

DRUGS: THE ALTERATION OF THE SELF - PART 3
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In my experience as a counselor the trick with these “autistic” LSD types is to get right in there with them and show them that they are not alone, that you know exactly where they are, and that what they cling to as making them unique is in fact common knowledge to all of those who know the mind. There isn’t anything unique or special about their LSD trip and they might as well accept this and move on. Others have been there before them. There is nothing they (at first) hate more than company, because their private drug vision is what has made them unique to themselves all these years. It is all they have at the moment and they have held on to it (frozen in time) and have not progressed from that point since then.

There is nothing these folks need more than to see that they are not alone and not so “special.” This realization spoils the trip that they have been hoarding all these years, and they soon let go of it and rejoin the rest of us. It is a great relief to them, actually. They move on again and real progress is possible. And here is the moral of this story:

While Hallucinogens don’t and can’t change the true nature of our mind, they can and usually do affect our concept of our own self, shattering whatever we had managed to get together up to that point in our life. Drugs are not often kind to our self-image if we are too attached. The aftermath of a drug trip can take months and even years to stabilize, and there are several components it helps to be aware of.

First, as mentioned, the mind itself is not affected, unless of course you have some physical damage. Take note of that statement please. Knowing this can be a huge relief for those who feel they have been changed forever and don’t even know it or can’t remember what they were before. The mind itself can’t be altered. Buddhists know this. They have mapped it for centuries with clarity and brilliance.

What is affected (and can be altered) is our sense of self, but this is usually only temporary and the self will automatically reassemble itself (like it or not), but this usually takes time. The loss of self or detachment of the self is actually a healthy thing in the long run, but can be uncomfortable in the short run. What one sees when the self is shattered is a glimpse of what yogis and mystics ever strive for. The problem usually is that we become stuck back at the time we took the drug trip, much like an emerging butterfly might be stuck half-way out of its chrysalis. We can’t go back where we came from and we are not all the way out, and don’t know how to get out.

We then either have to forget what we saw and experienced in that drug glimpse or come to actually understand what happened and become comfortable with that. Well we can’t forget, because that glimpse is perhaps the truest moment we have ever known, so we are stuck in a “Catch-22.” We have to move on, either backward or forward. “A little knowledge is a dangerous thing” makes sense here. How to do this?

Some take more drugs (prescription drugs this time) in an attempt to calm and relax their state of mind, still further altering the self. Many more have long and expensive years of therapy

trying to put the toothpaste back in the tube. Or like one of those little games where we slide the squares around trying to complete the picture, we monkey with our self like a Chinese puzzle. All of the above give only partial results and seldom are a complete remedy. Even then there is usually a hangover, some sense that the self has been permanently changed or damaged. It probably has, but the self is not key here. It will always try to reassemble itself. The self is not important.

Part One

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