



HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE FOR YOU



My Story

I had never done drugs.

Never. I barely drank.

In the summer of 2020, I went to a ceremony and took MDMA, cannabis and psilocybin. All at the same time. This was a very structured and supported event, and there were only about 10 of us. I brought my terror and a pillow, along with socks that read, "Happy" on the toes, just in case I would forget that that was what I was after.

It was my hope. I was feeling rather joyless, and no joy was on the horizon as far as I could see..

As I laid down on my mat, I adjusted down my expectations. I would gladly simply accept change.

We were given the plant medicine along with some basic information. Soon the man across from me started to snore, the leader spoke in lyrical tone while guiding us to breathe, "Go inside, relax."

Breathe I could do, go inside I had done from years of yoga. I thought, "Well, perhaps I'll get a really good five-hour nap and relaxation." I breathed in, went inside (meaning intending to get a sense of my lungs...) and then I was inside. Of me. I could see my body from the inside out.

"Holy shit!" As I began to freak out, I remembered the guidance to go with whatever came up, and so I did, I swallowed (myself?!) and went deeper.

It is said that describing a hallucinogenic experience is like going to the ocean and being able to return with only a teaspoon, and having to say, "Here, this is the ocean."

Here's my teaspoon. I was the me I am now, and I was my mother, and I was me in utero and I was me holding me as a newborn. I was engulfed in warmth, in love, in joy. There was so much joy, that I giggled, then laughed. I did not want to disturb others, so I covered my mouth, but like a small child, I only laughed more.

I visited where we come from, and it was beautiful, safe, unified. I understood we choose this consciousness and it's our birthright to have love, joy and acceptance. I understood where we go to and this was back to the wonderful unified whole. Whatever that is; I cannot explain.

And so, this atheist ended up a Believer, of something wonderful. There was more, much, much more and it was wonderful. But that is my teaspoon. There's an ocean left.

Later my co-journeymen said they loved my laughter. They followed it and I inspired them. This was the first time I have ever imagined I could lead with no intellectual credence, no authority, no title—only with joy, in other words, by being. With laughter. And this I began to understand who I truly am—a soul visiting this earth in a body, tasked with influencing only with joy.

What I did right (for me):

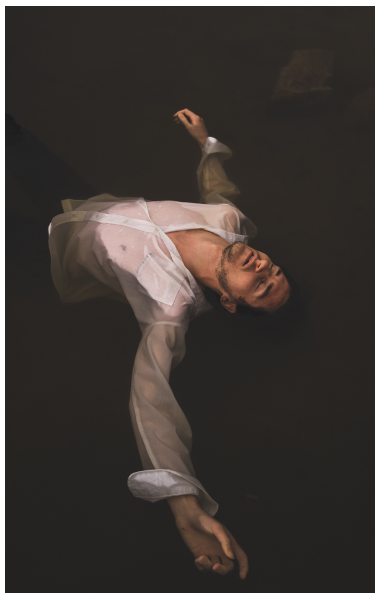
1. I actually did the ceremony, faced my fears and did something for myself, completely out of my comfort zone.
2. I was guided by a very experienced, intelligent and kind soul.
3. Although we had no pre- or post-work, I did my first ceremony within a small group.
4. I stayed within the United States, in a place I knew that I could get help if I needed it.

What I wish I had known...well, that's everything in this guide.

May you start on your journey,

Beth

"You go deep enough or far out enough in consciousness and you will bump into the sacred. It's not something we generate; it's something out there waiting to be discovered. And this reliably happens to nonbelievers as well as believers — Michael Pollan



Understand what you want.

You may be looking for a “good” time, you may be wanting a “sparkly” experience, or you may want a profound experience with significant potential shift in your life. If you are wanting the later, this Guide is for you. Psychedelics are more and more seen to have the ability to dramatically and perhaps even permanently shift our world views and life satisfaction in incredibly powerful ways. It’s important to note though, this does not happen without our participation.

Perhaps most important in picking the right experience for you is Set and Setting, which what you do, where and with whom and under what intention; is the most critical key to your experience. If nothing else, what we have learned is the importance of preparation and intent along with an experienced, safe and appropriate guide cannot be overstated. We also believe who you do this with—meaning small cohorts of people with trust and honesty will magnify the potential of a positive, profound experience.

Select a guide, center, group.

All guides are not equal. Some call themselves Shamans, or Sitters or guides; but what truly matters is that you select a professional who can help you prepare for the experience by providing information about the substance, its effects, and what to expect. They can also help you set intentions and create a safe and comfortable environment.

During the journey, guides can provide emotional support and guidance, helping you, if needed, to navigate challenging thoughts, emotions, or experiences. They can offer reassurance, grounding techniques, or other strategies to help us feel safe and supported.

It is important to intentionally select a “sitter” or guide that has deep respect for the profound mystical component of the experience, as well as one who understands the science and has significant experience. Being guided by someone who is calm, reassuring and trustworthily is essential.

Do research and make sure that the group or person are/is legitimate and follows ethical guidelines. Connect with the group ahead of time and get to know the members and leaders. Ask about their experience with psilocybin and their approach to using the substance. Talk to others who have gone thru the experience with this guide.

Make sure you are in a safe and comfortable environment during the journey. Ideally, you should be surrounded by trusted people who can and will provide support and guidance.

Do not approach a profound psychedelic experience without having a non-“using” sitter with you at all times.

Common Types of Hallucinogens

1. LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide): A potent synthetic chemical that alters mood, thought, and perception. Experience can last several hours or more.
2. Psilocybin: A naturally occurring compound found in certain species of mushrooms. It can cause changes in perception, thought, and mood.
3. DMT (Dimethyltryptamine): A powerful psychedelic compound that can induce intense visual and auditory hallucinations, as well as altered states of consciousness.
4. Peyote: A cactus that contains the psychoactive compound mescaline. It has been used in religious and spiritual ceremonies for centuries.
5. Ayahuasca: A brew made from plants containing DMT. It has been used in traditional spiritual practices in South America for centuries.
6. Ketamine: A dissociative anesthetic that can produce feelings of detachment from reality and altered perception of time and space. Legalized in medical offices.
7. MDMA (also known as ecstasy): A synthetic compound that can have mild hallucinogenic effects, but is primarily known for its empathogenic and stimulant properties.

Common Experiences...

1. LSD: Profound spiritual or mystical experiences, increased creativity and openness, and improved mood and social relationships.
2. Psilocybin: Feelings of increased empathy, connection with nature, and enhanced creativity and problem-solving ability.
3. DMT: Intense spiritual or mystical experiences, feelings of awe and wonder, and improved mood and well-being.

4. Peyote: Feelings of increased empathy, connection with nature and spirituality, and enhanced creativity and problem-solving ability.
5. Ayahuasca: Profound spiritual or mystical experiences, feelings of increased empathy and connection with others, and improved mood and well-being.
6. Ketamine: Feelings of increased empathy, connection with others, and reduced symptoms of depression or anxiety.
7. MDMA: Feelings of increased empathy, emotional openness, and a sense of connection with others.

It's important to note that the effects of these substances can vary greatly from person to person, and the experiences of one individual may not be representative of others. Also, often guides combine substances and may provide cannabis, teas and other herbal drinks.

Preparation

Ideally your guide will provide you with pre-work and information. There's much benefit in understanding what you will be taking, the known experience of most people using this medicine and the opportunity to set intentions. Even more powerful is to do this with a cohort so that each participant is supported by others.

It is essential to be transparent on any medical conditions you have or medications you are taking. Talk to your doctor about your intent, and get a clear understanding of his/her viewpoints on how to do this safely. Many anti-depressants need to be stopped prior to a ceremony, and this should be done under the direction of your doctor.



Safety/Legality

Legal issues: Psychedelic substances are illegal in many countries, and possessing or using them can result in serious legal consequences, including fines and imprisonment. Some religious and research organizations legally can provide psychedelics and may work under a PMA (Private Membership Association) in which for a small fee, you join the organization and under this association; the usage of psychedelics could be protected.

Further, check with the practitioners on their protocol for getting emergency medical help if needed. Many states in the US protect those getting emergency help, regardless of the circumstances. You want this.

Group or Individual?

In a small group setting, each participant may receive strong individual attention and support from the guide or facilitator, and also have profound experiences of belonging and connecting with a cohort of journeyers. This can help to create a more personalized and supportive experience. Be sure to know how small the small group is—more than 10 per two facilitators could be too large for adequate support.

It may feel safer to have an individual session, but often this can feel isolating and there's the community missing in integration, perhaps one of the most powerful impacts of a journey.

Individual journeys and very small groups allow for better monitoring and supervision of participants, which can help to ensure their safety and minimize the risk of adverse effects.

Small groups can foster a sense of intimacy and connection among participants, which can help to create a more comfortable and supportive environment, especially with intention setting and integration.

Small groups can provide opportunities for group bonding, shared experiences, and mutual support, which can enhance the transformative potential of the experience. Frequently, in a journey you may have profound insights and experiences that may be nearly impossible to explain to others. Having a built in cohort allows deeper integration.

Overall, small group settings can provide a more personalized, supportive, and transformative experience for individuals seeking to explore the potential of psychedelic substances. However, it's important to note that small group settings should always be facilitated by experienced and trained professionals who can provide appropriate guidance and support.

Foreign Country?

Psychedelic journeys can be intense and disorienting experiences that may (rarely) require medical attention or support. In a foreign country, you may not have access to the same quality of medical care or support systems that you would in your home country.

The customs, norms, and expectations of a foreign country may differ significantly from your own, which can impact your psychological well-being and experience of the psychedelic journey.

If you do not speak the local language fluently, it may be difficult to communicate your needs or understand important instructions or safety protocols.

Quality control: In some countries, the quality and purity of psychedelic substances may be questionable, increasing the risk of adverse effects or unexpected reactions.



Intention

Set an intention for your psilocybin journey and approach the experience with an open and receptive mindset. This can help you to gain the most benefit from the experience. Powerful intentions tend to be ones that suggest a way of being, instead of a desire that one might think they want. For example, an intention to have more peace, love and acceptance is actually possible and has permanence to it. For example, an intention of wanting more joy in your work is stronger than, "I'd like a better job."

Mindset management

Guides can help individuals to cultivate a positive and open mindset before and during the experience, which can help to minimize the risk of having a challenging trip. They can offer strategies for staying present, managing anxiety or fear, and approaching the experience with curiosity and openness.

Also, as much as intention setting is critical, it is equally important to realize that the medicine will do what it will. Fighting or resisting experiences can make them much more intense. Letting go of what “must” happen in lieu of what you may need to experience is liberating. And always, always if having challenges during an experience, it is important to ask for help, or support. This may be precisely what the medicine is teach you to do.

Integration:

After the experience, guides can help individuals to integrate their insights and experiences into their daily lives. This may include offering support or resources for ongoing self-reflection or growth. We feel this is perhaps the key to having lasting, profound shifts in our lives from a ceremony. Integration, ideally, with a small supportive group is incredibly strong and is highly recommended.

Supportive Modalities:

Some experiences will include modalities that support journeys, relaxation, acceptance and shifts.

For example, breathwork, hypnotherapy, and psilocybin are all practices that can be used to promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Used in succession, these practices may have complementary benefits that can enhance their effectiveness.

Breathwork involves intentional breathing techniques that can help to reduce stress, increase relaxation, and promote a sense of calm. It can also help to increase oxygen flow to the brain, which can improve cognitive function and mental clarity.

Hypnotherapy involves a trance-like state in which an individual is highly receptive to suggestions, and can be used to promote positive behavior change, reduce anxiety, and improve overall well-being. Psilocybin is a psychoactive substance that can induce profound changes in consciousness and is being investigated as a potential treatment for a range of mental health conditions, including depression and anxiety.

Used in conjunction with one another, these practices may have a synergistic effect that can enhance their benefits. For example, breathwork and hypnotherapy can help to promote relaxation and reduce anxiety, which can make it easier for individuals to enter into a receptive state for the psilocybin experience. Additionally, breathwork and hypnotherapy may help individuals to integrate and make sense of their psilocybin experiences, and to apply the insights gained during the experience to their daily lives.

A final note.

It's worth noting that the use of psilocybin is still a topic of ongoing research, and it is important to approach the use of any psychoactive substance with caution and under the guidance of a trained professional. Additionally, the benefits of these practices may vary depending on individual circumstances, and it is important to consult with a healthcare provider to determine if they are appropriate for your needs.

Resources

Books

"How to Change Your Mind" by Michael Pollan - This book explores the history, science, and potential therapeutic benefits of psilocybin and other psychedelics.

"The Psychedelic Explorer's Guide" by James Fadiman - This book offers practical advice and guidelines for using psychedelics safely and effectively, including psilocybin.

"The Psilocybin Mushroom Bible" by Dr. K Mandrake - This book provides a comprehensive guide to growing and using psilocybin mushrooms, including tips for cultivation and dosage recommendations.

"The Doors of Perception" by Aldous Huxley - While not specifically about psilocybin, this classic book explores the author's experiences with mescaline, a related psychedelic compound, and offers insights into the nature of consciousness and perception.

Recommended Podcasts

- Huberman Lab
- Psychedelics Today
- Making Sense (Sam Harris)
- Tim Ferris
- Psychedelic Therapy Frontiers
- MAPS Podcast

The information presented is provided solely for informational purposes and should not be relied upon for diagnosing any disease or medical condition or prescribing any form of treatment. The content is primarily based on personal experiences, case studies, and anecdotal reports. It is not intended as a replacement for personal consultation with qualified physicians, therapists, and attorneys and should not be used as such.



Who We Are—

FieldGuide9 or FG9--a leader in spiritual journeys.

We bring the leading guides in spiritual growth to a stunning, privately owned retreat center in nature. FG9 is at the intersection of science, spirituality, and harmony with self and others.

Spiritual Guidance—we have cutting edge, deeply experienced sincere shamans, musicians, and practitioners. We are a not-for profit, with a religious designation. Plant medicine is a sacrament in our community.

Modalities—For all of our retreats we have deep pre and post practices that include: sauna, ice plunge, sound therapy, breathwork, meditation.

Personalized Coaching and Small Group Intensive Training—in our intimate journey groups (12 or less) we have many hours of coaching and small group work led by expert coaches which includes Internal Family Systems, The Work, and Limiting beliefs.

Intention Setting—we guide each participant to explore their deepest wishes for themselves and others.

Integration—we have several integration sessions over the weeks following each ceremony.

Community—we have a community of fellow journeyers, leaders and practitioners; all on the same team, and we frequently come together.

Education and continuous growth—We bring to the FG9 community experts and their practices in religion, spirituality, psychology, science/medicine/research. We are dedicated to researching the plant medicine developments for our community.

Food and Lodgings—We have world class lodging on 14 acres in which both the sun rise and sun set can be viewed from the decks. Hiking out the door. Dark skies. Hot tub, fire pit. All in our privately owned retreat center. One hour from the San Francisco airport. We provide organic, homemade, amazing food.

Safety—We are a Private Ministerial Association, with a religious designation. All participants are part of our PMA. We follow the strongest protocols on privacy, safety, diet, assistance and support. The Journey is a structured, month-long program built around a unique and powerful combination of traditional and non-traditional modalities. It's experienced within a tight-knit group of just 12 participants that quickly creates dramatic, life-changing impact for anyone wanting more. We are located in northern California, and the rest is online.