8. Why should your sitter be well informed about entheogens?
  - To encourage you to take your dose
  - To help him know how and when to react and to identify problems.

### Suggested exercises:

1. Plan a journey with an imagined or real person from your circle of friends. What things would you agree on and what type of sitter would you want this person to be?
2. Imagine someone asks you to be their sitter for an Ayahuasca setting. How do you prepare yourself and what roles do you think you could have?

## **Part II.**

*If I have a headache, I have a headache. It doesn't matter if the explanation is dilating blood vessels in my brain, or muscle spasms in my shoulders, or "stress", or psychological distress, or invisible demons pounding mallets on my brain. We don't call some headaches "headaches" and others "apparent headaches". There is no such thing as an "apparent" headache. Likewise, a mystical experience is defined as such based on the characteristics of the experience, not the source or explanation of the experience. So whether the source is "outside" or "inside", whether we explain the experience in mechanistic terms or not, it is still a mystical experience. There is no such thing as an "apparent" mystical experience.*

Gibran2

# 4

## Exploring Hyperspace

### 1. Exploring hyperspace

At the end of this section you will:

- have knowledge about exploring various forms of altered states
- have a basic understanding of what an introverted/extroverted experience is, what it can show you, and what to watch out for
- have basic knowledge of some of the more special phenomena
- know some of the details involved in using music and art in your journeys
- know how creativity can be affected and used when traveling

As you have seen in chapter 1 there are various reasons for using entheogens and a widespread pallet of effects you can expect from them. Of course, a simple list of effects does no justice to the experience itself - a subjective occurrence that many artists have tried to capture in their paintings, music, movies, literature, etc. The psychedelic experience, however, because it so fundamentally affects your perception of your self and your surroundings, is something that seems impossible to describe or capture fully.



This means that when you are getting started, you will probably want to explore this new experience a bit to understand how to work with it. In the following sections we will go into

various forms of exploring the altered states and also elaborate on some of the more special phenomena. We will take a look at different forms and purposes of introversion and extroversion during a journey, the phenomena of out of body experiences (OBE), and the similarities to near death experiences (NDE).



Bundesarchiv, Bild 103-1009-0104/11  
Foto: Siegfried Jäger | 4. Januar 1988

Special attention will be given to a very strange and fascinating phenomenon: encountering entities. Finally, we will look at how art and music can be integrated into a journey and how journeys can inspire art and music.

While we differentiate between intro- and extroverted experiences, there is no reason why one experience could not have characteristics of both, especially with long lasting entheogens such as mescaline or LSD.

## 2. Introversion

### Introvert

A term introduced by the psychologist Carl Jung to describe a person whose motives and actions are directed inward. Introverts tend to be preoccupied with their own thoughts and feelings and minimize their contact with other people

When journeying, we can decide whether we want to be predominantly occupied with external sensory input (extroversion) or more focused on what is going on inside i.e. introversion. The latter can be done by minimizing sensory input. For example, journeying in a darkened room or, if available, even in a flotation tank. However, simply closing your eyes and leaning back can be more than sufficient.

You can also use specific sensory input like music, a piece of art, a photo, or something similar to help you focus on specific emotions or ideas that you are interested in exploring in your altered state. Breathing techniques or other meditation techniques can also be applied to center your thoughts on yourself or something specific, but it is equally valid to let the substance itself take you wherever it wishes to. Letting this happen rather than fighting it can be an essential ability in a traveler, especially when using high doses or specific substances that tend to impose their own agenda on the traveler. Travelers are advised to **let go rather than resist** if the experience becomes very strong and overwhelming. Resistance to the experience will often cause suffering.

When dealing with experiences centered on self-reflection, in general, you run a higher risk of encountering things within yourself that can lead to confrontations - hidden or poorly understood fears, injuries/traumas/painful memories, destructive or unhelpful thought patterns, etc. can surface and force you to face them.

## 2. Introversion

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This can be something sought after by the traveler, as it can be beneficial to personal development and healing, especially when it comes to dissolving destructive thought patterns or habits. It can even lead to mystical experiences, once major psychological barriers seem to have been overcome, letting the traveler enter a state of profound freedom.

However, these confrontational situations can equally arise without being sought after and may even take the traveler by surprise, having expected and intended something entirely different. In these cases especially, these confrontations can cause quite a bit of grief. The traveler might not be prepared to resolve said internal issues, yet once confronted with them it can become very difficult to focus on something else.

Generally, it is more rewarding to try to work through these issues, to face them, embrace them, and let go of them, similar to shadow integration as described by C. G. Jung. In some cases, you may wish to avoid the confrontation, however. For example, if you know you are not prepared to face said issue or because the experience has become too rough. You can try to distract yourself by turning from introversion to extroversion (watch a movie, chat online, etc.) or to have your sitter help calm you down and talk you through the experience, leading you away from the topic you fear.

### **Mystical Experience**

A mystical experience is a powerful and frequently transformative experience that puts user in touch with a strong and utterly convincing sense of "something higher" - Unity with the Godhead, entanglement, Brahma, Akasha, ultimate understanding, enlightenment, etc.

Some travelers enjoy meditation while journeying, which can also lead to mystical experiences and profound insights. This can be meditation in stationary form, but things like yoga or chi gong can also be interesting if the substance allows for this kind of movement. Furthermore, techniques from expressive psychotherapy can be utilized, such as writing or creating art as a form of accessing the subconscious.

Oftentimes, entheogens allow us to see things - including ourselves - in a new light or even for the first time, especially in introverted experiences. This makes them an invaluable tool for self-reflection and development.





### 3. Extroversion

#### Extrovert

A term introduced by the psychologist Carl Jung to describe a person whose motives and actions are directed outward. Extroverts are more prone to action than contemplation.

Focusing on sensory input, our environment, and our interactions with our environment can make for an entirely different experience when using entheogens, though mystical experiences or profound insights can equally occur without focusing on internal issues or feelings.

Many travelers like journeying in nature, in order to explore the fascinating world of plants and animals or their surrounding landscapes. Many report a sense of awe for the beauty of nature experienced in this fashion and a sense of reconnecting with nature. A sense of universal connectedness, empathy, and wonder is not uncommon with these kinds of journeys.

Nature can also be a bit intimidating on higher doses and can add to any disorientation you might experience. If you have planned your journey adequately, you will at least rationally know that it is unlikely that you are in any real physical danger, so as a general rule, remain calm if you find yourself threatened by your surroundings.

Other forms of extroverted exploration include other people. Some travelers like journeying with companions, which can be interesting for experimenting with communication, discussions, and other types of interaction. Intimacy and sex can also be explored while journeying with your partner or a trusted individual. Journeying with the right people can be very rewarding and even bonding. It can be insightful to the friendship you share and illuminating about the topics you touch upon in discussions. It can reveal things about what is transmitted beyond words when people communicate, the limitations or the power of language, suggestivity, as well as a whole array of subtleties when it comes to eye contact, physical contact, and intimacy in general.



Just as with choosing a sitter, it is of the utmost importance to choose your travel-companions well. While having the right people around you can be a magical experience, traveling with the wrong ones can easily lead to negative emotions and a negative overall experience. If you feel this is happening, consider leaving the group/the other person for a bit and returning later or not returning at all. If this is an issue you feel should be resolved then and there, beware that being under the influence can intensify emotions and tension and therefore any drama involved as well. However in some cases the altered state can be beneficial for tackling an interpersonal problem because of the altered manner in which you perceive it.

#### 4. OBEs, NDEs, ego death and entities

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Another thing that is greatly enjoyed by many travelers is journeying at music festivals, raves, or clubs. Joining the crowds and the music and dancing while in an altered state can induce trance states, feelings of connectedness, collective consciousness, and total loss of self.



Due to your altered state when journeying, these situations can also cause social anxiety, claustrophobia, and disorientation which can negatively affect your experience. Other problems that were discussed in chapter 1 are dehydration, hyperthermia, and hyponatremia, so be sure to bring drinks that contain electrolytes and take care of your body in general.

There are plenty of other activities that can be interesting while journeying, such as going to a museum (art or otherwise), visiting ruins (medieval, Mayan, etc.), taking pictures, playing video games, or other externally engaging activities. There is no rule for what will produce the best experience. However, in all activities you plan, make sure you are safe and can stay out of trouble as described in chapter 2.

Looking at art, listening to music, and creating art or music are activities that will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. It is important to note that very high doses make extroverted experiences impossible, because the effects of the entheogen will override almost all sensory input and also might make it very difficult to move around/explore.

#### 4. OBEs, NDEs, ego death and entities



Higher doses, or so called “break through” doses of entheogens can produce some very special effects such as *OBE* (out of body experience(s)), *ego death* and the encounter of *entities*. These special effects are quite common with some substances, such as DMT and mushrooms and rare on others, such as LSD. There are countless speculations about the ontology and meaning of these phenomena and we suggest to the reader and traveler that he or she make up (or leave open) their own opinion on the matter. As for this text, we will try to refrain from making any implications or speculations and simply report on the fact that these experiences can happen and what they consist of.

**OBE the out of body experience** is an experience where the traveler apparently leaves her physical body and moves around unbound by physical laws. Often this is combined with traveling to what appears to be foreign

worlds, where sometimes entities may also be encountered. The experiences of these foreign worlds are very varied, there seem to be very few commonalities from one experience and traveler to the other. Other forms of OBE involve apparently traveling within this world to past, present, or even possible future places. Also, leaving the body and any definable world altogether can be experienced.

OBEs are quite common on so called "break through" doses of DMT when vaporized, high doses of mushrooms or ayahuasca, as well as Salvia. On LSD and mescaline it is rare, but can occur on very high doses or when mixed with harmalas (extreme caution!).

The OBEs in which past moments are relived (your life flashing before your eyes) or in which the physical world in general seems to be transcended (see also ego death) are often compared to **near death experiences (NDE)**. However, it is not clear if OBEs on psychedelics and NDEs are in any way neurochemically related. There are speculations about this, but no substantial evidence has been found to date.

#### NDE

A near-death experience (NDE) refers to a broad range of personal experiences associated with impending death, encompassing multiple possible sensations including detachment from the body; feelings of levitation; total serenity, security, or warmth; the experience of absolute dissolution; and the presence of a light.

**Ego death** or the dissolution of self is an experience in which the traveler loses all notion of self or identification. Travelers may perceive their consciousness expanding into infinity, as it no longer seems bounded by the ego or body. They may experience one-ness with the cosmos. In this state, the traveler often does not remember who or what they are or were. Some refer to this state as pure consciousness. Occasionally, this state leads to a mystical experience where the traveler

seems to merge with a higher power, higher order, or their higher self.

#### Ego dissolution...

...is when "basically all the roles you play and terms and identifiers that you have learned and built up that define *you* are no longer relevant or hold the same importance. This can progress to a point to where you just *are*, no labels, no definitions, no restrictions, you are just a being or point of pure awareness. It truly feels as though you are dying to go through this. But once on the other side of this phenomenon you realize how much more you are than all the labels and trappings you associated with your sense of worth. For some this is a blissful excursion into heaven, for others it can be a tortuous descent into the depths of their own hell."

- PB Smith

**Encountering entities** is one of the strangest yet most fascinating phenomena of the entheogenic experience and is, occasionally, specifically sought after by travelers. These experiences consist of an encounter with an apparent being that shows apparent sentience and sometimes very elaborate traits that we would attribute to humans or beings of equal or higher intelligence. These entities come in various forms - common appearances include aliens, insectoid beings, gods from various cultures (Egyptian, Hindu, Mayan, etc.), geometric figures, humans, formless spirits etc.



The entities sometimes appear within the setting that we are traveling in and sometimes in OBEs that take us into apparent strange worlds. Often, they seem to try to communicate with us telepathically, however, sometimes they appear to be completely oblivious of us. Sometimes it appears they have messages for us, that may or may not be related to things we are actually thinking about, related to our healing process or something in our life. Other times it could be a message seemingly entirely unrelated to our internal struggles.

Almost always, if there is a message, it seems very important. On some occasions the entities might seem sinister or appear to have evil intentions. With most of the visions and hallucinations that travelers experience on the various entheogens, they are quite aware of the fact that they are part of the effects of the substance they took. However, entity contact is often accompanied by a feeling of reality. Despite the knowledge that they are under the influence of a psychedelic, travelers may feel the entity contact is real. This is especially true for DMT, which in itself seems to impose a sense of hyper-reality (more real than reality) during its effects.



There is a lot of speculation about what entity contact really means - from traditional shamanic interpretation to esoteric new age interpretations, you will find proponents of all theories among entheogenic travelers. And even though you may think you know what they really are now, it is likely that once you experience an entity encounter for the first (or next) time, you will not be so sure anymore.

The strange worlds and their inhabitants, the entities in general, and the powerful visions that are sometimes related to NDEs are all very mysterious. We cannot fully explain them, nor can we say for sure what they can teach us. The mystery in itself however, it seems, is very attractive to many travelers, and so the experience is quite desired and sought after.

## 5. Art and music

Using art and music during one's journeys can be interesting in both intro- and extroverted experiences. Both can be used as a sensory-input guide to traversing one's inner landscapes and both can be the objects of exploration in and of themselves.

### 5.1. Music

Before you get to the stage of choosing a type of music from the myriad of styles and artists available, perhaps the first thing you will be asking yourself is should you even put on any music at all? As always, it depends.

For example, the simple difference between the long-lasting orally-ingested entheogens and the shorter experiences produced by vaporized DMT or smoked salvia can considerably alter the way music can be used in your journey.

So, to listen to music, or not to listen to music? This may be a fundamentally more important question than many will realize, because music can exert a significant force upon your journey and thus alter it considerably.

Counter arguments for listening to music are, in summary, that the music can influence and control the journey and prevent you from exploring parts of your mind that you otherwise might have. This can be an advantage too, in case you are, for example, experiencing undesirable/negative emotions. Playing the right music can sometimes help you out of rough spaces. However, it can also prevent you from having different experiences, if for example, you were to listen to the same type of music every time you journeyed - all of your journeys might end up having a similar feel to them.

For DMT in particular, there are a variety of specific phenomena linked to the DMT experience that are directly influenced by music. For example, the very essence of the



## 5. Art and music

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foreign worlds and entities seems to change by the presence of music. This topic, among others, will be discussed in detail in the Auditory Explorer Specialty course.

On the other hand, listening to music can be a fascinating experience in itself due to your altered perception. It can be enthralling and ecstatic, make your experience feel more dynamic, or color the experience with an emotional quality created by the music. This does not necessarily have to do with what the musicians initially intended. These pro arguments apply to both short and longer lasting experiences.

What type of music you choose to listen to will greatly depend on your personal preferences and it is encouraged to experiment with this. Special attention may be given to non-musical sounds such as binaural beats and isochronic tones, which some travelers find beneficial. When experimenting, make sure that you can change the music or switch it off if you find it disturbing, producing negative emotions, or otherwise affecting your experience in a negative manner.



The logistics of listening to music, which you may want to consider beforehand, include the ease of operating the music device (complicated designs may be hard to figure out when traveling), the use of speakers or headphones, and especially with substances/doses that make it hard to move around, your distance from the device.

Also, please remember that when journeying, you may not be able to tell if the music is too loud or not and this may cause problems with neighbors. Test the volume of your speakers before hand and mark the maximum volume you will allow yourself to listen to in some way.

Finally, music can be used specifically to soothe you in the case of a difficult experience. It can help distract you, but it can also simply help you discover strength to face whatever it is that you are confronted with. It can even be used as a kind of self-defense, if you find yourself in a seemingly hostile situation (e.g. entities with apparently evil intentions). For these

cases, travelers report that singing/chanting or otherwise making music yourself is a very helpful tool, aside from listening to music you know to have positive effects on you.

## 5.2. Art



Similar to music, but not quite as pervasive to the experience, is the use of artwork to inspire a journey. Visually, this can be very pleasing, stimulating, and, just as it may do while sober, can stir up emotions and evoke interpretations and reflections on a certain topic.

Using paintings or other types of visual art works seems to have less likelihood of provoking distress or negativity in any long lasting fashion. Some images might be disturbing to the traveler, but in most situations, a simple flip of the page or turning your attention to something more pleasant will resolve the situation.

The logistics of using artwork are fairly simple. For long lasting experiences, you can use books that you keep around, the Internet, or posters alike. If you are planing on taking a higher dose and wish to see specific images, you might want to prepare certain pages of the book or webpages in advance, since this can be difficult to do later on. You may consider printing the images beforehand or using posters directly and hanging them on a wall where they will be visible. The same goes for DMT, since you don't want to waste time flipping through a book or googling to find the image you were interested in.

There is no type of art that we can recommend over another, since this will depend very much on your taste. Artwork that is related to entheogens and surrealism can be very interesting to look at. However, so can fractals and other mathematically created images, since you might find similarities between them and your visuals. Artwork with a certain content, for example spiritual art, can be used to help influence the character of your experience. If this fails to work, try not to get frustrated. We cannot always control the direction in which entheogens take us.

## 6. Being creative

Certainly you have, now and then, browsed through the Internet looking at psychedelic art or something similar, seeing how many artists strive to capture the psychedelic experience in one way or another. You might feel that, in some images, they have succeeded in capturing the visual quality of a certain substance, while in others, perhaps a more emotional aspect has been depicted.



Similarly, you may find that certain types of music mimic auditory hallucinations, reflect, or have similarities to internal dynamics you experience during an entheogenic experience.

## 6. *Being creative*

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Many travelers are intrigued by the challenge of capturing the altered state in some form of art, be it a poem, a painting, or a piece of music. This can be done during the experience itself or after it, working from memory and/or inspiration.

However, these are far from the only ways entheogens can catalyze creativity. Given the way they alter your perception and your mode of thinking, they can offer you new ways to view things and therefore assist you in finding creative solutions to problems, giving inspiration for projects, art, and even science. Some of the greatest minds of the past century have admitted to experimenting with psychedelics and several have claimed that it helped them develop their ideas or fueled their creativity.

Keep a notepad and a pen ready in case you come up with any interesting ideas or thoughts. This way you can write them down and keep track of them. You might find what you wrote to be unintelligible later on, or downright brilliant. Both extremes exist.

If you are more of a visual person, you might want to experiment with colors and paints during your journeys. Perhaps this can lead to new techniques or ideas for materials to use. If you are more musically oriented, experimenting with an instrument while traveling can be very engaging and rewarding. Some musicians claim that after their first encounter with LSD or similar substances, they gained new insight into the flow of music. Certainly entheogens can greatly influence your perception of the intimate relationship you have with music, if you are a musician or an audiophile.

Apart from possible new ideas, creativity can also facilitate healing, induce therapeutic effects, and can be used during journeys for this specifically. Inspiring creativity can be done in a manner of free association or by focusing on something in particular. Trying anything that requires fine motor skills at very high doses is probably not going to work. Also, some entheogens cause trembles at lower doses, which can make it difficult to manage a paintbrush or an instrument in the manner you'd like. Sometimes smoking or vaporizing cannabis can help reduce trembling, but it will also change the quality of the experience. Don't get frustrated if it just doesn't work out the way you expected, there's plenty of time to try again.





### Knowledge review

1. Whether an experience is introverted or extroverted depends on?
  - the personality of the traveler
  - the dose
  - intentions, planning, setting
2. A mystical experience is:
  - guaranteed with allentheogens
  - a transformative and profound experience
  - considered a bad trip
3. Entheogens produce NDEs
  - Yes  No
4. Ego dissolution is:
  - a very positive experience
  - horrifying and dangerous
  - when you lose all sense of identification, which can be both scary and wonderful
5. Entity contact is most common with:
  - Mescaline
  - LSD
  - DMT
  - Mushrooms
6. Music while traveling can:
  - be ecstatic  change the experience
  - cause positive emotions
  - cause negative emotions
7. True or false: It is recommended to use only psychedelic art on journeys.
  - True  False
8. How can you capture creativity while traveling?
  - Have a notepad and pen nearby
  - experiment with paints
  - experiment with musical instruments

### Suggested exercises:

1. Use the setting you described in the exercises of Chapter 1 Setting. Is this suited for a more extroverted or introverted experience? If extroverted, what activities would you want to do while traveling?
2. Make a list of visual artwork you would be interested in using for a journey.

*Psychedelic experience is only a glimpse of genuine mystical insight, but a glimpse which can be matured and deepened by the various ways of meditation in which drugs are no longer necessary or useful. If you get the message, hang up the phone. For psychedelic drugs are simply instruments, like microscopes, telescopes, and telephones. The biologist does not sit with eye permanently glued to the microscope, he goes away and works on what he has seen.*

Alan Watts

# 5

## The Set

### 1. The set

At the end of this section you will:

- Understand which internal issues can affect your experiences;
- Understand the mind sets you should avoid travelling with and how to evaluate yourself before any potential journey;
- Understand how your circumstances, living conditions, and social situation(s) play a role in your entheogenic endeavours;
- Have an idea of the difference between responsible use and abuse.

You may have already heard people talk about how important set and setting are when it comes to using entheogens. We have already taken a look into the setting, so now it is time to consider the set - your mindset, your physical condition, your social circumstances, and possible obligations/responsibilities. We'll address how this should figure into your planning and the effects it may have upon your experience.

First we will see how we can evaluate our own mindset, and reflect upon the circumstances and mindsets which might be contraindications for travelling. We will look at living circumstances and the social stigma concerning entheogens, and how they can influence our mindset or the experience itself. And we will also look at what responsible use consists of - how it differs from abuse, how we can differentiate between the two ourselves, and how we can avoid forming negative patterns of use with regards to these substances.

## 2. Mindset

How much do you see when you look in the mirror? Everything the eye beholds, and everything about you that is hidden from plain sight, will accompany you on your journey. All your fears, your 'baggage' and your modus operandi will be there, intensified to possibly horrifying degrees, dissected and changed, sometimes dissolved by the experience.

For the sake of easy discussion, we will categorize internal issues into three categories: *Acute (or current), persistent, and latent.*

As the name suggests, **acute** issues relate to one's most immediate events and thoughts: that phone call you just received, the letter that was in the mailbox this morning, your fear concerning this journey, the fight you had with your brother yesterday, the rejection you got from that job offer...anything that is acutely stressful or relevant to your life. All of these things, since they are in the most accessible level of your psyche, will most likely have a direct impact on any entheogenic experience. However, since these are issues that, in general, cannot be resolved by entheogens, nor need to be resolved in any psycho-spiritual way, any negativity arising from them is probably not going to benefit you much in the sense of learning or gaining insights.

**As a general rule, it is not a good idea to journey when you have any acute problems on your mind.** Entheogens will usually not be able to solve these problems, and most likely you will not be able to escape thinking about them. The converse is actually more probable: you will be stuck for the duration of the effects going over all your negative emotions, which are intensified and distorted.

On the other hand, acute positive issues on your mind such as being in love, having achieved something, having been released or freed from something, having had a great day, having met an old friend again, or having been commended for something can further increase into euphoria and elation during the journey, and give you a generally positive feel as the experience unfolds.

**Persistent issues** are those that form a part of you, or things upon which you have been "hung up" for a long time. Social anxiety, general irritability, PTSD, rigidity, spontaneity, beliefs (religious or otherwise), habits and habitual thought patterns, depression, sensitivity,



phobias, etc. are all persistent issues. All of these can influence the experience and how you navigate through it, and all of these can be challenged, confronted and changed.

It is possible that any negative attributes will be thoroughly illuminated for you to see how they are affecting your life. Sometimes this can lead to a bad experience; however, it can also lead to a very positive one if you manage to break the pattern of this negativity by (for example) identification, acceptance, nurturing forgiveness, integration, and finally dissolution. Some travelers use entheogens for this purpose specifically - understanding and transforming persistent issues.

There are formal studies that suggest entheogens can help in healing obsessive compulsive disorders<sup>1</sup>, addictions<sup>2</sup> and help cope with impending death<sup>3</sup>. Anecdotal reports suggest that they can also help in some cases of depression and negative outlooks on life/society by augmenting compassion and empathy. However, psychedelics should not be taken as a replacement for psychotherapy, if this is needed.



Naturally, travellers will not be able to avoid persistent issues when journeying. Even if they do not necessarily lead to bad experiences, certain issues - depending on what their exact nature may be - can become a predominant factor in the experience. A good idea is to follow the ancient advice engraved in the entrance of the Oracle of Delphi - know thyself - and be aware of what lies within.

**Some persistent issues, however, should be considered contraindications for taking entheogens, such as severe depression with suicidal tendencies, destructivity, or indeed any other major mental disorder.**

**Latent issues** are, in general, impossible for us to know about before they surface and become evident. Examples of latent issues are traumas,

repressed memories, fears and emotions, and latent mental disorders. There is a probability that these may come up unexpectedly during our journeys, but it won't necessarily happen.

In the case of mental disorders this can be quite problematic, but since mental disorders generally occur in people who have a family history of mental illnesses, or with a prior personal history of such conditions, potential problems can be prevented. We recommend not using entheogens if latent mental disorders are suspected.

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<sup>1</sup>Francisco A. Moreno. "Safety, Tolerability and Efficacy of Psilocybin in 9 Patients With Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder". In: *J. Clinical Psychiatry* 67:11 (2006).

<sup>2</sup>MP Bogenschutz and JM. Pommy. "Therapeutic mechanisms of classic hallucinogens in the treatment of addictions: from indirect evidence to testable hypotheses." In: *Drug Test Anal* 4,(7-8) (2012), pp. 543-555.

<sup>3</sup>AA Kurland and S. Grof. "Psychedelic Drug Assisted Psychotherapy. In Patients With Terminal Cancer". In: *Columbia University Press, New York, NY* (1973), pp. 86-133. URL: [http://www.maps.org/w3pb/new/1973/1973\\_kurland\\_2843\\_1.pdf](http://www.maps.org/w3pb/new/1973/1973_kurland_2843_1.pdf).

For all the other cases, entheogenic experiences can be difficult but also very rewarding. They can teach us about things we have been carrying with us without knowing, or even suspecting they were part of our baggage. Journeys can also be specifically planned to bring up latent issues such as traumas, following techniques from psychotherapy or similar disciplines.

As a general rule, it is recommended to take entheogens only if you are prepared to accept what might be shown to you, and if you are willing to change. Many people come back from an entheogenic journey calling the experience “life changing” in the sense that it changed their perspective and outlook, and showed them how little they know about their own consciousness. Many people feel very humbled by the experience.

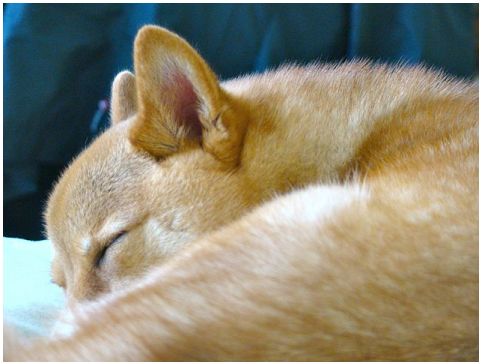
Entheogens have the ability to dig up just about anything that lies within, but the probability seems to get lower with each category - the most probable being the acute issues, and the least probable the latent ones. Being confronted with these things can be painful, but that does not mean it is a *bad experience*. A *bad experience* could be defined as any experience after which one feels worse than before. If it's painful, but comes to a resolution, the experience is termed difficult. *Difficult experiences* generally turn into bad experiences if we are unwilling to let go of, change, or accept whatever is in the focus of the experience.

In order to evaluate ourselves for possible reasons not to travel, and to have an idea of what we should be prepared for, we can use a checklist like the following example shows, to ask ourselves the relevant questions.

### Personal Evaluation Checklist

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. How do you currently feel?  | <input type="checkbox"/> bad habits                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> calm <input type="checkbox"/> anxious <input type="checkbox"/> excited  | <input type="checkbox"/> destructiveness                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> happy <input type="checkbox"/> focused <input type="checkbox"/> worried | <input type="checkbox"/> phobias                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nervous <input type="checkbox"/> sad <input type="checkbox"/> angry     |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stressed  |   |
| 2. Any recent...   | 4. Are you willing to change?                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bad news <input type="checkbox"/> break-ups                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good news <input type="checkbox"/> fights                               |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> accomplish-<br>ments <input type="checkbox"/> rejections                | 5. Even your most fundamental beliefs?                      |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    |
| 3. Any persistent...   | 6. Any personal or family history of men-<br>tal disorders? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> depressions   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PTSD  |   |

### 3. Physical set



Here you should ask yourself - how do I feel physically? As stated before, entheogens can tax the immune system and generally stress our bodies. But they are not the only thing that can affect us in such a manner. You might be struggling with a cold or some other sickness, or find yourself exhausted from work. Taking entheogens on top of this might be too much.

While taking entheogens under bad physical conditions won't necessarily result in a bad experience, it could be the final straw that leads to you getting sick or sicker. Some people will also

experience severe anxiety due to physical distress when taking entheogens during a cold or other minor illnesses. This depends on the individual.

Some travellers report healing properties from mushrooms, MDMA, or ayahuasca in particular, even concerning problems such as colds. It is up to every traveler to determine for themselves whether the substance can help or will add to the physical stress. **Generally it is not recommended to use entheogens when feeling physically weak or sick.** However, this is subjective and may differ from situation to situation.

### 4. Life, the universe and where we stand

As we saw in the section about the mindset, our trips can be influenced very directly by what we are acutely processing and experiencing. Aside from internal issues, this also includes our living conditions and the society in which we live in. We will take a look at what this means and how we can make the outer circumstances work in favor of our planned journeys.



Unfortunately, at this current point in time almost all entheogens are illegal in almost all countries. For anyone who decides to travel regardless, this may cause discomfort and even paranoia. Some people might feel it is wrong or even immoral to use entheogens, due to their legal status or on account of religious beliefs. You may or may not be conscious of these thoughts going on in your mind, so it is a good thing to think about it before you start.

Also, as discussed before, a lot of fear is spread about entheogens concerning their alleged risks. If you don't understand clearly the actual risks involved, you may disregard these (misinformed) warnings initially - but then, under the influence, you might begin fearing for your health, or even for your life, without there being such a danger.

Finally, using entheogens is generally frowned upon by society and many people see little difference between someone exploring his mind with these substances and a heroin addict. Your friends, colleagues, parents, or anyone in your social environment might feel worried about your use. This can lead to very strained relationships and endless discussions, especially if these well-meaning individuals are poorly informed. In your journeys, this can make you feel uncomfortable with other people around, especially if they are not travelling too. It can make you feel social pressure, judgment, or guilt while you are travelling, to the point where you regret having taken anything at all.

Living conditions can also add to stress concerning the use of entheogens. For example, if you live with people who are strongly opposed to the use of any kind of illegal substance. Jobs that have regular drug tests can present another problem.

You have to address all of the points above, and resolve them either practically or internally, so they do not affect you while journeying. If you cannot overcome the feeling that you are doing something wrong, or the fear of getting caught doing something illegal makes you too uncomfortable, then perhaps you should not be using entheogens.

You can help yourself avoid these negative feelings by choosing an appropriate setting (see Chapter 2) where no one will bother you in your activity, by taking safety precautions for your health and safety, by informing yourself well, and by making sure you are using the entheogens in a responsible, respectful, and positive manner and context. Finding like-minded people can also be very helpful.

Finally, you should always consider your responsibilities and what is expected of you on the day of your journey or the following day(s). Some substances, but also some experiences, can be extremely taxing both physically and mentally. **Ideally you should not have to perform any important tasks the day of your journey nor immediately afterwards.** If you have a very demanding job, deadlines to fulfill, important meetings, etc. you might want to postpone your journey. Otherwise, you might find yourself very ill at ease during the experience, and later on incapable of performing the necessary tasks to your satisfaction.



**Entheogens can cause mental and physical after-effects that one might consider a form of “hangover”. Often the mental effects can be perceived as positive, however many times you will be very busy sorting out your own feelings and thoughts and this can distract you from doing other things. Physical after-effects can leave you exhausted the next day. It is recommended to have a day dedicated solely to integration and physical recuperation directly after the experience.**

## 5. Responsible use vs. abuse

As mentioned above, many people think that the only responsible way to treat any kind of psychoactive substance is not to use it at all. However, given the low risks presented by entheogens in comparison with some legal substances and the list of potential benefits, we beg to differ. As with almost everything, there is always the potential for abuse, and the general consequence of abusing entheogens is a reduced functionality in reality.

The substances in and of themselves should not be considered as either good or bad. It is the way they are used which determines whether they have positive or negative effects on us and our surroundings, and this is what should be evaluated. As such, there is no clear recipe for frequency, dosage, or reasons for use that can be considered good or bad. This is very dependent on the traveler(s), their circumstances and responsibilities, and the phase of life they find themselves in. What is reckless use in one phase of life can be valid exploration or spiritual work in another.



It is thus important to evaluate the context we are taking these substances in, our set, our reasons, and intentions for taking them - i.e. safety and risk assessment, understanding, and integration. Even though we might be having very beneficial experiences, taking entheogens in dangerous places with no safety precautions should still be considered irresponsible use. And even if you know all the potential risks and dangers, and you are taking the substance in a controlled environment, it might still be considered abuse if you take it on a destructive and escapist impulse. Although this is, generally, a tougher call to make.

Respectful and responsible use occurs when you are not unnecessarily endangering yourself or others, when you understand the risks and know the effects and dosages of a substance, when you treat the entheogens in all their stages (acquisition/production, planning, consumption, and integration) with respect and mindfulness, when you engage in basic planning and evaluation beforehand (set and setting), when you take care of your health before, during, and after the experiences, when you keep entheogens from ruling your life, when you refrain from dosing when it is clearly not beneficial, etc.

Irresponsible use occurs when you put yourself and/or others in danger with production or consumption, when you don't know about risks, dosages, or possible effects, when you don't know the purity of your substance, when you take doses much higher than recommended (especially if you have little to no experience), when you mix substances without any research about adverse effects, when you disregard safety precautions and planning, when you dose despite knowing your set is bad (particularly in the case of acute mindset issues or health issues), etc.

The term abuse is more difficult to define since it's something that has to be judged mainly according to the consequences of use. You could be considered to be abusing entheogens if



you begin losing touch with reality, if you no longer have anything else to talk about besides entheogens, if your life outside of entheogens is non-existent or doesn't interest you at all, if you take entheogens without intentions or reflection, if your sole aim is to escape reality, if you take entheogens to the point of making your physical or mental health suffer from it without receiving any overall benefit, etc.

Note that the term benefit may seem ambiguous, and might suggest we are judging different types of use. We do not want to imply that only psycho-spiritual work or the like is considered beneficial. On the contrary, even experiences for the pure pleasure of them, without any specific goal can be beneficial to our mood and our appreciation of life. It becomes a negative influence when these "hedonistic" experiences become the only thing we can enjoy. It is important to maintain balance in one's life.

So, every now and then, in our process of using entheogens, we should ask ourselves if we are still using in a responsible manner.

The following questions can be a good starter for a periodical self-check.



1. Do I feel comfortable with my insights from my previous trip?
2. Do I feel I have given my previous experience a place in my life?
3. Am I doing harm to myself or others?
4. Am I benefiting from my use, or is it hurting me?
5. Is my use of entheogens having a negative impact on things like social relationships, work, school, family, meeting obligations, etc?
6. Do I feel a strong call to go back?
7. What are my intentions for continuing to journey?
8. Is it time to hang up the phone?

### Knowledge review

1. Your set includes your:
  - mindset  location
  - physical set  social environment
  - obligations
2. For the mindset there are three categories of issues. They are:
  - intrinsic, confined and accepted
  - acute, persistent and latent
  - actual, predominant and lateral
3. A bad experience is a difficult experience in which:
  - you are unwilling to listen
  - you are unwilling to run away
  - you are unwilling to let go/change/accept
4. If you have a personal or family history of mental illness should you use entheogens?
  - Yes  No
5. When feeling physically weak or sick:
  - it is recommended only to take LSD
  - it is recommended to take lower doses
  - it is not recommended to travel
6. Social circumstances can make you feel:
  - guilt  regret
  - pride  depression
7. Responsible use means:
  - To use in a mindful and respectful way remembering safety precautions and risks.
  - To use only when healthy and only for psychological work.
  - To refrain from using when it's clearly not beneficial.

### Suggested exercises:

1. Using the above checklist, as well as an evaluation of your current circumstances and obligations, would now be a good time to journey? Next weekend maybe? Why or why not?
2. Aside from the above questions to ask yourself concerning the responsibility of your use, what other methods can you use to make sure you continue to use responsibly? Make a list with ideas.

## **Part III.**

*Everyone who has broken through and has the courage to do so again is a titan of strength. The only question is what are you looking for on that other side. Do not be sidetracked. Seek what you went there for and refuse to accept anything else.*

Vovin

*My psychedelic experiences havent so much convinced me of the reality of other realms as they have lead me to consider the possibility that this realm - the realm of our everyday experiences - may in fact not be at all what it appears to be.*

Gibran2

# 6

## Responsible and Safe Use

### 1. Responsible and safe use

At the end of this section you will:

- Have an idea of generally used dose ranges;
- Know how to reduce the risks of overdosing;
- Know about different methods for testing purity and contents of substances;
- Have an idea about interactions between common medication and typical entheogens;



If you've done the exercises from [The Set](#) section you might have already come up with some ideas of how to use entheogens responsibly and safely in addition to preparing yourself mentally for your experience. In this section, we will go into some very important things you should always look at before you ingest any entheogens, in order to keep yourself safe.

We will primarily focus on responsibility and safety concerning the chemical properties and physiological effects of these substances. We will take a look at dose-ranges for the more popular entheogens, testing methods

for purity and contents of entheogens, and some possible adverse interactions with common

medication and medical conditions. Circumstantial issues and mindset issues have been discussed in the previous chapter and post-journey integration of the experiences will be discussed in Chapter 9 - as components that are essential for responsible use.

## 2. Dose ranges

As presented in the table in chapter one, most common entheogens have a relatively high safety-ratio compared to other substances, such as alcohol, for example. This means that fatal overdoses are rare when staying in reasonable dose-ranges. However, even so, non-fatal overdoses can be quite unpleasant and should also be avoided.

### Overdose

You are said to have overdosed when the effects of the ingested substances are too much to handle for your body and mind. Non-fatal overdoses can result in coma or temporary heart arrhythmia, among other things.

Below you will find a table with effective dose ranges (of the commonly used entheogens) that have been either applied in formal scientific studies or are known to be effective from the collective experiences of many travelers, if no studies were available. For all of the given ranges of these substances a 100% purity is assumed. It is important that no other unaccounted-for active ingredients are in the substance you consume, otherwise the dose-ranges will differ.

In general, all dose-ranges are to be taken with a grain of salt, meaning "your mileage may vary". Body weight, physical fitness, metabolism, diet, and other things can play into how sensitive you are to any given entheogen. It is recommended that you always start out with a threshold to low dose to see how your body and mind respond to a new substance. If after this, a higher dose is desired, the recommendation is to raise the dose in small increments to avoid taking more than your body or mind can handle.

Special caution should be taken when administering crude extracts or plant-parts where the concentration of the active ingredients is unknown. Plants and mushrooms can vary in active content even if the parts are from the same plant/crop/flush. This means that administering the same amount of plant matter can lead to varying results and may surprise you.

## 2. Dose ranges

**IMPORTANT:** This information is intended to describe the range of dosages people report using. It should not be construed as a recommendation of any sort. Individuals can respond very differently to the same dosage. What is safe for one can be dangerous for another.

Entheogen	Threshold	Standard <sup>1</sup> dose-range per body weight	Standard <sup>1</sup> dose-range a for 70 kg person
Ayahuasca: B. caapi Psychotria viridis			75 - 100 g 30 g
Cannabis smoked Cannabis oral	33 mg		50-70 mg 60-80 mg
DMT vaporized DMT freebase oral <sup>2</sup> RIMA <sup>3</sup> (rue extract)	5-10 mg 20-35 mg 100-200+ mg		15-20 mg 50-70 mg 100-200+ mg
LSD	20 ug	1.14-1.43 ug /kg	80-150 ug
MDMA HCL	30 mg	1-1.78 mg / kg	70-125 mg <sup>4</sup>
Mescaline HCL	100 mg		180-350 mg
Psilocybin Whole mushrooms (cubensis, dried)	3-4 mg 0.25g	0.22-0.43 mg / kg	15-30 mg <sup>5</sup> 1.5-2.5 g
Salvia regular leaf, dry	0.25 g		0.5 g

<sup>1</sup>Standard dose ranges refer to either 1) doses that have been used in clinical trials and have been found to be well tolerable or 2) doses that have been found to be well tolerable by the community of travelers, when no clinical studies were available with information.

<sup>2</sup>Oral doses of DMT depend highly on inhibition of the monoamino oxidase, and vary greatly from person to person.

<sup>3</sup>RIMA doses given are what is considered full or close to full inhibition. This can greatly vary from person to person. *It is advised to try raising the dose of RIMA first before raising the amount of DMT if you find your experience was weaker than expected.*

<sup>4</sup>Michael Mithoefer. "MDMA-Assited Psychotherapy in the Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)". In: ( ).

<sup>5</sup>Vollenweider, "Neurobiology of Psychedelics".

Apart from LSD, which is active at  $\mu\text{g}$  doses, measuring out the dose you desire of most of these entheogens you will require a milligram scale. Scales often used for measuring out cannabis are usually not accurate enough for the dose-ranges of substances such as DMT or MDMA. Recommended accuracy is at least  $\pm 1$  mg.

It is important that you measure out your dose, to avoid taking too much, as this can lead to undesired effects or, in extreme cases, to overdoses. Eying out milligrams is generally not a good idea, especially since the volume of a given powder or substance can be deceiving.

For LSD, a known amount of the pure crystal is usually dissolved in a certain amount of liquid, giving a known concentration. This way it is easy to calculate how much LSD is in any given amount of the solution - say a drop. This method can also be used for other substances if the scales available are too inaccurate to measure out single doses.

When working with plant material or mushrooms, you should be aware that the amount of active molecules can greatly vary from one plant/mushroom to another. Also different strains can vary in active content and storage conditions can cause degradation of actives over time. Thus, caution is advised.

For all cases, it is better to err on the side of caution and take too little than too much. Also, special attention should be given to knowing reported lethal doses as listed in Chapter 1, so as not to approach those too much, especially when planning higher-dose journeys.



### Further reading and references

**MDMA** Mithoefer and Rick Doblin. "MDMA: The safety and efficacy of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine-assisted psychotherapy in subjects with chronic, treatment-resistant posttraumatic stress disorder: the first randomized controlled pilot study -". In: *J Psychopharmacol* 25(4) (2011), 439452. DOI: [10.1177/0269881110378371](https://doi.org/10.1177/0269881110378371). URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3122379/>

**LSD** Peter Gasser. *LSD-Assisted Psychotherapy for Anxiety Associated with Life-Threatening Illness - Gasser 2008*. URL: [https://www.maps.org/research/psilo-bsd/principal\\_investigator\\_peter\\_gasser\\_m.d.\\_with\\_co-therapist\\_barbara\\_spe/](https://www.maps.org/research/psilo-bsd/principal_investigator_peter_gasser_m.d._with_co-therapist_barbara_spe/)

Lisa Jerome. URL: [http://www.maps.org/research/bsd/swissbsd/IB\\_LSD.pdf](http://www.maps.org/research/bsd/swissbsd/IB_LSD.pdf)

### 3. Testing methods

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**Psilocybin** Griffiths. "Psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences having substantial and sustained personal meaning and spiritual significance". In: *Psychopharmacology* 187(3) (2006), pp. 268–83. URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16826400> MAPS. *Psilocybin-Assisted Psychotherapy for Anxiety in People With Stage IV Melanoma*. URL: <http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT00979693>

**Mescaline** Alexander Shulgin. *pihkal*. URL: [https://www.erowid.org/library/books\\_online/pihkal/pihkal096.shtml](https://www.erowid.org/library/books_online/pihkal/pihkal096.shtml)

## 3. Testing methods

To make sure you are actually ingesting what you think you are, or to make sure your product is not contaminated, there are several testing methods that can either be used by you/the traveler, or that require you to send a sample to a testing organization.

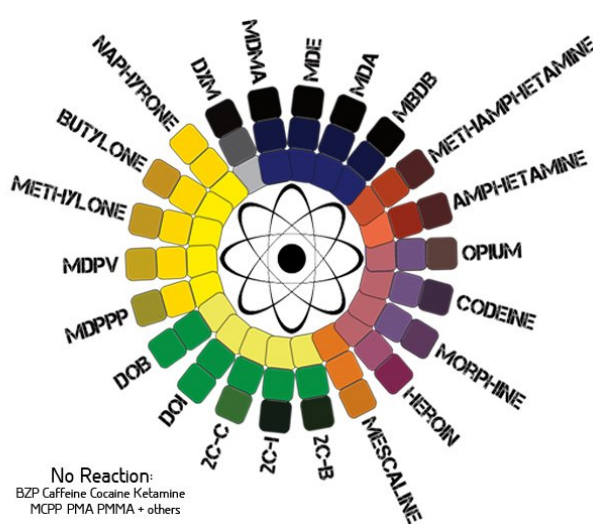
Methods you can use yourself are colorimetric testing - for which various kits are available that test for LSD, MDMA, and various ingredients that are known to be mixed into these if obtained from dealers - and thin layer chromatography (TLC), which can be useful for testing extracts or plant matter for impurities. Methods that require rather expensive and elaborate equipment to measure concentration or to determine the substance in question are UV-Vis Spectrophotometry, Gas Chromatography, 5 Column Chromatography, Mass Spectrometry and Liquid Chromatography as well as NMR.

We will examine the two methods that can be done by anyone in their home in detail and give a quick overview on a few of the other methods that are typically applied by organizations that offer tests on substances. We will also look at how to interpret the results of these analyses.

### 3.1. Colorimetric testing

Colorimetric tests are qualitative tests using certain liquids that indicate the presence of a compound in a given product, by the color it becomes when a substance is introduced into a drop of it. There are different kinds of colorimetric reagents; which ones are appropriate for your use depends on which compound(s) you are testing. Some of the most used are: Marquis, Mecke, Mandelin, and Ehrlich/Van Urk/P-DMAB.

To test, you only need a tiny sample of the substance (such as, say, 1mg), and a drop of the reagent, which will change into a specific color or colors over





time. Please take careful safety precautions when preparing and handling these reagents. Wear protective clothing, gloves, and goggles.

For Marquis reagent, the image<sup>6</sup> shows which results could be expected, where the three colored boxes indicate reaction over time.

If, for example, you are unsure that what is labeled MDMA really is MDMA, you could run a colorimetric test and see if the result matches. Organizations such as [bunkpolice.org](http://bunkpolice.org) or Energy Control advise to test for the following substances as commonly mislabeled:

**For LSD:** DOB, DOC, DOI, 25C-NBOME, 2CC, DMA, 25I

**For MDMA or ecstasy:** Opiates, 2CB, 2CI, 2CC, amphetamines and methamphetamines

Colorimetric tests are good as a first screening method. Their main advantages are that they are fast, sensitive, and can be performed “in the field”, i.e. on the spot where you come in contact with a questionable substance. For more accurate analysis, however, one needs to use it in conjunction with other testing methods like TLC, as explained below.

The limitations of colorimetric relate to when a substance is a mixture of compounds. When testing with marquis, for example, a mixture of MDMA with some other substance such as amphetamine, the reaction will favor the MDMA side and therefore turn black, instead of showing the orange for amphetamine presence. Also, testing with just one reagent might give a misleading result (for example with Marquis, DXM and MDMA can look similar with a dark purple/black color), so doing a second test with another appropriate reagent (in this case Mecke, which would make DXM yellow instead) is recommended.

A comprehensive list of different substances and the colors they show for different reagents can be found at this address:

<http://www.oht.me/redirect/reagents>

There are several organizations worldwide that sell these tests, which are also listed in the link. Regarding safety, be careful when handling these colorimetric reagents. Marquis reagent for example is made of sulfuric acid (can cause burns) and formaldehyde (a known carcinogen that can cause irritation of mucous membranes). Have some baking soda solution on hand to neutralize any spills, on your skin or otherwise.



<sup>6</sup>Bunk Police. URL: <http://bunkpolice.org>.

## ADDITIONAL REACTIONS

For use in verifying known and identifying unknown substances

\*These reactions are reliable, but have not been verified by GC/MS testing\*

Z-AI	NO REACTION		DOC
ZC-D			Doxepin HCl
ZC-E			Dristan
ZC-P	NO REACTION	NO REACTION	Ephedrine
ZC-T-2		NO REACTION	Etaqualone
ZC-T-4		NO REACTION	Ethylcathinone
ZC-T-7		NO REACTION	Etizolam
ZC-T-2I			Exedrin
3-FMC	NO REACTION		Glucose
4-AcO-DALT			JWH-018
4-AcO-DIPT			JWH-073
4-AcO-DMT			JWH-081
4-FA	NO REACTION		JWH-200
4-FMC	NO REACTION		JWH-250
4-FMP		NO REACTION	Lidocaine
4-HO-DIPT			LSD
4-HO-MIPT			MDAI
4-HO-MET			Meperidine
4-Mar	NO REACTION	NO REACTION	Mephedrone
5-APB			Methadone
5-IAI		NO REACTION	Methaqualone
5-MeO-DIPT			Methedrone
5-MeO-DALT		NO REACTION	Methoxetamine
5-MeO-DMT			Methyl Amphetamine
5-Meo-MIPT			Methylone
6-APB			Methylphenidate
AET			Modafinil
AMT			O-desmethyltramadol
Aspirin			Oxycodone
Benzphetamine		NO REACTION	Paracetamol
Bromo-Dragonfly		NO REACTION	pPPP
Buphedrone	NO REACTION	NO REACTION	Phendimetrazine
Chlorpromazine		NO REACTION	Phenprobamate
CP-47,497			Propoxyphene
CP-55,940			Sugar
Desoxypipradrol		NO REACTION	TFMPP
Diazepam	NO REACTION	NO REACTION	Theobromine
DMT			Tramadol
DPT		NO REACTION	Viagra

⇨ \*\*Reactions are from\*\*  
\*outside to inside\* ⇩

### 3.2. TLC testing



TLC stands for *thin layer chromatography* and is a method of separating different compounds that are in a mixture, on a silicate plate. It works in the following fashion: A small amount of sample (say, 5mg) of the substance to be tested is dissolved in methanol. A volume of only 3 microliters is then dropped onto the bottom of the silica TLC plate.

For this, special tubes are used, which are very thin and do not require suction to fill. This means that simply by submerging them in the solution, the tube will fill with a few microliters because of capillary action. The capillary is touched to the TLC plate to leave a drop of solution on it. One TLC plate can be used for various solutions, as long as they are sufficiently separated (i.e. not touching).

The TLC plate is then placed in a container with a small layer on the of a solvent mixture, called the eluent, at the bottom. The eluent mixture depends on what substances you are testing for. For tryptamines, it is often some mixture of ethyl acetate and methanol, or methanol and ammonia. The eluent mixture can be adapted according to availability of solvents, however not all mixtures will work equally well for every substance and using the wrong mixture can mean that your

compounds will not separate.

The TLC plate is placed upright in the eluent; the level of eluent in the container should be low enough that only the very bottom of the silica plate is submerged in the eluent (below the place where you added the sample drops). Because of the porousness of the silicate plate, it will slowly soak up the eluent. Due to the different polarities of the eluent and the silica, as the plate soaks up the solvent, it also carries the samples being tested upwards, and depending on the polarity of the molecules in the sample, some will travel further than others. This results in distinct spots in a vertical column on the TLC plate for each tested substance.

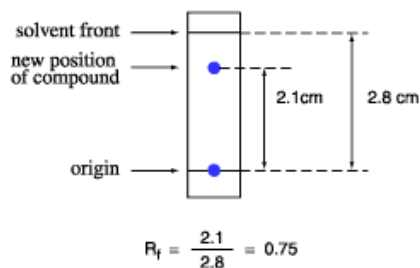
The plate is left in the container until the eluent has reached the top part of the silicate, after which it can be removed and dried by air. The spots can then be examined under UV-light for better visibility, since commercial silica TLC plates usually have a fluorescent indicator, which makes the spots more visible.

There are 2 ways to interpret the spots: 1) Comparing with a standard that was dropped on a parallel column, or 2) measuring the retention factor (Rf) and looking at literature values to compare with your results. The Rf is the fraction between the distance the spot

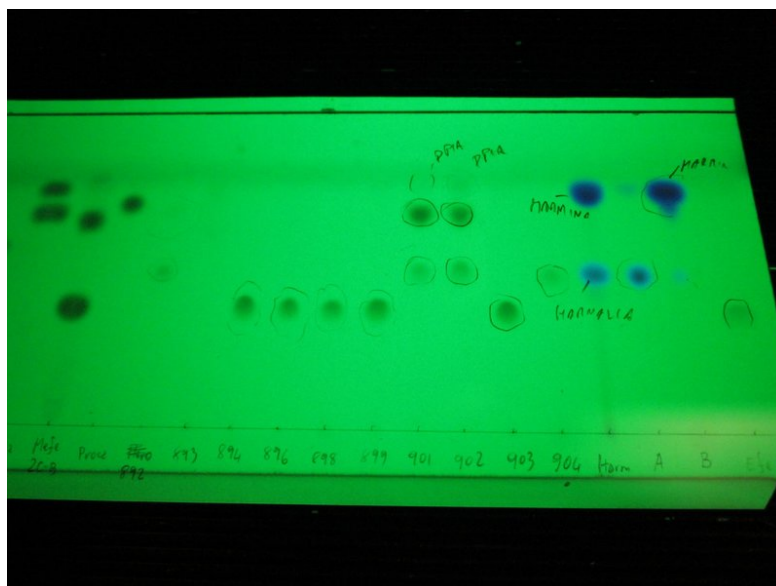


### 3. Testing methods

has traveled to the distance from the starting point to the solvent front (typically the end of the TLC plate). To use the R<sub>f</sub> for determining the contents of your substance you will have to use the exact eluent mixture that the literature gives.



An example TLC plate can be seen below.



For the sake of explanation, focus on the three very right columns that each show blue marks. For this test three different substances were applied to the TLC plate - two substances to be tested (labeled A and B) on the right and one mix of standards (labeled harm) on the left.

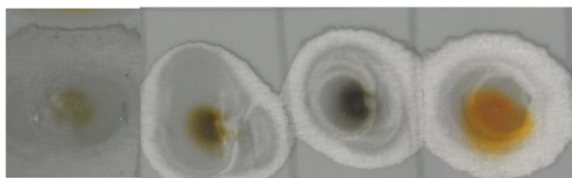
The two substances to be tested were the result of a harmala extraction and separation, while the two standards were commercially obtained samples of harmine and harmaline - the two main compounds usually present in *P. harmala* or *B. caapi*, from which these extracts are made. The standards were dropped in one column to save up on plate-space. The top spot corresponds to harmine and the bottom to harmaline.

We can see that column A has a spot which corresponds to the standard for harmaline, and very little amount of harmine on the top part. The inverse for the column B. So from this, we can conclude that the separation worked reasonably well.

Even though this method cannot quantify accurately, you can at least get an idea of which alkaloid is predominant in each sample. If you look closely, on column B (harmine), there seems to be another round spot that is touching the harmine spot. This could indicate the presence of another rue alkaloid ( possibly THH).

When using TLC to test for other substances that you consider to be pure, if you find that there are two or more spots, you will know this substance has some kind of contaminant(s). The final part of the test would then be to drop some colorimetric tests on each spot and see what color they turn to compare with standards and/or literature information.

**Some of the limitations of this method are:** Testing very crude plant preparations (such as, say, soaking some plant material in methanol and testing this methanol) will usually not work because too many impurities such as chlorophyll, plant oils, and others will be present, which leave streaks all the way up the plate instead of distinct spots. Therefore to test with TLC you need have a somewhat pure sample.



DMT, NMT, Gramine and Mescaline  
Light brown, brown, black, orange

Also, ideally, one will have the relevant standards to compare with the tested substance. If one doesn't, it becomes a harder task to identify the compounds. You might, for example see, two different spots when measuring a material, but how will you know what each spot is? Here, literature Rf

values can help, as can dropping the colorimetric tests on each spot to see how they react (see image). Depending on what is being tested, this is possible, but if its an unknown mixture, it can be very hard to identify each spot.

Another aspect is that TLC is qualitative, not quantitative, at least in theory. You cannot judge the quantity of alkaloid present by the spot size, because some alkaloids, by their chemical nature, do not form strong spots. However, you can make some quantification if you have pure standards of a substance: You would have to make a few columns with different known amounts of the standard substance (for example 100ug, 300ug, 600ug, 1mg) and measure the width of each spot. This could give you a crude graphic plotting spot-width against substance amount, which could be used for further reference. The important thing is to use the exact same eluent as with the standards.

TLC plates or kits can be bought from chemistry suppliers (for example here: [http://www.oht.me/redirect/tlc\\_vendor](http://www.oht.me/redirect/tlc_vendor)), but it can sometimes be difficult for individuals to purchase them. The organization, TLConcious, will be offering entire TLC kits in the near future for plant and substance analysis, with a detailed set of instructions for using the kit and which eluents to use.

Other options are creating TLC plates yourself - for the more crafty out there -, for which there are manuals or instructions to be found here:

<http://www.oht.me/redirect/tlc>

[http://www.oht.me/redirect/tlc\\_movie](http://www.oht.me/redirect/tlc_movie)

## 4. Organizations and testing methods

Some analytical methods require very expensive and elaborate equipment and are probably out of reach for anyone not working in a related field. However, some organizations receive anonymous samples and test them using these methods. Here are a few of these methods explained, so that you know what to request in case you want to get a sample tested.

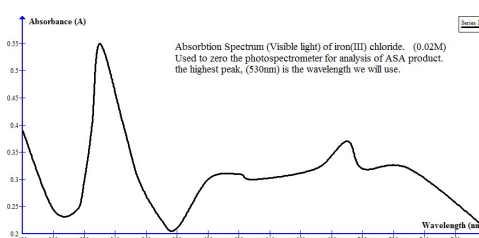
### 4.1. UV-vis



Spectrophotometry is an analytical method that can give you the purity/quantity of a certain substance. It involves a machine about the size of a printer, that is connected to a computer. It shines a range of frequencies from UV to visible light (UV-vis), through a transparent container containing a solution (usually in methanol or ethanol) of the substance to be tested, in a specific concentration (often 1mg/ml). On the other side of the container, there is a detector which measures the intensity of the light after it passes through the solution. Each substance has a unique light absorbance factor (which usually you can find in literature). The spectrum you end up with is the absorbance of light (measured by comparing initial intensity of light and intensity at the detector) plotted against the wavelength of the light.

the concentration of the compound present in a linear fashion. These maximum values are then compared to literature values or a standard of known concentration. You can determine the purity/amount of your substance by simple calculation. For example, your substance resulted in a reading of 0.9 at the maximum, while your standard/the literature value of 100 % of said compound reads 1.6. The purity of your sample is then determined by  $\frac{0.9}{1.6} \cdot 100 = 56\%$ .

Photospectrometry is generally not used to identify the substance in question and does not work if there are adulterants present. So, before you request a UV-vis analysis, you need to know what your substance is (using a mass spec or at least a TLC). Once you know which substance you are testing for and its absorbance, you can quantify it, which could be useful in knowing the doses you will be administering.



## 4.2. Gas chromatography, liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry

Gas chromatography (GC) and liquid chromatography (LC) are techniques to separate compounds in a mixture and these methods are usually coupled with mass spectroscopy (MS), which can be used to quantify and identify compounds. The mass spectrum then has to be compared to literature spectra or values given by the literature. Problems with GC can be that it uses heat, which can damage some compounds. It is, however, a very powerful method that can be used to perform a "specific test" which can prove the presence of a particular compound. LC-MS on the other hand provides less specific information by indicating the presence of a certain category of compounds, rather than any one in particular.

GC-MS can be used in conjunction with TLC and reagents, in case you have not been able to identify some contents of a given substance with these simpler methods. Combining these methods should resolve all doubts concerning most mixtures of compounds.

## 4.3. Alternatives to chemical analysis

On some occasions, a chemical analysis may not be available, possible or, feasible at the time. Although we highly recommend the previously discussed methods, we will briefly discuss this alternative of how to go about testing a substance with uncertain purity - for example a personally extracted compound - that you have never tried before.

1. If you know the normal threshold dose for the supposed substance of unknown purity, starting even lower than this dose could be used as an initial test for allergies or similar adverse reactions.
2. By slowly working your way up in dosage, with breaks of at least several days in between, you can find an acceptable and tolerable dosage for yourself without risking overdosing or getting overwhelmed. Keep the steps reasonably low so you can get an idea for the dose-response curve. It may be a good idea to keep a log of dose and effects for each try.
3. Once you find a dose that gives the desired effects, you can compare to literature values (the above table) and estimate the purity of your given substance. If effects differ greatly from what you expected, you can suspect active impurities or a mislabeled substance.

If you have experience with the substance but want to test a new batch, the same procedure is advisable, though it can be reduced to a first test for allergic reactions and a second test for estimating potency using a threshold or close to threshold dose. **The same procedure is recommended for testing a substance with which you have no prior experience, even if you know its purity, since this way it is unlikely you will become overwhelmed unexpectedly by the substance or encounter health problems due to allergic reactions or undiagnosed illnesses.**

Remember that if you do not use chemical analysis prior to administering a substance you will be using your body as a chemical analysis lab, which can be hazardous to your health. **It**

**is always recommended to chemically analyze any substance you wish to administer, before trying it on yourself.**

## 5. Entheogenic independence

### **Entheogenic independence...**

is when your interest and use does not depend on other people or shops providing you with final products. Rather, you cultivate all the necessary plants and fungi yourself.

Once you inform yourself about the statistics of substance tests at organizations such as Energy Control or Bunkpolice, it becomes clear that what is available on the street is often not what it seems and this can easily lead to dangerous situations - especially since the compounds being passed off as

others might have much lower safety ratios than what they are being presented as. Also, adulterants added to substances or mislabeled substances can be significantly more harmful to your body when it comes to side effects, or they might even be addictive.

Furthermore, obtaining substances made by others can support drug cartels and unsustainable and environmentally unfriendly chemistry labs (chemical waste products may be thrown into the environment or down the drain, harming the environment, simply because it is easier). It can also mean that you find yourself in contact with individuals who are not interested in safe and responsible use, neither for themselves nor for you. And finally, it always creates a greater risk concerning the law.

Fortunately, a great number of entheogens can be found in live plants and many of them are even still available legally. In the case of mushrooms, the mushroom fruits themselves seem to be illegal in most countries, however, in many countries, the mycellium and the spore prints are not. Also, many countries have native psilocybin-containing mushroom species that can be picked in the wild. In some countries, though cannabis is illegal to buy and sell, having a certain amount of plants has been decriminalized. DMT-containing



plants can be found in nature in abundance (e.g. Acacia and Phalaris species) especially in southern countries and various species can be easily cultivated at home. Similarly mescaline containing cacti are commonly available around the world.

At first glance, it may seem like much more trouble to cultivate or look for harvestable plants than simply finding someone who can sell you the end product. However, building a relationship to entheogens from their very origin is very rewarding work in itself and should not be underestimated. At the same time, you are avoiding any connection to shady characters with questionable production methods.

When using plant sources and extracting the desired compound yourself, you are in control of what ends up in your final product. You are also in control of what chemicals you use and how you take care of them once you are done with them. Some extraction



procedures (so-called "teks") use very eco-friendly chemicals. Also, usually cities will have chemical waste services where individuals can dispose of old paints and solvents and other things you don't want to dump down the drain. In general, this is where any environmentally dangerous chemicals should go as well.

By growing your own plants you can be sure that you are not supporting any unsustainable harvesting or deforestation because of your interest in entheogens.

Tests for purity and actual contents of extracts are still useful and should definitely be considered before administering said extracts, especially if you are inexperienced with or unsure about the extraction procedures.

While not all entheogens have to be extracted, often travelers find they can reduce side effects like nausea by not consuming the entire plant matter or plant brews (water extractions) as done traditionally. Another advantage of extracts is that if you know the purity of your extract, you know exactly how much of which substance you are consuming. Since the content in plant matter can vary a great deal, you can never be sure exactly how much of the active substance you are ingesting unless you extract.



On the other hand, many report a qualitative difference between consuming extracts and traditional whole-plant brews, claiming that the experience is more holistic. Whether this has to do with additional substances in the plant matter which interact with the psychoactive compound or is psychological, has not yet been determined.

Entheogenic independence is the most responsible way to go about exploring entheogens, both for you personally and for the environment. Safety issues concerning extractions, chemicals, and people who know about your interests and activities, however, should still be considered at

all times. It is not always wise to let others know what it is that you are growing. Specific techniques, equipment, and safety issues concerning cultivation and extraction will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

## 6. Medical conditions and medications

As previously discussed, it is not recommended to use entheogens when suffering from mental disorders. Other problems can emerge from illnesses linked to our bodies capacity to detoxify - i.e. liver and kidney problems. Also, since many entheogens have effects on the cardiovascular system, they may cause extra stress which can become problematic if prior conditions exist. This can be especially dangerous if these illnesses have not already been diagnosed, meaning that you may not know what is happening. **For this reason, among others, it is highly recommended to start very low in dose when introducing oneself to entheogens and to monitor ones reactions closely.**

The interactions of different medications can carry well known dangers, which is why medication generally arrives with instructions of use, counter-indications, and a list of medicines to avoid. These should be read carefully. Unfortunately, entheogens generally do not come with said instructions. However, they can cause equally adverse interactions with several types of medications and other illegal substances. Most medication, however, has never been tested with entheogens, so information on actual interactions is hard to come by.

Some medications specifically state that they should not be taken in combination with MAOI and this should be followed strictly. This means that RIMA should also be avoided in combination with these medications. *For cases in which you are unsure, it is better to postpone your journey to a time when you are not taking medication, rather than risk adverse interactions.*

The following tables are taken from the article: Folke Sjqvist. "Psychotropic Drugs (2) Interaction Between Monoamine Oxidase (MAO) Inhibitors and Other Substances". In: *Proc R Soc Med.* 58(11 Pt 2) (1965), 967978 and list known interactions between MAOI and generic medications. Due to their reversibility and selectivity, RIMA may have less severe effects than indicated here, **however you should never test your luck in this respect.**

Further information about substances that should be avoided when using RIMA or MAOI can be found here:

<http://www.oht.me/redirect/maoi>

Specific Agents	Symptoms	Caused Fatality	Comments
Noradrenaline	Potentiated adrenergic effects		
Dopamine	Hypertension		
Tyramine	Hypertension		
Amphetamine	Severe headache, hypertensive crisis, cardiac arrhythmias, chest pain, circulation insufficiency. For drugs passing the blood-brain barrier central excitation possible as well	Yes	All fatal complications with tranlycypromine. Less dramatic cases reported also with phenelzine
Methamphetamine		Yes	
Dextroamphetamine			
Metaraminol			
Phenylephrine			
Ephedrine		Yes	
Methylphenidate			

Table 6.1.: Sympathomimetics

Specific Drugs	Symptoms	Caused Fatality	Comments
Thiazide diuretics	Hypotension		
Methyldopa	Hypertensive reaction and central excitation possible		Central excitation not yet reported in man
Reserpine and related compounds	Reversal of the reserpine syndrome: marked hyperexcitation		High dose of reserpine necessary. Rarely seen in man. Hypertensive crisis after MAOI should not be treated with reserpine

Table 6.2.: Antihypertensive drugs

6. Medical conditions and medications

<b>Specific Agents</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Caused Fatality</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Imipramine	Excitation, tremor, profuse sweating, hyperpyrexia, delirium, clonic and tonic convulsions, rigidity, coma.	Yes	Reported after therapeutic doses of imipramine-like drugs
Amitrypyline	Agitation, tremor, opisthotonus, coma, hyperpyrexia		
Tranlycypromine	Hypertensive crisis (mainly systolic hypertension). Clinical picture may resemble pheochromocytoma or subarachnoid bleeding. In rare instances death because of intracerebral bleeding	Yes	At least 20 fatal cases reported in both England and the United States
Phenelzine	Similar, but less dramatic pictures described		No fatal complications reported

Table 6.3.: Anti depressant drugs

Specific Agents	Symptoms	Caused Fatality	Comments
Barbituates	Enhanced and prolonged sedation		Reported after therapeutic doses of imipramine-like drugs
Pheothiazines	Increased extrapyramidal reactions. Hypertension		
Pethidine	Excitation, rigidity and coma within minutes after the injection. Hypo or hypertension, impaired respiration, hyperpyrexia, shock. Also prolonged pethidine effects	Yes	The syndrome has been described after iproniazid, phenelzine and pargyline

Table 6.4.: CNS depressants

Specific Agents	Symptoms	Caused Fatality	Comments
Anesthetics	Enhanced CNS depression		Poor documentation
Chloral hydrate	Enhanced CNS depression		Poor documentation
Anti-Parkinson drugs	Potentialion		Poor documentation
Insulin	Hypoglycemic reactions		Reported for mebanazine
Cocaine	Hyperexcitation		Uncertain association

Table 6.5.: Other drugs (found empirically)

### Knowledge review

1. When trying an entheogen for the first time, it is recommended to start
  - with a medium dose
  - with a threshold/low dose
  - with a high dose
2. LSD is active at \_\_\_\_\_ doses.
  - g
  - mg
  - ug
3. Why are testing methods important?
  - To know purity — actual doses
  - To know about adulterants
  - To know what the substance you are ingesting is
4. What testing methods can be used at home?
  - GC-MS
  - Colorimetric tests
  - UV-vis spectrophotometry
  - TLC
5. TLC can \_\_\_\_\_ compounds but can't \_\_\_\_\_ them.
  - purify / identify
  - identify / separate
  - separate / identify
6. Which method is used to determine the purity/concentration of a given substance?
  - UV-vis spectrophotometry
  - Colorimetric tests
  - LC-MS
7. When using plant sources for extractions, you are in control of:
  - what chemicals you use.
  - what ends up in the product.
  - what happens to the chemicals after they are used.
8. You are taking medication and want to use entheogens, but are worried there might be adverse interactions. You cannot find any definite information. What do you do?
  - Postpone the journey to when you are not taking the medication.
  - Take a slightly lower dose of the entheogen than you would otherwise take

### Suggested exercises:

1. For a substance of your choosing, what reagents would work to identify it? What adulterants or impurities might you suspect and how could you identify them?
2. Design a table or template that you could use as a log for testing (on yourself) a substance of known purity for its effects and your personal responses. What dose would you start out with? What increments would you use?

*First off, the sensations you feel, see, hear, etc. are all going to be much more intense than your normal experience. This is the nature of the game. Just get in it and dig it, and the good stuff will happen. You will be just fine when you get back, eardrums and all. I promise.*

*Face your weakness, come to terms with what you are and what will happen to you upon smoalking, and continue forth not scared doubtful but strong and confident. Not only will it make your uneasy feelings completely meaningless, but when you start from a stable and strong position, the trip literally is far more positive, far more gratifying and if anything unpleasant should come up, you have at your disposal the faculties to overcome it with grace and dignity.*

Hiyo Quicksilver

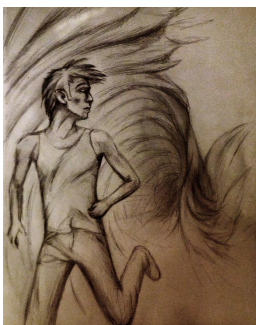
# 7

## Problem Management

### 1. Running into problems

At the end of this section you will:

- Know what problems can arise during journeys
- Know how to reduce the likelihood of problems through preparation
- Know how to react in order to reduce the severity of problems
- Know how to create an emergency plan



If you haven't run into any problems while taking entheogens yet, but continue to use them, sooner or later you will encounter some. Problems mean undesired effects or side effects, ranging from uncomfortable to dangerous. Not all of these are necessarily emergencies or result in "bad trips," however, any one of them can lead to a bad or painful experience that can be traumatizing, lead to injuries, or even require medical attention. It is no secret that these substances can be very powerful and if taken recklessly, can even endanger your life.

In general, no one wants to have a "bad" experience (although some harsh/difficult experiences can be very educational) nor endanger themselves on purpose. Many of the problems that typically arise, do so in part, because of uninformed or unwise choices made concerning journeys.

## 2. Causes of problems

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These can include choices concerning appropriate (mind) set and setting (location/company/etc.), the substance itself, the dose, and the physical condition we find ourself in, as discussed in the previous chapters. Of course travelers are not always in control of all the factors leading to bad experiences, nor is it important to always avoid all problems. However, by learning about the different types of possible or likely problems, you can greatly reduce your risk for severe and dangerous issues, because many can be either avoided through preparation or resolved before they cause unnecessary suffering or harm. This chapter will also discuss what to do if an emergency cannot be avoided. For this case, the discussion will include the usefulness of an emergency plan.

### **Prepare vs. react**

Thorough preparation can go a long way towards resolving problems before they even surface. This can lead to more pleasant overall experiences. However, some problems will surface despite all preparations. Here, it is important to know how to react in order to avoid injuries, traumas, or worse.

## 2. Causes of problems

As indicated above, the general causes of problems that arise can be mental, circumstantial, or physiological. However, especially while under the influence, it is not always possible to tell the difference. A sitter can help clarify this sometimes, but even so, it is not always possible to differentiate. For example, panic can arise because of a bad setting (too many people, loud music, etc.), it can arise because of some internal struggle regardless of outer circumstances, or it can result as an effect of physical illness, due to a bad reaction to the substance(s) consumed.

In cases like this, the situation should be analyzed rationally and measures should be taken to improve it. With the help of a sitter, an evaluation of the situation is much easier than when having to do this under the influence yourself. The sitter should use sound judgment to improve the well-being of the traveler - e.g. changing location from a crowded area, due to panic, is probably a good idea, even if the crowd is not the cause. Checking for signs of intoxication or a medical problem would also be prudent, as well as using techniques to calm the traveler.



### 3. Manifestations of problems

The manifestations of problems - how you will experience them - can be grouped into two main categories: psychological/mental and physiological.

#### 3.1. Psychological manifestations

Among the psychological/mental manifestations are dysphoria, panic, paranoia, anxiety, overwhelming emotions such as sadness, anger, etc., and disorientation. Though these can not always be prevented, **you can reduce the risk of them surging up by preparing your trip and choosing a setting according to the substance and dose you are going to ingest.** Pre-journey meditation or other types of mental preparations can also go a long way in reducing anxiety and other problems related to being overwhelmed by the substance.

##### Grounding

If you hit a hard-to-handle situation, use a familiar object that you can hold in your hand that brings you back to reality. This can be your pipe, an amulet, your favorite stuffed animal, etc. Find something that works for you and be sure to have it around if you are planning on going deep.

Knowing the location to an extent, so you know how to escape crowds, where to go for fresh air, where to get assistance etc. will help you react, if/when you begin to experience mental discomfort. If you are traveling without a sitter, perhaps have a phone with you so you can call someone in case you need calming down. Finally, know the people you will be traveling with and choose your company well, since this can be a great factor in mental comfort or discomfort.

Reactions that can help in the case of problems in this category are: changing location, changing company, getting fresh air/taking a walk, taking a shower, changing music, chanting, talking to a friend/your sitter, using an object to ground you, and using breathing techniques to calm down, among others. A lot of times, eating or drinking something light can also help, since dehydration and low blood sugar can also cause you to feel discomfort, which cannot always be differentiated from mental discomfort.

##### Breathing Techniques

If you find yourself panicking or feeling anxious, try focusing on your breathing and taking deep and slow breaths. Try abdominal breathing - breathe while ensuring that your abdomen moves in and out. Try visualizing your breath cleansing you of your fear.

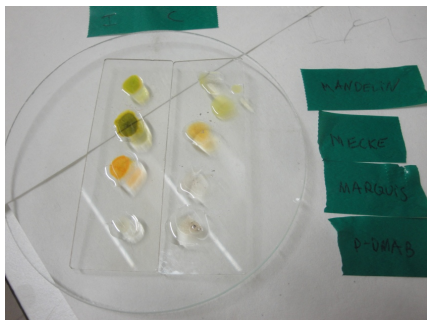
#### 3.2. Physiological manifestations

Physiological manifestations include dehydration, nausea, vomiting, coordination problems, inability to move/walk, inability to articulate yourself, and general symptoms of poisoning. A lot of these won't necessarily be problems if you are well-prepared for your journey. Knowing what to expect from the substance and the dose taken is important, because this knowledge allows you to choose a setting in which coordination problems or inability to move around

### 3. Manifestations of problems

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don't become an issue. This means doing adequate research about recommended and safe doses, as well as about the effects that are to be expected.



To counter dehydration, have a bottle of water with you or close to you. To counter nausea, if expected, you can try eating ginger beforehand. Smoking a small amount of cannabis can also counter nausea, but should be done with caution due to the psychoactivity of cannabis. If none of this helps, try not to hold back during your experience - this usually worsens the discomfort. If you have a purge bucket or something similar, you can remain seated and purge to relieve yourself of the nausea without any stress or

risk of injury. Normally, this will be enough to make you feel better. Also, prepare yourself according to the expected ambient temperature to avoid hypothermia or heat exhaustion. On some substances, you can feel cold very easily and this can cause great discomfort, while on others you might not even notice that you are cold. Make sure you have the right kind of clothes to keep yourself warm, but also make sure you don't overheat.

Inability to articulate yourself is in general not a big problem unless you really must have a conversation at the time. Try to plan your experience according to the dose you will ingest and make sure that there is no need for this (e.g. don't go to work while journeying). In an emergency, however, this can present a problem, which is why for higher doses a sitter a highly recommended.

The sitter in the above case, by using sound judgment and checking for signs of an emergency (see below), can determine if any steps need to be taken or if the traveler simply needs to wait until the substance wears off. This also applies to the final problem - signs/symptoms of poisoning. One of the most important steps in preparation, as presented in the previous chapter, is knowing what substance(s) you are ingesting and their purity. **It is always the traveler herself who is responsible for making sure the substances consumed are safe and that she/he knows the dose and purity she is ingesting.** It is also the traveler who suffers the consequences if she is mistaken...

Based on the purity test results and the knowledge of what other medication the traveler might be taking, you (the traveler or the sitter) can weigh out the probability of an actual poisoning or simply a psychosomatic reaction. When in doubt, it is recommended to act as though it were a real medical emergency.

Perparation Checklist (example)	
<b>Location</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> know where facilities are</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> know where a calm corner is</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> know where the closest help is</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> know the ambient temperature</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> be aware of dangers (cliffs, water, cars, etc.)</li> </ul>	<b>Substance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> researched general safety</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> researched general effects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> researched dose</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> checked purity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> measured dose</li> </ul>
<b>Things to have with you</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> water/fruit juice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> snacks or fruits</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a bucket or purge-bag</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a phone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> grounding object</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> warm clothes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> music</li> </ul>	<b>Company</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> knowledgeable/trained Sitter you trust</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> travel companions you trust</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> pets</li> </ul>

## 4. Problems of actions

Finally there is a set of problems that result from bad judgment or psychological crisis during the journey. These are problems concerning actions such as doing physical harm to yourself or others, either deliberately or by acting unsafely. A good way to prevent the latter scenario is to minimize “unsafe” possibilities in the area where you will travel - i.e. no cliffs to fall off, no car keys lying around, etc. Also, having a sitter to watch you can greatly reduce your risk of finding yourself in this kind of situation. *As a sitter, you should never let someone who is journeying operate machinery or a vehicle or be unsupervised in a location where she/he can become involved in a serious accident.*

Finally, to prevent deliberate harm, you should consider your mental state before journeying. If you are already in a very destructive or angry state, you might want to consider alternatives to entheogens as a means to work through these issues first. Otherwise, have a good sitter that is up to the task of possibly restraining you and helping you through a difficult experience.

Make sure you review possible scenarios with your sitter, so that you both know what to do and what to expect if certain situations arise.

It is a good idea to create an emergency plan for your journey, as explained below.

## 5. Summary

The table below summarizes some pointers for problem management. Suggestions made here are not guaranteed to work, but have been reported to help at times.

## 5. Summary

Manifestation	Causes	Preparation	Reaction
Panic, paranoia, dysphoria, ...	Setting	Know location / choose well	change location
	Mindset	pre-flight meditation, have grounding object with you, abort <sup>1</sup>	use grounding, breathing techniques, chanting ...
	Dose / toxicity / substance	know purity of substance and safety	ask for help / follow emergency plan
Dehydration	Forgetting to Drink	Bring liquids	Drink <sup>2</sup>
	Sweating	Adequate clothing, bring liquids	Drink <sup>2</sup> , change clothing
	Vomiting	bring liquids, try ginger or other anti-nausea foods	Drink <sup>2</sup>
Nausea, vomiting, discomfort, illness	(High) Dose	Know what to expect, bring a bucket	Purge, drink <sup>2</sup> , remain calm
	panic	see above	ground, calm down, breathe...
	poisoning / O.D.	Check substance purity and standard doses, know where to get help	Call help/follow Emergency Plan
Coordination, movement	(high) dose/substance	Know what to expect and plan the setting accordingly	stay calm, move as little as possible, ask for help if needed
Poisoning, O.D., Serotonin Syndrom	Dose	Know standard doses and measure your dose before consuming	Follow Emergency Plan
	Impurity	Test substance for purity	
	Unknown substances	Test substance	

<sup>1</sup>If you are feeling unsure about traveling, you should always give yourself the option to back out of it at any time (before ingesting the entheogen)- to abort - , no matter how much planning you have done. It is part of your responsibility, to assess your mindset and decide whether traveling is sensible and beneficial at this point in time, as a means of preparation. If the answer is "no, then you should not do it.

<sup>2</sup>when drinking, make sure you are also supplying your body with electrolytes and minerals to avoid hyponatremia (low salts), which otherwise, in extreme cases can result in life-threatening situations.

It is a good idea to discuss possible scenarios with your sitter, so that you both know what to do and what to expect if certain situations arise. This is the best way to prevent any misunderstandings. An *emergency plan* that covers these scenarios and gives instructions to follow can also save you a lot of trouble for the minimal effort of taking a few minutes to design it.

## 6. Emergency management



Though no one expects to end up in an emergency situation, and it may be rare for responsible travelers, emergency situations can still occur due to unforeseen events, circumstances, mistakes, or accidents. Real emergencies can include: poisoning, affected breathing and heart function, heat stroke, hyponatremia, injuries or, psycholog-

ical crisis, to name a few.

Signs of an emergency can include: **unconsciousness, unresponsiveness, trouble breathing, rapid or weak pulse, bleeding, convulsions, uncontrolled behavior.**

In general, such situations requires quick action because the life of the affected person may very well depend on it. In order to react quickly and as efficiently as possible, you should be prepared to do so - it is good to review the possible situations and necessary reactions beforehand.

### Signs vs. symptoms

*Signs* are what can be perceived from the outside, by another person.

*Symptoms* are experienced by the affected person

### 6.1. Why an emergency plan?

Creating an emergency plan will provide you with just this: an overview of possible emergencies and an easy, step-by-step plan to follow should any occur. This can help you, both in your preparation for your journey with respect to considerations for safety, as well as if you find yourself in a real emergency and need to help someone or yourself.

It should be noted that actual emergencies are rare, especially when following the recommended safety procedures. However, situations in which the traveler might feel that he is in an emergency situation are much more frequent. The emergency plan can also help you or the sitter objectively decide which is the case. **If you are doubtful about the severity of a situation, treat it as though it were a real emergency.**

## 6.2. What is an emergency plan?



An emergency plan can be a list of steps to follow, in the form of a paper, a flow-chart, or a diagram, in case of a real emergency.

The emergency plan should be location- and substance-specific. It should be simple to follow and contain only the most important information. This includes the location (address), ingested substance(s) and dose(s), the number of the emergency service (e.g. 112 in Europe or 911 in the U.S.), and the address of the closest hospital.

The steps to follow should be based on expected effects, known risks, known pre-existing medical conditions, and experience, if any. An emergency plan might differ when having a sitter or not, since the possible procedures such as evaluations and actions can be adapted to self-help or helping another. Once the evaluation leads to the conclusion that an actual emergency is at hand, you will always contact emergency medical services. As stated before, if you are doubtful about the severity of a situation, assume it is an emergency - it is better to err on the side of caution, especially when lives could be in danger.

Always inform medical personal of what was ingested and when. If unsure, give a sample, save vomit to give as a sample or give any details you can. This is especially important if you suspect poisoning. Make sure any pre-existing medical conditions/ important allergies are known to the medical personnel as well. This means this should also be recorded in the emergency plan.

Think about what information could be useful and what is unnecessary when making your own plan. This can depend on the situation. For example, using GPS coordinates is not necessary if you are going to be in a city with a fixed address. However, if you are outside of the city and don't have street names to give as reference, GPS coordinates might be useful.

## 6.3. How to follow an emergency plan

Handling an emergency begins with assessing the situation. In order to do so and respond efficiently, the general rule is to take a moment to gather yourself, to focus, and then begin evaluating. This can be tricky if you are journeying without a sitter. If your ability to assess the situation properly is greatly diminished, but you are worried about your health, it could be best simply to contact with EMS and ask for help. In other cases you may want to consult the *First Aid Manual*.

After the initial step, follow the steps of the emergency plan, which in general should have various branches to follow depending on the situation. Use sound judgment to assist the person in need of help and follow the directions of EMS personnel once you have contacted them.

Below are two examples of very general emergency plans that can be modified and used for a "home setting" for example. For any substances in particular, a plan could be more specific, elaborating the most probable scenarios and explaining to the sitter or traveler which

actions should be taken for which signs/symptoms. It is important to keep the plan as simple as possible, to allow for quick action.

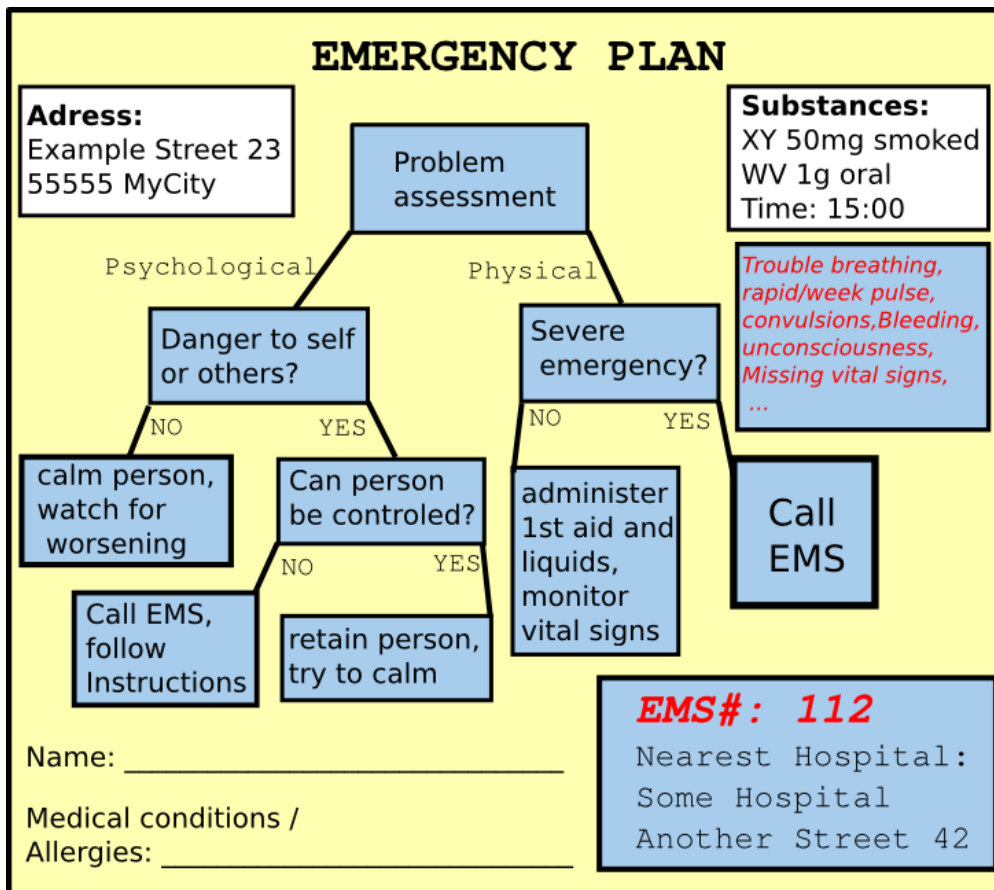


Figure 7.1.: Example emergency plan

6. Emergency management

EMERGENCY PLAN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Conditions/Alergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Substances: \_\_\_\_\_

Problem	Severity / Evaluation	Possibilities	Action
Physical	severe <sup>a</sup> grave <sup>b</sup>	— Means to help available	CALL EMS (112) Administer 1st aid and liquids, monitor vital signs...
	light	Means to help NOT available —	call EMS or seek help refer to table in section <b>Summary</b>
Psychological	Danger to others or self	I can control him/her I can't control him/her	restrain and calm call help or EMS
	No danger	—	calm him/her, watch for worsening

<sup>a</sup>Signs: Trouble breathing, rapid/week pulse, convulsions, Bleeding, unconsciousness, Missing vital signs...

<sup>b</sup>Signs: Injuries, unusual body temperature, continuous vomiting...

Adress: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Nearest Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

EMS: 112



**Knowledge review**

1. Why should we learn about problem management?
  - Problems WILL arise.
  - It can lead to traumas, injuries or life threatening situations.
  - To prevent all bad experiences.
2. Choices concerning what factors can lead to problems?
  - Set/Setting
  - Substance / Dose
  - Physical conditions
3. True or False: By adequate preparation we can avoid all possible problems.
  - True  False
4. How can you prepare for your journey?
  - prepare music/objects/drinks
  - prepare /know location
- bring a bucket
- research substance effects and safety
- investigate purity
5. Who is ultimately responsible for checking the safety of the consumed substance/dose?
  - The sitter  The traveler
6. What signs can indicate a real emergency?
  - unconsciousness
  - trouble breathing
  - rapid or weak pulse
  - bleeding
  - convulsions
  - uncoordinated movements
7. What is the numer for EMS in your country?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested exercises:**

1. Create an emergency plan for a selected location, and a chosen substance. Will you be using a sitter or traveling alone? How would you modify your emergency plan accordingly?
2. Create a preparation checklist for a specific substance, dose, and location.

## **Part IV.**

*"Those who want, find a way. Those who dont, find excuses"*

unknown

*"There can be no more intimate and elemental part of the individual than his or her own consciousness. At the deepest level, our consciousness is what we are - to the extent that if we are not sovereign over our own consciousness then we cannot in any meaningful sense be sovereign over anything else either."*

Graham Hancock

# 8

## Entheogenic Equipment

### 1. Equipment

At the end of this section you will:

- Have an overview of different methods of cultivating entheogenic plants;
- Have an overview of what is needed for mushroom cultivation;
- Know what materials can be used for different extractions;
- Understand safety issues when handling solvents;
- Have an overview of possibly helpful tools for administering entheogens;

Now that you have familiarized yourself with a lot of different topics concerning entheogens, we will come to one of the most interesting topics - the equipment. Whether you decide to become fully entheogenically independent (recommended) or just want to try them out a few times, you will probably have to use some equipment.

In this chapter, we will look at the different things needed for cultivating plants and mushrooms, equipment and chemicals needed for extractions and testing methods, and finally, the tools you will need for administering entheogens. For all of these subsections, the methods and equipment discussed will consist of things you can do and have in your home; we are in no way promoting any certain commercially available products. **Also, we do not encourage selling or trading entheogens and thus do not encourage producing more of any entheogen than is reasonable for personal consumption.**

## 2. Live plants

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The following sections are not meant as exact instructions or guides on how to grow or extract things. They merely give an overview of often used equipment and tools for these processes.

## 2. Live plants

Cultivating live plants can be as simple as planting a seed or a shooting in a pot or in your garden and giving it water, sunlight, and nutrients. However, depending on where you live, the plants you wish to grow may have special needs that your environment does not naturally provide. This can mean certain temperature and humidity ranges, enough light, adequate mineral nutrients, or special composition of the soil or growing substrate. Some plants may still grow even without special care, but you may find they grow much slower, or do not seem to develop as they should.



In order to provide the plants what they need, there are various options. Plants can be placed in indoor greenhouses, where humidity and temperature can be controlled using humidifiers and heaters. Additionally, supplemental growlights can be used and adjusted at different growth stages, according to the intensity, quality, and period of light required by the plant(s) at a given moment, and depending on the amount of natural light available in your place.

When there is not enough natural light available, many gardeners use so-called grow boxes or tents in order to employ artificial light efficiently and discreetly. Well known by the travelers growing cannabis, grow boxes are sealable indoor greenhouses with opaque, reflectant walls - meant to maximize light usage inside of them, and to prevent the growing lamps, which are often incredibly bright, from shining through into the surrounding room. These grow boxes sometimes have their own ventilation, humidity, and even irrigation systems - helping the gardener provide the plants with fresh air, water, and ambient moisture as needed in a controlled setting. Some factors, like the photoperiod (the period of time per day that a plant is exposed to light) or the climatization of the growing space, can be automated with timers or thermostats in order to reproduce the natural day cycle indoors, as desired.

Grow boxes are easily customized and can be used to grow almost any plant. This, of course, includes entheogens such as salvia divinorum, iboga, cacti, and many others. Learning about the natural environment of the particular plants you intend to grow will give you an idea about the equipment you need in order to successfully establish them indoors.



Depending on the geographical location you live in, you might need more or less equipment to get your desired plants growing healthily. You may be fortunate enough to find that the plants will easily grow in your garden without any kind of special equipment. In this case, perhaps all they need is a bit of care, regular irrigation, proper fertilizers, and pest control. Additionally, you might want to set up little greenhouses outdoors to shelter plants while taking advantage of natural light. Tents for plants that need more ambient humidity than your environment provides - or for plants particularly sensitive to excess of water, or to physical trauma when rain falls directly on them - can also be used. Knowing the climate you live in and understanding the needs of the plants you intend to grow will tell you how and when to intervene in their development.

With some space either indoors or outdoors, a little work, and some basic equipment, you can start your own ethnobotanical garden with all kinds of psychoactive and medicinal plants.

#### Plant equipment options:

- Pots, collecting trays, and germination trays
- Growing substrate/soil
- Nutrients and fertilizers
- Grow boxes or green houses
- Grow lights and related electrical equipment (ballasts, cords, and plugs)
- Ventilation systems (oscillating fans, intake and exhaust fans, and pipes)
- Watering tools (sprays and watering cans) or irrigation systems
- Humidifiers
- Heating mats
- Measuring units (hygrometer, thermometer, pH and EC meters)
- Automation tools (timers, thermostats, humidistats)
- Shears, scissors and razors for pruning and taking cuttings

## 2. *Live plants*

---

There are many vendors that sell viable seeds or shootings of various plants of interest, so it's quite easy to get started. You can also try finding seeds, seedlings or take plant cuttings in nature and try to establish them at home. Be sure to inform yourself on what the plants need beforehand in order to take good care of them.

### 2.1. Sources

List of vendors for viable seeds and plants: <http://www.oht.me/redirect/vendors>

Online community for the exchange of legal live plants and viable seeds: <http://www.oht.me/redirect/sharetheseeds>

### 3. Mushrooms



Growing mushrooms can be a most rewarding and interesting hobby. Depending on the level of involvement desired, it can be as simple as putting a box in an aquarium and giving it a few sprays of water every day, or it can be an elaborate process requiring knowledge, patience, equipment, and technique.

The simplest way to get started with growing mushrooms are the so called grow boxes which some vendors sell. These are usually small tubs with fully colonized substrate, ready to fruit. They come with very simple to follow instructions and need very little care: a dust-free and humid environment at room temperature or a little above and some light. An aquarium, a transparent plastic box with a lid or anything similar will do. To control the humidity you use a spray bottle filled with clean water. It should be noted that these growboxes contain mycelium, which contain psilocybin/psilocin, and are therefore technically illegal to possess in most places where mushrooms are illegal.

If you want to grow mushrooms from a spore print, the process becomes more involved. At the very early growing stages, the mycelium - which is the part of the mushroom that is usually underground and looks like a white network of fibers - is very vulnerable to contamination by organisms such as mold, bacteria, or other fungi. To prevent this, a lot of attention must be given to working in sterile conditions.

The procedure of going from spore to mushroom can vary a great deal, but usually includes the following steps: From the spore print a spore syringe is made. This is used to inoculate jars filled with spawn/substrate - usually brown rice flour or rye - or sometimes a liquid culture. The inoculated jars are placed in dust-free/clean, dark and warm conditions. An incubator can be used. Once fully colonized, the jars can be directly fruited by placing them in fruiting conditions (light, humidity, and temperature controlled), into the so called fruiting chamber. The jars can also be used to colonize other jars or tubs filled with bulk substrate (such as coco coir/vermiculite, straw, manure, etc.). These tubs can then be placed in a dark area (do NOT use an incubator as colonizing bulk substrate generates a lot of heat by itself), and when fully colonized, placed in the fruiting chamber or fruited as monotubs.

The most basic way to go from spore prints to mushrooms is called the PF-tek. Instructions on this can be found easily on the Internet or in the *Mushroom Growers Speciality Course*.

The following are lists of different things you might need when growing mushrooms, not limited to the PF-tek. A lot of these items are available in any household-supply store and are easily modified to suit the mushroom growers needs.

## 2. Live plants

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### Equipment that is used to sterilize includes:

**Pressure cookers** – to sterilize grain/brf substrates, tools and liquids (essential)

**Alcohol, chlorine, vinegar, hydrogen peroxide** – to clean tools and surfaces (essential).  
It's good to have alcohol in a spray bottle.

**UV-C lamps** – to sterilize tools and working areas

**Gas burner or torch lighter** – to sterilize tools and needles (essential)

### A sterile work zone is very recommended. For this one can use:

**A glove box** – an upside down transparent box with holes for your hands

**A glove tent** – see-through plastic foil under which you have your

**A flow hood** – A sterile workbench with a constant over-pressure of air-flow from a HEPA filter, which filters out even smallest particles like bacteria.

### Tools for miscellaneous purposes you might use:

**Electric humidifiers** – for fruiting chambers

**A scalpel** – for scraping the spore print. Spore-loops or other small metal utensils that can be flame-sterilized will also work. A scalpel is also great for cutting off the heads of the mushrooms if you want to take prints yourself.

**Syringes and needles** – to transfer the spores to the substrate. They have to be sterile before you use them. Also a must if you are using liquid cultures.

**Thermometers** – to check the temperature in the incubator and fruiting chamber, among other things.

**Silicone** – useful to create 1-time injection ports

**Aluminium foil** – for all kinds of things like spore prints or sealing off jars and tools while in the pressure cooker

**Hygrometers** – for measuring the humidity in your fruiting chambers

**Spray bottle** – to spray water for humidity





**Miscellaneous containers you might need:**

**Mason jars** – sizes depend on preference, but wide-mouth jars are best (essential)

**Shallow tubs** – for growing the mushrooms in

**Large tubs** – to be used as incubators and fruiting chambers

**Indoor greenhouse** – can also be used as a fruiting chamber



## 4. Extractions

Extractions are performed to isolate and purify a certain compound or group of compounds from plant sources (or sometimes pharmaceutical mixtures). The process depends on the type of starting material you are working with, what it contains, and what you wish to end up with. The basic extraction processes extract groups of compounds that are chemically related to one another (e.g. Harmala alkaloids from syrian rue seeds). Later, these compounds can be separated by further purification or separation techniques.



An ayahuasca brew, for instance, is a crude plant extract using only water and optionally lemon juice, vinegar, or another food safe acid. Other crude extracts using solvents such as ethanol or methanol can be obtained for TLC analysis of plant matter and are very simple to perform.

However, once one begins using chemicals and solvents, it is important to always follow safety precautions:

- To avoid skin damage from acids or bases (i.e. hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, sodium hydroxide, etc.), always wear gloves and clothing that covers your skin.
- To protect your eyes, wear goggles.
- When working with volatile solvents, always work in a well ventilated area and limit your exposure to these solvents as much as possible.
- Make sure you have no open flames (or potential electrical sparks) when working with flammable substances.
- It is a good idea to read the hazard warnings and material safety data sheets (MSDS) on the chemicals before using them.
- Never use the same containers for food and for dangerous chemicals.
- Work in a designated area.
- Label chemicals and extractions accurately and don't mix them up.



Most procedures for extracting alkaloids from plant matter follow a process known as an acid-base extraction. As the name suggests, this involves the use of an acid and a base, as well as water as polar solvent. To check pH values, you can use pH meters or strips. Many extractions also require organic non-polar solvents, depending on availability and preference. Less toxic procedures use solvents like D-Limonene or even vegetable oils.

Since every solvent and chemical will react with different materials, it is important to study the qualities of a given solvent before working with it. High concentrations of sodium hydroxide (lye), for example, should not be handled with LDPE plastics. Solvents like acetone also react with certain types of plastic. Therefore, the equipment needed depends on the types of chemicals you will be working with. Make sure you choose your containers well so they are not prone to break or leave unwanted residues in your final product.

Generally, your equipment will consist of a mix of the following items:

**Containers:** Borosilicate glass bottles or jars in various sizes, HDPE plastic jars or bottles (less desirable than glass). Glass plates or baking dishes, glasses, bowls, pots, etc.

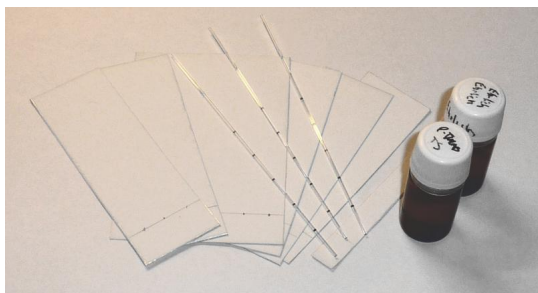
**Tools:** Funnels (glass or HDPE), spoons, razor blades, pipettes or turkey basters, syringes, filter paper (coffee filters work), cotton or cloth for filtering, pH meters or strips, thermometers, etc.

**Scales/measuring devices:** mg scale, kg scale, graduated cylinders, measuring cups, etc.

**Chemicals:** Sodium bicarbonate (washing soda), sodium hydroxide (lye), calcium hydroxide (lime) hydrochloric acid, acetic acid (vinegar), naphtha, limonene, ethanol, isopropyl alcohol (IPA), acetone, etc.

**Safety:** *Nitrile or latex gloves, goggles, lab coat or designated clothes, face mask, designated work area.*

## 5. Testing kits



As discussed in Chapter 6, in order to test your substances for adulterants, purity, and content, you will need some extra equipment. Colorimetric tests can be bought in small bottles or mixed with the appropriate chemicals. Aside from the chemicals required, a dropper may come in handy if you mix your own.

For TLC testing, you will need the TLC plates, a glass container in which the TLC plates are put into the eluent, chemicals for the eluent, a pencil, and whatever solvents and chemicals you need to extract and dissolve the substances you want to test. For identification, sometimes UV lights of different wavelengths are needed.

When it comes to safety, the same principles apply for testing as for extractions. Solvents and chemicals should be prevented from coming in contact with skin, eyes, and mouth, so **safety gear should be worn at all times when working with these.**

## 6. Tools for administration

In order to administer entheogens, many travelers use special equipment: mainly pipes and vaporizers. Other things that can be useful are different foods to mask the taste of entheogens - which are often quite bitter - or beverages to dissolve extracts in.

For cannabis, especially, there is a great variety of pipes, bongs, and vaporizers used to administer both cannabis buds and hash. For those who do not wish to smoke cannabis, due to aversion to smoke/carbon monoxide, electric or manual vaporizers offer a very healthy alternative. By heating the cannabis only to the temperature needed for vaporization of the active substances (mainly THC and CBD), you do not inhale the byproducts of the burning plant material.



Similarly, pipes are needed to smoke DMT. However DMT should not be burned directly, as this will destroy most of it through combustion and causes a very bad taste. Many travelers use regular pipes for DMT, protecting the crystals from the direct flame with layers of inactive herbs (or sometimes ash). Other options are manual vaporizers, which can be home built or bought. When vaporizing DMT, convection vaporization (where a stream of hot air passes through and around the product) is preferable to conduction vaporization (where a hot surface conducts heat directly to the product).

DMT has the characteristic of re-condensing rather quickly once it has been vaporized, so most travelers prefer vaporizers with a very short path between the vaporization chamber and inhalation.



For substances that are taken orally, some travelers prefer to mask the strong and often bitter tastes with foods or juices. Honey or chocolate seem to work well for masking the taste of dried mushrooms. Sometimes, mushroom tea is made - extracting the active and water soluble compounds into the tea and thus avoiding eating the mushrooms themselves. Lemon juice can also be added to mushroom teas to mask the taste, and at the same time deliver a stronger brew due to the hypothesized effects of citric acid on psilocybin. For oral DMT, grenadine juice seems to mask the taste quite well, but any strong tasting juice will usually do.

To avoid nausea, some travelers use raw ginger or a drop of lemon essential oil prior to ingesting the entheogens.

If travelers wish to insufflate entheogens (nasal administration), glass or metal tubes can be used instead of rolled up money, though the latter also serves the same purpose. A cut straw can also do the job.

**Knowledge review**

1. Which are environmental conditions that you might have to artificially manipulate for plant species?  
 magnetic field  
 humidity  
 temperature
2. What defines the photoperiod?   
the type of light a plant receives  
 the amount of light a plant receives every day  
 the number of light sources used
3. The most basic technique for growing mushrooms from spore prints is called \_\_\_\_\_.  
 PF-Tek  
 mushroom Tek  
 liquid culture
4. A sterile workbench with a constant over-pressure of air-flow from a HEPA filter, which filters out even smallest particles like bacteria, is usually called a \_\_\_\_\_.  
 glove box  
 flow hood  
 HEPA bench
5. To sterilize substrates for mushrooms you need a \_\_\_\_\_.  
 UV lamp  
 sterile work zone  
 Pressure cooker
6. Extractions are usually performed to \_\_\_\_\_ active compounds from \_\_\_\_\_.  
 create/plant matter  
 identify/inactive compounds  
 extract/plant matter
7. How do you avoid injuries from chemicals?  
 Wear protective gear like gloves and goggles.  
 Use only lab grade chemicals.  
 Weigh the chemicals before use.
8. What equipment can help with administering entheogens?  
 Pipes and vaporizers.  
 Foods to mask taste.  
 Juices.

**Suggested exercises:**

1. Considering your environmental conditions, which plants could you grow without trouble? Which would require extra equipment?
2. Considering the chemicals suggested/needed for an extraction, which require special care to handle? How would you go about handling them?
3. Explain why it is important to work in a designated area and use designated containers for extractions and chemical experiments. Why should you always label everything clearly?

*Having your assumptions about what is real challenged so deeply can shake anyone up. Some people find it liberating, some find it distressing. Sometimes the distress can lead to liberation, but the road may not be easy.*

SpinCycle

# 9

## Getting The Most Out of Your Experiences

### 1. Getting the most

At the end of this section you will have learned:

- What integration of an entheogenic/psychedelic experience is and how to go about it intentionally
- How to stay grounded and what this means
- Some considerations about frequency of use and benefiting the most from entheogens
- How to navigate an experience

There aren't enough words in our languages to fully prepare a person for a strong psychedelic experience, but that doesn't mean we can't or shouldn't even try. A traveler cannot enter the altered realities fully prepared - only prepared as much as possible.

Strong psychedelic experiences are, for many, the high water mark of their human development. They can be, quite literally, life changing events. Previous beliefs can be shattered or definitively confirmed, ideas may be re-invented from alternate vantage points never seen before, and you may find your life compass recalibrated for a new heading - just to name a few examples. The list regarding the potential benefits is quite long and excitement can result from a strong psychedelic experience, but the list can quickly become much shorter if proper integration isn't applied after your journey's end.

## 2. Integration

Integration is the word commonly used to describe the process, not event, of interpreting one's personal experience and then understanding how best to apply the experience to one's life and personal development; to take full advantage of the opportunity presented by the courageous leap into other worlds. Without integration, the psychedelic experience isn't much more than a thrill ride and the traveler can be left in a worse state than before their journey - confused and even scared.

A short list of objectives of integrating could be as follows:

1. What does this experience mean to me?
2. How can I use this experience to better myself and my life?
3. What, if anything, did this experience show me that I haven't seen before?

The vast majority of the time, most travelers do integrate their experiences, even if they are not aware that they are doing it. In the days and weeks after a strong psychedelic experience, a person may find that they are quieter than normal, keeping to themselves in quiet contemplation. They may appear to be zoned out, but what is happening - unbeknownst even to them - is that they are integrating. They are trying to understand how this experience applies to them and their life and what its relevance is. Integration can take time so be patient; it isn't uncommon for the process to take days or many weeks, months, and in some cases, it can even take over a year or more to ring every last drop of knowledge and understanding from a strong psychedelic experience.

### **Keeping a journal**

You can use a journal to write down your experiences, as you would with dreams, following interpretations or answering questions concerning integration - as listed above - with respect to the experiences. Some people use poetry, free association, or other non-linear writing styles as ways to understand their experiences.

The journal can also serve as a kind of log-book; tracking substances, doses and, a rough sketch of set, setting, and intentions, so that you can remember which combinations were more helpful than others. This is especially useful if you are interested in the exploration of the potential of these substances.

It can be helpful to integrate with intention and close attention, rather than just allowing subconscious integration to happen, but there is no right or wrong way to go about it. Some travelers find it helpful to keep a journal as a place to write down important parts of the journey that will fade from the memory in the hours and days after the experience. In this journal, a person can spend time writing their thoughts and feelings, as well as their immediate interpretation. The traveler should consider including anything that comes to mind that seems important as a piece of the puzzle of the experience itself during this important process. A journal is an important tool, allowing the author to see firsthand how their understanding develops before them. Some ideas and thoughts in the immediate after-

math yield to deeper meaning or possibly even a completely opposite one. When the traveler



### 3. How does one intentionally integrate?

sees this take place, they learn to be more receptive to the other areas of their being, by allowing the understanding to come not only from their cognitive, linear mind, but also from a deeper place of higher consciousness.

For example, an experienced and determined traveler who spent several months in traditional ayahuasca ceremonies in South America became very aware of the merits of using a journal. This man claims that without the written word, it would have been impossible to decipher and integrate all of his experiences. In the first weeks of drinking ayahuasca, he asked the medicine how he could do his part in this healing process and was told quite simply, "you must write". He states: "The written word is the best tool I know of for the process of integration."



### 3. How does one intentionally integrate?

There isn't a one size fits all approach, nor is there a black and white answer to this question. Some choose to discuss their experiences with trusted people or shaman-type workers, while others may prefer sitting alone in nature quietly pondering. Each traveler will find their own method naturally, by simply doing what feels comfortable. What can be useful to the integration process is to understand how psychedelics work in our minds and bodies on the subjective level. Please keep in mind that we are discussing the subjective, personal experience, so some may disagree with the ideas expressed in this chapter, while others may resonate with the words herein. Neither is right or wrong. Should you disagree, this chapter can still be helpful in finding your own form of positive, personal integration.

The psychedelic experience is, often-times, not straightforward and can have a depth and complexity equal to or greater than the human mind. We are conditioned to be linear thinkers because it best serves us for our survival in dominant society. The psychedelic experience does not need to follow this human conditioning and, if it did, would be grossly limited in its potential for avenues to teach and heal. Therefore, knowing this, we must be prepared to think outside of the box and use the right hemisphere of our brains while we search for the meaning(s) and message(s) of the experience.

Brain hemispheres	
Left hemisphere	Right hemisphere
Analytic	Intuition
Logic	Feeling
Linear	Creativity
Reason	Imagination
Facts	Non-verbal

Some psychedelic experiences can be easily misinterpreted, the teachings lost, and an opportunity for integration missed. A good example of this is a fairly common theme experienced by explorers in today's society: the end of the world. The experience may be quite

### 3. *How does one intentionally integrate?*

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vivid and clear with details such as dates, places of refuge, and how the end will occur. The linear brain may quickly interpret this message in a panic and conclude that the end really is near. Say, for example, that the date shown to the traveler as 1 year from their journey. But let's take a look at what could change in that person's life if they start believing this.

How would they then treat a stranger on the bus? What kind of reconnections of family and loved ones would occur? Would the seeker cherish each ray of sunshine that reaches their face and live each moment in joyful gratitude of being alive? What if this date comes and goes and the world keeps on spinning on its axis? It would seem that the experience was not at all about the end of the world, but actually encompassed living a quality, joyful life, residing in gratitude, while developing deeper relationships with those around the traveler. The purpose of this paragraph is not to serve as another self-help essay, but to show one example of what could be called "back door lessons of psychedelics." Often times with psychedelics, things are not what they appear to be at first glance.



Keeping this in mind during the integration process can be very beneficial. It could be that there is no correct interpretation of the experience or, perhaps more importantly, only the one that best resonates with the seeker. Maybe there is not only one way of interpreting the experience that makes sense or gives valuable insights, but several, even if they seem mutually exclusive and "can't all be true."

That being said, the lessons are only limited by the seekers depth, honesty, and complexity. The further down the hole you dig, the wider the caldera of understanding expands. Do not be scared to think outside of the box. Be brave and always, always be true and honest to yourself during the integration process. By lying or hiding from your thoughts, or trying to steer the interpretation towards a meaning you desire because of fears and insecurities, you - the traveler - stunt the potential growth and rewards of your experience.

## 4. Staying grounded

Something worth revisiting that was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter is the possible danger of non-integration or reflection. If you work with these substances long enough, you will undoubtedly see the havoc that a strong psychedelic experience can wreak on an ill-advised or uninformed person. A person leaves themselves vulnerable when lacking in preparation or clinging to false beliefs and assumptions about their experience. In a nutshell, when they don't stay grounded in reality after or between journeys.

As previously mentioned, a strong psychedelic experience can be such a powerful event that it may challenge your ability to stay grounded and unattached, but you must always try. New ideas and beliefs can be exciting and very helpful as they replace old thoughts and create new truths. With the abstraction and peculiarity presented in some psychedelic experiences, it can be quite tempting to scream our new insights from the mountaintop, possibly worrying loved ones and even causing problems in our personal and professional lives. The reality experienced during a psychedelic experience can be remarkable. Some use the term 'more real than this reality'. In this state, you may be susceptible to taking on concrete, unquestioning stances on beliefs that may, very well, be contradicted in future journeys. Abstract methods of learning (backdoor lessons) - as discussed earlier - should not be taken at face value. **A good rule of thumb may be: the more outlandish the introduced belief, the more time you should sit with it in integration.**



### Possible ways to stay grounded

- Remain open minded and critical rather than accepting everything at face value.
- Consider alternative viewpoints and interpretations.
- Consider the consequences and benefits of a new belief. Do you need the belief to obtain these benefits?
- Test your new belief as though it were a scientific hypothesis.

Oftentimes, accounts of personal experiences are helpful to understand the ideas being discussed, so we will look at an example. A man that had worked with these teaching substances for many years was greeted by what could be called (or seemed, to him, to be) beings from a higher dimension/reality, during a powerful peak experience with vaporized DMT. The beings informed this man that in order for our universe to exist, God the creator must be present within it, in a physical form. He was told that the form changes periodically, but its presence remains constant in this current space and time. The form this God had chosen to be

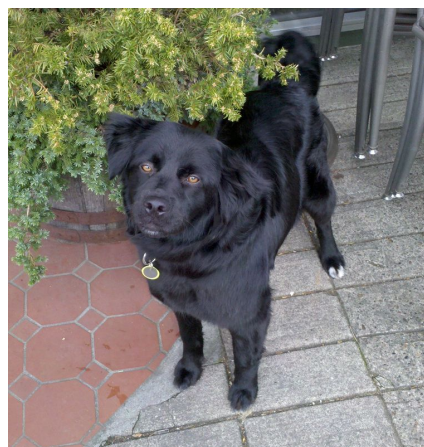
## 5. When shall we meet again?

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at this time, was the man's beloved pet dog. He was then told that his purpose in life was to be God's caretaker until God changed form again upon the animal's death.

Depending on who you are this may seem plausible, but to most people, it is simply laughable. What wasn't so funny was that to this man this event felt more real than our reality and stopped him in his tracks. He described the following weeks as such:

"I kept to myself, residing in an almost all-encompassing state of disbelief. Logically my mind knew that the probability of this being true was minuscule, but in my heart and emotional core it couldn't have felt more real. I chose to not discuss it with even my closest confidants and fellow psychonauts in fear of being looked at as losing my mind. In hundreds of journeys I have never felt quite this confused about what to believe. The power of the experience hindered me from using my tools that would set me free, objectiveness and integration. I sat with the memory of the experience, struggling to integrate as the days went by. Time began to give way to clarity and with each passing day the event released its grasp and integration then became possible."

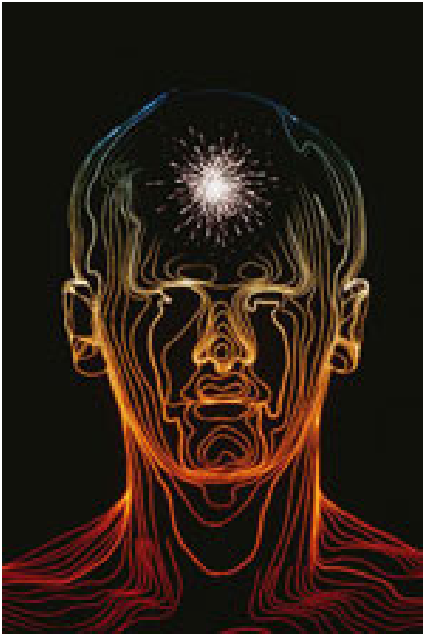


This was quite a learning lesson, even for an experienced explorer, and although for him it was tempting to fully take on this belief, his experience and understanding of the ways and powers of psychedelics guided him safely through the integration period.

Finally, we should remember that it is one thing to discuss these experiences and thoughts with those that have been there, but to expect a person who has never encountered an altered state of reality to relate and not feel concern for our wellbeing is not realistic. This is why immediately running outside post-journey, prior to integration, and shouting from the mountaintop isn't always the best thing to do, although it may feel like it is.

## 5. When shall we meet again?

Many see working with these compounds and plants as a process, not an event. The frequency of psychedelic use and the amount of time between experiences are entirely up to the individual and will vary between substances. Some people feel good about using DMT nightly, as an ongoing ritual, while others may want (or even need) months between journeys. With some substances, like LSD, tolerance is a major factor, while with others, like ayahuasca, some claim to experience a reverse tolerance the more often they drink in close succession. Frequent use of MDMA and THC can have longer-lasting aftereffects that may not be desired. So again, we arrive at the common theme of - there is no one size fits all answer. Here are some thoughts that may help you decide what's best for you.



It's your body and your mind and it's always within your right to explore it when and how you see fit (unless causing harm to others or yourself). If you have found a fellow traveler to share in the experiences and explorations with, that's great, but don't ever feel you must keep up with anyone else, nor they with you. If and when you're ready for another journey you will know. That's not to say you won't feel nervous. You may or may not. Most experienced users of these substances are nervous, to varying degrees, every time they travel. They just don't let it stop them or dissuade them. Feeling apprehension doesn't always mean you're not ready. Just as in explorers of the physical world, bravery is a virtue and will be a necessity at times.

One must also take into account their daily lives and responsibilities. Perhaps a 16 hour long mescaline journey isn't the best choice on a work night. Nor a fast 10 min DMT launch if you're the only adult home with a sleeping child in your care. It may sound silly to read these words, but the level of irresponsibility evidenced by some people and their choices can be greatly surprising.

Another good thing to think about before taking a follow-up journey is how far along we are with integration, both emotionally and rationally. Sometimes having successive journeys without enough time to digest what has happened can lead one deeper into psychedelic (mind-manifesting) realms, which may be beneficial. However, in some cases, this can mean losing your grounding and not being able to benefit from the experience - or in worse cases even, experiencing negative effects on your psyche.

You should make sure you know about the possible risks of frequent use, as discussed in Chapter 1. A good idea is to check yourself regularly for signs of negative or unwanted symptoms that may be due to your use of entheogens, especially before a follow-up journey.

As always, set and setting should also be considered with each and every journey. Sometimes social settings, such as live music or gatherings, sound like a great time to eat a handful of mushrooms or take a few tabs of LSD, only to lead you to discover how awkward psychedelic experiences can be, at times, in public. Some would never dream of using these substances in public, while others are quite fond of the social experience.

**Whatever you choose, be responsible and exercise good judgement. Don't drive or put yourself in dangerous situations and have someone to confide in, in the event of an emergency of varying nature.**

**Things to consider when planing follow-up or sequential journeys:**

- Intention
- Tolerance
- Physical set
- Mental set
- Setting
- Real life
- Groundedness
- Integration

## 6. Navigation of the experience

Before a strong psychedelic session, some people will spend many hours meditating and setting intentions, smudging rooms and themselves, while others will simply find a comfortable and safe place on the floor, plop down and begin. Between these two polarities, there is neither right nor wrong, only what you, the explorer, feel good about. For some, too much build up starts things off on a strange foot, while others use their rituals and talisman surrounding them to feel comfortable and safe, certain that they are influencing the journey-to-come through this. Many people not only use traditional rituals, but enjoy creating their own. And why not? It's your experience, go and do what feels good and right for you.



Maybe you have a song list that puts a smile on your face, which you want to listen to beforehand - perhaps performing some movement or dance. Its your world! Make your own rituals and practices if desired and don't feel embarrassed or hesitant to do so. Rituals are in human history for a reason, oftentimes setting a specific mind state for a specific event. You may utilize pre-existing rituals, create your own, or simply kick your shoes off and go for it. It's all up to you.

Regardless of how you begin, it is important to know how to navigate through altered realities. Not only the experience as a whole, but also navigating through the different stages of a strong psychedelic experience. In a way, the word 'navigates' is inaccurate, since most of the time, you are no longer in the driver's seat of your mind. We speak of navigation more in terms of guiding the self and your thoughts, rather than controlling the actual experience. This next section will discuss getting the most out of your experience and touch on difficult and uncomfortable experiences, ways of avoiding them, and what one can do if found in the deep waters of fear and confusion.



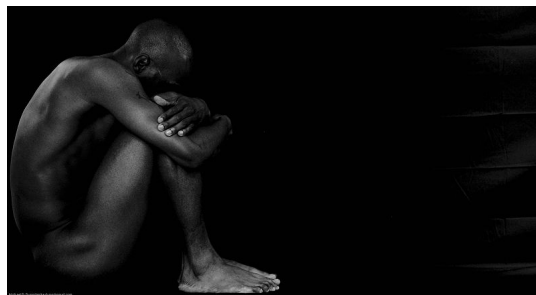
First and foremost, one should give up any ideas or notions that they are going to be the director of this Broadway play. You may be the starring role, but you will not always be calling the shots. By entertaining that notion of control, you're subconsciously declaring you know what is best for you, what you need, as well as how and when it should be delivered or presented. If this were true, then you wouldn't have much to gain from a psychedelic journey and should

simply implement your current knowledge and understanding in your life now.

Setting aside preconceived desires and expectations is paramount to getting the most from your experience. By setting standards and models for the trip to live up to, usually from adopting other people's experiences that you have been informed of, you are putting a litmus test on the experience, instead of openly accepting whatever it is you receive. These expectations are often where disappointments and feelings of disillusion stem from. It is considered, by many, ideal to enter the experience with an open heart and mind towards what is coming. This is one form of navigating the experience.

One of the largest concerns from new explorers is the possibility of what is often referred to as a *bad trip*. A more accurate term is difficult or uncomfortable journey. This isn't merely an attempt to fluff things up linguistically and downplay what could be a very scary event. We refrain from calling them 'bad' because, if navigated and integrated positively, difficult experiences are often viewed as the most healing and life changing experiences a seeker could have. There is no good or bad, there is just the experience and what you do with it.

This section won't repeat the emergency or common counter measures that are discussed in previous chapters, but instead will present some different perspectives on why difficult experiences happen and what some find helpful in the event that they do occur. If you took a survey of facilitators and guides of psychedelic journeys that observed an experience move in a negative-feeling direction for the user, the odds are that the main culprit is either a) a person's fear or refusal to release control as the psychedelic begins to immerse the mind, and/or b) the sheer unexpected power of the experience coupled with confusion.



To the traveler, in the moment, it's not going to be this black and white, which is why, oftentimes, a person - especially when alone - may feel that all they can do is ball up in the fetal position and ride it out. This is probably the least optimal way to get through a hard ride and is a tends to result in getting very little out of the experience.

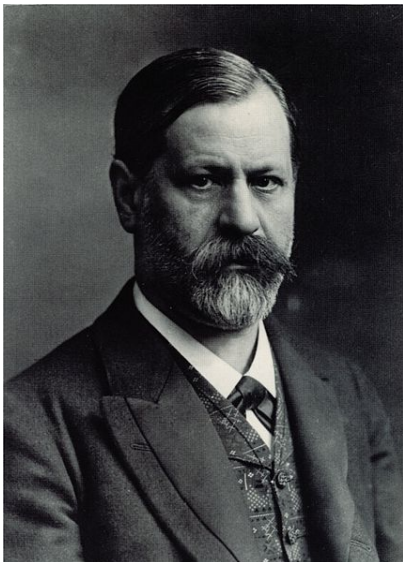
## 6. Navigation of the experience

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Its not at all a normal feeling to have something come in and take over your mind, even when its what you signed up for and expected. If this new feeling begins to invoke fear or even terror, it is quite helpful to recite, either aloud or in your inner voice, what is actually happening. Something like: *“I am a person that has taken a psychedelic substance and the effects are beginning. The compounds are safely affecting my brain chemistry in a way that is new to me. Ive responsibly and willingly partaken in this experience and I release control to it and feel gratitude for this special event”*.

That is just an example, and this - or your own calming mantra - may be recited as many times as needed. If your mind is whirling and racing around, needing something to focus on, surrendering to the experience is a great option along with the breathing exercises described in other chapters. As in meditation, it is helpful for the mind to have one thing to focus upon, such as the breath or even an emotion such as love. This can slow the stormy headspace and allow the journey to go deeper in a comforting way, as the mind stops racing and dragging along random or undesired emotions with it.

One cannot express how important the willingness and choices of surrender and the release of control are. In the second common example, (b) the unexpected power of the experience, the same rules apply. Suffering can come from the struggle of trying to stay grounded in some type of familiar reality and if you're having a very strong psychedelic experience, this attempt will not only prove futile, but will also add to and most likely be the cause of these scary and negative feelings.



By mediating or focusing on non-resistance to the coming state as you wait for the substance to begin its effects, you are preemptively navigating and aligning yourself for a positive and power-filled experience - one without fear and with total acceptance. Resist nothing and embrace everything.

Another approach, and one some travelers find useful, is the belief that nothing in the psychedelic experience can come to you that isn't from you. Think of this approach similar to Freud's model, that everyone in a dream is a reflection or part of the dreamer. When using this approach, the traveler takes ownership of the entire experience, the good, the bad, and everything in between - as a part of themselves. Just as some believe we are beings of light, we too have our darkness and both must be embraced and accepted as part of the

### Mantra

A mantra is a sound, syllable, word, or group of words that is considered capable of “creating transformation” or “freeing the mind.” Mantras originated in the Vedic tradition in India.

Use traditional mantras or create your own to help you navigate through your experiences.



whole. Resistance and fear of looking at this dark side of the mind can cause a person to think they are having a bad experience.

As human beings we tend to shrug off or refuse to look at aspects of ourselves that may not be flattering, in a form of self-denial or shame, but in the process, we bring up negative and/or resistant emotions that can feel amplified in altered states. As in life, everything isn't always cookies and cream, and we don't always have the ability to pick and choose. The psychedelic experience mirrors this facet of the human experience. Because the psychedelic is - for example - showing you or making you think of parts of you or your past that are painful or difficult, does not mean you are having a bad trip. It's a gift of the experience, that it has sought out and identified some possibly repressed or unprocessed emotions that are a stumbling block to you, and is allowing you the opportunity to change and progress as a person, thus becoming the highest version of yourself. Oh yes, hard ones are a gift to a great many and once seen in a different light they become less scary and, to some in need, even desired.

### Knowledge review

1. Why should you integrate?
  - So you can take higher doses
  - In order to apply the experience to your life and personal development
  - To find happiness
2. How can you intentionally integrate?
  - Meditate/contemplate
  - Travel
  - Write (in a journal)
3. What is a journal good for?
  - To avoid HPPD
  - To conquer fears
  - To decipher and integrate experiences
4. What can you do to stay grounded?
  - Remain open-minded and critical
  - Consider alternative viewpoints and interpretations
  - Consider the consequences and benefits of a new belief
5. Who should dictate the frequency of your use?
  - Peers
  - The traveler himself
6. What should you consider when planning successive journeys?
  - Tolerance
  - Integration
  - Responsibilities
7. What are probably the main reasons for difficult experiences?
  - Fear and refusal to let go
  - Colors you have no words for
  - Power of the experience and confusion
8. What approaches can you use to navigate your experiences?
  - Mantras
  - Surrender
  - Fetal position
  - Freudian interpretation

### Suggested exercises:

1. Make or get a journal that you find pleasant. Take into consideration the type of paper – lined, squared or blank – the size and feel of it, etc. These might influence your integration process by making you more or less inclined to use it. Now ask yourself if you want to use a certain format for logging your journeys or if you want to use the journal in a more freeform manner. Would you want to use the journal during your journeys or only before and after?
2. Make up or find a few mantras that you think might be helpful. You may want to write them down somewhere and keep them with you when you travel.

## **Part V.**

*"It's a very salutary thing to realize that the rather dull universe in which most of us spend most of our time is not the only universe there is. I think it's healthy that people should have this experience."*

Aldous Huxley, Moksha: Writings on Psychedelics  
& the Visionary

# 10

## Getting Started

### 1. Getting started

At the end of this section you will:

- have a general idea of how to plan your first experience
- know what entheogens are suggested to start out with
- be aware of suggested settings, dose ranges, and company for your first experience

This section will share some recommendations and considerations for newcomers to entheogens or for those who want to test a substance with which they have no previous experience. Here we will discuss the different options for first-timers, i.e. what substances and doses to start out with, what situations to avoid, and how to prepare yourself.

Since all of this information has, in one way or another, already been mentioned throughout the manual, this section can be considered a summary, with special focus on the first journey.

## 2. Where to start

If you are considering trying out entheogens for the first time, you will probably have to start thinking about what substances are available in your current situation. If you do not know if entheogens are for you and thus don't want to set up cultivation equipment, perhaps you can find naturally growing plants in your area or have a friend who is willing to share their harvest with you.



We do not recommend buying entheogens for reasons elaborated earlier. Additionally, many see the use of entheogens as something sacred and putting a price on it, paying for it, or otherwise commodifying the experience seems, to many, "wrong" in one sense or another. It is commonly seen as part of your responsibility and respectfulness in using entheogens to acquire them in a sustainable way that does not support the drug trade or cartels.

Your first journey will likely be a special event and can result in life-altering perspective changes. It is thus recommended not to rush into it and/or settle for an entheogen of dubious origin or quality, nor is it advise to dose under less than ideal circumstances. Searching for natural sources that grow around your area or performing a quick mushroom grow can mean waiting a few additional months, but you will be more likely to wind up with a product free of negative associations and of high quality.

In order to prepare your journey, you should think about considerations concerning the setting, your set, the entheogen and your dose, and finally, the company you will be in. You can use a checklist or do it all in your head - whatever works best for you. For elaborations on each of these topics please see the respective sections of this manual. Below are some very basic suggestions.

## 3. Which entheogen



One of the most common questions asked by those who want to try entheogens is, "which entheogen should I start with?" Unfortunately, there is no real answer to this question. It depends on what is available to you via a responsible manner of acquisition and what you are interested in.

Entheogens that are frequently recommended for starting explorations are low doses of mushrooms or LSD. Mescaline-containing cactus is another option that is said to be very manageable for first-time explorers,

#### 4. Which setting to choose

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though it is recommended to do a crude extract to avoid eating too much potentially-nauseating plant matter.

Another very mild way to experience altered states is starting with cannabis, first smoked or vaporized and later ingested orally in low doses. Higher doses of oral cannabis can be very psychedelic and even overwhelming. These higher doses can also temporarily lead to difficulty in standing up and moving around, and unfortunately, can cause quite a bit of physical discomfort in some individuals. Hence, doses should be measured and considered well.

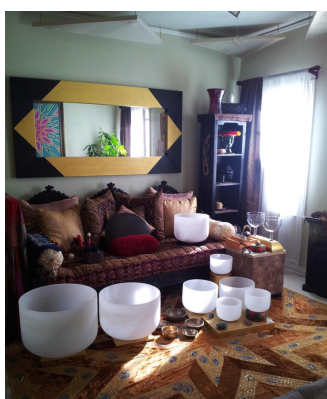
Some explorers are only interested in one particular entheogen, often DMT or ayahuasca. There is nothing wrong with starting out with these, though many people will suggest that the experiences they facilitate are more intense than other substances. However, if you start out with low doses and with ample preparation, they are just as valid for starting points as any other entheogen.

In general, your experience will be very different from your normal waking state of mind, no matter what entheogen you select. It should be noted that while reading about effects and experiences is a good idea for preparation, they cannot replace the actual experience. This means that, most likely, you will to some extent feel surprised by the experience.

No matter which entheogen you end up selecting, make sure you have researched it well. This means that you know about its effects on you, including bodily symptoms, risks, dose ranges, possible interactions with other substances or medications, and mode of administration. You should also be sure of its quality and contents.



#### 4. Which setting to choose



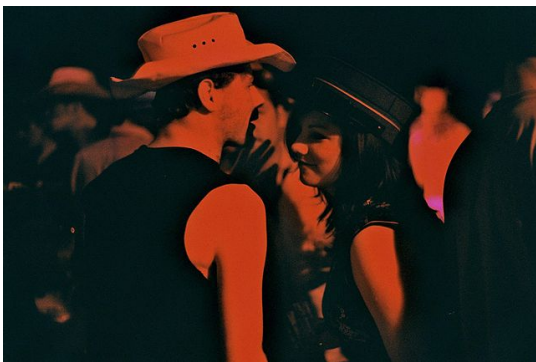
For your first journey, it is recommended that you choose a quiet setting in which you are very comfortable, where you have the opportunity to just relax and have adequate sanitary facilities at hand. We recommend this because, for your first journey, you don't really know what to expect and being in a safe environment can help prevent anxiety that might build up in a less comforting setting .

Places that could be good locations for a first-time journey are your home, a friends house, a cabin in the woods, a quiet and isolated spot on a campground, etc. Some travelers like to prepare their setting with warm blankets, soft pillows, and dim lights. Colored lights and "psychedelic" decorations, altars, or anything else that puts you in the mood for your journey or helps you to feel comfortable can be nice to have.

Though you may have heard of many people taking entheogens at clubs, raves, or festivals, many of those who take actual psychedelic doses, without experience in this dose range, tend not to enjoy their journey but instead end up feeling confused and scared. Granted, this does not always happen, but since you have less control over things that could help you prevent bad experiences, we recommend avoiding these situations for your first time.



## 5. Company and sitters



For a first-time journey, the company of a sitter is highly recommended. Choose a good sitter who is well informed, who can help you out if needed, and who you trust. It is essential that before the journey, you and your sitter talk about what will happen and how you want the sitter to behave during your experience.

You might prefer to travel with some good friends, rather than alone. If you have experienced friends, this can be of great help. If all of you are traveling for the first time, make sure that everyone is well informed and that there is mutual trust and respect for any emotions that may surface during the journey. During the experience, you or other travelers might want to seek solitude, silence, fresh air, etc. It should be made clear to everyone, in advance, that these wishes should be respected as far as reasonable and feasible.

Choose your company well, it can be a very important factor in how your experience turns out.

## 6. Doses to start with

In general, it is recommended to start with low doses to learn how the body and mind react to these strange substances and to avoid becoming overwhelmed in a negative manner by the substance - i.e. getting more than you bargained for. When using psychedelics, your ability to manage a certain dose in a positive way can be quite dependent on your set, setting, and reason (or intention) for traveling. However, it takes a bit of experience to be able to judge this appropriately. Experience can also help in managing higher doses.

Some things also depend on the individual - e.g. some people get strong nausea while traveling with certain entheogens while others, after having ingested the same substance from the same batch, experience none. Nausea can result in fear and discomfort if unexpected, especially when traveling on high(er) doses and with little to no experience.

**Knowledge review**

1. How should you plan/prepare for your first experience?
  - Make and use a checklist.
  - Consider everything in your head.
  - Use whichever method works best
2. True or False: DMT should not be used as a first entheogen.
  - True  False
3. A good setting to start out in can be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a heavy metal concert
  - your home
  - a shopping mall
  - a cabin in the woods
4. It is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ your company well.
  - inappropriate / inform
  - important / choose
  - irresponsible / attend
5. It is recommended to start out with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - break-through doses
  - threshold doses
  - low doses

**Suggested exercises:**

1. Imagine a friend tells you they want to try entheogens for the first time. How do you advise your friend and which options do you see as realistic for her/his current situation?
2. If you have experienced entheogens before, how was your first experience? How was it planned and how did it turn out? Did you consider all the things mentioned above?
3. If you do not have experience with entheogens but know people who do do they consider all the the issues above? Why or why not?



*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*

Robert Frost, The Road Not Taken

# 11

## Outlook

### 1. The road less traveled

At the end of this section you will:

- Have completed the Open Hyperspace Traveler course
- Have an outlook on what more there is to learn
- Know where you can get more information about certain topics relating to entheogens
- Know about continuing education courses of the Entheogenic University
- Have a “suggested reading” book list

So, it seems you have come to the end of the Open Hyperspace Traveler course. Upon completing this section you will be an *Open Hyperspace Traveler*. This means that you know the basics of using entheogens in a safe and responsible way, which could hopefully benefit you in your life.

You probably already know that there is a lot more to learn than what this course consists of, when it comes to entheogens. Just learning the sustainable production of entheogens alone, in their main variations, could fill one or two (or more) manuals like this. And there are plenty of other aspects that can be studied in greater detail.

In this section, we will give a little outlook on things you might find interesting for continued research. We will give you an overview of what other courses the Entheogenic University offers (or will offer soon) and where to find information on some of the more

popular topics. We will also offer a short book list for those interested in reading some of the standard works published.

## **2. What this handbook hasn't taught you**

Following the five parts of this course manual, you have learned how to plan and execute entheogenic journeys, how to integrate and get the most of your experiences, how to use and be a sitter, and how to test your entheogens for purity and content, among other things.

This means you can start exploring the world of entheogens based on this knowledge and the basic safety guidelines this course provided, using sound judgment and informed choices about what you ingest/administer and how you do it. But what about the topics this manual has not covered? From what you have learned here, you know that to use entheogens responsibly it is important to do your research. Any aspect of entheogens that you find interesting can be researched further. There may be literature about it, forum discussions, scientific articles, or even conferences. The following are a few areas that you might want to look into after this course.

As discussed in this handbook, there exist a multitude of reasons and potential benefits for using entheogens. However we have not gone into great detail on any one of these topics. You may be interested in looking into psychology and entheogens or spirituality and entheogens, philosophy or ontology and entheogens, etc. in a deeper fashion to learn more about different ways to view and use the experience.

Perhaps the history of entheogens interests you - whether seen from the perspective of prohibition and the evolution of society or looking at traditional uses from druids to shamans in different cultures. Some authors have even linked entheogenic use to the origins of religions, though this is a highly controversial topic. There are many discussions you can find in online forums about these topics, as well as books covering a range of interesting viewpoints.

If you are looking to become entheogenically independent, you will probably need some more technical information - plant or mushroom grower's guides and basic chemistry guides and techniques for extractions will probably contain what you will be looking for.

After some basic investigations and journeys with entheogens you might be interested in higher doses or combinations of substances that have not been discussed here. Maybe you are interested in more elaborate or special settings, such as flotation tanks or unique ritualistic approaches.

Perhaps entheogens interest you scientifically and you want to keep track of progress or even work in this area yourself. Sadly, it is a rather small field in official science and thus hard to get into. Good places to start asking around are psychedelic conferences, which are held once or twice a year in Europe and North America. Often, the topics are quite broad, ranging from neurosciences to anthropology, with emphasis on psychology, which makes for an interesting mix. Other places to investigate scientifically are in the "underground" communities that have sprung up around entheogens, such as online communities like the DMT-Nexus and the Entheogenic University.

You might be interested in activism for legalization or decriminalization of these substances. There are a lot of organizations and groups working towards this goal, many with particular focus on cannabis, which you could join to get involved in their projects. You could also start your own local group. The group connected to the Entheogenic University is called Coalition for Entheogenic Liberty (CEL). There are many ways to help this cause, and the current scientific investigations by MAPS and the few other scientists/groups involved in psychedelic research may be some of the most important factors that could help in this struggle.

Another form of activism is harm reduction, using approaches like education and chemical testing. Join the Entheogenic University or volunteer at similar projects in real life. Help stop the drug-stereotype and bad images that entheogens have ebbn given by spreading accurate information, rather than propaganda and help people to travel safely, thereby avoiding news headlines and bad statistics. Spread this handbook and the knowledge contained herein to your friends, to further the responsibility, safety, and benefits of their use of entheogens.

### **3. Entheogenic Information: resources and how to use them**

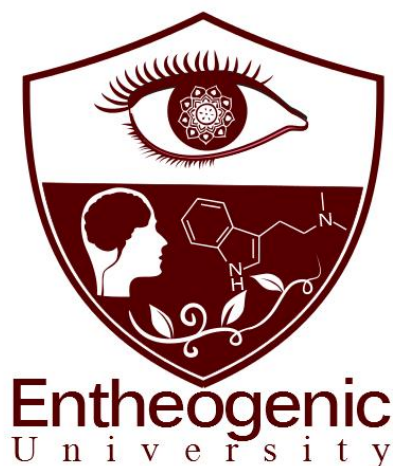
On the Internet you can find a myriad of resources related to entheogens. A lot of them are cluttered with information that ranges from fact to fiction. Somwtimes it is hard to weed out the good from the bad, so it is important to read critically when coming across new information. Unfortunately, a lot of people will state things as fact because of hearsay, rumors, or speculations of others without there being any kind of scientific evidence backing their claims. One very popular such claim is that DMT is produced by the pineal gland. This speculation was made by Rick Strassman in his book, "DMT the Spirit Molecule" and has been propagated as fact by many readers, even though it has not been demonstrated scientifically to date.

We thus recommend using multiple resources and critical thinking to differentiate fact from fiction, especially but not exclusively, for online resources.

There are many non-scientific publications on entheogens which also make speculations about them, but often the fact that it is a speculation (or the opinion of the author) is not made very clear. Readers can easily be mislead into believing these things, since they are published, to be true, and this can lead to misinformation. While, in general, it is up to the reader to believe what he or she chooses, we believe it is crucial to spread accurate information about entheogens and separate fiction and opinions from actual facts. This does not mean that opinions and speculations should not be voiced, but that they should be easily recognizable as such.

Furthermore, misinformation can also cause harm, which is why, again, we stress using multiple resources for reference, especially when it comes to more technical information (e.g. extractions, doses, medicine/health, etc.).

## 4. Continuing education - more courses



The Entheogenic University (E.U.) strives to give you free and valid information about entheogens based on science and experience. We are always in the process of assimilating the latest news and findings and creating new courses and documents for people interested in these substances. Our courses are aimed at harm minimization and benefit maximization.

After completing the Open Hyperspace Traveler Course, you can explore further courses from the Entheogenic University, as available. If you feel you have good working knowledge of a certain area, you can also help us create more handbooks in the area(s) of your expertise. We are always looking to expand our course library.

Some of these courses might be short guides while others can be quite elaborate. A great advantage of taking the courses with the E.U. is that, if there is a course about it at the E.U., then it means there are people in the E.U. you can consult on the various topics - in the event that you don't understand something or need more elaboration, or if just want to discuss something.

## 5. Suggested reading

If you are interested in entheogens, at some point you will probably want to consult other sources of information for more in-depth discussions on topics such as psychology, philosophy, and/or history and entheogens. There are a variety of publications out there, ranging from very scientific and factual to total fiction and everything in between. The following presents a small selection of informative books and articles that may be of interest to you and that we consider valuable.



For further suggestions check some of the discussions online or ask a member of the Entheogenic University. In the appendix **B** you will also find a short list of movies and documentaries with psychedelic references.

A very frequently updated site on news concerning the world of entheogens with various articles and publications including interviews, reviews, science etc. can also be found here: <http://the-nexian.me/>

**Acid Dreams: The Complete Social History of LSD: The CIA, the Sixties, and Beyond**

Martin A. Lee, Bruce Shlain  
ISBN: 0330484818

**The Brotherhood of Eternal Love: From Flower Power to Hippy Mafia: The Story of the LSD Counterculture**

Stewart Tendler, David May  
ISBN: 0586049096

**LSD My Problem Child: Reflections on Sacred Drugs, Mysticism and Science**

Albert Hofmann, Mark Plummer  
ISBN: 0979862221

**Hashish!: Updated Second Edition**

Robert Connell Clarke and Mel Frank  
ISBN-10: 0929349075

**The Psychedelic Explorer's Guide: Safe, Therapeutic, and Sacred Journeys**

James Fadiman  
ISBN: 1594774021

**Just a Wee Bit More About DMT**

Nick Sand as Infinite Ayes  
<http://www.serendipity.li/dmt/weebit2.pdf>

**Moving Into the Sacred World of DMT**

Nick Sand as Infinite Ayes  
<http://www.serendipity.li/dmt/sacred.pdf>

**Drugs Without the Hot Air: Minimising the Harms of Legal and Illegal Drugs**

David Nutt  
ISBN: 1906860165

**PIHKAL and TIHKAL**

Alexander Shulgin  
ISBN: 0963009605 and 0963009699

**LSD Psychotherapy**

Stansilav Grof  
ISBN: 0979862205

**Pharmactheon: Enthogenic Drugs, Their Plant Sources and History**

Jonathon Ott

### Knowledge review

1. What does it mean to be an Open Hyperspace Traveler?
  - You know everything about entheogens.
  - You are an experienced traveler of hyperspace.
  - You have completed the OHT course and now know the basics about the responsible, safe, and beneficial use of entheogens.
2. How can you become involved in working towards legalization/decriminalization of entheogens?
  - Join an existing group/organization
  - Create your own organization/group
  - Volunteer at projects for harm reduction and chemical testing
  - Join the Entheogenic University and help educate and reduce harm
3. What should you do when using resources about entheogens?
  - Use more than one resource.
  - Believe everything that is written and published.
  - Think critically.
4. What are the advantages of continuing courses at the Entheogenic University?
  - Contact to members who can help with the topics studied.
  - Courses are in the same format as the OHT Manual
  - Topics are covered based on science and experience with the goal to minimize harm and maximize benefits.

### Suggested exercises:

1. Think about what you will do next with what you have learned. What further information will you probably look into first? What interests you from a practical viewpoint? What about from a more philosophical one?
2. Congratulate yourself! You have now completed the Open Hyperspace Traveler Course and can call yourself Open Hyperspace Traveler.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

**Part VI.**  
**APPENDIX**

# A

## Substance Index

Below, we have put together a list of common entheogenic substances with a short introduction to each, and their typical signs and symptoms for low, medium, and high doses. Typical ingestion methods are also included.

For easy reference, the following section is ordered alphabetically.

### 5-MeO-DMT

**Family:** Tryptamines

5-MeO-DMT is considered to be one of the most powerful entheogens concerning the subjective experience and dose, with active doses starting as low as 1-2 mg when vaporized. It is alleged to occasionally be used as an admixture in Ayahuasca (but little evidence has been provided to support this claim) and is found in various plant species, often alongside DMT.

5-MeO-DMT is only orally active if the Mono-Amino-Oxidase (MAO) is inhibited by MAO-Inhibitors (MAOI) or Reversible MAOI (RIMA). Usual forms of administration are vaporization and oral ingestion with RIMA (although there may be additional health risks associated with oral ingestion). Duration of effects can last between 1 to 2 hours for vaporization and 1 to 2 hours for oral ingestion.



### Signs:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Pupils slightly dilated, appearance of distance or trance.	Pupils greatly dilated, possible sweating, gasping, vomiting, eyes open and close	Pupils dilated, user "gone" in trance, potential for uneven or even cessation of breathing or heartbeat. Possible gasping, vomiting, trembling.

### Symptoms:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Crushing body load, quickly yielding a sense of body-orgasm. No CEV's, slight fractal visual distortions with open eyes.	Crushing body load inducing gasping and gagging nausea with any resistance and a sort of release into the 5-meo state with surrender - beyond body-orgasm into gasping soul orgasm. CEV's show a sort of yellow or white field. Eyes want to open and close. Open eye visuals are best with loved ones. Fractals in space and time.	Body load that hits like a wall of drowning whiteness. Overwhelming. No time to resist or submit or feel nausea or groan or . . . . Blackout for peak memories. Weird verbal outbursts or babbling. Extended peak effects, 20 mins to over an hour. Total time to baseline 2 hours to . . . . extended feeling of not being fully back or integrated that can last days, weeks or months.

## Ayahuasca

**Family:** Tryptamines and MAOI/RIMA

Ayahuasca (pronounced ayawaska, or ajawaska in the Quechua language) is a traditional brew of various psychoactive infusions or decoctions, prepared with the Banisteriopsis caapi vine (or related vines). It is usually mixed with the leaves of dimethyltryptamine (DMT)-containing species of shrubs from the genus Psychotria. The caapi vine alone can induce some psychoactive effects (see Harmalas), but DMT-containing plants (such as Psychotria) remain inactive when drunk as a brew without a source of monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI or RIMA), such as B. caapi.

Outside of this traditional context, **Ayahuasca analogues** are commonly made of harmaloid containing plants such as caapi vine or syrian rue and DMT-containing plants such as Mimosa tenuiflora root bark, Acacia species, or Psychotria species. Combining the extracts of these plants is known as **Pharmahuasca**.

Duration of effects can be between one and five hours with after effects lasting up to a day.

**Signs:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Pupils slightly dilated, slurred speech, tear formation, yawning	Pupils greatly dilated, slurred speech, incoherence, trembling, ataxia (physical drunkenness)	Pupils greatly dilated, strong incoherence (inability to form sentences), sweating, ataxia, diarrhea, vomiting, crying and laughing at the same time

**Symptoms:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Colors appear brighter, edges sharper. Light-headedness, altered thought-processes/internal dialog. Closed-eye visuals (patterns, colors)	(Geometric) patterns appear on uniform surfaces, walls seem to be breathing. Patterns and structures may seem to shift or move. Things may appear novel or more wondrous, events more intense. Difficulty in understanding how things work (e.g. Computers, phones, etc.). Difficulty in following conversations. Loss of sense of time. Intensification of pre-existing emotions. Closed eye visions. Euphoria	Geometric 3-dimensional patterns appear, difficulty in focusing the eyes, synesthesia, visions, intensification of emotions, insights, time dilation, mystical experiences/epiphanies/ego-death, nausea, entity contact.

## Bufotenine

**Family:** Tryptamines

Bufotenin is a naturally occurring psychedelic, present in many species of plants (most commonly in the seeds of *Anadenanthera* species) and *Bufo Alvarius* toad venom. It is said to be similar in effects to, though less potent than, **5-MeO-DMT**. Chemically it is 5-Hydroxy-NN-Dimethyltryptamine.

Traditionally, seeds containing this substance are used in snuffs in various countries in South America in order to induce visionary states. Contemporary use is rare, since experiences

are said to be strange and are often accompanied by nausea and unpleasant bodily sensations such as pressure in the head and stomach, constriction in the legs, tingling and burning sensations in the face, and high blood pressure.

## Cannabis

**Family:** Cannabinoids

Cannabis, also known as Marijuana, is a plant containing cannabinoids - a class of diverse chemical compounds that activate cannabinoid receptors - in its flowers. The main cannabinoid in Cannabis is the phytocannabinoid  $\Delta^9$ -tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). CBD is the other main cannabinoid attributed to inducing relaxing, healing, and pain relieving effects, while THC is considered the psychoactive component.

Concerning use worldwide, cannabis is probably the most popular entheogen in the world. This is most likely due to the mildness of its effects in lower doses and the observed pleasantness of these lower doses.

Contemporary use is generally religious/spiritual, recreational or medicinal. Medically, it has been shown that cannabis has positive effects on stimulating hunger in cancer and AIDS patients, reducing nausea, and reducing pain. It can be smoked, vaporized, or eaten (in combination with fatty foods such as dairy-products, as it is lipophilic).

### Signs:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
slightly decreased reaction	red eyes, eyelids low (as with very tired people), slow reactions, enjoying food more than usual, relaxed body-language and vocalizations	lethargy, incohesive sentences, lower blood pressure

### Symptoms:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
feeling relaxed, altered thinking process	dry mouth and eyes, decreased short-term memory, creative thought process, things appear funnier than usual, strong desire to eat, less perception of pain	visions, strongly altered thought process, altered perception of time

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## DMT

**Family:** Tryptamines

NN-Dimethyltryptamine, or DMT for short, is a short acting entheogen which allows a person's consciousness to voyage into the most incredible dimensions, visions, thoughts, and experiences imaginable.

It is one of the most powerful yet mysterious psychedelics in existence, giving profound and awe inspiring experiences that raise many new questions regarding the nature of reality and our place within it. It is important to realize that the experience may be very difficult for some to integrate, and great care and respect is necessary to use it.

DMT exists naturally in every human being and is widespread throughout the plant and animal kingdoms. It occurs naturally in many mammals, marine animals, trees, grasses, flowers, and shoots.

The most common and easiest method to acquire DMT is to extract it from the various plant species that contain the compound. In its crystal form, DMT is a rather new psychedelic, however in the form of the [Ayahuasca](#) brew, it has been used for centuries in native cultures of Latin America.

The following signs and symptoms are for vaporized/smoked DMT. For effects using DMT orally, see [Ayahuasca](#).

### Signs:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Slightly dilated pupils	Dilated pupils, spaced-out look, staring, teary eyes, yawning	Unresponsive, staring at nothing, tachycardia

### Symptoms:

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
slight fractal closed eye visuals, feelings of elation/mild euphoria	fractal closed and open eye visuals, otherworldly feeling, feeling your heart beating fast/strongly, intense feeling of strangeness	Loss of body, loss of sense of self, white light, visiting other dimensions, speaking with or contacting entities, transforming into something not human, visions

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## Harmalas

**Family:** Beta-carbolines/MAOI/RIMA

Harmala alkaloids, such as harmine, harmaline, and tetrahydroharmaline, are most commonly found in plants such as *Peganum harmala* (Syrian Rue), *Banisteriopsis caapi*, and other species of the *Banisteriopsis* family. They are often used in conjunction with tryptamines, especially DMT. Most commonly, these mixes are known as **Ayahuasca**. In fact, traditionally, it is the *B. caapi* vine that is called ayahuasca and the brew does not have to contain DMT.

They function by inhibiting the metabolism of monoamine compounds (thus MAOI) such as serotonin, which incidentally also inhibits the metabolism of DMT, allowing it to become active through oral ingestion, where otherwise it would be metabolized before reaching the blood brain barrier.

They differentiate themselves from other MAOI by being reversible and selective in their inhibition, reducing certain risks related to MAOI and tyramine-containing food, for example. Hence they are more correctly referred to as RIMA - reversible inhibitors of monoamine oxidase

The effects of harmalas are slightly sedating, relaxing, and at high doses can be visionary and dreamlike. They can produce nausea which is usually enhanced when taken in combination with tryptamines.

When taking harmalas or any MAOI, you should be very careful with additional substances and any medication you are taking, since MAOIs interact dangerously with several types of drugs/medications.

## Iboga

**Family:** Tryptamines

Iboga is traditionally used in the Congo rainforest and is a central support in many local cultures and religions. People in Gabon attribute the peaceful nature of the country compared to all of its surroundings to the Bwiti beliefs and the influence of iboga. We would like to interject a personal opinion here, that the European influence (and capitalism) in the region has been destructive and disasterous for the local population, and sourcing iboga on the black market often seems to propagate the exploitation of Africa by the 'Western' industrial society. Please be conscious of your actions if you decide to order a sacred plant that was probably stolen and illegally exported from Gabon. Exportation of iboga from Gabon is specifically defined as poaching and is illegal according to Gabonese law.

In France, at the beginning of the early 20th century, iboga was prescribed to people to treat fatigue and it became popular with European athletes. Today, it is banned from the olympics as a doping substance. It is also used mainly to treat addictions, often in the underground, since it is not accepted by modern medicine in most countries. There are, however, some addiction clinics that use iboga treatment with great success.

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Dosing and effect intensity depend on situation; personal constitutions vary, and a person's first contact with iboga is typically exceptionally powerful, even with a low dose. We strongly recommend that if someone wants to eat iboga, they should find someone who is experienced to guide them. Potentially, a trip to Gabon where they can interact with the root culture and discover a way to participate instead of just take.

Iboga causes low body temperature, low blood pressure, and lowered heart rate. This condition triggers heart failure in some people who have congenital heart defects. It is very rare, but people sometimes do not live through the experience. Conventional wisdom says that an ECG screening for "long QT" syndrome can pick out people who might be at risk, but there is not much evidence for this.

## LSA

**Family:** Tryptamines

LSA ( d-lysergic acid amide, d-lysergamide, or ergine) is a psychoactive alkaloid found in various vines of the Convolvulaceae family and some species of fungi. It can also be found in the seeds of *Turbina corymbosa* (ololiuhqui), *Argyreia nervosa* (Hawaiian baby woodrose), and *Ipomoea tricolor* (morning glories, tlitiltzin). Reports indicate traditional use of LSA-containing seeds as a sacrament by Mexican Native Americans and the Zapotecs. LSA is also a precursor of LSD.

It is usually taken either in the form of the seeds or extracted and ingested orally. LSA has strong vaso-constrictive properties and can be dangerous when taken in high doses.

**Signs:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Pupils slightly dilated, slight trembling, slurred speech	Pupils greatly dilated, slurred speech, incoherency, trembling	Pupils greatly dilated, strong incoherence (inability to form sentences), trembling and shaking, cold hands and feet i.e. strong vasoconstriction, sweating

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**Symptoms:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Colors appear brighter, edges sharper. Light-headedness, muscle tension, nervousness. Altered thought-processes/internal dialog. Closed-eye visuals (patterns, colors)	(Geometric) patterns appear on uniform surfaces, walls seem to be breathing. Patterns and structures may seem to shift or move. Things may appear novel or more wondrous, events more intense. Difficulty in understanding how things work (e.g. Computers, phones, etc.). Difficulty in following conversations. Thought loops. Loss of a feeling for time. Intensification of preexisting emotions. Closed eye visions. Euphoria.	Geometric 3-dimensional patterns appear, difficulty in focusing the eyes, synesthesia, Visions, Intensification of emotions, insights, time dialation, inability to tell which position the body is in, mystical experiences, nausea

## LSD

**Family:** Tryptamines

LSD stands for Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (Lysergsurediethylamid in German). Its psychedelic properties were discovered 1943 by Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann. It received significant attention in the U.S. throughout the 1960s in the cultural revolution and peace movement during the time of the Vietnam War, with proponents such as Harvard Professor Timothy Leary, Stanislav Grof, and John C. Lilly believing in its potential for psychotherapy. It was quickly criminalized, however, making research with it either impossible or illegal. It is often als refered to simply as acid.

LSD is chemically related to DMT and Psilocybin/Psilocin but is active in far more minuscule amounts. Usual forms in which LSD can be found are blotter (pieces of paper onto which dissolved LSD is dropped), liquid, or powder/crystals (very rare). The most common form of administration is sublingual.

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**Signs:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Pupils slightly dilated, slight trembling, slurred speech	Pupils greatly dilated, slurred speech, incoherency, trembling	Pupils greatly dilated, strong incoherence (inability to form sentences), trembling and shaking, cold hands and feet, sweating,

**Symptoms:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Colors appear brighter, edges sharper. Light-headedness, muscle tension, nervousness. Altered thought-processes / internal dialog. Closed-eye visuals (patterns, colors)	(Geometric) patterns appear on uniform surfaces, walls seem to be breathing. Patterns and structures may seem to shift or move. Things may appear novel or more wondrous, events more intense. Difficulty in understanding how things work ((e.g. Computers, phones, etc.). Difficulty in following conversations. Thought loops. Loss of a feeling for time. Intensification of preexisting emotions. Closed eye visions. Euphoria.	Geometric 3-dimensional patterns appear, difficulty in focusing the eyes, synesthesia, Visions, Intensification of emotions, insights, time dialation, inability to tell which position the body is in, mystical experiences,

## MDMA

**Family:** Phenethylamines

MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxy-N-methamphetamine) has become widely known as “ecstasy” (shortened to “E,” “X,” or “XTC”), usually referring to its street pill form, although this term may also include the presence of possible adulterants. It became widely popular in the electronic music/rave scene beginning in the 1980s, though had been used recreationally since the 1970s.

MDMA is known to induce euphoria, a sense of intimacy, and diminished anxiety. Many studies have suggested that MDMA has therapeutic benefits and facilitates therapy sessions in certain individuals, a practice for which it had formally been used in the past. Clinical trials (by MAPS) are now testing its therapeutic potential for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and anxiety associated with terminal cancer. So far they show promising results.



Contemporary use outside of clinical trials is usually recreational or aimed at exploring intimacy, sensuality, love, and compassion. Typical routes of administration are oral or intranasal.

**Signs:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
dilated pupils, big smiles	very dilated pupils, sweating, slight hyperthermia, increased heart rate, cuddling, physical activity, very relaxed body language	coordination and articulation problems, increased hyperthermia

**Symptoms:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
altered thought process, colors, mild euphoria, increased compassion and empathy, openness	fractal or cartoonish closed eye visuals, overflowing love and understanding, feeling of serenity, lack of physical exhaustion	

## Mescaline

**Family:** Phenethylamine

Mescaline or 3,4,5-trimethoxyphenethylamine is a naturally occurring psychedelic alkaloid of the phenethylamine class, occurring naturally in the peyote cactus (*Lophophora williamsii*), the San Pedro cactus (*Echinopsis pachanoi*), and in the Peruvian torch (*Echinopsis peruviana*), as well as in a number of other members of the Cactaceae plant family. It has been used for over 3000 years by Native Americans in Mexico, who ingest the peyote cactus. The other cacti have a long history of usage in various regions in South America.

Scientific studies have indicated the potential of mescaline for treating alcoholism and depression, however, due to its legal status, very few studies have been conducted since the 1970s. In his famous essay "The Doors of Perception," Aldous Huxley speaks about his experience with mescaline, recalling the insights he experienced as ranging from "purely aesthetic" to "sacramental vision".

Contemporary use is centered around spirituality, exploration, and self-development. When working with cactus, explorers make a tea or an extract to ingest orally. Rarely is the plant consumed as is (usually only with peyote).

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**Signs:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
dilated pupils, big smiles	very dilated pupils, sweating, slight hyperthermia, increased heart rate, vomiting	coordination and articulation problems

**Symptoms:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
altered thinking processes, altered sense of color, mild euphoria	“geometricization” of three-dimensional objects, mostly closed eye visuals, nausea, tachycardia/anxiety	complex fractals, kaleidoscopic distortions

## Pharmahuasca

**Family:** Tryptamines and MAOI/RIMA

Ayahuasca analogue using extracted substances rather than plant brews. Route of administration is typically oral. For effects please see [Ayahuasca](#).

For dose information on extracts from Harmala containing plants please refer to [Harmalas](#). If properly MAO-inhibited, an effective dose of oral DMT can be as low as 50 mg. For more information please see [DMT](#)

## Psilocybin / Psilocin (Mushrooms)

**Family:** Tryptamines

Psilocybin Mushrooms or “Magic Mushrooms” are a very widespread and ancient entheogen. There are several different types of mushrooms that produce psilocybin. Some grow in tropical climates such as South-East Asia and South America while others prefer colder climates such as central Europe, Great Britain, etc.

Traditionally, they have been used by Shamans in South and Central America, sometimes as admixtures to Ayahuasca brews or eaten on their own. Scientific studies indicate their usefulness for treating obsessive compulsive behavior and the fear of death. A different study has also shown how psilocybin induced mystical experiences had positive and long-lasting effects on those that underwent the experiences<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Griffiths. “Psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences having substantial and sustained personal meaning and spiritual significance”. In: *Psychopharmacology* 187(3) (2006), pp. 268–83. URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16826400>.

Contemporary use is usually focused around healing, personal growth/development, and exploration, as well as recreation. Many travelers find mushrooms to be less predictable/controlable than LSD, while many of the effects are comparable, though subjectively quite different.

Mushrooms are usually eaten whole, either fresh or dry, or crudely extracted in a tea with lemon juice.

**Signs:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Pupils slightly dilated, slight trembling, slurred speech	Pupils greatly dilated, slurred speech, incoherency, trembling	Pupils greatly dilated, strong incoherence (inability to form sentences), sweating

**Symptoms:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Colors appear brighter. Light-headedness. Altered thought-processes/internal dialog. Closed-eye visuals (patterns, colors)	Organic patterns appear on uniform surfaces, walls seem to be breathing. Patterns and structures may seem to shift or move. Things may appear novel or more wondrous, events more intense. Difficulty in understanding how things work (e.g. Computers, phones, etc.). Difficulty in following conversations. Thought loops. Loss of a feeling for time. Intensification of preexisting emotions. Closed eye visions. Euphoria.	Geometric or organic 3-dimensional patterns appear, difficulty in focusing the eyes, synesthesia, visions. Everything appears liquid. Intensification of emotions, insights, time dialation, mystical experiences/ego-death/OBEs and entity contact

**Salvia Divinorum**

**Family:** Salvinorin

Salvia divinorum is a Mexican perennial herb which has a long history of use as an entheogen by indigenous Mazatec shamans. Salvinorin A, the psychoactive substance found in it, is considered a dissociative exhibiting atypical psychedelic effects. It can be active in doses as low as 20  $\mu\text{g}$ , but the generally accepted threshold dose is around 200  $\mu\text{g}$ .

This makes Salvinorin A, regarding weight, the most potent naturally occurring entheogenic substance known to date.

The leaves of the Salvia plant are usually dried and smoked, although this is not the traditional method of preparation. Traditionally, the fresh leaves are rolled into what is called a quid and chewed, causing a longer lasting and more mellow experience than when smoked.

**Signs:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
	meditative like state, body movements similiar to yoga (nothing hard, stuff like childs pose that feels good and requires no balancing) very relaxed mood and body language. Possibly giddy-ing.	

**Symptoms:**

Low Dose	Medium Dose	High Dose
Tingling sensation, slightly altered perception	seperation from physical body, out of body experiences without break from reality. Enhanced feeling of gravity, feeling of pins on skin. Closed eye hallucinations. Euphoria. Sexual arousal.	Complete seperation from physical body and break from reality. Feelings of confusion and fear. Demonic voices. Sometimes headaches and lethargy after peak that lingers until sleep

# B

## Movies and documentaries with psychedelic references

**1968 - 2001: A Space Odyssey (Stanley Kubrick)** - Fiction

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0062622/>

Probably the only film in this list that does not feature use of psychedelics, it's still a must watch nonetheless.

**1973 - The Holy Mountain / La Montaña Sagrada (Alejandro Jodorowsky)** - Fiction

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071615/>

Jodorowsky's surreal symbolism classic is not only a weird ride, it's one of the very few films where the crew followed unusual spiritual exercises prior to and during the shooting, including ingestion of LSD and psilocybin mushrooms.

**1978 - Maía Sabina, Mujer Espiritu (Nicolás Echevarría)** - Documentary

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0295426/>

Unique film documenting the life of María Sabina, the woman who introduced Robert Wasson to psilocybe mushrooms.

**1980 - Altered States (Ken Russell)** - Fiction

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0080360/>

Inspired by the figure of John C. Lilly, Altered States is the story of a scientist experimenting himself to bits with psychedelics and isolation tanks. Cult sci-fi.

**1993 - The Art of Tripping (Channel 4, UK)** - Documentary

A journey through artistic creation and psychoactives, hosted by Bernard Hill.

**1998 - Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (Terry Gilliam)** - Fiction

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120669/>

---

Great adaptation of Hunter S. Thompson book. It goes way deeper than depicting use (and abuse) of psychoactive drugs.

**2002 - Hofmann's Potion (Connie Littlefield)** - Documentary

<http://www.imdb.es/title/tt0439611/>

The first, and arguably better, documentary on LSD. Featuring professor Albert Hofmann, Ralph Metzner, Stan Grof, Ram Dass and archive takes with Aldous Huxley and Tim Leary.

**2002 - Shamans of the Amazon (Dean Jefferys)** - Documentary

[http://www.shamansofthea...com/index\\_content.html](http://www.shamansofthea...com/index_content.html)

"Shamans of the Amazon is a personal account of Film-maker Dean Jefferys returning to the Amazon with his partner and one year old daughter. They journey deep into the heart of the Ecuadorian rainforest to meet two Amazon Shamans, to learn about and experience the ancient ayahuasca ritual. The film will also show how this hallucinogenic ritual is being adapted and used in western cultures."

**2004 - D'Autres Mondes / Other Worlds (Jan Kounen)** - Documentary

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0347718/>

"A Journey into The Heart of Shipibo Shamanism". One of the best film approaches to shamanism and psychedelics, featuring Charles Grob, Stanislav Grof, Luis Eduardo Luna, Pablo Amaringo, Rick Strassman and Alex Grey, among others.

**2004 - Ibogaine, Rite of Passage (Ben De Loenen)** - Documentary

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0431823/>

A visit to Iboga in both the bwiti rituals and a detox clinic in America. Very nice film and document.

**2004 - Blueberry / Renegade (Jan Kounen)** - Fiction

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0276830/>

Irregular adaptation of the graphic novels by Jean Giraud, but with a few brilliant moments, including an ayahuasca trip.

**2005 - Tribe: The Babongo (BBC)** - Documentary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmNQSf7Mycw>

A good, respectful report of the babongo rituals in Gabon.

**2006 - Psychonauts (András Kovács)** - Documentary

<http://daath.hu/psychonauts/>

"Psychonauts believe that these spiritual experiences, when properly processed, lead to long-term and positive benefits in their everyday lives."

**2006 - LSD, Problem Child and Wonder Drug (Michael McAteer)** - Documentary

<http://www.lsd100.com/>

Report of the symposium celebrated in Basel, Switzerland in 2006 to honor Dr. Albert Hofmann in his 100th birthday.

- 
- 2007 - Entheogen: Awakening the Divine Within (Rod Mann, Nikos Katsaounis, Kevin Kohley)** - Documentary  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1549781/>  
Good introductory approach to ecstasy and shamanism.
- 2008 - Know Your Mushrooms (Ron Mann)** - Documentary  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1339111/>  
A very fun introduction to mushrooms and a visit to the Telluride Mushroom Festival in Colorado, US. Not specifically targeting psychedelic mushrooms (although they are more than present!) but well done and quite enjoyable.
- 2008 - Peyote to LSD: A Psychedelic Odyssey (Peter von Puttkamer)** - Documentary  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0822803/>  
Wade Davis follows the steps of Richard Evans Schultes and his discoveries of psychoactive plants.
- 2009 - Enter the Void (Gaspar Noé)** - Fiction  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1191111/>  
Controversial adaptation of the Tibetan Book of the Dead. A young drug dealer finds himself in the Bardo Thodol. Loved and hated, it's a brilliant visual experience anyway. Featuring some of the nicest renderings of hyperspace visuals ever displayed on a movie.
- 2009 - Manifesting the Mind (Andrew Rutajit)** - Documentary  
Dennis McKenna, Strassman, Pinchbeck and other usual suspects in an introduction to the psychedelic experience.
- 2009 - Inside LSD (Pamela Caragol Wells)** - Documentary  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1540611/>  
Episode about LSD in "The Explorers" National Geographic series, narrated by Peter Coyote.
- 2009 - Metamorphosis (Keith Aronowitz)** - Documentary  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1446106/>  
The following of an ayahuasca ceremony in Iquitos, Perú.
- 2010 - DMT, The Spirit Molecule (Mitch Schultz)** - Documentary  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1340425/>  
The widely known film about Dr. Strassman's clinical DMT assays. Strassman, Hancock, nice visuals, fact and speculation and cool experience reports.
- 2010 - Dirty Pictures (Étienne Sauret)** - Documentary  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1592855/>  
A visit to the life and works of Sasha & Ann Shulgin.
- 2010 - Vine of the Soul: Encounters with Ayahuasca (Richard Meech)** - Documentary  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1562910/>

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Report of a journey to Amazon and Ayahuasca, with Guillermo Arvalo, Dennis McKenna, Kenneth Tupper and canadian therapist Dr. Gabor Maté.

**2011 - The Substance: Albert Hofmann's LSD (Martin Witz)** - Documentary  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2075352/> Well made movie about the discovery of LSD by professor Hofmann. Featuring among others Ralph Metzner, Stan Grof and Albert Hofmann himself.



# C

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## Authors and thanks

### The following authors have contributed to this text:

**olympus mon** wrote [Getting The Most Out of Your Experiences](#)

**Global** wrote the section about music in [Exploring Hyperspace](#)

**endlessness** wrote the section about TLC in [Responsible and Safe Use](#)

**Vodsel** edited and added substantial info to several chapters

**Pandora** edited several chapters and added info for various substances

**Enoon** wrote and edited everything else

### Special thanks to

**The Traveler** for keeping my moral up and always giving helpful remarks as to how to continue with the text.

**Entropymancer, Aegle, proto-pax, ouro** for supporting and or giving valuable info on certain sections.

**All the contributing artists** that have lent me their creative work to share here this text. Special thanks to cyb for all your help.

**Vodsel, Lychen and Snozz** for all the work put into editing and re-editing the chapters, finding images and for keeping my morals up.

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## Answer key

### 1. Hyperspace part 1

#### Knowledge review

1. What is an entheogen?
  - A psychoactive substance that can be used beneficially.
  - A drug that gives you colorful hallucinations.
2. What are the chemical categories of entheogens discussed here?
  - Tryptamines ■ Phenethylamines
  - Canabinoids ■ Salvinorin
3. What are contemporary reasons for using entheogens?
  - healing ■ recreation ■ exploration
  - spirituality
4. What neurotransmitter do tryptamines most resemble?
  - glutamate  dopamine ■ serotonin  histamine
5. How do tryptamines work on the brain?
  - Tryptamines bind to the kappa opioid receptor
  - Tryptamines bind to the 5HT receptors
6. What possible medical uses for entheogens have been suggested?
  - Help cope with death
  - Treat addictions
  - appetite stimulation
  - Pain and nausea reduction



## 2. Hyperspace part 2

### Knowledge review

1. What can cause serotonin syndrome?
  - all entheogens
  - high doses of MDMA or LSD mixed with other substances
2. How can you avoid hyponatremia?
  - Don't drink alcohol
  - Instead of pure water, drink mineralized water or fruit juices.
3. Which entheogens can cause HPPD?
  - Only LSD
  - Only Mushrooms
  - All of them
4. How can you avoid stress on your immune system?
  - Take antibiotics
  - Give your system time and nutrients to recover
5. What should you do if you suspect serotonin downregulation or reduction of short term memory?
  - smoke cannabis
  - abstain from drug use until recovered
6. What is the LD50?
  - The median lethal dose measured in rodent population
  - A variation of LSD-25
7. How is the safety ratio calculated?
  - The ratio between a regular dose and a high dose
  - The ratio between a regular (effective) dose and a lethal dose.

### 3. Setting

#### Knowledge review

1. What things can be hazardous to personal safety?
  - bodies of water ■ cliffs ■ traffic
2. How can you avoid becoming a disturbance to the public?
  - Don't take high doses in public if you cannot handle yourself on them.
  - Dress in camouflage
3. What should you never do while traveling?
  - Operate vehicles in traffic or dangerous machinery.
  - Share views on profound questions.
4. How can being comfortable help you in your journey?
  - It prevents bad experiences.
  - It can keep you from being distracted and let you focus on the experience
5. How can you be a hazard to your surroundings?
  - Uncoordinated movements
  - bad judgement
  - altered sense of value.

## 4. Sitter

### Knowledge review

1. When is a sitter recommended?
  - When using new entheogens
  - when using high doses
  - when you have little experience
  - If there is an elevated risk
2. What can a sitter help you with?
  - Safety ■ comfort ■ supplies ■ crisis ■ trouble
3. What are the downsides of having a sitter?
  - Distraction ■ dissonance ■ hard to find  costs
4. What are the main responsibilities of a sitter?
  - Make sure the traveler has fun
  - Keep traveler safe and in good health
5. When should the sitter ask questions or voice doubts?
  - During the journey
  - Before the journey
6. What is a dosing sitter?
  - A sitter who takes a small dose of the same entheogen to be on the same wavelength.
  - A sitter who takes the same dose as the traveler.
7. Should your sitter be a friend of a friend?
  - Yes ■ No
8. Why should your sitter be well informed about entheogens?
  - To encourage you to take your dose
  - To help him know how and when to react and to identify problems.

## 5. Exploring Hyperspace

### Knowledge review

1. Whether an experience is introverted or extroverted depends on?
  - the personality of the traveler
  - the dose
  - intentions, planning, setting
2. A mystical experience is:
  - guaranteed with all entheogens
  - a transformative and profound experience
  - considered a bad trip
3. Entheogens produce NDEs
  - Yes ■ No
4. Ego dissolution is:
  - a very positive experience
  - horrifying and dangerous
  - when you lose all sense of identification, which can be both scary and wonderful
5. Entity contact is most common with:
  - Mescaline
  - LSD
  - DMT
  - Mushrooms
6. Music while traveling can:
  - be ecstatic ■ change the experience
  - cause positive emotions
  - cause negative emotions
7. True or false: It is recommended to use only psychedelic art on journeys.
  - True ■ False
8. How can you capture creativity while traveling?
  - Have a notepad and pen nearby
  - experiment with paints
  - experiment with musical instruments

## 6. Set

### Knowledge review

1. Your set includes your:
  - mindset  location
  - physical set
  - blacksquare* social environment
  - obligations
2. For the mindset there are three categories of issues. They are:
  - intrinsic, confined and accepted
  - acute, persistent and latent
  - actual, predominant and lateral
3. A bad experience is a difficult experience in which:
  - you are unwilling to listen
  - you are unwilling to run away
  - you are unwilling to let go/change/accept
4. If you have a personal or family history of mental illness should you use entheogens?
  - Yes ■ No
5. When feeling physically weak or sick:
  - it is recommended only to take LSD
  - it is recommended to take lower doses
  - it is not recommended to travel
6. Social circumstances can make you feel:
  - guilt ■ regret
  - pride  depression
7. Responsible use means:
  - To use in a mindful and respectful way remembering safety precautions and risks.
  - To use only when healthy and only for psychological work.
  - To refrain from using when it's clearly not beneficial.

## 7. Responsible and Safe Use

### Knowledge review

1. When trying an entheogen for the first time, it is recommended to start
  - with a medium dose
  - with a threshold/low dose
  - with a high dose
2. LSD is active at \_\_\_\_\_ doses.
  - g
  - mg
  - ug
3. Why are testing methods important?
  - To know purity — actual doses
  - To know about adulterants
  - To know what the substance you are ingesting is
4. What testing methods can be used at home?
  - GC-MS
  - Colorimetric tests
  - UV-vis spectrophotometry
  - TLC
5. TLC can \_\_\_\_\_ compounds but can't \_\_\_\_\_ them.
  - purify / identify
  - identify / separate
  - separate / identify
6. Which method is used to determine the purity/concentration of a given substance?
  - UV-vis spectrophotometry
  - Colorimetric tests
  - LC-MS
7. When using plant sources for extractions, you are in control of:
  - what chemicals you use.
  - what ends up in the product.
  - what happens to the chemicals after they are used.
8. You are taking medication and want to use entheogens, but are worried there might be adverse interactions. You cannot find any definite information. What do you do?
  - Postpone the journey to when you are not taking the medication.
  - Take a slightly lower dose of the entheogen than you would otherwise take

## 8. Problem Management

### Knowledge review

1. Why should we learn about problem management?
  - Problems WILL arise.
  - It can lead to traumas, injuries or life threatening situations.
  - To prevent all bad experiences.
2. Choices concerning what factors can lead to problems?
  - Set/Setting
  - Substance / Dose
  - Physical conditions
3. True or False: By adequate preparation we can avoid all possible problems.
  - True ■ False
4. How can you prepare for your journey?
  - prepare music/objects/drinks
  - prepare /know location
  - bring a bucket
  - research substance effects and safety
  - investigate purity
5. Who is ultimately responsible for checking the safety of the consumed substance/dose?
  - The sitter ■ The traveler
6. What signs can indicate a real emergency?
  - unconsciousness
  - trouble breathing
  - rapid or weak pulse
  - bleeding
  - convulsions
  - uncoordinated movements
7. What is the number for EMS in your country?
  - 112 or 911 usually

## 9. Equipment

### Knowledge review

1. Which are environmental conditions that you might have to artificially manipulate for plant species?  
 magnetic field  
 humidity  
 temperature
2. What defines the photoperiod?   
the type of light a plant receives  
 the amount of light a plant receives every day  
 the number of light sources used
3. The most basic technique for growing mushrooms from spore prints is called \_\_\_\_\_.  
 PF-Tek  
 mushroom Tek  
 liquid culture
4. A sterile workbench with a constant over-pressure of air-flow from a HEPA filter, which filters out even smallest particles like bacteria, is usually called a \_\_\_\_\_.  
 glove box  
 flow hood  
 HEPA bench
5. To sterilize substrates for mushrooms you need a \_\_\_\_\_.  
 UV lamp  
 sterile work zone  
 Pressure cooker
6. Extractions are usually performed to \_\_\_\_\_ active compounds from \_\_\_\_\_.  
 create/plant matter  
 identify/inactive compounds  
 extract/plant matter
7. How do you avoid injuries from chemicals?  
 Wear protective gear like gloves and goggles.  
 Use only lab grade chemicals.  
 Weigh the chemicals before use.
8. What equipment can help with administering entheogens?  
 Pipes and vaporizers.  
 Foods to mask taste.  
 Juices.



## 10. Getting the Most Out of Your Experiences

### Knowledge review

1. Why should you integrate?
  - So you can take higher doses
  - In order to apply the experience to your life and personal development
  - To find happiness
2. How can you intentionally integrate?
  - Meditate/contemplate
  - Travel
  - Write (in a journal)
3. What is a journal good for?
  - To avoid HPPD
  - To conquer fears
  - To decipher and integrate experiences
4. What can you do to stay grounded?
  - Remain open-minded and critical
  - Consider alternative viewpoints and interpretations
  - Consider the consequences and benefits of a new belief
5. Who should dictate the frequency of your use?
  - Peers
  - The traveler himself
6. What should you consider when planning successive journeys?
  - Tolerance
  - Integration
  - Responsibilities
7. What are probably the main reasons for difficult experiences?
  - Fear and refusal to let go
  - Colors you have no words for
  - Power of the experience and confusion
8. What approaches can you use to navigate your experiences?
  - Mantras
  - Surrender
  - Fetal position
  - Freudian interpretation

## 11. Getting Started

### Knowledge review

1. How should you plan/prepare for your first experience?  
 Make and use a checklist.  
 Consider everything in your head.  
 Use whichever method works best
2. True or False: DMT should not be used as a first entheogen.  
 True  False
3. A good setting to start out in can be \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a heavy metal concert  
 your home
4. It is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ your company well.  
 inappropriate / inform  
 important / choose  
 irresponsible / attend
5. It is recommended to start out with \_\_\_\_\_.  
 break-through doses  
 threshold doses  
 low doses

## 12. Outlook

### Knowledge review

1. What does it mean to be an Open Hyperspace Traveler?
  - You know everything about entheogens.
  - You are an experienced traveler of hyperspace.
  - You have completed the OHT course and now know the basics about the responsible, safe, and beneficial use of entheogens.
  
2. How can you become involved in working towards legalization/decriminalization of entheogens?
  - Join an existing group/organization
  - Create your own organization/group
  - Volunteer at projects for harm reduction and chemical testing
  - Join the Entheogenic University and help educate and reduce harm
  
3. What should you do when using resources about entheogens?
  - Use more than one resource.
  - Believe everything that is written and published.
  - Think critically.
  
4. What are the advantages of continuing courses at the Entheogenic University?
  - Contact to members who can help with the topics studied.
  - Courses are in the same format as the OHT Manual
  - Topics are covered based on science and experience with the goal to minimize harm and maximize benefits.









