15. Interview with Participant 15

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**Length:** 3:38:38

**Spoken duration of interview:** Participant (85%), Interviewer (15%)

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

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

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

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

psychedelics, experience, psychedelic experiences, bit, sense, profound, realise, completely, idea, pretty, day, thought, problem, feel, point, people, good, question, terms, put

**Participant** 00:00

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 00:03

So, the one thing before we start is just to frame the particular psychedelics that we're interested in talking about and making, because some people lump different drugs into this category or not. So, just to clarify what we mean by psychedelics, and when I'm asking about your psychedelic experiences, kind of what drug experiences I'm particularly interested in.

**Participant** 00:25

Yeah, sure.

**Interviewer** 00:25

So, the main ones, of course, classic psychedelics. So, we're talking LSD, psilocybin, DMT, mescaline and Ayahuasca. I don't know if Ayahuasca is technically a classical, psychedelic, but it's pretty common.

**Participant** 00:41

I suppose DMT is part of that.

**Interviewer** 00:44

Yeah, and also Iboga if you've ever used that, so all of those, you can drop them in the psychedelic box, and if you've used any of the analogues of those, so if you've used like one 1p-LSD, or you've used another version of psilocybin with 5-Meo-DMT, or something like this, or some Ayahuasca, you know, pharmahuasca or something.

**Participant** 01:05

yeah, yes, yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer** 01:06

That's all good. Just put that in there as a psychedelic box. Drugs that we would like you to kind of exclude from talking about when you're talking about your psychedelic experiences, are cannabis. So, some people are very high doses say it's very, psychedelic like but for this instance we're not interested in that. Excluding MDMA or ecstasy, and also, ketamine and salvia. So, those are the four main drugs that I've read about that I think probably the most common that people might lump in with it or not. So, those are the four that I would exclude the other five, six are the ones that I would put in the box.

**Participant** 01:48

Okay, what would you say, I mean, it may not be that relevant as we go forward but what would you say about the 2C series?

**Interviewer** 01:54

2C I think I'm pretty sure those are analogues of mescaline, I haven't, I'm not sure.

**Participant** 02:00

They're fairly close, in effect, just not duration, but phenomenological.

**Interviewer** 02:04

Yeah, I would put, I would include the 2C series as an analogue of mescaline in that case, you can put that inside.

**Participant** 02:12

Sweet.

**Interviewer** 02:12

Cool, right. So, that's all the pre amble.

**Participant** 02:16

Wonderful.

**Q1. Interviewer** 02:17

The first question starts nice and broad and it basically is, why do you use psychedelics?

**Participant** 02:27

Well, I mean, many reasons, and obviously, there's some history there where, you know, in my teens, I used them a few times, just for fun, just take them in a friend's house and look at a trippy poster and eat something fun, and you know, whatever, just hang out but then my real relationship, quote, unquote, with psychedelics rather started 19 or 20, I can't exactly pinpoint it but as initially it was recreational. So, the intent going into the experience was recreational, but and this was using LSD but coming out of the experience, it was actually quite psychologically transformative and I stopped drinking, I had been problem drinking for some time and I stopped drinking pretty much on a dime and then I had a very close follow up experience with psilocybin and since having those experiences, my motivation has been essentially conscious exploration and that's come in many forms. Sometimes, it's been spiritual exploration but when I say spiritual, I sort of mean materially spiritual in the sense of divine and kind of supernatural bit extent[ial?], rather than fantastic and then more recently, it's been a bit more towards the mental health and you know, framing the subjective experience as a tool for personal growth and consciousness expansion, in the sense of thoughts, as opposed to necessarily spirit but I should also note that I have not taken a psychedelic for some time. I've taken I am actually planning on very, very soon, sort of week, but it's actually been quite some time since I've taken any substantial dose of a psychedelic, probably five years or so.

**Interviewer** 04:26

That's quite a long time.

**Participant** 04:27

Yeah, I've taken some low doses of things like 2C-B and MDMA but obviously, I won't include my answers to experiences but um, MDMA and low dose of ketamine as well, which again, obviously won't be included in the experiences but.

**Interviewer** 04:46

And what was the motivation or reasoning behind this five-year hiatus?

**Participant** 04:54

Just integration time I went through about an 18 month period where I used psychedelics eight or nine times, which I know for people who are drug users, that's not going to sound like a lot, you know, eight or nine times in 18 months or so, it's not a big deal but when you're when you're speaking about sort of very deep, high dose psychedelic experiences, I mean, I'm sure I don't need to sort of, you know, pound that nail at all for you but it's a very different realm and the integration that's taken place as a response to the two or three of those experiences, specifically, which had very profound effects on me, has just meant that I've not felt the call basically and that sounds so cliche and kind of trite and meaningless, but I've just not felt an impulse to go back into that realm and drag something new back from it, for lack of a better term but again, right now, I do actually feel that, again, I'm at a point in my life where there's a lot of things going on and I feel like it could be helpful for me to straighten some things out and expand my thinking and kind of break out of some habits and so that kind of explains both the gap, which is integrating that same thing and then the motivation for doing it as the thing that then gets integrated.

**Interviewer** 06:19

Okay, cool. I think you probably answered the second one.

**Participant** 06:27

Sorry, I'm sorry.

**Q2. Interviewer** 06:29

No, no, that's fine. That's fine because the questions are kind of kind of logically ordered. So, the second question was, basically have the reasons why you use psychedelics changed over time and you've just described they have.

**Participant** 06:41

Yeah, sure.

**Q3. Interviewer** 06:42

No problems answering my questions. That's all good. So, how did you first start using psychedelics?

**Participant** 06:51

I'm so I'm the youngest of four and I have two older brothers and my house was incredibly liberal and my parents were they weren't, weren't absentee parents or anything, but they were caught up in their own shit, I'm just going to sorry, excuse my French, but they're just, they were just caught up in their own stuff and they were not, by the time they had the fourth child, at least and their fourth child was at the point where they were getting into dangerous situations, they were just not able to effectively parent and so I found myself in a lot of situations where things like this were just sort of around and while everybody was, surprisingly, in retrospect, surprisingly responsible with these things, they weren't taking them every week, they weren't, you know, scaring each other with strobe lights or anything they would take them and listen to music and hanging out with a blacklight and then being pretty respectful and you know, there was no ceremony around it, but it was very respectful. So, that was my first experience was 13, possibly 14 and I was at a friend's house for new year's and I'd bought half a tab of acid, which, in retrospect, I'm thinking was probably about 75 micrograms, I would say, possibly 100 because obviously, memories never going to be that accurate but in that range, probably somewhere between 75 and 100 micrograms in retrospect.

**Interviewer** 08:10

And you brought that from your home.

**Participant** 08:13

Yeah, yes. So, so I sourced that through a friend and then I've gone to the party and taken out the party and, and had the experience there but the party was, I mean, two of my brothers were there, these are people that I've been friends with for four or five years, you know, I was I was in a very trusting and safe environment and I knew that nobody was, you know, nobody was a shady character or anything like that and there was nothing strange happened, it was all fun, and just had a great time and the only thing that I did note, which I haven't had with LSD since then, which does give me some pause, but not a lot is that my memory of it is that it lasted until the evening of the next day. So, you know, mild effects were still being felt, but still, you know, you wouldn't want to drive the car sort of effects. You know, I had taken the LSD at maybe 6pm or something like that. So, effects were kicking in fully by about 8pm and then I'm talking about seven 8pm. The next night, you know, I my memory puts me under the impression that it lasted that long, but nevertheless, I'm probably going into too much detail but that was how I got into it was totally recreational and totally um, again, not as silly as taking it all the time. We, you know, taken way too much MDMA and an EDM festival, something like that, but it was certainly still recreational and I didn't really understand any spiritual dimension. At that point. I was pretty hard-line atheist. So, I didn't even have a framework to put the experience in those terms, even if it had approached.

**Interviewer** 09:50

Do you remember what the sort of intensity or you were saying you had a good time but was there any profound effects or intense effects during that first trip that come to mind?

**Participant** 10:03

There was certainly and this is going to seem maybe a little bit dilettanteish, because it's kind of getting into neuroscience but I had a really profound sense of realising that your brain can trick you into believing something. Not believing necessarily as in you, you’re attached to it as a reality, but believe that something is happening in the sense that you can go look, I'm on a drug, and I know it's not real, but close eyes open eyes, whatever, the wall is melting. So, I now know that my brain can actually replace my reality with something that's not actually happening in front of me and I can have a fully immersive virtual reality experience and again, later on, that might have been framed as something spiritual, but at the time, it just occurred as a as a, you know, I felt like I was a scientist who would look through a microscope at my own mind and found something profound that, you know, being 13-14, and having not gotten to any of the literature, or even any of the philosophy around it, or any of the sort of ethnography around it. I had no framework whatsoever to realise that millions of people have said that exact thing before, but I thought it was totally profound thing but it was very much in a sort of a scientific framework. It wasn't like a divine thing, revelation, it was just like, Ah, shit, this is a data set I didn't have before and my conclusion from this data set is that wow, my brain can actually create objects in my felt reality. That was pretty mind blowing like that that took me about two and a half hours of the trip. I mean, you know, again, memory may not be totally exact, but I remember about two and a half hours of the trip just sitting in an armchair just thinking like, holy shit that changes everything. Moments of almost paranoid delusion of you know, fuck, is my mum real? You know. I just, is my brain just tricking me like I have no idea what's going on now but luckily, though, those moments were pretty, pretty transient, and also, I found them entertaining rather than scary, which I think I'm quite blessed. With the horror stories, I've heard that I've never had.

**Interviewer** 12:22

They definitely can go dark.

**Participant** 12:24

Exactly. I mean, I've had similar thoughts of, you know, family members dying or whatever but for some reason, they've been framed in a way that I've found really entertaining and I've just been really lucky I think that I've never got stuck in one of those awful places that that people report but that was the only really profound experience. I mean, other than that, it was watching a trippy poster move and walls breathing with you and having, you know, conversations with friends that you couldn't possibly remember the next day but we're obviously the most profound thing in the history of linguistics at the time and listening to music that I liked at the time and seeing it in a new light and things like that but they weren't particularly profound. I did have some really profound experiences with art later on, but not in this experience.

**Q4. Interviewer** 13:06

Okay, cool. So, the next question is, what aspects of psychedelics do you find most meaningful or valuable?

**Participant** 13:19

Yikes, okay, right in there. I think probably the most valuable aspect to me, I would say, although I am somewhat biased because of because of what I sort of do. It's not for a living, but I do spend about 30 hours a week on it. So, it's more or less a job with [organisations], because I'm somewhat biased by what I do in those spaces but one of the things that I find extremely valuable about it is the fact that it takes you outside of your preconceptions, and it takes you outside of your default mode network, it takes you outside of your pre-recorded reactions to things, it takes you out of those sort of emotional crunch zones, and those the tensions that you kind of repeatedly create for yourself, and I don't mean to sort of sound victim blaming there but I just mean in the sense that reinforcing thought patterns is what kind of leads to these somewhat traumatic reactions to things by my understanding of the psychology anyway and so being able to extract yourself from those sort of cyclic patterns, and have a bird's eye view for lack of a better term or, you know, a big picture view or a new lens or a new resolution or something, you know, whatever sort of metaphor you want to use, I think they're all kind of getting at the same thing where what you're basically doing is taking a look at yourself from somebody else's perspective and I think that that's one of the most valuable things because not only does it make you see if you're an asshole, which is profoundly hard to get somebody to do, I think. It also means that people get respite from whatever it is that's preventing them from doing that anyway. So, it, you know, you sort of you sort of give a man a fish and teach them to fish at the same time, when you have that, I think a bit, I mean, that's a bit of a low resolution way of describing it but I think that that's very profound. What's meaningful to me, is, this is going to sound maybe a little bit, boring in the psychological sense, but I think one of the most meaningful things to me is actually the artistic aspect to the experience. So, you know, I experienced fully immersive visual and auditory hallucinations and so that also lends itself to, you know, quasi physical hallucinations, because you're having an experience where you're in a 3d reality, where you are under the distinct belief that you have a 3d form and that that reality can interact with that 3d form. So, you're having what amounts to a physical experience, in your conscious experience, even if it's not actually in your physical experience, if you said, I mean, you know, in your conscious experience, it presents itself 100% as a physical experience too. So, you know, I can have fully immersive experiences like that and in a world where there are shapes, colours, angles, sizes, shades, geometric representations, that you had, absolutely no inkling could possibly exist. The effect that that has on me, I think, in terms of the force with which it makes me sort of surrender and give up and be humbled and sort of say, look, I don't know shit. You know, these colours exist, whether they are materially real or not, I'm seeing them right now. So, they, they're, they're at least experienceable, I'm pretty sure that's not a word, but there, at least they can be experienced by the human psyche, and knowing that is profound enough for me and when that happens, at a million miles an hour relentlessly for six hours, and you get the impression that you've seen more high art than the world has produced and will ever produce. In this one experience laying in your bed with your eyes closed. The effect that that has on me, it's pretty much ineffable, where most other aspects of the experience I can kind of find some poetic or logical framework to wrap around them where this aspect of experience I've just completely lost for words, and I have to just say, look, dude, I'm not really a proponent of drug use but in this one instance, there's only one way, you know, and it's the only thing that really puts me there is that artistic sensual aspect.

**Interviewer** 18:14

So, and in terms of the, the artistic, or the intense, fully immersive, 3d geometric realities you go into, is the meaningfulness simply the experience of it or is there something that you take away from that as well? Like, is there a meaning you extract out of it or is it just the it's just the pure aesthetic experience?

**Participant** 18:41

Well, I hope this doesn't sound like dodging the question, but it's it there is the just extreme awe that you can totally get lost and just say, like holy ever loving God, this is just extreme bliss, and pure creation, and creativity that I couldn't possibly fathom and that's just unbelievable and you know, it's like a million orgasms at once for every single part of your entire being and that's really interesting in and of itself, as it probably sounded like just saying, but there's a metabolite of that experience and I don't know that I would frame this, as I say, I hope don't sound like dodging, I wouldn't say that it was a takeaway of the awe, but it's a metabolite of that experience, where I'm not always but I have regularly, you know, let's say I've taken psychedelics maybe 200 times in my entire life, maybe 120 of the times this has happened. So, it's quite high, you know, probability that when I have that experience, what it does is it opens me up to the what I mentioned before, which is the self-reflection, you know, I just sort of say, holy shit, this is incredible. I'm now fully primed to turn that lens around on myself and say what the hell is going on here? What can I now see here that my guard is down and that my intuitions have been sort of, you know, laid bare and some of them are obviously helpful, and some of them not and I've had that experience of being just sort of somewhat torn to shreds in terms of my values, that I can then turn around and look at myself and say, hey, that trauma you experienced. Why are you carrying it? Like this, you know, obviously, that the details of that maybe aren't particularly interesting, but I, you know, I have had these profound experiences where I have conversations with myself, and I'm under the impression that that is a metabolite of this experience of awe because it shakes me so much that I'm capable of accepting what I've always known is the logical answer to a problem. So, you know, take for example, I had anxiety problems and I knew that the problem was overthinking and I knew that the problem was miss apprehending situations, for the most part and I knew that the problem was not just shutting the hell up and letting things happen but obviously, when you're having anxiety disorder, it just isn’t that easy but what psychedelics was able to show me was to turn around and sort of look at myself doing it, and finally accept as an actuality, the logical deduction of what the answer to that problem was and so, you know, I was then able to take the reins of my decision making in terms of what I did with my mental real estate and that type of thing. You know, who I let live on the land, in my mind, and for what lengths of time and to what depth and that was a profound, you know, just taking that one example, that was a really profound shift in my consciousness that, you know, measurably improved my life.

**Interviewer** 21:42

With the anxiety?

**Participant** 21:45

Yeah, yeah, just as one aspect of what I what I was dealing with, when I was sort of coming off drugs and drink and, you know, I, as I say, I understand that to be a more or less direct correlate of that experience and I could probably statistically, you know, obviously, I can't actually do this, but in my memory, and in my mind, and just sort of bringing it up as a concept, I would say, you know, there's probably 100% hit rate where not every time I had the experience of, you know, sort of ineffable awe did I have these sort of self-reflective episodes where something was worked out but every time I had a self-reflective episode, it was in response to that ineffable awe and that that sort of feeling of, you know, that sort of mystical unitive experience that came from this artistic, barrage is probably the best word, but it's just like being, I think I heard Russell Brand, explain something one time as being beaten over the head with a rainbow. It's kind of like that, where it's just like this absolute onslaught of the most beautiful mind bending, you know, shape and colour and sound and everything and they will just, they're all downstream effects, you know, from that, I believe, but again, I can have that experience of awe without necessarily having what I would say a mental health improvement for me, but, but again, every time I had a mental health improvement definitely was preceded by the awe

**Interviewer** 23:17

okay,

**Participant** 23:18

where I could have experiences that were really interesting and fantastic and I was in weird places that looked funny and they were, you know, weird trees, but you know, so you know, you look at these weird places on earth that have weird trees turn, it wasn't that profound and you know, it's just interesting. It was fun and I had a great time and maybe music was profound and that kind of thing but it definitely didn't give way to anything that I would consider. Sort of emotionally significant, I would say, unless I had that experience of awe

**Interviewer** 23:54

Okay, cool. That's very thorough and detailed answer thank you.

**Participant** 23:57

Sorry. Sorry, if I'm being too detailed.

**Interviewer** 23:59

No, No, No, there's no too much detail. I mean, if we went on a rant for like, five hours, maybe I'd have to cut in at some point. So, there's always limits but like, you know, that's really good.

**Participant** 24:09

I'm just used to public speaking about these topics. So, I sort of set things up to be a monologue.

**Interviewer** 24:15

Yeah, well, if you, just the think I sort of get that vibe a little bit that you're used to talking about it in major audience and so, yeah, if you can't help what you can help, but if, if you're able to think about this more as like a one on one, I mean, it is a one on one conversation.

**Participant** 24:35

Yeah, sure.

**Interviewer** 24:36

So, it's more like how you might talk to friends or someone who you're close to about your experiences. So, you don't have to feel as if you're on display, if that helps.

**Participant** 24:50

It probably will because it's just default for me. So, it's not so much that I have trouble doing that. It's just it's default. So, yeah.

**Interviewer** 24:57

No worries.

**Participant** 24:58

Cool.

**Interviewer** 24:59

Well I'll take what I get. So, don't you just you just do what comes naturally to you but in terms of this, yeah, it's just me and you. So, you're you don't have to be concerned in terms of like, if you think what you're saying could be interpreted or sound a bit silly in a certain way as like, that's fine. Like, I'm not I'm not here to judge the particular things you're saying. It's more, I'm just here to listen to your understanding of your experiences and what they've meant to you, and how they've changed or not changed or affected you in different ways and so if it means this to you, that's fine. I'm not, you know, no one's here to say that's a wrong belief and you shouldn't think that way about that.

**Participant** 25:38

Sure. Sure. Yeah. It would be kind of defeat the object of research, I suppose.

**Interviewer** 25:42

Yeah, I only want you to say the things that I think I want you to say.

**Participant** 25:47

Yeah and then you went to the end of the study, and realise it wasn't what you wanted them to say anyway.

**Q5. Interviewer** 25:51

Yup, oh well. Hence avoid trying to put anything into your mind before. So, the next question is, what aspects of psychedelics do you find most challenging or difficult?

**Participant** 26:15

It's hard to say. Again, I hope that this doesn't dodge the question, because I do have a direct answer but I just kind of want to add a little caveat to sort of contextualise which is that, I mean, when I say difficult and challenging it, it appears to me from talking to sort of hundreds of people about their experiences, and [???] and all that sort of thing, that my idea of challenging and difficult is nowhere near the level that a lot of people, you know, when people kind of rate their difficult experiences, when people explain the experience that they're having, and what they compare it to, I've never gotten anywhere close to that, you know, people might give like an eight out of 10 on the scale and I'm sort of like, Dude, that would be about a 50 out of 10 on my scale. You know, so when I say, you know, a difficult experience, maybe a seven out of 10 on the difficulty scale. It's not that bad. You know.

**Interviewer** 27:03

So, it's for you.

**Participant** 27:04

Yeah exactly.

**Interviewer** 27:04

This is the thing. So, these questions are designed or are trying to ask, relative to yourself, not other people what is difficult for you. It doesn't matter what other people find difficult. It's like, if that's a seven for you, that's a seven.

**Participant** 27:19

Okay, cool. Yeah. So, yeah, I just wanted to get that in there because I just I know that sometimes it's kind of like a, like a lateral scale, where you're going to take an average of what everybody sort of saying, and then it fits in there. I just want to be clear, that's all. Absolutely, definitely specific emotional release. So, I mean, it could be better. Sorry let me just turn a light on it, that sort of getting into dusk here, let me just turn the light on. Okay, that's a, that's a bit better. Okay, I'm definitely specific emotional. So, it might be better framed as like, like, like fronting up to memories. So, I mean, I had, I had some really specific memories of my dad, who I, you know, have a, our relationship's okay, now, but, um, I would say traumatic relationship with throughout my childhood. I mean, he was severely mentally ill for most of my childhood. I mean, you know, he knows that, and he admits that, you know, he was diagnosed, it wasn't exactly, you know, secret or anything like that, but, um, it caused a lot of problems and they're just a handful of specific memories that caused behaviours in me and, or at least that my interpretation now is that they caused certain closures in emotional avenues, and created certain fears. Specifically, things like fear of rejection and fear of being refused help and, you know, it's, you know, pretty profound thing, when I realised on a psychedelic, that you know, that this is just an example of where the experience was extremely difficult, because I had to front up to these specific memories of my dad that I'd been, you know, mortified of, to the point where a couple of them I hadn't remembered until this experience, you know, some of them, they'd come up now and again, and I just push them back down but there was a couple where he hadn't remembered them until the psychedelic experience that they came up on and so facing the memory is extremely difficult because I feel again, like you know, that seven year old child that's in this situation that's completely powerless and being dealt with by somebody who's in supreme authority and is extremely intimidating and all this sort of thing, and potentially unhinged as well, which actually had some concept of at the time, unfortunately, actually had some concept that this was an unpredictable situation as well as scary one and so facing the memories was extremely difficult and harsh and frightening and a lot of crying and I think I actually pissed myself one of these occasions because it was just so confronting in the sense that like, a seven year old, would you like a 22 year old might not, but I was in the psyche of a seven year old at the time. So, you know, made complete sense to just do that and not be embarrassed about it or anything. I'm still not it's just was part of the process but then coming out of it, I you know, having realised that these memories had created these certain behaviours and stopped me doing certain things and realising that then confronting these and then realising they weren't my fault, and I could, you know, reframe them and file them in a different place, in my mind basically, was a profound, it was a profound release, because it meant that I'd be able to deal with these things but it also meant that I finally realised that a lot of that work, while challenging was beneficial. So, when I had further experiences of similar kind, I just didn't see them as really challenging anymore, but I do definitely find it hard to front up too difficult memories. That's something that I always have to kind of, you know, let's, let's have a couple of shots of whiskey and dive right in, you know, like, it's that kind of feeling where I know that I really have to kind of steel myself and, and push through but I ultimately know that there's the light at the end of the tunnel. So, I never find it that difficult. It just does take something out of me same as performing, you know, you want to do it at the end of the day it's why you're there but fuck it sucks, like the moment just before you do it fucking sucks. Like, it's so awful expecting the pain, you know, which I just don't do by choice, basically.

**Interviewer** 32:09

In terms of you, you mentioned that a few of the memories or experiences that came up were memories that you had not been aware of? What makes you sure or confident that those experiences really happened? Is there, how do you recognise that?

**Participant** 32:30

Well, one of them was one, which I've corroborated with both my brother and my dad after the experience to ensure that I was not sort of just telling myself stories and one of them was one that explained enough about my behaviour that I didn't actually care. I considered the possibility that this was maybe a false memory, I consider the possibility that maybe this was something that I was using to cope with some other aspect of my childhood and I just came to the conclusion that to be honest with you, the profundity of, so this was a this was an experience, which had specifically to do with reaching out for help. So, a situation where I was in trouble, and I needed help and I'd asked my dad and the response had been not only, you know, net negative it was sort of extreme net negative and that particular experience I just had not thought about this happened when I was eight. Again, I'm not totally convinced this is a real memory either. It's worth asking that question for sure but you know, I thought about it, I spoke to my dad about it. He said, yeah, I mean, that's definitely sounds like something that I would do at the time. I, we were alone at the time, that the memory such as it has occurred and but I came to the conclusion Look, I just I just don't give a toss the experience the effect that it had on me confronting the memory was that I was then able to reach out for help and the response was no longer a reflection me or my attempt to get help. It was a reflection the person or entity that I was asking for help and it also meant that I'm no longer judged the entity because that's their choice, you know, if they don't want to help then they don't want to help, whatever but so the profundity of that the effect meant that I didn't care. It just didn't really matter to me anymore and then the fact that that a few of them were memories that I'd had from day one and one of them was one that I had corroborated readily with my brother and father. I just thought Well, yeah, that's probably real and that's good enough.

**Interviewer** 34:42

Yeah. Yeah, there's only so much investigating one can do.

**Participant** 34:46

Yeah, exactly and I didn't see the reason to interrogate it, in the sense that what I'm searching for is a reason to then reverse some psychological progress. So, it just didn't seem like a very sort of cost-effective endeavour

**Q6. Interviewer** 35:00

No fair enough. So, you've definitely spoken to this but in what ways have psychedelics affected your life?

**Participant** 35:20

Well, they broke addiction, that that's sort of a pinpoint bumper sticker one that, you know, you don't have to beat around the bush, they broke my addiction to alcohol. For sure, I would say I definitely was not an alcoholic, the withdrawals from alcohol were minimal and, you know, they were sort of over within about a week and I was able to kind of get on with my life. So, I wouldn't say it was sort of like a profound, deep physical addiction or anything, but it was it was a severe psychological addiction, for sure and that was just on a dime. I mean, that was within a within the nine, nine to 11 hours of a 120 microgram LSD trip. When I was, I'm pretty sure it was 20 but I'm going to say 19 or 20, I'm not sure but pretty sure I was 20. Had me reflect on why I was drinking and, and that has a lot to do with my family history and things that I was dealing with as I was coming of age and, you know, you know, like, you become conscious when you're a kid, but like, you kind of come online, again, when you're about 11 or 12 and you start realising like, holy shit, I actually get what drugs are, I actually get what you know music is, like, it's not just what I listened to, it was other people do stuff to you kind of come online for a second time to the wider world a little bit and as I was coming through that my family was in a complete shambles and I was witnessing my, you know, I, I had seen two members of my family try to kill themselves by that point, including my dad, physically seeing them not just sort of went through it sort of physically sort of happen. So, I, you know, I was at a point in my life, when I was coming into high school was the other thing, you know, you're going through puberty, go to high schools, and relationship and all that shit, that's difficult anyway and then I had all this crazy stuff going on at home as well. So, I was trying to get away from that to the depth that I could and that was what sparked the opiate addiction and then it was getting over the opiate addiction is why I started drinking but that had nothing to do with having dealt with the underlying issue, it just had to deal it was it was, like heroines really expensive and no one else I know does heroin. So, it's, it's kind of getting a bit boring. So, so I just I, it was just a change of scenery. It wasn't it had nothing to do with actually dealing with the psychological issues. So, in this one LSD trip, I was able to get to the core of those problems and figure out why I'd actually been using and abusing, you know, say abuse, there's no problem with using drugs, but abusing them is a problem. Why I was abusing these substances, and why I had self-harmed and why I had engaged in some extremely reckless behaviour in terms of endangering my body as well as these other things and also, sort of starting to work on reframing the sexual abuse episode that I experienced as well, when I was 18. Into something a bit more useful, I would say. So, they've broken addiction, and because of the break in the addiction, that opened me up entirely to the, you know, subsequent experiences, then became therapy sessions that were actually effective, because the, the, the shell was cracked, and I was able to bawl my eyes out if I needed to, I was able to scream into a pillow if I needed to, and I didn't feel embarrassed. I didn't feel like you know, my masculinity was threatened, I didn't feel like my femininity was threatened if I was getting aggressive in my response to a memory or something. You know, I just got to the point where I wasn't judging myself anymore, or at least not nearly to the same degree. I mean, obviously, we need to judge ourselves to not become a complete asshole but, you know, to the degree that was pathological anyway, I, that didn't seem to be a problem. After that point. Obviously, I can't be sure people around you might give you a different opinion but from my perspective, that didn't really seem to be a problem and so subsequent experiences have had these specific effects that unlocking like specific chains that I had around my emotional wellbeing, like fear of rejection, fear of asking for help, fear of relationships, fear of intimacy for the fact of, you know, giving somebody the keys to really fuck you up is quite scary and I just, you know, I was too afraid because my parents didn't treat me right. My siblings didn't treat me right. You know, Who the hell is some random person from three suburbs over going to treat me better than my parents, you know, that type of stuff and so it gave me the ability to deal with that because I was able to just bawl my eyes out and realise I had a shit childhood and that sucks, and I've got to mourn for that and move on and, you know, mourn for the fact that I didn't have loving, well I mean, loving is probably not quite, that's probably unfair to my parents, but I didn't have competent parents, they may well have loving, but I didn't have competent parents and I had to kind of mourn that, that I was never going to have the experience that, you know, partly, that you see in media, but partly that a lot of my friends had as well, you know, I had, I had some friends that had really lovely family units, I had friends that had, you know, divorced parents, but they were in, they were on cordial terms, and they had a great time going from parent to parent, and they got two Christmases, and, you know, all that kind of thing and they seem to be fairly well adjusted with it and whereas my parents broke up and decided to stay living in the same house, so it just, it was absolute mayhem, and it was horrible. So, I had to mourn all of that stuff, where just dude, you got it to some degree in a lot of these areas, you got the wrong end of the stick and it fucking sucks, dude and then on top of that, you got raped, dude, okay, yeah, you've got to frame this in a way, that's going to mean you don't want to kill yourself and it gave me the ability to just be kind of vulnerable enough to deal with that and then secondarily, because of the profundity of that experience has actually changed the trajectory of my life, and that my ultimate goal would be to be able to work with [organisation] full time and be advocating for the use of psychedelics in mental health treatment, and personal growth as well. I mean, obviously, there's some caveats to that, that don't come with the mental health treatment stuff, but vice versa, so. So, it's, it's actually changed what I wanted to do with my life as well, where previously, I had essentially wanted to just be a volunteer worker for the rest of my life pretty much and just, you know, woof my way around the world and see heaps of cool stuff. You know I'm not saying it was a bad idea, necessarily, but it was a very different thing to what I want to do now, which is actually be particularly of service and, particularly, you know, it's obviously, for me, I want to make money so I can live and all that sort of thing but the baseline is the altruism of look, look, I'm not getting paid, and I'm still working my ass off now to produce content and, and put meetings on and talk to talk to professionals and try and get funding and all this sort of thing and take meetings and blah, blah, blah, which was just purely because It has to be done, you know, and that and that's something that that conviction, which I realise is not an objective statement but um, that conviction within myself is something that's come out of my psychedelic experiences as well. So, it's had a profound effect on what I think is valuable in my life in terms of what I can actually do and give the world and the effect that I can have on those around me, quite profoundly changed my trajectory quite a lot.

**Q6a. Interviewer** 43:02

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

**Participant** 43:12

My identity definitely has that one's easy. I mean, my identity definitely has I, you know, I'm a spiritual person, for sure. It's definitely closer to the Sam Harris, sort of mentation of spirituality, but I'm definitely spiritual. I mean, I feel things which appear to me to be divine in the moment, and I relish those moments, and I think that they're extremely valuable and they inform. I'm also a musician and they inform a lot of my artistic, you know I'm not saying I'm any good, but you know, they inform my artistic output as well and, you know, my personality is now reverent to that as an aspect of reality that it wasn't before where I was pretty much a hard-line atheist, and, you know, not even like a Sam Harris atheist, but like a, like a, you know, I don't know, like more like a Matt Dillahunty, or Richard Dawkins or something, where it's just sort of like, look, you have to be an idiot to believe in God. That's what I was like and, you know, until I had these sort of profound experiences in my late teens, early 20s, I was very much non-spiritual and anti-religion and well, I would say, I'm still somewhat anti-religious now because I have a spiritual dimension to myself and my identity and my, my framing of pretty much everything. I'm much more sympathetic to religion now, at the very least. So, I'll still argue with the best of them that we should do away with the majority of what comes along with religion but I'm the first in line to say well, look, you know, we got to protect the, the, the, the good ethical prescriptions, we've got to protect the art, we've got to protect the profound philosophy and wisdom, you know, all of that stuff I sort of am much more sympathetic to now. So, I think I come across probably a less abrasive person, because I'm not quite so circumscribed in what I will and won't allow into my sort of little bubble of ideation and I mean, politically, they've changed me a lot, but it's been in kind of both directions. So, it's hard to really know what to say there, except to just sort of give a short timeline, which is that when I first encountered profound, psychedelic experiences, they made me sort of extremely left wing, like, to the point that it was kind of like, yeah, communism is good hammer and sickle kind of thing. You know, completely and utterly naive to history and completely and utterly unaware of what I was actually saying and with also no actual real understanding of what communism actually was, what socialism actually was, it was a very low level. Yeah. Good. Everyone. Good, nice to everyone. Good. This is the I'm being told that this does that. So, let's do that and, you know, weirdly enough, that was the closest I got to flirting with sort of right wing stuff, where I was listening to people like Alex Jones, and, um, you know, super conspiracy theory type stuff that, you know, obviously, they talk about things like, you know, crystals, and crazy new agey stuff, as well but you end up with this sort of severely identarian delusional aspect of thinking on that end, but then subsequent experiences have, you know, pulled me to the, to the other side, where I've been, you know, completely politically right wing, but sort of socially left wing but politically, kind of like, well, policy should basically just take its hands off everyone's private life in every aspect and just take care of, you know, building roads and stuff and that's it but then, my most recent psychedelic experiences brought me closer to the middle and I see myself as maybe a bit left of centre now, you know, I'm definitely very socially liberal. You know, I'm pro-gay rights, Pro-choice, Pro, drug reform, pro prison reform, Pro, some reform of the capitalistic system, for sure, you know, all of these things that are left of centre, but then I'm also like, Yeah, but also, fucking stop telling people what they can and can't do in their private lives, you know, like, it's a much more kind of, I find myself completely pulled, if I'm ever in a political debate, I find myself completely pulled between people and I have no idea where I must actually rest in their minds. Some people might see me as sort of extremely right wing, some people might see me as extremely left wing, and I'm just standing in the middle guy, I don't get why you guys are yelling at me. So, I think it's just made me more moderate in general, and more. It's definitely made me more moderate in terms of my drug use and things like that, you know. more moderate in my food intake at far, far healthier diet since having profound psychedelic experiences and that wasn't by choice, either. That was just a result of, I think, generally working on my life and getting my mental hygiene together had to do with hey, you're eating a lot of high octane crap, dude, you're going to die at like, 50. Okay, sweet we'll work on that, you know, I think it was just sort of part and parcel with the whole take a look at yourself and figure out why you're unhappy and why what you can do to help and do something about it. So, it's definitely made me more moderate. It's made me more open minded. It's made me more tolerant of views that I didn't necessarily agree with but it has also made me more, it's probably given me a bit more conviction in real boilerplate issues that I believe in, though like, like freedom of speech, for instance, which no, I don't believe hate speech is freedom of speech, I believe in some reasonable regulations on speech for sure but I'm pretty staunch. The point at which my cut off line is pretty staunch, though and psychedelics have actually kind of improved my clarity there and improved my thinking in terms of, you know, maybe it's just selection bias, but it's improved my understanding of the philosophy behind why I feel the way I do and I'm happier with the conclusion that I have now than previous, you know, before having profound psychedelic experiences but there's only two or three things like that. One of them is basically do whatever the fuck you want, just don't hurt anyone and I don't get any say in that. That was solidified with psychedelic experiences, quite actively and that I actually had a vision of you know, that hallucinatory vision of just basically every type of person, including people that had like violins for arms, I mean, I'm sure you can relate and basically the feeling of like, these are all people that that everyone's a person doesn't matter what even if they're lying to themselves, and there's some weird trend. I mean, who gives a shit dude, like, it's just it's people doing what they do and that's fine, as long as they're not hurting anyone, get over it and that was a pretty profound thing that happened and from one of those experiences as well. So, that those two are really the boilerplate thing is do whatever you want, and don't hurt anyone and then the freedom of speech to debate ideas, and all that sort of thing. Those two real boilerplate philosophical ideas that for me cover almost everything I could want to debate with somebody at a fundamental level anyway, were reinforced actually, by psychedelics, but many other things were shaken loose and changed.

**Q6d. Interviewer** 51:09

Has your understanding of yourself changed due to psychedelic experiences?

**Participant** 51:16

Yeah, definitely, and profoundly, that one's easy. I mean, that's, that's, uh, you know, five, strongly agree. Definitely, I mean, in profound ways, and in ways that I would say go to the point of, if I had not been able to reach the types of understandings that I have about myself, now, I may have probably continued down that suicidal path because it was just such a struggle, having no clue where I fit and no real identity or understanding of what I was meant to do with all the hurt that I was experiencing, and all that sort of thing and it just seemed the better, the easier, you know, the better way out, like, we'll just this, this sucks, I can't really figure out how to fix it. So, here we are, the profound understanding that I've reached through that I, you know, my apprehension of it, is that the psychedelics have given me the ability to have that understanding. Absolutely profound, and I can't overstate really, how much I agree with that one, that it has.

**Interviewer** 52:16

And in terms of this, this understanding of these understandings, is it a logical sort or rational understanding of yourself? Is it a more emotional intuitive? Is it both and maybe a little bit of like, the top three, so to speak? What do you think you now understand better about yourself, that's, particularly stands out to you?

**Participant** 52:46

Right okay. I would say that, I mean, the different things that it's helped me understand have been pretty wide ranging. So, you know, it's quite hard to kind of fit one thing, which is, I guess, while you're asking for a few of them, one of them has definitely been the understanding that I'm not a particularly I, I don't, sorry, I won't go in reverse, I would normally go in reverse, but, um, it, it marries the two. So, what I would frame it as like a, like a sharpening of my intuitions using logic. So, my intuitions would be, you know, you're, you're, you're a hurt person, you're a damaged person and that's why a lot of these things go wrong, and why you make these ridiculous decisions, despite knowing logically, all of that stuff. I have an intuition that that is the case, but I have no ability to really put language to it in a way that actually, you know, you can see a way out of the maze kind of thing and then with psychedelics, it gave me some kind of like, logical, like, let me just shift some words around and now it makes sense and then it was like a logical, you know, syllogistic, this causes trauma, you went through a whole load of this stuff, therefore, it's likely that you know, it just made sense of it in a way that I was actually able to go like, okay, so there is kind of like, there is a framework for this and then obviously, once that happens, you reach out into the literature and you start asking questions, and you realise, okay, people have known this for years and it's, you know, there's a lot of stuff out there on it. So, it was marrying the two to some degree where I had these intuitions that I had no idea what to do with and injecting a bit of logic into it actually made more sense of it. Um, in terms of probably the top three, sort of points of understanding about myself, I'd say one was my sexuality. So, I'm, I'm, at the time at least, I was pretty openly bisexual but I had leaned into that more than was actually necessary to fulfil my emotional requirement in a performative way. So, I kind of leant into that in a performative way to kind of be part of certain social groups that I felt I wanted to be part of and felt was maybe necessary to be as interesting as I felt the need to be when I had no self-worth and particular psychedelic experience where I mean, long story short, I danced around in a dress, pretty much I was able to come to the conclusion that wait, hang on, I may be bisexual, but it's not anywhere near the degree to which I had been presenting, for lack of a better term, I actually present far more what they call heteronormative then, than I had been letting on and I didn't want to admit that because I had, you know, negative connotations around masculinity and all of this sort of thing. Due to having been in that sort of, like, extremely left wing sphere for quite some time and it gave me a profound understanding of how that was okay and, you know, as long as you're not being a dick, which was the boilerplate, you know, framework for any of it. It doesn't matter, you know, fuck who you want as long as they're consenting, you know, fuck who you want them that will let you fuck them, it doesn't matter. Just be nice, be responsible, be safe, it doesn't matter. Don't worry about it, dude, it's cool. So, that was one really big understanding that gave me a bit of freedom and made me a little bit more confident and self-actualized to use a bit of a high brow term. Another one would have been realising that a lot of my behaviour avoiding opportunity was a habit of receding from potential rejection or potential failure and, and that that stemmed directly from my, you know, the behaviour of my father. So, I was able to go through a lot of those painful memories and reframe them and refile them and the understanding that my behaviour had been moulded by those experiences was something that I mean, I'm, I can tell, I haven't done a very good job at getting one with you because normally, I'd be in tears by now at how profound and moving that experience was of. So, I'm sorry about that.

**Interviewer** 57:25

Well it's alright sorry, you don't have to cry that's not required.

**Participant** 57:28

No, but just this particular thing. I mean, it's very rare that I can talk about this, and I don't kind of crack up because it was such a profound realisation that look all of these things that you've been doing to destroy every good thing that's ever come into your life, to the point that no one can be bothered trying to help you anymore. Stem from this, and you can fix it, you know, like, you know, it's like, like, get into the water on a burning beach, you know, you've been hopping around on your feet for hours, and hours and hours, and then you're finally allowed to go and put your feet in the water, and it's just like, Oh, my God and it's just, you know, again, totally ineffable how profound that was, on me, understanding where those behaviours came from, I mean, it was then a bunch of work, integrating it to actually do anything about it but just noticing in my behaviour, where that came from, and noticing that I mean, maybe this was a metabolite or maybe this was actually the profound part but the fact that I was then ready to deal with it, you know, there's always this thing of your psychedelics come to you, when you're ready, man, you know, DMT will find you don't go looking for it, you know and, you know, maybe at the time, maybe I've felt an element of that as well, where there was some providence in terms of, you know, I'm now ready to deal with this trauma and you know, that the great intelligence, whatever you want to call it, has then put this experience in front of me, that's given me the tools to do it. I don't subscribe to that now, necessarily, but that was definitely an impression at the time. I would say those are probably the two most profound, there was some other smaller ones where it was like, dude, you're a real dick. Like, you interrupt people all the time and small things like that, that gave me a better understanding of, you're really neurotic and we need to work on that and maybe we should work on that and that's how, you know, I'm going by, you know, sort of feedback here but you know, that that seems to have had a profound effect on my ability to actually ingratiate myself to different groups of people and to relate to people and understand where people are coming from and be, you know, someone people would invite back, you know, someone that people actually want to spend more time with and again, I'm going by feedback here, I'm trying my best not to not to sort of sound like I'm kind of making that aspect of it up. I mean, I just, I have better relationships with my family now. I have better relationships with my friends. Now, I have an extremely good long-term relationship now, which I've never been able to really hold down before. Which has, you know, it's had its ups and downs, but they've been, you know, the bedrock has been completely stable and it's been a completely adult, mature, you know, logical, fair way of dealing with disputes and things, but I just had absolutely no conceivable capacity. While I was still dealing with all that trauma because that was where I reacted, I reacted from the trauma instead of from whatever was happening in front of me. So, yeah, I mean, they're definitely the most profound sort of discrete understandings.

**Q6e. Interviewer** 1:00:48

Cool, thank you have spoken to that one. Maybe you can just speak a little bit more to this but the question is, has your psychedelic use affected your use of other drugs? And you've noted that you, you quit alcohol, sort of on a flip dime. Is there, is there anything more to add to that or do you think you've covered that?

**Participant** 1:01:17

It might be worth just saying just sort of explicitly that, you know, I stopped drinking, I mean, I would have been 20 for about four years, maybe a bit more, I must have been 25, when I decided to try and drink again, and the only thing that I could really do was enjoy whiskey. Um, you know, I went from not being able to drink spirits to drinking straight whiskey but there we go, point being that I now have maybe one drink a week, and it's maybe half a standard measure because I'm doing it entirely for the sort of the sensual experience. It has nothing to do with being drunk, I don't enjoy being drunk anymore. Which I think is that's probably the thing that's really changed is. I've been drunk a handful of times since restarting my alcohol use, such as it is, but I just haven't enjoyed it and I haven't had the impulse to do it again, and I haven't wanted to, and it's just not made a lot of sense to me and yeah, I just had no interest in it. It unfortunately, did not have any effect on my use of cannabis. So, I was I had been until recently that I'll explain that bit at the end, but um, until recently, I had been pretty much a daily user of cannabis for about 15 years. So, starting when I was about 13, maybe about halfway through my 13th year until I was, ah, would have been 29, I suppose. Where I had an experience which had nothing to do with psychedelics where I quit cannabis on a dime but nevertheless, it didn't actually have any effect on that, which I thought was quite strange, because it turned out that my use of cannabis was actually strongly linked to some similar issues that I've been dealing with, with the with the psychedelics but other than that, I haven't used any substances. So, alcohol was the only substance I have used habitually other than cannabis since using psychedelics. So, you know, I, I had only the only drugs that had a previous problem with was opiates but I'd started drinking as I quit opiates. So, alcohol was the only one that really had any, any problem and I just never really used any other drugs habitually. Like I've tried everything under the sun, like there's probably not a drug you can name that I haven't tried, but I just never had any ongoing relationship with any of them. So, uhhh, scant on data there.

**Interviewer** 1:03:54

Would you describe your use of cannabis as problematic?

**Participant** 1:03:58

Absolutely, yeah. 100% it was it was it was a it was a severe psychological addiction, which was basically the last bastion of my inability to face some of my emotional shortcomings. So, it was it was putting me into a place but I mean, sometimes the effect of cannabis is described as it sort of just hits the it's okay button. Where kind of whatever you're feeling psychologically, it doesn't really change it, but your brains just kind of like, it's okay. It's not that big of a deal you know, you just kind of zoom out a little bit and you go, Oh, yeah, well, there's people starving in Africa, so who cares? And it's like, that's not an intelligent way to frame this but anyway, um, because of that happening, I just didn't I you know, there was these once I'd stopped taking psychedelics at the very least, there was these remaining little blind spots where I had certain behaviours and certain habits that I needed to combat that were being completely sort of, you know, railroaded by my use of cannabis, so you know, I'd had a sober half day and think oh yeah I've got to deal with this thing, when I get home from work, I'll call this person and talk to them about this issue or whatever the hell, and I'll get home from work have a couple of cones, and, you know, it's not a big deal and so I just, you know, for years, you know, for four or five years now, obviously, I was in a situation where that was my relationship with cannabis. I mean, I was smoking probably eight times a day, something like that six to eight times a day on any given day, twice, before work, lunchtime, after work three or four times, probably. Sometimes more, I mean, obviously, when I wasn't at work, it would be more as well and then I just quit cold turkey completely for a full year. Sorry, you didn't actually ask about this but just as context, I quit cold turkey for a full year and then came back and I pulled it, I pulled the date back a couple of weeks, because I was going to Splore. So, I thought, well, that's a pretty good marker for it, to be honest with you. So, I pulled the date back a couple of weeks, but I had no problem with it at all. After the first week or so I had no impulse to smoke cannabis, I was fine and then after about the halfway mark, I started going, you know, it did help with some things and so let's see if we can revisit the relationship the same way I did with alcohol. So, I think that's what I'm getting too good. I think what psychedelics may have done is actually instilled in me a way of dealing with my use of substances where I can frame it as useful, as opposed to as a band aid. So, with cannabis, it's now mainly used as a sort of creative lubricant, to some degree, when I'm trying to write content, or come up with novel ideas for something that I need to do for it for a project or with music, or to enjoy music or something like that, or to enjoy sex or something of that kind but it is targeted and it's, it's, you know, I'm aware of why I'm doing it, and it's conscious, you know, it's not unconscious anymore and I think that that, you know, I can't be sure about this, but I do get the impression that my experiences with psychedelics gave me the, I'm going to say wherewithal, I'm not sure if it's maybe the right word, but the wherewithal within myself and within my, you know, spirit or whatever you want to call it to just sort of front up and say, no, I'm just going to fortify myself against this shit thing that I'm doing and yep, withdrawal sucks. We know that but we have to do it. So, you know, get on with it and I think it's possible that the understandings that we mentioned in the previous questions, gave me that kind of resolve and conviction within myself that once I sighted the problem, I had the conviction to kind of go through with the solution, if that makes sense.

**Q7. Interviewer** 1:07:44

Cool. Thank you. Have your psychedelic experiences affected your relationships with significant others, and by significant others this is could be your family, it could be friends, so people who are important to you, could be your close relationship with a spouse. Yeah, and how have they been affected?

**Participant** 1:08:12

Forgiveness, I mean, it's just instilled an almost infinite capacity for forgiveness, and meant that I just did not realise what I was capable of before and it's obviously because I was never shown forgiveness as a kid, you know, those realisations all came with it but the way that it improved my family relationships was that I was able to stop taking things personally, and kind of zoom out on people's behaviour and realise that I don't know shit about their experience. I don't know why they're doing what they're doing. It might look like they're doing it because they're a dick but it might be because they're in a lot of pain. That was why I did most of my shitty things to people, you know, that's why I lie, cheat and steal and all the rest of it, I did it because I was in so much pain that I had no idea that I could do other stuff and so it's given me this capacity of empathy and forgiveness that I never had before. So, with my family, for instance, with my mother, we were able to have really profound and, you know, really quite searing conversations about her behaviour when I was a child and her inability to protect me from my father and things like that, that, you know, they can they, you know, in some instances that would break a relationship but my experiences with psychedelics, I was able to approach that situation. Instead of demanding an apology, offering an apology and instead of demanding understanding, offering understanding and trying to understand the other and that was just something that I've never thought of doing before, because I was never shown how to do that, you know, I never had an example to go by and all of the stuff that you read in books and get told in school just sounds like bullshit because everyone who stands above you when you're a kid is obviously talking bullshit because they don't know anything. Especially when you're the youngest of four, because it's the mission of your entire life to rebel against any received wisdom that you get from anyone who's older than you pretty much. So, you know, in, in relationships with my mother, as I said, with my partner now with the partner of my child, so I have a child and my, his mother and I are not together my ability to deal with her where we have some extreme sort of political and socio political disagreements. They're not kind of violent disagreements or anything, but they are very much to the point where it's like, well, how the fuck are you going to raise a kid? But I come to the table with this, she does as well, she she's also used psychedelics, and she sort of understands where this comes from and we've spoken almost explicitly about this aspect of our relationship, where we've been able to approach it with wanting to understand the other person and wanting a good solution rather than my solution and, and wanting an amicable result without, you know, obviously, you don't want to compromise quality, in terms of the solution that you have for the problem, but you're no longer so attached to your name being on something or your idea being the one that solved it, you know, whatever, all those things that are just sort of attached to, I need to, you know, steel my ego against the outside world, and these outside ideas that threaten my credibility and my backlog of gold stars, basically, you know, and, and, and, and so it's just really profoundly improved those relationships, and really made me genuinely move from being an extremely socially anxious recluse to somebody who's pretty outgoing, and meets people regularly and is able to run meetings with hundreds of people and stand there afterwards, as they come up in a line and ask you personal questions. You know, which I never thought I'd be capable of doing that and, and I feel closer to those people as well. I mean, this doesn't this isn't, you didn't directly ask us but I do think it's relevant. I mean, the other thing that that's given me is that when people who I don't know, are in my bubble, and I'm, I'm interacting with people that I don't have any particular familial tie to or, you know, tribal title for lack of a better term. I approach it with the same, almost the same sort of enveloping want of that person to leave the interaction better off than they came into it. If that makes sense and that's just dramatically improved every aspect of my life, work home love, you know, my relationship with my children, everything. Absolutely everything, profoundly. In a positive way. Absolutely positive.

**Interviewer** 1:12:55

Sounds like it.

**Participant** 1:12:56

Just want to point that one out.

**Interviewer** 1:12:58

It's hard to interpret it in the other way I think. It's like everyone walks away feeling happy, in a negative way.

**Participant** 1:13:05

Well, no, but I mean, that that can mean that I definitely brush past this myself that, you know, there's some that smacks a little bit of I've, I've done the work, which I certainly don't feel like. So, I just want to, you know, I do want to be clear on that front as well, that I'm not this isn't sort of like, you know, can we stop now or something? It's, it's, you know, it's, it's, um, I'm well aware it's an ongoing process.

**Interviewer** 1:13:39

Well, I guess it's, from what you've described, it's a relatively large change from where you were and so, from your perspective, this, even if other people have much better interactions, can do it much more fluidly are lovely or whatever. For you. This is a massive improvement.

**Participant** 1:14:00

Yeah, absolutely.

**Interviewer** 1:14:01

That's what that's what we're asking about. It's like, you know, at the end of the day, it's about you relative to yourself, and what and what's changed for you. Not necessarily, you know, because there's always going to be something better and worse than us.

**Participant** 1:14:15

Yeah, yeah, for sure. For sure.

**Interviewer** 1:14:22

Lots of these questions are kind of like you've definitely touched on them in different aspects. So, if they if you feel like you've covered a lot of what's the questions kind of essence is asking, just feel free to sort of like touch on it a bit but don't you don't have to go super deep if you feel like you've covered it, because a few questions as well are a little bit similarly worded but asked differently, because some people if you asked them in a different way you get at the idea, a different bit of the idea that they don't. That helps in the circumstances where people are finding it hard to get out everything that's in there and I don't think I don't think you have that issue.

**Participant** 1:15:07

No, yeah.

**Q8. Interviewer** 1:15:08

You're good. I think you're good at expressing so, the next question is, have psychedelics changed how you think and feel about yourself?

**Participant** 1:15:20

Oh, yeah, I mean, profoundly. I mean, I hated myself before, and I love myself now, you know, and not in the prideful way, but just, I deserve the same love that I give other people, you know, that sort of realisation that, you know, you're giving it away all the time, you're helping everyone and you're doing this, and you, you know, you cry when you see someone get hurt, and you know, but you don't reserve any of it for yourself, which is how I used to be and now I'm now I'm sort of like, you know, I'm not me first, but I am very much. You deserve to take some time off. You deserve to do this. No, you're a good dad, you know, you know, I'm able to actually have positive self-talk, which I just wasn't capable of previously, pretty much.

**Q9. Interviewer** 1:16:03

Well, that's yeah and sort of similar word one has psychedelics changed how you view yourself?

**Participant** 1:16:14

Less, for sure. I spend a lot less time worrying about how I appear and worrying about how I come across and obviously, you know, to a degree, that's not true but it's completely artificial because I realise I'm a public persona I'm performing publicly, it's completely put on and it doesn't. It's not repressing anything, basically but in general, it, it's meant that I've spent a lot less time looking at myself and a lot more time looking at things like how can I help? And what can I do to alter a situation, but in the sense that I do look at myself, I, I enjoy it a lot more like I see. You know, instead of seeing kind of like a, like a beaten, little child, I see like quite a happy adult person that's more or less got this shit together and I can be a little bit more objective instead of just instead of just constantly injecting negativity into the narrative, you know, if I do reflect on myself, or my achievements or something, you know, I'm not constantly trying to go well, yeah, yeah. Okay, so you were at those meetings, but do you have degree? You know, like, which is that's probably how I would have thought of it before where now I'm like, hey, that's crazy, dude like, you don't have a degree, but you've been part of like a protocol writing meeting. That's pretty cool, dude. You know, like, that type of thing. Like that kind of perspective change. Where I, I look, I, the positives about myself are highlighted now, instead of the negatives.

**Interviewer** 1:17:45

Okay.

**Participant** 1:17:48

I would say, I would say that one's definitely not quite as astute as some of the other answers.

**Q10. Interviewer** 1:18:13

Have psychedelics provided insights into how to live life well?

**Participant** 1:18:19

Oh, Jesus. I mean, given the context, personally for me, then definitely, yes. I mean, it's given, it's given me a lot in terms of how to remove certain things from my life that are hindrances or burdens or just things that are deadweight, you know, whether or not they're actually causing any problem in my life. It's just like, well, why spend the energy on it? It's taught me how to budget better, it's taught me a bit more of a work ethic in the sense of it creating meaning rather than money. It's taught me how to interact with people better. So, I mean, yeah, definitely. I mean, relative to myself, absolutely. I just, I just, I'm just I'm sorry, I just always really conscious of thinking, but I don't know if that means anything. Like in terms of the, you know, is there a live better, you know, like, I just, ya know, I'm always reticent to say, yes, I live better now. You know, I mean, it just seems a little bit arrogant to say that's all.

**Interviewer** 1:19:30

Yeah. No, so this is yeah, in that case, some actually, all these questions. Hopefully, it's coming across like they are focused on your personal experiences.

**Participant** 1:19:41

Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:19:42

So, it's not, again, it's not about you, comparing yourself to others and going Oh,

**Participant** 1:19:47

Yeah, yeah, I know. I know. I just mean that. Like, I'm always it's difficult. It's always difficult for me to answer because I'm always philosophically aware of like, ahh are you sure?

**Interviewer** 1:19:56

Yeah, I know, yeah. I know that sort of train of thought. Yes. In that case. Yes. It's just You know, as you said we don't know. There's lots we don't know but I guess it comes down to, you got to make decisions at some point and you have to make a judgement at some point. Are you making better decisions or are you making worse?

**Participant** 1:20:18

Yeah, yeah, exactly. I think so.

**Q11. Interviewer** 1:20:21

Okay. Have psychedelics shaped your worldview? And I guess you have described as your political view, but maybe, you can go broader than that?

**Participant** 1:20:32

Yeah, getting philosophical.

**Interviewer** 1:20:34

Yes.

**Participant** 1:20:49

Yes, in the sense that it dis de focalized it basically. So, I kind of I had a worldview, that was kind of things operating in a certain way and there aren't these things in reality, and there are these things in reality, and that means that, you know, these types of people represent XYZ, and these people represent ABC, you know, that type of kind of fairly reductionist thinking. Whereas after my psychedelic experiences, I've been able to kind of be more like, well, what about compatibilism, you know, like it, and then actually have a bit of a I wonder and just sort of look at other people's ideas in a way that I can actually take on aspects that resonate with me, instead of swallowing something wholesale. So, it's made me capable of and so that that's influenced my worldview, in the sense that since taking psychedelics, when I come across something philosophical, or socio-political, or perhaps spiritual, um, in terms of the wisdom aspect of it, I'm able to take things on and inculcate them into kind of like a mishmash of things that works for me, because I'm no longer worried about who else agrees with those things. Whereas previously, my worldview was very much run by you know, who agrees with you? You know, what camp, do you find yourself in? Who are the people that you find around you? What are the what are the implications of what you claim to believe sort of thing? Whereas after psychedelics, I now just, quite plainly don't give a shit and if something works, it works. If it doesn't, it doesn't and so I look at someone like Kant, and there's certain aspects of that that work for me certain aspects that don't look at Marx, there's an aspects that work certain aspects of don't you know, Wittgenstein, you know, whoever, whatever it is that you know, or a politician, there's certain things that Jacinta says that I think are ridiculous. There's certain things that make absolute sense and I think, wonderful, they're, you know, I'm just I'm not. I'm completely non-dualistic now, as far as I can tell. Um, which,

**Interviewer** 1:23:05

what do you mean by that, non-dualistic?

**Participant** 1:23:06

So I'm not, I'm no longer sort of, like, if someone brings something to me and I go, here's an idea, or here's a concept or project or a proposed solution for something, I, I no longer think of things as it either is, or it isn't the thing that you've you know, it, it might be a bit, there might be something I can take out of it but it might not be entirely what you said it was, or there might be certain aspects of it that work for me, because I live in New Zealand but for somebody who lives in, you know, Paraguay, it might not be applicable, you know, things of that nature, where I, where I'm no longer kind of like, getting, basically the spirit verse science thing, it's the same thing. Like, I'm not just looking at concepts as either true or false. I'm looking at concepts as useful or not useful, you know, I haven't thrown out capital, capital T truth, I'm, personally I put a lot of value in capital T truth and I think it's a really good tool for doing things but in terms of living life, and how you actually view the world on an aesthetic level, I think not having that focus is actually a good thing, where you're able to take abstract ideas that maybe aren't fully true, but you can get something from them that's helpful or you can use something that's not true to help somebody else see an idea more clearly, or something like that. Where previously I would have just been incapable of really conceptualising those types of thoughts, it would have either been, well, can you prove that it's capital T true, or I don't care, sort of thing. You know, it was very reductio ad absurdum. Pretty much everything.

**Interviewer** 1:24:45

So, your beliefs before, would they you would need it would just basically have to be.

**Participant** 1:24:51

Completely reductionist, scientific kind of, you know, obviously there's some value in that, but you know, that was the entire way I saw everything. So, if you know, people were talking about psychology, I only cared if they could show me a neural correlate, you know, just as an example that you might be able to relate to, you know, I would only care if they described it in terms of a neural correlate to an experience that I could frame for myself. Whereas now I can go into something and go, okay, you know, that idea works for me, you know, it intuitively works for me, and it fits with what I maybe understand so far and then somebody else might criticise it, and then I'll read the criticism and oh okay, I see why that worked for me, but why I was misapprehending it or whatever, you know, much more open to updating my beliefs and much more open to updating my worldview and I wasn't capable. I hope that again, I hope that's not dodging the question, because I, you know, I'm not committed to anything but previously, I was very much committed to this sort of reductionist consciousness as just neural activity sort of view of things. Whereas I'm now capable of updating as information comes in and as I read new works, or I read new pieces, even from the past, I can actually take them on board and inculcate them and hold them without believing them and use them.

**Interviewer** 1:26:11

Would you say so in a word, nuance?

**Participant** 1:26:22

Curiosity is probably a better word because I, because I don't think I always succeed which nuance in to me infers, but curiosity to know what you know, what else is there? And not stick with the thing that I'm comfortable with I would say, um, where I never had curiosity before I had fear instead. That's a really good distillation of it actually, is that in terms of interacting with the world and interpreting things that happen around me? I went from being in fear to being curious. I'd say that was a very good way of putting it.

**Q12. Interviewer** 1:27:01

Have psychedelics changed your relationship with nature?

**Participant** 1:27:06

Not really, no, no, I was a very highly spiritual, sorry. Pro nature person before anyway, I mean, I grew up in the middle of native bush and on a bay and things like this. I mean, I've always been very kind of out there and understanding how important it is to have nature in your life and some connectedness with the earth. I mean, even if you're just purely for the fact that like, well yeah, you're made from the same stuff, and everything else is concrete. You know, like, if you live in the middle of a city, you just literally are not interacting with organic material and that seems to me a bit silly. So, not really, I mean, I my habits of how Interact with nature and my relationship with it haven't changed I don't think.

**Interviewer** 1:27:45

Okay. Would you like to take a break at all? Do you need to use the bathroom or anything?

**Participant** 1:27:52

I'm good, if you're if you're fine, I'm fine. I mean, if you if you want to take a break, I'm sweet, too but I'm fine. No, no,

**Interviewer** 1:27:57

That's fine by me I just thought I'd double check cause we've been going on awhile.

**Participant** 1:28:00

Yeah, no problem at all.

**Interviewer** 1:28:03

So, I think we probably will, looks like we're about halfway.

**Participant** 1:28:07

Okay. Cool.

**Q13. Interviewer** 1:28:11

So, the question focus now is changing. So, those were obviously a lot about psychedelics and how you know, the meaning you draw from them, the thoughts about how it's changed and affected you and all that. Now, the next couple of questions are going to be looking at how you use psychedelics. So, the particular ways in which we use them and yeah, so just change in tact a little bit. So, the first question is, how do you prepare yourself for a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:28:42

Oh, um, I tend to go back to some non-scientific literature. So, I'll read Alan Watts, Terence McKenna, Daniel well, not so much Daniel Pinchbeck. He doesn't really cover the things that I'm talking about here but um, those types of Ram Dass, you know, those types of kind of psychedelic philosophers, I guess, for lack of a better term. Go to those and listen to some of the things that I enjoy in what they say, kind of gets me into the mood. I don't eat for about six hours or so, five or six hours. I arranged my life in a way that I have nothing to do the next day, at least. Usually more than that. Usually, I'm alone in darkness, I have music handy, but I don't tend to have it all the time. I have water handy and usually something like nuts, or dried fruit or something like that, but I can chew on if I need to and I let it wherever I am. I let everybody who's there know what I'm doing. So, you know when I was living at home I'd let everyone know, hey, I'm going to take something, I'll be a few hours, just, you know, maybe check on me every two hours to make sure I'm okay and I'll be fine and then I sort of metaphorically shit myself and take, take whatever I've chosen to take because it's pretty nerve racking.

**Interviewer** 1:30:25

in terms of the preparation here is that sort of on the day of that you're going to take or is there a lead into this?

**Participant** 1:30:34

Yes, yes, I, I tend not to really have, I tend not to sort of do it over a long period, because I just psych myself out. Whenever I've had those sorts of thoughts, you know, maybe weeks prior, and I start working up a bit of a lifestyle change to gear towards an experience. I just freak myself out, and I can never bring up the courage to actually take it. So, I've put that approach by the wayside and the best thing for me to do personally, is to just essentially decide on the day, maybe the day before, make sure I have the day off or just wake up and realise oh shit I have got the day off tomorrow. Maybe tonight I'll take something. So, I have to do it, I have to sort of sneak up on myself a little bit or I tend not to be able to muster the courage, despite never having a particularly challenging experience, which I find odd but there we go.

**Interviewer** 1:31:30

Maybe it's just the intensity.

**Participant** 1:31:32

Yeah, I think it is just the profundity in general.

**Interviewer** 1:31:36

And does. Is there any sense, I don't know, an intuitive sense that you're going to be doing this at some point and it's so you said like the day of or the day before you might pop into your mind? All right let's do psychedelics. Is there any sense that that's coming or it really is?

**Participant** 1:31:53

Yes, yeah, that that you actually you're right to point that out. I mean, that that does happen. So, for instance, for the last, I would say three or four months, I've had like this kind of inkling, that's just kind of swelled up every now and then and then gone away and it's gotten slightly brighter and slightly larger every time it's come up in my mind and then the last couple of weeks, a couple of things have happened just with a couple of friends have come into town that haven't been in town and things of this nature. Where it's just things have just worked themselves around to a point where I'm like, then it's time and then it's time and that has definitely taken a period to come up but I no active preparation, I think is what would be the delineation there. When yeah, there's definitely an intuitive sense. I definitely get that.

**Q14. Interviewer** 1:32:52

Okay, where do you normally take psychedelics, and why do you take them there?

**Participant** 1:33:00

Luckily, this one will be easy and short, in my bedroom, by myself in not always silent, but almost always darkness and the reason is to essentially maximise the conscious experience. So, it's not that I'll only ever do them that way I've had experiences out in nature, I've had experiences at concerts, etc but where I think I get the most benefit is where I can maximise the conscious experience. So, if I can zero, all the outside stimuli, and zero my own sort of superficial input into the experience, I get the most out of it, and I get the most profound sort of noetic quality to the experience as well.

**Q15. Interviewer** 1:33:40

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

**Participant** 1:33:53

I 100%, every time I do it in this way, I ensure that I can be warm the entire time. So, if the temperature is low, like there has to be a heat source of some kind, or I need to be dressed correctly but I ensure that temperature has to be taken care of. That's just something that I've had a couple of very uncomfortable experiences with and I would just prefer not to deal with that and then water and having water around us is a must you know the other sort of chewing items are take a leave to some degree, but water is a definite.

**Q16. Interviewer** 1:34:39

How do you prepare the space when you take psychedelics?

**Participant** 1:34:44

I just make sure it's very tidy. I mean, maybe some people would consider it a bit obsessive. It is definitely a bit more tidy than I would like for instance my bedroom. I would tidy it to a slightly higher standard than I would normally but I, you know, not, I don't take out cleaning products or anything, just make sure everything's actually away rather than sort of like hanging out of the drawer or something like that, you know, just little things like that.

**Interviewer** 1:35:14

And what's the point. Why, why do you do this?

**Participant** 1:35:17

Because it distracts me a lot, if there are things that are little things that are out of place that I can fix, or I then will get onto some weird track where the project is redesigning my bedroom or something and I start moving all my furniture and to avoid things like that, where I can just say, No, that's everything is just so and I can, without anxiety, go into the conscious experience and not worry about the real world, for lack of a better term. Just gives me that comfort, I suppose.

**Q17. Interviewer** 1:36:04

Are there any other preparations you make prior to taking a psychedelic that you might not have mentioned?

**Participant** 1:36:19

Oh, well, I definitely have the day the whole day off. So, I mean, I generally will take psychedelics at night but I ensure that I have the whole day off that day. So, I use that time in like with intention to prepare the set and setting it's not just sort of the you know I say kind of willy nilly wake up. That is true, but I mean, if that's the case, the intention, like for instance, right now, I'm kind of gearing up to pretty much get to it at some point in the next week or so and I've arranged my life where there's a couple of options, where I have the full day empty, so that if I wake up on that day, I can do it. If I wake up on another day, too bad. I haven't arranged my life to support it that way. So, that's something I actually do intentionally, a little bit less flippantly than I did in the past before, sorry.

**Interviewer** 1:37:15

So it's kind of similar in that way, where you said earlier about talking about your awe experience and how any of the changes new I think emotional changes that occurred later, were only occurred in response to something that happened before but it doesn't always cause the, you can have some an so in this sort of analogous sense. You, the days that are available, you won't do it on a day that doesn't fit the prescription of what you need to do it one of those days. So, if you wouldn't just take a psychedelic that within a day that you didn't have the day off on.

**Participant** 1:37:55

Yeah, exactly.

**Interviewer** 1:37:56

Can only happen on the days that fit that.

**Participant** 1:37:58

Yes, Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Not every day off do I take psychedelics but if I'm going to take them, I always have the day off.

**Interviewer** 1:38:04

Yeah. That sort of sort of trying to get out.

**Participant** 1:38:06

Yeah. yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yes, that that that has that has become fairly important in terms of my intuition about preparation.

**Q6b. Interviewer** 1:38:16

And you said you, you usually use them at night. What what's the purpose of that is why at night?

**Participant** 1:38:25

Two things one of them is airy fairy, one of them actually makes sense. The one that makes sense is that it's the same thing with zeroing outside stimuli. So, at night, it tends to be a lot quieter, sort of the latent volume of the world tends to be quite a few decibels lower. The sort of social temperature of any house tends to be quite a lot lower at night and I basically also have the ability to say, can everyone just keep it down? And they can't go, well, no, you're the one that decided to take drugs, you know, it's like, well, yeah, it's late at night, you know, lets chill and then and then the second slightly airy fairy reason is that, um, that seems to be more or less universal, with shamanistic ceremonial use and I have found that I get more. I mean, again, probably confirmation bias of some sort or another, and more expectation bias, rather but I seem to get more profound results that way. I seem to do better If I'm taking psychedelics during the day, I seem to always end up whatever the intention is, I always end up out in nature or with somebody or in a situation where I can't fully immerse myself, you know, and it's, it's still amazing, and I've had some really fantastic experiences that will stick in my memory for a long time in that context. It tends to be less profound on the day and, again, that could just be expectation bias, but um, that stems from my understanding of indigenous practices, basically.

**Interviewer** 1:39:58

So, so maybe in the simplest sense there, you only do psychedelics on a day where you have the whole day off and the following day is also off?

**Participant** 1:40:09

The following day as always, yeah, that one that one is always was off.

**Interviewer** 1:40:12

Yeah and with the night time, in some sense, you're if you do it at night, the options available to you to go out into nature, or to hang out with someone and go do something. It's just not there then. So, it's not a it's not a thing that you'll let yourself do because it's not available.

**Participant** 1:40:31

Exactly it's not a temptation and that's the other thing is because, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm not judging myself for it. When I do it. It's just like later on, I'll be like, Ah, well, I'm going to have to make sure I stay inside next time. It's never, never something I regret doing but yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:40:47

I guess, just depends on what intention you're coming in with, and can you making it as easy to stick to it as possible?

**Participant** 1:40:56

Yeah, exactly, exactly.

**Q18. Interviewer** 1:40:59

Make sense. All right. Um, what do you normally doing physically during a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:41:09

literally trying to stay as still as I can. I found that the energy in my body that makes me restless and I mean, this seems to be a fairly universal thing as well, the energy that makes me restless and want to just sort of move my limbs and move around. If I can grab hold of that and stay still, if I can hold that thought line for long enough to just stay completely still, it wells up and explodes into the conscious experience and it's actually that energy, being kind of cornered and forced into my head is kind of the best way I can explain it, by my body just not moving so that it has nowhere to go because it's not being spent anywhere and then and then all of the energy in my body goes into my brain and then my consciousness spends to extend the metaphor, the energy into the experience, which is completely, you know, physically dissociative. You know, it's not totally emotionally dissociative or anything, but it's physically dissociative.

**Q19. Interviewer** 1:42:38

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

**Participant** 1:42:43

I mean, do you want the obvious things like driving and stuff like that? Yeah, like I definitely avoid all of that kind of just general harm reduction stuff. Yeah but I but I don't think there's anything particular to me that I actively avoid from memory.

**Interviewer** 1:43:24

Yeah, the question is a bit.

**Participant** 1:43:27

Oh eating, I avoid eating much as I say, I'll have snacks that are for chewing on and generally that's to bring my consciousness back into my body, whatever that means but when I chew, I then can sort of re-congeal, and you like, if I need to take a piss. I might be having trouble getting my body to do what it needs to do and then if I have some dried fruit to chew on the chewing, because I have to focus on the chewing, it grounds me in my body and I can get to do the thing and back to my room and but I avoid having any, any substantial food at all. For some reason, I just I hate doing it, and I avoid it some people absolutely love it. For whatever reason, just never agreed with me.

**Q20. Interviewer** 1:44:20

Is there anything special you do after a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:44:32

Well having the day off for sure. Like with no, with no responsibilities, like not even like I've got to go see my friend for lunch. You know, just nothing. I want to be able to pick and choose exactly what I want to do the next day because sometimes it's going to be curling up in my bed crying, processing something but sometimes it's going to be going out and seeing my family or you know, whatever but I want I need to be able to have that choice to go into the experience with enough comfort to surrender and then once I know that I have that freedom the next day, it gives me the comfort to go into the experience. So, there's nothing specific, there's no sort of specific ritual or anything, but having that blank canvas for the next 24 hours is pretty important to my sort of ritual for a lack of a better term. I should say, though, that most of these almost all of these answers don't apply to smoked DMT because it's so short acting, I don't feel almost any of the same integrational like obligations. So, with DMT, I can take it pretty much any time. As long as I bring up the courage to do it. I don't need any of the prerequisites if it's smoked. Um, but any of the any of the longer slow release psychedelics these, all of these apply to all of them. I mean, even the ones that you know, it even spills over into the ones that you're not including like MDMA, they're just across the board, these are pretty much universal for when I use them, except smoked DMT. It's the only one.

**Interviewer** 1:46:13

And I would also imagine cannabis, you would be

**Participant** 1:46:16

Oh, sorry. Yes, yeah, Yep. Yep. Sorry, cannabis as well. Yeah, of course. I personally don't consider it a psychedelic. So, like, at all. I know it can have that expression but I don't consider it a psychedelic.

**Interviewer** 1:46:31

Yeah, like, I guess it depends on the awe, bliss, or profundity of an experience and whether it touches that.

**Participant** 1:46:39

Yes, exactly. I've just not hit that. I mean, I've had some really amazing experiences where I've, you know, maybe not smoked for a few weeks, and then had like, you know, three grammes in half an hour or something. I've just been in a situation where I've been like, Ah, this is a new part of my mind. Wow but it's not, it's just not quite the same thing for me.

**Q21. Interviewer** 1:47:02

Fair enough. Where are we? Are there any helpful techniques you use to navigate difficult or challenging moments during a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:47:13

Singing.

**Interviewer** 1:47:15

Singing?

**Participant** 1:47:16

Yep. So, every time I've ever had a difficult experience, where I've been like, excuse me, I've never gotten past, dude this is going to go south. Like, I can see, I know what's fucking coming dude and I don't want to go down there. I just sing and if I sing at that point, it just completely and utterly redistributes the tension in the experience and often, it actually completely changes the visual hallucination as well. Sometimes if I'm having, you know, sort of a negative, darker, sort of noirish vision that is sending me down, you know, I'm having a, I'm having a thought that I know is going to send me somewhere I don't want to go. If I sing, it can sometimes actually completely change the phenomenology of the experience, as well and so I don't actually have to do the emotional work to pull back. The experience itself has actually aligned itself with hey this dudes not doing well, let's get them a blanket kind of thing but singing or humming.

**Interviewer** 1:48:18

What type of singing?

**Participant** 1:48:20

Um, anything. I mean, generally speaking, it's just made up on the spot, generally speaking, it's just pick a picture and go with it, and then it'll come. It's very intuitive.

**Interviewer** 1:48:32

Okay, so you singing in glossolalia? Like, is it words?

**Participant** 1:48:38

More or less. Yeah, so yeah, more or less, more or less just sounds. Not even necessarily glossolalia but um, what in music is called vocalese, where it's almost like scat singing, but, you know, tends not to be quite as complex is scat singing, but that type of thing where you just kind of pick random syllables and make sounds that are, you know, the intention is that you make pretty sounds, and they completely pervade the experience and change the quality of the experience and that's my, that's what happens with me anyway and everyone I've suggested it to has experienced the same thing. So, I don't think I'm like crazy or anything. Like I don't I don't get the impression that it's just me trying to sort of justify the fact that I don't have bad trips or something.

**Interviewer** 1:49:27

Can I ask, was this motivation to vocalise or to sing to change a trip? Is this something that you came up with on your own or is this something because I know it's very common in Ayahuasca use.

**Participant** 1:49:43

Yeah, especially Icaros and stuff. Yeah, yeah. So, kind of both so they're tangential to each other, though. So, from reading True Hallucinations, by Terence McKenna. All of the crazy ramblings that Dennis goes on about the like electron spin resonance of the molecule and trying to inculcate it into human DNA and all this sort of shit, just fucking crazy but the ideas behind that made me think, okay, well, that's probably bollocks, but surely the vibrational quality of your brain, if there is a neural correlate to the experience of some kind, must have an you know, and that it must be expressed in the in the phenomenology somewhere and then I tried it a couple of times and had some success, you know, here and there and then I had a particularly profound DMT experience in which I had an entity of some kind say, sing that's what you're meant to be doing and from that experience on, it's been, like, on a dime, stuff starts going south I sing, you know, it, whatever it is, whether it's me or another consciousness, that whatever just comes to the rescue and just repaints the whole scene, and it just takes it another direction, and it's incredibly effective for me.

**Interviewer** 1:51:09

One thought that comes to mind is, during a psychedelic trip, the experience can move in many directions, in a simplified version, they can go quite negative into the dark places, and they can be quite positive.

**Participant** 1:51:25

Sure.

**Interviewer** 1:51:26

When you recognise at whatever moment that you do, that your trip is going into a negative place where you don't want it to go. What, is there, some people, for example, talk about how, you know, you got to face your demons, you got to go into the trauma to get through it. So, what, in what sense, are you at some points willing to face really hard traumatic memories that you've experienced, which are arguably going to be negative, scary? In scare quotes verse when you decide that no, this is just not worth it at all, it's going to have potentially no, it's only going to be something goes bad. There's no positive outcome from going down this or is that even what you're thinking then?

**Participant** 1:52:12

Yeah. It's, it's possible that I'm lying to myself when I give you this answer, but I'll give it as if I'm sure of it. So, that it makes more sense to you. I don't think they're the same thing. So, intuitively can notice a difference between something which is coming up as dude, you've got to work on this and something that's coming up, that's like, just thinking about 1000s of dead babies is not going to help. You know what I mean? Like, like, it seems to be more that when I talk about these challenging experiences that I try to avoid, they appear to me as completely aesthetic. They don't appear to me as like, emotionally damaging, they appear to me, it's just like, I don't want that. Like that's just like, you know, like, that's just an elephant with five arms. Like, that's weird. I don't, you know, like, it's pretty arbitrary, is the feeling that I get, it just sucks. Whereas when I have traumatic memories come up in the experience, it is actually much more like a here's Johnny, it's time to get on with this thing and you didn't want to do it, but too bad. It's much more profound and it comes across as much more salient and much more alarming and much more. Salient is probably the best word. I mean, it comes across as crystal clear, this is something that is important to you and this is something that you need to do. Whereas the other the other things that I that I tend to avoid. They don't come across as frightening. They just come across as like grotesque or macabre, or something like that.

**Interviewer** 1:53:58

The ones that you would avoid?

**Participant** 1:54:00

Yeah, yeah, they come across as something more like grotesque or macabre or, like replaying a memory of like, like, for instance, I have a memory of a kid splitting his knee open when I was like six and at one point in a trip that started replaying in my mind and it was pretty explicit memory and it was just like, not only was this like, you know, replaying the memory of a seven year old kid in agony from spilling his knee open. I can also like visually see his knee splitting and blood like bursting out. So, like, yeah, so like going over that when you're in that kind of like, sensitive space is not that great. I'm not sure there's any trauma there to deal with. It just isn't something I want to think about over and over, you know, it comes across as aesthetic. I think that's really the difference to them. So, I don't know if I'm like lying to myself there and just trying to kind of bypass your question a little bit, but my sense is that when traumatic memories come up, I don't [avoid them] and they appear different in the experience they appear phenomenologically different.

**Interviewer** 1:54:58

Okay, so there's some quality about them that you recognise

**Participant** 1:55:03

This again. Yeah, exactly like I can kind of see ahh ok, I have I have seen this before, and there's certain there are certain sort of correlates of the phenomenology as well, with certain things will precede it like, it tends to rain. In the experience prior to a difficult, I mean, this isn't 100% of the time again, but like, I tend to have an experience where I'm having some kind of profound appreciation for the idea of rain, before a memory will come up, and something will maybe like come out of the rain or like the rain will stop to reveal something or something like that, and it'll have some tangential relationship to the rain and then that'll come out, as you know, there's, again, like, that's somewhat, you know, I, you know, like a three dimensional download of like, a five dimensional experience, you know, but, um, that'd be the best way I could put it, I would say, whether are actually these sort of somewhat consistent reflections in the experience that leads me to think that they're different.

**Interviewer** 1:56:05

Are there, are there any other techniques that you might employ, to navigate challenging or difficult experiences?

**Participant** 1:56:29

Just change of scenery, I mean, that applies in every aspect of my life, really, if I'm having a difficult time, then I'm able to a change of scenery, you know, walk outside, talk to somebody, you know, if everybody knows that I'm in the house, and I'm tripping, I can go and say to somebody, I'm having a difficult time. I've only had to do that once, but it was pretty good. The person just said, yep, that's absolutely fine, have a drink of water. What, you know, let's talk about something and you know, that just took my mind off and went off in a completely different direction and, you know, sort of an artificial change seems to work just as well as kind of like an internal change to me, or equally, I mean, when I say change of scenery, that could also be putting on music or something like that, you know, just something that's going to sort of, sensually change the experience, then that alters what's going on somehow. Singing just seems to be the most profound and efficient and on the dime and sort of organic feeling, and intuitively satisfying.

**Q22. Interviewer** 1:57:34

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

**Participant** 1:57:44

Meditation, for sure, I definitely meditate after, you know, these long acting experiences, not again, not smoked DMT but, um, the long acting psychedelics I definitely meditate? Well, I mean, I probably meditate about 10 minutes a day, like, it's to the point where like, my partner might not even know sort of thing like, like, it's a very sort of, I used to have a much more deep practice than that, but I don't now but after psychedelics, I tend to for a few days afterwards, I tend to find myself drawn to sort of longer, you know, 20 to 40 minute meditation sessions and out of those, I tend to write quite a bit. So, it's not always a trip diary type of thing. It's not always a trip report, or even an emotional trip report, which I've found a bit more helpful but sometimes it can actually be even working through maybe a political idea that came up through essay and bouncing ideas off myself and getting, getting the ideas out in front of me. So, I can examine them with a sober mind, is probably the best way to put that. So, sometimes that's writing sometimes that's maybe speaking with the person who was present during the experience. For a very brief period, I was talking to my therapist and sometimes it's recording music. Sometimes I'll be writing poetry, you know, there's a number different things, but the, the idea is always to get the thoughts and the, you know, revelations, quote, unquote, and all that sort of stuff that manifests during the experience to get it out in front of me, so that it's not trapped in the box of the person who had the experience so that can actually come out and see the light of day and I can see holes and I can fill in gaps, and I can bridge, you know, ideas that are maybe interdisciplinary, where at the time I couldn't find the correlate or something. So, that that tends to be most of what it is and I know that you know, that might not be that helpful because it's quite vague and covers quite a lot of different practices but there's a pointed intent at getting the ideas out to be reviewed. Whatever the medium is, that's the intention and that seems to be where I am able to do my, my best work. My, you know, my internal where I find the most benefit in terms of self-actualization and development? Definitely in those moments.

**Interviewer** 2:00:29

I had a question that came up while you're talking, but it disappeared.

**Participant** 2:00:33

Ah sorry.

**Interviewer** 2:00:34

No. In out, that's life.

**Participant** 2:00:41

That's what psychedelics taught me.

**Q23. Interviewer** 2:00:46

Are there any noticeable changes in how you think or feel in the days or weeks following psychedelic use?

**Participant** 2:00:53

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I'm definitely more prone to magical thinking. That's one thing I've noticed and I mean, I keep it in shape fairly well, but I entertain a lot of ridiculous ideas about you know, three dimensional shape shifting, sorry, like fifth dimensional shape shifting cat people, maybe they're real, you know, that, that type of thing that to me appears to be totally kooky thinking. A bit of that happens but it tends to taper off after about a week just sort of slows down and I kind of get back to a bit of a more, less enthusiastic about the experience and more enthusiastic about what I got from it, which is, that comes from that integration, of getting the ideas out in front of me, I would say that I am definitely more enthusiastic about spending time with other people in their service. So, spending time with friends on things that they want to do, going and spending time with somebody on their project, rather than something that's mutual. Things like that I'm much more open to in the days and weeks, you know, in the afterglow period, as they're calling it. Much more open to starting new ideas, but I can't say that that necessarily lasts, but starting new projects, or maybe trying to take up a new skill or something like that, I'm definitely much more open to starting new things of that kind but, you know, I've never been diagnosed, but it's possible, I have some form of mild ADHD. So, I do get bored with things like that quite easily and I you know, it's very hard for me, even in the span of 10 minutes to kind of stick to one thing, unless I'm seeing quite immediate results and that goes away. So, my focus comes in, and my inability to kind of stick to a long-term benefit, basically, you know, you know, sticking, sticking to something that may be short term, not pleasurable for some long-term benefit of being able to do XYZ or being better at ABC. That increases, you know, incredibly like to the, you know, all of the time I'm capable of making those concessions and, and not finding it difficult at all. Like it's not even like yeah, now have the capacity to push through. It's like, no, that's just how I think about it now. That more compassionate kind of open. What else? I'd say I probably get a bit more industrious as well, I tend to think, yeah, cool, let's get heaps of stuff done, you know, I've got all these projects, you know, got all these irons in the fire. There's all these people that I maybe haven't talked to for a long time or something and I get quite enthusiastic about getting productive and getting some things done and, and seeing some results and you know, that they tend to be less superficial than in the in other times of my life, where it might be to do with your monetary goal or achieving a material possession or something where this tends to be more like, you know, I want to finish this book, or I want to help that guy do his thing, or I want to create a support group, of some, you know, whatever, you know, enthusiastic about that type of stuff that tends to happen, as well

**Q24. Interviewer** 2:04:29

Has how you use psychedelics changed over time?

**Participant** 2:04:34

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think we did cover this a little bit somewhere near the beginning because I remember bringing it up and saying it's kind of pointless, because I've already been through the timeline of you know, when I was in my teenage years, it was all recreational and then, in my early 20s, it was sort of it that was more of a religious experience. I would say, I don't think it really met the criteria for religious experience, but um, it was much more toward a religious experience because it was unexpected. I was not intending to have that profound of an experience and even the second psilocybin trip that most likely was on purpose, but I don't think I expected the same profundity to happen again and I don't think I expected that. That artistic awe that I described was possible before that, so that was much more of like a revelatory thing. Where I was, you know, sort of taken by surprise but since then, it's definitely been, you know, responsibility and set and setting and intention and, all that very responsible. So, it's definitely changed, but not in the last, I would say, decade, it's probably remained about the same. There's definitely some ceremony to the way I use psychedelics now. I mean, if I, I feel like maybe I haven't said enough to put that across but there's, I definitely feel that it's somewhat ceremonial, when I sort of get myself together and, you know, my teeth chattering I'm like, okay, I'm going to take this thing and wait, wait for the come up and I'm generally speaking will listen to something on the come up, for instance. I mean, but it's never one particular thing, just something that keeps my mind still for a little while.

**Interviewer** 2:06:32

By ceremonial what do you mean? Is that sort of a respect type of thing?

**Participant** 2:06:38

Yeah, yes. So, I kind of I kind of relinquish some of my more reductionist views for the benefit of the experience and I tend to be a little bit kind of, like, I'm going to take you and I want you to treat me nicely. So, I'm going to show reverence to you, anthropomorphize it a bit and I definitely get into a headspace of I'm communing with something and I'm, I'm here to learn and, you know, all of those sorts of somewhat cliched, sort of Ram Dassy type things about spiritual experiences, I actually draw them down in and sort of involve them in the experience, purposefully, because that is what, that's what the experience requires for me to gain what I gained from it on a fairly, you know, consistent basis. If I go into it, trying to figure out what's going on, it's useless. It's just a waste of time and I end up just kind of going around in circles in my head, very small circles, for the whole time and I don't regret it, but I never think I've really got anything worthwhile from it when I do that but if I can bring in some of that spirituality, and kind of let go of some of my preconceived rationality and say, you know, this isn't rational, you're going to go to a place where you're seeing colours you didn't think existed, like, if you're trying to be rational about this, it's going to be really difficult and that helps a lot and then that that's also part of the comfort thing of making sure I have time to get into that space throughout the day and I have the day afterwards to do whatever I need to do, you know, whether it's just stay in the bath or whatever, just, but it has to do with that comfort and it has to do with that kind setting the situation up to be gentle to whatever I might think. While I'm, you know, on the drug, because if I'm there trying to be a Richard Dawkins, and I have this realisation that ahhh aliens fucked with DNA 15,000 years ago, and that's why we had the agricultural revolution, crazy. I don't want to be judging myself for that. I want to have the thought go into it, see what happens and experience it for what it is, you know, and I think if I don't, you know, my experience so far has been if I don't bring down some of that spirituality, and some of that magical thinking and fuzz it up a little bit. That tends to happen, and it can be a bit uncomfortable.

**Interviewer** 2:09:18

Sorry what tends to happen?

**Participant** 2:09:20

That I that I'm trying to rationalise these thoughts and judge myself for having them and then when I'm judging myself for having them that can be a big spiral, and then I have to sing and then I forget what I was doing. So

**Interviewer** 2:09:34

I remember the question that came to mind before.

**Participant** 2:09:37

Okay, cool.

**Interviewer** 2:09:38

It was when you're talking about writing down and getting the ideas out, so that you can look into them. Do you do that during your trip or is this a post trip thing?

**Participant** 2:09:49

Almost never, almost never. There was one occasion where I did that during a trip where I got my dictaphone, which was a miracle considering what I was actually recording was my thoughts about the fact that I was incapable of holding a thought for more than a split second and it was extremely uncomfortable because I couldn't even hold the thought that I couldn't even get comfortable with the fact that my thoughts were running fast because thinking about that my thoughts were running fast was then immediately another thought, and I was then catching up again. So, I was just constantly stumbling over my thoughts and it was really uncomfortable and I tried to record some thoughts about that and they were pretty incoherent, as you can imagine, but I did glean something from it, in that I couldn't remember why the trip was so difficult and I listened to this and I remembered it was Oh, yeah, yeah, that's right. I couldn't, literally couldn't remember anything because my brain was running so fast and that was what sucked and okay, I get it now but generally speaking, I don't I think that's the only occasion which I've done it during the trip.

**Interviewer** 2:10:52

So that's all the how tos of psychedelics for now, we're moving into asking, we're going to be exploring a couple of your experiences, so specific experiences and if you want to go into however, as much detail describing them. One is going to be looking at a negative or challenging experience. Another is going to be asking about a life changing, or very memorable experience. So, sometimes they fold in and they can the same ones.

**Participant** 2:11:22

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 2:11:24

So, if you just pre-empting you for that that way you can think which ones you might want to share?

**Participant** 2:11:29

Yeah. This one's pretty easy. Yeah. This one's pretty easy. The negative one.

**Interviewer** 2:11:35

But we have one before that.

**Participant** 2:11:36

Oh, sorry. Sorry. Sorry. okay.

**Interviewer** 2:11:38

I was just letting you, I was just letting you know we're leading into

**Participant** 2:11:40

Oh, we were coming up to it. Okay. Yeah. Sure.

**Q25. Interviewer** 2:11:42

So, the question before that is, what do you think is the core and for you personally, what do you think is the core psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 2:11:54

As in which substance or phenomenologically?

**Interviewer** 2:11:56

Phenomenologically.

**Participant** 2:11:56

Depersonalization. Getting, for me, the core, the heart of the stone, when you've really got the thing for me is, is when you've reached a situation where there's no I, whether, you know, some people call it ego death but when people describe ego death to me, for some reason, I don't intuitively jive with it, for some reason, but it that that is what it is realistically, is you, you lose the part of your mind, which holds you separate from anything else and for me, that's the most profound experience that kind of universal, that kind of unity, which is actually transcendent of the physical world. It doesn't it's not your one with the universe, because that's too limited. You know, you are one that's in terms of human language, as far as I understand, that's the only thing that we could say, and just leave that open ended and just say, it's one, like, I don't know, if I put anything else in, it would defeat the object of it being one so I fucking lay off, you know, like, when people try to push for an explanation, you know, I'm just like, well, it's just, you can't, it's completely ineffable, you know, the experience is not, it's, it's inextricable from the idea of the experience. So, you can't actually frame it in anything other than well, what it feels like is what the experience is, if you see what I mean. Like colour, you can't describe colour, just however you experience it is what it is. People that don't see blue as a cold colour freak me out, but there's heaps of them, you know. That's just my thing.

**Interviewer** 2:13:56

Yep, no, and I can, obviously language is a limited medium of communication and vision has is its own sense modality that can never be described in the, in this in the pure aesthetic experience of it.

**Participant** 2:14:15

Yeah. See if I can improve this lighting is that yeah, that's going to be a lot better. It's just a slightly awkward angle now but that seems a little bit better.

**Interviewer** 2:14:27

The face that's no longer shadow.

**Participant** 2:14:29

Yeah. Sorry about that I should have throught about it.

**Q26. Interviewer** 2:14:33

No that's alright, you can still see some of the movements just was a little bit dark, but that's okay. So, the next question is the question that I was leading you into, so can you describe your most challenging or negative psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 2:14:47

Yeah, man. So, the one that I touched on before with the inability to hold a thought that was one of like, that was like wearing a shoe that was five sizes too small, like it was just almost excruciating in terms of mental anguish, like not even emotional, like there was no emotional content, it was just like this crushing. Like, it must be how people feel like when people describe, like, trying to do maths, and it just hurts their brain so much that they actually freak, I just give up with maths like, I'm not good at maths, but I just give up, I don't freak myself out about it, I just I can't do this, or I'm not in the right place to do it, or whatever I just give up but people describe having this complete breakdown, where they're just like, I just I can't do it. Oh, my God and it was like that, which, you know, I hadn't had for years and years before that, where I couldn't hold a single thought no matter how simple it was, for more than, you know, a microsecond. So, every thought that I had, trying to apprehend the fact that I could not hold a thought was a complete farce and so what would happen was, it would be excruciating mental pain for about five minutes and then I would have a thought of this is just a fucking joke, and start to laugh really heartily and then I would think, why am I laughing? And then the whole process would start all over again and I couldn't think about why I like the question of why I was laughing was immediately irrelevant, because I couldn't remember that I'd been laughing and then I couldn't remember that I asked the question and then it was like, Well, what am I even doing? And then, you know, it was just, it was awful and somehow, I decided I don't want to do this anymore and I left the room and I had a cigarette, I smoke cigarettes at the time and I smoked a cigarette and just walked up and down my driveway and by the time I got back to the end of my driveway, at my house, I was almost completely sober. Which was really strange, because I was only about two hours into the trip and I'd taken quite a strong dose of mushrooms. So, pharmacokinetically, it didn't make any sense whatsoever. It made even less sense, because what I've found out recently is tobacco smoke is actually a monoamine oxidase inhibitor. So, it makes even less pharmacological sense to me now but that was the experience was I was about two hours in, I survived about an hour of this, maybe an hour 20, a bit of push of this excruciating pain of trying to figure out how to work with it and let go and stay still and I'd sung and I've done everything, and I couldn't hold it together for long enough for any technique to actually do anything and then as I just said, f-it I'm going to try and get out of here, and I just, it was, it was like a rush. It was like a like a bum rushing myself out of the house almost and then the change of scenery was what gave me. Ah sorry I should mention that was the change of scenery of getting out of the front door of my house, getting from my bedroom door to the front door was only about two and a half metres. So, that wasn't that bad but it was terrifying in those two and a half metres but once I was outside the front door of my house where there was an automatic light, and I was outside in the cold breeze and like every sensation was different and the different, the visual was different and everything I was granted a respite where I could, I could hold a thought for about three seconds and then I was able to light a cigarette without setting myself on fire and then as I smoke the cigarette walking up my driveway, it was only about the driveways about 40 metres long, something like 45 metres just walking up the driveway and back down. So, you're talking maybe three and a half minutes, something like that long enough to smoke a cigarette and then just sort of look at the stars a little bit. By the time I got back to the end of the driveway, I was just that the whole thing was gone. There was almost the only thing I could still feel was the buzzy skin, which tends to be the last thing to go for me anyway even on proper long trips, I tend to feel that until I go to sleep. Doesn't matter how long after the trip, unless if I go to sleep, I'll still feel the body kind of thing and that was all that was left. So, I know you didn't ask necessarily about that aspect of it but that freaked me out because I knew at the time and I still know now but it just didn't make any sense at all that that would happen but it did.

**Interviewer** 2:19:17

Technically impossible.

**Participant** 2:19:18

Yeah, apparently but it happened and you know, maybe my perception of time was just completely fucked and it wasn't though because I checked the time I was right the time down when I go into it so that I just have an idea if I do have time dilation or anything. I had an idea of what it was like and there was none of it. It was just I had a pretty accurate rendition of the chronology and it was weird. So, on to one more. One that was extremely profound and I may tear up with this one because this one really materially changed my life and how I see myself and how I see how I fit into the world and how I how I think about how my past has experienced who I am now. Which if you recall, with the self-understanding stuff, it was that figuring out how those things had made me who I was and how I could combat that was one of the most profound things they gave me and this is one of the experiences that did that. So, this was with smoked DMT, funnily enough, so it doesn't really fit into any of the same frameworks as the others but it was using changa, if that matters to you. So, the experience, as I can tell, there's no real phenomenological difference between smoked, like fumarate or something, and Changa. Um, so I had had a couple of experiences, but I kind of fucked them up like on the first time, I didn't, I didn't take enough and then I tried to take a piss and it kicked in while I was trying to take a piss it was, it was, it was funny rather than awful, but it was a complete comedy of errors but then I said, No, fuck it I got together with another person, and made sure that they were able to take the joint of changa away, and I didn't have to worry about that I could just lie down and they made sure that it was, you know, quiet and all that and you know protected me and made sure I could go into it fully and so we were in a dark hotel room in Melbourne, and I smoked the changa and I was used to the come on at this point. So, it didn't faze me that it was just it happened and it was fine but at this, this time, it was different, because I actually my reality was completely replaced with something that appeared to be another physical reality. So, it appeared to be a fully three dimensional tangible, it didn't really defy the laws of physics or anything like that, it just seemed to be a completely different reality like, and I was exactly the same going, what the fuck just happened, Where the hell is this place and then I felt in my body. You know that. Apologies for the vessel to get this illustration across, but, um, immediately preceding diarrhoea, and you could have a sensation where you just have hundreds of bubbles bursting in your gut and, you know, you almost feel like, it's like something moving around, because there's so much movement with this, I got that really profoundly just hundreds of thousands of bubbles bursting in my gut and then the visual experience came to and I was laying on a slab, you know, whether it was mortuary or hospital, I couldn't tell you but I have actually written this down, which I wrote down the next day, if you want me to send that to you afterwards, or something to show

**Interviewer** 2:22:41

Yeah

**Participant** 2:22:41

to expand on it. Um, but that is about 400 words but the gist of it was I had an experience where it was basically some beings that could have been aliens, they could have been machines, I'm not sure what we're doing some kind of surgery on me. This is my interpretation. It wasn't necessarily the aesthetic that I could see. Although they were all three dimensional, these weren't things that I had that I have to make up language for they were they were, as far as I was concerned, physically happening in the room with me, it was not some weird, spiritual, emotional download, it was the actual thing, in and of itself and so there were these two beings and they were working on me, I couldn't figure out if they were machines, or aliens or what and then once I realised, Oh, they're, they're fixing me. They're fixing something that's wrong with me, they're actually doing something good. That's, that's awesome. As soon as I had that realisation, immediately, my sense was that my body was then. So, if I'm laying on the slab, and my heads up this end, Immediately got the sensation that the slab tilted backwards and I went down a chute, kind of like the best way I could explain it is, if you've ever seen sheep sharing, and they finish the sheep, and then put it down the chute to go into the pen, it felt like that, like that was actually my sense of it, because I could see the chute you know, I was going on backwards, you know, on my back backwards. So, I could see the chute sort of

**Interviewer** 2:24:08

like a tunnel sloped going into it?

**Participant** 2:24:10

Yeah, going down backwards, like come across and then I found myself come out of the tunnel and then I was lying in a room that was probably about the size of this room. So, probably something like I don't know, two and a half by four and a half, something like that, maybe three by five at a push. So, I'm there in the back corner of this room, looking at the chute that I came out of. I'll try and do this your way. So, I'm looking at the chute that I came out of directly in front of me but this side [right] of it is a wall but it's not really a wall. It's kind of permeable. It's like it's more like a like, physically appeared more like licra and intuitively appeared more like a veil between realms something like that. On the opposite side of the room. In the corner was what I can only explain as an art installation piece, I would say, of two flames that were coming up out of the ground and intertwining with each other but they were moving in a way that is completely ineffable and the colours were ineffable and they had just such a beauty about them and such a, an elegance and grace. That was, you know, as far as I was concerned, completely unprecedented in human history and then on that same side, so you've got the chute here, and the thing and the fire is kind of on that side. On that same side, I got the sense, and there was some physical indication of this, that there was actually kind of a corner that you could go around. So, the wall on this side only came up to, you know, maybe two thirds of my visual field and you could go around it and that around there, there were there were there were some entities, some intelligences that could be interacted with and there was this sense that maybe it was like, you know, you get the sense of like, I don't know, like when you're a kid and your parents have people over, but you have to go to bed and you have this sense of when you're in your room, and there's something going on outside and you're like, I could go and talk to people, you know, something of that kind and I also looked up, and it was just infinite like it was I got the sense that there wasn't necessarily stars or something but it was just completely and utterly the intuition was, this wasn't a physical thing, but completely infinite and infinite in the sense that it was an infinite tunnel. Which was somewhat oxymoronic, because if it was a tunnel, it was finite. So, it couldn't be infinite, but also only yay wide but the intuition was, it was infinite. So, you know, it was one of those. You know, as you were mentioning earlier, you can have these really paradoxical thoughts, and they just appear to you as nice and natural and part of the part of the landscape and so I thought about the people going, that might have been around the corner a little bit and then I was like, that'd be interesting and you know, oh, yeah, you know, Terence talked about that. I wonder if it's the machine elves and that type of thing and but it was totally lucid and then I heard a voice that was just like. Hey, man, what's up? Basically, and I was just like, huh? Telepathy, cool. I've heard about this, that you know, I've heard that that was the thing and then from the side where the chute was, so again, like I'm laying on my back looking up kind of thing. This wall that I mentioned, was like, it was a wall and it was blank, but it was semi permeable, and it kind of felt like maybe it was like between realms or something like that. From that wall into my visual field, I saw what like I'll have to add some stuff to the description but the basic description would be like a puff of vapour. Like if you can visualise like when you see like a Glade automatic air freshener in this puff and it just kind of like puffs out and kind of rolls back on itself as it hits the resistance of the room and it's got a pretty cool like almost Koru, like, sort of shape to it. Like that, but smoke rather than vapour and you know how smoke can have like different hues to it and different the light can.

**Interviewer** 2:28:06

Thicknesses?

**Participant** 2:28:06

Yeah, yeah, exactly like where it's different and different smokes have different hues, to different thicknesses and stuff like that. It was incredibly complex in that sense, and it was multicoloured and there was again colours that I didn't recognise and somehow you could shade green into purple with nothing in the middle and it still worked and you know, things, things like that, that were just you know, they you can't do them unless you're tripping basically or well, we don't know of another way to do them, yet and it was beautiful and it was really beautiful and it brought me to tears because it was just so elegant and there were colours I didn't know and I was already in sort of a vulnerable space before going into it anyway and then what I realised was that this thing, it was kind of uncurling, it wasn't exactly as I described it in the sense of the smoke folded back on itself. It was almost like it was uncurling. Like it was almost like this was like a ball that had been puffed out and was now unravelling and unpacking itself, it was more like that, which I suppose is what's happening in an aerosol but just wanted to be to flag planted that it's a bit more poetic than that and it definitely appeared closer to fabric. In terms of visually, it appeared more like fabric, but in terms of the way that it moved, it appeared more like smoke. So, again, a bit paradoxical and a little bit kind of, I'm only impressing on you how amazing it seemed like it didn't just seem like a puff of smoke like, it seemed like some completely otherworldly form of matter that we haven't come across yet that was like at once fluid and solid and emotional, but also dead, but also you know, just all of that stuff that you can't ever fit into the description and what I realised was that this was like my soul. Like this was like my spirit and my soul that had just been sort of systematically destroyed throughout most of my life, and systematically had parts of it ripped away and, and, and all of the light just sort of snuffed out because I was in survival mode for the majority of my life. So, I had absolutely no opportunity to nurture the parts of me that could be helpful or that could be, could be supportive, or could be forgiving, or could be compassionate, or could be empathetic, all of those parts have just been destroyed, because the only way I could survive was by not giving a fuck about anything at all ever, including my own wellbeing and so I was able to see this and actually witness it happening in front of me and I mean, I'm not saying that this was actually my soul, I'm saying that I could witness the process taking place in the way where, you know, it brought a whole new meaning to the term seeing is believing, you know, you don't necessarily believe that these things are possible and that these sorts of healings can take place, you know, you're so stuck in the idea that you are, who you are and then you're not able to move past that, that when I was able to actually see, this can actually happen. I just completely changed. Like, in that moment, it completely changed everything about how I saw myself, that I'm not just stuck and I'm not just this one person, that's a product of you know, I didn't blame myself for the things that had happened to me but I didn't give myself the credit, that I could actually do anything about it and I could actually, maybe deal with some of the way that my dad treated me and then actually move past it instead of going, Yeah, it wasn't my fault but I'm fucked up. You know, it wasn't my fault. He did it but you know, unfortunately, now I'm sociopathic. So, whoops, you know, like, It actually gave me the ability and saw that there was actually another option than just accepting that and then the voice came back and it just sort of said, how you doing? And, you know, all I could do was laugh, it's, you know how I'm doing you asshole and then and then it just said, well, you know, what are you, how are you feeling? What's going on? And I just sort of said, well, I don't fucking know, I have no idea, I never knew that this was even possible. How could I have a thought? And then the voice just said, well, sing you like singing, sing, just, you know, and I this was the experience where prior to this, I'd had some success with chanting and stuff as a result of trying to sort of utilise indigenous knowledge and that type of thing but I've never had that much success, because I was rarely in a group setting, which, as far as I can ascertain, it's much more profound in a group setting but in but in this setting, you know, this voice just said, you know, and I was under the impression at this stage that this was mother Ayahuasca as well, I should point that out, because I'd had a couple of Ayahuasca experiences a few weeks before and then I was told that this changa had Caapi vine as part of the smoking mix. So, I got the impression that this was continued work from the Ayahuasca experiences and that the fact that I had done immense purging, and had next to no visions, in the Ayahuasca experience was so that this experience could have perfect resolution, and be you know, chronologically sensible, and physically sensible and, and that and interpretable and relatable, and that kind of thing. You know, it was almost like the Ayahuasca experiences were, this isn't going to work, dude, you're fucking disgustingly gross. Let's clean all of this shit out and then once I had the changa experience, it was like it was this crystal clear. I don't know how I've missed this for the last 20 years of my life, but I have and now for some reason, I can see this in all of us, you know, transcendent, transcendent beauty and, and, and I mean, the way I wrote the report and the way I feel about it every time I think about it, or think about this, probably at least once or twice a week, about how much of a profound effect this has had on my ability to be a complete person rather than a person from 10 years ago, that just kind of in dribs and drabs, continued being human to some degree. It taught me that I could love myself and that, that that I was allowed to, and that it wasn't arrogance to say, Hey, dude, you're doing all right. You know, and that it wasn't, it wasn't the height of me annoying other people to go, you know what, I just need some time to myself right now and that it wasn't offensive to someone to say, you know, I don't like that. I don't want to do that or I, you know, I'm sure you can extrapolate a lot of that psychological stuff and you know, that that's all fairly that all comes in a relatively well themed package and, and the experience faded away from that, with me singing this, this melody that I can still remember, I'm sorry, I'm not going to sing it for you but it's very simple melody, it's only about three notes or something but since then I've been able to take that with me in almost every situation that I felt anxious, I've been able to bring that to my mind and it's just put me back into kind of the place I'm in now but just sort of at a level where I'm not, I don't have to physically manifest how I'm feeling, I can just sort of mentally and emotionally take it on board and say, cool, I can deal with this now and I can just sort of fortifies me against tense situations and times where I might have procrastinated or times where I might have avoided a confrontation or something. So, that's that one and then I mean, you know, I, as you can tell, I'm still feeling the, the benefits of that one, I'm still integrating that one.

**Interviewer** 2:36:02

How long ago was that experience?

**Participant** 2:36:05

That was in December 2014.

**Interviewer** 2:36:09

So that's

**Participant** 2:36:11

Just over six years.

**Interviewer** 2:36:12

just over six years, and it's still recounting that still brings up deep emotions.

**Participant** 2:36:16

Yeah, still, it's still. It's, it's, I mean, this is a, this has become a cliche but I feel exactly the same way I feel when I go through the story of being the birth of my first child. So, I was in the room for the birth of my first child and that was a pretty fucking earth-shattering experience for various reasons. I mean, he was a, an odd birth as well. So, there was some aspects of it that were unexpected, that were also shaking, but, but when I tell the story of just how wonderful it was, to see my son for the first time, and to hold up and hear his voice, and you know, all that sort of stuff, I get into the exact same place with how profound it was and I get into the exact same feeling of just unmitigated happiness and unmitigated kind of appreciation and gratefulness for that, you know, whatever the experience is, there's probably, maybe three or four of them, that put me in the same space, but that those two are the ones I can just sort of bring up on a dime, and say, you want to see me cry, I can do it, you know, like, they just both put me into a such a profound state of vulnerable gratitude. That I don't think I'll ever move past them, either of them. Is the impression I get anyway, sorry.

**Interviewer** 2:37:41

Is the songs that you sing, now, during your subsequent psychedelic experiences? Is it the same song that you sang, then?

**Participant** 2:37:52

It always starts with it. So, it's just this particular melody, there's just three notes with a particular rhythm to them and It always starts with that, that just floats in and I almost do it out of habit and, but you know, there's it's calculation, you know, it's a bad experience, but is it the right kind of bad experience is it one that you could maybe work through without, this is the one that might be fun, if you actually just give up and stop thinking of it as bad, you know, but you know, if I go through the calculation, and it's still going that way, um, it starts with this three note melody and then from there, it can turn into anything, I mean, often, it turns into something that I just had, I have a lot of joy with anyway, there's, you know, a handful of songs that I have, that are just kind of like a feel good, you know, anthems for me, you know, they tend to be more obscure music, but like they you know for me they're. Yeah, fuck Yeah, love this shit I want to go for a run now or whatever, you know and often, I'll, I'll then delegate the job to that, sort of thing and, and, and sort of, I get the feeling that the original melody is much more of a reminder than it is a tool in and of itself. It's much more of a like, Hey, man, just you can It's okay, you know, you can do this, it's all good, you've done it before, it's fine and then and then I'll find something that's a bit more sounds a bit weird, but more contemporary to like the specific moment, maybe something I've been listening to recently or something that's related to an event that's happened recently or something but it always starts with that melody from since that that particular trip.

**Interviewer** 2:39:37

Well, thank you for sharing that.

**Participant** 2:39:39

No problem.

**Interviewer** 2:39:40

Yeah. It's just really awesome to say, people, you know, the depth that these experiences go and the impact that they can have on people.

**Participant** 2:39:53

Yeah, yeah. That's one of the guiding lights of what I'm trying to do with [organisation] and stuff, you know, it's just knowing how profound that can be and how, you know, I've watched people go from suicidally depressed to just grateful to be alive every day, you know, it's not it's, I'm, it's not only my experiences that make me crack up like this, it's you know, seeing other people who go from being completely incapable of, you know, holding a relationship with even their family, to being, you know, totally productive, thankful, talented, you know, people who just, you know, they don't have the ability to use their skills, because they're depressed or anxious, or they've been through trauma or whatever, and it just breaks my heart, you know, whenever I see that kind of thing and so like, knowing that there's this thing that can maybe help people exploit their own talents and their own abilities, to, you know, make their life more enjoyable and make their life something that they actually want to continue to start with, and then improve upon, secondarily is I just I, I can't ethically defend not pushing that agenda personally once I realised it, you know.

**Interviewer** 2:41:08

Yeah. Well, you can I think arguably, it doesn't matter the source of their unless the source of that was like extreme external harm. Other than that, you don't have, what ethics would say that you shouldn't?

**Participant** 2:41:22

Yeah and this happens to be the one that presented that reality to me. So, it's the one of my toolbox.

**Interviewer** 2:41:32

Okay, well, moving on. \*laughs\*

**Participant** 2:41:37

\*laughs\*

**Interviewer** 2:41:37

It's hard to it's hard to transition. Yeah, just moving on.

**Participant** 2:41:41

That's alright. Hard cuts are fine.

**Q28. Interviewer** 2:41:45

Have you? Uh, well, the question is actually worded. If you have you ever experienced ego death can you describe what it was like?

**Participant** 2:41:54

Yeah, that sort of defeats the purpose of being able to say yes. Um, unbridled Love and Light. I mean, it's like, it's like a feeling of, it's like, ultimate forgiveness, I don't know, like, because the feeling of forgiving somebody is such a relief. Like, it's such a profound loss of tension. That the best way I, the only thing I can really relate my experiences of ego death to is like, all-encompassing loss of tension. So, just absolutely everything that could possibly be conceived as tense just disappears and there is not even the possibility of maybe thinking about ever entertaining the idea of not being perfectly blissful and it's ironic, because I realised that that only works because of my day to day life, a lot of things suck but you know, in the moment, that the experience is just ultimate lack of tension, you know, and with that, you know, that that means, well, you couldn't have a body, because that's a load of tension that you couldn't have, you couldn't have desire, because that's a lot of tension that you couldn't have you couldn't have, you couldn't have a memory, because that's tension, you couldn't think about the future because that's tension, you know. So, you end up with this kind of singularity and it's kind of philosophically homeless, because, you know, you can't actually put any words to it.

**Interviewer** 2:43:30

That makes that's interesting how you say that, because some of the things that I've been reading in the follow up question sort of gets at, you know, do you still have a body in this experience. Do you still have personal identity or memories or experiences of who you are but when you say, an ultimate lack of tension, I wouldn't, I didn't automatically go to the thought of like, yes, having no tension means having no body means having no mind or having no memories or having no desire yet. That makes sense.

**Participant** 2:44:08

Yeah and you've got to do things like to meet this criteria, you've got to do things like remove the worry about death, or remove the possibility of death being a problem, you know, and like, how could you possibly do that while you're a conscious living being that can be aware of its impending death. You know, that seems pretty impossible. Obviously, enlightenment purports to achieve this, but I'm not an adept in any of those.

**Interviewer** 2:44:37

Sounds very difficult to get there.

**Participant** 2:44:39

Yeah, exactly and this one, yeah. One trip away, if you're in the right setting, but yeah, I mean, when I say like of tension, I mean, that just seems the most succinct way of saying lack of worry, lack of concern, lack of need, something like that. Maybe because you know, your body might not be a tension in and of itself, you might be perfectly happy with your body, but you're going to have to eat in a few hours, you're going to have to take a shit after that you're going to have to have a wank a bit later, you know, you're like all of that type of stuff. Like, it's just there's absolutely nothing like nothing that even it's, you don't even have a mind to be worried with. You don't even have the toolkit anymore to be worried about anything and so I just said loss of lack of tension, because that's sort of like a nonspecific. Well, you have to regress to zero for that to make much sense and that's exactly what it feels like to me.

**Interviewer** 2:45:41

Is there any, even though, like, I'm just going to ask a few questions on it even know it might be dumb on your descriptions, but is there a sense of visual quality still in existence there like are you in a, "you", is awareness in a space an experience of literally nothing? But how sort of I don't know, the question is kind of like, when you close your eyes, and it's in a dark place, there is a sense of darkness.

**Participant** 2:46:13

Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer** 2:46:13

But behind your head, there is no sense of anything.

**Participant** 2:46:17

Yeah, you can't possibly have a sense of it. Yeah. It's much more like the behind the head thing that was actually I'm glad you said that because I was searching for something. It's much more like something behind your head where it's like, you can be aware of it, but you can't possibly be conscious of it. If I that sounds a little bit like they run over each other. So, I'm trying to kind of maybe figure out a way that's like, you can be aware that that it exists, like you are having a in this space, you're obviously having a conscious experience. Otherwise, there would be nothing like you would have nothing to say there would be no emotional response, like you, you're obviously having an experience of some, your mind is experiencing something but the experience is of having no mind. So, you can be aware that it's happening, but you can't actually be conscious of it because otherwise it would be a different experience. That's the best way I can explain it and I think that's an oxymoron still. So

**Interviewer** 2:47:21

Well, as we mentioned a few times now, there are a lot of paradoxes.

**Participant** 2:47:27

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 2:47:27

It's like well, the experience is the experience and that's all you know, that's the all the justification needed.

**Participant** 2:47:33

It's almost like being somebody who's dead, and somebody's looking at somebody who's dead at the same time because the dead person isn't experiencing anything whatsoever but the observer is aware that they're not experiencing anything whatsoever and it's somehow being both of those perspectives is how I experience it.

**Interviewer** 2:47:58

What comes to mind for me, is a computer science idea of like infinite regress, where it's almost your brain is still active, imagine like if people put you in a brain scanner, stuff is happening to some degree. So, but just because the machines running doesn't mean the machine is aware of any of the parts creating the non-experience it's having. Yeah, that's just sort of reminds you sort of how I think about it's almost like you spiral the mind spirals into a space of like, it's so far away from all experience that it has an experience of nothing but there's still something that

**Participant** 2:48:35

That has to have that experience. Yeah, exactly.

**Interviewer** 2:48:39

It's looking deep into an infinite well and going like there's nothing there but there's still a sense of there's nothing there.

**Participant** 2:48:46

Because it's a well, like you've still got to be you've still got to be aware that it's a well you're looking into, right, and it's the same kind of thing, because it's like, you've got to be aware to have any experience at all, but when the experience is not having an experience, it's just, it's completely it's your It's like a Tesseract. You know, it's like, inside and outside itself. It’s ridiculous. It's completely absurd and when you're in that space, trying to figure it out, just results in laughter. In my experience, it's just the big cosmic joke of like. Yep, that's well, that's what you're here

**Interviewer** 2:49:19

I think you mentioned you listen to Alan Watts before.

**Participant** 2:49:23

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 2:49:23

Sometimes and I know at one point. He's like, talking about a person who becomes enlightened or and they just like once you become enlightened, the only thing to do is have a good laugh.

**Participant** 2:49:34

Yeah, yeah, exactly because it's like, well, what else is there to do? You know, that's it.

**Interviewer** 2:49:41

Yeah.

**Participant** 2:49:42

That's the is why laughing Buddha and everything you know, but that was the sense that I got was just this immense kind of childlike haha it's a little big joke, you know, if there was any conscious experience, but that's again, that's a that's like a nine dimensional download into 3d. You know when it comes to the ego death experience. The other ones were a little bit more. Bit closer to home.

**Interviewer** 2:50:04

Only six dimensions, much easier.

**Participant** 2:50:05

Yeah, yeah, exactly. slightly closer to language. Sorry I did have a thought there that I don't want to lose. What was it specifically? Like you mentioned, na it's gone whatever.

**Interviewer** 2:50:06

You want to touch on the thing I mentioned that might trigger it?

**Participant** 2:50:27

Na, it's fine, it wasn't that important.

**Interviewer** 2:50:30

Cool. So, we got five, six questions in the last one's kind of usually short, so.

**Participant** 2:50:40

Okay.

**Interviewer** 2:50:41

We should be done, I think about 15-20 minutes.

**Participant** 2:50:44

Perfect. No worries.

**Q29. Interviewer** 2:50:47

So, the question is have I mean, you have definitely spoken to this, but maybe you want to go into a bit of detail with about maybe how they have changed or not changed. Have your experiences with psychedelics affected your spiritual or religious beliefs?

**Participant** 2:51:03

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I mean, spiritual, for sure. Not religious. I mean, I still don't buy any organised religion, I'm not partial to doctrine. I'm not partial to dogma, like I'm not partial to sort of codified anything, really and that didn't change that remained the same or maybe even solidified a bit more. Just through the humbling of holy fuck, I didn't know this was here, but it's definitely changed my spiritual beliefs where I went from being more or less hard-line atheist, you know, sort of a, Dawkins, Hitchensian atheist. That having said that, Hitchens was pretty good at acknowledging the spiritual but anyway, that type of almost polemic, anti religionist, which included you know, UFOs, aliens, Bigfoot, you know, gods of any kind, you know, all that. Everything just seemed like absolute bullshit. Yeah, exactly, is absolute bullshit and, and what psychedelics did was open that bag up that visual metaphor that you just made was good. What psychedelics did was just like, na, we're just going to pull that down from the attic and have a look in that bag and see what we missed.

**Interviewer** 2:52:19

Pandora's bag.

**Participant** 2:52:20

Yeah, yeah and there was a lot that I missed, there was a hell of a lot that I missed and then that that sent me the curiosity is definitely the thing that were that I'd mentioned earlier and then that set me on to discovering a lot of Eastern thought. Hindu Buddhist, Sufi, you know, Sufi mystic thoughts pretty damn psychedelic, for the most part. Nepali thought, religious thought, you know, like the Charas monks and people like that, and the type of philosophy that they talk about and then obviously, people like Terence McKenna, and, and, and Alan Watts and Ram Dass and people like that, who are writing things that, you know, maybe go off the deep end a bit, but they certainly bring you bring to light, a lot of spiritual thoughts, which you don't get from religion, which I was not really aware of before psychedelics that I've been that avenue and now I'd consider myself a pretty, fairly openly, highly spiritual person, I just see my spirituality as a domain of mind, as opposed to necessarily a domain of reality but I'm not sold one way or the other but I'm leaning towards, from my experience, and what I understand about the neuroscience that that it may be more, maybe more a dimension of mind than a dimension of physical reality but that's a pretty profound change from one to the other. I mean, I went from not really even appreciating animals, because they were just animals and who gives a shit, they don't know anything, to sort of appreciating all life for being intrinsically valuable. I'm not like pro-life or anything, but just generally, every person who is alive has value and obviously, there's gradations and different metrics, and it gets complicated and you get into the weeds, and then that's where the politics and socio politics come in but I wasn't even playing the game, before psychedelics, and then after psychedelics, I was curious and started playing the game.

**Interviewer** 2:54:25

Just a quick question when you caveat out a decision, not pro-life. I'm assuming you mean in the political sense of the foetus but not, you're not anti-life in general?

**Participant** 2:54:37

No, no, no, exactly. I just mean, yeah, I'm not I'm not sort of right wing, pro-life, anti-abortion, in the sense of all life is intrinsically valuable. That's just a very much a party line of anti abortionists. So, I just wanted to be quite clear that like, I wasn't just sort of, you know, Trojan horsing in, some anti-abortion like thing where I'm the opposite of anything to be honest with you but you know, that life has intrinsic value in that, you know, whether it's an ant, a nat, or a gorilla, or a human, or a blue whale, or a plant or a fungus or bacteria, whatever it all has value and at all, you know, I'm not one of those, you know, check the door before you close it in case there's an ant behind the hinge. I'm not one of those people, but like, I am definitely like, where I can do no harm, I'll do no harm, you know. Actually one thing that this, this may not be the right thing to be bringing up but something that had solidified some of you that I had gleaned from psychedelics but wasn't completely sure about where I was thinking. How do I comport myself in the world in a way that's good and in a way that's not going to be harmful? And that kind of thing and trying to come to terms with, you know, was I going to become vegan? was I going to do this or was I going to do the other thing, and I was having a conversation with a friend of mine, called, you may know him. I'm not like name dropping when I say this, but you may know him as why I'm pointing it out so that it doesn't come across as that is a guy called Graham Hancock is an author who's written about psychedelics quite a bit. I was having conversation with him and I asked him because I was curious. No other reason than I was curious was what his definition of the word love was, like, everyone has different versions of what they mean by that, you know, for some people, it's tough love for some people, it's just infinite compassion. For some people, it's sexual. For some people, it's, you know, whatever and he just sort of said, Well, look, I think, and that I, I, I didn't need to make any changes to this and, and it's become something that I have carried with me is that the best way to move around in the world lovingly is to not make things worse for anyone else. So, you don't have to have these sort of sort of vast ambitions of trying to make things better necessarily, it might be a bit arrogant to think that you can make things better for somebody else, you have no idea what their life is, like, but actively not making things worse and that's something that came that came out of a psychedelic experience, and I thought was a bit of sort of pap really, because it just seemed to be a little bit of a new agey throwaway, of like, just don't make things worse, you know, just be don't be a burden. You know, it just seemed like a really cliche, pointless kind of thing and then when Graham kind of explained, what I mean by that is that it's in contrast to having these kind of unrealistic expectations of yourself and what effect you can have on the world and that really hit home and helped me integrate that experience that I had shortly before this conversation, which was a mescaline experience and stop judging myself for my behaviours and just started being okay with being wrong and being okay with making mistakes, and just making sure that when I do something, I've done it to the best of my knowledge and that, to the best of my understanding, it won't make someone's life worse and if I'm wrong, hey, I'm wrong, but I did my best and I'm willing to just bite the bullet and say, Hey, I was wrong, and I don't have to beat myself up about it. I don't have to feel shit, I don't have to chastise myself. I don't have to go through a struggle session, I just say, Hey, I made the decision with the best of my knowledge. That was wrong. I'm now updating that knowledge or whatever the case may be and that's okay. That's how we grow and learn but that so those two things had to happen for that to really become part of my psyche but that was a fairly profound change as well, I would say.

**Interviewer** 2:58:39

So, does that come, what it that seems to bring up for me, is this idea one of potential like honesty, like, a need to act? Honestly, I guess both in speech not to tell a lie because it might actively harm someone, but also to follow what you feel is intuitively or right for you. How do you deal with the situation? Like, I guess it also is just asking for your kind of feedback on what you think about this? Is it also this idea of not causing harm to others? How do you how do you manage that with your sort of your own personal needs and your own personal desires to want to do things or achieve things? So, is it that is it somehow bounded, I guess, to some degree, like if you if you eat meat, if you consider animals, conscious, sentient beings who have value, how does what's the justification in that sense? So, all right, well, it's still okay to eat meat, or it's okay to buy this product which causes external harm.

**Participant** 2:59:52

Yes, this this is my thoughts on this going to be probably disappointing because I think the question's I mean, its essay inducing question, right? Like, it's the kind of thing where every single example is going to have its own philosophical justification. So, the only thing that I can say that I think would answer your question that you could write down, I suppose, is, it's not a hard and fast rule. It's just do it to the best of your ability. Um, sometimes that means a trade-off. Sometimes that means I know, I'm going to harm this person, you know, the trolley problem, you know, I know, I'm going to kill this person but can I ethically defend not saving five people, you know, and you, you do the trade off and I just, honesty becomes really important now, because I have to do what I think is right. Which is, in my opinion, most people's biggest problem is not being honest about what they want, and not being honest about how they want to go about getting it. So, they repress all of their wants and needs and it comes out as abuse. Anyway that's, that's, I digress completely but, um, but the only thing I can say there is that it's not a hard and fast rule. It's something that comes into play in a calculation based on everything that's going on in that particular moment.

**Interviewer** 3:00:03

Yeah. Which is incalculable.

**Participant** 3:01:12

Exactly. Exactly. Again, not a Buddhist I don't check the doorframe for ants or something but if I, but if I saw a bunch of ants behind the doorframe just happened to I go okay I'm going to do this one gently. You know what I mean? Like it's not. It doesn't. It's not something I think about constantly but if I have the opportunity, I'll do what I can to reduce the harm. It's really that simple.

**Interviewer** 3:01:36

Fair enough. I just thought it might be that I just probe on that a little bit.

**Participant** 3:01:40

Yeah, no, fair enough and I mean, it makes sense as well. I mean, I did probably say it a little bit more like this is my life role now, which isn't quite the case,

**Q30. Interviewer** 3:01:49

Well there's often always more nuance to it when she just ask a little bit, which I expected, but I was just interested to see or hear. Have psychedelics changed how you think about death, or the process of dying?

**Participant** 3:02:07

Transiently. So, in the afterglow, period, maybe up to about three months, I have absolutely zero fear of death, I can think about it as much as I want. I can think about dying in horrific circumstances, I can think about dying in my sleep, I can think about dying while I'm awake, but just really old, I can think about what about if I died when I was a child, what would it maybe I am dead, what's going on here is no problem at all. The only emotional reaction to it is curiosity and interest. However, after about that three month mark, I fall back into what I latently have, which is a when I get into the weeds, it's a fairly debilitating fear of death and when I really think about the idea of expiring, and just sort of getting to the end and having no rope left, it terrifies me to the point where it can keep me up all night. Not that often. I mean, I wouldn't say it was the to the point of neurosis, it's probably to the point of like, it makes sense, you are going to die and we don't know what's going to happen. So, it makes sense that that's kind of terrifying. So, not long term, but transiently, it has a really profound effect on it. I think it's I think it's that when the rationality comes in, I start realising that the chances that the psychedelic experience approximates the after death experience, are incredibly low and then my sort of trust in the emotional buffer zone that it gave me starts to wane a little bit, I think after that point.

**Interviewer** 3:03:36

That's interesting, you sort of say that, because I think the literature, or at least people who I've spoken to, you know, some people have found tremendous relief from that experience and one of the explanations I've heard, is this idea of the psychedelic experiencing experience being like a rehearsal for death.

**Participant** 3:04:04

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 3:04:04

And it's, it's interesting that you notice, like, even if you think the experience is, you know, feels as if what it feels like to die, you know, maybe an ego death experience. For a lot of people, they sort of describe it as such, could be something completely different and so, the security you take from oh well this, I've already done it, so if that's what it's like it's fine. Then you're like, whoa, whoa, well, maybe not.

**Participant** 3:04:31

Is it, yeah, Is it is it though, or is that just like going to rainbows end [amusement park]., You know, you know, like, like, in terms of like, philosophy of mind, I'm sort of like, well, is it that or is it just like, you know, like a really colourful candy floss, you know, like, is it actually just sort of mind candy, rather than actually anything that you can really draw that kind of profound of a conclusion from? Yeah, I think that just comes in as Integrate but it doesn't seem to have any effect on the other benefits. It hasn't seemed to have had any relation to self-acceptance or, or relatability, or any productivity or anything like that.

**Interviewer** 3:05:14

Would you say that your level of self-acceptance has?

**Participant** 3:05:21

Skyrocketed, absolutely skyrocketed. I mean, I, you know, I was at the point where I was wanting to kill myself, because I didn't think I was a good addition to society, rather than I was necessarily depressed. It was that my view of myself was so bleak that I was like, actually, I'm so profoundly self-aware and intelligent that I know, I'd be better off for everybody else not being you know, obviously, that's because [???] worse, but that was the way I thought about it and then, you know, after my psychedelic experiences, it was like, No, the exact opposite of that is true.

**Interviewer** 3:05:51

Okay, so you would attribute. So, would you attribute the loss of the wish to die to your directly to your psychedelic experiences?

**Participant** 3:06:03

Um, no, no, that was a near death experience but it was very similar to other psychedelic experiences I've had, but it was a bit more clear, it was much more like the DMT experience, which was very sort of linear and exact, with psychedelic experiences can be very, sort of grey and hard to grasp and you can describe it chronologically, you know, whereas the near death experience that really ended the facility, I had to do that much harm to myself. That just really shut the door on that room was a near death experience. It wasn't you know, I call it psychedelic but it wasn't as a result of drugs at all. I might have been high and then, obviously, like, extremely delirious from blood loss but I say, obviously, that was what it was a near death experience from blood loss but that experience was, it was similar to the DMT one, though, where I had a consciousness just sort of basically had to have a conversation with me and be like, Well, what do you want to do? Like you can, if you lie here, you die and that's fine. You know, nothing happens after that. It's cool. You know, all the pain ends, it's fine. You don't have to worry about what everyone else does, it's fine but also, there's this tiny little bit of light here that you can nurture if you want and here's some possible avenues other than the one single possibility that you've been entertaining for the last five years, which is that you're a piece of shit, no one loves you and everything, you everything you touch turns to shit, and you should die. Here's a few of the literally infinite other possibilities for your life, maybe think about these and that that kind of made me go oh ok, yeah, na, it's never going to be worth killing myself because there's always going to be another option, basically, like there's always going to be another version of next week than the one I'm thinking of. So, it's never going to be justifiable, basically. So, that was a psychedelic experience and, you know, Interpret it as psychedelic and phenomenologically. It was similar in terms of the emotional response, it was the same sort of profundity and depth but it wasn't a drug experience. So, I'm not sure if that would be particularly relevant or not.

**Interviewer** 3:08:22

Was that if you don't mind me asking was that? Was that in relation to one of the suicide attempts?

**Participant** 3:08:27

Yes, yeah. Yeah. The final one, as it turns out.

**Interviewer** 3:08:39

Well, that makes sense as well. I guess this one, this question here is kind of similar to that spiritual religious beliefs one, but it's, it's more designed to be a kind of secular question in case it gets it comes it says it in different ways that maybe people who don't

**Participant** 3:09:02

people who are resistant to religious language might be a bit more open to it.

**Q31. Interviewer** 3:09:05

So yeah, have psychedelics changed any fundamental beliefs about the nature of reality? So, your fundamental beliefs about the nature of reality?

**Participant** 3:09:13

Well, funnily enough, I didn't really entertain the multiple universe theory before one of my psychedelic experiences and then I got a philosophical for whatever reason, I got a philosophical groundwork downloaded to understand the multiple universe theory and then I was able to watch a thing of Sean Carroll talking about it and actually understand what the hell he was going on about, conceptually, as opposed to scientifically, you know, into the nuts and bolts, just conceptually, what the hell are you actually talking about? And so I entertain that and that's actually a fundamental shift from basically believing in a finite universe, which we can't possibly know the excess of, you know, there's a finite universe is expanding from the Big Bang and eventually it'll probably just fall back into entropy and turn just compressed back into a singularity and then there'll be a big bang, again

**Interviewer** 3:10:06

or keep spreading.

**Participant** 3:10:08

Well, it could, it could, yeah, I mean, it absolutely could, but then that would be, I would then have to entertain ideas that were spiritual in fundamental, because then you're looking at eternity and Eternity is really a spiritual idea, fundamentally. So, you know, I never entertained that type of thing, I just entertained the idea that there's a big bang, there's going to be a crucial point where the heat death has reached, like throwing a ball in the air, eventually, it stops, it's weightless for a quarter of a second, and then it falls back down, gravity grabs that, again, basically the same thing where you've got, you know, immense energy and it's going to get to a point where it stops for a couple of seconds, and then entropy comes back and we go back to zero, was the way I conceptualised it before but now I'm open to many worlds, I'm open to simulation theory, I actually kind of understand the philosophical framework for that and while it doesn't seem necessarily likely, entertain it. I don't, I don't really have any hard and fast worldviews anymore, necessarily. I do believe in the scientific method but method, not necessarily scientists, or NASA, or UCLA, or anything necessary, necessarily discrete like that but I believe in the scientific method of observation and discovery and measurement. More than I used to, which is ironic, because I was such a materialist but I basically thought, well, yes, I'm a materialist but at the end of the day, science is done by scientists who are paid by XYZ and then that means that it's so convoluted that there's no point believing in the scientific method, because how could it possibly be worthwhile, but then I realised there are two different things like the method and the people doing it two different things and I wasn't really able to make that distinction, for some reason before psychedelics as well.

**Interviewer** 3:12:02

So, in terms of fundamental beliefs, so you mentioned the multiple worlds and simulation theory, is it now? You can entertain these ideas in contrast to before we wouldn't, but you don't necessarily subscribe to them? They're not they're not fundamental like this is the bedrock of what is going on but your ontological framework.

**Participant** 3:12:25

So there's so there's so there's two, there's two parts there, actually, which is interesting, because I did this just seemed pedestrian to me, but when you pointed it out, I thought that's actually a really good point is it removed an existing ontological exactitude that I had about how I thought. It removed that fundamental reductionist lens but it didn't really replace it with any particular lens, it replaced it with a View Master. So, I cycle through many different views. Yeah, exactly and I could cycle many different views and ideas and, you know, sometimes I can totally understand why socialism would be great. Sometimes I'm like, no 100% of free market capitalism is best. Sometimes I think Hinduism is a good idea. Sometimes I think no honour killings probably aren't great. Sometimes you know like it. It's just made me so much more able to move through cultures and experience things immersively without losing my shit.

**Interviewer** 3:13:32

Does that ability or change now the way you no longer have a sort of bedrock fundamental framework or belief? Is that, do you find any difficulties during normal life with actually that capacity to see things from multiple frameworks as does that ever cause issues?

**Participant** 3:14:02

I can think of two examples, but one of them is just not, it's not a big enough issue, but it is worth mentioning is that it can make me indecisive because it also extends to seeing multiple potential consequences of an action. It's not necessarily just to do with sort of philosophical ontological beliefs, or even epistemology like that, you know, I've opened up on sort of epistemological nuance a bit as well, where, you know, there used to only be sort of one or two sources that I would put any stock in and now there's multiple and multiple types of knowledge that I value now and that type of thing as well. Um, but it Sorry, what was the direct question again? Sorry.

**Interviewer** 3:14:44

So, the idea is, does this capacity now to.

**Participant** 3:14:48

Oh, yeah, yes. Oh, sorry. I got back with you. It can make me indecisive so if so if I need to decide what to do, about a situation that can have a sort of a tangible consequence in my life, it can make me indecisive, and sometimes that makes me miss opportunities. Um, that's probably the biggest thing. That is, funnily enough is something that used to happen when I, you know, prior to psychedelics, but it's a very different thing now. It used to be fear, now, it's, it's too many options on what to do everything. So, exactly the opposite and the other way that it can be a problem is actually dealing with people who aren't that way. So, dealing with deal dealing with people who do have fundamental bedrock, boilerplate things that they will or will not allow, kind of in their purview. It can make things really difficult, like I lost friends, when I moved away from being, you know, expressly, XYZ political affiliation, or when I moved away from the XYZ conception of Judeo Christian values or something like that and that, I mean, I don't care, which is why I say it's not that big of a problem, because I'm just sort of like, well, cool, that's where you are in your journey, it's not a problem, I can sort of maintain equanimity with people coming in out of my life now, because I don't immediately assume it relates to my behaviour. You know, I do always entertain that idea but It's not my immediate thing of all, what have I done? You know, of course, I'd pissed them off again, you know, which is what I used to be like, was just assuming that I'd done something wrong on every single occasion. Whereas now, it's, it's just that I can have disagreements with people where they are not willing to maybe give the time of day to somebody who isn't expressly or hasn't at least chosen the hill they want to die on. You know, I know, I know, certain people who I can't have conversations with, because they require you to have a hill for them to attack you on to facilitate the conversation, which can be very fun. I love a robust conversation, as they say, more than more than anyone I’d love it but when you can't then come back from that and shake hands afterwards and have a beer or whatever. I can't really get on with that. So, it can be really difficult with people who require that type of commitment to have a working relationship with them but again, I don't care that much. It doesn't detriment my life, I don't think but it is something where you know, I'm losing things because of it. I suppose.

**Interviewer** 3:17:27

I think yeah, that's just I think important to ask that because there, there is obviously a lot of emphasis, like openness is good but it's like, well, maybe there are trade-offs, as you say, you know, maybe being as you increase your openness, or you increase your fluidity of trying on and taking different kind of mishmash beliefs, maybe that makes it harder in some aspects and to see if that's something that manifests in people's lives.

**Participant** 3:17:55

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, initially, there was definitely I mean, when I went crazy, like extreme left wing, and New Agey, and that kind of thing, that was definitely a bit of that, where it was kind of, you know, I was taking candy from strangers, essentially, you know, I had no discernment about what was going in and what I was taking seriously and what I was putting stock in. So, you know, I take a paper from Johns Hopkins just as much as I'd take, you know, a random Facebook comment from some dude in Bristol that thinks he's worked out what's going on with SARS or something, you know, and it was ridiculous and I'm, you know, I look back with fond embarrassment, a lot of that. So, that definitely is, is has been a problem where you know, where you lose the discernment, because you don't want to commit to anything, you lose discernment, and start taking on everything and it definitely took a little bit, you know, months, not years, but it definitely took a little bit to kind of get to a point where I was confident enough in my deductive reasoning, that I was happy with my conclusions and fairly sure I wasn't, you know, drinking the Kool Aid, as they say.

**Q32. Interviewer** 3:19:32

Have psychedelics changed your outlook on life?

**Participant** 3:19:37

Yeah, it went from not wanting to be alive to being extremely grateful to be alive and wanting nothing more than to experience as much as I possibly can before I die. can't really think of a more diametrically intense change.

**Interviewer** 3:20:33

What about in terms of your future, though? So, do you have a, has it changed your vision? Your, kind of how you project yourself into the future? What you'll be doing what you?

**Participant** 3:20:50

Yeah, absolutely, I mean, I did mention this earlier but I'm but the potential benefits of psychedelics have informed much of the effort that I've made in my life since then I mean, most of my, you know, I work full time on something else, but that's in almost entirely an enabling mechanism to work on psychedelics and psychedelic, and in the [organisation] and [organisation]. So, I mean, it's definitely it's changed me from, you know, the only ideations I had about what I could do long term back then was, you know, be a musician or something like that, you know, one of those sort of romantic well, hell, you know, either I die, or I do this, you know, it just sort of fit, it fit the narrative, and it fit the character that I was playing, you know but now, I want to be of service and I want to be here for a long time, as well, I want to be as old as I can, when I die. You know, avoiding, as best I can palliative complications, I'd like to be very old when I die. I now want more and more varied people in my life, where I wanted to maybe whittle that away as much as I could before and I also see myself in the future, in very, very, very different circumstances. So, so obviously, one of the things that happens when you're depressed and you have anxiety is you have this one track mind, and you're sort of stuck in these thought patterns, I could only project into the future in like, one tiny little arc of light, where, you know, I ended up unhappy for the rest of my life, or my exact one in 10 million plan that relies on being in the right place at the right time, and being extremely lucky and being more talented than I actually am. etc, etc, happened, you know, they were the only things that I can entertain and now I'm thinking, you know, I might live in Guam one day, you know, I might, I might go volunteer in Nepal, I might, you know, there's so many interesting exciting things that I'm curious about and that get me up in the morning because they're out there, and I want to experience them that I just didn't have that like your lust for life, I suppose that's one way to put it, where I just didn't have that whatsoever and so going into the future, I didn't have one is the biggest difference but when I did, it was bleak and it was truncated, and it was circumscribed and proscribed and it was dismal, and, and very impersonal. Whereas now it's extremely customised. You know, when I project into the future, and I think about what I'm doing and what I might achieve, it's extremely customised. It's extremely collaborative, which also wasn't the case previously. It has to do with remaining healthy, it has to do with maintaining good relationships, you know, all of these things that I just had absolutely no time for. Previously. So, it's fairly similar to the previous answer, I suppose and that it's an extension of it.

**Interviewer** 3:24:01

That's cool that's, but it's a different way of coming at it. Would you say just from what you're describing with the sort of the one the two tracks either you in the depression anxiety state you know, you're either I guess die or live depressed your entire life or you have your one in 10 million experience? Is the has the possibility range opened up?

**Participant** 3:24:26

Oh, yeah. Yeah, just infinitely like a literally infinitely Where, where, you know, I had one or two ideas of what could possibly happen like, you know, either I make it big, or these two other possibilities where my life sucks until I'm old or I die now is then oh, yeah, but there is literally infinite other possibility like you could turn into a mollusc at some you have no idea like there could be some weird thing that happens, where karellen comes down from the stars, cures all the cancer and you get whisked up. You know, like you have no, I know those are absurd. I'm just illustrating a point that they just didn't cross my mind where now that scope of possibility is like this shit behind me that I'm aware of, and I still don't know what it is but I know I'm going to, I'm open to finding it out one day, you know, I'm never going to get out, you can never turn full circle, but I'm going to keep running at it, you know, I'm going to keep doing my best to get there. You know, I'm never going to make a dent in it, but you got to try

**Q33. Interviewer** 3:25:34

This one, you'll have fun with if psychedelics have a role to play in society, what do you think it is or roles?

**Participant** 3:25:48

Yeah. I mean, I, I think there's two pretty discrete roles. I mean, one of them, I think is therapeutic, which I think should remain relatively clinical, and should remain subject to screening practices and, you know, making sure drug interactions are kosher, and all that sort of thing and it's all very clinical and these are generally going to be drug naive people, which is one of the main reasons why I think that's the case why it needs to remain somewhat clinical and regulated, and you need to have trained people like yourself, doing the work, because exactly, doing the work, because you will need to be careful, these things are profound if they can have this kind of effect on me in this direction. What about the effect it has on some people in that direction, right, and you want to avoid that and, you know, clinically, that seems to be the case, you know, you screen properly, you have good rapport with the patient and, you know, I haven't seen a clinically significant adverse reaction in any of the trials that I've that I've read. So, there's that aspect, which I think is going to be immense. I mean, mental health statistics are abysmal and while I think things are over diagnosed, and people have to learn coping mechanisms, as opposed to necessarily, you know, and also not framing everything as trauma, I think is probably going to help. Not everything is trauma and also not everything is a repressed memory, I think is one of the other things that people get kind of stuck up on is they I must have repressed something, you know, can be quite difficult but aside from that, I think they're also going to be incredibly useful and I say going to because I'm very optimistic, they're going to be very useful as a social cohesion tool is probably one of the better ways I could put it, where on the individual or micro level, they improve, you know, personal wellbeing, they improve people's self-worth, their ability to counteract negative influences in their lives, etc, etc but on a more macro level, I think as a society, when people have these experiences together, they bond more they, you know, a lot of the things that are ended the stoned ape theory, but just without the ridiculous conclusions, where yes, these things would be bonding, they would probably lend themselves to more sex, they probably would lend themselves to people having a deeper understanding of each other's plight. These things are probably true. I mean, that seems to be the case in a small communities of psychedelic entrepreneurs that exist. So, the idea that that would be the case in society, I think, is probably close to the Mark.

**Interviewer** 3:28:29

Can I jump in and just ask one thing on that?

**Participant** 3:28:32

Sure.

**Interviewer** 3:28:33

So, the idea of them being as a sort of social tool and on a larger scale, you know, beneficial by increasing the understanding and the connection between people. How much do you weight that idea with the kind of other idea that the types of people who are drawn to these drugs these substances are

**Participant** 3:28:58

are already these types of people,

**Interviewer** 3:29:02

Yes, yes.

**Participant** 3:29:05

Yeah and the other thing to point out there before I answer just to steel man, what you're saying to the point where I probably won't be able to overcome it is psychedelics are also rife in cultures which have horrific abuse problems and addiction problems and it historically baby sacrifice problems and you know, all sorts of different stuff like that and obviously that you know, QAnon Shaman and all this sort of thing that's come around recently. Conspirituality and all that crap. Yeah, I mean, it's, that is a really difficult point and I think what you have to do is square it around to set and setting and there may need to be a certain amount of authoritarianism there that might come through just informing it just saying, look, look, what we're going to do is we're going to use the clinical work that speaks for itself and we're going to inculcate the Indigenous wisdom. So, we're going to set up set and settings which are not conducive to being a wacko and are not conducive to inhibiting openness and you know, the set and setting itself requires a certain amount of surrender. So, that you are, you know, already somewhat primed for that, for it to have effects on things like trait openness, and agreeableness, and things like that, instead of, you know, aggressiveness and disagreeableness and that sort of thing, which can totally completely happen in the wrong set and setting. I think it is, a lot of it is setting an intention. I think, when you set an intention, you do largely remove the ability for that left field, off the rails experience to manifest. That's just a personal belief, though. I mean, it does seem to somewhat be the case in the literature, but there's no good enough data for me to say, I think that that's actually how it is but that's just my interpretation.

**Interviewer** 3:31:04

Maybe at a larger scale.

**Participant** 3:31:05

Yeah, yeah. May, May well be the case and what you know, that may be one of those things that we just have to run the experiment before we

**Interviewer** 3:31:13

get the results

**Participant** 3:31:13

Get to see what happens. Yeah, exactly. Like the vaccine just Well, just try and give it to everyone, we'll see what happens and it's not quite true. Just saying, although, like the vaccine, people are ignorant that it's actually built on decades and decades of previous research and a really good understanding of how the thing works.

**Interviewer** 3:31:38

It's the 21st century, what can we say?

**Participant** 3:31:40

Yeah.

**Q34. Interviewer** 3:31:43

Have psychedelics shaped your view of humanity's future?

**Participant** 3:31:48

Not really. No, because I mean, I stay aware that most people don't take psychedelics. I stay aware that even if they did not everyone's going to respond the same way I do. Not everyone's going to respond the same way people I like to so there's a huge, huge, huge margin of error for my experience, extrapolating to anyone else’s, for starters, and then the human race. I mean, that just comes to me as almost grotesquely arrogant.

**Interviewer** 3:32:13

Oh, well, it's not necessarily in the sense,

**Participant** 3:32:17

but I mean, my I mean, my personal outlook. I mean, I personally, outlook has not been changed at all, because I realise those things. Whenever I get any sort of sanguine idea about, you know, my personal worldview, projecting out into humanity's future, I just automatically go, Dude, come on, you just say you're a tiny speck of nothing on a speck of nothing. That means there's absolutely nothing that you don't know about any of that. Don't worry. Yeah. Also, that's a waste of intellectual real estate, you have kids to take care of you, you know, so I just, I doesn't have anything for me, unfortunately.

**Interviewer** 3:32:58

Or fortunately, maybe got better priorities in the right place.

**Participant** 3:33:02

That's could be very well, true.

**Q35. Interviewer** 3:33:05

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

**Participant** 3:33:13

Do your research, definitely do your research, read, get multiple perspectives, don't just buy the clinical thing, don't just buy the indigenous thing and floating on top of that, because it's, it's the throbbing red thumb in the middle of that hand. Set and setting. Set and setting is number one, be mindful of setting but that comes, do your research. That's the first thing you're going to find. So, it but that's the red thumb that I think is the heart of that suggestion is set and setting set and setting set and setting. Be aware. Make sure that it's conscious, make sure that there's intention, or you're going to go through the fucking tumble dryer, and you won't know what ways out. Not everyone has that experience but you know, it seems to severely reduce the risk when you do become aware of set and setting and intent.

**Q36. Interviewer** 3:34:09

Yeah and final question is, are there any final thoughts or comments you would like to mention before we conclude the interview?

**Participant** 3:34:21

Um, I'd say just as just as an overall caveat to everything. It would be easy to read a lot of these experiences and the overall thrust of what I'm saying as just a completely sanguine psychedelics changed my life and move me forward and progressed me as a person and I believe that that's, you know, in controlled circumstances, and an nuanced way what they can do for humanity but I do need to be clear that I'm not convinced of that. That's just the best idea that I have. It's not something that I am attached to, it's the best idea I have and until I get a better idea, it seems dumb not to follow it through. So, in terms of how I actually hold a lot of these thoughts and feelings and views, they're going to be a lot more flippant, than, you know, I'm very much kind of, at the end of the day, it's all a big joke. I mean, we are, we're just going to die. Like, what does it actually matter? Like, on a historical scale, we we're nothing like there, there may well be beings who can't even conceive of our lifespan because they operate at a level that's so different to us, right. So, I'm just kind of like, it's just silly. Like I all of this comes across as silly on some level, right and that's actually how I kind of comport myself and that's something I learned from psychedelics. So, that's, that's a final note that didn't really come from any of the other questions that I feel is really important to note is that the, like, the bag that all of this comes in, is a party bag and it's just, it doesn't matter that much. You know, none of it matters that much. Um, Bill Hicks is a good analogy is the Bill Hicks thing, it's just a ride. You know, it can seem really important, but you know, and sometimes when it does, you should do something about it. You know, when there's blood pissing out of some part of your body, and it seems really, you should probably do something about it, but it's just a ride, like, it doesn't actually matter and that's just been kind of like a permeating sense but it's never, it's never explicit or discrete, or, or made manifest anywhere. It's just an underlying. Remember, nothing actually matters, you know, when you go into everything, and accepting that as not nihilistic and I would say, as genuinely fun. That means, ah, sweet. I don't have to worry anymore. I guess. I think Terence McKenna put a good way, once were you look, we're, we're monkeys, we don't know enough to worry. You know, like, we don't know enough about anything to really worry you know, we're just trying to work out this tiny minute aspect of something that we might not even grasp. So, hey, it's all good.

**Interviewer** 3:37:45

Yeah, I guess. That's hard. Not necessarily a paradox, but it's but in your position where you're supporting or advocating the advancement of psychedelics in a clinical setting or use, you can't be like, but by the way, it's all just a big joke and doesn't matter. People are not going to take you seriously then am I.

**Participant** 3:38:04

Exactly. Exactly and the other thing is, that is a very personal philosophical view. I mean, that's not something that I've said in any other interviews or anything. It's just something that I think matters from me to you. sort of thing. Yeah, that I mean, at the end of the day, it's all It's all right.

**Interviewer** 3:38:23

Yeah, I resonate with that.

**Participant** 3:38:24

And that's how I stay happy as far as I can tell. Alrighty, let me

**Participant** 3:38:32

Sorry for taking so long dude.

**Interviewer** 3:38:33

No, not at all.

**Participant** 3:38:35

Coming up on five hours now.