

# PSYCHEDELIC JOURNEYWORK

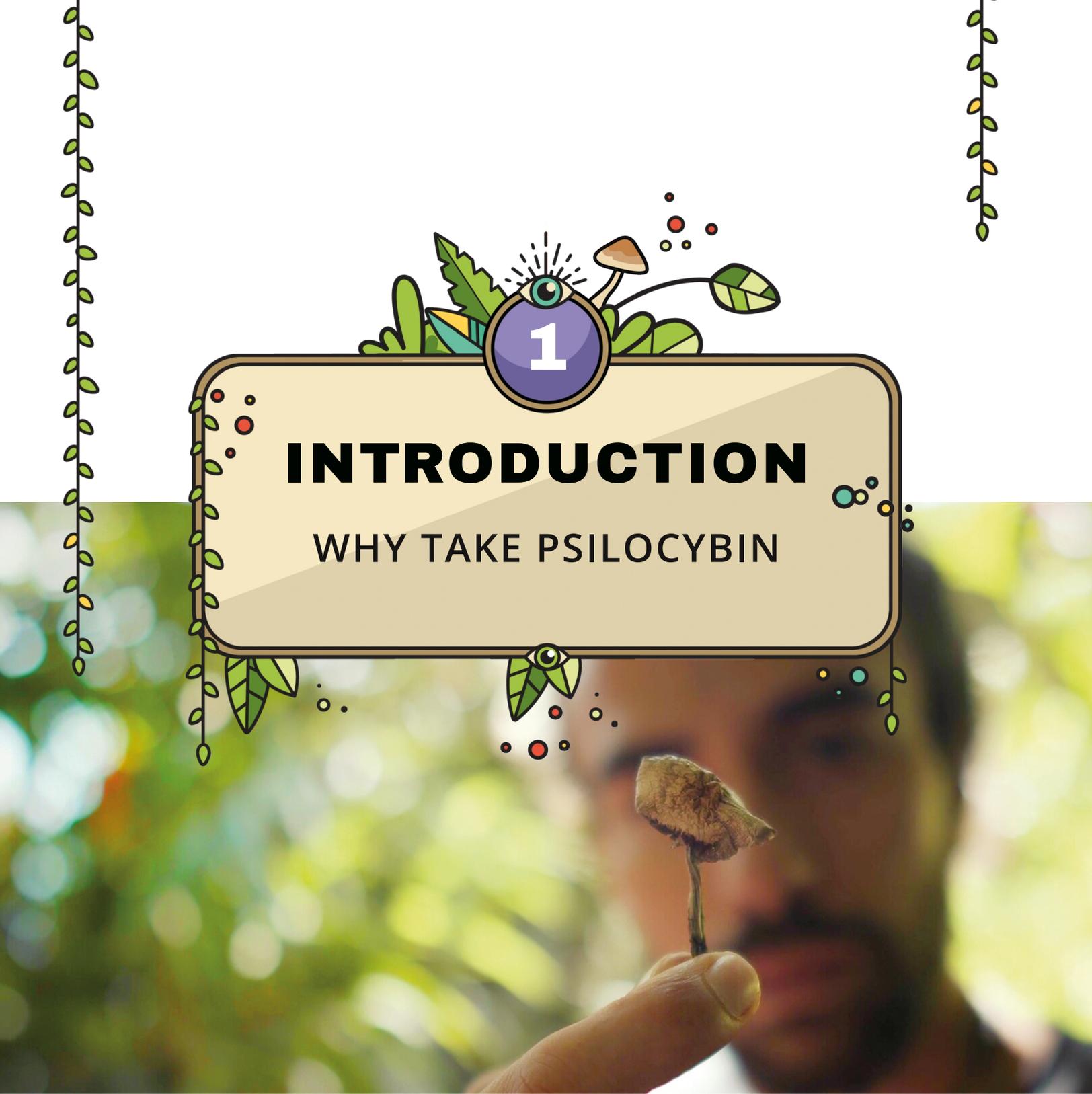
STUDENT WORKBOOK



# PSYCHEDELIC JOURNEYWORK COURSE

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# INTRODUCTION

WHY TAKE PSILOCYBIN

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Welcome to this course on Psychedelic Journeywork with Fungi Academy!

In this lesson, you'll learn:

- How the course is structured
- How to get the most out of the course
- Different reasons why people engage with Sacred Mushrooms and other psychedelics

This course consists of video presentations and in-depth written resources included in the workbook you're currently reading. The resources we provide span thousands of years, from ancient entheogenic practices to modern, cutting-edge research.

In each lesson, you'll find a lot of links and references. In a way, this course is the portal to a rabbit hole. How deep you go is solely dependent on you.

While we'll teach you the core skills of psychedelic journeywork, **a huge aspect of psychedelic journeywork is the ability to connect, online or in person, to the growing global network of psychonauts.**

And with an ever-growing community of like-minded psychonauts, **we'll strive to help connect you with them.**

Developing a relationship with this community isn't just to connect, support, and feel supported and heard by others. It's a vessel to learn about developments in technique, discover approaches from cultures other than your own, become informed about issues that emerge from poor practices, and learn from those who are doing things really well.

Here at the Fungi Academy, we'll support your learning journey through our social media spaces and online lectures.

If you haven't already, **subscribe to our weekly Mushroom Magic on Monday newsletter**, where we share the latest news in the mycosphere and psychedelic frontier with our readers.

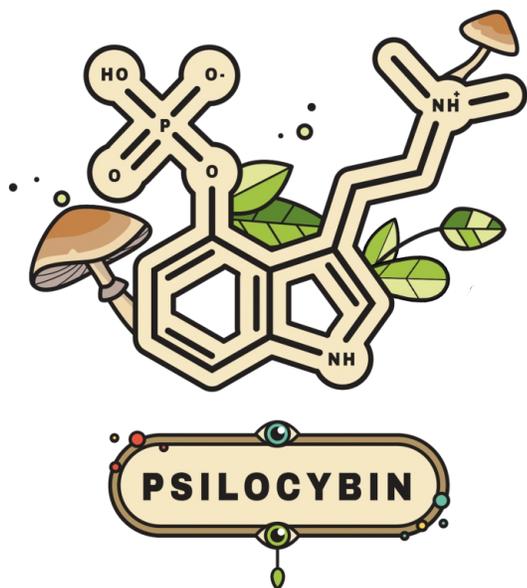
Also, **check out our blog on the Fungi Academy website** [↗](#), which is quickly expanding into a library of mycological knowledge.

**Most importantly, consider signing up for our Sacred Mycology Cultivation Course**, where we take beginner students through the entire sacred mushroom cultivation process. It's accessible for people without any prior mushroom cultivation knowledge and **by the end of the course, you'll have all the knowledge and skills to cultivate your own sacred medicine forever.**

While many of the practices, advice, and ideas we'll present can be applied to working with other psychedelic substances, in this course, we'll focus our attention on just one:

## SACRED MUSHROOMS

# 1. INTRODUCTION



**Psilocybin**, the psychoactive compound in sacred mushrooms, is produced in hundreds of mushroom species growing in countless different habitats across the world.

Sacred mushrooms are an ancient medicine. They're also the focus of a rapidly growing body of scientific and medical research.

This course will teach you how to work with them. **Still, it's very important to follow the resources and links we provide so you can begin to put the picture together for yourself, too.**

As you assess the information provided here, elsewhere online, and by those working in the field, **maintain an open mind with your critical faculties engaged.**

There are innumerable opinions on if, how, when, and why you should engage with sacred mushrooms. Learning how to use these substances in a safe, sane, consensual, and supportive way is a life-long journey.

And in the end, each person's journey and destiny is unique.

Stay high, stay free.

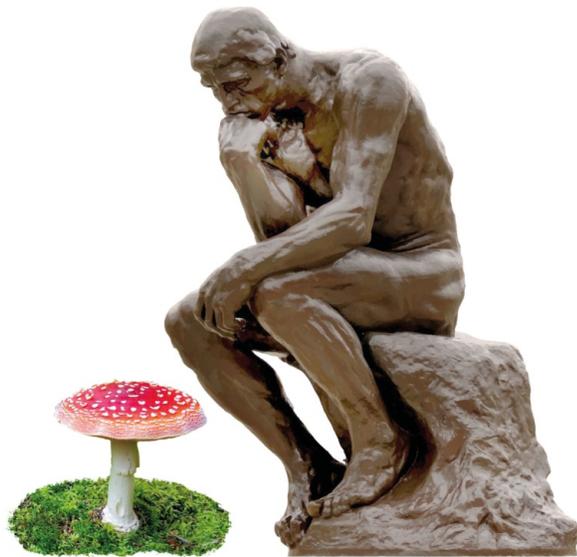
## WHY TAKE SACRED MUSHROOMS?

There are many reasons people seek out the psychedelic experience.

Your motivation may be one specific purpose or a blend of several:

- Self Exploration
- Healing
- Mystical Experience
- Alternate Realities
- Creative Insight
- Relationship with Death
- Reset
- Recreation

# 1. INTRODUCTION



prophets) can be accessed through the use of sacred mushrooms. Ecstasy, illumination, non-duality, and other life-changing, frequently—though not exclusively—pleasurable states can be experienced.

These may be highly internalized events or may be intimately linked to the psychedelic setting. For example, a sacred mushroom experience in the outdoors can often provoke perspective-changing experiences of the natural world as sacred, enchanted, and sublime.

## SELF EXPLORATION

The desire to search and discover the meaning of life is intrinsic to all humans. Sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics can be an ally in that exploration.

## HEALING

Whether illness exists in the personal, psychological, physiological, social, or even cultural body, sacred mushrooms and other psychedelic drugs can serve as medicine. The healing power can appear spontaneously or be encouraged through methods like psychoanalysis, shamanism, and other approaches.

Sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics can combat addiction, anxiety, alienation, depression, isolation, trauma, and ennui, and can have beneficial effects on other forms of illness and/or cause an improved psychological relationship with health problems and their associated pain.

## MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

The peak experiences of life encountered by inspired individuals (e.g. mystics, shamans,



## ALTERNATE REALITIES

Sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics can allow you to enter what appear to be other realities or realms of experience. Whether you understand these encounters as taking place in an internal, archetypal, imaginary reality, or a more objective realm (such as the 'astral' plane, or a dimension populated by alien entities), is a matter for personal reflection and exploration.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## CREATIVE INSIGHT

Sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics can enhance problem solving, stimulate new ideas, dissolve conceptual or psychological blocks to creativity, and lead to insight into the arts and sciences, giving rise to new artwork, technology, and innovation.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH DEATH

Oftentimes, the most difficult experience on sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics is when you experience the process of dying. Yet exploring how it may feel to die can teach you the importance of 'giving in' or surrendering to the experience, providing a broader perspective on your own mortality and reducing your anxiety about death.

## RESET

Sometimes, you may find yourself in need of a reset to break out of habitual thought

patterns. To this end, sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics can serve as initiatory tools to create a radical discontinuity in experience and allow you to experience a rebirth, a moment of 'ego-death' or 'non-dual' state. Many people report a feeling of having been reborn or rebooted after a sacred mushroom experience.

## RECREATION

Sometimes, we get so caught up in getting from A to Z that we forget there are 24 letters in between. Sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics used as recreation can provide you with a moment to stop, smell the roses, and be reminded of the simple joys of life.

There need not be a strict division between spirituality, healing, and enjoyment. In fact, recreation itself can be a healing, nourishing spiritual undertaking.



## RESOURCES

### Essential libraries on Psychedelic History, Chemistry and Culture:

[Erowid](#)

Erowid.org has a vast database of trip reports, pharmacological information and much more

[PsychonautWiki.org](#)

Psychonaut wiki contains accessible information about many psychedelic substances

### [Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies - MAPS](#)

MAPS is one of the leading organizations in the field of psychedelic medicine

[Breaking Convention](#)

Breaking Convention is a biennial conference on psychedelic consciousness. Their [Youtube channel](#) contains hundreds of presentations from their conferences

# 1. INTRODUCTION

[Shroomery - Magic Mushrooms \(Shrooms\) Demystified](#) 

and  
[Mycotopia.net](#) 

both host vibrant communities of people interested in psychedelic mushrooms

[The Manual of Psychedelic Support](#) 

[The Tripper's Guide to An Awesome Ride](#) 

[Marsh Chapel Experiment](#) 

A classic experiment using sacred mushroom as an entheogen to induce mystical experiences



## FILMS

[A New Understanding: The Science of Psilocybin \(2019\)](#) 

[Full Documentary]

[Fantastic Fungi, a Film about the Mycelium Network \(2019\)](#) 

[The Magic of Mushrooms \(TV Movie 2014\)](#) 

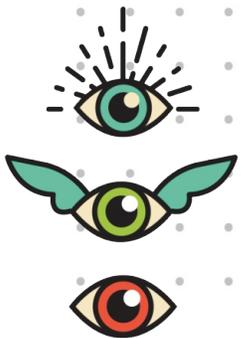
[Little Saints | Eat a Mushroom, Talk to God \(2014\)](#) 





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# **BASIC SAFETY** AND CONTRAINDICATIONS

## 2. BASIC SAFETY

In this lesson, we'll answer question including:

- What are Sacred Mushrooms?
- How do Sacred Mushrooms work on the body/brain?
- What are the possible interactions between psilocybin and other medications?
- What are the ecological, social, and legal issues surrounding Sacred Mushroom use?
- How can you consume Sacred Mushrooms?



### WHAT ARE SACRED MUSHROOMS?

**Psilocybin**, the psychoactive compound in sacred mushrooms, is a naturally occurring tryptamine found in hundreds of different mushroom species.

[Tryptamine psychedelics include classics](#) like DMT, psilocybin, and ibogaine. The other main family of psychedelics, phenethylamines, include psychedelics like peyote, mescaline, and MDMA.

LSD and chemically similar psychedelics are in the Lysergamide family but are sometimes included within the tryptamine group because of their [molecular similarities](#)

### HOW DO SACRED MUSHROOMS WORK ON THE BRAIN?

Psilocybin and other tryptamines do their magic by affecting the serotonin system in the brain. Without going too deep, **psilocybin activates several serotonin receptors found in the brain. This activation is what induces the psychedelic experience.**

While at first, the effect can feel quite "weird," experienced users come to find a degree of consistency in its effects. Generally, you remain conscious and aware under the

influence of tryptamines. In the right setting, **you also will likely experience your mind becoming aware of itself.**

This amazing, funny, profound and potentially transformative state of awareness is the psychedelic state. But what does psychedelic even mean? In Ancient Greek, psychē (ψυχή, "soul") and dēloun (δηλοῦν, "to make visible, to reveal") roughly translate as "mind-manifesting".

## 2. BASIC SAFETY

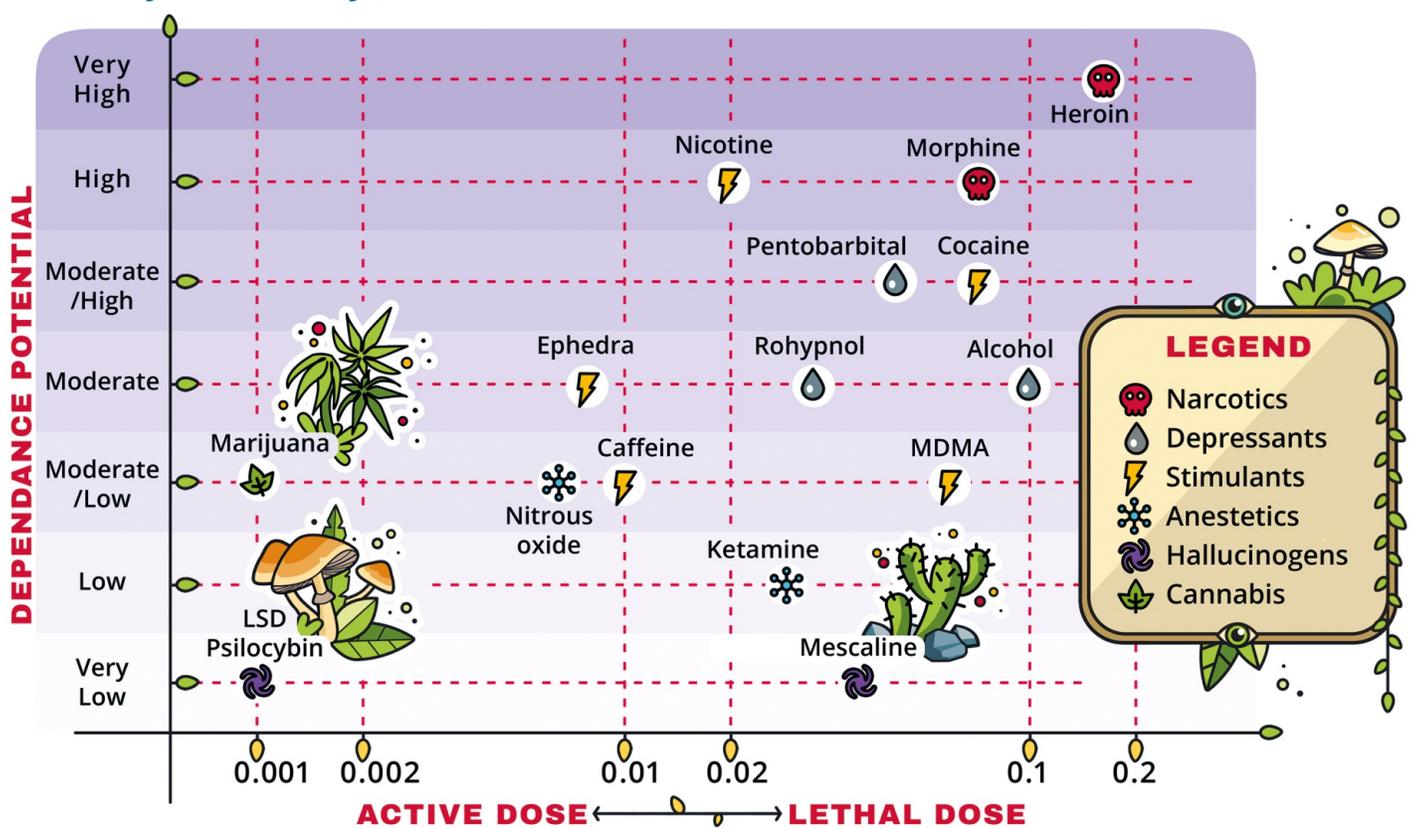
### HOW DO SACRED MUSHROOMS WORK ON THE BODY?

Given its potentially profound effect on the mind, **it's impressive how little psilocybin affects other systems in the body.** This feat is one reason why psilocybin has garnered such interest in the medical and psychological industry as a therapeutic psychedelic.

**Physiologically, psilocybin is very safe, has a very low toxicity** (much lower than

that even caffeine, for instance), and induces the psychedelic state for about 4 to 5 hours at a level that many find to be quite tolerable.

However, high doses of psilocybin can nonetheless be very powerful psychologically, and for some, overwhelming.



### SYNTHESIZING PSILOCYBIN

In 1959, Swiss chemist [Albert Hofmann](#) and his team successfully synthesized psilocybin. Hoffman is best known for being the first person to discover, synthesize, and ingest LSD.

He obtained psilocybin-containing sacred mushrooms from French mycologist [Roger Heim](#) who cultivated the mushrooms after they were first gifted to [Valentina](#) and [Gordon Wasson](#) by the Mazatec sacred mushroom healer [Maria Sabina](#)

## 2. BASIC SAFETY

### POSSIBLE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN PSILOCYBIN AND OTHER MEDICATIONS

Although physiologically, psilocybin is very safe, unpleasant and even life-threatening interactions can occur if combined with certain medications.

Given the ability of sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics to help people with **anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, addiction, and obsessive-compulsive disorder**, among others, those with mental health issues often seek out psychedelic medicine in hopes of alleviating the pain.

But, **the pharmacological drugs often prescribed to treat these conditions can potentially cause serious problems when mixed with psilocybin.**

Typically, the medication prescribed for the aforementioned conditions interact with the same brain neurotransmitters that are affected by psilocybin.



#### **WARNING!**

**If you're uncertain about whether a medication you're taking will adversely affect your sacred mushroom or other psychedelic journey, it is best to be cautious and postpone your journey.**

Currently, most experienced practitioners recommended **discontinuing the ingestion of the prescription medicines listed below for at least two weeks prior to taking any type of psychedelic. However, for some medicines, you may need to discontinue use for up to six weeks.**

Sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics can profoundly affect your mental state. Any

lingering concern about potentially dangerous interactions may influence your psychedelic journey in a harmful way.

Currently, there are not many comprehensive studies of the interaction between psychedelics and the variety of medications used to treat conditions like depression and anxiety.

Therefore, the guidance given here is by no means exhaustive or complete and **we at Fungi Academy are not recommending you take any psychedelic substances.** Do so at your own risk and please seek qualified medical advice before you do if you have any lingering concerns.

#### **Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)**

SSRIs are usually prescribed for depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other anxiety disorders. These medications work by increasing the availability of serotonin in the brain.

Ingesting sacred mushrooms or other psychedelic substances while actively using these medications could potentially lead to **Serotonin Syndrome** [↗](#), which can be fatal.

It is worth noting that Serotonin Syndrome is very rare with SSRI drugs, and many people report that the effect of taking sacred mushrooms/psychedelics while on SSRIs is merely a reduction in the potency of the psychedelic experience.

**Serotonin Modulators and Simulators (SMSs) and Serotonin Antagonists and Reuptake Inhibitors (SARIs)** are medications that are similar to SSRIs. Since

## 2. BASIC SAFETY

these medications also affect the serotonin system, it is **not recommended** that you do not combine them with psychedelics.

**Serotonin-Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs)** are a class of medications that boost serotonin and norepinephrine levels in the brain. There are no confirmed reports of adverse interactions between psilocybin and SNRIs. However, it's always best to **seek medical advice and practice caution**.

**Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs)** are another class of medications that affect dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin. Depending on individual circumstances, MAOIs **may interact with psilocybin**. Prescription MAOIs are known to be **dangerous when combined with certain psychedelics**, notably MDMA.

**Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs)** and **Tetracyclic Antidepressants (TeCAs)** increase levels of serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain. There is evidence that this class of substances can have **dangerous interactions with psychedelic substances**. These medications may increase the potency of psychedelics and may adversely affect the heart.

**Lithium compounds** or **lithium salts** are medications used to treat depression and anxiety. There is evidence that **lithium can cause very dangerous interactions with psychedelic substances** including seizures, heart failure, and even death.

**Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (NRIs)** and **Norepinephrine-Dopamine Reuptake Inhibitors (NDRIs)** are medications used to treat depression and anxiety disorders. These medicines increase the amount of Norepinephrine and/or dopamine in the brain.

It is not clear whether there are interactions between NRI/NDRI and psilocybin. Again, it's always best to seek medical advice and practice caution.

**People who wish to stop using a prescription medication and who want to use psilocybin should seek medical advice before changing their dosage regime.**

If you're looking to stop your prescription drug medication and use sacred mushrooms or any other psychedelic, **please seek qualified medical advice before making any decision.**

### Pre-Existing Mental Health Conditions

As we've stated, Sacred Mushroom journeys can be quite psychologically challenging. **If you have a dissociative illness, psychosis, personality disorder, chronic addiction (e.g. opiate, alcohol, amphetamine), or any other serious mental conditions, please seek qualified medical advice before using sacred mushrooms or any other psychedelic.**

While sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics can help address these and other serious mental health issues, such inner work requires extensive experience and knowledge.

### Physical and Mental Wellbeing

You should also consider your life stage and general health when consuming any psychedelic. If you have been experiencing abnormal physical or mental health issues, consider delaying your journey until you are in a better condition.

Physically, because sacred mushrooms are generally quite easy on the body (heart rate, respiration, and blood pressure are rarely

## 2. BASIC SAFETY

affected), you may still use them with a chronic illness or injury. Old age is also not typically an issue.

### Women's Health

Some women experience changes in sensitivity to psychedelics at different points in

their menstrual cycle. Though there are few resources on this topic, these links may be helpful.

- [Psychedelics and Women's Health](#) 
- [I Ate Psychedelic Mushrooms to Treat My Postpartum Depression](#) 



## ECOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND LEGAL ISSUES SURROUNDING SACRED MUSHROOM USE

### Ecological and Social Issues

Psilocybin itself is a prodrug, meaning it is converted into the pharmacologically active form psilocin by the human body. While the human body absorbs psilocybin rather quickly, the metabolized form, psilocin, is detectable in the human body for a short while afterward and can be passed into the surrounding environment.

Currently, there is little to no research on the downstream ecological impact of human psilocybin use, but this is an area of research you should keep an eye on.

What we do know about other psychedelics is that detectable amounts of ketamine, cocaine, and MDMA can be found in bodies of water in many countries.

### Legal Issues

While this is a fluid situation globally, at the moment, there are many places around the world where the unlicensed use of sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics is illegal.

**We at the Fungi Academy do not wish to encourage law-breaking. We strongly recommended familiarizing yourself with the legislation in your region.**

Given the prevalence of drug tests in many countries and/or for many jobs, you may like to know that psilocybin/psilocin is rarely part of drug testing protocols but is, in principle, detectable in various ways. Check out the link below for more information.

[How Long Do Shrooms Stay in Your System?](#) 



## HOW TO TAKE SACRED MUSHROOMS

Sacred mushrooms are normally taken orally, either by being eaten raw, ingested via an infusion (e.g. tea), or processed some other way like dehydrating and pulverizing into a powder (which increases the absorption rate into your body) before oral consumption.

Mushrooms can be stored in honey then directly consumed, or added to chocolate or other foods before oral consumption.

Many people claim that adding a low pH substance ([such as lemon juice](#) ) may

## 2. BASIC SAFETY

increase absorption rate, bringing about the psychoactive effects more quickly and powerfully but lasting for a shorter time.

There's little point in smoking mushrooms. Psilocybin degrades very quickly at high temperatures.

Sacred mushroom tea can also be absorbed anally. Though quite uncommon, this method likely leads to a stronger experience as the



rectum's mucus lining means the drug is absorbed directly into the bloodstream instead of first encountering the stomach's digestive juices. However, it may be both culturally and physically uncomfortable.

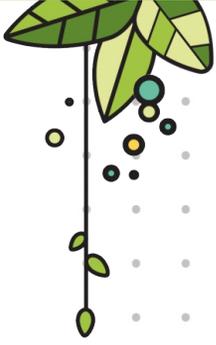
### Less Can Be More

In the field of psychedelic therapy, some researchers believe a ['sweet spot'](#) exists where a dose is strong enough to offer insight and positive change but not so strong that the experience becomes overwhelming and distressing.

Yet from microdoses (sub-perceptual) to threshold doses (consciously experienced) to heroic doses, the choice will always be yours. Nonetheless, **we recommend starting with a lower dose, especially if you haven't tried a particular batch yet, to assess the effects before moving to a higher dosage.**

Keep in mind that ceremonies or other novel settings have the potential to increase the strength of the experience.

And never underestimate the power of sacred mushrooms. They should be handled with informed understanding and respect. Always label and store them in a discreet, safe, hidden area to avoid accidental consumption.





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3

# BEYOND SET AND SETTING

## 3. BEYOND SET AND SETTING

**In this lesson, you'll learn how to prepare for and integrate after a sacred mushroom journey, including:**

- Physical Wellbeing
- Set
- Setting
- Substance
- Skill
- Support & Settling

No matter your intention, we believe everyone goes into a sacred mushroom journey with hopes of it being a safe, healing, and generally beneficial experience. To ensure things go smoothly, you should consider a range of factors when preparing for a journey.

### PHYSICAL WELLBEING

It's important to feel confident you're pharmacologically safe and not taking any medication that could be problematic. Going on a journey while in significant physical pain or discomfort is not recommended.

Generally speaking, **you want to approach the journey in sound physical shape.** You also want to be aware of the physical effects sacred mushrooms can have. Dilated pupils, slight flushing of the face, poor coordination, yawning, 'energy rushes,' and for some people, nausea, can occur.

On an empty stomach, sacred mushrooms' first effects are generally felt within 15 to 30 minutes, with the peak experience occurring around 2 hours after ingestion.

Tremors or rushes are experienced by some psilocybin users due to a hard-wired biological response called the 'wet dog shake'. Sacred mushrooms activate the serotonin receptor site that induces this response.

Check out [this video](#) to understand this common physical response, or [this page](#) to better understand the other effects sacred mushrooms can have on the body.

### SET

Physical wellbeing is one aspect of 'set.' The other is your mindset, from mood to expectation to memories of previous experiences.

**Considerations you should account for include:**

- Previous experience with sacred mushrooms, psychedelic substances, or altered states (e.g. meditation, breathwork, ecstatic dance)
- Preconceptions and expectations you may have about what the experience or outcome will be like
- Motivation/intention for taking the medicine
- How you expect the journey to affect and relate to your existing social, political, and cultural life

### SETTING

Setting encapsulates everything outside your inner mind, from the immediate environment (e.g. outside or inside) of the journey to the presence or absence of other people (e.g. solo, peer group, ceremony) to the wider cultural context of the experience (e.g. the social and legal status of the medicine).

The setting for a sacred mushroom journey can profoundly influence the experience. Choices as simple as the presence or absence of music or the type of lighting in an inside environment (e.g. dark, light, colorful, white) are important to consider.

### 3. BEYOND SET AND SETTING

#### Key aspects of the setting include:

- ✔ Safe and comfortable surroundings  
This allows you to focus your attention on the journey knowing that, at a physical level, all is well
- ✔ Power objects  
The presence of supportive symbols or objects, be it religious, spiritual, familial, or something else, may hold significance to you and serve as meaningful, comforting, grounding, and inspiring.
- ✔ Good company  
If you're going on a journey in a shared space, it's very important to trust those whom you are journeying with. Kindness and mutual respect should exist between all participants.
- ✔ Setting things right  
Preparing your environment for the journey is an important part of the set and setting process. As you prepare the space and gather supplies for the experience, you are not only creating the setting but intentionally cultivating your mindset for the journey.  
This also means ensuring that the interpersonal relations between group members are in good standing and that any tension that may exist between members are successfully sorted before beginning the journey.

#### An Important Note!

If you're approaching a sacred mushroom journey with the intention of healing, you may inevitably be carrying some degree of distress and pain. Or you may approach the journey in hopes of experiencing and traveling through emotions of sorrow, grief, loss, etc.

In an explicitly therapeutic session, the therapist will spend time with you to develop

a supportive relationship before the journey. They will also have the skills to work with you as any difficulties may emerge.

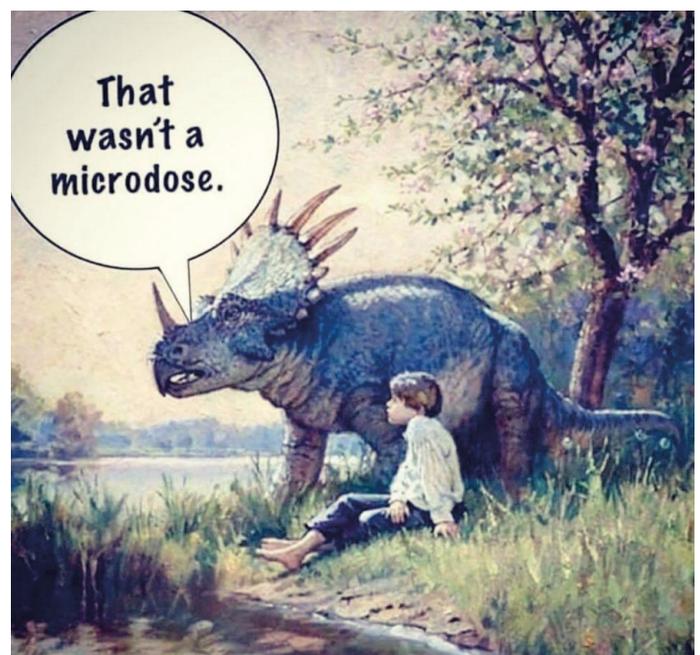
Yet no matter if you're supported by a therapist or in a different setting, **you must feel ready to surrender to the experience and be in a setting where the physical and interpersonal dynamics support your process.**

#### SUBSTANCE

Being completely confident about the source of your sacred mushrooms is vital. So too is an assuredness in your dosage and the possible interaction with any other medications you may be taking.

With a previously untested batch of mushrooms, **we always advise starting with a low dose first.** With sacred mushrooms, a booster dose can always be taken. Generally, we do not advise taking a booster dose until 1 to 1.5 hours after the first dose has been consumed.

**Please buy a scale rather than eyeballing (that is, guessing) your dose!**



## 3. BEYOND SET AND SETTING

### Dosage

The amount you take of a given substance, known as the dosage, is often described with these common terms:

- **Baseline:** your 'normal' state of awareness before ingesting any drug or once its effects have completely worn off
- **Placebo dose:** where your expectation can create a psychological and/or physiological effect in the absence of any actual active drug
- **Microdose:** a very low dose at which you do not consciously notice the psychoactive effect of the substance (i.e. sub perceptual) but you nevertheless experience subtle changes in the mind and body (especially if you consistently microdose over an extended period of time)
- **Threshold dose:** a dosage level at which the psychoactive effect is barely perceptible
- **Effective dose:** a dosage level at which the drug's psychoactive effects are clearly felt
- **Dissociative dose:** a dosage level at which memory function is impaired and unconsciousness and/or collapse may occur
- **LD50:** the threshold at which 50% of a given population are likely to die from the toxic effects of a specific substance.

**It's important to remember that 'baseline' is relative.**

While your weight can be a factor to consider when figuring out dosage, that is not the only variable to consider.

From following a particular diet (or fasting), to your unique genetic variation, to your particular stage in life, you may find yourself

more or less sensitive to sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics.

In fact, momentary features like having a busy, active day, just engaging in an argument with someone, or being freshly in love can all radically change your baseline sensitivity to psychedelics.

The best approach, especially if you're new to sacred mushrooms and/or psychedelics, is to start with a low dose and increase it as you become comfortable rather than plunging into the deep end without hesitation.

### SKILL

Psychedelic journeywork provides us with the opportunity to develop our own skills in curating sessions.

As we become familiar with how the experience feels for us, teaches us, and changes us, we can learn how to navigate the experience more deftly. We may also learn how the experience feels, teaches, and changes others, and how they make their own way through the journey.

Yet we must always be cognizant of how we share our experiences in a thoughtful way.

There is always more to learn in terms of our personal process and the wider cultural and pharmacological field of psychedelic science. **Having a few journeys under your belt, no matter how "extreme" the dosage, does not necessarily make you skilled in supporting others on their journey.** It also does not make you a therapist or shaman.

After a successful journey, we may be tempted to believe we understand sacred mushrooms or psychedelics. We may also find ourselves believing that the experience is something everyone needs to try.

## 3. BEYOND SET AND SETTING

To protect ourselves from the pitfall of over enthusiasm and ego-inflation, we must practice humility, stay curious and open to new information, and be honest with ourselves and others about our skills and experience.

Part of being a skilled curator and healer includes the consideration of security, confidentiality, and integration.

### SUPPORT AND SETTLING

Integration of your sacred mushroom experience will take time. These journeys can be life changing. **Having space afterwards to process the experience as well as a supportive and understanding community to speak with can be very helpful.**

For higher doses and first experiences, going through your journey with the support of an experienced, trustworthy, and compassionate friend or professional sitter can be invaluable.

Ensuring you have time after the journey without any major commitments is also very helpful.

Before making any major life decisions or changes, we recommend holding onto your insights lightly and waiting for a few days to pass.

In the meantime, journaling, creating art, walking in nature, speaking with a trusted and experienced friend or psychedelic integration professional, or reaching out to an integration support group, can all be beneficial in the vitally important process of integration following your journey.



### RESOURCES

[Psychedelic Integration List - MAPS](#) 

[Psychedelic Integration Therapists UK](#) 

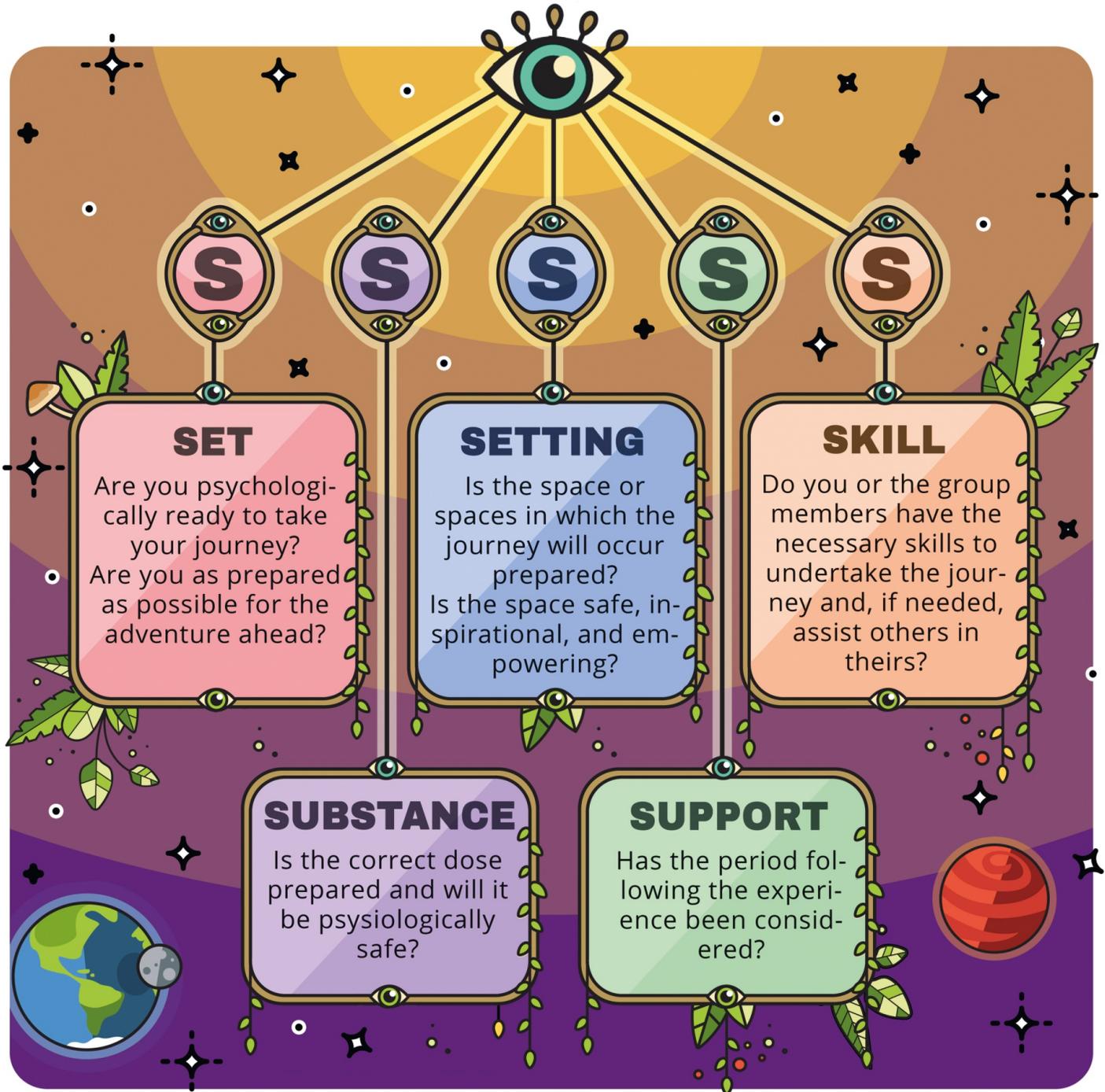
[Psychedelic Support Network - Therapy and Integration Services](#) 

[Psychedelic Integration UK Home Page](#) 



### 3. BEYOND SET AND SETTING

#### SUMMARY





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4

# SACRED MUSHROOM

JOURNEY CURATION

## 4. JOURNEY CURATION

### In this lesson, you'll learn:

- Different approaches to communing with Sacred Mushrooms
- Tips for curating a solo or group sacred mushroom journey

### There are many ways to structure or curate a sacred mushroom session:

- Solo journeys (one person alone)
- A journey for two people where one person takes the medicine and the other does not or takes a symbolic/micro dose. The person who does not take the medicine is known as the "sitter" and is there to support the psychonaut through the journey
- A journey for two people where the sitter(s) take a more explicitly therapeutic or "guide" role

- A journey for a small group where everyone takes the medicine
- A journey for a group embedded in a communal, ritual setting. This includes a formal medicine ceremony
- Taking a journey in a shared space such as a music festival or other public setting

The boundaries of these structures are fluid. In a solo journey, you could visit a good friend towards the end of the experience to talk about what happened.

In a communal, festival setting, you could choose to withdraw to your tent and enjoy the journey in solitude.

### Below are three examples of how you can commune with Sacred Mushrooms.

## LICENSED, THERAPEUTIC SETTING

Typically, you must first pass a few physical tests to ensure you're ready for the journey. You will then have time to meet the sitter(s) who will support you during your journey. They may or may not have previous experience with psychedelics.

### Common topics discussed include:

- ✔ How to prepare  
Oftentimes you are advised to only eat a light breakfast
- ✔ What to bring  
You may be encouraged to bring an important object (e.g photos of loved ones or a favorite blanket) to the session, and to wear comfortable clothing
- ✔ Boundaries during the journey

Agreeing on forms of non-sexual physical touch as a way of support if you come to a difficult moment in your journey.

- ✔ Strategies for dealing with difficult moments  
Potentially discussing simple breathing techniques to help you relax

### Dosage

The dose depends on the protocols used by the therapist(s) but is often moderately high, typically around 25mg of synthetic psilocybin.

### Setting

For licensed sacred mushroom therapy, the journey typically occurs in a hospital setting. The room is prepared for the experience, with

## 4. JOURNEY CURATION

low light levels and other furnishings to make the space as calming and comfortable as possible.

The session is likely to take place during the day.

### Experience

After the medicine is administered, you will be invited to lie down on a bed or couch, to wear eye shades, and to wear headphones with a predefined playlist. Drinking water is nearby. The sitter will likely sit alongside you silently.

Styles differ, but the most common practice in today's therapeutic setting is for the sitter to be non-directive, speaking when spoken to but gently encouraging you to return to the silent, eyes-closed inner landscape of your journey.

The "sitter" primary purpose is to compassionately support you while allowing you to make your own way through the experience.

Food is sometimes available after the journey and you will be checked medically before leaving the experience.

After the session, there is typically a follow up process which can extend up to several months after the experience. Generally speaking, the therapist will have a follow up meeting with you on the day following the session, or soon thereafter.



### PRO TIPS!

In sessions where you intend to spend the majority of the session laying down, it may be more comfortable and reassuring to have a futon or bed positioned low to the ground.

In sessions where the therapist/sitter is alongside the psychonaut, the sitter should situate themselves at a similar height to be psychologically "on the same level." The therapist/sitter also should consider their clothing, siding for informal and relatively plain clothing.



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### CEREMONIAL SETTING

It depends on the tradition and style of the group and leader, but oftentimes, there is explicit preparation before the journey that may include:

- Fasting before the journey
- Abstaining from sex, drugs, or medications that could interact with the medicine
- Activities with the goal of purification, meditation, and intention setting



#### Setting

A ceremony may be held for one person or may take place in a group setting. You may or may not know the other participants.

All participants, including the leader (e.g. shaman, medicine person, etc.), take the medicine.

The session can take place during the day or night, indoors or outdoors.

The space may include symbols and practices associated with the group, like an altar where significant 'power objects' related to the group are placed, (e.g. a simple 'zen' like altar with crystals and flowers, or a complex arrangement of icons and esoteric paraphernalia).

You may be able to wear clothes of your

choice, or a particular color or style of dress may be directed.

#### Experience

The medicine is typically organic, that is, raw mushrooms, fresh or dried. The dosage is typically moderate to high.

The ceremony often begins with calling good spirits and energies into the space.

The medicine is taken with reverence. You will be invited to set an intention for the journey.

During the session, the shaman and any helpers are responsible for your wellbeing and that of the other participants. You may be asked to leave the work of supporting anyone experiencing difficulties to these appointed people.

The shaman may provide or curate music, from simple percussion to singing spiritual songs or freeform vocalizations to a full band of musicians!

There may be periods of quiet, of prayer (sometimes accompanied by ritual use of tobacco or incense), or of other activities.

There may be periods when you are invited to lie down and let go into the journey. However, it is common in many traditions for you to be encouraged to stay sitting up and alert, remaining present and engaged with the ritual.

Water may be freely available, or may be reserved for particular times during the ceremony. At the close of the session, food is generally served.

Final prayers of gratitude may be offered and other ritual practices completed. You are then free to depart.

There is generally no follow up, though there are exceptions to this.

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### PEER GROUP SESSION

A small group of friends decide to take a mushroom journey together.

#### Before the session, you may discuss:

- How you intend to co-create the session (e.g. dosage, where, when, music to be played)
- Where to source the medicine
- Communal agreements like no phone use during the journey and established physical boundaries
- How everyone is feeling to ensure everyone is in as good an emotional place as they can be
- Any medications you may be taking

#### Setting

You set up the space(s) for the journey in a way that everyone has agreed upon, making sure the space will be safe and undisturbed.

You may bring blankets, important personal objects, and other personal or collective effects to make the space empowering, beautiful, fun, and well supplied.

Drinking water is freely available. Food is pre-prepared for the group to share after the session.

You may bring or create a visual focus for the space, like a central fire or an altar. Anything more complex or emotive than abstract imagery or landscape is unlikely to sit well with all participants.

#### Experience

The session often begins with everyone speaking aloud, or silently bringing to mind, their intention for the journey.



The mushrooms are divided and taken together.

One person may decide to take a lower dose, or a token microdose, and act as the communal sitter.

An agreed upon music playlist may be played. You are free to move around the space as long as you are not putting yourself at risk or interrupting the process of others.

There may be various phases of activity as the session progresses, depending on the needs, skill, and opportunities available to the group.

The group agrees to spend the whole journey together. Different rooms or spaces with different music and vibes (a well-lit room with upbeat music or a darker, calmer room with relaxing music) may be available.

There are often playful moments of conversation and laughter.

At the end of the session, the group may come together, collaboratively check in on each other, and share food, then spend the next few hours together until everyone is confident that those who need to leave are ready to do so.

In the days and weeks to follow, the group stays in touch, checking in with each other, and offering support and collaboration during the integration process.

## 4. JOURNEY CURATION

### NUMINOUS JOURNEYS, ONE DESTINATION

The way in which you choose to engage with sacred mushrooms will always depend on your unique opportunities and needs.

The carefully supported psychedelic therapy model can be very helpful if you're coming to sacred mushrooms primarily as a healing medicine and/or are new to the psychedelic experience.

Ceremonial sessions can offer an aspect of spirituality when connecting with the medicine.

A peer group session can facilitate a special bond between friends, serve as a support system after the journey, and increase the psychedelic journeywork skills within a community.

**No matter the method you choose to commune with sacred mushrooms, there are some fundamental elements every session should include:**

- ✔ Pay close attention to the safety and security of the space and group
- ✔ Treat the medicine with respect
- ✔ Provide a beautiful and empowering space as the container for the journey
- ✔ Act mindfully in the space with an awareness of the delicate nature of the

experience, especially around people who are new to sacred mushrooms or who are in an emotionally vulnerable state

- ✔ Be clear from the start about how any difficulties that arise will be dealt with
- ✔ Stay calm and deal with any challenges that arise with compassion and intelligence
- ✔ Strive to maintain a space in which each person can experience their journey fully, encountering joy, sadness, laughter, tears and anything else that may emerge, but not at the expense of others in the group.
- ✔ Have a process at the journey's end to check in, eat, and ensure that people leaving the session are ready to do so

As with anything, when curating sacred mushroom sessions, skill comes with experience. Even in entheogenic cultures with traditional ceremonies, shamans will often adapt and innovate as they develop their practice. The same can be said for therapists in modern therapeutic settings.

As you develop your skills, you will develop methods that work for you. This process, like life and sacred mushroom exploration, is a journey.

## 4. JOURNEY CURATION

### RESOURCES

[Psychedelic Therapy](#) ↗

[Is it Better to Take Psychedelics Alone or in a Group?](#) ↗

[Everything You Need to Know about Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy](#) ↗

Films by [Vincent Moon](#) ↗, who records traditional ceremonies

[A Unified Model of the Brain Action of Psychedelics - Dr Robin Carhart-Harris](#) ↗

[Maria Sabina - Mujer Espiritu in English](#) ↗

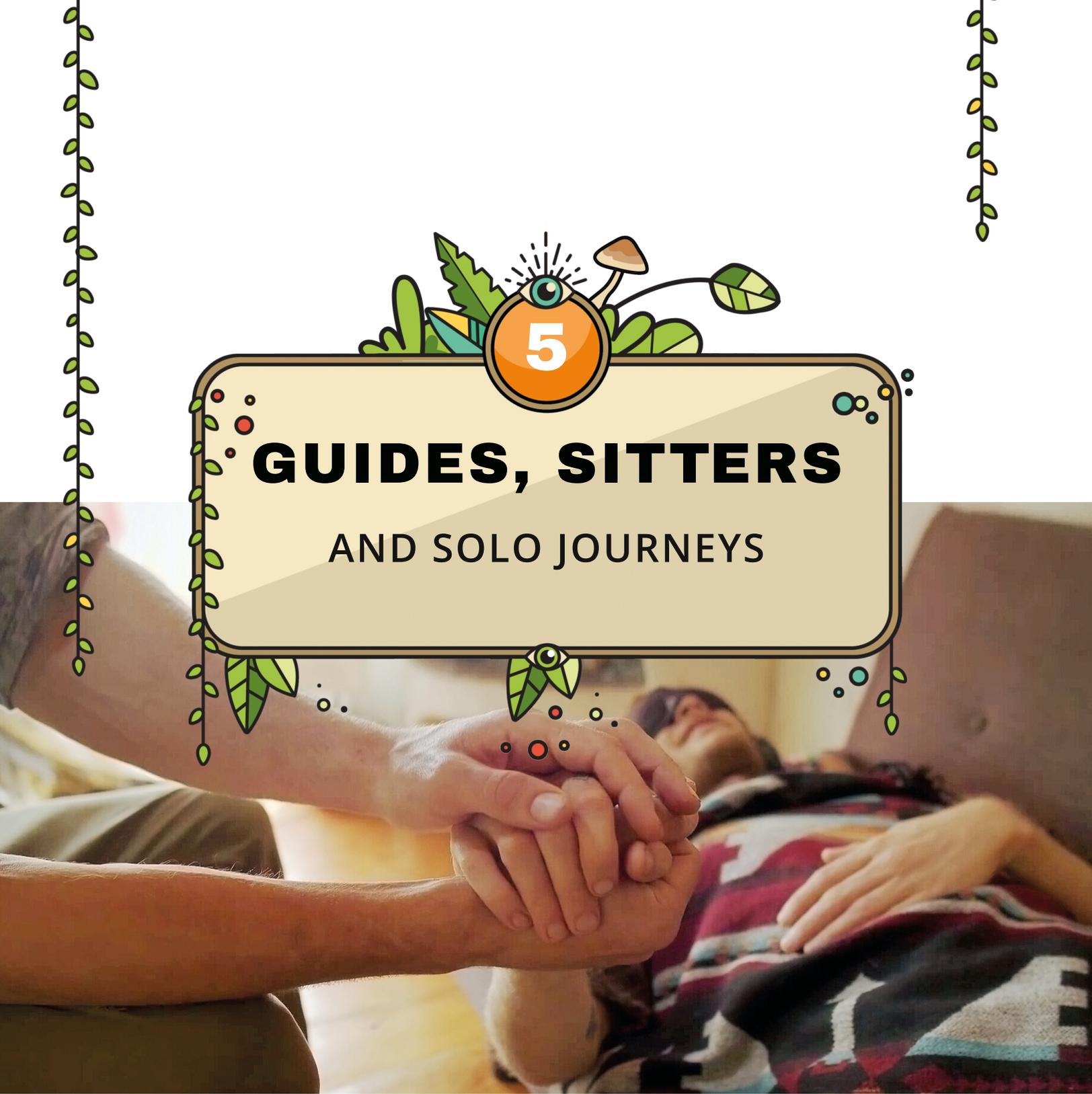


# NOTES



# NOTES





## 5. GUIDES, SITTERS, AND SOLO JOURNEYS

In this lesson, you'll learn about the **different ways to go on a sacred mushroom journey and how to support someone in their own quest, including:**

- How to hold space as a sitter
- When a sitter turns into a guide
- How to go on a solo journey

### HOLDING SPACE AS A SITTER

If you ever find yourself in the role of supporting someone during their psychedelic journey, then you've just found yourself in the position of what's colloquially known as the "sitter."

Usually, the sitter role is played by just one individual. However, especially in some therapeutic contexts, there may be two or more sitters.

Different from a "guide," **a sitter is primarily there to act as a non-directive supporter.** They ensure the journey-goer is safe, well-assured, and that the space is pleasant and protected.

While a sitter does not need to be a therapist, they should be confident they can calmly deal with any psychological or physiological problems that could be encountered in the session.

Having a sitter is especially helpful for some trying sacred mushrooms for the first time. But experienced sacred mushroom journey-goers may still want a sitter to support them if they're taking a higher dose, or for other reasons. **No matter how confident we are in our relationship with sacred mushrooms, a good sitter is a valuable ally.**

Ideally, a sitter has a lot of experience with



## 5. GUIDES, SITTERS, AND SOLO JOURNEYS

psychedelic journeywork, giving them a keen awareness of the range of experiences that may be encountered in a session.

Typically, the sitter does not take any medicine as part of the session or may ingest a token or microdose amount.

### Preparation

Before the journey begins, an experienced sitter **ensures the psychonaut has considered any pharmacological interactions** and understands the possible physiological and psychological effects of sacred mushrooms (e.g. poor coordination, yawning, 'energy rushes,' or nausea).

Pre-journey communication about the desired structure of the experience, any needs or aspirations of the journey-goer, as well as the skills and needs of the sitter, should also be discussed. **It is a good idea to discuss and come to an agreement on a comfortable level of reassuring, non-sexual contact, should it be needed.**

It's also important to talk about set and setting, and for both parties to familiarize themselves with the space. Music choices and any other resources or needs should be prepared.

The goal is for both people to be informed and confident. Though only one person is taking the medicine, the experience is shared and **the act of sitting can itself be a powerful, transformative experience.**

### On the Road

Once the psychonaut takes the medicine, the sitter should note the time. This is important, especially if the psychonaut is considering taking a booster dose. **A general rule is to allow 1 to 1.5 hours to pass before taking a second dose.**

During the session, the sitter ensures the psychonaut is comfortable, offering water, blankets, and changes of music or lighting as requested.

Under the influence of the medicine, people are quite sensitive. As a sitter, it's important to remember that most often, "less is more."

If the psychonaut encounters difficulties in their experience, **a simple change in music, the opening of a window to allow fresh air inside, or the offering of a blanket to snuggle with is often all that's needed.**

The sitter should always remain non-judgmental about the content that emerges during the journey, and handle any disclosures in an intelligent, compassionate way. An agreement may be made to keep the contents of the journey confidential.

Sitters may be asked to provide **gentle, non-sexual physical contact to reassure the psychonaut**, like holding their hand or touching their arm.

In general, **the sitter should aim to provide a calm, reassuring background presence** with a relaxed body posture and gentle smile. Staying aware of the psychonaut is necessary, but care should be taken not to stare at them.

Talk is usually kept to a minimum. The sitter may repeat back to the psychonaut any positive phrases that emerge in the journey, providing encouragement and reassurance that all is well.

As a sitter, your well being is also a vital part of the journey. Sacred mushroom journeys typically last several hours, so you may want to bring something to read, or some other simple, quiet, calming activity like sewing or drawing that can quickly be left if called upon by the psychonaut.

## 5. GUIDES, SITTERS, AND SOLO JOURNEYS

Whatever activity you choose, **make sure it is calming, nourishing, and simple to ensure your psychological state offers an air of tranquility to the psychonaut.**

You may also want to have some simple, nutritious food available (e.g. fruit, seeds, or nuts) that can be eaten without disturbing the psychonaut.

You may want to assist the psychonaut in a walk to the bathroom, if needed. Especially at higher doses, the change in environment (even just opening of the eyes) and walking can be challenging!

You may also choose to wait outside the toilet at a polite distance to assist the psychonaut once they're finished and ready to return to the main space.

### PRO TIPS!

When waiting outside the bathroom or moving about, the sitter may want to gently hum a tune. The humming helps relax both sitter and psychonaut, and helps communicate in a reassuring, non-verbal way, to the psychonaut, especially at a high dose, that the sitter is present.

A sitter should remain with the psychonaut until both parties are confident the psychonaut has reached their baseline consciousness. Sitters may want to make themselves available for follow-up discussions with the psychonaut a day or two after the journey.

### WHEN SITTERS BECOME GUIDES

The role of a “guide” is more active than that of a sitter. While much of the approach is the same, **the key difference is that, with prior agreement and approval by the psychonaut, a guide will gently influence the psychonaut’s journey.**

For example, during the psychonaut’s journey, a guide may offer opportunities to engage with art materials or the personal objects a psychonaut may have brought with them.

A guide may choose to read pre-agreed upon passages of literature or poetry, or lead a short session on breathwork or guided imagery techniques.

Or a guide may directly invite the psychonaut to focus on certain ideas or situations which they want to explore during the session.

**A ‘shamanic’ style of journeywork could be described as a highly specialized form of guiding.** Shamanic interventions may include blowing cleansing incense over the

psychonaut or making movements over their body to remove ‘energy blockages’ or ‘entity attachments’.

Shamanic style guiding can be very powerful but must also be carefully considered. It is **vitaly important that the psychonaut is well informed and comfortable** placing their trust in the skill and intention of the shamanic practitioner.



## 5. GUIDES, SITTERS, AND SOLO JOURNEYS

### SOLO JOURNEYS

Entering into a psychedelic journey on one's own can be a powerful experience. In solo journeys, you do not have any immediate support. On the flip side, you also do not have anyone else to be concerned for or distracted by.

A solo journey can be part of a vision quest, where you spend time in the wilderness with the medicine, or could be a more simple, recreational practice done at home.

A solo journey may be fairly introspective, even if taking place outside, which comes with various opportunities and risks.

For people who regularly support others in their psychedelic journeys, a solo experience may provide a valuable counterbalance.

It's very important that you keep safety in mind when planning a solo journey. If you're going to any remote location (e.g. any wilderness hiking/camping), ensure you dress correctly, bring adequate food and water, and tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return. A fully charged phone and basic first aid kit are highly recommended.

At higher doses, some psychonauts prefer silent, solitary darkness. Famed psychedelic explorer [Terence McKenna](#)  recommends this practice for those who feel called to it.

However, as we've said before, more isn't always better. **A moderate dose of sacred mushrooms combined with a nature walk and good friends can be just as powerful and healing as a heroic dose in silent darkness.**



## 5. GUIDES, SITTERS, AND SOLO JOURNEYS

### RESOURCES

General information on being a [Trip Sitter](#) 

[How to be a good Trip Sitter](#) 

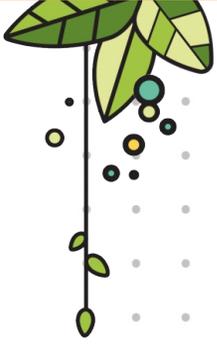
The excellent and very detailed [Manual](#)  of Psychedelic Support

An interesting example of the guiding practice in the very early days of western psychedelic therapy:

[My Self and I](#)  
[by Constance A. Newland](#) 



# NOTES





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## 6. PREPARATION AND NAVIGATION

In this lesson, you'll learn how to prepare for and navigate through the sacred mushroom experience.

### THE DAYS BEFORE YOUR JOURNEY

The context of your journey will sometimes dictate how you prepare. For example, in ceremonial or therapeutic settings, specific preparations might be recommended.

Nonetheless, there are a number of practices we recommend when preparing for a sacred mushroom journey.

#### Meditate

The simplest act can have the greatest impact. Sitting and **breathing mindfully**, going for a walking meditation, practicing Tai Chi, or whatever form of meditation you prefer helps **center and ground you before the experience**.

#### Connect with Nature

The soul nourishing, calming effect of **taking a walk or simply sitting and being in nature** or the outdoors cannot be overstated.

#### Separate from Social Media

In the days before your journey, **reduce your engagement with social media and news** to calm your mind and focus your attention on the journey ahead.

Avoid any violent or harsh media content or entertainment (e.g. horror movies) for several days before your journey.

Try not to consume any material that may influence your own experience, like accounts of mystical states or shamanic healing experiences. **Give space for your own unique experience to unfold**.

#### Cleanse and Nourish Your Body

If you're able, we recommend **cutting out the use of stimulants** (e.g. adderall, caffeine), **depressants** (e.g. alcohol), **and other substances** (e.g. tobacco, cannabis, refined sugars) for a couple of days leading up to your journey.



## 6. PREPARATION AND NAVIGATION

We also recommend nourishing yourself with fresh, delicious, healthy food, good night's rests, and maintaining any bodywork routines (e.g. yoga, running, swimming, etc.) while being mindful not to overstrain yourself.

In some ceremonial settings, you may choose or be asked to abstain from sex for a few days before your journey.

More generally, remember to enjoy this time of preparation. Be kind to yourself. Let your mind feel calm, excited, curious, at ease, or whatever else comes up naturally.

### Build an Intention

Consider why you're going for this journey.

Perhaps it's something you feel called to do. Maybe you have a specific intention. Allow those feelings and ideas to emerge. Consider expressing them via **journaling, creating art, or talking to trusted, close, knowledgeable friends.**

Decide if you want to bring any **'power objects'** to the space where you'll be taking the medicine, whether it's a work of art, photograph, piece of jewelry, or something else. Bring things to make you comfortable, like a favorite blanket or duvet.

### Buy the Ticket, Take the Ride

Appreciate that while a sacred mushroom experience can be very powerful, it's **'just a ride'** and **isn't necessarily the answer!**

For some, a single sacred mushroom experience may be all that's wanted or needed. For others, it may be something they return to time and again. Even in a professional, therapeutic context, it can take multiple sessions to successfully address a complex trauma.

### Avoid Expectations

As you prepare for your experience, it's important to see it in the wider context of **not just a sacred mushroom experience, but a life experience.** Especially if you're in search of healing, it's best not to pin all your hopes on the journey fixing all your perceived problems.

And remember, **sacred mushroom journeys can be great fun!**

Sure, sacred mushroom journeys are often transformative, healing, and/or difficult. But **plenty of people also seek out the experience simply because it's enjoyable.**

With the right preparation and knowledge of what to expect, you're ready. No go enjoy the experience!



## THE HOURS BEFORE YOUR JOURNEY

On the day of the session, **you can eat normally until around 4 hours before you plan to take the sacred mushrooms.** Once within this four hour window, it's best to avoid eating anything. You can continue to hydrate, but stick to water or herbal, non-caffeinated tea.

You should dress in a way that is

comfortable and suitable for your setting. Generally, we recommend wearing **relaxed clothing** and **bringing multiple layers** so you can easily regulate your — actual or perceived — body temperature.

Going barefoot when conditions allow can help you feel more comfortable and grounded.

## 6. PREPARATION AND NAVIGATION

### Intention Setting

We all have our reasons for communing with sacred mushrooms. It can be helpful to explore these motivations before your journey.

Put simply, **why do you want to go on this journey?** You may have many reasons, or one sole intention.

Before consciously ingesting sacred mushrooms, it is common practice to **bring your intention to mind**. In a ceremonial setting, there may be a particular process for this. In solo, therapeutic or peer group settings, the process may be much less formal.

One simple way to approach the process is to **speak to the medicine, communicate your intention, and ask for its help**. Saying your intention aloud can make it feel more powerfully real.

It can also inform others in the space how you're approaching the medicine. In some traditions, smoke from sacred herbs or other ritual techniques are used to place your intention into the medicine.

The words of your intention are important, **but what's most important is that they come from your heart**. Formal ceremonial language is unnecessary. Speaking to and asking the mushrooms for help as you might speak to a respected and trusted friend is all that's needed.

### Intention Does Not Equal Experience

While you may have a clear, well-communicated intention, sacred mushrooms can take you in other directions. In this experience, you can **imagine the mushrooms as wise teachers offering you a very different insight into your life than expected** that



## 6. PREPARATION AND NAVIGATION

may not — at least at the time of the journey — seem related to your original intention.

In some psychedelic therapy models, the medicine is described as activating our **'inner healing intelligence.'** By this, it's meant that we all have an innate psychological healing

process within us, typically operating at a deep, unconscious level.

It's not that hard to believe, either. You don't have to consciously focus on healing a cut for it to regenerate a new layer of skin. Your inner physical healing intelligence takes care of it for you.

### NAVIGATING YOUR SACRED MUSHROOM EXPERIENCE

Once we ingest sacred mushrooms, we enter a space of anticipation as we wait for the experience to begin. Typically, **it takes between 20 minutes to an hour for the sacred mushrooms to show themselves.**

During this time, you may wish to focus your attention on surrendering and relaxing into the experience.

Once the experience begins, your mind and body will begin to notice a powerful internal shift.

A moderate increase in heart rate may occur as your body releases adrenaline and your brain begins to transform into the psychedelic state.

#### The Come Up

You may experience some turbulence during what is known as the 'come up' as you adjust to the new sensations.

Working with the breath is one of the most powerful methods for helping you relax into the experience. Music with a little rhythm and slow, easy, deep nose breathing, perhaps with a long exhalation, can help calm you down.

If you're seeking to increase the intensity of your journey, fast, deep breathing exercises, like those used in holotropic breathwork or connected [breathwork](#)  can be used.

#### Not Bad, But Difficult

If you encounter feelings of anxiety or wish to change the direction of your experience, try to direct your attention away from the focus of distress (e.g. feelings of nausea, of being 'stuck' in a negative thought loop, etc.).

**Listening to the music or concentrating on a visual focal point**, like a ceremonial altar or the power objects you may have brought, **can help redirect your attention and the journey.** So too can sitting up, stretching, changing posture, and/or gently massaging your hands and feet.



If a trip sitter or other supportive person is available, they may be able to help you overcome a difficult moment. Because sacred mushrooms make you extra sensitive, **oftentimes only a small intervention —**

## 6. PREPARATION AND NAVIGATION

**offering a blanket, encouraging words, hand to hold — is necessary.**

Singing, making freeform sounds, or repeating ceremonial prayers/mantras can offer you a sense of agency and change your breathing pattern. **Drawing, panting, writing, or any other form of artistic expression can also help** you navigate, process, and express your insights and experiences.

If the setting allows movement, dancing, using a rattle, or other movement based activities can also change your internal dynamics and shift the journey into a better direction.

Being able to hold onto an object can give you a sense of security and groundedness. In some therapeutic settings, a soft toy may be used so you can cuddle it, helping to release [oxytocin](#) ↗

Sometimes in an inner journey, you may find yourself constantly feeling the need to urinate. It may be less a physical need than a **subversive form of 'resistance' to fully surrender to the experience.** In this situation, go to the bathroom until you are able to be comfortable and release this energy, then return to your journey.

If you experience a persistent nausea, the simple act of arranging a bucket and tissues nearby and drinking some water can be enough to allow you to let go into the journey.

And if you do purge, try not to dwell on the event. Just relax afterwards. Assuming you didn't get purge less than an hour after ingesting the mushrooms, much of the medicine will have already been absorbed.

### Guardians at the Threshold

Comforting and cleansing items like essential oils, incenses, or smudge herbs

like sage can help purify the space, energy, and serve as a sign of transition during and after the experience. In ceremonial settings, floral water and other herbs are often used.

Calling aloud or internally to your spirit guides, ancestors, or other helpful imaginal, innerworld, or religious figures can provide strength and resiliency. You may also find that calling to the spirit of the sacred mushrooms for help in your mind or aloud can be remarkably powerful.

Whether you believe it's a psychological trick, neuro-hack, or imagined experience matters little. **By asking for help and calling on these entities, you are indicating a surrendering of control, a powerful release that is well known to be one of the most important processes in the psychedelic journey.**

### Words to Live By

Remembering and repeating simple phrases in your head or aloud can help remind you of the transient nature of your journey, and bring you to a calmer headspace. A sitter or supporter can also choose to remind you of these phrases during the journey. Examples include:

- Trust the process
- This too shall pass
- Go in and through
- Don't be afraid of the darkness. That is where the treasure lies.
- Allow the process to unfold
- The mushroom is the teacher
- All shall be well
- Relax and let go

## 6. PREPARATION AND NAVIGATION

- You're doing really well
- All is welcome here
- Let the medicine do the work

### The Calm After the Storm

As the medicine begins to wear off, you may want to spend some time in quiet meditation, silently or verbally giving thanks to the sacred mushrooms.



## RESOURCES

What to Expect on Sacred Mushrooms

[Sacred Mushroom Effects - Psychonaut Wiki](#) 

[Erowid Psilocybin Mushroom Vault : Effects](#) 

A great overview by Erowid on of Working with Psychedelics

[Erowid Psychoactive Basics Vaults : Integration Tips](#) 

A very useful book on breathwork and psychedelic consciousness

[Life Force: Sensed energy in breathwork  
psychedelia and chaos magic by David Lee](#) 







## 7. MUSIC AND THE SACRED MUSHROOM JOURNEY

In this lesson, you'll learn about the powerful relationship between sacred mushroom journeywork and music.

### MUSIC IS MEDICINE

Music is a powerful tool for psychedelic journeywork. It can frame, support, and direct a sacred mushroom experience, profoundly affecting the way it unfolds.

As a result, **the choice of music is an extremely important consideration and requires skillful selection.**

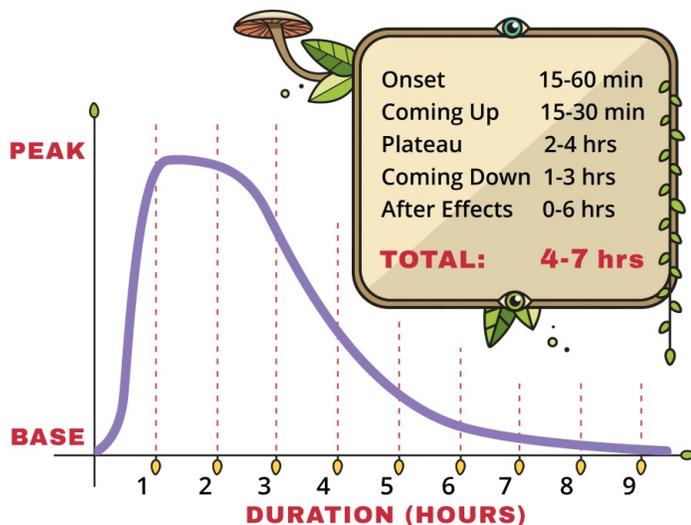
Within a sacred mushroom journey, music is likely to be experienced as emotionally significant, magnificent in sound quality, and intensely beautiful.

### PLANNING A PLAYLIST

The choice of pre-recorded tracks should **follow a progression in line with the sacred mushroom experience.**

Often, this translates to calming sounds as the final preparations for the journey are made and for the first half hour as you wait for the medicine to reveal itself.

**As the journey begins, you may utilize music with a faster tempo,** perhaps featuring drums, to give your mind a place to focus its attention as you come into the



experience.

For therapeutic psychedelic sessions, it's common for there to be a predetermined playlist designed to evoke a range of emotions. A selection of different styles can be used, from wistful, melodic classical pieces to up-tempo electronic music.

In these settings, discordant or challenging music isn't typically included. It is very common to use music without human vocals for the majority of the session, like ambient music.

For therapeutic sessions, it can be beneficial to **use music that's unlikely to have strong associations** for whomever is engaging with the medicine. In this way, the music provides a 'backdrop' for the experience rather than guiding it too strongly in any particular direction.

In ceremonial or peer group sessions, the music used is usually determined by the style of ceremonial work or preferences of the group.

Ambient music like the sound of singing bowls, rushing water, rain in the forest, or white noise can help mask any distracting sounds (e.g your neighbors watching the television) and help give your mind something to focus on without pushing the experience in any particular direction.

**At the peak of your trip, complex, layered music can be particularly engaging.** Examples include intense, trance-dance techno music or rising and falling electronic waveforms of the 'drone' music genre.

**Toward the end of the journey, songs with lyrics or choral material can be included to bring you gently back to the human realm.** Some therapists ask their clients to pick a few beautiful, uplifting tracks to include toward the end of the session's playlist.

## 7. MUSIC AND THE SACRED MUSHROOM JOURNEY



### PRO TIPS!

**Headphones help you enter into the musical soundscape deeply** and are often used in therapeutic and solo sacred mushroom journeys.

If using headphones, you may decide a wire headset is more reliable than a Bluetooth connection. Another option is to use a splitter wire from the device so you can play music to the headphones and speakers simultaneously, allowing you to hear the music if you temporarily remove the headphones.

**Sound check your devices before your journey** so you don't have to adjust them during your experience. Ensure the relative volume levels of each song are similar so you don't get blasted with a song.

Prepare some alternative tracks in case your playlist becomes too intense. We recommend **simple, long duration soundscapes** featuring gentle drumming, natural sounds or other ambient material to help recenter you.

Use pre-downloaded music so you don't have to deal with your internet going out or those pesky Youtube ads. If possible, have a backup audio device containing your playlist just in case.

### EVERYONE'S A MUSICIAN

In many ceremonial and peer group settings, live music can be used and created on the spot. You may be surprised to find you are still able to play music while under the influence of sacred mushrooms.

Music can be created with electric or acoustic instruments, involve singing, clapping, beatboxing, or any other way to make sound and music.

Even when pre-recorded music is playing, gentle live drumming, the use of rattles, humming, or sotto voice singing may blend well. Perhaps a melody arrives during your experience. A gift from the spirit of the mushrooms, perchance?

Icaros — a catch-all term nowadays for songs sung during ayahuasca ceremonies — are often considered to come from the medicine and may appear fully formed (especially in the minds of musicians) with melody and lyrics.

Deeply embedded childhood songs, nursery rhymes, hymns, and poems can also be useful as means of holding our attention when journeying, allowing the transformational power of the medicine to do its work. Famed psychonaut Terence McKenna once observed that the song 'Row, row, row your boat' was a perfect modern Western icaro.

It's important to **consider the meaning and style of the song so it suits and blends with the intention of the experience.**

Even if you're not a skilled musician, it can be interesting and powerful to explore music making in the psychedelic state. This could involve anything from the use of electronic devices (e.g tablet based sound generators) to singing bowls, rattles, or mouth harps. Instruments tuned using the pentatonic scale — so notes played can't sound off key — may be useful for non-musicians to experiment with.

Experimenting with discordant sounds may also be rewarding, especially since psychedelics can assist us in discovering new

## 7. MUSIC AND THE SACRED MUSHROOM JOURNEY

harmonies amid an apparently chaotic cacophony.

Singing is used in traditional and some modern sacred mushroom contexts, combining the qualities of creativity, breath control, present mindedness, communal connection, and enjoyment. **The other benefit of this exploration: you need nothing but your body.**

Mantras, rune names, or pagan chants may all be employed. Simple syllables like 'Om' and 'Ah' may be used, and free-form sound improvisation (e.g. humming, whistling, throat singing and other vocalizations used by shamanic practitioners) can prove effective either alone or in a group setting.

**Group singing** (free-form, with live musicians, or a pre-recorded track) is a great way to bring a group together and **cultivate the sense of the journey as a shared experience.**

Feel free to play with sound. Listen to some examples of shamanic or tribal singing if you need inspiration. **Instead of regarding this as performance and becoming self-conscious, let the sound flow outward as an expression of the psychedelic state.** Even if you are alone, try singing, chanting, humming, whistling, etc.

Singing can provide an excellent focus for attention as the medicine begins to work, and a great release for the emotions we hold internally. Even in very deep or high states of consciousness, vocalizing sounds is usually possible, even if words are elusive.

### THE BEAT OF YOUR OWN DRUM

The quintessential shamanic tool is the drum. Percussive rhythms have demonstrable effects on neurological processes and can be

used to induce a variety of altered states with or without the use of drugs.

To use a shamanic metaphor, the drum is a horse whose rhythm the psychedelic explorer rides through the journey.

Drumming provides a convenient, familiar, continuous presence to focus your attention on, echoing the rhythmic pulse of your heart and regular pattern of your body. It drives the ceremony forward. It provides a sense of comfort when the beat is predictable, making you feel more secure and aware of what's happening.

While phenethylamine psychedelics (like peyote or MDMA) may blend well with fast drumming, some people prefer slower rhythms for sacred mushroom sessions. Different rhythms may suit different periods of the journey. Experience and experimentation are the best guides.



**Regular, driving rhythms when entering the psychedelic state, more spacious, gentle or textured drumming at the peak, joyous celebratory beats as the descent occurs, and calming meditative sounds of whimsical chill beats at the end** are a great baseline structure to play with.

## 7. MUSIC AND THE SACRED MUSHROOM JOURNEY

### WHEN SILENCE SERVES

When curating a session within the therapeutic model or using a predetermined playlist, it can be very beneficial to include short periods of silence during a journey. These moments of silent pause **provide a space between the emotional content of the tracks for breath and processing.**

In ceremonial settings, space is common between songs. Instead of applause for the musicians, the silence is employed to let the feelings evoked by the music settle in.

Sacred mushroom journeys can be made without music or with much longer periods of quiet. Explore and experiment to discover what's right for you.

### DANCE YOUR HEART OUT

Music invites movement and dance. Especially when you feel the characteristic 'energy rush' of sacred mushrooms, dance and movement can be very helpful. Depending on the structure of the session, music and movement offer an embodied and potentially supportive practice.

Communal dance in a ceremonial context, or the recreational space of a rave, brings people together. In a smaller group or alone, **moving in response to music, whether through dance, clapping, tapping, rocking, or stretching can be comforting, absorbing, and may release emotional tension in your body and mind.** Dancing is also, well, just damn pleasurable!



## 7. MUSIC AND THE SACRED MUSHROOM JOURNEY

### RESOURCES

Additional information and examples of playlists:

[Psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy sessions with music](#) ↗

[Listen to 5 scientifically-approved playlists for psychedelic therapy](#) ↗

[6 Music Playlists For Psilocybin Journeys](#) ↗

[New evidence for a central role of music in psychedelic therapy](#) ↗

[The hidden therapist: evidence for a central role of music in psychedelic therapy](#) ↗

Songs by Maria Sabina

[Mushroom Ceremony Of The Mazatec Indians of Mexico](#) ↗

[Music For Mushrooms: A Soundtrack For The Psychedelic Practitioner](#) ↗

[Mazatec healing songs](#) ↗

[Shipibo ayahuasca songs](#) ↗

An example of a contemporary freeform medicine song

[Free form medicine song by Julian Vayne](#) ↗

Useful discussions on dancing and partying with psychedelics

[Partying](#) ↗

[Dancing on Mushrooms? - The Psychedelic Experience](#) ↗





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# NOTES





8

# MANAGING CHALLENGES

## 8. MANAGING CHALLENGES

### In this lesson, you'll learn about:

- Challenges that can arise during a sacred mushroom experience
- Redirecting the experience when it gets difficult
- Manage challenges and helping others manage theirs

### WHAT CAN HAPPEN

Sacred mushrooms induce a range of psychological effects, some of which can be distressing.

For example, you may find yourself overwhelmed by the experience's intensity, stuck in negative thought patterns, or flooded by powerful emotions.

With high doses, you may feel as though you're about to die, especially as the experience begins. Paranoia, an impression that the experience will never end, or that you're losing your mind, also sometimes occur.

Serious reactions, such as outbursts of aggression and other behaviours dangerous to your wellbeing or that of those in your immediate surrounding, are very uncommon but not unknown.

Given the possibility of such strong reactions, you may find yourself needing help

to calm and/or change the experience's trajectory.

**Altering the three main variables of set, setting, and substance** can allow you to address difficulties like anxiety and emotional downward spirals, changing the direction of the experience for the better.



### SWITCHING THE SETTING

A few simple ways to quickly change the setting of an experience is to **turn down the volume of the music, select calmer sounds, dim the lights, or curl up with comfortable blankets and cushions.**

A common cause of confusion is anxiety about your body temperature. Blankets can help assuage that concern.

**If the environment is not physically safe or does not feel safe** — e.g. outdoors in a storm, at a festival — **it's best to go**

**somewhere else.** If possible, it can greatly help to receive or give assistance to the distressed person in moving from one environment to another.

Oftentimes, indoor environments provoke introspection. As a result, **going outside to a safe** — and ideally beautiful — **space can be a powerful way to change the direction of a journey** from one that feels 'too inward' to one with a more life affirming, positive tone.

## 8. MANAGING CHALLENGES

In ceremonial settings, there are typically established methods to help people in difficult moments, like the use of the cleansing aromatics [Agua de Florida](#) and/or [Kananga water](#).

Smudging — the burning of incense like copal, cedar, or sage — and gently wafting the smoke towards the distressed person, or other more advanced shamanic techniques, can also be used, though precautions should be taken with these methods, especially if the person under stress is experiencing paranoia.

### CHANGING THE SET

Using **slow, easy, patterned breathing exercises** can cause a huge improvement in your mental state when under psychedelic distress.

One of the most useful breathing techniques, which can be practiced before the session, is to **inhale for a set amount of time**, — e.g. 4 seconds — **hold the breath for that same time period, then exhale for twice the length of the inhale**.

This type of breathing affects the [vagus nerve](#), thereby lowering your heart rate and helping your mind and body relax.

Sighing, crying, moaning, singing, or any other type of natural vocalizing can be a very beneficial process for release.

**Singing helps modulate your breathing, provides a focus for your attention, and can help you regain your composure.**

Crying shouldn't be resisted but instead welcomed as part of the cathartic process.

It can be useful to create a kind of metaphorical link between the external stimulus and your inner transformation. For example, you may benefit by imagining that with each beat of the music, the 'knot' of tension at the core of your distress loosens.

Identifying and utilizing these types of metaphorical relationships is the foundation of many shamanic techniques and, in the depths of the psychedelic state, is a very

powerful technique for personal transformation.

Adopting an open body posture, or sitting up in a relaxed but alert manner — as one might when meditating — are other simple ways to change the set. Playing with your facial expressions can also provoke instant, powerful results. As science has shown, smiling naturally makes you happier.

Sacred mushrooms can induce shivers, known as the 'wet dog shake' reaction. If you're new to this feeling, it can feel strange, alarming, or cause you to believe you're cold. Maintaining a moderate temperature in the session space, using blankets, and adding or removing a layer of clothing — e.g. sweat-shirt, socks, shoes, etc. — can help assuage this confusion. If you notice someone else experiencing this, a gentle reassurance that this is perfectly normal usually helps.

If the setting allows, **inviting yourself or the person experiencing anxiety to surrender to these feelings**, letting them move through the body and perhaps even translating them into yogic-style stretches, free form movement, or dance can be very helpful.

Self-massage or, where appropriate, gentle, non-invasive massage and simple, safe touching — e.g. resting a hand on someone's lower arm — paired with some kind words is often all the reassurance that's needed to calm yourself or others.

## 8. MANAGING CHALLENGES

### BODILY BREAKDOWN

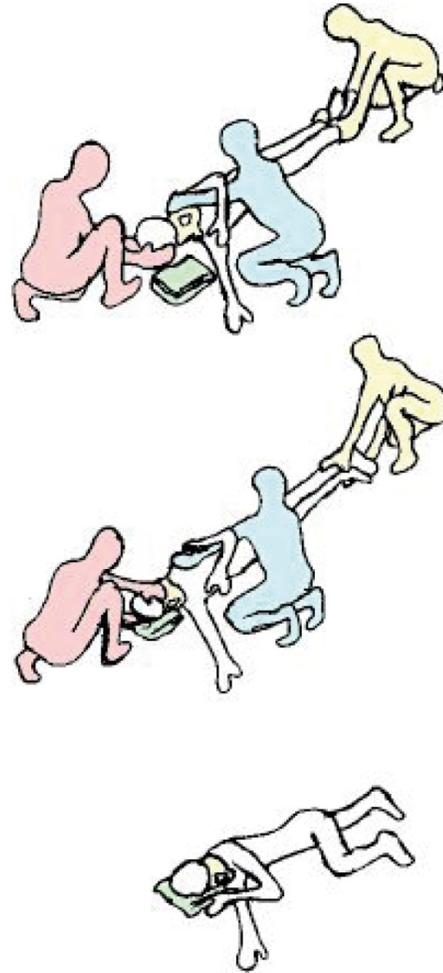
The physical effects of sacred mushrooms are negligible but include pupil dilation, moderate changes in blood pressure, lack of coordination, and nausea. Nausea is typically transient, but the simple act of providing a bucket and tissues nearby can be beneficial. Purging is possible but uncommon.

**Nausea can often be reduced simply by taking the attention away from the stomach and focusing it on the music or something else, like a deep breathing exercise.** In ceremonial settings, vomiting, sometimes described as ‘getting well,’ may be considered an important part of the healing process.

Oftentimes, just knowing that nausea may occur, and that its cause is usually the result of sacred mushrooms [affecting the serotonin receptors in the gut](#)  can be enough of a reassurance to overcome this brief period in your experience. In other words, **nausea is a feeling that sometimes arises during your experience but isn't a sign that you actually need to vomit.**

When there is clear evidence of a bad reaction, like difficulty breathing, irregular heartbeat patterns, or other definite physiological problems — make sure the person checking these signs is fit to do so competently — seek medical attention. **If there's someone nearby who has not taken the medicine, get their support and advice before summoning medical help.**

Pay attention to clear physiological signs of distress. If your blood pressure drops and you feel faint. sit down! If someone becomes unconscious, check that their airway is clear, that they're in a safe place, and put them into the recovery position.



Periods of unconsciousness, characterized by reduced muscle tone and immobility or by seizures, can and do happen occasionally on sacred mushrooms and other psychedelic drugs. When this rare reaction does occur, it is usually after ingesting a high dose or when the psychonaut is in a sensitive state.

**In every case, check the pulse and breathing.**

**Dissociative states usually pass in less than 20 minutes and cause no lasting damage.** Subjectively, the person going through this state may be having a wonderful innerworld adventure!

## 8. MANAGING CHALLENGES

Nonetheless, these events can be distressing for people witnessing it occur. It may therefore be beneficial to talk through what happened after the session.

Physiological problems are remarkably rare with sacred mushrooms and **often seemingly organic problems — e.g. breathing or nausea — are rooted in anxiety and psychic distress.**

If, as is likely, the person under duress is simply having a difficult journey, and others present are competent to assess this, it may

not be wise to call an ambulance. Hospital environments are unlikely to provide a comforting set and setting for a psychedelic experience.

At festivals, there may be spaces specifically set up for supporting people who are experiencing challenging psychedelic experiences, staffed by competent sitters. If you plan to use sacred mushrooms or other psychedelics at a festival, **make note of the location of such services or figure out a way to summon assistance, if needed, before ingesting the medicine.**



### BE THERE NOW

When assisting someone experiencing a difficult journey, it's important to remain relaxed, open, and calm. In essence, you want to set an example of the relaxed and easygoing state of mind you hope to bring the person having a challenging journey back towards.

There are various methods for checking how a person is doing cognitively.

Ask them simple questions, like their name, address, and the date. Be mindful of how you speak, especially if the psychonaut is experiencing paranoia.

It can be quite useful to find a phrase that seems to help — e.g. “you’re coming through this journey and transforming yourself” —

and repeat it calmly rather than engaging in a more elaborate dialogue.

Other simple statements like “you’re doing really well” expressed gently, clearly, and kindly are ideal.

There are no useful home remedies that can turn off or reduce the intensity of a sacred mushroom or other psychedelic experience. And while aborting a psychedelic experience using pharmacological interventions such as tranquilizers or antipsychotic medications is possible under medical supervision, **it can sometimes result in psychological problems such as a sense of ‘unfinished business,’ which in the long run can be detrimental.**



### EGO INFLATION

A possible effect of any psychedelic is what is often described as ‘ego inflation.’ In such an episode, the person under the influence of a psychedelic comes to believe either during or after the session that they are in some way profoundly, individually ‘special’.

Delusions or confusions about being the new messiah and/or in direct personal contact with spirits can happen. While less common with sacred mushrooms than with some other psychedelics (notably LSD and ayahuasca), these phenomena can and do occur.

## 8. MANAGING CHALLENGES

They can be transient or persist for some time after the journey. When possible, it's important for the psychonaut to question these beliefs, which are often framed as knowing better/more authentically/being more spiritually attuned than others.

This is where a supportive community can be invaluable, helping the psychonaut put their 'revelation' into a broader context. **The power of gentle, compassionate humor can go a long way towards defusing what can, if left unchecked, develop into megalomania and mental ill-health.**



### TACKLING TRAUMA

During a sacred mushroom experience, **difficult personal memories may come to the surface.**

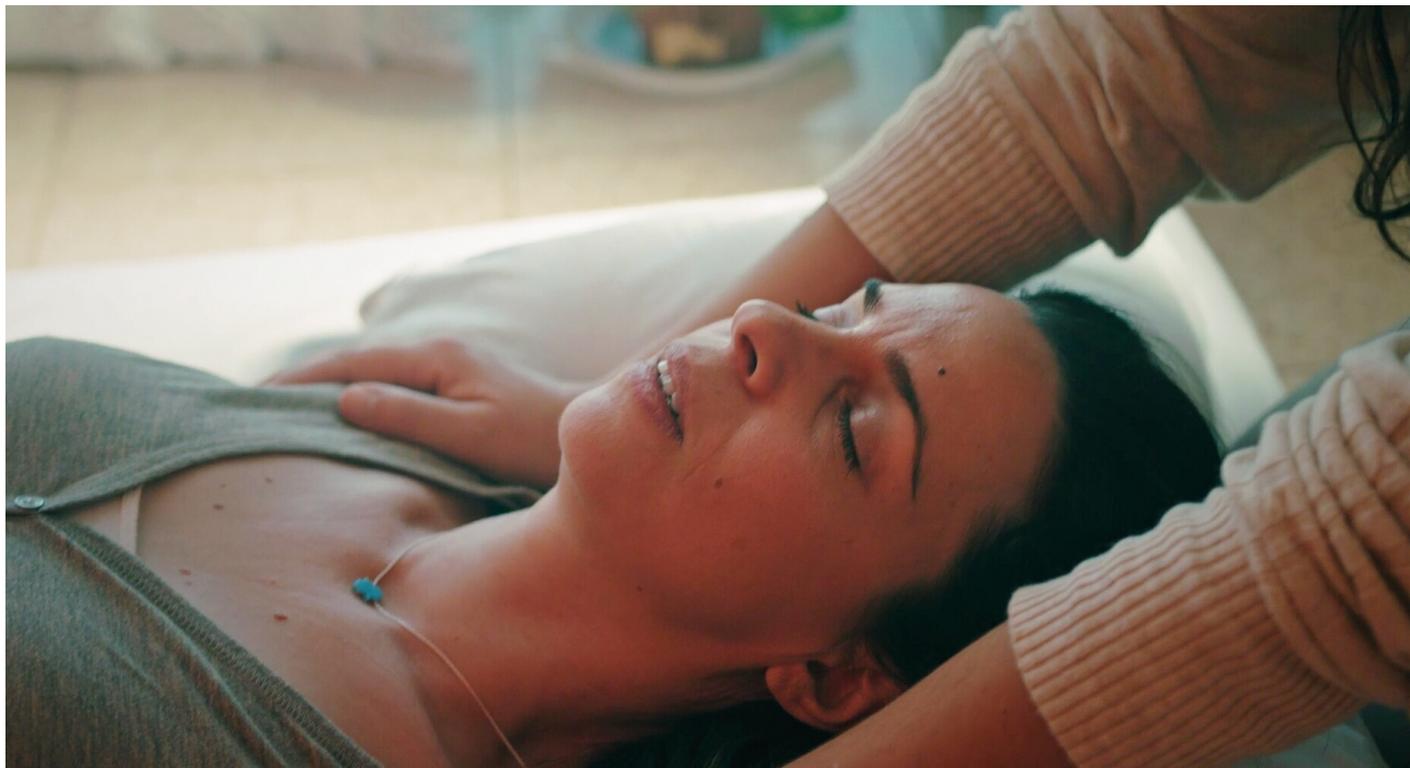
Trauma rooted in a wider social, cultural, or generational context can also appear, like memories of genocides, war, slavery, or other terrible experiences.

Inside the sacred mushroom experience, gentle supportive care can help. After the journey, it may help to speak with others about the generational wounds you've encountered.

It's especially valuable if a supportive and wise member of the same affected

community can help you process the experience. Feelings of survivor guilt, shame, and other difficult emotions may require expert help to process successfully.

The sacred mushroom experience can help you successfully navigate through traumatic material. In these situations, it's helpful to recognize the challenges encountered in your journey may be personal and collective, and that what you're doing is important work. By successfully undertaking such a journey, we help to heal both personal and collective wounds.



## 8. MANAGING CHALLENGES

### SURRENDER

For most difficult sacred mushroom journeys, **the best course of action is to simply trust the process, trust the medicine, let go, and ride it out.**

The most fundamental key to working with sacred mushrooms or any other psychedelic drug is to open up and let the medicine work

through you, even when it feels difficult. It's important to remind yourself, and be reminded by others, that you are on a drug that is safe and transient.

Remember the classic mantra for challenging journeys: **'This too shall pass.'**

### IT'S OKAY NOT TO BE OKAY

Part of the reason you choose to commune with sacred mushrooms may be to put you in touch with difficult emotional content. So, it's quite normal for some parts of your experience to feel difficult in one way or another.

Moments when we 'lose the plot' or 'freak out', if the session is held well and suitable aftercare and integration is achieved, can in the long run be beneficial, or at least a necessary process in your healing.

As the saying goes, 'You can't make an omelette without breaking some eggs!' Even experiences of panic and profound fear can be productive when handled and processed correctly.

Likewise, a sacred mushroom journey may not meet your expectations. You may come

away feeling bored, sad, or let down by the medicine. Yet, these feelings too can be acknowledged, welcomed, and sat with.

Again, 'this too shall pass.' **What may seem like a disappointing journey can, after reflection, turn out to be just the lesson you needed.** Even if you find this isn't the case, the future may bring an opportunity for another session which may unfold very differently, helping you appreciate both polarities more.

For some psychedelic explorers, it may take several sacred mushroom sessions to get to where you want with the medicine. For others, it may lead to the realization that, at least at the moment, the sacred mushroom or psychedelic experience may not be the right medicine for you at the moment.



### RESOURCES

[The Manual of Psychedelic Support](#)

[The Tripper's Guide to An Awesome Ride](#)

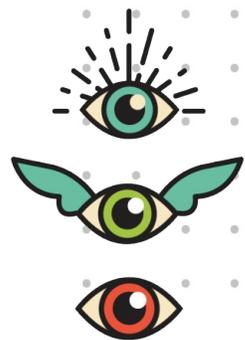
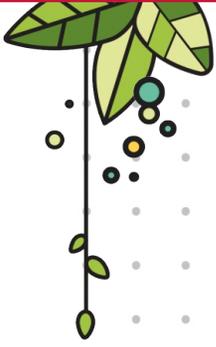
Physical and Psychological Effects of Psilocybin:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psilocybin#Physical\\_effects](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psilocybin#Physical_effects)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0269881116662634>

[https://doc.rero.ch/record/309825/files/213\\_2003\\_Article\\_1640.pdf](https://doc.rero.ch/record/309825/files/213_2003_Article_1640.pdf)

[https://erowid.org/psychoactives/faqs/psychedelic\\_crisis\\_faq.shtml](https://erowid.org/psychoactives/faqs/psychedelic_crisis_faq.shtml)





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**9**

# THE ART OF COMING DOWN

## 9. THE ART OF COMING DOWN

**In this lesson, you'll learn about:**

- Coming down
- Integration
- Settling
- Turning experience into understanding

### BACK TO BASELINE

For most people, the sacred mushroom experience lasts about 4 or 5 hours, though if a booster dose is taken, the experience may last a bit longer. Any physiological effects — e.g. poor coordination, dilated pupils, etc. — will quickly subside as the medicine wears off.

You may begin to reflect on the experience as the experience fades. **This reflection is an indication that the journey's end is near.**

You may feel as though the journey ends abruptly, which can evoke a feeling of

sadness.

But unlike other psychedelics, the return journey with sacred mushrooms is typically quite gentle, leaving a positive afterglow.

Strong feelings may arise from the experience and you may feel the need to cry and/or laugh afterwards. These feelings should be welcomed as part of the process.

For most people, what's left after the journey's conclusion is a sense of wellbeing and perhaps relief at having come through a powerful experience. Amazement and a sense of awe are also common.

Offering gratitude for the experience and acknowledging the wonder of your body, nervous system, and mushrooms, can be helpful. You may also feel called to offer thanks to gods, spirits, ancestors or other beings. Depending on the setting and level of curation, ceremonial prayers or other rituals may formally mark the end of the session.



## 9. THE ART OF COMING DOWN

In a peer group setting, cleaning away the debris of the session, opening doors, sweeping the floor, and other acts of tidying up can help on a psychological as well as physical level. Opening the windows to let fresh air into the space can help demarcate and support the transition from the psychedelic to the baseline state.

**Be easy and gentle with yourself and anyone around you who is also coming out of the journey, especially if they are not yet at baseline.** It may feel like you have an urgent need to share your experience. In some settings, that may be fine. But in ceremonial and peer group contexts, it may be best to wait for a while. Perhaps try to eat something first to ground and recharge.

**Please ensure you are firmly at baseline and wait at least two hours after the journey ends before driving.** Always err on the side of caution. It is best to plan to rest, sleep, and then drive.

### SETTLING INTO A NEW NORMAL

Taking a bath or shower after your journey can be a simple but powerful act. In the days following your journey, caring and nurturing yourself is vital. Be compassionate with yourself. Rejoice that you've been through what may have been a life-changing experience.

### TIME IS THE GREATEST INTEGRATOR

Give yourself time both immediately after the journey and in the days that follow to rest, reflect, and recharge. Good food and good sleep are important to allow the experience to fully settle into the deepest parts of mind and body.

A comfortable, calming, beautiful place to rest following a sacred mushroom journey

is a blessing! The resting and dreaming state are also powerful and should be very much understood as part of the integration process.

It's best to avoid any major commitments for a day or two after the session. **During this immediate integration period, you may do many of the same things you did to prepare for the session** like being mindful of the media you consume, the food you eat, spending time in nature, and practicing meditation, light bodywork, and active relaxation.

Remember that even positive, beautiful journeys take time to integrate.



### THOUGHT BEFORE ACTION

We recommend waiting to take action on any insights you may have felt you 'had to do' during your journey. **Allow yourself some critical distance so that you can judge how to skilfully manifest your psychedelic insights in the world.**

In the days and weeks that follow your experience, allow yourself time to mull over and appreciate what you've experienced. You may find memories of the psychedelic state surface in your waking hours. These may be triggered by some stimulus associated with the state, or a dream related to the experience.

## 9. THE ART OF COMING DOWN

**It can be useful to write down the key insights from your journey, express them through art, or record your impressions.** These processes of integration never need to stop. Some psychonauts will continue to produce writing or art inspired by a journey long after it is over.

Physically, you're likely to feel very well in the days following your experience. Sacred mushrooms can have anti-inflammatory effects and promote circulation. You may feel sexually energized.

The positive psychological effects of your journey can linger for months, even years, but those with mental illness like chronic anxiety may find these conditions eventually creep back into awareness as time passes.

**The period of wellbeing following your journey can be an ideal time to change your lifestyle,** like ceasing damaging addictions, beginning a more regular exercise program, and/or reaching out to others.

### EVERY ROSE HAS ITS THORN

Perhaps your journey was marked by a sense of incompleteness. Maybe the dose felt too low, provided no breakthroughs, unfolded in an unexpected way, or didn't address the issues you sought to work through. Talking through these feelings with others can be very helpful.

**It's also important to allow time for the insight and unconscious effect of the journey to filter into daily life.** Weeks or months later, you may realize you received just what was needed at that time.

Even if nothing of that sort ever arrives, you can always return to the psychedelic space. Never forget that **all of us are human, imperfect, and a 'work in progress.'**

If you're using sacred mushrooms to address complex traumas, **one session is unlikely to be enough.** The experience, or let down after a failure to breakthrough, may also be a message that you need to engage with some other healing modality like psychotherapy or a body based healing technique.

### INTEGRATION CIRCLES

It may be helpful to talk about your experience with others. On the other hand, you may desire to avoid narrating the journey but simply let it and its teachings emerge gradually in your psyche and life. In some entheogenic cultures, the exact contents of a journey are considered to be best kept private.

**Seeking out trusted and ideally, psychedelically knowledgeable friends can be very helpful.** Getting access to an integration circle, an experienced psychedelic integration therapist, or a wise, open-minded friend can be one of the most rewarding parts of the journey.

As we talk about and explain things to others, we may discover realizations. We also have the chance to hear other examples of how people have used their psychedelic insights to inform their daily lives.

In a peer-group session, meeting up a day or two after the experience can be interesting and fun as psychonauts share stories and compare experiences.



## 9. THE ART OF COMING DOWN

### TIME AND SPACE

It's usually wise to space out your psychedelic experiences. Your body and mind need rest. To craft a healthy relationship with the medicine, and to show your appreciation of it, you need to give the experience time to settle and yourself time to reflect on what happened.

To return to a baseline level of physiological

tolerance, most people recommend at least a week between sacred mushroom journeys.

**Psychologically speaking, much longer, say several months, may be the best practice.**

Sacred mushrooms exhibit cross tolerance with a number of other psychedelics. As a result, a substance like LSD will probably have less of an effect if taken soon after a sacred mushroom journey.



### RESOURCES

[Psychedelic Integration List - MAPS](#) ↗

[Psychedelic Integration Therapists - UK](#) ↗

[Psychedelic Support Network - Therapy and Integration Services](#) ↗

[Psychedelic Integration UK Home Page](#) ↗



# NOTES





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10

**MODELS**  
OF THE PSYCHEDELIC  
EXPERIENCE

## 10. MODELS OF THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE

In this lesson, you'll learn about **the different methods and models for understanding sacred mushroom and psychedelic experiences**, including how the experience may relate to human biology, life, and culture as a whole.

### ANIMIST AND RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

In traditional entheogenic societies, the language and ideas used to describe psychedelic substances like sacred mushrooms typically fall within an animist or religious frame of reference.

An example, we can take this quote from the **Mazatec healer Maria Sabina**:

*"It's that in me, there is **no sorcery, there is no anger, there are no lies**. Because I don't have garbage. I don't have dust. The sickness comes out if the sick vomit. They vomit the sickness. They vomit because the mushrooms want them to. If the sick don't vomit, I vomit. **I vomit for them and in that way the malady is expelled**. The mushrooms have power because they are the flesh of God. And **those that believe are healed**. Those that do not believe are not healed."*

Many of the approaches employed in entheogenic sessions — whether ancient or modern — rely on you **"buying into" the experience**, i.e. believing in the medicine's effectiveness. In this sense, Maria Sabina's statement could be imagined as representing a deep understanding of what's known as the placebo effect.

The act of removing 'spirit intrusions,' 'energy blockages,' making healing passes over the body, or other physical acts during a psychedelic ceremony **have the effect of creating powerful metaphorical statements**. Often, these are framed as a 'removal' of that which is bad — vomiting out the sickness — or the recollection of that which has been broken or lost.

In Maria Sabina's description of the psychedelic process, she makes clear the importance of a ceremony's leaders to be in a state of 'no sorcery, no anger, and no lies'.

In other words, preparation and purification before the ceremony is essential. **The wellbeing of the ceremony's leader** — e.g. the 'shaman' — **is intimately linked with that of the practitioners**. As Sabina explained, if the practitioners cannot vomit out their sickness, the shaman will do it for them.

### MODERN WESTERN MODELS

Since western society's re-encounter with psychedelics toward the end of the 19th century — and particularly since the clinical and wider cultural use of psychedelics in the mid 20th century — various models have been proposed to interpret the psychedelic experience.

### STAGES OF THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE

*The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on The Tibetan Book of the Dead* — often simply referred to as *The Psychedelic Experience* — was co authored by [Timothy Leary](#) and [Ralph Metzner](#) and [Richard Alpert](#) who later became known as [Ram Dass](#)

Published in 1964, this book was inspired by ideas drawn from the Buddhist text the [Tibetan Book of the Dead](#) which describes how to navigate the process of death and the intermediate states — or 'bardos' — before rebirth. Using this set of Buddhist ideas, **the authors drew parallels between the bardo states and the states of ego-dissolution — AKA 'ego-death' — that can occur on psychedelics**.

The book outlines different attitudes you should attempt to cultivate as you meet each

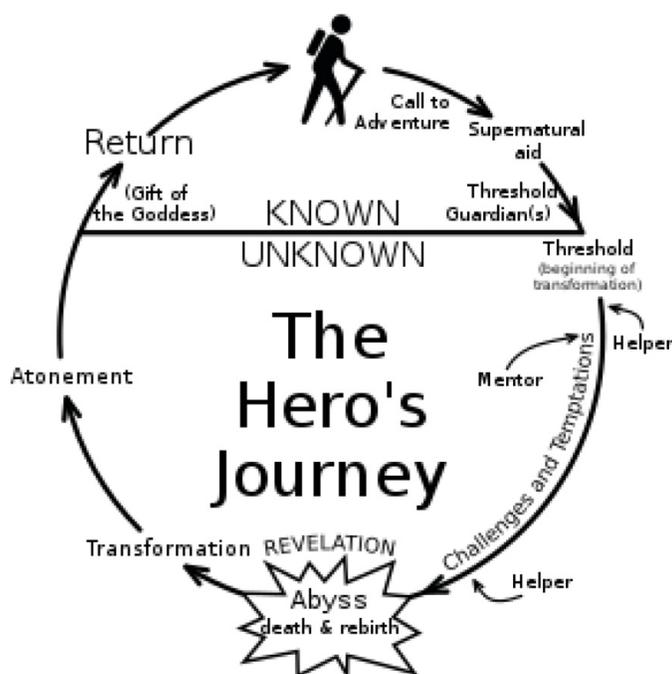
## 10. MODELS OF THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE

bardo, or stage. The book also contains sections designed to be read aloud during psychedelic sessions, as well as other advice on how to use psychedelics.

Related to the bardo model is the [Eight-circuit model](#) of consciousness developed by Timothy Leary and later expanded upon by Robert Anton Wilson and Antero Alli. In this model, various circuits or capacities are imagined to exist within each person, which can be activated by using psychedelic drugs.

### THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Another model for understanding the psychedelic experience is what's known as the Hero's Journey. The idea, developed by various people but perhaps most closely associated with mythographer Joseph Campbell and his book [The Hero with a Thousand Faces](#) postulates that there's a **fundamental mythic storyline that appears across cultures, religions, and mythologies, called the monomyth.**



Though you may notice connections and/or differences between the Hero's Journey model and your own experiences, the concept's most

important contribution to understanding psychedelic experiences may be the teaching that **obstacles and challenges, even a 'long dark night of the soul,' are inevitable parts of the journey.**

The very fact that we call sacred mushroom experiences a 'journey' or 'trip' relates them to metaphors of movement and travel. And as in any journey, there are times when things flow effortlessly, and moments when the 'going gets tough.'

### RESEARCH LEADING TO NEW INSIGHTS

More recent contributions to our understanding of psychedelic experiences include the psychedelic therapy model 'Accept, Connect, Embody' (ACE) created by psychedelic therapist [Dr. Roslind Watts](#)

In Watts' work, she found **people communing with sacred mushrooms to treat their depression oftentimes realized — during or after the journey — their illness was about disconnection with oneself.**

One of the principle metaphors used by Watts in the ACE model is of the psychonaut diving into the unconscious realm and coming across spiky shellfish at the bottom of an ocean. Though fearsome in appearance, the shellfish were in fact where the pearls of wisdom and transformational insight resided.

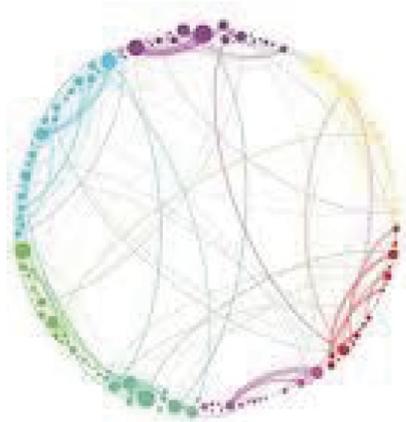
Dr. Watts' model draws on insights from [acceptance and commitment therapy](#) which stresses the importance of surrendering oneself to the psychedelic state.

Another psychedelic researcher, [Dr. Robin Carhart-Harris](#) developed a theory postulating the psychedelic experience is beneficial because it destabilizes normal brain functioning, thrusting it into a state similar to psychosis. This model is called

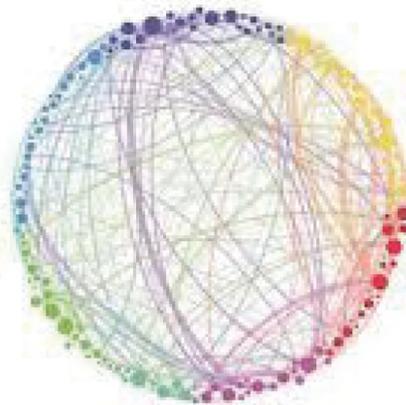
# 10. MODELS OF THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE

Relaxed Beliefs Under Psychedelics, or [REBUS](#)

This model is closely informed by the [current neurological understanding](#) of how psychedelics work and returns in some senses to the model of psychedelics as [‘psychotomimetic’](#) meaning they mimic the symptoms of [psychosis](#)



the brain is pictured on placebo  
(using neuroimaging data)



the brain is pictured on psilocybin

This diagram depicts the relationship between regions of the brain under a placebo (left) and under the influence of psilocybin (right).

In the placebo diagram, you can see the brain in **its ‘default mode network,’ the idle state of being when we’re not engaged in a task.**

In the psilocybin diagram, the default mode network is turned off and **novel connections are emerging between previously unconnected parts of the brain.**

As we’ve mentioned before, music can profoundly impact the sacred mushroom experience, including the visions you perceive. This may be due to a kind of ‘cross-writing’ of the visual and auditory systems in the brain.

The hyper connected state of the sacred mushroom influenced brain may also account for why novel ideas, insights, and long forgotten memories tend to arise.

And as science has recently found, [psilocybin can induce neuronal growth and increase neuronal connectivity](#) which persists long after the psychedelic experience has passed.

The implications here are significant and raise the possibility that [psychedelics may have the potential](#) **to help people suffering from neurodegenerative** **diseases** like Alzheimer’s, Dementia, and Parkinson’s Disease.

It’s worth noting that measurable similarities have been found between the brain state of long term meditation practitioners, and the brain state of people under the influence of psychedelics. Similarities between the psychedelic brain and brain states observed in preverbal children have also been observed.

## SACRED MUSHROOMS AS MEDICINE WHEEL

One other valuable way of understanding the psychedelic experience is presented by Daniel McQueen in conjunction with [Medicinal Mindfulness](#) This ‘metamodel’

## 10. MODELS OF THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE

is inspired by the Native American medicine wheel and describes the four main paradigms of psychedelic use.

**East** — Spiritual, Religious

Entheogens are very likely the origin of modern religion. Yet you don't need to be religious to have a spiritual experience. Sacred mushrooms can induce states of personal, intimate connection with the Divine (Creator, Universe, Spirit, Great Mystery, Self, Source, Absolute, etc.). These so-called "mystical experiences" are often beyond words and concepts.

**South** — Emotional, Creative

Sacred mushrooms can help us tap into the inherent creativity inside all of us. The south of the psychedelic compass also symbolizes celebration and playfulness. **True psychedelic maturity paradoxically includes being childlike and playful.**

The South also represents activism, of standing for what you believe to be the truth and taking mindful action to bring this truth to the world. **Conscious activism is motivated by connection, love, and care.**

Before we have grieved the loss that has wounded our hearts, our well-meaning actions and words are shadowed by fear, anger, and judgment. If our intention is to have a positive impact in this world then the art of connection, not alienation, is what we need to master.

**West** — Physical, Psychological

Many humans have traumatic wounds from the past. The pain we carry or the love and safety we didn't receive in childhood leaves a mark. This often manifests as addiction and patterns of impulsive and self-destructive behavior. With proper intention and guidance,

**sacred mushrooms can help us release trauma and live a life free from addiction.**

**North** — Mental, Practical, Scientific

Entheogens can be used to find practical solutions to difficult problems. There are accounts of discovering real world solutions to mathematical, scientific, and engineering problems under the influence of sacred mushrooms. Artists have also described dissolving creative blocks during an experience.

### METAPHORS AREN'T MAPS

Each of these metaphorical models seek to make sense of the sacred mushroom experience. And while we may find them useful, we must also remember that **a map is a depiction of a territory, but not the territory itself!**

Perhaps what's most important about these ideas is their attempt to understand the psychedelic state, and a reminder that the insights sacred mushrooms and other psychedelics offer often appear as metaphors. For example, you may return from your journey with a new insight rooted in a new metaphor.

'I feel like I'm reborn!' you may say. Or, 'I've seen how things can be different for me'.

In this way, a metaphor discovered during a journey can be the way you relate to and explain your insight to others and to yourself. It can also serve as practical insight to be acted upon and/or recognized as truth.

In a talk full of metaphors, famed psychonaut Terence McKenna explained: *"My notion of what the psychedelic experience is for, is that we each must become like fishermen and go out into the dark ocean of mind and let your nets down*

## 10. MODELS OF THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE

*into that sea. And what you're after is not some behemoth that will tear through your nets, foul them and drag you and your little boat into the abyss. Nor are we looking for a bunch of sardines that can slip through your nets and disappear, ideas like "Have you ever noticed that your little finger exactly fits your nostril?" and stuff like that."*

*"What we are looking for are middle sized ideas that are not so small that they are trivial and not so large that they're incomprehensible. But middle sized ideas that we can wrestle into our boat and take back to the folks on shore and have fish-dinner."*



### RESOURCES

[Manifesting Metaphorical Minds – Exploring How Psychedelic Healing Works](#) ↗

Recent sacred mushroom scientific research:

[Psilocybin for treatment-resistant depression: fMRI-measured brain mechanisms](#) ↗  
[Psilocybin-occasioned mystical-type experience in combination with meditation and other spiritual practices produces enduring positive changes in psychological functioning](#) ↗

[Neural correlates of the psychedelic state as determined by fMRI studies with psilocybin](#) ↗

Recent non-scientific articles on psychedelics

[Psychedelic Research Finds Ego Exists in This Part of the Brain](#) ↗  
[Why Interrupting the Default Mode Network with Psychedelics is Good for Mental Health](#) ↗

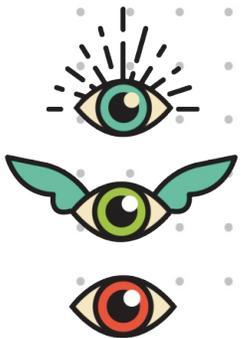
### FILMS

[Dr Rosalind Watts - Psilocybin For Depression: Introducing the ACE model \(Accept, Connect, Embody\)](#) ↗

[Dr Robin Carhart-Harris - A Unified Model of the Brain Action of Psychedelics](#) ↗

[Peyote: Last of The Medicine Men - Huichol People of Mexico](#) ↗

# NOTES







11



**THE JOURNEY  
NEVER ENDS**

# 11. THE JOURNEY NEVER ENDS

In this lesson you'll learn how to **continue your path of self-discovery, offer your insights and gifts to the world, and craft a more fulfilling life for you and the whole of humanity.**

## PRACTICING WHAT YOU - AND SACRED MUSHROOMS - PREACH

Sacred mushrooms are a great blessing, offering us remarkable insights in joyous, beautiful, and challenging ways.

Learning how to curate, enter, navigate, and integrate these experiences is a lifelong journey.

**What happens in the psychedelic state should inform you when you're in other states of awareness**, whether with friends, family, lovers, co-workers, or those with whom you're in conflict.

If you're to truly respect and learn from this medicine, it should inspire and change you in every aspect of your life.

Consider the type of preparation you make for a sacred mushroom journey, and the processes you use afterward to integrate your insights. Then remember that each night, you enter a visionary journey in your dreams.

With that in mind, **you may want to start incorporating the preparation, navigation, and integration skills used in sacred mushroom journeywork into your daily life.**

### These practices may include:

- Communing with nature often
- Regularly **exercising**
- Consuming healthy, nourishing food

- Consciously making personal choices — e.g. diet, travel, and consumption habits — and understanding how they affect the world
- **Meditating** and spending time being what the Romantic poets called 'diligently indolent,' that is, not 'doing' but **allowing yourself to just 'be'**
- **Creating** — e.g. art, clothes, growing food — instead of consuming
- Being of **service to your community**
- 'Showing up' for others — e.g. offering support, friendship, care, and joining in solidarity with people who are victims of prejudice or other harm
- **Laughing** and making others laugh more often

Learning to accept who you are, that you're inherently worthy of love, and that the human condition is marked and defined by challenges to be overcome, is an invaluable understanding not only within the psychedelic state, but in the journey of life as a whole.



The compassion and care you cultivate for yourself and those around you during a sacred mushroom journey should extend well beyond that setting.

# 11. THE JOURNEY NEVER ENDS

## HEAL YOURSELF, HEAL OTHERS

As you hone your ability to accept yourself without judgement, you'll find yourself in a position to help others. This is a virtuous circle.

Coming to know yourself better — through the psychedelic experience and other processes of self-discovery — you can then offer your gifts more authentically to others who in turn can support you, and others, when times get tough.

Creating **strong, meaningful relationships** with others, finding kind and intelligent strategies to address problems when problems arise, and **building community** is essential to the betterment of humanity. Acknowledging your vulnerabilities and celebrating your successes helps everyone.

Other people can learn from your experiences, too. Consider sharing your psychedelic experiences on services like [Erowid](#) and in person at integration circles and other spaces.

As you gain experience, you'll understand that **there's always more to learn**. Nonetheless, seasoned psychonauts can draw on experience and provide great advice to those with less psychedelic know-how. If and when you become an elder in the community, **consider how to pass on and share your wisdom**.

## PUSH THE MOVEMENT FORWARD

Sacred mushrooms are a controlled substance in most jurisdictions around the world. At times, this reality may upset you. Yet there are countless ways to help create opportunities for others to use this medicine in an intelligent, safe, informed way.

Some examples include getting involved with organizations related to harm reduction, anti-prohibition campaigns, prisoner support, and movements to increase the accessibility of licensed psychedelic therapy to the disenfranchised and impoverished populations that need it most.

## DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS

Sacred mushrooms offer us a new way of perceiving the inner and outer world. This shift in perspective is the source of many of its teachings.

With that in mind, **continue to 'feed your head'**.

Enhance your skills in curating sacred mushroom sessions by learning about how other psychedelic substances — ketamine, MDMA, cannabis, peyote, ayahuasca (DMT), iboga, salvia divinorum, etc. — are used.

With time and research, you'll begin to notice how these traditions continuously transform and redefine themselves. In other words, your exploration and education should never end.

**Investigate how other spaces related to holding and directing a psychological experience operate.** Performance spaces like church, theatre, film, art, and even archaeology have much to offer in understanding, navigating, and curating psychedelic spaces.

So too do different schools of psychology, especially those that deal with transcendent phenomena like [Jungian psychoanalysis](#) transpersonal psychology, and neurotheology.

**Take time to engage with indigenous worldviews and lifestyles.** Study a variety of religious traditions and mythologies.

## 11. THE JOURNEY NEVER ENDS

Understanding the different archetypes within our 'psychic architecture' can prove invaluable when working with people and psychedelics.

Connect to other communities — whether focused on spirituality, art, politics, or sports — to ensure you don't get stuck in the psychedelic ghetto.

Stay alert to the changes in legislation and research so you can situate your practice in a way that is sane, safe, and well informed. Sign up for one of the many online news services related to psychedelics and, if able, make in-person connections by attending groups, conferences, and events.

Lastly, remember to **keep things in perspective by practicing humility**. Don't underplay your skills and experience but don't assume just because you've gone on a lot of journeys or taken high doses that you know the answers to life or the universe.

Be especially wary of assuming you or others know the 'One True Way' to do things. Broaden your perspective and make room for the possibility that you're wrong. As sacred mushrooms teach us, discovering new perspectives can change our minds and lives.

### TAKE IT EASY, BUT TAKE IT!

Thank you for joining us in this experience that is the Fungi Academy's Psychedelic Journeywork course. I hope you've found it informative, inspirational, and useful in your own unique journey.

Still thirsting for more information or a community of like-minded cultivators,

psychonauts, and mycophiles? **Consider joining the Fungi Academy Discord server** and keeping up-to-date on the ongoing program of workshops, lectures, and events by visiting our [website](#) ↗

If you haven't already, **subscribe to our weekly Mushroom Magic on Monday newsletter**, where we share the latest news in the mycosphere and psychedelic frontier with our readers.

And [check out our blog](#) ↗ which is quickly expanding into a library of mycological knowledge.

Sacred mushroom medicine is extremely powerful. When treated with kindness and respect, it can be a great blessing and healer for you as an individual and for humanity as a whole.

May you find your own unique medicine, your own unique gifts and talents, and may the sacrament of sacred mushrooms aid you in this work for the benefit of yourself and all beings.

**Stay high, stay free!**

*Julian Vayne  
Devon, British Isles, 2020*



# 11. THE JOURNEY NEVER ENDS

## RESOURCES

Psychedelic Research and Harm Reduction Organizations

[Global Drug Survey](#) ↗

[Beckley Foundation: Psychedelic Research & Drug Policy](#) ↗

[Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies - MAPS](#) ↗

[Centre for Psychedelic Research | Research groups](#) ↗

Psychedelic News and Discussion

[Psychedelic Times - The Psychedelic Research, Plant Medicine & Entheogen Resource](#) ↗

[Psychedelic Salon Podcasts - Quotes, comments, and audio files  
from Lorenzo's podcasts](#) ↗

[Adventures Through The Mind | A Psychedelic Podcast by James W. Jesso](#) ↗

[Darren Le Baron](#) ↗

More Perspectives

[Center for Psychedelic Therapies and Research | CIIS](#) ↗

[Horizons: Perspectives on Psychedelics](#) ↗

[Synthesis: Legal Psychedelic Retreat in Amsterdam](#) ↗

Drug Decriminalization/Legalization Organizations and Supporting the Release of Prisoners  
from the War on Drugs

[Scales - Psychedelic Prisoner Support Network](#) ↗

[CAN-DO Foundation Home - Justice Through Clemency](#) ↗

[ADF | Ayahuasca Defense Fund | Legal Support | ICEERS](#) ↗

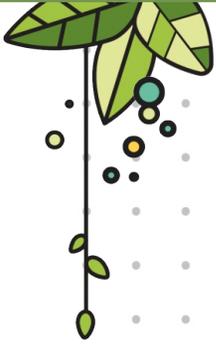
[Transform Drug Policy Foundation: Home](#) ↗



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# NOTES



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