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## UNDERSTANDING A PSILOCYBIN MACRO JOURNEY

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**FG9** a non-profit Private Ministerial Association (PMA) offers a transformative and deeply impactful plant medicine journey with deep support and spiritual guidance from experts. Based in California, we conduct journeys multiple times a year with small, intimate cohorts. Our journeys are known for their profound and long-lasting effects as well as relationships, facilitated by the formation of incredible small group support networks; and guided by experienced leaders.

### What is psilocybin and how does it work?

Psilocybin is a naturally occurring compound produced by more than 200 species of fungi. Fungi is a general term that includes several types of yeasts, molds and mushrooms. By itself it is inactive, but, in the body, it is converted into something called psilocin.

Psilocin has mind-altering effects on the brain including:

- Euphoria
- A distorted sense of time
- Visual and mental distortions
- Perception of “spiritual experiences”

Because of these “magic” effects, the types of mushrooms that cause them are called “magic mushrooms”.

The “experience” typically begins around 30 minutes after drinking a tea infused with the magic mushrooms and lasts 2-4 hours. However, it might feel like it lasts MUCH longer because of the distorted sense of time. The body quickly processes and disposes of the mushrooms and is undetectable within 12 – 24 hours. Psilocybin is non-addictive. In fact, its anti-addictive because the



body produces a high tolerance to the effects quickly.

About three out of five people report having an “out-of-body” experience that an overwhelming percent later describe as pleasant or even euphoric. If you do, great! If not, no worries, this is not required to having had an profound experience. Over 80% of people describe the experience as life-changing in the days and months after.

Now, from a chemical standpoint and in simple terms, let’s talk about what happens.

Psilocin activates the serotonin receptors in the brain. Serotonin is one of five chemicals produced by the body that together regulate mood, motivation, creativity and learning. Serotonin, in particular, regulates mood and creativity and typically makes you feel more happy, more connected and empathetic towards yourself and others.

In this case Serotonin activates a part of your brain called the “Locus Coeruleus” which is responsible for the creation of novel thoughts and feelings.

The geometric shapes you might see? That is just the visual cortex part of your brain responding to lines and shapes. You can get the same effect by rubbing against your closed eye. This just happens without pressing and is no scarier. Enjoy them! You may also have novel perceptions of your senses. For example, you could find that you don’t just hear music, but feel it.

### **Psilocybin:**

Psilocybin is the psychoactive ingredient found in magic mushrooms. It produces a hallucinogenic trip with effects that begin within the first 20 to 40 minutes and last between three to six hours.

In addition to usage for spiritual growth and healing, psilocybin has been used in therapeutic settings to address a range of mental health conditions. These include suicidality and depressed mood, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder.

Psilocybin's primary effect is to mimic serotonin, leading to neuroplasticity. A combination of psilocybin and talk therapy shows evidence of the strongest long-lasting results. Psilocybin increases communication across the brain and reduces the hierarchical organization of the brain, broadening the flow of information.

### **Potential Benefits:**

Many individuals report a variety of experiences, including feelings of connectedness, expanded awareness, and a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the universe.

### **Risks and Discomforts:**

- **Psychological Effects:** The substances used in the ceremony may induce altered states of consciousness, which can lead to intense emotional and psychological experiences, including feelings of fear, anxiety, confusion, and sadness.
- **Physical Effects:** The consumption of plant-derived substances may result in physical symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, sweating, increased heart rate, and changes in blood pressure.
- **Unpredictable Reactions:** Individual responses to the substances are highly variable, and there is a possibility of unexpected or adverse reactions.
- **Contraindications:** Some individuals may have pre-existing medical or psychological conditions that could interact negatively with the substances used in the ceremony. It is my responsibility to disclose any relevant medical or psychological history to the facilitators prior to the ceremony.



- **Integration:** The experiences during the ceremony may be intense and may require careful integration and processing afterward. Facilitators may offer guidance on how to integrate the insights and experiences gained from the ceremony into my daily life.

#### Best practices for an effective guided psilocybin journey:

- Sit or lie down comfortably with eyes closed or an eye mask.
- Music is critical to the experience.
- At least one person present should not be on psilocybin.
- No food at least 4 hours prior to the journey.

#### Psilocybin Dosing:

Ceremonial doses: 2-4g.

Heroic doses: approximately 5g dose of mushrooms.

Sourcing is key – not all mushrooms are created equal.

#### Understanding The Elements of An Effective Psilocybin Journey:

- Conditions of participation: 21 years of age or older, no previous psychotic episodes, no first relatives with schizophrenia, not on antidepressants.
- Set (mindset of person) and setting (environment and people present) need to be crafted in just the right manner to bias the experience towards a beneficial journey instead of a 'bad trip'.
- Use an eye mask or keep your eyes closed for the majority of sessions because too much time will be spent on the altered perception of the environment (visual hallucinations) if eyes are open.
- The person should be seated or lying down comfortably.
- Music is a huge element of a positive experience because it drives cognitive and emotional experience – usually starts calm then moves into something with more percussion at the peak of a journey then gets softer again until it completes with nature or soothing sounds.
- No food at least four hours prior to the journey.
- Psilocybin journeys are contraindicated for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

*“We are the witnesses through which the universe becomes conscious of its glory, of its magnificence.” --Alan Watts*

