1. Interview with Participant 1

**Interview recorded:** 30/11/2020 (NZDT)

**Length:** 2:08:25

**Spoken duration of interview:** Participant (75%), Interviewer (25%)

**Age (years):** Participant (23), Interviewer (29)

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

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

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

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**Interviewer** 00:00

pop up thing. Okay. So, I guess we can just run through the questions now. You're okay with that? Sure,

**Participant** 00:13

Sure Andrew.

**Interviewer** 00:14

So, I'm going to just one thing I didn't mention as similar to the description, in what did I in the sort of online questionnaire? When I'm talking or asking questions about psychedelics, it's more referring to those classic psychedelics. So, things like mushrooms, LSD, DMT, and multiple forms of DMT. You know, I Ayahuasca included any sort of analogues of LSD, synthetic or real mushrooms and other things like Ibogaine, and masculine, but the ones that I wouldn't include in there, some people think, say marijuana is psychedelic, I'm trying to exclude that but not talking about ketamine as well. So that's said, it's talked about as psychedelic, that's I think more people describe more as a dissociative, but but dissociation is a kind of one part of the psychedelic experience. So, but not that as well. Not including things like MDMA, or ecstasy and or stimulants or opiates. So, these, you know, it's like that trying to just sort of set the frame for like, what drugs we're sort of talking about here and what they mean to you.

**Participant** 01:35

Sure.

**Interviewer** 01:36

I don't know how I think it's very hard personally, to be able to separate out the reasons one uses drugs and like, Oh, I use these ones for these reasons, these ones for different reasons, but to the best you can, that'd be helpful.

**Participant** 01:48

Sure Andrew

**Q1. Interviewer** 01:49

Cool. Who? All right. So, the first question is, why do you use psychedelics?

**Participant** 01:58

I believe that the main reason is that I'm, I'm a really curious person and psychedelics have always been a really fascinating for me since I was a child. So, they have they had a Mystique around them that I that fascinated me ever, ever since I was a child. So, when I actually got older and got the chance to try them, it was, it was like a dream for me and the first few times I try them, it was like, exactly what I envisioned. It was a really good experience and it was really mystical and really spiritual. So, I guess the reason I use them and continue to use them is curiosity.

**Interviewer** 02:44

And is there any other reasons why you think you might use psychedelics?

**Participant** 02:51

It would be curiosity and recreation because I also use them for recreational purposes.

**Q2. Interviewer** 03:01

So, the next question is, have the reasons why you use psychedelics changed over time? And if so, how have they changed?

**Participant** 03:13

Yes, that they have changed. The beginning it was it was something I did out of curiosity, as I've said out of fun and recreation and as I have gone over using them several in total hundreds of times I I believe that now it's more spiritual for me. Now I take it, I think it is and spiritual event, and something that makes me reflect and reflect about circumstances of my life and about the situations that I'm currently going through. So that has changed over time a lot.

**Q3. Interviewer** 03:54

Okay. How did you first start using psychedelics?

**Participant** 04:03

The first time I started using was when I probably was 17 or 18 years old, and I started I was looking for them. So, I was actually trying to obtain them, and I got the chance to try LSD to purchase LSD so I I had the opportunity to try it with my with my girlfriend with my girlfriend. So, we actually did LSD a lot of times together and that was how I started using psychedelics for the first time.

**Q4. Interviewer** 04:42

What aspects of psychedelics do you find most meaningful or valuable?

**Participant** 04:51

I would say that the opportunity to to analyse situations or to understand the context of situations that are going on in your life or that are happening that are meaningful, that that are meaningful to you and that you might see through a different lens when you're on psychedelics. So, like that ability to have a whole different perspective and to, to be able to analyse events through a whole different lens, I believe that's really important for me.

**Interviewer** 05:32

Can you maybe talk a little bit more about the idea of this alternative perspective lens? How does that play out in your experience? How does it allow this idea of analysing new situations.

**Participant** 05:48

For example, I when I started using psychedelics, I was a I was a selfish person, I was a really selfish person, because I wasn't able to, to be empathetic and to put myself on the shoes of other people, like my father or my my, my partner, my girlfriend so the these experiences I've had with psychedelics made me more empathetic and made me It made me able to, to understand the context of my, like to understand the situation I was putting my family through, and my girlfriend so it allowed me to see what was going on but through their eyes and to like, dis-attach myself from myself, if that makes sense, to to be able to analyse from an outside perspective, from their perspective, maybe, which was something that I couldn't do sober.

**Interviewer** 06:47

So, would you say that it improved your capacity to see through other people's sort of, or imagine what it's like?

**Participant** 06:59

Absolutely.

**Q5. Interviewer** 07:04

What aspects of psychedelics do you find the most challenging or difficult?

**Participant** 07:11

I've had, I've had several traumatic, really traumatic experiences that have been very, very difficult for me and that I also attribute to that at some point, I was abusing psychedelics and I've had really intense anxiety and panic attacks when using psychedelics and I actually developed a panic disorder which lasted a long time, due to my psychedelic use. So, and it's, it's unpredictable, because sometimes I can have a good experience and other times, I will have intense anxiety. So that's something that I find really challenging about psychedelics, that one experience might be really good and really introspective and really useful and the next might be might be pure panic can really are really traumatising experience.

**Interviewer** 08:10

Is this ongoing do you still experience panic attacks?

**Participant** 08:17

less frequently than before, but I still do sometimes when I use psychedelics.

**Interviewer** 08:22

And have you changed your psychedelic habits because of these experiences?

**Participant** 08:32

Yes. Yes, I have.

**Interviewer** 08:34

Could you describe sort of what that looks like a bit, how it changed?

**Participant** 08:40

Before I would be when I started using the psychedelics, I wouldn't be I just to be really like care less about the dosages I wouldn't really think about the dosages I would use and I would trip anywhere I would trip at school or I would trip at work or wherever and it was just fun and something I did for fun and as I started having these difficult experiences which were really traumatic for me, I started having much more respect for the dosages for the setting and for always having like a benzodiazepines on hand for if I have an anxiety attack. So changing the way I approach them and approaching them as something spiritual and that's something I do to get to get to know me a little bit better and to be able to analyse the context of what I'm going through through a different lens but but being careful about it and not just doing it for fun and recreation, like I did before.

**Interviewer** 09:50

There's just a thought that I had of asking a question, but I think he's come back to me for a sec.... It's gone. If it comes back, I'll ask it, but that was quite it's quiet. Interesting that sort of what you're saying there. Did you... actually actually here it is. Have you noticed changes? So you made these changes to how you use it? Has it changed the difficulty / frequency of challenging negative traumatic experiences and could you describe maybe like, what the changes have been?

**Participant** 10:47

Yeah, when I, when I started using psychedelics, I would. It was, let me say that ummm, for example, some of my difficult experiences would be that. I would. It's hard to understand, but it would be, I would literally feel that I have gone crazy. So, I couldn't process, or I couldn't understand, or I couldn't accept what was going on. So, it was really traumatising. So, we just having this extremely bizarre and strange thoughts where it was really hard for me, I couldn't accept it or deal with it but nowadays that I that I have a more, let's say a more careful approach with psychedelics, the experiences have changed. So, I'm now able to accept and to, to let go of what is going on in the experience and that has changed the whole context of, of the experiences and what I get out of them. So, I actually am able to, to understand the message. The message my own mind is giving me and what I'm why I am thinking all this all these things while on psychedelics. I guess that has changed a lot due to being more careful and being more like more attentive of the setting and how I approach my psychedelic use.

**Interviewer** 12:21

And you described now as more spiritual approach, maybe self-reflection, does if you increase the dosages, now you're more careful with how you use it and the context. If you only change the intensity of the dose, do you think this would affect the positive negative aspect of experience, or does the framing of it now actually make it a lot easier to handle even variations in higher dosage?

**Participant** 12:53

No and nowadays, I stick to to moderate or low dosages I I have never used before I did really heavy dosages I, I would use I would abuse them in really heavy dosages and nowadays I stick to really low or moderate use as far as the dosages go.

**Q6. Interviewer** 13:22

So, the next question is, in what ways have psychedelics affected your life?

**Participant** 13:31

Well, it's, they have made me really, I don't know, I don't know how to word it perfectly, but I would say they have made me a lot more afraid of death.

**Interviewer** 13:44

More afraid?

**Participant** 13:45

They have made me, Yeah, really, really afraid of death and that has been really that has been really meaningful and has that has had a lot of really big impact in my life because I had an experience where I had to go to the hospital and get medical treatment while on psychedelics. It was not due to an inherently dangerous medical condition, but I suffered a really intense panic attack, in which I was convinced, and I was sure that I was going to die. So that left me traumatised. So, I'm, I have a really big fear of death now and that that started after that experience, that particular experience that I had to get medical attention and had to go to the hospital. Afterwards I was I was left traumatised in that sense. So that would be the negative aspect but there have also been positive aspects. So, I would say that they have also made me more empathetic and they have made me more, let's say a more a better person all around. More empathetic, and more caring, and more more understanding of other people and their situations and their contexts and more tolerant, I would say that would have been the positives and I would say the negatives outweigh the positives, but there have been both positive and negative aspects in my life.

**Interviewer** 15:29

So are there... you talked about it increasing your fear of death and you also talked about how it sort of generated panic attacks and more anxiety. Is there any other negatives that you haven't covered in terms of long-term effects?

**Participant** 15:48

I would say that I'm mostly that's about it, I had the panic attacks, which I had to get, like, psychological help and go to therapy and they lasted a long time and right now I'm much better as far as panic attacks goes, but as far as a fear of death, I'm really afraid of death. I've become a little bit of a hypo hypochondriac because I'm really scared of that. So, I've developed a lot of disorders linked to fearing death and fearing illness and like living that experience again, so I believe that would be the most prominent, prominent negative since that. As far as now goes, it has been permanent, so it hasn't gone away.

**Interviewer** 16:45

And you've used psychedelics during the times, you've had panic attacks, like, had them sober, and then tried psychedelics again, and it's sort of carried on, so you use it currently?

**Participant** 17:03

Yeah, what happened was that I had this really traumatising experience and I didn't, I couldn't accept the loss of the psychedelics. So, I thought to myself, that maybe was just a bad day, or maybe it was just my mind playing tricks on me. So, I didn't want to accept that I actually had a difficult experience and maybe it was a good sign to slow down. So afterwards, I continued using the and, but but they always ended with severe panic attacks. So, I would use them maybe the next week, and I would say, Oh, it's going to be fine. Now I'm going to be calm and I would eat them, let's say I would eat mushrooms or I would eat a tab of LSD or Ayahuasca because I always used them interchangeably and even before the onset of the effects, I would be dreading it and I would be having a massive anxiety attack. So, I would have to take benzodiazepines to calm myself down and to kind of blunt the experience and that wasn't until I understood that what I was doing was not helping me at all. So, it was probably two or three months when I use them, and it will be only intense panic attacks and intense anxiety. Afterwards, I took a long break, I took maybe half a year of break, and then I started using them in low to moderate dosages and I could actually, I still had difficult experiences and I had flashbacks of the traumatising experience I've had but it was easier for me to handle and to stay calm without needing the help of pharmaceuticals. So, I could calm myself down alone and trying to think rationally what was going on in my mind, and that's how I improved but I still have difficult experiences till today.

**Interviewer** 19:07

And the reframing or the use now is spiritual, does that, how does that help you in terms of, so you've talked about changing the dosage and changing the approach to it but spiritual is maybe beliefs around its use and particular practices? How do you think those help if there's an ability for it to be separated? How do they help or don't help? I don't know. What do they do?

**Participant** 19:38

I would say I approach it in a more. For example, if I'm having it's a little bit hard to explain but if I'm if I'm having a tough time in my life or if there is something going on that I need to take an important decision on. I try to approach psychedelic use as a way to connect with myself and with my soul with my mind. So I try to I follow a whole ritual now where I try to I don't use any drugs for several days before and after the experience and I fast for a few days, and I approach it in a more spiritual way, let's say with my soul or with my mind and to analyse what I'm going through in my life and it has helped me it has helped me to accept a lot of a lot of things. For example, I blamed myself a lot after this experience I had where I had to go to a hospital and I blamed myself a lot and I was finally able to let go of that experience and accept that it happened, and it was a mistake, and that life has to continue and I was so to let go afterwards using using psychedelics again. So, in that way that re-approaching psychedelics in a different manner has been helpful for me to solve this past issue that were created by psychedelics themselves.

**Interviewer** 21:16

A two-edged sword.

**Participant** 21:20

Yeah.

**Q10. Interviewer** 21:22

Okay. You have spoken to this, but maybe you can speak specifically into what I'm about to ask. So, have psychedelics provided insights into how to live life well?

**Participant** 21:40

Yeah, yes, absolutely they have and not just in the not just in a personal level but I also I have analysed a lot of, let's say, I have understood via psychedelics a lot about how society works, how, why people act, the way they do, why people make the choices they make, and it has really broadened my, let's say, my viewpoint of life, and it has really helped me in being able to, I would say, be in the world in a different manner because that that's something that I couldn't really do before. I was the person that was really selfish and that was really not very empathetic, let's say so they have definitely made me have a more complete life, a life where I can understand people better understand my own fears better also and understand a lot about myself and about society about the country I live in, the city I live in, and about my culture. So, they have really broadened my views on life, and they have been really insightful in that sense.

**Interviewer** 23:03

A follow up question to that is, do you think those insights have been helpful to your wellbeing overall, or is it a mixed bag or more negative?

**Participant** 23:17

I would say it's a mixed bag, I would say that it's, really mixed, some have been helpful for me, some have been some have helped me a lot to connect with people. For example, what I mentioned with my father or as far as being able to be more empathetic and have a much better we still have difficulties in our relationship, but we have improved a lot after, after I have used psychedelics and, and I gained that ability to put myself in his shoes, that improved a lot or on the other hand, I have also become a lot more septic lists a sceptic about a lot of things about a lot of, let's say a lot of the social etiquette and a lot of I don't know, I have become really more introverted, I would say and also more sceptic and less interested in social interaction. I've come to believe that it's really shallow, and they have made me more more of an introverted person I would say also, so there's both positives and negatives.

**Interviewer** 24:30

And how would you describe becoming more introverted is that I don't want to put like how is that for you?

**Participant** 24:41

I love before I was someone that would really love to go out to parties that would really love to go out to meet friends for whatever to go out drinking or to go tripping, whatever and nowadays, I keep mostly to to myself and to my close friends and to my to people that really matter; my girlfriend. So, it's, I've lost the interest in socialising because I realised, via my psychedelic use that a lot of social relationships and a lot of a lot of social relationships, let's say are really shallow, without much meaning to them and without any without any point to them. So, let's say that I have lost, interest in meeting new people and I keep mostly now to my close friends and to my family.

**Q13. Interviewer** 25:44

So, how do you prepare? You've spoken to this, but how do you prepare for a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 25:52

Nowadays, what I do is that I don't consume any kind of drugs for let's say, for 10 days before the experience, it depends sometimes either two weeks, sometimes 10 days depending on, on whether it's Ayahuasca whether it's LSD, depending on the drug I do more or less days but I do at least 10 days without using any other drug even coffee or tea, nothing psychoactive and I I fast for 3 days before the experience, only drinking water and I go, now I like to trip mostly on the natural settings before I would do it, as I've said at home or with friends at school or even at the workplace. Nowadays, I like to go to choose nature to say to a forest or to a park. So and that's how I approach it and I stay for the whole duration of the experience in let's say, in the park or in the forest, until the experience is over and also the days before the experience, I try to really reflect on what I want to get out of the trip. I write the list of the the ideas that I want to go over and to analyse during the trip. So, I don't forget them when I'm tripping because it can happen and that's how I prepare nowadays for the experience itself.

**Interviewer** 27:32

Is there any other places where you take psychedelics? You just described a sort of natural setting, and that's common now and you've sort of described you've done it at the workplace at your home, with friends out at parties sort of like that. Is there, let's say for what your usage is now, is there any other locations that you would use it? Or is the natural setting the one and only?

**Participant** 27:58

is speaking, speaking specifically about nowadays, it's only natural settings.

**Q16. Interviewer** 28:04

Okay. So, this next question, I'll read it, but I need to preface a little bit just that can be misinterpreted as what I'm asking. So can you describe any special arrangements you make in the places where you take psychedelics? and so the idea is not the necessarily the fasting or the no drugs, like the preparation, but in the environment, which you take the psychedelics in are there any objects, activities, things people that you do or need or have there so that it sort of affects your psychedelic trip in the way that you want?

**Participant** 28:49

No, not at all.

**Interviewer** 28:51

Okay.

**Participant** 28:52

No, I don't do any of it.

**Q18. Interviewer** 28:57

So, the next question is, what do you normally do during a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 29:04

Usually, nowadays, what I do is to I like to trip with an if possible, with another person, it's not always possible, but I like them. I like for, like, having them also take a psychedelic and having us go to a natural setting and just having a conversation throughout the whole duration of the experience. So, spend the whole experience, just having conversations and walking around and looking at nature and reflecting. That's what I what I like to do during the experience nowadays.

**Interviewer** 29:43

And what was it sort of a bit before that? What have you used to do?

**Participant** 29:50

Oh wow. Before I would probably it really depended on the setting because, usually I would go about my, let's say that I would take the psychedelic, but go about my day as normal. So let's say for example sake, let's say that, for example, I would go to I would take psychedelic after breakfast, and then I would go to university and I would take classes, and I will just go about my day as normal and sometimes I also stay at home exclusively for the experience. So, I would spend the experience like watching videos or watching movies or playing video games. Yeah, that's basically what I did before go either go about my day as normal or stay at home.

**Q19. Interviewer** 30:56

Is there anything you avoid doing during a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 31:05

Nowadays there are there are things that I avoid. Yeah. Which are looking at social media. That's triggering for me for having a bad experience. So I try to avoid taking my phone with me and I also, I try to avoid certain topics such as, like the experience I had, and I try to avoid talking about it and about certain key topics that are like a trigger point for me and those are the things that I avoid. Now, as far as, as far as the psychedelic experience itself goes. I also try to avoid other people. So, for example, if I'm at a park, or if I'm in the forest, and I see a group of people, I try to go the other way, just be as far away as from people as possible.

**Q20. Interviewer** 32:11

Is there anything special you do after a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 32:17

No, something special that I that I do all the time? No, not really.

**Q22. Interviewer** 32:23

Okay. So, you've sort of spoken to this question already but maybe you can elaborate on if that brings up more thoughts. So, do you practice any type of integration or self-reflection to make sense of your psychedelic experiences? And if so, what does that process involve?

**Participant** 32:57

So, what I have learned through all these experiences I've had with psychedelics is that all these strange thoughts, and all these, all these things that come that pop up on my mind, and all the things that start I start, like, envisioning in my head, are a way of my, it's a way for my mind to communicate with me, and it's actually trying to tell me something, and I have, I have noticed that because it's, I mean, I have noticed that it makes perfect sense. It's just like, um, let's say like a manifestation of my subconscious mind. So what I do now, instead of running from it is trying to listen to it and I write, I write the main ideas or the main, like the main reflections I had during the experience and I also beforehand, I also write the main ideas I want to reflect on and the main things that are going over in in my life that I want to think about during the experience and afterwards, I go over the notes I've made during the experience, so I can kind of integrate it because before I would have sometimes I would have really good experiences or really good thoughts that be that would actually be useful but I wouldn't be able to integrate them because I forgot them or I wouldn't pay any attention to them after the experience. So actually, writing them down and being able to read them a week or two weeks later was really useful for me as far as integrating the positives out of the experience.

**Interviewer** 34:46

And Is that terms of reflection or reading what you wrote down after a trip is that something you do regularly? Is it directly after or is it sort of like I mean, you revisit that sort of process look like?

**Participant** 35:04

Yeah, the notes themselves, I write them during the trip, and I go over them a few days later. So, it's not like the day after, but maybe three days later, I will go over them and they keep a notebook of all the ideas I've had during these experiences. So, I go over and revisit all of them, not only the recent ones, so I can actually remember what I what I thought at that moment why I thought it, that position I was in at that particular point in time and how things have changed. So that's, that really helped me put in context in my life what's going on in my life, and how I can integrate these ideas to actually be helpful for me.

**Q23. Interviewer** 35:55

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

**Participant** 36:07

When I started using them, I would have like an afterglow, like let's say that they after the use of the psychedelic, I would have I would feel really well, like, I was kind of nice, afterglow and I will be more, I would be much more empathetic and I would be happier all around, I would feel much better but as I started using psychedelics more often, I've lost that. So nowadays, I pretty much only have let's say, I have a small hangover the day after, so I might feel a bit foggy mentally, but no, I don't have any changes as far as how I feel mentally.

**Participant** 36:55

What about, say emotionally?

**Participant** 37:00

No, no change.

**Q25. Interviewer** 37:02

No change? Okay. What do you think is the core psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 37:25

Could you elaborate on that question?

**Interviewer** 37:28

Sure, and if any questions don't make sense, feel free to ask for additional elaboration. So my intuition of what this question is sort of trying to ask is people who use psychedelics over many, let's say, different substances, and over different times and in different settings, there's going to be large variations in one's experience but is there something that is sort of common throughout all of them, that you can sort of talk about as being potentially the unique or the identifying signature of the experience that you go oh this is psychedelic, and this is kind of, maybe why I come at it. This, you know, this is the important aspect to me or the core aspect of psychedelics. Does that sort of help?

**Participant** 38:23

it's, yeah, that does and it's, hard for me to answer because I've had a really strange thing happened to me that is that my experiences with psychedelics have changed so much that I could. For example, some of the experiences I have now I would say it's even a completely different drug or the effects are completely different physiologically speaking, for example, nowadays, I rarely I very rarely get visuals, even if I use and I always test all the psychedelics I use with reagent for example, if I use LSD, I will also always make sure it's real LSD by using reagents, such as Ehrlich's reagent, etc. So, I know the it's not the substance itself, but I have, I don't know if it has to do with my previous use or maybe use of other substances or maybe it's natural, but I have lost a lot of effects. For example, at the beginning, I would have intense visuals, like everything melting and really intense visuals. Nowadays, even if I take a higher dosage, I don't have or very slight visuals. So, and also like the, let's say, what I the ideas that came to my mind or the psychedelic experience itself is really different. Now. For example, at the beginning, I was like even my body would feel really really strange it would be, I will have really strange bodily sensations nowadays have lost that too. So nowadays I would say it's mostly mental what I get. So it's most mostly like reflecting and really introspective experience and having thought loops and that's what I experienced nowadays, but the experience has changed so much for me that it's hard for me to to describe like what is the core of the psychedelic experience because because it has changed so much for me, and even with something like mushrooms, which will always be psilocybin, the experience has changed completely and it's it's not like the first time I did it. So, there's not like a trademark sign of the psychedelic experience for me since it has changed and varied so much from my usage

**Interviewer** 41:00

That's actually quite interesting as well.

**Participant** 41:04

And it's actually it's a distressing thought for me, and it's kind of is distressing that I'm not able to have those kinds of experiences anymore but I've come to accept it and I don't know I I’m really curious about whether it might be related to, to either, like psychologically, maybe a psychological aspects, since I already know the drug. So maybe my brain plays out the experience with a drug differently? Maybe it has to do with the abuse of the drug that I'd did previously. I don't know what it's really, it's distressing for me that the experiences have changed so much. It's something that I find distressing myself.

**Interviewer** 41:57

Could you describe that more like Why? Why is it distressing for you?

**Participant** 42:05

Because I believe that something has changed in my brain for me to not be able to have the same experiences. So, I'm not sure whether it's something that's coming, psychologically, or something that's actually related to, to my brain, or to how my brain actually works and receives the substance. So it's distressing not knowing what is what is going on, and why the experience has changed so much because as I've said, even, for example, if I did a double blind test, let's say and with [me], from two years, or three years before who did psychedelics for fun, and nowadays and received the drug and had those effects. I would say they are completely different drugs. I mean, not even not even the same family of drugs. So, the experience has changed so much for me. So, I don't I can really put like a core to the psychedelic experience that's hard to describe for me.

**Interviewer** 43:05

No problems there. Maybe at the end of the interview, we can come back and talk about this a little bit.

**Participant** 43:11

Sure.

**Q27. Interviewer** 43:19

Can you describe your most memorable or life changing psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 43:28

For good or for bad or in general?

**Interviewer** 43:34

Well, I'm I have a question coming up, it's going to ask specifically about your most challenging and negative psychedelic experience. So, I'd say put it on the good side for this one.

**Participant** 43:47

I have really fond memories of, of the first usages I did of psychedelics and one particular experience that I remember, was as I'd mentioned, I would go I would go out with my girlfriend and get the LSD and we would do it together and I remember that one time, we were just tripping in the park near my house and we were having these crazy intense visuals and just speaking about, we were speaking about her family, and she was opening up a lot about a lot of things that are affected her as far as her family goes and that was really special and that's a memory I'm really fond of like the first experiences I've had with psychedelics. Even if it was only for recreation or fun, I'm really fond of them because they were really like they were really magical experiences if I were to die now, I would say it's in the top 10 of the best experiences I've had in my life. So, I would say that is the most memorable okay?

**Interviewer** 45:01

And just just kind of out of curiosity, you said you're in a relationship now, is it still with the same person? Or is it new?

**Participant** 45:10

Yes, it's actually with the same. I have the same girlfriend and we're still together. Yeah, it's, it's with her.

**Interviewer** 45:24

Oh, by the way, and because I know I'm going to ask some questions on the negative side, if you don't want to answer or there's parts you don't want to specifically mention, you've perfectly just like, don't feel comfortable going into too much detail or whatever, it's completely up to you.

**Participant** 45:38

Sure, don't worry.

**Q26. Interviewer** 45:41

Can you describe your most challenging or negative psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 45:48

I have a couple that are probably worth mentioning but the most, the most challenging or the most difficult one was probably this one where I had to go to the hospital. So what happened that day was I took, I think it was two tabs of LSD and I was at home with my girlfriend but in that particular occasion, she also she also took LSD, but she took less. So, she took only one tab and the trip was going as normal at the beginning but um, we were I think we were having a shower for some reason and I started thinking I started like having a weird sensation in my chest. Like, like a weird feeling and I started you know, fixating, I don't know, I started like putting a lot of attention to what I was feeling in my chest and I was convinced that I was having a heart attack. So I started panicking a lot and started pacing back and forth and I remember I just I went out of the bathroom and I went to my desk to take my blood pressure and because I was getting real nervous and I was thinking that I was having a heart attack and I remember very vividly that when when I went to my desk to take my blood pressure. I started having like crazy visuals and I I don't know how to explain but I was taking the blood pressure in with my arm and I was just watching the BP monitor like the numbers going up and it looked like it was morphing into like the gates of hell, I don't know, it was really, really distressing and everything started melting and I was I was going crazy. So, I got back into I got back into the shower because I started thinking about my veins being really like you get the vasoconstriction with the psychedelics. So I was panicking about my veins being really, really small and having these really strange thoughts with strange thought loops and I just called 911 and that's for an ambulance because I was going crazy and I actually I had some Xanax but my girlfriend at the beginning my girlfriend didn't want me to take the Xanax and I that was a big mistake because I actually took it but it was too late. So I ended up calling 911 and when actually when the first a police car arrived, and afterwards an ambulance arrived but I remember I just like put my shorts on after the shower and I as soon as I heard the sirens of the police car, I ran out of my home and I don't know I was going crazy and I went to the police officers like super scared of them. I told them I think I'm having a heart attack and really scared I need the ambulance. They got an ambulance super quick and then I got to a hospital and by then I was a little bit more relaxed since I have already taking the Xanax before the police car and the ambulance arrived but they still gave me like intravenous Benzodiazepines I believe it was Valium and I realise and my dad was there and he was like what's going on? He was really confused because he didn't even know I did psychedelics and yeah, it was a really shameful moment like a really, really traumatic because the experience itself was really traumatic like actual believing I was convinced that I was having a heart attack and I was convinced that I was like everything was morphing into hell. So, I was actually believing that I I was actually dying, and that I was actually going to hell and that everything was morphing into like the after world and I would be stuck in hell forever. So it's like, it's probably difficult to explain everything that went on but it was, it was really, really traumatic and it was really, it was really scary because I was sure I was about to die like I was, convinced, completely convinced that I was about to die, I had no doubt inside of me that it was about to die. So that's what really made me afraid of death I believe that putting putting together that experience, like the traumatic fact that you believe that you're going to die, but also, you're having these effects from the drug that everything is morphing and that you believe you're actually going into hell and that you're you so you believe that you're physically like actually dying, but also going into hell and that everything is I don't know, it was really traumatic and that's probably why I'm still afraid to this day of that, like I'm afraid of actually dying and having that experience actually repeat itself. So yeah, it's, that was the most challenging and although I have had other experiences that were really traumatic also, but that was the most traumatic one.

**Interviewer** 51:23

Would you like to speak to the other ones? It's up to you.

**Participant** 51:28

So yeah, I there was one that was actually the first bad experience that I had and that and actually that was that was also with my girlfriend and she also had a really really traumatic and bad experience and what what happened that day was that we we ate a lot I ate five tabs, really strong tabs of LSD on that particular occasion it was LSD and she ate I believe also a lot for her so she ate like about two or three. So everything, it was a really strange trip because we ate the tabs out, we never slept after eating the tabs, but for some reason we felt super sleepy after eating the tabs and they were they were real LSD because I always buy sheets, like sheets of LSD and I test each of the tabs. So I know they are real LSD but anyway, for some reason, we were really sleepy and I woke up maybe one hour later, but when I woke up, I felt that immediately after I woke up, I was having all the classical psychedelic effects, but I was convinced that I, I had become like, a schizophrenic because I was hearing voices and that never happened to me with with LSD. I was hearing voices and voices in my head and everything had a like, for example, I would look at my wall and I would see like patterns of skulls on the wall and only like really, really, it was not creepy, or it was not scary at the moment but it was just like, I was convinced that I become crazy and it was not really scary. It was just like accepting of it but my girlfriend was really scared because she was having the same effects and

**Interviewer** 51:46

she was hearing voices as well?

**Participant** 53:37

She was hearing voices as well and she was seeing really scary patterns on the walls. Like, in my case, it was skulls but she was she was seeing faces in the walls, and really scary patterns and I remember that I tried to lay down to sleep like just to let it pass but when I try to and that's something also that really that's really vivid still in my mind that I try to like sleep or not sleep but like try to lay down on my bed and whenever I would close my eyes, I would hear like super super realistic sounds of someone banging on my wall super super, like the sound super realistic, like not not something that you know, it's fake. Like typically when you're experiencing a psychedelic effect or a sound, you know, it's an effect of the drug but in in this particular occasion, it sounded really, really real and that was that was at the moment. It was strange because I was not afraid. Only after the effects started wearing off, I was I started becoming afraid of everything that had happened and that was a really after the experience itself wasn't that difficult. So probably that's that is why it wasn't that Traumatic but afterwards so it was difficult for me, it was really scary and actually I was, I mean, it sounds silly, but I would be really scared of sleeping at night without, with my lights turned off or, like, it was really scary for me for a couple of days after that and that was also a really traumatic experience.

**Participant** 55:26

And did your girlfriend hear the banging as well?

**Participant** 55:30

No, no, she, but she was hearing voices also and, like, for example, we tried to go to the park to like to, because we were she was really scared and I was really confused because I was like, accepting of the fact that I have, I don't know what I was thinking of the moment I only remember that I was thinking, I've read that if you have like schizophrenia in your family, or maybe genetically, LSD can trigger it. So that's probably what happened to me and now I'm a schizophrenic and that's okay. That's how it's going to be now. Like, I wasn't afraid, but she was really afraid. So, I tried to get her to take a walk in the park. So, we went to a park to take a walk and she will, she will ask me if I was calling her and I wasn't speaking to her. She told me she was hearing someone calling out her name, and voices calling out her name and that's strange, because that's the only time that has ever happened, either to me, or as far as I know, I think it has happened in other occasions to her but for me, it was the only time I have ever experienced that with any psychedelic with mushrooms with LSD with Ayahuasca DMT. So, it was really, really strange, really strange experience that really traumatic also.

**Participant** 56:56

I think you mentioned it was like potentially one other but I'm not sure if those were the two main ones. You'd want to speak to any others before we move on?

**Participant** 57:07

Had? Yeah, I've had another one with mushrooms. Where I did, I ate psilocybin mushrooms and with a friend and he and I, for some reason, we became convinced that the mushrooms we had eaten were poisonous, for some reason, for whatever reason. So of course, there is no like for the poisonous mushrooms themselves. There is like no cure. So, we had our really, it's crazy. So, we had a really, really tough experience. Also, because we started panicking and doing like a whole story inside of our heads that maybe the dealer made a mistake and maybe he got the wrong mushrooms and for some reason we had been poisoned and we started getting really paranoid really. It was also a really, really scary experience and because we became super paranoid of everyone, we thought that everyone was out to get us or maybe they had poisoned us so yeah, it was a really bad experience also.

**Interviewer** 58:27

You happy to move on new sort of focus question, or is there anything else you want to add?

**Participant** 58:34

No, I think that's Yeah, those are the most memorable bad experiences.

**Interviewer** 58:39

Okay and thank you for sharing I know, like talking about these things is not easy.

**Participant** 58:46

Yea, It's not easy.

**28. Interviewer** 58:55

So, the question is, if you have experienced ego death, could you describe what it is like?

**Participant** 59:08

I have never, like I have never understood the phenomenon of ego death. So, I have never, like I have never really like for example, not knowing who I am? That has never happened to me even in the most intense trips. So, I have never experienced ego death myself.

**Interviewer** 59:36

So, in that case, a follow up question is, if you haven't experienced ego death, can you describe what you think it is?

**Participant** 59:48

from other people's experiences, I believe that it's losing. Like literally losing the fabrics of reality. So literally, not knowing who you are or where you are at or anything that's going around you and, like entering into a losing all connection with reality. I think that's why ego death, he's like,

**Interviewer** 1:00:22

Is there any more before we move on? Any more thoughts on that? Or? That's okay.

**Participant** 1:00:28

I believe that's it.

**Q7. Interviewer** 1:00:30

Okay, cool. So, it has your psychedelic use noticeably affected your relationships with significant others? If so, how have they been affected?

**Participant** 1:00:48

speaking directly of my use, I would, I would say no, no for the use itself, but some of the effects or some of the sequels of the use. So, for example, that the panic attacks that were caused by psychedelic abuse, and some of that stuff, has affected my relationships with others, but my direct usage of psychedelics hasn't, hasn't affected my relationships with others.

**Interviewer** 1:01:20

So, in terms of the long-term consequences of the psychedelic use, rather than specifically taking psychedelics, and say that changing the relationship during that, how has the long-term effects affected significant relationships with people?

**Participant** 1:01:39

I have lost a lot of friends due to not being able to, at the worst point of the panic attacks, I couldn't leave my home. So, I was homebound for a couple weeks and I lost a lot of friends. A lot of people that I used to go out with because I wouldn't, for a long period, as I've said, I was clean of all drugs. So I stopped doing any kind of drugs, I lost a lot of friends that or acquaintances rather, that we go over, you know, with trip together or do drugs together in general and I also, it also obviously affected my relationship with my girlfriend since I was all the time I was panicking and she had to leave work or to leave the university to come take care of me because I will think I was about to have a cardiac arrest or a heart attack or whatever and it really strained my relationship at the moment also with my parents, because my mother had to come in and take care of me because I would be so scared and have such intense anxiety attacks that I couldn't leave the house or do anything. So, at that point in time, at that moment, it really strained my relationship with my both with my family with my girlfriend, and also, I've lost several acquaintances and friends due to the effects of the let's say, of the panic disorder I developed due to psychedelic abuse.

**Interviewer** 1:03:13

Would, so you said you lost a number of friends and in those friends, you took drugs with and other situations were not partied with was the choice to stop using drugs. Was that part of the reason that you split with the friends? Not only panic attacks?

**Participant** 1:03:36

Yeah, exactly. The also the decision to stop doing drugs for a while until I felt better was a big part of it of losing those those friends also.

**Participant** 1:03:50

And how? How did your parents react to this? So here was [participant] before. Maybe we'll get in little to this, but like, relatively healthy I imagine. He shows up at the hospital. At some point parents get called in and now he's suffering panic attacks like how did what was the reaction from your parents to this evolution and change in you?

**Participant** 1:04:17

my, my parents were really it was really desperate for them because they they didn't know how to help me. They tried to take me to psychologists. So, they thought I was going to get over it by going to a psychologist. They tried to get me to meditation. They tried a lot of stuff and they were really comprehensive, and they were really understanding, and they tried to help me, but it was also really difficult for them because they Yeah, I was. I mean I have always been really healthy until now, both physically and mentally but out of the blue, I got to the hospital. They didn't know that I used They knew that I use some other types of drugs, but not psychedelics. So, it was a surprise for them, they didn't have a clue and afterwards, just see me have panic attacks and being homebound and being unable to go to the university or go to work like I did before or exercising, it was really distressing for them and it was really difficult because they tried everything to help me but they, that I feel personally that they felt desperate at times they didn't know what to do, because they were trying everything they could and they were being really comprehensive but yea, it was really distressing for them both to finding out but that way, they having to take me to the hospital that I use psychedelics, and also the the effects that cause that were caused on me by psychedelic use.

**Interviewer** 1:05:57

and have you spoken to your parents about this explicitly?

**Participant** 1:06:04

I try to avoid that topic with them. Since it's such a triggering point, like speaking personally with them, it's very difficult for me to speaking about everything that happened. With them personally, it's really difficult for me, so I try to avoid talking with them about that.

**Interviewer** 1:06:21

A little while ago, you described that psychedelics had helped you connect more with your father. So, you sort of described that also psychedelics has strained the relationship. Can you maybe speak to what the this deeper connection with your dad? How it manifests? What does it look like? What's what are the changes that occurred?

**Participant** 1:06:46

Sure, so so my, I have always had a really, I guess, the best way to describe it would be a really awkward relationship with my father. So he's kind of an awkward person, like, he's kind of shy and not really outgoing and it was really, some of his interests and some of the, like, his hobbies were like strange to not strange, but I didn't really identify with them and it was really, really difficult for these reasons to have a connection or to develop a really a real like a father and son relationship with him and via my psychedelic use, I was able to understand a lot of things about him a lot of like, the reasoning behind some decisions he had taken when I was younger, that I was maybe spiteful, when I was younger, but I got to finally understand via my psychedelic use. So, I was able to let go of some bad memories and try to bond more with him via understanding his interest, and also his hobbies, and putting myself in his shoes. Like, what why what was the reasoning for him at that point in time for some decisions he had taken. So, our relationship improved a lot in that sense

**Interviewer** 1:08:11

Is that from, from your perspective, a more positive feeling towards your father, or, as it has does it manifest in the interaction as well?

**Participant** 1:08:25

in the interaction as well, because I have, I have actually bonded more with him and we have like a much better relationship where we actually speak more and have more communication, just all around, just because I am able to let go of all the spite and all the hatred I've had before and I will avoid communicating with him. Now I actually do so we have a much better relationship and now I also am able to put myself in his shoes. So, I'm able to share some of his hobbies that before were really like odd or boring for me and that and now I'm able to share and understand why he likes them so much. So yeah, our relationship has improved a lot too.

**Interviewer** 1:09:08

Okay, cool. Maybe just before we move on, what about your relationship with your girlfriend? The panic attacks you said have strained it, but you also described in your early experiences her opening up to you and talking about her relationship with her family and stuff like that. I don't know if you can sort of maybe summarise or give us sort of an overview of how psychedelics have in general affected the relationship.

**Participant** 1:09:50

Yeah, I those moments were really such that they are really fun memories of mine, and I really believe that they shaped the course of the relationship in the sense that she opened up a lot about things that probably she would have never told me or maybe would have told me several years down the road. So just having those and those experiences happened at the beginning of the relationship. So I think it's like, there is no way to measure how big the impact of psychedelics has been in the sense that she, she opened up so much, yeah, and she, she was able to share a lot of things, you know, just in the more it's something that comes out in the moment, and it's really spontaneous, let's say but she, she shared a lot with me that really helped me understand her better understand, like her background, and where she, where she came from, how she how she got to be the person who she was and yeah, I think that psychedelics were really helpful in the sense of opening up a lot of like Pandora's box, you know, like all the memories and all the both negative and good memories that you normally don't share with a person, because they are really private but that really helped us build a much better relationship, a much better understanding.

**Interviewer** 1:11:18

And maybe the follow up on that a bit. How is the sort of relationship with psychedelics and the girlfriend? how it is that I wouldn't want to say operate, but it's not exactly the right way. How does that fit together now?

**Participant** 1:11:36

That you mean, if she if she still uses psychedelics, or?

**Interviewer** 1:11:40

More so you describe originally you had some very positive experiences and then later on you had some negative ones you still described that you use psychedelics and you're still in the same relationship with her. So, I wonder sort of what does that process that dynamic? What is she accepting of the use? She there to look after? What's, how does that sort of work? Because obviously, there's been this negative shift that could put someone off from doing it ever again. Oh, no, let's just stop. You know, so I was wondering what that looks like.

**Participant** 1:12:19

Yeah, and that's a really good question that's actually because my experience I had the panic disorder I developed, I believe that it has permanently affected her also, because every time she takes psychedelics now, she has anxiety and panic attacks also. So she has stopped taking psychedelics, and she's also against me continue with, she's against my continued use of psychedelics and the, to the, to that experience and so yeah, that's actually a really good question and she she has told me that she believes that it was just seeing me go through all that I went through and the experience I had that she she can't put herself to like to keep using psychedelics because she always has bad experiences the few last few times she has tried them ever since that happened, she has had negative experiences and yeah, she's also completely against me continue using psychedelics.

**Interviewer** 1:12:50

and maybe if it's okay to ask a little bit more on that how does that dynamic affect the relationship you still use she's against.

**Participant** 1:13:40

she respects my decision to use psychedelics, but she gets angry of course and she refuses for example, if I get a panic attack, she refuses like she did before she would look after me and try to calm me down. She refuses to do that now so I'm on my own now so I try also that makes me be more more conscious of trying to keep sane during the trip and not trying to let go too much so say I'm on my own it's not like before where I've had so like a trip sitter a when I do it alone, because it's not often nowadays that I do it with friends. So, I try to be more careful of of my of my use nowadays also because of that factor.

**Interviewer** 1:14:29

Do you actually I think I might. I don't think so but the question I think here is, do you mostly trip by yourself now.

**Participant** 1:14:44

So, as I mentioned I really love on the I mentioned at the beginning that I really love when I have the chance to trip with another person, so I try to wait or plan my trips around. I have some friends that are still into psychedelics, but I rarely see them. So, I try to plan my trips to where I can we can do it together. Or to, or for example, when this past few times were my girlfriend actually got like the will to try psychedelics again. I tried to plan my use. So, it, it was the exact same day that she did it. So, we could do together but yeah, I try to always do it with someone else but if it's not possible, I will trip myself

**Interviewer** 1:15:30

and is there a maybe like a ratio of how much together with at least one other person versus by yourself, could you estimate?

**Participant** 1:15:38

I would say that nowadays it's probably 60% alone 40% with with a friend or with my girlfriend these past few times.

**Q8. Interviewer** 1:15:55

So next question is have psychedelics changed how you think and feel about yourself? And you've spoken to this a lot but I wonder, with the focus of the question, if that sort of brings anything new out, I'll just reiterate. Have psychedelics changed how you think or feel about yourself?

**Participant** 1:16:24

Yeah, absolutely, of course, they have changed a lot about how I see myself and but I wouldn't say necessarily probably not in a positive way because I would before for example, as I've said, they have really helped me be more empathetic and to put myself in the shoes of others but I also believe they have made me be that they are making me more empathetic and make me see other people's perspectives. They maybe have made me realise a lot of stuff about myself, perhaps, or perhaps it's a false impression. For example, before I would consider myself a really intelligent person. I always used to consider myself someone that was really intelligent and really knowledgeable about a lot of topics and nowadays, I don't feel that way I feel like I feel after my psychedelic use that maybe I have realised that maybe I'm not as smart as I thought and in in other aspects, I have come to a same realisation. So probably they have changed the way I look at myself, but not necessarily in a positive manner.

**Participant** 1:17:48

Would you describe it as negative form, potentially, something else in this shift in thinking of oneself?

**Participant** 1:17:57

it's, it's, it's confusing for me because just to put it into context, before I was speaking about this example, in specific about being smart, for example, I was really confident about me being someone that was really smart and really intelligent and even nowadays, people always say that to me, when my friends, my family, my even band of classmates or teachers, etc. Always, always stress the point that I'm someone that's really intelligent and really wise but when, but, I don't feel that way anymore and that came, I remember vividly that I it's funny because I was having a trip, I believe in that particular occasion, I had done Ayahuasca and I remember that I started having like, really stupid, really stupid thoughts like really like nonsense that might come to your head during your psychedelic trip and I started questioning myself why I'm Why am I thinking this stuff? This doesn't make sense and then I came to a realisation maybe, that maybe I'm not as smart as I have always thought that maybe it's going to be really hard for me to explain what I thought but at that moment, I thought that how about if I have gone all my life thinking that I am intelligent, but I'm actually really stupid, and I have just never realised I came to like that idea and I have like a really crazy thought loop and I started thinking, maybe I'm not that smart, maybe I'm not that intelligent and then I started remembering. Like, everyone has stupid moments, right? Or everyone makes mistakes sometimes, but I started only remembering the mistakes I have made or the stupid moments I've had, and I started really stressing that. So that really reaffirmed the idea that Yeah, maybe I was secretly not as smart as I thought. So yeah, it's difficult to explain but that will after that experience, I have never again thought that I'm thought of myself for someone that that is particularly smart. So yeah, and before I was really confident, even even nowadays, a lot of my classmates, co- workers, etc, teachers tell me that I'm someone that is really wise and really smart, but I just can never feel the same way about myself again. I hope that was more or less clear because it's, it's difficult to understand how I felt during, during that trip and what I thought at that moment.

**Interviewer** 1:20:50

What about emotionally? Is there been any sort of feelings towards yourself that have shifted?

**Participant** 1:21:03

That's a good question. Not Not really, as far as emotionally. Not Not really.

**Interviewer** 1:21:11

No? Okay. Oh, and a follow up. So, to that question, how you think about yourself how you feel about yourself. How has that affected your life? So, I guess, to speak to it, that's probably one that you focused on was the confidence of being a smart person. How has that change in how you think about yourself impacted how you act? Or, you know, approach life?

**Participant** 1:21:49

I'm much less self-confident, let's say so I'm much less self-confident, definitely. Before I would be really confident in my skill and my, like, my capacities of doing things. Nowadays, I doubt myself a lot and whenever I have like a business idea, or a new project, or even something silly, like an essay at school, let's say I always second guessed myself, so I'm always doubting about my decisions and I believe it has affected my self confidence in, that sense, I'm not as confident in the things I do and in the, like, the ideas I have now.

**Interviewer** 1:22:38

And how would that reduction or loss and self-confidence, how does that play out in terms of how you your behaviours or your actions?

**Participant** 1:22:50

it makes me less, probably less willing, or less, likely of actually doing things or actually playing out the ideas that I have. So, for example, instead of if I come with a good business idea, instead of going actually going through with it, I will probably just think it's not worth it and not, not go over it. Yeah, it's, I procrastinate a lot nowadays. So, I sometimes I get really good ideas and really good. What I know are really good ideas and I even tell my friends or my colleagues about them, and they think they're good ideas or really worthwhile ideas but I just procrastinate and end up never following up because I believe they are not worth it or probably not that good. of an idea, let's say.

**Q29. Interviewer** 1:23:55

so, we're sort of shifting topic here but still psychedelics but different frame. So, the question to start us off is how oh sorry not how. Have your experiences with psychedelics affected your spiritual or religious beliefs? And if so, how have they been affected?

**Participant** 1:24:17

Um, no, they have not affected I have never been a religious person and so I have never I have never actually believing that let's say in any particular religion or any particular faith and my I haven't changed due to the let's say due to the experiences themselves but at the same time I'm when I had this experience that I believe I was going to die and that I will I believe that I was going to hell and to like, it left me with a like, I felt that I was at the like, at a purgatory, right? So, it was like everything was like eternal damnation. I don't know how to explain it but I like part of me being afraid of death I believe that more so than being afraid of death itself is of that experience that I had that day playing out again, when when I'm about to die, or when I have a near death experience again. So, it's not that I believe that I'm going to hell after I die but that experience was really traumatic. So, I would say that change.

**Interviewer** 1:25:48

Have you ever experienced a spiritual crisis because of your psychedelic use? And sort of follow up on that as essentially what helped you get through this experience?

**Participant** 1:26:04

Can you elaborate on that question?

**Participant** 1:26:06

I can give me one second, thought, I haven't got it popped up. I'm just going to go based kind of how Wikipedia defines spiritual crisis. So, it says spiritual crisis, also called a spiritual emergency is a form of identity crisis, where an individual experiences drastic changes to their meaning system. That is their unique purposes, their goals, their values, their attitude and beliefs, their identity and focus, typically, because of a spontaneous spiritual experience. Yeah, that's I think that's probably sufficient to describe, I think, does that make sense?

**Participant** 1:26:57

Yeah, absolutely, and yes, I have had was a question was that if I have ever had a spiritual crisis?

**Interviewer** 1:27:06

Yeah. So, if you've had, if you've had a spiritual crisis, and also what helped you get through this experience?

**Participant** 1:27:18

Yes, definitely, I've had I have come to a lot of realisations about, about a lot of things about my life. For example, my career I was studying, I'm still studying but I was studying in a field that wasn't of particular that I studied due to pressure on my parents side and that I had never realised that I really didn't like it and I realised via my psychedelic use that I love another career and I am actually I'm still studying the previous one, because I'm really close to finishing it but I started studying a new career at the same time, which is the one I actually like, for example and I also realised that for some I hated travelling before, I didn't like to travel before I wouldn't like I would rather stay at home or say, in my city, then to go out for travelling purposes and also, via one of my experiences with psychedelics, travelling became one of my, like, my goals in life, and I actually started travelling and going out to different countries because I realised that I wanted to the same way that psychedelics made me made me understand other people and made me emphasise with other people and get to know in like, these new experiences I was having with psychedelics made me understand, in my point of view, the world made me understand the world better. I wanted to travel and to get, to know, new places and, yeah, a lot of aspects and a lot of decisions, really critical decisions in my life have shifted completely due to my psychedelic use.

**Interviewer** 1:29:20

And I guess, maybe the question is, was there any acute moment, like maybe a short period, so a spiritual crisis, where I guess it's probably quite challenging this transition from one type of identity values, beliefs purpose to another. So, is there anything you can that helped you with that transition? Or is it I don't know.

**Participant** 1:29:49

No, not at that level.

**Interviewer** 1:29:53

Okay. So over maybe a longer period?

**Participant** 1:29:57

Over a longer period and over shifting what were like I've had a false belief system or a flawed belief system that psychedelics made me change and I change a lot of my values and a lot of my goals, but it was over a long period and a lot of experiences, which made me realise what I really wanted out of life, but not like an acute or really special moment that I can quote right now.

**Q30. Interviewer** 1:30:28

Okay, cool. So, you've actually spoken to this quite a few times, but I'll just ask it anyway, because it might bring up something new in the way that the questions asked but essentially, is have psychedelics changed how you think about or feel about death or the process of dying?

**Participant** 1:30:54

Yes, absolutely. Absolutely and in a in a very negative way and I, I believe the, I have read a lot about, for example, psychedelic therapy, therapy being used for terminal patients and just the thought of that is extremely, like, it's extremely distressing for me, because I just imagine being in that position, like being having a terminal illness and knowing I'm going to die soon and having to live all that experience again, it's extremely traumatising. My experience was a, they made me much more afraid of death and I can see personally how, for me, I know everyone's different, and everyone might have different experiences but I, for me, they have made me much more afraid of death and much more scared of that and I would, I would definitely not recommend them myself for someone that was in a like in a terminal illness or in a terminal stage. If the yeah, for me, they had a very negative impact on my viewpoint of death.

**Interviewer** 1:32:12

You You spoke a little bit before that wasn't so much the focus on dying itself but the idea of this purgatory or hell type of maybe like, if there was such thing as death, it's like sort of in between, or the place you will live as you know, Hell is not very a very nice place. I don't know if you could give some sort of weighting, but of the newfound fear related to death, how much would you place it in the idea of re-experiencing the hell purgatory landscape verse, simply the idea of say non not existing anymore.

**Participant** 1:32:54

They the my psychedelics experiences they have also, let's say, they have also made me they have also made me more. In that sense, I believe that you have a point because for example, when I have had the first experiences, I lost the fear of actually before it was afraid of not existing. So actually, the idea, let's say that my ego, my ego was too big, like I couldn't conceive the idea of the world going, going continuing without me. So, and I think that's what are what gets to a lot of people, the idea of the world, or their families or the money they've made, or et cetera, et cetera, so on and so forth, of leaving stuff behind, and knowing that everything will continue without them. I think that, like their ego is what doesn't allow them to to be at peace with the idea of not existing anymore and in that sense, I believe psychedelics can be useful, they, they have helped me, and maybe I'm less afraid of the idea of not existing anymore, and more more accepting of death itself but probably the the experience I had, which was really traumatic subconsciously still makes me makes me afraid of the process of dying, probably due to the fear of reliving that experience. So, I hope that makes sense.

**Interviewer** 1:34:31

So I wonder, you I asked you a little while ago, that spiritual religious changes and beliefs and you sort of said you're a non-religious person but there have been a few times during the call we you have referred to your soul, and you're also talking about the idea of purgatory or hell and, at least on the second aspect of purgatory and hell these to me, my understanding is sort of like religious Just concepts based on maybe at least Christian worldview definitely has an idea of heaven or hell. So, I wonder if you can speak to the idea that you say you're non-religious, but you're afraid of going to hell? So, I just,

**Participant** 1:35:21

Yeah, it was it was just using like, figuratively speaking about the experience I've had so so I think that I need to clarify more like what was the experience like so I was having like the like this, these chest pains, this intense chest pain and these physical symptoms, I started breaking out in a cold sweat also, and my blood pressure was really high, probably due to the anxiety and I started having all these physical effects, but also I was having the normal the normal effects of the of the LSD of a psychedelic then, at that point in time, I was having crazy visuals and like, you have to used psychedelics yourself. So, you probably understand like, like when sometimes a story plays like you have a setting a set and setting inside your head and a story plays out inside of your head, right? So, the story that was playing out in my head at that moment was that everything, like everything was melting everything. The visuals were insane. The visuals were absolutely crazy and I was having this intense panic and when I was when I was taking my blood pressure, I remember vividly looking at the blood pressure monitor and like everything was morphing but it felt like it was taking so long, it felt like it was like it was eternal. Like that's what I mean by purgatory or by hell, let's say that, let's say that what I felt at that moment was that I was making like the transition of like, actually dying, physically dying, because I was convinced that I was dying but in my in my head, I was thinking I was playing out this story that's so common with psychedelics, or, like this story that, like, the stories you come up with when you're on psychedelics, right? The set and settings and that story was playing out in my head was that everything was morphing and everything was melting, and that I was about to die and that it that was like that transition or the process of dying and going to hell and that I was going to hell afterwards. I don't personally believe in hell or life after death or etc but it was just so traumatising to, to, you know, to be in a state where you have consumed a drug, and you don't know what's going on and just to, to have this intense fear of actually really believing you're going to die, but also seeing all these going around at the same time, everything melting and everything moving and everything feels so eternal, and so like mystical and it's it's very hard to explain, but that's what I mean. I mean, the the actual process itself was really, really terrifying, really like something out of a nightmare. So that that's what I what I'm afraid of like the probably I subconsciously associate death now with with that experience and I'm afraid of that that experience replaying itself and I have other stuff I have read has probably played into that because I, I have read, for example, some studies that say that I'm not sure if it's if it's has actually been proven, but some studies that say that, for example, that DMT is produced in the pineal gland in in the it's produced normally naturally by humans and before death, or when you have a near death experience, it's released. So that's why near-death experiences feel so like the slow motion and feel like psychedelic psychedelic experience. So that makes me panic about even if it were to turn out not to be true. That makes me panic, just the idea that I might relive that that that same experience I have. That is what's really terrifying Andrew.

**Interviewer** 1:39:28

If I can just speak to the DMT released upon death. I believe that's only sort of like a hypothesis and they haven't there's not actual evidence to support that. So, there is evidence to support that DMT is created in very small amounts in the brain and I think the pineal gland might produce it. I believe the pineal gland also produces like melatonin. So, it's related to sleep wake cycles, and I think Melatonin is very chemically similar, analogous to serotonin and serotonin is chemically analogous to DMT. So, I think potentially, in those little mechanisms where they can make it, they might be able to make DMT but to speak to what I've read. Yeah, I don't I its suggestions are no one knows. This is the thing, no one knows but the idea that your brain could produce enough DMT to become psychoactive, to that sufficient degree, I think is like, low probability chances, let's say,

**Participant** 1:40:38

Yes, it might be, it might be farfetched but just and I agree completely, I don't even know if it's true, but just see the possibility of, even if the possibility didn't exist, even if that was completely false. I just, I associate now, the idea of death, with that really traumatic experience I have and so it's an even emotionally, I was having a lot of pain. At that moment, the I that I was just thinking about, I was convinced that I was going to die. So, I was seeing all these go around and having such regrets about my life and things that I have done and about leaving my family behind. It was such a painful, painful moment, such a terrifying moment, it was a really traumatising moment and I think that that's, that's the key point that just as psychedelics can heal, they can damage also and just as they can be really, they can make you live this incredible intense experience out of world out of body experiences, they can also make you go literally to hell or live a nightmare, literally a nightmare stuff. The what I live is literally stuff that I wouldn't even imagine in the worst, terror movies, it was a nightmare. So that's what I what I think is really important for people to understand about psychedelics, that just as they can heal, they can hurt and they, after all, I believe that a lot of people are really eager to people, always try to explain everything, always trying to find meaning behind stuff. So, people always want to give meaning to to LSD, or Ayahuasca and see see see it as something sacred. When for me, it's just a drug and it's, it's something that can potentiate your state of mind. So if you want it to be something incredible, something spiritual, that can change your life, it can be, but if you're not in a good moment, if you're not ready for it, it can also make your life a living hell and I've had, I've had friends that have had similar experiences to me. So that is why I believe that's really important for people to know and understand of psychedelics and as you said at the beginning, not just let go with the hype with the whole hype that there is around because it's dangerous, it's really dangerous.

**Q31. Interviewer** 1:43:11

For sure. Moving on to another question, we're getting close to the end as well. So not too many to go just to let you know. Have psychedelics change any fundamental beliefs about the nature of reality? And if so, what has changed?

**Participant** 1:43:37

for me personally, they they haven't changed my my viewpoint on let's say on the fabric of reality, because I I personally believe it's my viewpoint that psychedelics are just a drug just like just like opiates, just like stimulants, yours just like any other kind of drug, and they have a set of effects and they potentiate what is on your mind. So they can be great tools to if you want to self-reflect yourself or study and but but they can also be they can also make you live this fantastic incredible experiences which seems so, so mystical and so crazy, which I have lived and I so I understand why some people try to give them maybe meaning. Try to find the meaning behind these experiences and try to try to I have heard people that try to connect their psychedelic experiences with maybe another let's say, they say that another dimension exist and that when when you consume the you go into that other dimension, or some people give them religious meaning or spiritual meaning and that's great if it helps the person and helps them become better or helps them process and integrate that experience. I think that's okay but for me, they are only drugs. So, they are only they only change your state of mind and it's only temporary. So that's why I, why I don't why they haven't changed my viewpoints on the fabric of reality.

**Q32. Interviewer** 1:45:20

Cool, alright. Have psychedelics changed your outlook on life? And if so, how has it changed?

**Participant** 1:45:35

Yeah, definitely, I believe that more than changing my outlook on life, they have made me they have changed my outlook on life by themselves by the experiences they have given me. For example, with with this traumatic experience I've had with the fear of death they have changed my outlook on life by themselves but speaking about the positives, I believe that rather than actually being beneficial by themselves, they have allowed me to realise a lot of things that I didn't know about myself and a lot of things that I didn't, I hadn't realised about myself, simply because I hadn't I didn't have the time to listen to myself and to my, to my to, to my, to my soul, let's say, to listen to myself. So, like my love of my love for travelling, or let's say that I actually wanted to study a different career and not the career that my parents want me to study. This kind of things psychedelics helped me realise them. So, they changed my life completely by helping me realise what I already had within myself but psychedelics themself. Only by the negative experiences I've kept, they haven't changed anything positive by themselves.

**Q33. Participant** 1:46:57

So yeah. If psychedelics have a role to play in society? What do you think it is?

**Participant** 1:47:14

Wow, that's a that's an interesting question. I think that I personally believe that if, if everyone could, could try psychedelics at least once. I know, it's really cliche, because a lot of a lot of people who could use psychedelic said, but I really believe that because I was was someone that was really selfish, that was really, that couldn't really put myself in the shoes of others, and psychedelics, just they change the way you see, you see everything so much and lead you, they change your mindset so much, and let you analyse different perspectives that you can look into before and different ideas and different concepts. I believe that if everyone was if everyone was to try psychedelics, at least once the world would be a much better place, there will be much more understanding people will be much more empathetic towards others, people will be more more capable of understanding the positions of others and why the reasoning behind their actions and why they do the things they do. That is, I believe that if psychedelic use would be more was more widespread, rather, I think that would be really, really good for society in general.

**Interviewer** 1:48:51

Is there any anything else you'd like to add to that question, or should I move on?

**Participant** 1:48:56

No, I think that's all and also I Well, I will also like to have that I personally believe even with my with the good and the bad, I think that psychedelics should be should be more widespread, they should be used more freely, and they shouldn't be restricted in the same way that other drugs are. So there should be there should be an easier access to psychedelics but even even with all the positives and the amazing stuff they can, they can make you feel and they can make you realise I also believe they are, as I have said before, they are really dangerous also. So that's why I think that people like you who are interested in this topic and who actually want to research it should really that's why I really think it's really important to research the effects psychedelics have and the dangers they might have. So, people actually know what they are getting into and not go into it blindly and to to know what some of the possible consequences and drawbacks will be of using psychedelics

**Q34. Interviewer** 1:50:19

have psychedelics? Sorry, have psychedelics changed how you think about the human species and what we're doing?

**Participant** 1:50:30

You mean as far as the, in general, or as far as what we're doing, do you mean the environment or?

**Interviewer** 1:50:36

Well, that's, that's why the questions open, rather than me put in a particular focus. It's like, what? When that question when I asked that question, what comes to mind when you think about what humans are doing? And essentially, have your thoughts changed in relation to like, that thing? I guess what comes to mind?

**Participant** 1:50:58

Yeah, got it. Not Not really, not really to be completely honest, not not really, I haven't my viewpoint on the human race and it hasn't change but it has changed as far as far as, for example, being more accepting of other cultures, being more accepting of like other other religions, other people that are different to me, and really to understand why they make the decisions they make, why they act the way they do, and to be more much more tolerant. That has been really, really good for me, but as a whole about the human race, not really.

**Q35. Interviewer** 1:51:40

Okay. Last two questions. Second to last is what advice would you give to people who are interested and are currently using psychedelics?

**Participant** 1:51:56

Well, the advice I would give them is not to abuse them, not to abuse them, because I did and it was, a lot of people think it's something that is not really dangerous, but it can be much more dangerous than or it can be much more dangerous then opiates if you abuse them, so use them responsibly, to try to try to have a purpose for each experience And to to get to to getting informed, and before using them to know and to actually hear from other people's experiences not only hear the good experiences, but also hear the bad and the potential drawbacks they might have because they are not for everyone. That's that's the advice I would give for someone that might be interested in trying psychedelics.

**Interviewer** 1:52:48

Would you? Could you elaborate a little bit on what you mean by abuse? Like how would you define abuse of psychedelics?

**Participant** 1:52:59

for example, in using them at one point in time, I was using them weekly and for some people that might not, I mean, I know some people that do them like two or three times a week at some points but for me, that was too much and I think that everyone has a different breaking point. So someone might, might do them once a week and be fine and another person might only be able to do them once every three months and what I mean is to to not abuse them and not to push it when you're not really doing well mentally or when you and not to use them only for recreation, let's say to use them with a purpose and try to limit the use as not using them weekly, or every three days. Like some people do at least space out the dosages.

**Interviewer** 1:54:00

Any other thoughts or

**Participant** 1:54:03

mostly that because that that's a mistake I made that I I thought that it was something that wasn't really harmful. It's just psychedelic. It's just you know, like people say like, as another weak drug but but as something that can harm you really, it can be really harmful in a lot of aspects. So, don't abuse it and don't use it as frequently, try to space out their usages, that that is pretty much it.

**Q36. Interviewer** 1:54:36

And final question is are there any final thoughts or comments that you would like to mention before we conclude?

**Participant** 1:54:46

Yeah, I actually have a question for you, Andrew. Okay, so on the on the initial survey, a lot of emphasis was placed on. For example, on other other drugs that you might use, for example, ketamine and opiates and marijuana, alcohol, etc and I'm just curious about what was the purpose or the meaning about, you know, knowing the use of other drugs, if, because the interview is mostly focused around psychedelics exclusively. So, like, what was the reasoning behind having, you know, knowing that the usage of other kinds of drugs,

**Interviewer** 1:55:37

Multiple reasons. So, for example, with the alcohol, tobacco, and sort of like 50/50, with cannabis, having an idea of like how much alcohol someone drinks over kind of a period of time how much they smoke, I've seen and I've read scientific literature, looking at people using psychedelics to, to get people to quit, certain addictions, like alcohol, addictions, smoking, opiates, as well. So one of the ideas is just have a look, in the natural or in the wild of psychedelic use, do we see a sort of a potentially like an inverse relationship between psychedelic use and reduction in amount of use of other drugs, but not necessarily all drugs, that there was sort of kind of what I thought we might find but you might find a positive relationship between psychedelics use and marijuana, or you might find a positive relationship of psychedelics and MDMA use or ketamine, for example. So one that was to have a look at, are there any relationships between the amount of use and potentially more or less use of other drugs, but it was also just to get a sort of kind of a snapshot picture of a person's drug use history to have to have a sort of understanding, have you only used if I didn't ask questions about the other drugs, I don't necessarily know what this is termed like a poly drug user. So, you're using a lot of you might have used cocaine 700 plus times but if I don't ask about stimulants, then that's not something I'll be aware of. So I can I could just focus on the psychedelics, but I thought, opening it up to the kind of almost the full gamut of the different kind of classes or ranges of drugs, gives a bit more of a better of picture, in terms of like what this person's drug use history looks like and that can, I think, a little more information there gives more context to the person's use because if they're, if they call themselves a recreational user, and they basically use a whole bunch of different drugs all over the place, and they've used psychedelics, you that might inform you about potentially, that might also be related to the types of long term affects you see. So, you say, a poly drug user whose kind of dipping their toe and trying all the different things. You don't see any positive changes, necessarily and if you did, you can't really say it's because of psychedelics, because, well, they use all these other drugs, and you don't, it's all quite mixed, you know, it all goes into your body it all changes your mental state, so you can't hard to tease out this did this and that did this. So it's worth it was that was sort of the background, is to have a look at some correlations, see if there's any relationships between them, and also to see, specifically, speak to some of the uses in the clinical settings where they're trying to deal with addictions to see if usage somehow is related to that in some way. So maybe, because there's a few questions that I asked in it to get us sort of understanding of how the person who's filling out the questionnaire thought about their own use, and maybe how people think about their own use, and for changes or informs how they use and therefore you'll see differences in the trajectories or long term outcomes and for that reason, it was I think, worth including questions of the other drugs. Yeah.

**Participant** 1:59:21

If you allow if you allow me a suggestion, I think that it would be, it would be really interesting, at least, I think, so that it would be really interesting, maybe for your research, to also ask about how psychedelic use maybe affected the usage of other drugs. Or, yeah, I think that would be a good question. That might be also also interesting to ask for future like for future interviews. I believe that it will be a really interesting

**Interviewer** 2:00:02

That's actually, I like that. I don't know why I haven't thought of that.

**Participant** 2:00:10

Yeah, I actually thought you were going to go over some, like some questions related to that because like, like survey was quite extensive about past drug use and other drug use. So, so yeah, I've,

**Q6e. Interviewer** 2:00:25

yeah, it's, Yeah, it should be included. It makes sense. So how about no reason I can't, I'm going to flip the question back on you and let you answer it because why not? How has psychedelic use affected your use of other drugs?

**Participant** 2:00:55

I actually hadn't thought of that but it's, it's for, for me, for example, it was quite it increased my usage, for example of I never used to consume, for example, let's say basically, benzodiazepines and I started consuming them because I needed them for to calm myself down during trips. So, in, it kind of was a gateway drug to other types of drugs like and I also sometimes I would consume also opiates and other mix them mix the psychedelics with other kinds of drugs. So, and before I did psychedelics, I had tried maybe Xanax one time at most, but after that, I started using them more frequently. So, in a sense, it was kind of like psychedelics were kind of a gateway drug for me for to train, like depressants and all kinds of drugs since I started needing them to calm myself down during the trips. So in that sense, I think it's it's really interesting, because I was someone that would never even think about trying, trying, for example, Xanax or Valium or, or opiates before, and I started doing so after and now they are my drugs I use more more frequently. So, I think that's an interesting viewpoint of how how psychedelics have affected my drug use and as far as reducing my desire to use alcohol or, or any other kind of drug for me personally, I have never noticed that. I yeah, that was my experience.

**Interviewer** 2:02:48

Do you outside of antidepressants or anti-anxiety medications? Do you, have you or do you combine psychedelic use without the drugs?

**Participant** 2:03:01

Mm hmm. Yeah. Yeah. Several times for example. Well, outside of outside of pharmaceuticals, I have combined them also with for example, marijuana, of course, the most common alcohol also. Which are probably those are the most common alcohol and marijuana. Yeah, I probably have mixed them with other types of drugs, but I probably only a few times. The most common combination will be opiates and psychedelics that would be the most common

**Interviewer** 2:03:48

is that to manage...?

**Participant** 2:03:52

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 2:03:54

And of the marijuana output when you have combined them, is there any noticeable changes in the psychedelic experience that kind of, say a bit stable about marijuana and took some psychedelics and it went in this direction, and it maybe goes in that direction each time I do it?

**Participant** 2:04:14

Yeah. For example, with alcohol when we when I was at high school, it was really common that for example, it not not only with me, but a lot of friends did that. For example, if you were having a bad trip, you you will go to the supermarket or to the store to buy alcohol because alcohol. Alcohol is super similar to anti-anxiety medication. So, for example, if you drink a lot, it blunts out the trip a lot, so it kills the trip a lot. So for example, if you are having a bad trip, you can just go buy a couple drinks and it's much better and it blunts the trip out a lot and it calms you down but sometimes it can also put it get people a little bit violent. So, it's a little bit of an unpredictable mix. Me personally speaking about my personal experience, it always relaxes me, and it blunts the experience and as far as marijuana it was the exact opposite, just smoking given a little, a little bit of weed, it increased the effects and gave it like a different. a little bit of a different. It changed it, it changed the trip a little bit, not only potentiating it, but also it made it It changed some of the effects. So, I would probably would be more likely to get anxiety and also a little bit more of paranoia and thought loops. So yeah, definitely potentiates the trip but it's also a dangerous combination are really dangerous, because you can smoke just a little bit and get really bad negative effects. So those were my experiences with those combinations.

**Interviewer** 2:06:10

Do you smoke marijuana, like in just general use?

**Participant** 2:06:16

Not often, but yes, I do.

**Interviewer** 2:06:19

And during those just marijuana say by itself, do you get similar anxiety, paranoia? And thoughts loops? Just using it by itself?

**Participant** 2:06:31

No no. For example, when when I eat edibles at really high dosages, I might have some of those effects but normally smoking only, I don't get those kind of effects, but the psychedelics and the weed potentiate each other so much. That just by taking a small, small drag off of a blunt it might give you really bad negative effects and I have personally met a lot of friends that that go ahead with that combination. So, and I have never seen it end well not mostly potentiates it the psychedelic, but it potentiates it in a negative way, like creating more anxiety and paranoia. I have really seen it, potentiate the or the beneficial effects. Let's say.

**Interviewer** 2:07:26

Have you Sorry, did you, did you say that you have seen friends have positive potentiated effects from marijuana and psychedelic combinations?

**Participant** 2:07:36

No that that mostly personally all the friends and acquaintances have made the combine marijuana with psychedelics, it's almost always a negative effect. It potentiates the psychedelic but in a negative way, it's more likely to create anxiety and thought loops and that was also my experience. I have seldom seen it potentiate beneficial effects or the good effects of psychedelics that's what I meant.

**Interviewer** 2:08:05

Okay, thank you for clarifying. So those are all the questions that I had for the formal part of the interview. So, I'm just going to end the recording.

**Participant** 2:08:17

Sure.