8. Interview with Participant 8

**Interview recorded:** 14/01/2021 (NZDT)

**Length:** 2:25:17

**Spoken duration of interview:** Participant (62%), Interviewer (38%)

**Age (years):** Participant (25), Interviewer (29)

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

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

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

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**Interviewer** 00:03

Cool. So, I have my question sheet here. There's about 41 questions to go through. Used to be shorter, but I've actually added more questions and changed a few a bit over the course of the interviews, too, because some of the questions were being misinterpreted. So, they just weren't worded as clearly in terms of the focus of the question. So, hopefully, you're the first person I'm going to try some of the new questions out on. I mean, they're just questions. So, it's not it's not too difficult, but just letting you know. One thing to mention before we start as well is when we're talking about psychedelics here, if you're able to segment out different drugs you may have used, the drugs that I'm talking about when I'm talking about psychedelics, or the ones that I'd like you to speak to are things So, the classic psychedelics such as LSD, psilocybin, DMT, and mescaline but also, potentially Ayahuasca, and Iboga, and any sort of chemical analogues of those, So, you might get, there's a lot of chemical analogues with LSD, for example, I've heard of one 1-P LSD, or like something LAD, they're just different chemical versions of it. So, if you've used things like that, you can drop those in the psychedelic box in terms of your experiences of using the drugs that some people, because of overlapping types of subjective experiences can happen with them. Some people can put say, Cannabis, MDMA, ketamine, and salvia inside of the psychedelic box and So, just for the purposes of this interview, I'm trying, I would like you to exclude your experiences using those and when you think about, say, why you're using the drugs, what the effects are, and things like that. So, just, yeah, whichever way you'd like to remember it, either what you include or what you exclude. So, the exclude is no cannabis, no MDMA, no ketamine, and no salvia, and the include is psychedelics. So, does that, does that make sense?

**Participant** 02:41

Yes.

**Q1. Interviewer** 02:42

Cool. All right. So, I'm going to, during the interview, as well, I'll be writing down notes and that's just to help me keep track of what we've talked about and then if you mentioned things I might be like, Oh, I think I we talked about something similar to this and that way, it just can prompt me. So, if I'm not if I'm just looking down writing, I am, I'm listening to you at the same time. So, the first question is, why do you use psychedelics?

**Participant** 03:14

Well, it started out for fun, but it turned into something that's more as a philosophical or, like spiritual use of it. You want me to go into more detail?

**Interviewer** 03:33

Sure.

**Participant** 03:34

Okay. So, I really feel like it helps me with my relations to other people on a personal level and it helped me put into perspective, my position in the world, other people's position in the world and how I actually affect the people in my life and so, for me, that's kind of the main reason that I'm using it, these days. To a certain extent, I do still use it for entertainment sort of purposes, was definitely like a mix of trying to understand myself better. Try and have a little fun. There's

**Interviewer** 04:41

Nothing wrong with having fun.

**Participant** 04:47

And in my experience, that's kind of one of the things that that I learn to do better after taking psychedelics is having fun and allowing myself to have fun.

**Interviewer** 05:00

Can you speak to that a little bit more? What do you mean by allowing yourself to have more fun?

**Participant** 05:07

Well I really feel like when I'm on the substance, when it's affecting me that it's so, much easier to let go of my perceptions of like how other people are viewing me, and just kind of fall into a mode of being in the moment and really enjoying myself rather than trying to like, kind of keep things keep my ego, basically. If people like think I'm weird, or if people don't understand why I'm doing the things that I do enjoy.

**Interviewer** 05:49

Are you using psychedelics around people, normally, or often? Or is it more of a solo experience?

**Participant** 06:03

Pretty much It's like 75% solo, I do use them with my friends sometimes and I used it once with my sister but in all those situations, everybody was using it.

**Interviewer** 06:30

I had a look at the online questionnaire you filled out, do know, you said you used around one to five times, is that accurate or have you used it, maybe, do you know the sort of the number of times of used?

**Participant** 06:48

That was accurate at the time since taking that I've used it two more times?

**Interviewer** 06:52

Okay, So, what do you know, the exact amount of times you've used it So, far, or a rough number?

**Participant** 06:59

Seven

**Q3. Interviewer** 07:00

Seven, okay. How did you first start using psychedelics?

**Participant** 07:29

Oh, well, my friend, got in contact with someone who had some and he asked me if I would want to do it with him and prior to that, I had done my research, and I knew that it was something that I wanted to try sometime in my life and it was kind of like the stars aligned and I was in a good place at the time. So, I thought, you know, let's do it. Tick it off the bucket list.

**Interviewer** 08:09

And would you say, now that you've done it, the bucket list is ticked? Or are you? Cause you mentioned before you sort of originally tried it for fun, and now it's evolved into a spiritual, philosophical, maybe self-introspection, sort of aspect. Has the interest in using them grown deeper since using them? Or is it similar to when you first started? Has it evolved? Like I wonder. Yeah, because doing it once, you can tick it off the bucket list, but sometimes it's like, well, now I want to do it more and more and more.

**Participant** 08:52

Yeah. After the first time, I kind of wanted to do more to see how the different times compared to each other and actually, the last month or so, the interest in doing it has been waning for me. I can't really put a reason to it, just it's almost like I understand it now and I don't really need to use it anymore, but that doesn't mean that I won't.

**Interviewer** 09:25

Yeah, that makes sense. So, maybe less of a need, like say a need, or to do.

**Participant** 09:37

Yeah, it's almost like I can go back for a reminder of what I learned.

**Interviewer** 09:46

Do you know what got you interested in psychedelics originally?

**Participant** 09:56

I can't really say why but I can say that, all my life, even before I use drugs, I've kind of had that sort of like, spacey psychedelic mindset about almost everything. I've always been into, like that type of music. Meditation. Just introspection in general, I've always been like a very, like inward facing person, and just something about the mind space really speaks to me, and I feel comfortable there.

**Interviewer** 10:43

Do you? This is sort of a new question that comes to me, but in terms of your parents, or people around you, not let's say not the friend group, but adults or your family? Are they do you know, if they have also, used psychedelics? Is that something that's been talked about in your family at all?

**Participant** 11:04

No, I would be very doubtful if they have. I do know that my mother's side of the family is heavily to into drug use, and so, my mum is, like, turned completely away from that. So, she's pretty much against all that and I believe my father has done like cannabis in the past, but I don't know about his psychedelic use and it's not something that is openly talked about.

**Q4. Interviewer** 11:45

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

**Participant** 11:53

The pieces that I think are the most meaningful to me personally, are the synaesthesia type aspects to it, where it's almost like, you can experience two senses at the same time, two or more senses at the same time and it's almost like it's, it's putting something into your brain that combines the two and forms like a new memory with that, if that makes sense and then later, when you're sobered up, you can recall those moments and bring it like it kind of into your daily life. So, one concrete example is, with music, whenever I'm on a psychedelic, I can, like close my eyes while listening to music and like actually see what the music is doing in my head, like, see a sound as an object almost and it's, it's hard to say that that's meaningful, and how to communicate it, of why it's meaningful. It's almost like it's helping me understand myself better. Like the way that I think and then, as I was saying earlier, how it kind of puts into perspective how you affect other individuals in your life, that's been very meaningful to me as well and once again, it's something that you can take outside of the experience and remember and use it in your daily life and it also, kind of puts into perspective how trivial a lot of my problems really are and So, when I, when those problems come up again in the future, they don't impact me as much.

**Interviewer** 14:26

Is there anything else?

**Participant** 14:28

I think it's been really useful also, I think I mentioned this earlier as well, like letting go of my feelings about other people's perceptions of me and I realised that can be sort of contradictory to what I said about like, how, how I impact people and how I sit in the world and stuff but it's, it's sort of its two aspects. They're different things to me.

**Interviewer** 15:10

One, just thinking about it one could be like, out from you to them and the another one is their perception of you.

**Participant** 15:22

Certainly. Yeah, I think that's a good way of putting it.

**Interviewer** 15:31

What aspects? Before we move on, is there anything else you'd like to add to that? Or is that good?

**Participant** 15:37

That's ok.

**Q5. Interviewer** 15:38

Okay, So, what aspects of psychedelics do you find most challenging or difficult?

**Participant** 15:44

Hmm, well, I think the physical sensations are probably the most difficult part of it. Usually, like 30 minutes to an hour after taking it I’ll feel very nauseous and almost like I'm going to be sick. Like, I wish that I didn't take it. Like, I don't want to be having this experience right now but there's always some kind of hump and once you get over that hump, it's all fine but yeah, definitely, it's, it's physical. I don't usually get to like a bad mental space. Say usually I don't think I've ever been to a bad mental headspace.

**Interviewer** 16:38

Have you had any, if we wouldn't, let's say not bad or negative in sort of, in that sense, but in terms of difficult or challenging periods, beyond the early stages and feeling the physical sensations of nausea. Have you had any, you know, internal experiences, the sort of, you know, that the psychedelic world, let's say, of the internal stuff, has any of that ever been challenging or difficult coming across things that.

**Participant** 17:16

In the sense of like, it's hard to understand what's happening to me or understanding what I'm seeing where the things that I'm seeing are coming from. So, it's like wrapping my head around the experience that I think that's challenging. It's also, kind of what draws me back, to keep trying to keep trying to understand the themes that come up in successive experiences. As far as like, negative imagery, I have seen that in psychedelic visuals, like twisted faces, skulls, things like that, but every time during the experience, it's not really impactful. It's just kind of like, Oh, that's interesting. I wonder why I'm seeing that.

**Interviewer** 18:40

You mentioned just before, this idea of coming back to develop a better understanding of the themes that emerged during your psychedelic experiences. Do you have any understanding at the moment or sense of what those themes are, that are coming up for you?

**Participant** 19:03

Sure. If I could put it in one word, it would be primal. Yeah, it really gets me into like an almost like natural mindset of feeling almost like an animal or like a monkey, very emotional, feelings are magnified. It almost feels like tribal in a way like I want to, like be with my people who are part of my tribe that relates back to the interpersonal relationship, themes and definitely, sort of like spiritual themes. Although I wouldn't say that my experiences are like, spiritual is almost pseudo spiritual where I feel like I'm like, closer to some kind of energy or collective consciousness or something like that

**Interviewer** 20:26

collective consciousness and you said something energy?

**Participant** 20:31

Yeah, I mean, that's like a kind of a dumb word to describe it, but I don't have a word to describe it. Just like, it almost feels like there's a presence or something's watching you, or something is like, laying out the experience for you. Some entity that's outside of yourself.

**Interviewer** 21:01

And these, this feeling of presence, laying out the experience, this is common during your, your trips?

**Participant** 21:10

Yeah, for sure. I've had moments where I told myself like, oh, something wanted me to see that.

**Interviewer** 21:47

And in those moments, where you felt as if some, I don't know, if you would say an external thing, but a presence wanted you to see certain things or experienced certain things is there a. Can you glean any sort of underlying reason as to why they want you to see this or that wants to be seen?

**Participant** 22:16

It's almost like I say they like I know what it is.

**Interviewer** 22:21

Who knows?

**Participant** 22:22

Like, it thinks that I need that right now. Or that for whatever reason, maybe I don't understand what I'm seeing, but I do need to see it, or feel it or think it and it always feels benevolent. Like it's trying to help me.

**Q6. Interviewer** 23:07

Okay, So, I'm going to start with a broad question and then depending on how you answer, I have a few sort of follow up ones, just to get at some of the key pieces that are of the focus of my one. So, it starts a little bit broad. So, in what ways have psychedelics affected your life?

**Participant** 23:29

That is a broad question. Yeah. It in a lot of ways, it's hard to say for sure because, I mean, we talked about this before the interview, but they're when you're not in a controlled environment, and like you have all these other variables, like sort of oppressing you from all sides and aspects of your life. So, it's hard to tell like how much any one thing is really influencing you but I would say if I had to put like a emotion to it, I would say that it's been a very positive impact on my life and I feel like I understand myself, the world and society a lot better

**Interviewer** 24:08

What do you mean by the world?

**Participant** 24:36

like the natural world, like even down to like the mathematics of it or like the physics of it, just like understanding just like angle over pose or just like mathematical concepts like that. Just seem to have So, much more weight to them when you're in a psychedelic state.

**Q6a. Interviewer** 25:08

Yep, I know that feeling. Okay. So, one of the questions is, has your personality or identity been shaped by your psychedelic use?

**Participant** 25:34

I think so. Yes.

**Interviewer** 25:38

Yeah, can you please? That is a kind of closed ended question because it's hard to word it but it's, it's offering an opportunity to elaborate on it for sure. Each of the questions.

**Participant** 25:50

Okay, was kind of harking back to previous things that I've said, it's changed my personality in the sense of how I carry myself and how I let other people affect me and how I try to project myself into the world.

**Interviewer** 26:37

Is there, this this change in how you carry yourself, project yourself and let others affect you. Is there a way that you can conceptualise that or does it have a particular direction of change or is it too I don't know loose to be able to describe kind of what pre and post psychedelic [name] would kind of how he would react, how he would be as a person?

**Participant** 27:13

Sure, it's a lot about my letting go of people's perceptions of me, I mean, the best way that I can put it is like to not care what other people think anymore. When, when I when it sits, right with me personally, that's all that really matters. Post psychedelics, pre psychedelics, I was all hung up on that, and like always constantly worrying about, like, even in the grocery store, or something, like someone's looking at the thing that I'm buying, and like judging me for it and post, it's like, I don't even care anymore. If they think that I'm unhealthy, then that's on them. I know, I'm a healthy person or I know, maybe then I'm not healthy, and I need to work on it, or whatever but it's not their place to, to come in here and judge a stranger.

**Interviewer** 28:11

So, in some sense, it's almost in those situations, you don't even necessarily know if people are judging you. So, it's a perception of what people might be judging you of.

**Participant** 28:27

Yeah and it's all like, down to insecurities about myself.

**Interviewer** 28:37

That's interesting. So, would you say there's an increased level of self-security?

**Participant** 28:50

Yeah, for sure and a sense of identity.

**Interviewer** 29:13

How would you if you can, how would you describe your identity? Or, how would you? Yeah, I guess describe it.

**Participant** 29:24

I guess, in one word, I would say learner. I've always been that way. Like, I just want to find out about things that I've been really interested in, like composition of materials or like, objects, like what they're made of Like, just kind of understanding things like throughout.

**Interviewer** 29:51

Sounds like you make a good physicist.

**Participant** 29:54

Yeah, probably. Physics wasn't my best subject.

**Q6b. Interviewer** 30:04

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

**Participant** 30:13

I think they made me realise that I don't like my job.

**Interviewer** 30:18

Okay.

**Participant** 30:19

Not just the job the career that I'm in.

**Interviewer** 30:38

Can you speak to us a little bit more in terms of what you realised about it that you don't like, and how psychedelics brought you to that?

**Participant** 30:49

Sure, I think I, I realised that the hierarchical nature of like a corporation is just something that I really just don't like and that's one thing that I really don't like about my current job and I know that throughout my career, no matter what company I go to, I'm going to encounter that and I think the psychedelics have kind of showed me that, that way of orienting society is sort of, for me, personally, is not a good way, not a system that I want to be a part of, I guess.

**Interviewer** 31:29

Has that lead to any thoughts or plans to transition to something else?

**Participant** 31:40

Not plans, I'd say I'm in the early stages of figuring out what I want to do next.

**Q6c. Interviewer** 32:00

Have psychedelics caused you to seriously question your own beliefs?

**Participant** 32:06

Yeah. I was not into spirituality at all, I was very much a materialist before I was using them [psychedelics] and now, I don't know what I know, it really just kind of throws a monkey wrench into the machinery almost. Just stop turning it and now I don't know what to think.

**Interviewer** 32:50

Is there any other beliefs not necessarily as metaphysical, although, other ones also, perfectly fine to mention, but maybe more down to earth let's say that have shifted?

**Participant** 33:05

I seriously started questioning. I guess, like meat eating, like, meat.

**Interviewer** 33:16

Meat, oh okay?

**Participant** 33:19

Like I started considering maybe going vegetarian. I haven't acted on that, but definitely, it broke down the preconceived notions that I did have about the food system that I for the record, I am in the USA. Just the, the way that we get our food is, I think, problematic and after taking psychedelics, it really like clicked for me. Just in terms of the food system, but in in terms of, like capitalism, overall, I think like capitalism with a capital C is destructive. That was not a thought that I would entertain prior to use. Just how sort of propagandised everything is in capitalism, with advertising and stuff like that.

**Interviewer** 34:46

Any other beliefs, or even perspectives or viewpoints that have shifted because of your use.

**Participant** 34:56

The belief that that people are bad for being in their circumstances, or that like, like giving someone a moral judgement, because of the circumstances that they find themselves in. I used to be kind of mad about that, but ever since I use psychedelics, I really do feel like people who are like everyone is in a different stage in their, in their own story and whatever events happen in their life led them to where they are now, everybody has a unique way of perceiving the world and processing what they're perceiving and So, it kind of crushed that that eternal, like judginess that I carried around with me all the time.

**Interviewer** 36:04

Can you speak a little bit more to that? What was this, maybe you can give an example or two of like, this judginess in action, and what it has been replaced with?

**Participant** 36:19

Sure, I can give an example. I have a friend whose very sort of spacey, like, he'll go often his thoughts a lot and like, he's just very slow. Like, we're always waiting on him and I used to really bother me, and we would kind of like, give him crap over it, but now, my perspective on that is that like, that's just his way that he, like, that's just how his brain works and I shouldn't be annoyed by that. It's actually kind of beautiful that I can live my life this way. He can live his life that way and we can still be friends and we can share our experience with each other. Another example would be like a panhandler, I would kind of like look at them with disdain, but now it's like, well, I don't know, how they got there. I don't know what thoughts are going on in their mind, what makes them feel like they have to do this? I mean, I could give more examples, but I think you get the idea.

**Q6e. Interviewer** 37:46

You've definitely answered this one already. Has your psychedelic use affected your use of other drugs?

**Participant** 37:54

Yes, I used to be a very heavy cannabis smoker. Three or four times a day, on weekdays and weekends, like six to eight times and I didn't have like a specific, like challenging experience with that during a psychedelic trip or experience but just after the experience had worn off, and I was sober, I just for whatever reason, I didn't feel like I needed to use it. have actually completely cut it out of my life. Not cannabis, but smoking cannabis.

**Interviewer** 38:42

How do you consume it now?

**Participant** 38:45

Through like butter, cannabis, butter.

**Interviewer** 38:48

Okay and what? How often would you use cannabis now?

**Participant** 39:02

Just once daily,

**Interviewer** 39:04

Once daily, okay and has that being a positive, negative, neutral change in your life?

**Participant** 39:13

It has been immensely positive and that's kind of going back to like, it's hard to know which things are influencing me to change my personality or to make my life change direction. I mean, that that was a habit that I had for like, six years So, but it was definitely like egged on by my psychedelic use to make that change but the change has been immensely positive. I sort of used to feel like trapped by like, I couldn't go and do things that I wanted to do because I had to smoke first or because like I would be worried about what if I need a smoke and I can't get it? Because I'm in a public setting or something?

**Interviewer** 40:10

Would you? Do you do think you, we're dependent on your cannabis use?

**Participant** 40:19

Yeah 100%.

**Interviewer** 40:21

And now how would you describe your relationship with it?

**Participant** 40:26

I'd say I'm still dependent on it. Especially for sleep. I don't have cannabis in my system, and then I'm not sleeping very well.

**Interviewer** 40:37

Okay. So, So, was it? Is it, functional, your use in some sense? I'm just trying to get a thought sort of because we there's definitely evidence, you know, cannabis has a number of uses to help people who have chronic pain or sleep or with different health issues. Did you originally or during your sort of six years of use, was it for a certain purpose and then evolved and now it's maybe shifted back? I don't know. Like, what's How would that have?

**Participant** 41:19

Yeah, sure, I would say so. It, definitely, uh, when I first started using it heavily, it was for like intellectual purposes, I felt like it. It made me a better thinker. It helped me to do my homework when I was in school helped me to wrap my head around concepts and I and I really do still feel that way about it. I love to like to take some and just like read a book or read a Wikipedia or something like that and I feel like I can just like, understand and hold on to concepts much better and helps me with my conceptual thinking but definitely, for a time. For a long time. I was not using it that way. I was just using it to not feel bad. It's almost like to make the cannabis withdrawal go away.

**Interviewer** 42:18

And now is the main purpose or the only purpose for being able to sleep or do you also, still use it in other capacities as well?

**Participant** 42:32

Yeah, it's basically just a comfort thing. It's been in my life So, long that I kind of feel lost without it, I guess. People like to have their cup of coffee in the morning.

**Interviewer** 42:51

Oh, they do. Yeah. Any other drugs that have potentially been affected by your use? Or would that be the main one?

**Participant** 43:05

I think alcohol as well. I never really had a problem with alcohol on the same way as cannabis but since I've taken psychedelics like I have almost zero craving to ever drink alcohol. Even to the point where like, if I were to be offered it, I wouldn't take it.

**Interviewer** 43:39

Is that out of? You said you haven't you don't have a craving for it anymore? Is there a reason behind that? Or is it more just something like you just don't feel like you want it?

**Participant** 43:56

Very much. The latter is there wasn't like a moment or like an epiphany that I had it was just like, I just don't have the desire to.

**Q7. Interviewer** 44:19

Have your psychedelic experiences affected your relationship with significant others and if so, how have they been affected?

**Participant** 44:31

I'm going to say no because I don't have

**Interviewer** 44:34

Well, significant so, significant other can include a partner but also, siblings, parents, close friends, things like this. Like whatever relationships you consider significant in your life.

**Participant** 44:48

I would say that it's made me more distant from my family.

**Interviewer** 44:54

Okay?

**Participant** 44:56

Just because I feel like they will never understand my reasoning for using it and they won't like to hear that I even tried it. They won't listen in good faith about the way that has positively impacted me. Friends, it's a different story. I mean, all my friends kind of are in that world. So, I would say it doesn't really have an effect. I did share with you that I had done it once with my sister. I did really feel like that brought us really a lot closer together, sharing that experience with each other and how

**Interviewer** 45:49

Was your maybe pre and post? How was your relationship with your sister before that? And has it changed since that experience?

**Participant** 45:58

Yeah, I always have been really close with that sister. We just have sort of like a kindred spirit. Like we've always been in the same things, we have very great conversations with each other. Always just been kind of able to understand each other in a way that the rest of the family doesn't. So, I would say that pre and post was the same relationship it was just deepened, the connection.

**Interviewer** 46:37

Was that her first time using psychedelic with you?

**Participant** 46:41

Yes.

**Q8. Interviewer** 47:01

You've definitely spoken to this, but if something else comes up when I ask it, feel free to just drop it in but the question is, have psychedelics changed how you think and feel about yourself?

**Participant** 47:22

Trying to think if I have anything more to add? Na I think my earlier answers are good enough.

**Q9. Interviewer** 47:47

Coming at it from a different way is have psychedelics changed how you view yourself?

**Participant** 47:57

Yeah, I see myself much more as like, imperfect, but um, but it's like, now I'm okay with it and then I don't have to try so hard to be perfect person. This also, made me realise just how much that I'm influenced by my culture, and my upbringing.

**Interviewer** 48:47

Do you want to speak to that a bit more?

**Participant** 48:52

Just like the kind of things that we were discussing earlier, like growing up in a capitalist country. It's, you're just kind of steeped in it for your whole life and psychedelics give you an opportunity to kind of step outside of it almost like it dissolves these structures that are in our brain allows you to view it with like a fresh set of eyes almost.

**Interviewer** 49:39

And that experience of the dissolving of the structures that have been created through growing up in the particular culture that you have grown up in, or the society is that what led to these changes or in recognition of say, when you're talking about capitalism, seeing that it is destructive?

**Participant** 50:10

Mhmm.

**Interviewer** 50:11

And prior to that, was that something you had not considered or?

**Participant** 50:21

It was almost like I was hardened off to it because it's it was like part of me and I didn't want to accept that something that was so, internalised could be wrong and in a lot of ways, psychedelics have shown me that it's okay to be wrong about things and sometimes it's not my fault, even that, I think certain things because the whole societal, like structure that you're born into, just kind of like a plant growing, and you put support systems on it, and it grows in a certain way because of that.

**Q10. Interviewer** 51:18

Have psychedelics provided insights and how to live life well?

**Participant** 51:25

Yeah, the things that I've been talking about this whole time is like, trying to be a better person for the people in your life. Realising what you can do to better help people, how to not let like strangers, people that shouldn't have an influence on your mood and your feelings, not letting them have that impact. Things like that and also, just taking some time to like really enjoy life.

**Interviewer** 52:18

Is that last one, something that you struggled with before using psychedelics?

**Participant** 52:28

I'd say so. I was, I was very much like concerned about the future or the past, not like living in the present moment. So, I'd be thinking about that one thing that I did that was embarrassing or like, how am I going to do this tomorrow, or how am I going to do this in a month? How am I going to do this in a year and don't get me wrong, I still think about those things but it's a lot easier to recognise when I'm thinking about those things and to rationalise it and to bring myself out of that mode of thinking when it's not healthy.

**Interviewer** 53:13

Has there been a shift in your capacity to recognise when those thoughts are becoming unhealthy or unhelpful?

**Participant** 53:27

Yeah, I'd say so. It's just kind of. Yeah, I don't have anything else to add.

**Q11. Interviewer** 53:47

Well, we don't worry, we will tap out somewhere with like, like, we know something that's important but why do you know that? \*pfff\* Come on, man, the universe is a mystery, don't ask me these questions. You have spoken to this question I'm going to ask next. So, I'll say it and then maybe add a little bit to put it in a different direction. So, the question is, have psychedelics shaped your worldview? And you certainly have spoken to that aspect, but I wonder could you maybe describe what your if you if it's even possible, what your sort of worldview is at the moment, how you how you think and feel about the world, you know?

**Participant** 54:39

Sure. I see a lot of hate and division in the world, especially with like political happenings that have been going on recently and I think that is totally against what humanity should be. I think that we've come too far from our roots and we should go back, not completely because we have a lot of modern luxuries, because of the way that society is structured but we should try and get back to, like the root of our existence as people on the earth, try to be kind to each other. Make small communities of people that really know you and can be there for you have a support system, do good in the world and don't be So, judgmental and we should all be helping each other to become better people.

**Interviewer** 56:02

Maybe, I don't know if what you just said there is the description of what you mean by this, but when you see it getting to the root of our existence? Are you able to articulate what that is? Or what your feeling is? What that sort of means?

**Participant** 56:22

Yeah, I think we become very disconnected with our, our history. Where we came from as animals of the earth and how that shapes us genetically and I don't think a lot of people realise like, just how much of their behaviour patterns are influenced by very deep things in their brain that can't, not necessarily that they can't control but that are just like impulsive and recognising that they're, that it's impulsive, and taking those impulses and redirecting them, or thinking about them before just blindly reacting to them. That's kind of what I mean by that. It's like realise that it's that you are a meat sack.

**Interviewer** 57:27

We're meat sacks having a conversation.

**Participant** 57:33

And don't take yourself too seriously. A lot of people do.

**Q12. Interviewer** 58:02

Have psychedelics changed your relationship with nature?

**Participant** 58:14

I wouldn't say it's changed. It's more so, its affirmed the way that I feel about nature.

**Interviewer** 58:30

And what, what has it affirmed?

**Participant** 58:34

Basically, it's just the same thing that we were just talking about that. Like, where we fit in to nature somewhere, as mankind and we should be trying to, we should be kind of hard to put into words. Just to think that we've, we've lost our sense of nature, in a lot of ways of where we stay in nature. That's about all I got.

**Interviewer** 59:28

Has it changed or this affirmation, So, that was conceptual, let's say but is there any change in your behaviour towards nature in general, as an example, do you now engage in more going to the park or going out into natural environments or gardening or you know, I don't know like, rather than just how you feel towards it, but actually interactions with it?

**Participant** 59:59

No, but the just because like, I've already been into that kind of stuff before my use. So, I've always been like in hiking, gardening, taking care of plants, watching the seasons change. Just like watching some ants crawling on an anthill, just like examining things that, analysing nature but those are the types of things that I feel are affirmed by the experience. This is beneficial.

**Interviewer** 1:00:48

What about a, Is there any sense of a deepening connection or relationship to nature? Or is that you say, similar level as it was originally?

**Participant** 1:01:03

I'd say it's similar.

**Q13. Interviewer** 1:01:10

Okay, So, we're going to shift question focus for a couple ones. So, this one's looking at your use of psychedelics. So, we're just going to go into different aspects of how you use them, and all the things related to that. So, the first question in this line of inquiry is, how do you prepare yourself for a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:01:38

So, whenever I do, I like to take three days, one day before the experience one day of the experience and one day after the experience, the day before is spent. Not the whole day, just, it's sort of like reminding yourself throughout the day, why do I want to do it? What do I hope to gain out of it? What's my intention? And also, physical preparation, like the space, I like to clean. Usually, I do it indoors in my house. So, I like to clean, make sure everything's all tidy. Make sure that I don't have anything going on, no one's going to be trying to reach me in the next day, do some chores, you know, whatever I need to do to feel like I have a full day to myself for the next day and then the day after is for sort of reflecting on what happened the previous day. Trying to like isolate insights and lessons that I feel like I might have learned So, that I can help remember it and also, physically, I feel like I'm pretty beat usually the next day. So, I like having sort of just like a rest day to recover.

**Interviewer** 1:03:03

A physical exhaustion? Mental exhaustion? Both?

**Participant** 1:03:07

Both. I'd say it's more physical exhaustion. I get headaches a lot.

**Interviewer** 1:03:20

On the following day or during?

**Participant** 1:03:23

Not during but like the hours after the experience has ended.

**Interviewer** 1:03:34

Okay, just clarify. So, you have you get sort of headaches at the come down of the trip, but not the say the following day. That's just exhaustion but not headaches?

**Participant** 1:03:45

Correct.

**Interviewer** 1:03:47

Okay.

**Participant** 1:03:52

And the next day, I'll also, feel sort of, I don't know if dissociative is the right word, but it's almost like I'm not like fully back into my identity yet.

**Interviewer** 1:04:10

Yeah, I think that's probably a fair word to describe that sense. So, just I think I might have missed the first day. So, the first day is are you doing the cleaning and the intention setting on the day before or is that the day of?

**Participant** 1:04:31

That's the day before.

**Interviewer** 1:04:31

Okay. Now your, these intentions that you set is it similar across your uses so far? Like the reasons or the intentions you're setting, or do they change each time?

**Participant** 1:04:59

I'd say they usually change each time. A lot of is circumstantial. It's almost like, I'm using it as an oracle. It's like, I want an answer to a question.

**Interviewer** 1:05:12

If you jump one level up, let's say So, you're saying you use it as an oracle to answer questions, most the intentions that you're coming in with questions you want answers to or are there other things, you're also, an intention? Like, I would like to have a really pleasant experience, which is not exactly a question, but uh, you know, can still be an intention.

**Participant** 1:05:33

It's both. There's one thing, one question that I would like to get answered, and then one benefit that I want to get out of it.

**Interviewer** 1:06:19

Do you have a regular time that you start your psychedelic trips? Or is it vary?

**Participant** 1:06:27

11 o'clock.

**Interviewer** 1:06:28

11 o'clock phew that's specific? In the morning?

**Participant** 1:06:32

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:06:38

And for you, how long does the trips usually last for?

**Participant** 1:06:44

Well, it's sort of a hard question, because there's like, phases to the trip almost but I'd say that the whole thing lasts for like, six hours. The most intense part of it is only like an hour and a half to two hours.

**Interviewer** 1:07:08

After six hours a do you feel you've come, not necessarily baseline, but much closer?

**Participant** 1:07:17

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:07:18

Okay, and would you do? Would you travel anywhere? Would you do anything like tasks? Once you had in the after the trip or the day following? Or is these days set aside for you have no pressing things that you need to get done or do things

**Participant** 1:07:43

The day before I would allow myself to have some pressing things to be done and actually, I would prefer to get them out of the way so, that I'm not thinking about it during that experience and the day of I will stay in the same location the whole time. The day after, it just depends on how I feel but I never feel like I can't do like something.

**Q14. Interviewer** 1:08:10

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

**Participant** 1:08:23

I take them at my home because it's a comfortable and familiar place, it's filled with things that I am familiar with, and that I am arrangements that that I am used to just, I don't like being in like a jarring location on a psychedelic, because I feel like that it can influence you towards sort of like more of a negative headspace. Especially, like you're having some kind of heavy visual and it's mixing with the environment and you're not sure what you're seeing. If you're not familiar with the space, it can really trip you out.

**Interviewer** 1:09:07

Yeah, yeah, that makes sense. If new environments are more unpredictable, So, you've got to be a bit more self-conscious and aware of your safety, which is difficult when the world is melting around you.

**Participant** 1:09:23

And you might not necessarily want to deal with that.

**Interviewer** 1:09:28

For sure and you do you live by yourself. Are you living with other people? Like what's the get the whole house yourself in the backyard sort of set up? Or what's your sort of space

**Participant** 1:09:40

By myself so, usually I'm just doing it alone.

**Interviewer** 1:09:46

And is that as trying to imagine, so, is it like a whole house to yourself or an apartment?

**Participant** 1:09:54

A whole house.

**Interviewer** 1:09:55

And do you have access to nature sort of like a backyard sort of setup as well?

**Participant** 1:10:01

Yes, and actually, one thing that I've done twice was I, I took the psychedelic and went for a walk in nature as it was coming on. Sort of when it was getting to the peak of the experience, I wanted to be inside and away from other people.

**Interviewer** 1:10:22

So, you have what type of nature is that? Is that like a sort of park setup? Or like a hike trails? Sorry?

**Participant** 1:10:33

Open space and like hiking trail.

**Interviewer** 1:10:36

Okay and that's close to your home I imagine?

**Participant** 1:10:39

Yeah, it's like, 5 minutes away, So, I just have to walk through like, a quarter mile of neighbourhood streets and then I'm there.

**Interviewer** 1:10:51

And do you throughout your trip? Are you moving throughout your home? Or do you find you, you stay in a particular location for the majority of the trip? Or varies or, you know, fluctuates?

**Participant** 1:11:04

Usually, I'm up and about walking around a lot. I'll like, my trips are usually very heavy, like, I'm just lost in my thoughts, So, I like walk up to a window, and I just look out at the scenery and think to myself and enjoy the visuals. I like looking at different things to see like how, how the perception differs from sober versus psychedelic trip to seeing the same object in both states, and also, how the visuals change from trip to trip.

**Interviewer** 1:11:47

And go out into your backyard or outside or anything like that, during it, or do you stay mostly indoors?

**Participant** 1:11:53

Mostly indoors but I would say that's more of a function of the season. Especially on a psychedelic trip, I'm really sensitive to temperature changes, okay. I'll get really cold very easily and I start shivering, and I want to avoid that. So, lately, it's been really cold here because it's winter but there was one experience I had in the same house. During the summer, where I was out on my deck and just for hours and hours, just kind of like soaking up the sun doing the same thing. Just thinking about things thinking about my life thinking about the world.

**Interviewer** 1:12:38

Sounds nice.

**Participant** 1:12:40

Yeah.

**Q15. Interviewer** 1:12:48

Are there any items that are important to you. Oh sorry, are there any items that are important to have with you when tripping?

**Participant** 1:13:02

This guy right here. My smartphone.

**Interviewer** 1:13:07

And what do you use your smartphone? What's the utility of the smartphone when you're tripping?

**Participant** 1:13:14

Um, I view it as sort of like a lifeline. I, it's like, I just like having it around. I'm not necessarily using it. It's like, just in case, if I, I've tried turning it off and putting it away before and I'm always, like, constantly thinking about it, like, oh, what if someone needs me, or what if someone's trying to get a hold of me and they can't. So, I, I just, I need to have it on my person and I've also, had experiences where it felt like, it was sort of like, like my connection to the collective consciousness. It's, it's like, tendrils coming out from it into like, some cloud of consciousness and people can like pull on the strings to get a hold of me.

**Interviewer** 1:14:07

The Internet string, ta ting ta ting.

**Participant** 1:14:10

It's like, tapping in to like this macro organism of some kind.

**Interviewer** 1:14:27

As you were saying, you keep the phone around in case people need to contact you. Is it also, you keep it around in case you need to contact other people?

**Participant** 1:14:40

I'd say not so, much. I probably wouldn't want to talk to anybody if they didn't know that I was tripping already.

**Interviewer** 1:14:56

And are there any other objects or items or things that are important for you to have around when you're tripping.

**Participant** 1:15:08

Not an object per se, but I do feel like music is a requirement. Some kind of music playing at some point during the trip Not, not necessarily the whole time, just like for whatever reason, I feel like music is just so, much more impactful, and emotional in that state. So, I like to, to indulge that.

**Interviewer** 1:15:36

You have a, do you pre select music before you get into it or is it something maybe, yeah, I don't know, what's, what's your process around that?

**Participant** 1:15:48

I have tried pre selecting before and I always found that, during the experience, I didn't want to listen to the stuff that I had pre-selected. In my most recent trips, usually, like a song will come into my mind and I go, I want to listen to that song. During the experience, So, I don't really prepare it anymore.

**Interviewer** 1:16:18

Do you? More on that, I guess is are you exposing yourself to music new music during this? Or is it only familiar music and within the scope of that?

**Participant** 1:16:31

Yeah, it's definitely familiar music. Things that I wouldn't say that there's like a certain genre or type of song or something like that I would try and stay away from or try and like gravitate towards. Like I said, a lot of times, it's just the song that I know already pops into my head and then I go in and look for it. I also, have like, streaming music streaming apps. So, I'll just open it up and like whatever I'm drawn to, I'll go to that.

**Interviewer** 1:17:13

And in terms of when you're listening to music, is it don't if you know yourself, but are there particular phases of the trip where music is a prominent thing that you want? And then other times where you want to no music? Or is that just variable?

**Participant** 1:17:33

I'd say it's variable. It's not like, consistently, like, at the one hour mark, I want to, but it's just sort of it if there's a certain phase, or a certain it's almost like you're going through a journey and when you see this part of the journey, you know it's time.

**Interviewer** 1:17:56

And that that changes between trips, but there is a phase during each kind of trip where you would want music? And it's just you recognise it in the moment, I guess rather than knowing beforehand, at the 35-minute mark is music time.

**Participant** 1:18:13

Yeah.

**Q16. Interviewer** 1:18:14

Okay. Yeah, how do you prepare the space where you take psychedelics?

**Participant** 1:18:36

Basically, just cleaning is all that I do to prepare. I don't take pictures down or anything like that. I just like surfaces and clutter cleared away.

**Interviewer** 1:18:51

Have you ever not cleaned your space before tripping?

**Participant** 1:18:57

No. Yeah, I'm not sure what the impact of that would be. I suspect it would make the trip just overall to be less enjoyable.

**Interviewer** 1:19:17

Is there any Is there any other things like do you other than cleaning? Do you do you rearrange objects and the places that you're using?

**Participant** 1:19:30

No.

**Q17. Interviewer** 1:19:31

Okay. Are there any other preparations you make prior to taking a psychedelic we might not have covered?

**Participant** 1:19:50

Not that I can think of.

**Q18. Interviewer** 1:19:59

So, what are you normally doing physically, during a psychedelic trip?

**Participant** 1:20:08

Typically, I'm standing, walking around, or laying on my bed.

**Interviewer** 1:20:19

So, we're so, typically, most of the time you're up and about, let's say, and so, and other times you're on the bed, I guess maybe on the couch or things like this as well in the chair, things like that? In terms of the space, you prepare, do you ever do you make it dark? Do you change the lighting situation at all?

**Participant** 1:20:54

No.

**Interviewer** 1:20:55

No? Okay, So, common in the psilocybin trials for example, people use blindfolds is that you use anything like this?

**Participant** 1:21:09

No, but I do play around with like this [covers eyes in various ways] to just kind of see the visuals.

**Interviewer** 1:21:24

Have you ever taken psychedelics during the night or during a time where it's dark?

**Participant** 1:21:31

No.

**Q19. Interviewer** 1:21:38

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

**Participant** 1:21:44

Certainly. Definitely a lot of media I would avoid. Like certain movies like I never watched like a scary movie or something like that. Even like a pleasant movie can start looking really weird. If you're not ready for it. I would never, go and drive a car or like operate heavy machinery. I try to like to avoid anything work related. I just want it to be out of my mind. I would never do like heavy physical activity. Certain social medias I think I'd stay away from like, say Facebook I think that would be kind of hard to look at in certain states, or like other media like news probably wouldn't want to look at it.

**Interviewer** 1:23:06

What about people?

**Participant** 1:23:12

I feel like I'm more friendly towards strangers. Like on my walks that I take that I've taken before I've always felt like more friendly towards people but during the really, like heavy parts of it, the peaks I probably wouldn't want to interact with people I don't know, certainly and like I said earlier, people that don't know that I'm on it, I don't want them to like question my sanity or something like that but I tend to, to view like individuals as like, very interesting when I'm on psychedelics, like, just the different the broad spectrum of like, how different people and personalities manifest themselves. So, I enjoy looking at certain types of social media, like more of the anonymous kinds.

**Interviewer** 1:24:27

Can you, what do you mean by that? The anonymous kinds.

**Participant** 1:24:30

I'm still like a forum, like a message board, or like, I guess it's not really anonymous, but YouTube. Anonymous in the sense like I don't actually know that people. Tick tock, it's a good one.

**Interviewer** 1:24:55

So, these for, for example, YouTube and tick tock. These are things that you might or have interacted with when on a psychedelic? And then not as, let's say problematic as interacting with Facebook or news sources?

**Participant** 1:25:16

Yeah, for sure.

**Interviewer** 1:25:19

And is that something you commonly do during a trip is go on, I guess with forums, I'm imagining like a drug related forum, probably psychedelics but who knows? But also, YouTube and tick tock, is this something that you might do commonly or is it rare? Like, how would you describe it.

**Participant** 1:25:42

The drug type forums, usually, I don't ever go on them. Actually, I don't think I ever have gone on them during a trip. Usually I like to go like after to see to read like what other people have been saying about their experiences but definitely Tick Tock is one that I go on a lot when I'm tripping

**Interviewer** 1:26:10

Is there any particular content on days that you like watching?

**Participant** 1:26:16

Yeah, I like the, like, human interaction type things. So, like, if someone is doing a good deed for somebody, or someone is taking care of a stray pet, or those type of, like, wholesome sort of content, or even just seeing people expressing themselves is really entertaining and sort of heart-warming. To feel like, the breadth of experience that's out there.

**Q20. Interviewer** 1:27:14

Is there anything special you do after a psychedelic trip? So, this would be you can maybe consider this near the end of the at the come down point where you feel kind of you're mostly back to baseline, and until maybe you go to sleep, lets say.

**Participant** 1:27:35

Sure. Usually, it's the I take a lot of time on the preparation day to think about the meal that I want, when I'm done and I will fast through the entire day of the trip and once my appetite comes back, then I'll have a meal and it's usually like the best meal I've ever had. Where it feels like in the moment and usually it's something like not to gluttonous, it's just like fruit or like some cheese and crackers or something like that but it feels really special.

**Interviewer** 1:28:30

Is the meal prepared. So, you can just get it out of the fridge, for example, or do you make it after?

**Participant** 1:28:38

I like to make it after, but usually it's something so, simple is just basically like taking the ingredients out of the fridge or you know.

**Q21. Interviewer** 1:29:17

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

**Participant** 1:29:24

Yeah. It's just getting up and changing the surroundings. So, I've had some moments where I just started feeling sort of uncomfortable, like a in an intangible way, just like you're not sure what's making you feel bad. It's not like a certain thought. Maybe it's just your surroundings are getting too overwhelming when there's too much stimulus or something and just standing up, walking into a different room, maybe going outside can really sort of like serve as a reset almost.

**Interviewer** 1:30:04

Anything else you can think of?

**Participant** 1:30:08

If it has to do with media, then just turn it off or change it to something else. Sometimes a song can do that.

**Interviewer** 1:30:40

It's interesting to think on that point in the clinical trial stuff that I don't imagine that's much of an option. Like, hey, you just got to be comfortable here. So

**Participant** 1:30:55

Maybe it's sort of to encourage the subjects to confront those difficult situations,

**Interviewer** 1:31:03

As well, that's potentially too much freedom allows you to opt out of facing some issues that you need to, let's say, or would be positive to do so.

**Participant** 1:31:19

I Identify with that I mean, there's been times where thoughts that I didn't want to think about at that time, were just kind of brushed away by doing one of those techniques.

**Q22. Interviewer** 1:31:41

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

**Participant** 1:31:55

Probably the biggest one that I do is to kind of retrace my steps. So, like, in my head, I'll start from the beginning, like where I took it, and how the whole thing unfolded and a lot of times, like I can glean things that I had forgotten by doing that.

**Interviewer** 1:32:16

You mean, physically going to where you started then moving around or in your head?

**Participant** 1:32:23

Just in my head.

**Interviewer** 1:32:27

So, just to clarify by here, retracing your steps, you mean, sort of metaphorically going through the experience?

**Participant** 1:32:35

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:32:35

Okay. Could have been the physical one because that's, you know, maybe putting yourself in the place as well. So, do you have any sort of journaling or record of your experiences? Do you write them down to your into your insights you have or thoughts that come up?

**Participant** 1:33:11

No.

**Interviewer** 1:33:12

So, okay.

**Participant** 1:33:20

I have attempted to do that before, but I always feel like it's like, useless for some reason. I just find it too difficult to write it down to words.

**Interviewer** 1:33:39

Yeah, well, yeah. makes sense to me. What about talking with other people do you? Would you consider later the day after, for example, talking to someone about your, the experience you had or is it mostly just a self-reflection thing?

**Participant** 1:34:05

I love talking to other people. Especially if it's like a shared experience. I love bouncing off like what are you seeing right now? This is what I'm seeing or not necessarily seeing but feeling and thinking. I had a bizarre experience, the one that I did with my sister where I felt as if the conversation we were having was sort of like playing on each other and it was like we're doing this and like, like, there are two head spaces were like, coming together and then making something new and influencing the trip, and even like the visuals of the trip.

**Interviewer** 1:34:57

What about afterwards and these shared experiences, would you discuss it later on when you're in a more sober state as well or is it mostly during?

**Participant** 1:35:08

I'd say mostly during the one with my sister, she went and wrote like, a whole book about it. So, the next time we hung out, we she took, she brought that and we kind of just like, went down the list and it, it helps to remind me of some stuff as she was going through it was like Oh, yeah, that was when this happened to me because I made the connection, where she had mentioned that during the experience, like, Oh, I'm seeing this right now and So, that part was like lodged in my brain but the thing that I was experiencing when she said that, and maybe I lost it, but then when she was reliving the experience with me, then it like dislodged itself.

**Q23. Interviewer** 1:36:30

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

**Participant** 1:36:39

Yes, the biggest one, I would say is, my mood stability is much more stable in only really like two or three days afterwards, but I'll notice that things which usually are irritating, aren't irritating anymore or I'll start looking at people differently. Like, not being So, annoyed at them.

**Interviewer** 1:37:29

You spoke earlier to this idea of a reduction in sort of judginess towards others and you said there was, I believe, you spoke to this idea of having just overall feeling less judgmental of other people. So, do you find how I'm thinking about is you just described, you look at people differently. To me, that fits in with the idea of, it's not only this, but like, probably one aspect would be judging people less in that sense. Is there an increase above this new baseline? So, pre psychedelic use, you had a sort of higher judginess now, after multiple uses, it's lower than it was before but even when you use a psychedelics, that's even shifted from that baseline. Now, it sort of returns to this more accepting baseline, but which isn't the same as it was prior but it? Does that make sense?

**Participant** 1:38:39

If there's like a trend line going up this way, and it bounces back and forth. Now it's maybe down here. Sorry, if it's not picking up. It's up here and it's bouncing and but now, it's down here, but it's still bouncing.

**Interviewer** 1:38:53

Yeah. Okay, that makes sense and the mood would the mood change from this to maybe like a lower amplitude shift or is it just a flat increase in enjoyment, but, uh, the same in terms of fluctuations?

**Participant** 1:39:15

It's the first one. Okay.

**Interviewer** 1:39:23

And that was for about three days afterwards. I think you said?

**Participant** 1:39:26

Yeah.

**Q24. Interviewer** 1:39:39

Has how you use psychedelics changed over time?

**Participant** 1:39:48

No. I suspect that it will, but I haven't been using them for very long, only a couple of years.

**Q25. Interviewer** 1:40:10

What do you think, Is the core psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 1:40:15

That's hard.

**Interviewer** 1:40:19

For you, So, it doesn't, not necessarily for people, but for you.

**Participant** 1:40:31

It's about pruning and nurturing the thoughts that arise in your head, choosing to go on a thought train or to leave it at the station.

**Interviewer** 1:41:08

Can you elaborate on that?

**Participant** 1:41:15

Sure. I feel like it, it puts you in a space where you can really view your thoughts as sort of external to who you are, and what makes you. Your thoughts aren't necessarily a moral judgement on who you are as a person they're just like things that pop up out of the ether and you can choose to entertain that thought or not entertain that thought but it doesn't mean really anything about you. What matters is the ones that you choose to entertain and like fixate on.

**Interviewer** 1:42:31

Do you think that it's that experience of the pruning and the nurturing the following of certain thought patterns and not of others. Has that changed the, pattern is probably not the right word, but it's the closest one that comes to mind. The sorts of thoughts that repeatedly come up over time.

**Participant** 1:43:03

Yeah, I think so. If like, you routinely, shove away a thought as it rises, like it'll cut, it'll start coming up less and less and less until like, you just don't really think about it anymore.

**Interviewer** 1:43:21

And has that been. Have you had thoughts or Yeah, that you've essentially decided to no longer think about for particular reasons and that's the gone now or much less prominent?

**Participant** 1:43:44

Um, I wouldn't say like this specific thought is more like motifs. A judgmental thing that we're talking about. Like if I find myself judging someone, it’s a lot easier to throw away that thought pattern.

**Interviewer** 1:44:09

I guess that might be related to that idea of letting go.

**Participant** 1:44:12

I think so. Yeah. It also, makes it easier to recognise when you're when you enter that thought pattern without noticing it.

**Q26. Interviewer** 1:45:20

Can you describe your most challenging or negative psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 1:45:37

No, I really can't say that I've had a negative experience but the challenging aspects of it, as I think I explained earlier is like just understanding what's happening. Especially when it comes to the visuals, like the some of the visuals are things that I would have never imagined that I could come up with myself or that could be like, in my brain somewhere. So, in that way, it's, it's difficult to find the right word, but it's like, it's difficult to accept that I'm seeing what I'm seeing.

**Interviewer** 1:46:48

So, in that sense, then, in terms of a trip that you've had that was difficult to understand or accept, what was you're seeing or feeling? Can you describe maybe what a prominent experience that comes to mind that falls within that sort of category or description?

**Participant** 1:47:11

Sure, I can try.

**Interviewer** 1:47:13

It's all I ask.

**Participant** 1:47:17

So, I've had the same thing on different experiences, but this one was the one it was the most vivid of seeing sort of like a, on a wall, a rectangular canvas, almost of visuals, and it's sort of like a stained glass window, it's the best way that I can, that I can explain it. It's like, a bunch of like, geometric shapes and in each of them is like a window and I'm seeing like almost a scene, or a memory or, or, like a face or just different aspects of life, or of things that I've experienced maybe and there and at the same time, this whole canvas is like, the shapes within are like rotating, not necessarily just rotating, like in a uniform way. They're just like shifting, and some of them are like moving up, some of them are moving this way and sometimes they're getting bigger, or sometimes they're getting smaller. I'll see like faces of people that I don't know. Like, really twisted faces, like, people look like they're in agony or something. Sometimes I'll see myself in there, in like, different emotional states, like I'll see maybe like, this part of my mouth, like smiling and laughing and I know that it's me, like I can recognise myself. It's just like, baffling in a way. Like, why? Why does this drug do this to me? Also, see, not necessarily things from real life, but just patterns. Like a, almost like mandala like patterns of like a very intricate geometries, doing like, things that you just can't put into words, colours and shapes, and it almost looks 3d and it's like spinning in on itself, sort of like those optical illusions or impossible shapes that you see, like four dimensional objects. I see a lot of almost like, Eastern imagery. Like Eastern spiritual imagery is sort of like henna tattoos or

**Interviewer** 1:49:45

What tattoos. Sorry,

**Participant** 1:49:47

Henna.

**Interviewer** 1:49:48

Hannah?

**Participant** 1:49:49

H E N N A it's a like Indian.

**Interviewer** 1:49:54

Henna, Oh, yes.

**Participant** 1:49:59

But I'll see things that are reminiscent of that and I'm definitely not like, into that stuff. It's kind of bizarre that it so, prominent.

**Interviewer** 1:50:16

This this vivid experience or the you've had on a few trips, I think you say, but we're describing it from one particular vivid experience. Is this eyes open? Or eyes closed?

**Participant** 1:50:28

Open.

**Interviewer** 1:50:29

Open. So, you're looking, are you looking? Is this canvas type thing projected on a wall, for example, or is it sort of just floating in your visual space?

**Participant** 1:50:41

It looks like it's like, projected onto the wall but in in certain moments, it looks like it's 3d, or it's like almost like a gaseous thing, like smoke or steam or something

**Interviewer** 1:50:55

Ah yes, and you were saying, When looking at this, inside of the intricate geometries, and they're morphing and changing shapes, you see potential like scenes of yourself or I don't think you said landscapes but scene to me as sort of, you know, like a place maybe is that is that experience of seeing those things, similar in the sense of how you see the world at the moment, like is it like, How to say, the world in which we see it now has maybe some pretty familiar objects and ways of being that are similar to and we're familiar with, is that projected inside of those spaces, or even the scene itself a highly geometric changing experience?

**Participant** 1:51:56

Inside the scenes are pretty much something that you would see in real life, it's not like contorted or geometric or anything, the only thing out of faces like it looks like maybe like, like they're like stretching downwards, or, like really long teeth that are like getting longer or something like that.

**Interviewer** 1:52:27

Have you come to any sense or theories or ideas as to what's going on in those moments; not necessarily, you know, like, physiologically, but the meaning of those experiences?

**Participant** 1:52:43

Sure. The meaning to me is that this is like, personally, I call it the tapestry of life, it's like, everything that is in could and was, is in there somewhere and it's like a soup or like a highly faceted gem that's like constantly moving and morphing and changing and like you're just seeing different facets of it. Almost like you're seeing into other people's lives. Or maybe you're seeing into, like your genetic code. I don't know, just that's the sense I get from it.

**Interviewer** 1:53:21

Is there a sense in which these things that you're seeing real or have occurred at some point, or will occur? And is there also, So, that's maybe one side to it, is some of them, also, fantastical and almost like a like you're watching a movie necessarily, like it's a it's a pretend it's been, it's playing but it's not, you know, like, if you watch a superhero movie, it's like, well, that's not real in a sense that you can still see it and you can still imagine that but it's not necessarily going to happen, or has happened.

**Participant** 1:54:08

Everything that I have seen within those windows is like realistic something that's possible.

**Interviewer** 1:54:13

Ok and what's going on, emotionally, during when you're watching these things,

**Participant** 1:54:28

It's pretty flat, actually, which is surprising to me is like I should be much more emotionally moved by these things, but it's not affecting me that way. It's just like confounding, that's the only emotion really that I'm having is being baffled.

**Interviewer** 1:54:55

And if you if you're, do you need to hold your gaze still to watch this or can you look away and look back, and it will be in the same location. Or if you look away as projected onto a new wall, for example,

**Participant** 1:55:08

It stays there. So, I can look at a different wall and see, like, more of the same thing but it's a different, like piece of it almost like magnificent artwork all over the walls and I can like, look at this wall and get a different aspect of it and look at this wall and get another aspect of it and definitely, there's like a continuity. So, if I look away, and then look back, it's the same thing as before.

**Interviewer** 1:55:40

Okay, that's interesting and how vivid would you describe this? So, if, if we said real life, during the day, let's say you've got some light going on. That's 100% vividness like, objects seem solid there. You can see them in clarity. Is there a sense in which, you know, maybe, for example, transparency is something you can think about when talking about objects. So, is that yeah, how would you describe the vividness of this?

**Participant** 1:56:40

Yeah, I'd say it's like 50% to 66%, like between a half and two thirds of like, something that would be real. Definitely has that transparent look to it, where it's almost like a hologram.

**Q27. Interviewer** 1:57:17

Ah, can you describe your most memorable life changing psychedelic experience?

**Participant** 1:57:29

Sure. There was a certain phase to a trip that I was having where this was the one I was talking about before in the summer that I did.

**Interviewer** 1:57:43

Could you quickly just refresh me on that the summer one.

**Participant** 1:57:49

The only important part was that it was happening during the summer.

**Interviewer** 1:57:52

Okay, all right.

**Participant** 1:57:54

I was able to go outside and enjoy the weather and I just had, like, the best way I can describe it is like a one on one experience with the sun. Where the sun was like, pouring all of its energy into me and like, nourishing me with it with the sunlight and heat and like, I just felt this like pure bliss and joy, like, right, right here in my chest. For like, 30 minutes, even after I had gotten back inside, this feeling was still there and just kind of gradually went away over time and that was kind of the most spiritual thing that I had. I really felt as if like, there was some spirit that was like having a one on one with me and it was just like, embodying the sun in that moment. After coming inside, like I just had, like, a sense of like, pure beauty. That just made me start like crying my eyes out.

**Interviewer** 1:59:15

At the beautifulness of it?

**Participant** 1:59:20

like tears of joy kind of.

**Interviewer** 1:59:35

I'm tempted to ask how to like it's a silly question. How did it make you feel because you've just described exactly how it made you feel. Do you maybe like, going through that, what has that meant for you or how, in a sort of metaphorical sense, how has that moved you? How has that moved you? What has? What impact has that experience had on you? Yeah.

**Participant** 2:00:17

Every time I look at the sun, it's not like the feeling is the same, but like, I remember that experience and so, like, I carry it around with me everywhere I go, and I can always remind myself of it. I wouldn't say that, um, that it's made me like a religious person or anything like that. If anything, it, the feeling I was getting in that moment was like an appreciation for how the sun fuels all the life on earth and basically, everything that's happening here is just because of the sun in a certain way.

**Interviewer** 2:01:10

Do you think there does the need? I have a sense of what I want to say but I don't want to put the words in your mouth. Is there a sense that you need to make sense of the experience or is the experience itself, the value, let's say?

**Participant** 2:01:35

Yeah, I think the ego wants to make sense of it. So, that it sits right, within your understanding of the world, but the experience does stand for itself. You don't have to understand it to get the benefit out of it.

**Q28. Interviewer** 2:02:16

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

**Participant** 2:02:27

I don't think that I've experienced ego death the closest I think that or maybe it's the same thing is ego diminishment. I had moments where I'll see myself in the mirror and I look at my hands or see my legs and sort of, it's that dissociative feeling like, oh, that's me. Like, this feels like someone else. Also, if I only touch my face, my face feels like almost like it's not my own face. The thought patterns, sort of follow the same theme and it's like you can step outside of your ego to look at your life outside of the ego, but you're still connected to it in some sense but it's something that like all this stuff, is really hard to explain.

**Interviewer** 2:03:41

Maybe a little follow up as well, this is written down but So, if you haven't, if you don't think you've ever experienced ego death, what do you think ego death is?

**Participant** 2:03:59

Good question. based off what I think about it, I think is based off of what I've read about it. So, what people have said is basically, that you stop existing for a little bit like you, you don't even you can't even recognise that you have a corporeal form. Just like in a spiritual realm of some kind, or just pure consciousness, like you don't have an identity. You don't have a body. You don't know what like life, not life, but you don't know what the earth is, sort of, that's the sense that I get of it.

**Q29. Interviewer** 2:04:56

Have your experiences of psychedelics affected your spiritual or religious beliefs?

**Participant** 2:05:02

Yes. Like I said earlier, I was like the strict materialist I didn't think anything metaphysical was going on. I wouldn't say that I’m like, in that in the opposite camp now, it's just that I can't reconcile the things that I've experienced with that worldview anymore.

**Interviewer** 2:05:55

Was the word materialistic? There's one that comes to my head, or was it like materialism? or How did you describe it?

**Participant** 2:06:04

Materialistic is what I said.

**Interviewer** 2:06:06

Yeah. Okay.

**Participant** 2:06:07

Basically, everything is like a physical phenomenon.

**Interviewer** 2:06:24

So, prior, did you have a, what was your sense about god? You know, broadly speaking, not any specific one say.

**Participant** 2:06:39

I was pretty squarely in the camp, that like god isn't a thing in this universe, it just, things just kind of fell into place by happenstance, life arose on the earth and here we are billions of years later. I still believe that to an extent, but I'd say it's more of agnosticism, rather than atheism now, where like, how can I possibly know after the things that I've seen?

**Q30. Interviewer** 2:07:19

Have psychedelics changed how you think or feel about death or the process of dying?

**Participant** 2:07:26

No.

**Interviewer** 2:07:30

Can you maybe just for clarity, speak little to if you if you have a position, or what your thoughts are on death? And if anything happens after it sort of thing? Or like the? Yeah, just your thoughts essentially on it?

**Participant** 2:07:46

Sure, my belief is that consciousness is sort of like an illusion that's formed, based off of the biological processes that go on inside the body. Once you once the body dies, the consciousness dies. You just return to the state that you were at before you were born. I can't remember what happened before I was born. I don't remember what happened after I die. That's kind of my position on it. I don't think what I what I have experienced is enough to really shift my thoughts on it.

**Q31. Interviewer** 2:08:41

This probably is answered by your other one, your a few. The worldview question I asked you a while back, and potentially spiritual religious beliefs, but it's just another way of asking a question that might not get tapped into by using the words like spiritual or religious. So, the question is, have psychedelics changed any fundamental beliefs about the nature of reality? And if so, what has changed?

**Participant** 2:09:12

Yes, the I've started to question my perception a lot more after seeing what's possible under the influence of a drug. Just a compound enters your brain and you see the world with such different eyes. It makes me question how accurate our senses really are and also, I start to wonder if the visuals that I was describing earlier, maybe if those are some kind of phenomenon that's all around us at all times and we just can't see it usually, or our brains are really good at putting up barriers, because it's just a bunch of noise that doesn't really help us in day to day life. Yeah.

**Interviewer** 2:10:14

So, maybe similar to all Aldous Huxley's idea of like the brain as a reducing valve, or a filter, as you're saying, so, have you. Your, what's your position or how do you think about now? Are you, you have any strong feelings either way as to the validity, let's say, of the things that you see during a psychedelic trip, the realness of them or the truth to them?

**Participant** 2:10:49

I certainly think that they're valid, and there's some kind of truth to them. I'm not sure if they are real, or if they're just in the head. I don't think there's a way to really know that. Though, the one thing that makes me question the most is the experience that I had with my sister where like, we were telling each other what we're seeing, and it was lining up and my it was sort of feeding each other like she'd say, I'm seeing this thing, and then it would like, find its way into my vision.

**Interviewer** 2:11:31

What do you think was going on there? Do you have a sense of that?

**Participant** 2:11:36

Yeah, I think that just by talking about it, you bring it into the subconscious and the subconscious can then manifest it into your vision. That would be the materialist explanation for it.

**Interviewer** 2:11:56

Is that the is that the explanation you find most plausible or do you have a different take?

**Participant** 2:12:05

Because that being said, there were certainly things that we're seeing that didn't cross over.

**Interviewer** 2:12:27

And has those, say that that increased scepticism or questioning of your perception of reality and how accurate our senses are. Has that impacted your day to day life at all? Does that sort of play itself out?

**Participant** 2:12:46

Not in an extreme way. It's just kind of like always at the back of the mind but I do think that our senses are accurate enough to give us a sense of what's going on. Otherwise, you couldn't actually build anything.

**Interviewer** 2:13:04

It feels real enough.

**Participant** 2:13:06

Yeah.

**Q32. Interviewer** 2:13:14

Have psychedelics changed your outlook on life?

**Participant** 2:13:19

Yeah. I think I'm a much more happy person. Just overall and I, I find a lot more good in the world than I used to.

**Interviewer** 2:13:51

And what about in terms of for you, just in terms of you, personally, your future outlook?

**Participant** 2:14:06

In a lot of ways, it's tossed that all up to you in a way where I don't know what to expect anymore. I thought that I had a certain trajectory and now I think the trajectory has changed but it's almost like it's like a rotating thing. Like I don't know where it's pointing in.

**Interviewer** 2:14:29

And it is that unknowing of that is, how to how is that? Has it affected you at all emotionally? Like, is that concerning? Is that a good thing?

**Participant** 2:14:45

It's frustrating because I feel like, I want to have a more positive impact on the world and I don't know how to accomplish that, yet.

**Interviewer** 2:15:04

Did you have that feeling prior to psychedelics? I guess there, you're saying you want to have a more positive impact? Was there a sense before that you wanted to have a positive impact on the world or was it even a different mindset, prior to that?

**Participant** 2:15:19

There was a certain sense of it. Just it wasn't very strong, and I felt very content with my life and where it was. So, that's what's changed. I'm feeling much less content, just with what I'm doing, to better the world.

**Interviewer** 2:16:00

So, it's kind of interesting that you say, overall, you feel you're a happier person, and you see more good in the world, but that you're actually prior to using psychedelics, were more content, and had potentially a more had a more solid or stable sense of a trajectory. So, is there this, If I can try and conceptualise a bit, and you tell me what you think of it? There's an increased sense of happiness and joy or goodness about life, but well not even but, simultaneously, combined with an increased sort of unsureness of what's going on? And a loss of contentment with your current situation?

**Participant** 2:16:57

Yeah, I think that's, that's right. It's like, I could be doing things to make me feel that elevated sense of contentment, even more.

**Interviewer** 2:17:16

Do you, if you took a step back and looked at that processes as a sort of encapsulated system? If it makes sense at all? Is that, do you think that's a good thing for your life overall? This shift or this sort of destabilisation, even?

**Participant** 2:17:34

I view it as a positive thing was like, lighting a fire under my butt to like, get me out of like, the routine that I'm almost stuck in.

**Interviewer** 2:17:51

I think, yeah. It's interesting, because I imagine a lot of other people, those things are coupled tightly, being content and being happy.

**Participant** 2:18:03

Right. It's almost, maybe using content is what's making it confusing. It's more So, like, like, I can see now how it's not as good as it as it can be, and I can take steps to keep moving towards the better. Better life circumstances, I guess. It's going back to that trendline analysis or analogy, where, like the trend is going up and it's bouncing up and down and how do I keep it going in that channel and keep it from tilting down or whatever or keep it from being even stagnant, because like, I want to always keep increasing happiness and contentment.

**Interviewer** 2:19:07

Do you have a, I know, a while back, you said that you want to have a positive impact on the world. Do you have a sense of what that might be? I ask because one of the things that comes to my mind is as you if you measure your achievement or your progress towards a good, you know, you sort of have to know what that good is that you're moving towards, or have some sense of that. So, I wonder if you do have a sense of what that is, or could it be?

**Participant** 2:19:43

Yeah, to me, I feel like I want to be the person who can who can provide an environment for people to be their best selves and almost like that nurturing theme coming back again, like I want to be able to nurture people and bring them out the best in them because whenever that does happen, that's when I feel the most happiest.

**Interviewer** 2:20:27

Do you have a sense of how you might do that?

**Participant** 2:20:30

No, that's, that's part of what's frustrating is like, I kind of know what I want but I don't know how to get there sand I don't know how, how that manifests. I don't think I would want to be like a school teacher but it's sort of like in that vein.

**Q33. Interviewer** 2:20:59

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

**Participant** 2:21:05

Therapeutic. I think the addiction trials are showing great promise and I think a lot of people could benefit from that. I also, a lot of people in the psychedelic community think that like, it's not for fun, it should only be for, like therapy or for like a spiritual sacrament of some kind.

**Interviewer** 2:21:33

Sacred medicine.

**Participant** 2:21:35

I don't take that perspective, I think there's a place for it as a recreational drug. I don't think that everybody should try it. I think there's certain mindsets that just aren't conducive to the psychedelic experience and I think that's a lot of times why people have bad trips, because maybe not ready for it or they're just not used to, to having like, scary thoughts and they don't know what to do with them.

**Q34. Interviewer** 2:22:19

Have psychedelics shaped your view of humanity's future?

**Interviewer** 2:22:31

Tangentially, I'd say so, almost like seeing the potential of what could be and what couldn't be if people if more people started taking them, I think the world would, would become a better place but I don't think that they're like the answer to all of our problems either.

**Q35. Interviewer** 2:23:00

What advice would you give to people who are interested in using psychedelics?

**Participant** 2:23:05

Do your research.

**Interviewer** 2:23:16

Would you give any specific pointers from your experiences? Like, yeah, in terms of what might be useful guidelines as to how to use them?

**Participant** 2:23:34

Sure. I think we touched on this before but be in a familiar place. Be with familiar people. Know how to get off of a thought loop or a thought turn, when you don't want to be there. Have a multitude of activities So, that you can distract yourself if you're starting to feel bad. Have a plan basically, like what to do when things go wrong and enjoy it, It's a very special experience.

**Q36. Interviewer** 2:24:36

So, final question, which is just essentially, are there any final thoughts, comments, or questions you'd like to ask or mention before we conclude the interview? Any sort of final statements or things that you would like said essentially?

**Participant** 2:24:59

I think I laid it out all on the table with everything I wanted to say.

**Interviewer** 2:25:07

Cool, it then let me just pop that.