

I. Places in the Mind

Psychedelic literature suggests that the altered state experience is an opening up and flowering of internal spaces within oneself. Psychedelia has helped open these spaces up, as ripe for exploration and discovery. Do you think the process of psychedelic altered states and therapeutic integration facilitates opening and rediscovery? How so? How not? What thoughts are stirred in consideration of developing proper techniques involving the use of altered states? How do you not get in the way of the process? Is that itself a process? What processes offer higher yields of functional utility, renewed passions, bettered sense of well-being for the self, and endues compassion for the other? What facilitates and restores meaning into one's life?

- "What you are going through is a process. All you have to do is not get in its way"
- "Take notes. As much as you can write everything down as it happens every feeling in the body or mind every concept every shift of emotion the notes could be of immense importance to you at some point in the future. However, the main value of keeping track of experience, finding words to express what's going on, is that it will help you to assimilate the changes you're undergoing, and put them in perspective."
- "If you have had the feeling of helplessness of being out of control during your altered state you will find that focusing your thoughts on words and phrases that best describe whatever is going on (it doesn't matter whether you use a pen and paper or a tape recorder) will gradually bring back a sense of being in charge of what's happening with you and to you. Why? because you are taking input which is coming at you fast and with great intensity—colors concepts emotions a sense of cosmic dimensions within the most ordinary objects and a continuing sense of immense meaningfulness—and you're attempting to contain it as much as possible. writing everything down or talking into a tape recorder our ways of imposing your own structure on interior chaos and it will bit by bit give you a sense of participation to replace the feelings of being victimized. it will enable you to let go of fear and perhaps open yourself to whatever it is that your psyche wants you to discover."
- "If for any reason you cannot or do not want to write or tape then make use of whatever form of artistic expression you can: clay modeling, painting anything that will express what you are experiencing in allow you to reshape and restructure it thus helping you regain some sense of control."
- "For those who are used praying, this is a good time to practice whatever you understand is meant by the word "prayer" asking— your own higher-self, or God, or your Angel— for support guidance and blessing."
- "In time the shift in consciousness will right itself and you'll be back to your normal baseline or at least close enough to it to allow you to function comfortably in the world again. you will emerge from this kind of unexpected stretching of psychic muscles with a feeling of having opened up new dimensions within yourself and an increased awe at the wealth of information that lies below the conscious mind and all of us."
- "Alterations of consciousness are inevitable if you are on a spiritual path using psychedelic drugs, visionary plants, or other methods such as, for instance: holotropic breathing, hypnosis, or meditation."
- "This method of learning has one great advantage in that the experience has a beginning, middle, and end."
- "For those whose everyday lives are not happy or fulfilling; the psychedelic experience can serve to renew their sense of meaningfulness and put them back in touch with wonder and joy."

II. Inflation (The Priestess)

What thoughts does the priest or priestess archetype conjure in the mind? What of this diamond clear mindedness?

- "I was The Priestess, full of knowledge and power, seated above the rest of humanity, dispensing wisdom. It was a picture of supreme intellectual and spiritual arrogance, and although it was visible for only a few seconds, I had taken it as a warning: this was an aspect of myself that I had to keep under control."
- "The drug or visionary plant does not, in itself, contain any particular experience; each psychedelic drug simply makes it possible to open interior doors through which that experience might emerge. The doors opened by DMT tend to be quite different than those opened by mescaline, for instance, but once you are through those doors, what you encounter is part of yourself."
- "Oh, my everlovin' God! This is what's meant by a bliss state. I'm a body of energy; my mind is like a crystal; there's no question in the universe that I can't find the answer to. All I need in the world is myself; living in this serene rhythm, filled with livingness and knowledge."
- "The priest or priestess is an archetype within the human unconscious, and I believe it's essential that it be experienced and work through by anyone who wants to know all he can about the nature of his (and everybody else's) mind and psyche."

III. Certainty and Knowing

What kind of certainty is developed in psychedelic spaces and how is this used afterward? What does do you think about the type of insight draw from psychedelic experiences? What should we make of such insight? Does it provide a greater utility, or does it come with drawbacks?

- “There is a real problem associated with the sense of knowing when it is part of the psychedelic experiment. It feels good (certainly unusually feels good), but the trouble is that it also feels at the time like a genuine experience of Truth. Your soul has no doubt at all there is no question that your evaluation of whatever it is you feel certain about fills you with a sense of absolute “rightness.”
- “Through the influence of a drug do not make a phone call do not write a letter and mail it do not make pronouncements about anything at all. enjoy the feeling and tell others around you that you are experiencing a delicious inflation. then either leave the company of your friends until that all annoyingness begins to mellow out, or stay with them and just keep your mouth shut in your, strong wise opinions to yourself.”

IV. The Void

Might psychedelics be used to prevent and combat depression? Thoughts?

- “This is one of the terrible places.... it involves a total loss of sense of any meaning.... if you are in the company of other experienced travelers someone else is sure to be familiar with it and can help you make your way through.... lead to suicidal impulses and sensitive persons because whoever finds himself in this particular place is always convinced at least temporarily that what he is seeing, and feeling is the basic truth about the world he lives in and the cosmos at large that all life is absolutely meaningless.”
- “You must remember it is not the final truth about the universe you live in it's a genuine part of what it is but only a small part.”
- “The second thing to remember is that you have no obligation to stay in this dark place.
- “One way to get free of this place is by focusing intently on certain images: perhaps the laughing Buddha, or your favorite mental picture of Jesus the Christ, or newborn babies being welcomed and adorned by their parents, or your love for your own mate or your children, the music you like to hear, the deep pleasure of planting and harvesting, or whatever else you can remember of the beauty and joy in life. Concentrate on one of these, or let all of them parade through your mind, and to the exclusion of everything else. See them clearly, your chosen good images, give them powers by saying yes to them, and with all of yourself let them radiate light within you. The void, the hopeless place will begin disintegrating color will gradually replace the dull Gray and meaningfulness will return.”
- “Everybody’s definition of “meaning” or “meaningfulness” is a bit different. My own is this: ‘meaningfulness’ is the sense that everything that exists, and has a purpose; that there is a great story being told throughout the universe, and that each of us, along with every other form of life, is playing an important part in that story.”

V. Paranoia

What do you think of using one’s “Observer” function of mental capacity in order to combat paranoia and fear?

- “If you find yourself feeling paranoid during a psychedelic experience there are certain things to keep in mind. First, if you are seeing a menace or hatred in the faces of people you know and love; try to activate your Observer the part of you, that watches, learns, and evaluates without emotion (although it does at times have a subtle sense of humor). The Observer is always present. Remember, it's there for you to use, and you must call on it. It should tell you something like this: ‘You've taken a drug and it's changing your perception. Don't get trapped in this negativity and distrust. It's a part of your psyche. It's an aspect of your survivor—the corner of your soul that assumes it's still living in the jungle and senses danger everywhere— and what you're seeing has nothing to do with the truth about your friends, or how they feel towards you. It has to do with projections from deep within your unconscious mind. Just write it out, it'll fade in a while.’”

VI. Self-Hatred

What methodologies are you aware of for the better the trip experience and preventing (or rather learning from) these spaces?

- “In most psychedelic sessions, this stage passes within the first hour and what takes place is usually a mellow good humored self-acceptance. but it is because of the possibility of an eruption of childhood program self-condemnation or its cousin paranoia that your first experiment with the new to use psychedelic drug should always be in the company of an experienced guide usually called a babysitter. there should be someone present who can spot trouble and move in with sympathy and common sense diffuse the potentially damaging self-rejection.
- And by “potentially damaging,” I mean that, in the case of self-hatred, if it is overwhelming and intense enough ,and the researcher it's not experienced, there can be an impulse of self-destruction.”

VII. The Oceanic Experience

What are your thoughts on the oceanic experience?

- "This is known as the participation mystique in the words of the great Mircea Eliade."
- "This bliss state does not negate the suffering you have participated in; it includes and contains in it. You may find yourself on a cosmic, knife-edge with your soul balancing between vast, deep darkness on one side, and an infinite stretch on light on the other; it is here I believe, on this knife-edge inside us, that laughter is born."
- "The person who has been in this place knows to his marrow that he is part of nature, not separate from it, and that the earth itself, the great body beneath our feet, is a living entity with a consciousness all its own, of a kind far different from anything that can be understood intellectually. He has felt the edges of the plant-consciousness, so he knows that some part of his psyche is connected to it, and that this is true of every living thing in the world."

VIII. Synesthesia

What are your thoughts on Synesthesia?

- "The definition of synesthesia in one dictionary is: 'a sensation produced in one modality when a stimulus is applied to another as when the hearing of a certain sound induces the visualization of a certain color.' Under the influence of most psychedelic drugs, not only can music present itself to the listener in all shades of color, and all degrees the brightness and subtlety, but the reverse can also be true; colors can translate themselves into sound. there are sometimes such exotic interpretive changes as feeling emotions as textures and intellectual concepts is three-dimensional shapes."
- "Poets, artists, and musicians may have experiences of synesthesia while they are focusing intently on their work, probably because the creative experience usually involves an alteration of consciousness, a trance state. the taking of a psychedelic revisionary plant simply makes this interweaving of sensory modalities apparent to the conscious mind."
- "Synesthesia produces a sense of pleasure in everyone who has experienced it. the human psyche seems to enjoy this melding of the senses. there are some people in this world who live with synesthesia all the time; they apparently consider themselves among the luckiest human beings on the planet. I am certain there are synesthesia experiences which are dark and frightening, perhaps in nightmares or in certain schizophrenic states, but I have never personally heard or read of such negative kinds of synesthesia. For me, this is a place of great enjoyment in soul satisfaction."

IX. Laughter

What are your thoughts on Laughter as a therapy?

- "A bout of real laughter can strengthen the immune system among many other good things and should be treasured."
- "The laughing Buddha is an archetype and illustration of what it is to stand on the knife edge between dark and light death and life and to survey the universe from there. This is cosmic laughter, half pain and half bless. One doesn't have to be a Buddha to know that place; it's inside every one of us mortals, and all that's needed is the willingness to open the door and step through."

X. The Beth State

What are your thoughts on the "Beth" state?

- "The Beth state is one in which you are aware of being in an altered state of consciousness, but you can't pin down exactly how you know, since there are no visual changes, no emotional stimulation, no colorful patterns appearing in the mind, no nothin'."

XI. Flooding

What are your thoughts on Flooding in the psychedelic experience?

- “This can be one of the consequences of taking too high a dose of a psychedelic drug. it can also happen at perfectly reasonable dosage level, but is far less likely. you find yourself bombarded by a torrent of images, concepts, and connections all coming at you from the friendly neighborhood cosmos. the details of the experience will vary of course with every person who finds himself in this particular place in the mind but the general feeling is one of being flooded by meaningful connections between everything in the universe and everything else. an experienced traveler knowing that this too will pass might manage to relax and enjoy the complexity of the onslaught, but to the naive experimenter, it can be overwhelming. the ego the sense of core identity might be hard to maintain the sense of the self might be lost in the roaring noise of continual, intense input.”
- “What you should be aiming for in such an experience is this; maintaining your sense of identity, your knowledge that you are a being distinct from other beings and from the world that surrounds you, well allowing the images and concepts and energies that are bombarding you to be what they are, to go where they are going, to flow through you and pass you. after a while everything will begin to soften and quiet in the crashing flood of information will eventually become a trickle. one of the things you may be left with from this experience will be a new appreciation of what it means to live your life with a goal, a focus, and intent of some kind to help channel your energy and thoughts.”
- “There is a difference between an experience of overload or flooding and one of mystical participation. Your instincts tell you when they’re overloaded; you feel under attack, overwhelmed by too much, too much and unable to learn anything of value, (except, of course, that your dosage level of the drug was probably too high).”
- “This state of being flooded by a more information more connections than concepts than you can handle can teach you about the place in that psyche. it can also make clear to you why as a human being it is necessary for you to control the rate of that flow at least to the extent that you can hold onto yourself and give time to the exploration of a concept or series of connections. only this way can you hope to learn something of value.”

XII. Time Distortion

What are your thoughts on time and space distortion in psychedelic experiences?

- “This is one of the most common effects of a psychedelic drug. Almost all of these drugs cause changes in ones’ time-sense, most of the time; there is a feeling of time-stretching, but there can also be an experience of the opposite, a compression of time. this is not usually disturbing to the traveler with one very distinct exception, I have heard of first-time psychedelic explorers who found themselves trapped in what they were sure was eternity, with no way out.”
- “I know of only one way to avoid such an experience, and that is to make sure that you take a relatively low amount of any psychedelic drug you haven't tried before. and when you are familiar with the drug, increase the dosage very slowly, if at all. this is not an area in which being “macho” is advisable. You're experimenting with your own mind and with unknown levels of your own psyche, and it is best to go slowly and carefully with great respect and humility.”
- “Keep reminding yourself that eternity, in this case, is temporary, and that you are experiencing a fascinating corner of your soul.”

XIII. Out of Body Experiences (OBEs)

Research into OBEs has been documented to some extent in the field of parapsychology. Claims of OBEs are neither insular, nor isolated. To some degree, OBEs appear to have some correlation with various altered states of consciousness, and have been found in a wide variety of textual accounts involving various altered states of consciousness. What are your thoughts on OBEs?

XIV. Hallucinations

- “The important distinction is this: if you've taken a psychedelic drug and are, for instance seeing increased brightness of color and richness of texture, interesting faces in large rocks, or kaleidoscopic imagery on your ceiling, and if you remain totally aware of the fact that such visual enhancements are due to you having taken a drug, you are NOT hallucinating.”
- “On the other hand, if you've taken a drug and see a pretty blue horse prancing across your living room carpet, and you're convinced that everyone else in your vicinity can also see the horse, and if you make no association between the blue horse and the taking of the drug, but are certain that what you are seeing is part of consensual reality, then you are indeed hallucinating. It is the conscious awareness of cause and effect—the taking of a drug and then seeing of a blue horse—that makes the difference between experiencing visual effects or visual changes in real hallucinations.”

XV. The Kali

- “Every human being contains all of these places in his psyche; what he does with them, how he puts them together into a world view of the universe, and his role in it, will be unique to him and must be respected and honored.”

XVI. Euphoria

- “In the psychedelic experience, we can discover a clear, open channel to feeling and emotions again. it makes us more vulnerable to the world around us, but without that vulnerability, we cannot feel our truth and we can never hope to grow wise.”