12. Interview with Participant 12

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**Spoken duration of interview:** Participant (65%), Interviewer (35%)

**Age (years):** Participant (24), Interviewer (30)

**Gender:** Participant (male), Interviewer (male)

**Residence at time of recording:** Participant (United Kingdom), Interviewer (New Zealand)

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**Interviewer** 00:00

All right. It's good that it lets you know. So, it's not sneaky. So, before we start, there's one more thing to add and this is to frame or to define what, when I'm asking questions, I'm going to be asking a lot of questions about psychedelics but what drugs fall inside in the box of psychedelics or the boundaries of psychedelics and what falls outside of it. It's a bit porous as, as one would expect. So, in terms of when I'm asking you about your use of psychedelics, if you could limit it to these psychedelics so LSD, psilocybin, DMT, Ayahuasca, mescaline, or Iboga, and any of their analogue, so if you've had synthetic versions of DMT, or psilocybin or LSD, or another version, like 1p-LSD, or I think like ETH-LAD or something like these, you know, there's like different versions of LSD, for example, you can drop those in the psychedelic box, that's, that's fine. In terms of the drugs that we'd like you to, if you're able to kind of separate out in terms of why you use drugs, and the different effects that you've experienced over the time using them are things like cannabis. So, we're not particularly interested in how cannabis has affected you. It's important for sure, but it's just not the focus of this study. Things like MDMA or ecstasy. Often, I think people are sort of like it's a partial, psychedelic, in some of its effects for some people. So, that's one we'd like to exclude that we exclude out of this and the other two are which ketamine and salvia, which definitely for a lot of people have been said to be psychedelic, and they share overlapping effects but in this circumstances, we'd like you to if you've had experiences with those that have not talk about those in relation to the, the interview and the focus of the questions, so just go over it one more time. So, the ones that we're talking about it like LSD, psilocybin, DMT, Ayahuasca, mescaline, Iboga, in any of their analogues, and the ones we're trying to avoid, are or not exclude are cannabis, MDMA, ketamine and salvia, and actually any other drug that's not in the psychedelic box that you might put in there, but I think those are the ones that would be most likely for people to potentially drop in the psychedelic box. Is that clear?

**Participant** 02:44

Yeah.

**Q1. Interviewer** 02:45

Cool. All right. So, we'll just jump right into it then. So, the first question is, why do you use psychedelics?

**Participant** 02:57

I'd say Initially, it was mostly through curiosity and then after experiencing it, it became more, I guess, sort of spiritual and therapeutic or introspective, suppose.

**Interviewer** 03:29

Do you want to tell me a little bit about therapeutic and spiritual aspects of your use?

**Participant** 03:38

I suppose the main thing would be the sort of mental stability, which generally has lasted from the start, but prior to using psychedelics, it was, I guess, quite volatile emotions, like going from one to the other quite often and along with sort of reoccurring things from previous bad experiences, which was then able to sort of go into and let go of through that, and then on the spiritual side, it's just sort of, I guess, for me, it does relate back to curiosity, but it's sort of the depth of human experience and consciousness and what we're able to experience within this lifetime, it's just definitely fascinating.

**Interviewer** 04:36

I agree. I'm just, if you see me looking down, it's just underwriting notes and that way I can scan back over them as we sort of talking and to link back ideas. If you've said something back in the past, it makes me remember a little bit easier and If you see me writing down, feel free to just like if you've got more thoughts that are coming up just to share them because we're trying to look some of these questions are closed questions. So, it might end with, you can just answer it in a sort of Yes, no way but in terms of the question itself, we're looking for an expansion on that. So, the question is sort of like, it might be closed, but it's more like, what comes to mind when that question is asked, and you can speak to that.

**Participant** 05:27

Yeah. Okay.

**Interviewer** 05:38

Is there any other major reasons that you would be you use psychedelics now?

**Participant** 05:46

I wouldn't say major, I'd put I suppose recreation was a minor, it's a factor, or in a small social setting, but not much of that going on with lockdown and everything.

**Interviewer** 06:03

Yes, well, the world comes in and sometimes says no and is that with friends or is that in a different sort of social group?

**Participant** 06:22

Usually close friends.

**Q2. Interviewer** 06:35

You have said that. So, the next question, you've already sort of answered it a bit. So, let's have the reasons why use psychedelics changed over time and you said originally, that it started out with curiosity and works or became a sort of therapeutic spiritual introspective. Use. Maybe you want to talk a little? Sorry?

**Participant** 06:59

I'd say it was more recreational in the beginning as well.

**Interviewer** 07:12

And how, how quickly would you do you think use in terms of the number of times you use or also the length like, the year months, from beginning use to kind of transitioning into a spiritual therapeutic use pattern? What how, what, how long? or How many times did you use before that change occurred?

**Participant** 07:39

Um, I think it was, like, within a year, for sort of, maybe six months, and it was over I'd say three experiences before it's sort of, there was already sort of knowing there's more to it, but then having an experience where you kind of encounter more of the depths of what's possible and think to sort of change the approach.

**Interviewer** 08:27

And how long since you've sort of switched for the majority of your use to this more therapeutic, spiritual aspect? How long have you been engaging in that sort of use for?

**Participant** 08:45

Um, well, it's been quite a while since I lasted did, but the majority of the time I have which would be three years, I think.

**Q3. Interviewer** 09:09

Okay, and so next question is, how did you first start using psychedelics?

**Participant** 09:18

Um, well, it was very much something I was interested in before the opportunity came along. So, it was quite a long time of like, research and exploring what's already out there and then it was just when it came about that there was an opportunity, I was more than eager to jump on that.

**Interviewer** 09:38

Fair enough.

**Participant** 09:42

And for the first time, it was just me having it with one close friend, there suppose in the trip sitter kind of roll.

**Interviewer** 09:53

Mm hmm.

**Participant** 09:53

Seeing what happened

**Interviewer** 09:57

And how were those first experiences?

**Participant** 10:01

Amazing.

**Participant** 10:03

There was no obstacles encountered or anything, it was sort of with my mental health. Sort of struggling a bit prior to that was where I was quite cautious in researching it and thought there'll be potential for it to take a dark turn, but got quite the opposite, really, all very positive.

**Interviewer** 10:03

Yeah?

**Interviewer** 10:27

And were the first few times you were using it was with your friend as a trip sitter or did you use it by yourself at any point?

**Participant** 10:37

By the first few times, the first one was with, like, my friend as a trip sitter then the next couple times were with other friends who also had it.

**Q4. Interviewer** 10:57

All right. So, next question is, what aspects of psychedelics do you find most meaningful or valuable?

**Participant** 11:08

Um, I'd say the main thing is the change in perspective, which is very broad, but I think primarily just sort of how you perceive life and experiencing things and sort of what's it all about? It's also sort of priority shift, which is similar, but sort of looking at which things matter and what to focus on.

**Interviewer** 12:06

Could you describe the perspective change? What, you described it as broad, but are you able to give some comparison maybe between pre and post use and the perspective change that you can maybe identify how it's shifted or is now different?

**Participant** 12:28

Yeah. I guess the main thing would be much more nature oriented, which with it came the sort of connection of all things that it's a shared experience, not just between ourselves, but sort of everything. I think it's a shift from a very sort of isolated, general feeling and view that sort of being in your own world, that it's all part of something else.

**Interviewer** 13:08

Would you link that to a spiritual form of belief or is this more just sort of the fact of the matter? If that makes sense?

**Participant** 13:19

It's a bit of a weird overlap. Generally, I would say it is more spiritual, but I guess because I can still kind of rationalise it with sort of principles in science of like, that there are forces that interact between everything that exists, and I think the spiritual element is consciousness itself. Aside from that it still does seem like almost stating the obvious that everything is connected.

**Q6. Interviewer** 13:58

Yeah, okay. What aspects of psychedelics do you find most challenging or difficult?

**Participant** 14:09

Um, I think it's just the sort of power and potential of them. Like, although I've only really had blips of like, little difficult moments that I can steer away from or navigate through, it's like, I don't know if the overall thing. The worst part is before taking it was sort of thinking about everything that could happen and then soon as you do it's, sort of remember it's alright, but I guess otherwise, just the intensity overall. Like, especially sort of the deeper you go, it's sort of being able to just let go and allow whatever happens, not fight it, despite how intense it can be and I suppose the other big one is, when it's in more of a group setting, having a tendency to sort of want to make sure everyone else is alright, or be thinking about others than sort of more worried about them than myself.

**Interviewer** 15:43

When you talk about letting go and the, in the experience, so you described just before, like the power and the potential of psychedelics is part of like the possible difficulties that come with it and so that sort of comes with the intensity and you were just describing about being able to sort of let go, in that experience and just let it go. Go with the flow, so to speak if that, I think that's kind of the idea.

**Participant** 16:13

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 16:13

How, how do you pair that with the idea of, at certain moments during the experience, there might be unpleasant thoughts, emotions, or internal visual stimuli or, you know, different sensory experiences going on, that you navigate away from? How do you? What's the, are you able to sort of explain that that kind of difference where it's like, you have a level of seems control or navigational control? At the same time, you're letting go of the experience? Is it just by degree rather than, like, in its entirety?

**Participant** 16:52

I'd say it's sort of a sort of shift of angle of approach, like, it's, if things seem to be going a bit downhill, it's like, sort of double checking with myself, sort of, am I looking at this the right way? And yeah, just not, not falling straight down the first thoughts that might come up but observing those thoughts.

**Interviewer** 17:35

Sounds a little bit similar to mindfulness.

**Participant** 17:39

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 17:43

So would you say, when you talk about kind of navigating the experience, in this sense, you mean that if something comes up that potentially is unpleasant or negative, that you take a moment to see if the way in which you're thinking about or your perspective on that particular idea or topic, which you perceive as negative is just sort of how you view it rather than intrinsic to the thing itself?

**Participant** 18:14

Yeah. Yeah and along with that is usually sort of covering the fundamentals as well, making sure I drink water. So, some deep breaths, and suppose some sort of grounding exercises, if needed, that sort of a tool to achieve that sort of observation of what's going on.

**Interviewer** 18:44

And do you experience. How often would you experience a difficult moment? And maybe even if you're able to, like, how long do they last? Because you said that just a blip, before?

**Participant** 19:00

Yeah, it is very rarely, and it sort of, I think the awareness of it happening is usually almost already there. So, I've never found myself like, lost down a dark path kind of thing. I have had moments of sort of a lot of confusion, and kind of just, I don't know what's going on, but it's going on. I guess again, it's the only times have had more of that is when it's with someone else I've been with and it's kind of just sort of doing what you can, making sure it's not going to something extreme, and the balance of allowing them the space to navigate it and sort of reassurance if it's needed. So, those might, usually brings me out a bit. So, I sort of almost automatically grounded if there's something external serious going on that I need to pay attention to.

**Interviewer** 20:08

And have you had that experience where you would you needed to help manage or support somebody who was having a more much more difficult time than you were?

**Participant** 20:22

Yeah. Not to any severe sort of extremes but to some degree, it's usually change the music or little changes make a big difference.

**Q6. Interviewer** 20:35

Yeah. Certainly. Okay, moving on, then. What, sorry, in what ways have psychedelics affected your life? And, and just to preface this. So, I start with this broad question and there's a few smaller questions I'll ask, depending on if you, if you answer them, I won't ask them but if you don't answer them, I'll get at certain particular points that I'm interested in. So, start broad, and then we'll narrow in on a few things. So, yeah, in what ways have psychedelics affected your life?

**Participant** 21:13

They've definitely enriched it in many ways, just sort of embracing the depth of day to day, sort of, in the same way. I think they're sort of improvements in mental health and that sort of is almost like an extra layer of awareness that stuck and similar to mindfulness, that sort of, even though it might still experience difficult emotions, it's not like fully sucked into them, I can allow them to sort of go through their process and I think socially, it's also had quite an impact where was generally very introverted, and sort of not particularly social. It's still like having not a massive extrovert or anything now, but just finding it a lot easier to socialise and, I guess, see other people's perspective as well, sort of communication improvement and then, I suppose also, just the sort of shift in priorities have sort of the things I feel are most important for making the most out of life. generally, quite simplified.

**Interviewer** 22:47

Okay, that's a rich answer. There's a few thoughts that come up as you talk about that. So, maybe we'll go backwards from the last thing you said. So, in terms of a shift in priorities, what did that what does that look like for you? What's it what's the shift been?

**Participant** 23:07

Um, it's a bit hard to sort of think before what they were because it was a feeling a bit directionless or almost purposeless but now it sort of nature is, I suppose the biggest and sort of ideal scenario is to be able to just grow different plants work with nature and be quite independent from sort of larger society and chaos and confusion that seems inseparable from it. Now.

**Interviewer** 23:39

Yeah.

**Participant** 23:44

And then, I think compassion is a big thing as well, just sort of doing whatever I can to help other people, usually in small ways, but yes, that was also one of the big things that took away of what I can do is sort of pass it on but if I'm doing good, then I can share that.

**Interviewer** 24:14

Have you engaged in any action towards, for example, growing plants or getting more involved with nature, like projects or things and relate in relation to engaging with nature?

**Participant** 24:32

To a small degree with some attempts at growing things which didn't work out so well but still continuing with, but it's something, it’s sort of a definitely had a lot of life come up and feel like it got in the way in between with becoming a parent and stuff and

**Interviewer** 24:55

Okay, well, congratulations.

**Participant** 24:59

Yeah, it's been a quite a roller coaster with all of that, but it still definitely like, there is a priority and a thing I mean it again, feels limited by lockdown that can't actually get involved much community wise. So, it's more spending time in nature where I can and things like that.

**Interviewer** 25:22

But I think just growing a baby is probably difficult enough.

**Participant** 25:27

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 25:29

You know, a lot of fail on that one. Wilt and die, but the baby must survive.

**Participant** 25:37

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 25:43

So, you said before as well that you found you were generally introverted and you wouldn't, and you said you wouldn't necessarily say you're not now, but you have a more ease of socialisation, and maybe even a better level of communication. Is that a positive in your life? Like as you see that as a good thing?

**Participant** 26:03

Yeah, definitely. It was sort of, I think, just sort of common thing throughout my life was a sort of sense of isolation and I guess always being a bit of a weird misfit kind of thing. Usually had small groups of friends who are also similar in their own ways, like other misfits, but not quite. Everyone's got their own quirks and stuff, but it's just sort of suppose partially just being more comfortable with being that and that sort of, then, I guess, just sort of gets picked up on by other people, and it's all a bit smoother.

**Interviewer** 26:44

Mm hmm.

**Participant** 26:46

Whereas before, it's sort of a lot of, kind of, I suppose awkward silences and not sure what to say or do and kind of on the edge of any sort of larger social context.

**Interviewer** 27:08

So, are you, with being more comfortable, is that with yourself, you're more comfortable with who you are?

**Participant** 27:18

Yeah, that's definitely a big part of it. Yeah, I think that was the main thing because it is that sort of how myself then interacts with someone that sort of comes back to myself. Yeah.

**Interviewer** 27:36

And what about other people, has there, has there being a change in, because you were saying sort of, in some situations, you know, silences might seem or feel awkward. Is there more of a comfortable being comfortable or feeling secure, or some sort of, you know, bit at ease in a social situation, not simply because of sort of sense of being happy or accepting or comfortable with who you are, but of being that towards others or being more comfortable with other people and their weirdness or their differences?

**Participant** 28:14

Yeah, it's hard to think of specific examples, but it is sort of something that people I've known for quite a while have commented on at times. Generally, a lot of positive feedback, sort of personality wise and just that I think just being myself is something that comes up quite a lot.

**Interviewer** 28:45

And what sort of comments have your friends or family or people you know, made about you?

**Participant** 28:53

Um, I think go with the flow comes up a lot, that I just seem to go with whatever happens, doesn't matter what's going on. We seem to sort of float through it all very calmly and I'm not sure what else. I suppose just I seem a lot more content and sort of that is, but I guess there's people who'd seen more of the worst side that commenting how they seem to be doing a lot better. It's nice that I don't seem to be having the same struggles I used to and stuff like that.

**Interviewer** 29:53

Cool. All right. So, that was the broad question now we have a few specific ones.

**Participant** 30:03

Yeah.

**Q6a. Interviewer** 30:05

Has your personality or identity been shaped by your psychedelic use?

**Participant** 30:13

Um, yeah, I mean I suppose identity has become a lot more sort of loose and vague. It's not something I take very seriously. It's sort of, I don't know, almost like just it's the thing that I'm doing at the moment, but it's not like, this is all I am kind of thing. If that makes sense?

**Interviewer** 30:39

Yep, definitely makes sense.

**Participant** 30:43

And personality, I think sort of reflects in some of the others, but just being a lot more open to everything really and a lot more relaxed with change, and sort of new situations and activities and lots of stuff like that. I think it was sort of a lot more stuck in one lane type of thing before and now it's sort of where I might have apprehension to try a lot of things it's sort of, if there's an opportunity to do something, then I'll at least check it out.

**Interviewer** 31:34

And in terms of you're saying, just before you were living a little bit more on one, sort of one lane way, can you give a bit more description to what you mean by that.

**Participant** 31:49

Um, I think it was just quite a narrow, sort of thing of interests and hobbies and stuff. I grew up playing loads of video games, and there was something kind of stuck with but was already losing interest in and just I don't know a lot of it was just sort of absorbing entertainment and not very engaged with things. Yeah, weird looking back now, didn't really do much.

**Interviewer** 32:30

And would you, would you attribute this change, of opening of this narrow set of interests, strongly, like in the majority to your psychedelic use, or does it come are there other factors such as getting older and things like this?

**Participant** 32:52

I would say the majority, I mean cannabis was separated as not psychedelic, was sort of the introduction for some of the same changes I experienced, but in a much stronger way and yeah, I think there were factors in sort of getting older in life circumstance and stuff like that, where suppose more opportunities came along, but I'm not sure I would have got as much out of all those different things, prior to psychedelics, where there's more able to embrace those things, since.

**Q6b. Interviewer** 33:52

Has your psychedelic use altered any of your long-term goals or life purpose?

**Participant** 34:03

I'd say it has, but it's hard to describe how because I didn't really have much of any of those before, and now they're there, but they're simple. It is sort of making the most of life helping others and sharing it with others then sort of actually living it. I suppose the participation in this directly comes from sort of an interest in being involved where I can in sort of helping the research into psychedelics in improving access, because of the potential and benefit I've experienced from it and seen widely discussed elsewhere, so.

**Interviewer** 34:55

Yeah, and very much appreciated. So, thank you for taking the time. Couldn't you without you.

**Participant** 35:03

The study?

**Interviewer** 35:04

Yeah. Mutually helping each other out, I think it's a good thing.

**Participant** 35:09

Yeah.

**Q6c. Interviewer** 35:16

Where are we? Have psychedelics caused you to seriously question your own beliefs?

**Participant** 35:27

Um, not too much, because I didn't particularly have any beforehand, I suppose. So, it's sort of and I was already sort of quite open and curious before. I mean, I guess even now, it's still sort of sceptically open minded, I won't take things at face value but I think that's, it's facilitated it, but not really changed it in a drastic way and definitely opened up a lot more sort of possibilities and things to consider where there's sort of a quite a narrow lens of reality before it's a lot broader now.

**Interviewer** 36:25

Could you speak a little bit what, what has brought it up? In terms of what seems like what did what did you dismiss before I guess what was outside of the scope of consideration?

**Participant** 36:39

I think it was previously more constrained to a sort of physical 3D reality that as we perceive it, but I think it so highlighted the limits of regular human perception and then brings into question like, sort of what a human can experience on a psychedelic may still be a limited thing of it. So, just that it's much, much bigger than we can currently understand and that there's something quite wonderful about that.

**Interviewer** 37:34

I think I don't, I don't think humanity would know what to do if we just knew it all. Like the dog finally caught its tail.

**Participant** 37:49

A point I'd felt I got to a sort of where I studied quite a lot in science and sort of generally felt like I understood what life was and what's going on and pretty much reduced it to this almost like nihilistic kind of view. That definitely didn't feel very good or help much with life purpose or anything. So, realising I didn't know anything was quite refreshing.

**Q6d. Interviewer** 38:31

Has your understanding of yourself changed due to your psychedelic experiences?

**Participant** 38:40

Yeah, I'd say it's changed in in a lot of ways. I feel like I understand myself less, but in a good way.

**Interviewer** 38:49

Well, please elaborate.

**Participant** 38:52

In that, it's it seems like there's more to what I am then I'm currently aware of, and there's more to explore in sort of discovering myself and understanding myself. So, it highlights a lot of what I'm unaware of. It kind of leaves it very open ended as to what the answers to those things are. Whereas before it was kind of just living meat sack kind of thing that responds to stimuli based on biological processes. I think they're more complex than I previously thought.

**Q6e. Interviewer** 40:13

Has your psychedelic use affected your use of other drugs?

**Participant** 40:19

Um, it's hard to say because it's sort of they came before trying a few other things, and I suppose they were I have tried other stuff, it seems sort of, as a curiosity, see what it's about, and it just doesn't seem worthwhile to continue. Whereas psychedelics are sort of, for the most part, the only thing I do feel worth continuing to use.

**Interviewer** 41:02

And what about in terms of any medication? Like, you know, antidepressants or things like this was? Was there any of that involved in your life before?

**Participant** 41:12

No

**Interviewer** 41:13

and did psychedelics? No?

**Participant** 41:16

No, I've never been on any prescriptions or anything.

**Interviewer** 41:20

Cool. Do you in terms of cannabis, is that something you use, every now and again, fairly regularly?

**Participant** 41:31

It's very rarely, now It was very consistently for quite a while but now it's probably sort of a few times a year, if I see friends. It's kind of if it's there, I won't turn it down, but I don't actively seek it and get it.

**Interviewer** 42:02

And did that. I wonder just to, before you said you sort of had a you used it more often in the past. Is that change from using it so often to now, just occasionally, if you come across it? Do you know why that occurred? Is that just life circumstances or were psychedelics involved in that?

**Participant** 42:26

It was mostly circumstantial, where I moved to somewhere else and financially, it wasn't very feasible, either. So, it's just kind of once I had an extended break, without choosing to it didn't seem particularly worthwhile to start again. Just, I mean, it's one of the things if I could grow it and have it sustainably it'd be great but to with how much it costs, it's just sort of it's sort of, I don't know, it's very quickly just becomes I don't know just doesn't have much of an impact but I'd smoke it anyway, so.

**Interviewer** 43:13

How much is it over there? What's the sort of prices for cannabis in the UK?

**Participant** 43:18

It's generally 10 pound a gramme, but sort of if you buy bigger amounts it works out a lot cheaper.

**Interviewer** 43:27

Yeah, it’s a bit New Zealand's a bit more expensive, I think something like 20 to $25 per gramme, depending on how much you buy again. So, yeah, you guys are about double, double last, so that you're a little bit cheaper. I think it's like $20 ish. Yeah, but not very cheap.

**Participant** 43:48

No.

**Q7. Interviewer** 43:51

Right. Have your psychedelic experiences affected your relationships with significant others, and significant others here means friends or family, it could mean a partner, it could mean children, just people who are significant in your life, not necessarily like your significant other.

**Participant** 44:14

Yeah but I think with my daughter would be likely in a major way, in just sort of the sort of interpretation of what her experience of life is like in early life and I've seen the stuff that brain scans of infants resemble those of an adult under the influence of a psychedelic and just seeing the way they interact with things that say that seems pretty feasible. So, I think it's having an influence and sort of just the priorities and values I'd like to pass on and sort of to hopefully at least give plenty of opportunity for her to explore that and then the other ones that sort of, I don't think with family it had much of an impact, it's sort of it was questioned a bit I don't think particularly approved of but not like, opposed either. There's not much said about it family wise and definitely brought friends who I've done them with a lot closer together and relationship wise the thing definitely made things easier, being more emotionally stable and able to kind of put myself in the other person's shoes a lot more, but still, with my daughter's Mom, where she has severe OCD that was part of the roller coaster that went on and general situation and I guess, having the close experiences essentially a full time carer for quite a while it sort of where things like psychedelic assisted therapy, I feel is quite important to explore as like nothing else has worked so far. So, anything that sort of pushing for more understanding of mental health and working on it, it's quite important to me, but.

**Interviewer** 46:25

Is that in terms of did your I'm not sure your partner or ex-partner with your child? Is she has she tried psychedelics as well?

**Participant** 46:40

She has, yeah it's an ex-partner, and I think only twice, which were definitely very challenging experiences for her, but provided sort of, I suppose, like short term relief, like there was quite drastic improvement but only lasted a few weeks to a month, and then the old symptoms would sort of start coming back again but that was I mean, it's not a therapeutic setting. It was still somewhat the intention, but I think could have done with someone more qualified to get more out of that I definitely think showed potential and there was nothing that got worse afterwards. It was just only a brief kind of relief before came back.

**Interviewer** 47:38

Well, that's quite interesting to hear that with especially with OCD is that a with your ex-partner is that she's been gone to a psychologist or psychologist and had a diagnosis of OCD or is it more?

**Participant** 47:55

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 47:56

Yeah okay.

**Participant** 47:57

Formerly diagnosed.

**Interviewer** 48:00

Because psychedelics, you're saying. There was a relief of the sort of symptoms of OCD there. So, I guess the compulsions or the thoughts that.

**Participant** 48:10

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 48:13

Okay. That's a good indicator. I think that just more possibilities.

**Participant** 48:20

Yeah, it's something I've seen a little bit coming up of stuff that's like, upcoming, but most of the studies have focused on depression, and then some on addiction and anxiety and stuff OCD, sort of it's been looked at a little bit, but there's very little to go on still.

**Interviewer** 48:41

Well, it, makes sense. If psychedelics helpful for anxiety, OCD, a large part of it as this anxiety about the what's going to happen if one doesn't do the ritual.

**Participant** 48:55

Yeah.

**Q8. Interviewer** 49:01

Have psychedelics changed how you think and feel about yourself?

**Participant** 49:08

Um, definitely say I feel a lot better about myself, generally, it's sort of. Within the experiences are sort of almost built in forgiveness for things and it sort of, I guess, acceptance, overlapping forgiveness, along with the sort of letting go of everything. So, it's sort of. I guess, the result would be a lot less self-criticism or at least if it's there, it's more rational. rather than sort of having an internal monologue that criticises things and beats you up for it, it's more sort of if there is a problem, be aware of it and think of how to work on it.

**Interviewer** 50:06

So, has the has the internal dialogue become in some sense, just like more useful?

**Participant** 50:12

Yeah. Mostly.

**Q9. Interviewer** 50:36

And there is a similar question that I ask and the reason I ask is just in case, the framing of the question, or the wording of the question draws out a different answer. So, the question is have psychedelics changed how you view yourself?

**Participant** 50:54

I mean I suppose, similarly to an answer to the previous question where it's sort of seeing myself as part of some bigger whole or like that I don't know, almost my current physical form isn't all there is. Whether it's like, it's one of the things I've still contemplated a lot is whether individual existence continues, or whether it's just merging back into everything and I'm still a bit mixed on that one but I think just having that thought of it is quite a big shift, compared to I'm going to exist like this, and then nothing afterwards.

**Interviewer** 51:52

Do you have when you think about your spiritual or religious orientation, if you have one, does it fall under a normal category of class, say, like, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu something like this? Or is it more your own personal understanding?

**Participant** 52:18

Yeah, say it’s very much sort of a personal thing. If I tried to put a name on it would probably be agnostic along the lines of just, I don't know. There were interest in other religions did come up partially from it and I suppose looking into psychedelics come across like Ram Dass and all the other people that went towards Eastern religions and stuff. So, I've read some books and checked out some of what they think's going on, which is more interesting ideas and perspectives. Haven't adopted any or latched on to any as this seems like exactly what it is.

**Interviewer** 53:19

Fair enough. Do you think you have taken any of or some of the ideas of the religions that you've read about and pulled those together to create your personal spirituality? Or is it more separate than that?

**Participant** 53:45

I think there's an influence but it's usually more sort of reaffirming, it sort of like, these parts sound like what I experienced a bit or seems like, the more times an idea comes up, then it's feels like it's pointing in the right direction and it's usually when it gets too specific that I start to sort of separate from it a bit that it's now it's hard to think of specific examples again, but, I think one of the main things is that I view things a bit more indifferent than religions often come up. Whether it's through an afterlife or reincarnation and karma that you'll be rewarded or punished based on actions I feel like in the larger scheme, it's less significant than we attribute things to because it's the whole thing of sort of what's order to the spider is chaos to the fly sort of.

**Interviewer** 55:06

Yeah. Yeah.

**Participant** 55:08

There's a very human lens put on to those beliefs I feel.

**Interviewer** 55:13

Yeah. Yes. Especially like the idea of death is bad but it's on the opposite. It's like, well, fungi have to live on something and

**Participant** 55:26

exactly.

**Interviewer** 55:28

things need to feed into other things. We eat food. It was it was living at one point. Pretty sure it didn't want to be dead.

**Participant** 55:37

Yeah and that was one of the big things I kind of took away where I was never particularly afraid of death, but it almost made the entire concept seem absurd, that it sort of, it's just a change of form. The same atoms continue as something else or energy continues. It's the cycle of everything. It's just a difference between sort of intellectually understanding it and the experience of directly feeling it which will have occurred.

**Q10. Interviewer** 56:23

Yeah, that makes sense to me. Have, you've definitely spoken to this. So, maybe you can talk a little more towards any specific things you might have done, related to this question. So, the question is, have psychedelics provided insights into how to live life well?

**Participant** 56:53

Yeah, this stuff I've pointed to a few times, but I guess one of the main things is just to not take anything too seriously. It's one of the first things that came along and comes up every time and then compassion, again, is a very big one its sort of for me, that's one where I feel like a sort of karmic effect does take place, it's put good out, and it kind of just spreads and comes back. If you put bad out, everything reflects and comes back and then I suppose the other bit is also just embracing things and feeling them fully rather than resisting a lot of it.

**Interviewer** 58:09

Could you talk more to that? What do you what do you mean by embracing things and feeling them fully compared to refer instead of resisting? Like, how, how does that manifest in your experience?

**Participant** 58:24

I think prior to psychedelics, I was very much sort of desensitised and numb to a lot of things, which I'm not sure if it was intentional or not, but it's more that I'd much rather feel both really good feelings and really bad feelings, then not feel anything at all, or just feel very limited things of them I'd rather experience a more rich contrast doesn't necessarily have to be good all the time, because the good is defined by the bad.

**Interviewer** 59:18

So before, was it by being numbed or desensitised was your emotional range, sort of constrained to just neutralness or some sense.

**Participant** 59:36

For a long time, it was, and I think it's where my mental health got to it's worse was that seemed to have kind of snapped. So, I’d swing from one extreme to the other and it was sort of when it was good, it felt like I was enlightened and couldn't understand how I could have ever been sad and then when it's down then it's the extremes of that and feels like you'll never be good again. So, had quite a manic-depressive type of phase, not full-blown mania but close enough and it's just very disorienting and then it would sort of otherwise just plateau into sort of numb thing and there's very little emotional coordination, I suppose. I think that might be how I ended up sort of where it would be either extremes or flat was just some lacking capacity to deal with how intense my emotions could be whereas It's definitely much easier now.

**Interviewer** 1:00:50

In terms of your emotional experiences now, and fluctuations in emotional content, is the range of the emotion or the intensity of the emotion outside of a psychedelic experience. Is that more constrained than it was when you're going through your manic-depressive sort of phase or less constrained than when you felt numb and desensitised, sort of like an in between? Or is it something else?

**Participant** 1:01:25

Yeah, I would say it's definitely not the extremes of when it was back and forth and but sort of as a baseline is still like, quite rich, and generally, much more leaning on the positive side. I think quite a lot of that comes from the sort of mindfulness type practices where it's sort of, although when negative emotions arise, it sort of you feel that they're there. It's not the same thing of getting lost in them that I used to have. It's not overwhelmed. Yeah, I would say it's less extreme, but it may be a different frame of reference, as well.

**Interviewer** 1:02:18

Can you describe so do you, do you practice mindfulness, or meditation practices?

**Participant** 1:02:26

Generally, yeah, like nothing particularly strict and discipline, but day to day is very much a part of how I go about things and going for walks.

**Interviewer** 1:02:41

And in terms of what you're just saying, before, a different perspective, can you speak a little to that? So, is, my feeling or interpretation was that you might be experiencing the same intensity or level of an emotional content, but the frame or the way in which you see that experience or connect with it is different?

**Participant** 1:03:08

Yeah, I think it is definitely similar to that where it's much less reactive. Where before it sort of, I don't know just very overwhelming and feels like it's out of control and don't know quite what to do with myself sort of acting impulsively. Whereas now, just the feelings are there, and I can feel them and if it's good, I can enjoy them. If it's negative, I can work on them. Or just sit with them.

**Q11. Interviewer** 1:03:51

Cool. Have psychedelics shaped your worldview?

**Participant** 1:04:12

Yeah, I think it's ridiculous.

**Interviewer** 1:04:15

Yeah? How so?

**Participant** 1:04:18

It just seems like the majority of the human population is taking things way too seriously, and don't quite know what they're doing. Everything just seems completely bizarre and ridiculous.

**Interviewer** 1:04:39

Yup

**Participant** 1:04:41

From a place of, I don't know, I think it was one particular experience where I declared the days of the week don't exist. It's all made up. Things of like wearing a suit and tie. You put a piece of fabric around your neck and now you have authority and doing very serious business stuff. It's hard to take much seriously I suppose and when needed, but some part of my head is always just kind of dancing often.

**Interviewer** 1:05:22

We are a bit silly aren't way as a race?

**Participant** 1:05:27

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:05:31

You've definitely spoken. Well, actually, maybe before we move on, is there any other things you can think of in terms of worldview that may have been affected by your psychedelic use?

**Participant** 1:05:47

Yeah, there, there was also, especially, sort of the shortly after more intense experiences overwhelming, [lag / connection loss] just out of deliberate actions, or just sort of a lot of confusion and unawareness. It's also there's been times where it has been sort of painful to realise how much is going on throughout the world and suddenly be a lot more sensitive to it. So, although it's also ridiculous, it's also don't know it's just sort of very, don't know the word for it, I suppose it's almost melancholic that there's some sort of beauty in how we've struggled through all the difficulties as well.

**Q12. Interviewer** 1:07:11

You've spoken to this one, so yeah, have psychedelics change your relationship with nature?

**Participant** 1:07:18

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:07:21

Maybe you can talk a little to any behavioural changes that have occurred due to this shift in your relationship, or your yeah, your relationship with nature?

**Participant** 1:07:35

Um, I guess one thing is I went to a much more almost entirely plant based diet just didn't sort of it because I just during experiences felt a lot better and became a lot more aware of my body and sort of eating a pizza covered in meat didn't feel very good and eating some fruit and vegetables does feel good and continue that and continue to feel better. So, kind of stuck with that and then getting out into nature, when I can almost whenever possible, feels a lot more relaxing and enjoyable than being around buildings and cars.

**Interviewer** 1:08:41

So, we're changing the direction of the questions now. So, I'm going to the next 11 questions are more related to how you use psychedelics and the different features and factors that get involved with that.

**Participant** 1:08:57

Yeah.

**Q13. Interviewer** 1:08:58

So, the first one is, how do you prepare yourself for a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:09:07

It usually varies depending on how high a dose it would be sort of how much preparation I do, it's definitely a lot more for higher doses and it's in the days or weeks leading up to it being very aware of like, what I'm eating, looking after myself, spending time in nature and suppose setting an intention, or just thinking about it a lot.

**Interviewer** 1:09:47

And how in terms of dosages, I haven't had a look, but what's the range? What's your sort of upper range of dosages you're using and what do you normally do?

**Participant** 1:10:01

For mushrooms, it's the most I've done was seven grammes and although five grammes was more intense, I think just on the specific mushrooms, and the 7 gramme being a single massive one think changing quite a bit and then with LSD, which is much less common, nowadays, its average would be two tabs and the most I did was three but later found out sort of by comparing experiences with those and others that they were abnormally strong, or the others are abnormal weak.

**Interviewer** 1:10:50

And in terms of intention setting is there are there a common set of intentions that you come in with, for your uses, or are they different for each time, what is, what is the intentions look like for you?

**Participant** 1:11:06

It's usually quite different but with sort of the common theme would be getting a fresh perspective, or a mental refresh kind of thing. So, it definitely does feel like a bit of a reset type effect afterwards. Then for each experience, it might be something in particular, that's been sort of something new in terms of circumstances or sense of direction and if it is, in those cases, it's never sort of immediately when something comes up, if it's been, if there's something that's kind of been stuck that I've been trying to figure out for at least maybe a month or something and then have the opportunity then that would be a time to get that insight or experience.

**Q14. Interviewer** 1:12:20

Where do you normally take psychedelics and why do you take them there?

**Participant** 1:12:26

Most commonly it's just at home yeah, it's been quite a long time but when it was more often it's just a lot more convenient there's no unpredictable circumstances at least very rarely. So, it just allows me to go fully into the experience without random other things going on and then next most common would be out in nature somewhere where it's like generally secluded, don't have strangers wondering about.

**Q15. Interviewer** 1:13:25

Are there any items that are important to have with you when tripping?

**Participant** 1:13:33

I guess the main thing is, I like having quite adjustable clothes, like comfy clothes but having like a vest and then zip up jumper and so I can have if I get hot, then I can cool off or if I get cold, I can warm up. Otherwise just having plenty of water and some small snacks and stuff but not individual items. If it is it's usually something I find along the adventure, like a particularly nice stick to use as a staff or something.

**Interviewer** 1:14:16

Is temperature during a trip, do you have fluctuations in feeling hot and cold?

**Participant** 1:14:26

Usually, yeah. I can't confirm whether it's actually happening or not but it's definitely more variable than usual. The sensations of it anyway.

**Q16. Interviewer** 1:14:53

Are there, sorry. How do you prepare the space where you take psychedelics?

**Participant** 1:15:01

When it's at home, it's generally cleaning up everything I can, having things tidy. Something I picked up very quick, you don't want dirt all over the place or things not finished and then suppose again, just generally making it comfortable and relaxing to be in.

**Interviewer** 1:15:30

Do you have a particular time of the day or night when you prefer to use psychedelics?

**Participant** 1:15:39

At home, it's usually probably sort of afternoon or late afternoon and if it's out in nature, it usually be earlier in the day. So, it sort of would last through the day.

**Interviewer** 1:16:16

In terms of temperature of the room, or the lighting, is there any way in which you set up the space and those in regards to those two?

**Participant** 1:16:30

Usually it would be dim lighting, I suppose. I won't have the lights on like I do now and just have like, a computer screen probably playing music or something and then temperatures just same as I'd usually have it supposed to sort of respond to how I feel.

**Q17. Interviewer** 1:17:11

Are there any other preparations that you haven't mentioned that you might make for or during the trip?

**Participant** 1:17:22

Not that I can think of it used to be when I was smoking cannabis more often that I would pre roll joints so that they're there throughout and used to commonly combine that with it, but I think now there's not really anything I haven't mentioned already.

**Q18. Interviewer** 1:17:54

What are you normally doing physically during a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:17:58

If it's home by myself, it's usually just laying in bed, for the most part, a little bit of stretching and stuff sometimes, but usually very little and then if it's out in nature, it's more just walking around, still not loads. Often just sat down for extended periods of time and then with a group of friends, it's hard to keep track. It's just a bunch of nonsense, but usually fairly rooted in the ground.

**Interviewer** 1:18:42

Sorry, back on the nature walk did you say you might sit down for periods of time during that as well?

**Participant** 1:18:50

Seems to be a common thing to look for cool spots, stay in them for a while, and then it's time to find another cool spot.

**Interviewer** 1:19:02

Do you do anything like dancing or yoga or meditation during your psychedelic experiences, is there any activities?

**Participant** 1:19:13

Improvised yoga, sometimes like don't actually know what I'm doing but it's just sort of stretching and quite intuitive with what I feel physically and I suppose sort of meditation almost seems to just come naturally with it where especially if I'm by myself or be either lying down or sitting quite still. It's almost like meditation straightaway.

**Q19. Interviewer** 1:19:56

Is there, is there anything you avoid doing or interacting with during a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:20:07

I learnt to avoid drunk people. By extension, it's generally just the general public strangers in civilised society. I think that's the main thing really.

**Interviewer** 1:20:40

What about in terms of technology? Do you engage with computers, internet, stuff like that during it? Or do you not?

**Participant** 1:20:52

I usually either usually have my phone on aeroplane mode or silent, like, put my phone away somewhere. So, distractions don't come up. I'd quite often have a computer playing music but with minimal interaction. See, I suppose technology for the most part is usually avoided as well.

**Interviewer** 1:21:30

And do you have music playing throughout the whole trip normally? Or do you turn it on and off depending on what's going on?

**Participant** 1:21:40

Usually through the whole trip.

**Interviewer** 1:21:53

And is that the same when you're out walking in nature? Do you have headphones phone sort of music setup or is that different?

**Participant** 1:22:03

In nature usually no music or technology or anything. Just the sounds of the day.

**Q20. Interviewer** 1:22:35

Is there anything special you do after a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:22:42

Um, I don't think so. No. I can't think of anything consistently. Generally, try to have at least the next day free to just take things easy process things.

**Q21. Interviewer** 1:23:17

Are there any helpful techniques you use to navigate difficult or challenging moments during a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:23:26

Um, I think just drinking water and sort of focusing on breathing the simplest. The other thing that kind of stuck from one thing was, we called it the "great much". It's like, at times things will feel like they're too much but sooner or later, you realise it's great and that's the great much. So, it's sort of if things feel like they're getting too intense, it's just some little mental reminder that that's kind of the point.

**Q22. Interviewer** 1:24:29

Could you describe any type of integration or self-reflective practices that you engage in to make sense of your psychedelic experiences?

**Participant** 1:24:40

Um, it's usually not very specific, but afterwards, it's just, I suppose the sort of minimal input like I might listen to some music, maybe music I listened to during the experience, but it's again, just kind of taking things easy, keeping things quite calm. Actually, could I go for a pee break quickly?

**Interviewer** 1:25:08

Yes, go for it. No problems.

**Participant** 1:26:37

Hello.

**Interviewer** 1:26:38

Hello, sir. Welcome back.

**Participant** 1:26:40

Sorry.

**Interviewer** 1:26:42

Yeah, no problems. I should have mentioned at the beginning. Yeah, these take, they're reasonably long. So, people are more than welcome to go the bathroom. It's like, no, you're not allowed, you must stay.

**Q23. Interviewer** 1:27:02

So, the next question is, are there any noticeable changes in how you think or feel in the days or weeks following psychedelic use?

**Participant** 1:27:14

Um, yeah, usually, I mean, it's, it's definitely dose dependent and it's usually very positive kind of refreshed, the world seems all a bit brighter. Pay attention to little details of things a lot more have been a couple of sort of the most intense experiences where there's also quite a bit of confusion or, or I mentioned being sort of almost overly emotionally sensitive for maybe a week or two. That was after the first sort of ego death or ego dissolution type experiences I had and there was some amount of piecing myself back together to be done.

**Interviewer** 1:28:06

Well, an intense experience takes a while.

**Participant** 1:28:13

Yeah.

**Q24. Interviewer** 1:28:17

We'll actually we'll touch on a question related to ego death a little bit later. Has how you use psychedelics changed over time?

**Participant** 1:28:38

Yeah. Yeah, definitely. I think, like the first phase was cautiously checking it out. The second was plunging down the rabbit hole and then after that, was more mild, almost sort of top up experiences and did microdosing for a while, which generally went very well and now it sort of, it would just be for the most part, a sort of occasional reminder type of thing. Refresh.

**Interviewer** 1:29:19

How long you said it's been a while. How long has it been since you've last used psychedelics?

**Participant** 1:29:36

Not sure I think more than I think maybe just over a year. Not sure exactly.

**Interviewer** 1:29:52

And is that out of a choice or is it part is it to do with all the COVID and all the different issues around just accessibility to public and getting buying things, all that sort of stuff?

**Participant** 1:30:07

Yes, mostly through circumstance, I suppose because I've had periods of time where be sort of more than suitable. If it was there would have gone for it.

**Q25. Interviewer** 1:30:35

Right, so we're changing again, those are the questions more related to psychedelic use and how that's potentially changed the different ways you do it. Now, we're going to ask a few things about your psychedelic experiences specifically. Yeah. So, the first one is, and if you need clarification, let me know because some people don't really understand what I mean by this question, or just need further clarification. So, the question is, what do you think is the core psychedelic experience, and this is to frame it, this is for you personally. So, we've got the internet and there's lots of stuff on the internet, which says, I've had these experiences, and we build a picture of what it's like for the general, like, the experience other people might have in general, but for you personally, what's the core psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 1:31:36

Um, the word that comes to mind is connection, but I think it is a sort of merging of anything and everything. Like, extended past, like space and time. It's I think, connection through boundary dissolution. Yeah. The core sort of expands in layers, but it's the same thing that continues. I think awareness is a very key aspect of that, because need to notice that it's happening too.

**Interviewer** 1:32:58

The question I was going to ask you, is, you said it expands in layers and I wonder if you can just speak to what you mean by that?

**Participant** 1:33:40

I suppose it sort of it starts with smaller things, like carpets flowing and sort of the sense of a sense of time gets more and more boundaries dissolving. So, things merge together in more and more different ways.

**Interviewer** 1:34:13

I think the internet's cutting out a little bit. Oh, let me I think I missed most of your answer that question. I had a, I think about 10-15 seconds, just no sound and then a lot wolololololo. So, I'll just ask it again. Can you please expand on what you mean by it expands in layers?

**Participant** 1:34:42

Yeah. Just that it sort of, sort of comes on in phases in it will start with minor visual things or a little shift in awareness of like, paying extra attention to details and things might start breathing and flowing a little bit to larger things like a sense of self and sense of time get more distorted and increasingly merge in different ways sort of more and more together until it all just becomes anything can mix with anything in perception, and yeah, I cause perception sort of [???] what shifts in those.

**Q26. Interviewer** 1:35:45

Can you describe your most challenging or negative psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 1:35:50

I think it would probably be the first thing which was along the lines of ego death, which was more of a sort of limbo for a while, like it was increasing confusion, I lost all sense of self or time, I didn't know what being a person was what feelings were. So, it was just very, very disorienting and that any thought I had would be its own eternal existence in itself. So, it did kind of feel like I might never be able to function in the world again, I don't know how to come back from all of this and it was sort of, it still wasn't necessarily like, it didn't feel like a struggle, and difficult, it was kind of just well, that happened. I guess that's how things are now, but it's definitely very disorienting and a bit of a challenge to work through afterwards and also coming back from it was. Although there were elements of challenging where it was of every emotionally significant memory of my life and both from my own perspective and the perspective of anything that's impacted someone else. It's just sort of a very, all at once experience coming back to myself, which resulted in me crying my eyes out with a big smile on my face. So, there were elements of challenge, but I wouldn't say. It was definitely a positive overall, so.

**Interviewer** 1:37:44

Cool. I'm just what I would I noticed with the mic is I can hear, when I'm speaking a little bit of like, voom, voom, voom and what I think that is, is the noise cancelling. So, your microphone cancelling out me. So, what I'm doing when you talk is just to put mute my mic, because it's thumps a little bit, and then it goes over what you're saying. So, if you don't see me reply, it's just because I'm making it so your audio comes in as clear as possible. Yeah, so I'll do I'll try and do more head nods. I'll give you the visual cues.

**Interviewer** 1:38:41

Well, see I have a question ego death, but I think seen as you brought it up, now, I might as well go into it. How have you, firstly is that, have you had ego death more than once? Was it a singular event that you've experienced this level of detachment from reality and who you were as a person?

**Participant** 1:39:07

There were a couple times afterwards, but it was, I think, because I then researched it quite a lot and tried to comprehend what would happen to me the next time it came about, I was sort of ready to sort of go through it, rather than how I seem to have ended up stuck in limbo, trying to rationalise something or hold on to something, it was more just, I'm going to let go of it and go past it and that's where the sort of feeling of becoming the universe came along and its I don't know if it I suppose it is a kind of ego death because I wasn't me anymore, but it was a very smooth transition to it and that's something which seems to be much easier to access In those experiences now.

**Interviewer** 1:40:06

And is this experience of ego death for you, it’s kind of funny to say for you seen as there is no you there when one is having an ego death, but are there visual experiences going on? Like, what are the types of, so there's, you were describing, sort of forgetting about you, you as a person, I think there was a loss of time and space, I'm assuming a loss of having a body of having a personal identity but are there other visual experiences going on during that is it, or are you in a completely non-visual sensory experience, I wonder if you can describe some of the things you're feeling and seeing and that going on during that?

**Participant** 1:40:57

It's, there's usually still some amount of visuals, but I think the feeling of it and awareness was kind of overpowered it. So, I just stopped paying much attention to that aspect of it and it usually is kind of just a sort of kaleidoscopic mess at that point, vaguely formed from whatever I might have looked at before then but it's definitely much more a felt type of experience than a visual one and I think the thing that comes through sort of getting to the other side of it is just overwhelming, kind of love and connection to everything.

**Interviewer** 1:42:08

During that experience, you're so this idea of overwhelming love and connection to everything. Is there still a sense in which there are other things during that or is everything one thing that you're connected to?

**Participant** 1:42:30

And it's the feeling is that is just one thing I'm connected to but I'm still aware that there are things within that thing, perceiving themselves to be individual things. So, it does feel like a kind of total awareness, where it encapsulates quite paradoxical concepts along with the sort of layers of awareness of what part of me still knows what I used to be now when I get into that space, whereas initially, it's just obliterated. It's sort of a bridge was formed over time, I suppose.

**Interviewer** 1:43:45

So, are you so now when you when you have an ego death or ego dissolution type of an experience, Is there a sense in which you maintain an identity or is there have I miss I sort of misunderstood what you meant by this bridge that's been built?

**Participant** 1:44:10

I feel it's that there's awareness of like, the starting point that I did have the identity but it's no longer I don't identify with it the same way I did outside of the experience, but I think it's also sort of day to day part of me is aware of that which was before when identity was brought up that it feels like some part of my identity does identify with that other experience of the sort of whole of everything.

**Interviewer** 1:44:50

Okay, so, now if I was to ask about your identity, some aspect of it is this larger broader consciousness being experience, and that's part of who you are?

**Participant** 1:45:08

Yeah or I'm part of that but yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:45:16

That's, that's good. That. That makes sense to me and in terms of the experience, how would you say that having an ego death or ego dissolution experience. How would you say that has impacted your life?

**Participant** 1:45:52

Um, well, it's, I think, where, came the sort of death concept becoming entirely absurd came from, along with just sort of being the default first impression of anyone to feel the kind of love and compassion for them, just because it some part of that overwhelming love for everyone and everything stuck and I think a lot of it does just reinforce things I've mentioned already is, like, not taking anything too seriously, as well, because it's something like that is just sort of makes an entire human lifespan seem tiny. There's so much, much bigger picture to things.

**Interviewer** 1:46:51

So would you attribute a large number or a significant amount of the benefit or the changes that have occurred due to your psychedelic use as being directly related to or caused by these, the singular or the combined experiences of having these ego dissolution, ego deaths or merging with the you know, the larger universe?

**Participant** 1:47:24

Um, I'd say the ones that now stick with me and stuck out the most, I would attribute to that. I think it was some of the earlier ones was almost like, getting out my own way first, or dealing with the baggage from before just clearing past experiences and stuff like that, to have the sort of foundation where I felt ready to go into higher doses and deeper experiences and so it's, the others were more I suppose, stepping stones to those bigger realisations that stuck.

**Interviewer** 1:48:24

It's interesting that you mentioned the idea of sort of clearing out the baggage. It seems the connection between that and needing a clean and tidy space in which one does the psychedelic. Interesting, I think, to see maybe them as sort of internal manifestation sort of like our space needs to be clean, so the mind can be cleared out.

**Participant** 1:48:51

Yeah.

**Q27. Interviewer** 1:49:00

This might be the same experience, or it might be a similar one and if so we don't have to double take on it, but can you describe your most memorable or life changing psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 1:49:14

Yeah, would be the same as the stuff I've talked about there was split across two main ones, where one was the first ego death where it was kind of the void type thing and the next one, the first sort of merging with the whole, but yeah, those same ones.

**Interviewer** 1:49:39

Could you talk to that? So, you just made this, you said you have two experiences one was sort of in the void type experience and another was with merging these two experiences like significantly different and how you experienced them?

**Participant** 1:49:57

Yeah, the first one did feel like I kind of got stuck at that point and didn't break through to the other side kind of thing. Where it was just, I ended up in that kind of confused limbo and when I was back, I was completely back and just had all those memories and stuff with it. Whereas the other one was very rapidly blasting off things just I don't know visuals turning into Google dream looking fractals, within like 10-20 minutes, very quickly becoming the universe.

**Interviewer** 1:50:45

And the and then the experience of the one where you got stuck and were in a sort of confused limbo. Was that the void one that you were describing?

**Participant** 1:50:54

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:50:56

Inside, or during that experience, was there visual content going on or was it like dark blankness? If you do remember.

**Participant** 1:51:09

it's definitely hard to remember, I think it was mostly blank and otherwise, like not a visionary, it might be sort of just seeing my room maybe a bit blurred and it wasn't, it definitely wasn't visually focused.

**Interviewer** 1:51:30

When, when you're having these ego death experiences, are you do you get up and move around? Do you open your eyes and look around the room or is this kind of lights off, eyes closed sort of internal experience?

**Participant** 1:51:49

Um, they're both like, one was at home, one was in nature, the void type one was at home, and it was, it was pretty much sort of wriggling around on my bed, looking at the ceiling, mostly. So, it was eyes open, I think, for a lot of it and the other one was out in an open area at night, sort of looking at the sky, I think, was the factor in sort of ending up in the universe. So, quick, was I was staring up at it but there was again sat down when sort of the peak of that experience was happening. Just looking at it.

**Interviewer** 1:52:39

I wonder So a question I have is, in terms of the perspective shift that occurs or has occurred during these ego death experiences. Does the is the perspective change mostly a sort of mental phenomena, where how to say, you feel connected with the rest of the universe, You feel one or merged with it, but is there a corresponding change in a the perspective as if so if you're sitting on planet looking up into the sky, you see the stars, but as you merge with the universe, is there a sense in which you move perspective? So, hop off the planet looking at it from a new sort of angle visually?

**Participant** 1:53:26

Yeah, yeah, there was a I mean, primarily, what I remember is more the feeling of it, and mentally, but there was definitely a sort of leaving the planet, hopping around the universe a bit, spreading out across it all and part of it was also realising, I don't know if it was, if there's any sort of fact to it, but the feeling that I could sort of zap into any other person's awareness, and live their life for a bit and just kind of that I had access to anything I directed my awareness to. So, there was a lot of flying about the universe.

**Interviewer** 1:54:18

Did you try any accessing other people's experiences during those trips?

**Participant** 1:54:29

Not specifically the main thing I remember was that it was at a time a festival was happening that I hadn't been able to go to and at some point earlier on was the passing thought of there's a bunch of people at a festival right now and then it does seem much more something that my brain would have made up as an interpretation, but it's sort of going into the experience of random people, different people throughout the festival, a lot of which was very sort of disorienting, and not particularly pleasant where I'd be in the universe and then go to being a confused human at a festival but I think I'm not particularly convinced that I really did it, might have just been an awareness of what it could be like.

**Interviewer** 1:55:21

So if I can drill into that a little bit there, in terms of the validity of the experience, so people have, especially just what you've described sort of a merging with the universe, or potentially, like, travelling around it, being able to access anything at will, a potential sense of being able to drop into somebody's experience that they're having, how much? Or how strongly do you hold that? Whether these experiences are a true reflections of what's happening, so you can actually open to other people's experiences, or you can travel around the universe? And or how, how much of this is maybe a mental experience more so that it's something you're capable of experiencing, but is not necessarily happening physically, let's say.

**Participant** 1:56:20

I think I probably was a lot more convinced of it being real nearer to when it happened, and I might have sort of grown to doubted more over time and it's definitely the thing of going into other people's experiences. I doubt more than I feel like there is some amount of truth to that connecting with everything and I think it is almost like with that without the barrier of the ego. That's what's going on all the time anyway because it is, Oh, no, I think of it like atomic soup. Everything is always mixed together and interacting.

**Q29. Interviewer** 1:57:24

All right, then. Thank you for going in depth on that one's quite an interesting description. Good stuff. Good stuff. So, this one is probably similar to one of my older questions I asked you, so we can touch on it shortly. Or if there's something else that comes up for you when it's asked, just chime on in but have your experiences with psychedelics affected your spiritual or religious beliefs?

**Participant** 1:58:05

I mean, I guess it's sort of prior to these experiences, they were almost non-existent, so or in a spiritual sense and I think one of the main things would be more openness to the sort of new agey woo woo type ideas of things, it's sort of while I'm not immediately going to dive into them, where before be very dismissive, it's sort of a lot of things which seem at least worth trying and I think it's kind of like the placebo effect, like it gets very real results. So, I think the sort of power of the will and intention plays a big part in the effectiveness of various spiritual practices and new age methodologies and stuff like that.

**Interviewer** 1:59:12

It makes sense who, who can make the best placebo? Yeah and I guess even in some circumstances, there might be even scientific level of effect that we just that hasn't been comprehended. Who knows?

**Participant** 1:59:38

Yeah, there's definitely another aspect of it. That was sort of the limited range of our tools of perception. Which sort of almost ironic that science and rational scientific methods kind of have some of the tools to highlight that there's more than we perceive, but then become hyper focused on those being the limit.

**Interviewer** 2:00:08

Yeah, yeah, I know what you mean, it's just boxes in boxes in boxes.

**Participant** 2:00:17

Yeah.

**Q30. Interviewer** 2:00:23

So you have definitely spoken to this one, but maybe you can elaborate it and just give a bit more detail around this idea that you've spoken to, which is, so the question is have psychedelics changed how you think or feel about about death or the process of dying?

**Participant** 2:00:42

Yeah, and it's definitely, as I said before, made it seem like an absurd concept, I guess, and then relates to the ego death experience that you kind of already feel like, what it's like for you as you identify yourself to die and disappear. It is pretty great but I think something where I'm still quite unsure is the actual process of dying and it's sort of that I guess there will seems as big a mystery as it was before and what that experience is like itself and just recently been reading the Tibetan Book of the Dead, which has some interesting ideas, which I don't particularly buy, but it's, enjoyable seeing interpretations of things.

**Interviewer** 2:01:37

Is that the Timothy Leary, Ram Dass Tibetan Book of the Dead that they came up with, or the actual translation of it?

**Participant** 2:01:47

The actual translation, I read the other one first and that made me think, oh, check that one out but most of its a lot of repeating of the forms of the peaceful and wrathful deities, and it seems too specific, makes me not trust it.

**Interviewer** 2:02:11

So, from your experiences of ego death, and this sort of dissolution of you, as an individual, at least temporarily, do you is that you're in terms of, cause you were saying that the idea of death is an absurd concept. Are you? So, do you believe that there is some form of further existence after death? Or is or is this you're just more open to that possibility, but not necessarily, like, firmly that's what's going to happen?

**Participant** 2:02:50

Um, yeah, I mean, I'm more or less, absolutely convinced that existence continues. I'm very unsure about the exact nature of how and the biggest thing whether a sense of self continues, or it sort of the atoms you're made of will eventually be part of something else that has an individual sense of self, that different forms of life have, each have their own identities and things in that way. It's where there's a lot of uncertainty of the sort of continuation, but from the perspective where you take even time out of it, then it is just one sort of ever-changing thing. Taking on every different impossible form.

**Q31. Interviewer** 2:03:56

this question here, we can move past it quickly, if you feel like you've already addressed it but the purpose of it is just to ask a question in a sort of more secular way, rather than so I'll read it, and then I think it'll make more sense. So, the question is, have psychedelics changed any fundamental beliefs about the nature of reality? And I sort of make that distinction because religious or spiritual beliefs could be fit that description, but they framed in a sort of different way and some people might not respond so well to ask it in that sense. So, I don't know if anything else comes up for you in regards to that question.

**Participant** 2:04:42

It's hard to think, specifically, I think just goes back to that. There's a lot more to it than I understand and think it's possible to understand, it's sort of, the nature of reality seems unknowable.

**Q32. Interviewer** 2:05:29

Have psychedelics changed your outlook on life?

**Participant** 2:05:36

Yeah, almost, it's a mirror of the same thing but it is definitely confusing how they, it becomes richer by feeling like, you'll never know what it is and have no idea, but it's, I think the experience of consciousness might be what it's all about. So, it's sort of maximising that, feels like, I suppose the point of it, it's just kind of amazing that it does all the things it does.

**Interviewer** 2:06:29

What about towards your specific life? And you potentially what you're going to do in the future? How does it change how you've you think or see that playing out?

**Participant** 2:06:43

Um, yeah, I think so. I think a big part of it is just the interactions I have with other people and would like to have with other people, especially, it's sort of, it's rare to find people who can relate to these kinds of experiences and ideas, but it's kind of, those are the people I want to hang out with and experience.

**Q33. Interviewer** 2:07:34

If psychedelics have a role to play in society, what do you think it is?

**Participant** 2:07:42

That's, that's quite a big one. There's a lot of I guess it feels like the first step is on the mental health front. That seems to be their access point. For therapeutic reasons, but I think for environmental causes, there's also a major aspect in sort of making people aware how much damage is being done to the planet and sort of, for what reason and then I think just changing the way people interact with each other as well. Sort of reducing all the opposition and realising common ground and shifting from sort of very selfish material goals and sort of education as wellbeing sort of training people to then have the same goals and hopefully, changing the direction of a lot of things really.

**Interviewer** 2:08:53

I wonder if I could, what comes to mind when you mentioned the environmental causes and making people more aware of the damage we're doing to the environment? You spoke a while ago in the interview of this. I think this sense of like the back and front of things like the good is necessary for the bad in some sense like this. The spider's web is the chaos to the fly, so to speak with the you know and I wonder in terms of your thoughts on environmental damage and catastrophes, pollution, and all the sorts of stuff we hear on news and people speak about, Does that concern you in that sense, or is that even? Is there even a layer beyond that where it's like, well, That's the thing playing itself out as well and it's all good anyway.

**Participant** 2:10:06

Um, I think one part of it is, it could be what determines whether humans get to continue to be part of things I think the earth will probably be alright without us. It has had mass extinctions and stuff before. So, I think overall things will continue but there is also the aspect of it being a driving factor for innovation and it's, it sort of feels like how far, just seeing how far we as a species have to push things before it breaks and gets us to do something different. So, I feel like, there's definitely a better way that we could be doing more to work towards but if we don't, it will still be in the bigger scheme, that things would be okay. It's just going to be a pretty bad way to go about it.

**Q34. Interviewer** 2:11:22

Maybe this is similar to what you've just answered but have psychedelics shaped your view of humanity's future?

**Participant** 2:11:33

I'm kind of it's definitely opened up more possibilities that I can imagine could happen but I'm not sure I'm optimistic that it will actually be able to get the kind of traction it needs to make big enough changes. I think the sort of the system's already in place, and the few who are able to control and manipulate it might already be too far gone to turn back. So, definitely quite mixed with that one. Instead of sort of definitely want to do what I can and sort of encourage others to do the same but it's definitely a difficult position. Yep.

**Q35. Interviewer** 2:12:43

Right. So, onto the last two questions. So, second, last question is, what advice would you give to people who are interested in using psychedelics?

**Participant** 2:12:58

Um, I suppose it sort of generally it would be to do lots of their own research, and study safety and harm reduction and understand it beforehand. There's part of me, which almost thinks like, just if they're driven to do it, to dive in and without expectations, but I think, in the interest of safety, and trying to push things forward into a more accepted direction, the sort of damage done by the stigma already in place, it's kind of, the worries that people have about it will only come out if they, they'll be pushed to more if they haven't got a second picture on it. See, I guess it is mostly informative. That the approach I'd want to have with people who are interested which have done to an extent already.

**Interviewer** 2:14:10

And what about specific advice. So, obviously, doing one's research and becoming aware of it is important but that sort of that idea suggests that at some point, they're going to come to some specific guidelines or advice that people collectively or individually are going to let them know, you know, through the forums or through internet or through videos or through conversation, like somehow someone's going about you should do it like this, rather than like this in this circumstance, maybe because it's going to be better. So, is there any generic advice or specific advice that from your experiences that you'd say like, this is what worked for me, and this might work for you?

**Participant** 2:14:56

Yeah, definitely for the first time being with people they trust and a comfortable with, with at least somebody sober or experienced who knows what's going on. One of the most common things I've said is smoothies, fruit smoothies are amazing. They sort of give you some of the stuff your body generally needs and they're not too rough on the stomach, which for mushrooms is always good, especially if they've got ginger in them. Definitely like clearing their schedule, having nothing big that's come up. Nothing big coming up the day after or a few days after and no major things that have happened recently. So, it's like nothing pressing on their mind too much. I'm not sure what else right now.

**Interviewer** 2:16:20

Anything in terms to do with set and setting or dosages?

**Participant** 2:16:29

Yeah, either at like their own home or a friend's home somewhere familiar and comfortable or in nature. Similarly, definitely preferably where they've been before and know the area and won't be disturbed generally and for doses, it's generally for acid say to start with one tab. For most people, if they're unsure, maybe half a tab if they have some doubts or hesitation and with mushrooms, I would probably say it depends on the mushrooms, but I'd probably say like two grammes, where it's enough to feel it and understand it a bit, but not really intense. I've known quite a few people suggest more, but it's sort of I've seen people have bad times from that or not first hand, but still close friends who then talked about it. So, yeah, start slow.

**Interviewer** 2:17:35

Cool.

**Participant** 2:17:38

It's the whole thing with, you can always take more, but you can't take less.

**Q36. Interviewer** 2:17:43

Well, then you go \*makes vomiting sound\* and the final question is simply, are there any final thoughts or comments or even questions that you would like to mention or ask before we conclude?

**Participant** 2:18:07

Not that I can think of a lot has been covered and part of me always would like now it's your turn, do the whole interview. Your thoughts on every one of these.

**Interviewer** 2:18:18

Me oooh. I guess. Yeah. All right. Well,

**Participant** 2:18:24

results come out and stuff to get more general idea.

**Interviewer** 2:18:28

Mm hmm. Let me pop there.