

THE MAGIC MUSHROOM User's Guide



The Psilocybin
Handbook
for Safe and
Ceremonial Use
of Psychedelic
Mushrooms.
A Practical and
Sacred Journey for
the Awakening
of Consciousness

DM TRIPSON

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In the book there are a number of links to texts and videos that allow you to deepen your study, with website addresses abbreviated using the service tinyurl.com, reducing a very long website address to just a few characters so that it may be easier to write in the browser of the device you are using.

This abbreviation is made up of **3 parts**:

1. https:// you don't have to type it because browsers complete it automatically;
2. tinyurl.com/ should be written, but it is short and always the same for all addresses;
3. a series of seven or eight numbers and characters that must be written, the latter always in lower case, so that they are easier to type than sequences where letters are both upper and lower case.

No medical or psychological advice

The information contained in the book should not be considered as a substitute to medical advice and does not form part of medical or psychological practice.

You should not rely on this information as a substitute for a medical consultation, or as professional medical advice, nor should it be considered a medical diagnosis or treatment.

The author declines any responsibility for any of the readers' actions or inactions based on the information presented in this book.

Always seek professional medical advice from your doctor, or from another qualified health professional, for any questions related to a medical condition regarding physical and mental health.

“My life is a story of the self-realization of the unconscious. Everything in the unconscious seeks outward manifestation, and the personality too desires to evolve out of its unconscious conditions and to experience itself as a whole.”

C.G.JUNG

This book is dedicated with admiration and respect to Terence McKenna, a great explorer of consciousness, a unique psychonaut and a witty visionary to whom I owe a lot.

I owe even more to Italo Cillo - Rishi Chony Dorje, my spiritual teacher for just a few years, a loving and bright being, possessing all the best human qualities, who opened me up to a world I didn't imagine existed. He left us in 2016. To him goes my dedication and much gratitude. I hope to meet him again in this life that has no beginning and no end.

Finally I dedicate it to all the brothers and sisters I have met on my path with the Master Plants and beyond.

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PREFACE

In an advanced phase of the editing of this book I thought it appropriate to ask for a criminal lawyer's opinion, due to the fact that the subject I am writing about is forbidden by the law not only in my country, but also in most countries of the world.

I found a lawyer, sent him the text, and received two answers: a good one and a bad one. The good one was that he really liked the book, the bad one was a list of the Criminal Code articles that I could violate by publishing this text: instigation to commit crimes, proselytism, propaganda (though indirect). These are some of the accusations I could face because of writing about a substance listed in the law against narcotics and psychotropic substances.

At first I got scared, then I got angry because it is unfair and wrong to place mushrooms in the same category as cocaine and heroin. It is nonsense for many reasons. It should suffice to say that mushrooms are not addictive or habit-forming, moreover it is not possible to take them more than once a week because they would not work; finally, the potentially lethal dose is so many times higher than the active dose that it is physically impossible to die from eating magic mushrooms.

The most common psychoactive dose is between 1 and 3 grams of dried mushrooms, and a person weighing 70 kg would have a 50% chance of dying if he/she ate about 2 kg of dried mushrooms, or 20 kg of fresh mushrooms. This is impossible even for someone wishing to appear in the Guinness Book of Records, as there are insurmountable physiological

limitations.

How is it possible to associate them with objectively dangerous drugs such as cocaine or heroin? I have personally known several people who have died from heroin, and I know others who have had their lives ruined by cocaine, but I do not know of anyone who can say anything bad about mushrooms.

I therefore decided to do some research, discovering that in over 60 years only 3 deaths in the whole world have been considered related to magic mushrooms - due to the interaction of the pharmacological substance with the organism and not to accidents or as a consequence of dangerous behavior in a state of mental alteration. The only death unequivocally caused by mushrooms took place in 2012 and concerns a young 24 year old woman, who had however undergone a heart transplant 10 years earlier (heart problems are one of the important reasons why psilocybin should not be taken); the second case took place in 1996 in France, but is very controversial because it was not ascertained with certainty that the cause of death was mushrooms, while the third lethal event concerns a 5-year-old child, another controversial case because almost certainly he had also eaten poisonous mushrooms. The young woman would not have died if she had read this book, so the book is anything but propaganda and proselytism.

In 2009 in the Netherlands the sale of magic mushrooms was banned as a result of great media pressure due to the death of a French girl during a school trip in the spring of 2007. This poor girl had psychiatric problems (another reason for which psychedelics should not be taken), but it is not certain that she had eaten mushrooms - the autopsy that was done in France did not detect any substance in her body - but she had been seen with some companions who had perhaps taken them. She actually threw herself off a bridge, then a storm broke out against mushrooms which finally led to prohibition.

Almost 130,000 people die in Europe every year from road accidents, over 30% of them are young people under the age of 30, while 2,400,000

people are injured or remain disabled: do we ban cars? If we wanted to project these numbers over 60 years, just to make a comparison with the same period of time we considered when evaluating mushrooms, it would be like comparing two world wars to a quarrel amongst elementary school children.

But what are we talking about: a dangerous substance? Millions and millions of people have taken magic mushrooms and only three people have died, and even these cases are controversial and anything but certain.

In many countries it is compulsory to receive injections of vaccines, the content of which is the subject of controversy due to the presence of heavy metals and other toxic substances. Vaccines are contested by many for their questionable effectiveness, and rejected by many who support the direct relationship between vaccines and cases of autism during childhood, and yet we cannot take an absolutely safe and natural substance to explore our consciousness? The association between mushrooms and vaccines is not arbitrary, both substances are introduced into our body, but the artificial one (controversial) is mandatory while the natural one (safe) is forbidden.

I accept that many people may have an attitude of rejection towards psychotropic substances, but this is precisely why I do not accept that an ideological aversion should limit those who think differently. I do not want to start comparing what is worse by saying, for example, that alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous and yet they are free. Instead I want to reiterate that the substance is objectively safe, has a long tradition of sacred and ceremonial use, and does not induce addiction or even frequent use; moreover many who have tried it have never taken it again, therefore it is a safe substance but often unpleasant in its effects.

This is objective information and comparison should be made based on these elements and not on ideologies that are rooted in facts repeatedly denied by countless scientific studies and experiences. It is obvious that we cannot drive vehicles of any kind while under the effect of psychotropic substances, but apart from this specific case already forbidden by the law,

why can I not take mushrooms while I am safe at home or in a natural environment? What is the problem for others? Why should I be punished if I do not create problems and do no harm to anyone, even myself? The law should "punish" only if you cause harm to people or things. No one should be punished if they are not violating this basic principle.

In a well-known TED conference the writer Graham Hancock spoke of a "War on Consciousness", and this is exactly the point. Modern humans are asleep, but they believe they are superior to humans of the past only because there has been great technological progress, when in reality we have lost contact with ourselves, with the sacred, and with our origins, which are within Nature and not in opposition to it.

Darwinism, the theory according to which competition selects the fittest, had already been disowned by Darwin himself, as it has been repeatedly shown that nature proceeds by collaboration and not by competition. Nevertheless this theory is still taught so that we can continue to maintain that if someone prevails over many this is right and normal, because it is a natural law!

This dominant "neoliberal" view allows for the indiscriminate exploitation of the planet's resources, pollution, wars, but also for the worldwide success of companies that produce drugs that alter our state of consciousness in order to make us controllable, docile and essentially unwell. These are sugar, alcohol, tobacco, psychiatric drugs, stimulants such as tea and coffee, and there is a generalized abuse of all these substances, which effectively dim our intelligence and consciousness as well as causing a number of health problems.

In his talk, Hancock claimed the right to choose and to use sacred substances and thousand-year-old techniques to explore our inner world. He claimed that we need to get back in touch with Mother Earth and to take care of our planet as we are a part of it just like all other living beings inhabiting it. You absolutely have to see his talk. He conveys his feelings to the public in a strong and effective way - every time I see it I get excited: <https://tinyurl.com/l16oset>

I share his views that Holy Plants are an extraordinary tool for therapy and for the evolution of consciousness, but they are very dangerous for those who want people to remain easy to manipulate, regimented, and fast asleep. These sacred plants used in thousand-year-old traditions throughout the planet are anything but recreational substances, unless someone considers desirable having nausea, vomit and diarrhea, so frequent during these experiences.

Our problem as a society is that we have lost our connection with the Spirit and the Sacred. One of the available remedies is to reclaim the use of these substances in order to carry out a profound work of reconnection and inner healing; this is the meaning and purpose of the existence of all these miraculous substances, and psilocybin mushrooms are the most natural and available representatives of them in our western world.



According to my lawyer there are some risks. Publishing the text as I had written it could expose me to the possibility of a trial, up to 6 years imprisonment and finally the payment of substantial fines. The book would be seized of course, but that would be the least of my problems.

Inserting a rich bibliography and quoting the sources perhaps would not protect me. One solution would probably have been to transform the text into a fantasy story, a sort of novel with characters who live and talk about what I described in the original text. In a novel you can write all sorts of things. There is even a literary case, the biography of a modern Japanese cannibal. This was celebrated by the media, and yet we cannot talk about psychoactive mushrooms. The other alternative would have been to turn it into an academic essay addressed to a few scholars - if I had the qualifications to do this - removing any reference to practical advice.

Apart from the effort I had made up to that point, which would have been completely wasted because I would have had to rewrite the book completely, I think the real problem was that the reason I wrote this text in

the first place, that is to inform people, would have disappeared. A fiction story is not effective for conveying information and very few people like reading complicated essays, especially those who would like to try mushrooms, perhaps out of simple curiosity, without knowing that they are not recreational substances but powerful tools of inner investigation. Those who spend many months reading and inquiring before having their first experience are rare, and most people do not go deep and therefore risk having several problems, even serious ones. It is necessary to provide people with correct but simple information, accessible to anyone, only in this way can damage be avoided.

I spent several days asking myself what to do. Take the risk? Rewrite the text? Give up?

While I was thinking, I remembered that all the people who had told me they had taken mushrooms had one thing in common: no one had the faintest idea of the amount taken. By no one I mean not a single one. It is incredible that this can happen with a substance that has very particular effects, which vary a lot in relation to the quantities taken. I could not give up, I had to share my experiences and give better information about the risks and precautions to those who wanted to ignore the law and try them anyway. I had spoken to so many people and had the feeling that there could really be a lot of them like that.

Is this incitement? It seems crazy to me, just as it is crazy to close your eyes and pretend that there are only people who respect the law in the world. The premise seems interesting, that is, if you respect the law you cannot hurt yourself. But the assumption is perverse, that if you do not respect it this is just your problem, if you take the risk and die or you have serious problems it is just too bad. This is a cynical, stupid, very neoliberal attitude. What if it were your son trying them secretly without knowing exactly what he was doing? Wouldn't it be better if he were informed and could possibly understand that it is not a good idea? Or try them in total awareness and safety?

The substance is safe from a physiological point of view, but those who

have certain physical or psychological conditions should avoid it, and this is obvious. The same is true of many common food products. More people have died from eating peanuts than from eating magic mushrooms. Obviously we should know the possible contraindications of food products, which should be disclosed especially to the people who are directly concerned.

For example, does it seem strange that you must not take mushrooms if you suffer from epilepsy, heart conditions or psychiatric problems? It is a substance that stimulates the brain, the nervous system and the cardiovascular system, so this advice is understandable, but it is essential for people to know about it. Someone has to explain everything that needs to be known in an honest and credible way. For this reason I decided to publish the text exactly as I had written it. I want to protect people - and mushrooms - from thoughtless and dangerous use. Nobody should get hurt and nobody should unfairly speak ill of Sacred Mushrooms.

Is this courage or recklessness? It is neither. I believe and apply what Thomas Jefferson said: "If a law is unjust, a man is not only right to disobey it, he is obligated to do so."

Whatever happens, it will have been for a good cause. I am afraid, but only by doing this will I be able to exercise my courage and do what I believe for the benefit of all. Make the most of what I have written. There are instructions, warnings, and information but also and above all the indications for a journey of inner quest and self-knowledge. It is a bristling and narrow road, like life itself. It is for the few, but it is the only one that is worth the journey: know yourself.

INTRODUCTION

Psilocybin mushrooms are a gift that nature has given us to help and support our personal and spiritual evolution. Contrary to popular belief they are not at all a recreational substance. I think it is difficult to have a worse experience than that of going to the disco after taking a dose of magic mushrooms, or interacting with someone at the height of the intensity of the psychedelic effect.

Psilocybin is not a drug, nor are all the main natural psychoactive substances used for thousand of years throughout the world. The most famous and important ones are DMT, mescaline and ibogaine, but the list is long and they all have one thing in common: they are not easy nor are they in any way recreational. If you are only looking for fun or for a “buzz”, mushrooms are not for you. If you want an escape avoid mushrooms because they mercilessly make you face the truest reality of all: yourself.

The first contact with these sacred substances takes place at the physical level, therefore knowing the substance and your own psychophysical condition is essential in order to avoid problems and consequences that can sometimes be very serious. The whole introduction is about the contraindications and should be read carefully, in particular about the physical and psychological health conditions that imply you must categorically avoid the use of mushrooms.

In order to know what to do - and what not to do - you need to have some basic information. How many do I take? How? Where? Mushrooms or

truffles? What are the differences? And what about Psilocybin? Music? Where to find them? What about microdosing? These are some of the questions that I have asked myself - and I have been asked - over the years, to which perhaps you have also sought answers on the web.

In the Internet era it is easy to find information on any subject, but there is so much out there that it is not easy to recognize the information that is actually useful and valuable, especially if you know little or nothing about the subject. This book integrates the best information found in books and online with many first-hand experiences. Here you will also find information and reflections that have never been published before and are the result of a personal synthesis of experiences with magic mushrooms and other fascinating related topics.

This text is meant to be useful to those who would like to approach magic mushrooms but do not know where to start and above all do not know what to believe after searching for information on the web. I have also prepared a "Quick Guide" which you will find at the end of the book, where I describe the essential points in a few words, topics that I elaborate on in detail in the first practical and informative part.

Remember that the contents of the Quick Guide are very important. It only contains the essential indications that I repeat and elaborate on throughout the book, but if you are going to only read those, please follow them literally. The main function of this Quick Guide is to serve as an easily accessible summary during the approach and discovery period so that you may avoid problems and psychophysical damage.

Thank you for your attention.

Necessary and important warnings

This book was not written to promote the use of legal or illegal psychoactive substances. Its intent is only to reduce or eliminate problems caused by taking these substances without knowledge of the facts.

The book does not encourage illegal activities and any information

provided is only for educational and information purposes. It does not give medical or psychological advice.

These are not just mandatory statements, as you can imagine the unconscious use of psychedelics can be very dangerous, as well as forbidden by the law. Despite the prohibitions sanctioned by the law, many people violate the established rules; this is a fact that cannot be ignored. Human beings have always transgressed laws and rules. With this awareness, this book intends to inform and describe the risks you may run, in order to avoid damage or serious consequences for yourself and others.

Psilocin, the psychoactive principle found in so-called "Magic Mushrooms", is illegal in almost all nations of the world, as are all natural and synthetic substances that have a tryptamine base and include DMT in their molecular structure.

N, N-dimethyltryptamine (N, N-DMT or DMT), an endogenous psychedelic tryptamine (that is, its origin is internal to the organism), present in many plants and in human beings' cerebrospinal fluid, was synthesized for the first time in 1931. Strange but true, something that is part of us is illegal.

If a substance is illegal, then its possession, trade, and use are punishable by the law, and the writer cannot and does not in any way want to support or encourage illegal activities. Whether this prohibition is right or wrong is another matter. I personally believe that all prohibition has in itself the ability to make substances that would otherwise be ignored by most people seem attractive.

The Prohibition of the 1930s in the USA was proof of this; alcohol consumption increased in those years, allowing criminals to become richer. On the other hand the liberalization of Cannabis shows that consumption decreases in those countries where it is not forbidden by the law.

Prohibition often seems made to be transgressed, this is part of the brave

human spirit, but even the libertarian Netherlands decided to make magic mushrooms illegal in 2009 after a death that was presumed to be connected to the use of this substance. It was a controversial case, but as a result of the media outcry the government decided to make them illegal.

Ignorance is always dangerous. This book is meant to give all the information useful to understand well beforehand whether it is appropriate to take psilocybin mushrooms, and if so how and what to do and above all what not to do.

"Magic Mushrooms", the name seems light and fun, and indeed the experience can be so, but it can just as easily be a horrible experience with serious consequences, so caution is necessary.

Why I wrote this book and what it is for

I have had many experiences with psilocin in all its forms. I have experimented with all possible dosages, up to thresholds that I have never read about in books or on the web, with the exception of Kilindi Iyi, an African American martial arts teacher from Detroit who dives into impressive psychedelic depths - he takes mushroom in amounts that are 10 times higher than the doses considered high.

I have tripped on mushrooms alone, with one other person, and in groups of more than 20 participants, in the day and at night, indoors and outdoors, in the midst of nature but also in the city center. Each time I have fallen more and more in love with this magic that nature has given us. But I have also seen people have problems, and had they been alone they could have hurt themselves.

My innate curiosity led me to read everything I found on the subject, and also to watch dozens of videos on the web before having my first experience with a small amount of truffles. As you can imagine I found everything, from "freaks" to very scientific approaches, a lot of nonsense but also some real pearls. Among the latter I want to mention Terence McKenna and the texts by Giorgio Samorini, a very serious, knowledgeable and competent ethnomycologist; his texts are technical,

specialized and interesting, so if you have the desire and patience I recommend you read them. <https://samorini.it/>

But first of all read this book. It is here in front of you and my intention is to convey everything you need to know. The rest that you can find in books and online is not essential, I have already made a synthesis for you.

“This is the book I would have liked to read before trying magic mushrooms. I would have saved myself many problems and a lot of time.”

This is why I am sitting in front of the computer writing. I have received so many gifts from my experiences that I want to share them with everyone. If you choose to try, I sincerely hope that you too can experience the wonders that mushrooms have to offer, and avoid problems. Often the most difficult experiences are the most useful, but difficult shouldn't mean dangerous, so read well in order to avoid unnecessary dangers for yourself and others. The journey can sometimes be difficult, but it must always be safe.



Do not look for instructions on growing mushrooms in this text; the web is a really comprehensive source of information about this topic. Furthermore, there are specific texts about this, and if you do an online search you will find many, as well as many video tutorials.

Where to find mushrooms? Dutch sites in general are trustworthy and reliable, unfortunately they will never send you mushrooms - they are forbidden - but they offer everything you need if you want to grow them. Seeing them grow creates a special connection, very useful for building a respectful relationship that will help you in all your experiences, not only the first ones.

You could have this experience by purchasing a "grow kit" (mycelium in a plastic tray, from which the mushrooms grow). There are many types and varieties, shipping is always discreet, and technically they do not contain prohibited substances ... at least until the mushrooms grow. But

nevertheless there have been sequestrations, trials and convictions, so be careful! Otherwise start from the spores and cultivate them following the instructions that can also be found online. I talk about them later in the book.

If you are fond of walking in nature you can go looking for them. They can be found practically everywhere in the world, some are easily recognizable while others are not, so you must be cautious to avoid consuming poisonous and lethal mushrooms.

Truffles are available for those who live in Europe (unfortunately not in all countries). I speak about them in detail later on. They are often the simplest and most accessible means for those who want to experience the psychedelic effects of psilocin.



I wrote this book with the objective of making it easy to read, fluent and pleasant till the end, to help you discover everything you need to know and you are interested in. I will not go into some topics that you can easily find on the web, for example stories about experiences or detailed descriptions of psychedelic visions. I consider these stories to be a waste of time and will not write anything of the kind about my own experiences. Instead, you will find numerous links for more information on topics that I find useful or stimulating.

I have paid particular attention to the topic "doses" because I have read incredible things on the web; be very careful, stick to what I will tell you because I have systematically verified this essential point myself and with my tripping companions. On the internet, many people exaggerate in one way or another, and their statements are so different from each other that they are just confusing and of no practical use. I will therefore give the utmost importance to everything concerning how to start and how to go ahead from a very practical point of view, with all the warnings and contraindications you need to know.

In the second part of the book you can find other types of information,

each one is a personal and original elaboration about the most subtle aspects of having an experience with mushrooms. I will go deeper into the aspects that are between a material approach (chemical, biological, etc.) to the substance, and the approach through subtle energies, going beyond matter and into the most advanced modern physics. I did not invent anything and as you read you will find the references that led me to make these considerations.

To summarize: the first part of the book is dedicated to practical aspects, considering the first contact with the substance essential for understanding well our body's physical and psychological reaction.

The second part consists of a number of insights and information that you will not find elsewhere and that will show you new and surprising aspects about this extraordinary natural substance.

Finally, in the third part you will find a summary of practical information in a handy and easy to consult Quick Guide.

WHO MUST NOT HAVE THIS EXPERIENCE

For some people it is better not to take mushrooms, for others it is much better not to take mushrooms. Yes, you read that right, in fact, there is nothing that fits everyone, and the use of psychoactive substances is part of the category of experiences that are best avoided for many.

The reasons for which you should not take mushrooms are essentially of two categories:

- physical reasons
- psychological reasons

and neither of them should be overlooked or underestimated, otherwise you risk your life.

Physical reasons

Physically you should be well. The WHO (World Health Organization) states that good health is a "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease". If you wish to take mushrooms you should be as close as possible to this definition, to put it simply, you have to "feel good".

If you do not feel well, if you are taking medication, if you do not feel fit or if you just fear that you may have a bad experience, do not take anything and wait until you feel ready. It is true that the substance's physiological interaction with your body and with some medicines that you might be taking may not be a problem - we will see this better in

chapter 6, dedicated to this topic - but the mere thought of not feeling well while having the experience could cause problems and "paranoia" during the trip.

If you add the alteration of the perception of time to this paranoia, you can easily imagine how a situation that you would like to end immediately will seem to last even longer. Living a nightmare while knowing you are not asleep is something I obviously do not recommend.

If you have allergies or intolerance to mushrooms do not eat them, they are magical but not hypoallergenic.

You have to discard the idea of trying mushrooms if:

- you suffer from *epilepsy*
- you have *heart disease*
- you are *pregnant*
- you are *taking medication containing MAO inhibitors* (MonoAmineOxidase)
- you have *abnormal liver functions*.

Be careful if you suffer from low blood pressure, maybe not so much while you are having the experience itself - the heart accelerates the heartbeat and blood pressure increases slightly - but later, when the effect is over you could have pressure drops, at which point fainting is not a remote hypothesis. So keep magnesium and potassium-based supplements with you, to drink with water (like Polase), as well as sugary drinks (for example the classic Coca Cola, containing sugar and caffeine) or something sweet.

These recommendations will be better specified further ahead in the book.

Psychological reasons

The psychological aspect is even more sensitive. I'll explain why.

The biggest fear I have seen in those who take mushrooms is mainly one, but it is very significant. Imagine you want to take a challenging dose of

mushrooms, Terence McKenna called it a "committed dose". In this case what would your biggest fear be?

Most people are afraid of going crazy, which is the fear that occurs most frequently during a "bad trip" (that is, a bad experience while you are on mushrooms) - chapter 5 is dedicated to dealing with this possibility.

Being afraid of going crazy and actually being at risk of going crazy are two very different things; the psychological reasons for which you should not take mushrooms have to do with this actual risk. If you have psychiatric problems and take a dose you can actually trigger a mental illness, the effects of which can last a long time or become permanent.

The psychological reasons that I highlight below actually have to do with this risk, not with fear. It might seem like I'm exaggerating, I know it is not easy to really understand the risk of underestimating what I wrote below, but believe me, it is important.

DO NOT take mushrooms if you have been diagnosed with a personality disorder - the psychiatric definition is "borderline" - and if you are emotionally unstable.

I have encountered people who are borderline and it is not easy to recognize them; often they do not even know they are! This is a big problem if you are going to take psychedelics. If you know, or even suspect you might have this kind of problem, please let it go, there is something else for you - if you really want - that can be infinitely more useful: microdoses. I'll talk about them in more detail in the second part of the book.

I repeat: avoid mushrooms if you have a psychiatric diagnosis, or even if you know you are emotionally unstable - and perhaps for this very reason you hope to recover by taking a psychedelic substance. Forget it, it is very dangerous! DIY psychotherapy does not work, talk to a good psychotherapist, do not risk hurting yourself.

- DO NOT take mushrooms if you have a family or personal history of psychosis (even drug-induced), schizophrenia, or a bipolar disorder (manic-depressive syndrome).

These disorders are the main ones, but in general if you have a psychiatric condition you must absolutely avoid them, and if you really insist you have to talk about it with your doctor who will help you understand the problems you could encounter and the possible solutions and treatments. Why should you dive into a nightmare? Maybe you have some psychological or psychiatric problems, but this doesn't mean you are stupid. Just avoid them.

- DO NOT take mushrooms if you suffer from alcohol or drug addiction. Cannabis addiction is not serious for interaction with mushrooms and perhaps the experience will make you understand useful things in this regard. But if you are seriously drinking or taking drugs you should avoid it, for your own good.

There is one exception: if you have a competent doctor who can assist you, after adequate preparation, then the experience with mushrooms could be profoundly therapeutic and healing. However with DIY it could be harmful, one of those experiences that had you known beforehand you would never have dreamed of having. In general, never mix different substances because it is always very risky and many combinations are potentially lethal. There are psychonauts who are passionate about combining substances, but I am absolutely not. It doesn't surprise me that several of these explorers have unfortunately lost their lives. Always remember that the term "magic mushrooms" may suggest they are something light and fun, and in fact they can make you have ineffable experiences (of a beauty that is impossible to describe), but you might just as easily end up wishing you could die in order to end what you are experiencing, so never underestimate them.

Short Glossary

I wrote this book with the intention of making it clear and understandable, so you can read it to the end without difficulty. However, there are 5 specific terms that not everyone knows - or they might know very little - and this could cause misunderstandings. I describe them just once in this paragraph, so that the continuation of the reading may be smooth, without

requiring further explanations and interruptions.

Psychedelic (from Wikipedia): The term derives from the Greek words mind or soul, ψυχή (psyche), and to manifest or show, δῆλος (delos), and was used for the first time in 1956 by Humphry Osmond in a letter to Aldous Huxley to define the substances that "liberate thought from the superstructures of social conventions". The main psychedelic psychoactive compounds are LSD, mescaline, psilocybin (contained in mushrooms of the psilocybe kind) and dimethyltryptamine (DMT).

So psychedelic means "*that manifests the psyche, that explains its content*". This definition is important because it helps us understand that experiences with these substances make us face the contents of our psyche, completely unknown to most people. For this reason caution is essential.

Entheogen (from Wikipedia): The etymology is a neologism derived from ancient Greek and formed by the words ἔνθεος (entheos) and γενέσθαι (genesthai), literally meaning "full of the God", more freely translated as "divinely inspired".

The term entheogen is generally used to indicate particular psychoactive substances, characterized by a marked psychedelic or hallucinogenic effect, which favor mystical and spiritual experiences. For these reasons they have been used for millennia on all continents, by numerous populations with shamanic traditions, or by religious organizations. In societies of the past and in those that still now use these compounds, they represent an important tool for encountering our own spiritual dimension, for creating greater connection with others, especially for therapeutic and healing purposes, and for connecting with the Gods and reaching religious ecstasy.

Psychonautics (from Wikipedia): Psychonautics (from the Ancient Greek ψυχή psychē "soul, spirit, mind" and ναύτης naútēs "sailor, navigator" – "a sailor of the soul") refers both to a methodology for describing and explaining the subjective effects of altered states of consciousness, especially of an important subgroup called holotropic states, including those induced by meditation or mind-altering substances, and to a research cabal in which the researcher voluntarily immerses him/herself into an altered mental state in order to explore the accompanying experiences.

The term has been applied diversely, to cover all activities by which altered states are induced and utilized for spiritual purposes or the exploration of the human condition, including shamanism, lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, sensory deprivation, and archaic/modern drug users who use entheogenic substances in order to gain deeper insights and spiritual experiences. A person who uses altered states for such exploration is known as a psychonaut.

Psilocybin: Beyond the interesting things described in Wikipedia, I do not completely agree with the description according to which this substance is psychedelic because it is not in itself psychoactive, in the sense that it has no effect on consciousness; in reality it is a precursor, that is to say it must be transformed into another substance by losing a phosphate molecule, thus becoming psilocin, which is the psychoactive molecule. This process takes place in the acidic environment of the stomach after the ingestion of psilocybin.

The same approach can be applied to psilacetin, although research has not yet investigated all aspects, i.e. whether it is a precursor of psilocin as is psilocybin, or it is a precursor but also has an effect in its complete non-deacetylated formula (i.e. without losing the acetyl molecule in the acidic environment of the stomach, without which it turns into psilocin). I examine the specific features later on.

Often in the text I privilege the use of the term "psilocin" instead of the more common "psilocybin", because psilocin is the true chemical key and not a precursor as are psilocybin and psilacetin, this is the reason for my preference. In the rest of the book you can replace one term with the other without changing the meaning of what is written.

Hallucinogen (from Wikipedia): Hallucinogens (from the Latin verb *alucinàri*, *allucinàri*: deceiving oneself, deriving from the Greek root *Alùo*, *alùsso*: raving, being beside oneself, or from the Lat. *lux*: light) is a wide term that includes various groups of heterogeneous substances capable of modifying perceptions, thoughts and feelings for some hours, more or less intensely depending on the substance and dosage.

The wider term hallucinogens generally includes real psychedelics such as LSD, mescaline, DMT or psilocybin, dissociatives such as ketamine,

ibogaine or PCP, and deliriants (often poisonous) such as common stramonium or atropa belladonna.

A (natural or synthetic) substance is considered hallucinogenic when, acting on the receptors of the central nervous system (CNS), it causes psycho-sensory changes in perceptions, mainly of the visual, tactile and auditory sphere, in thought processes, in the emotional sphere, in the state of consciousness, and in the connection with others and with the natural environment. The duration and intensity varies depending on the substance's type, quantity and method of assumption, as well as on external factors such as set & setting (these terms are the subject of a whole paragraph in chapter 2). At high dosages one can have real hallucinations that are "isolated" from the environmental context.

The criteria established by Hollister (1968) to determine whether a substance is hallucinogenic are:

1. the impact on memory or intellectual capacity should be minimal;
2. stupor, narcosis or excessive stimulation should not be integral effects;
3. the side effects on the autonomic nervous system should be minimal;
4. addiction should not occur;
5. in proportion to other effects, changes in thought, perception, and mood should predominate.

Unlike other psychoactive substances, such as opiates and stimulants, these drugs do not simply excite or calm our mental state, but instead they induce experiences that are qualitatively different from those of ordinary consciousness. These experiences are often compared to non-ordinary states of consciousness, such as trance, meditation, dreams, ecstasy, and sensory deprivation.



I thought for a long time about whether to insert the term "hallucinogen" in this glossary, then I described it anyway even if "*generating deceit or ravings*" does not correspond to my experience. I find the other terms, entheogenic and psychedelic, more correct, but what can be extraordinary is the experience one has of his/her inner moods, which are certainly confused, even in an ordinary state of consciousness. I say this because

mushrooms never lie, of this you can be sure.

But since many people use "hallucinogen" to speak about mushrooms, then knowing the exact meaning can be useful for you to understand and evaluate better.



Now we continue to learn more about this being, which is not a plant. In fact mushrooms have a Kingdom of their own, much closer to the Animal Kingdom than to the Plant Kingdom.

**FIRST PART –
INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE**

1. THE KINGDOM FUNGI

Fossil traces of mycelium have been found in the ancient lava of a volcano in South Africa. The precise geological dating has allowed us to establish that those fossils are over 2.4 billion years old. Moreover there is evidence of the presence of fungi over 1.4 billion years ago; they are therefore among the oldest living beings, among the first to appear and colonize the planet.

Mushrooms consist of a part which is hidden in the ground and a visible part: the mycelium and the mushroom. The mushroom is considered to be the fruit of the mycelium. The spores, which are the mushrooms' seeds, have great resistance to environmental factors, and scientists have verified that they can remain unchanged even in interstellar space for millions of years. From the spores that meet the appropriate conditions, the mycelium is generated and can develop in places that are very far from where it originated.

The mycelium looks like a dense net, interconnected on the surface and in depth, and can be very vast, in fact we know of a single mycelium network that extends for over 14 square kilometers.



Image of a detail of the mycelium

This network is widespread in the woods and green areas of the planet and wherever there is a mushroom there is a vast underground network with surprising characteristics, which has been called Wood Wide Web and works much like the internet that we know and use.

The mycelium's web is the way through which plants exchange data and information, while the contact between mycelium and plant roots is useful to both. It is a symbiotic relationship like the one we have with the bacteria that live in our intestines. Through the mycelium plants can, for example, warn each other of the presence of parasites, so that defenses can be implemented in time.

This organism's huge dimensions have led some scientists to say that it is a conscious entity, the number of connections within this network far exceeding those existing within our brain. Some truly amazing experiments have been carried out in Japan demonstrating the intelligence of mushrooms; I elaborate on this in the second part of the book.

In light of my personal experiences, *I know* that this entity exists, both in Plants and in Fungi, and so do many people who have experienced psychoactive mushrooms over tens of thousands of years. Mushrooms were certainly the first and oldest connection between humans and entheogens. Entheogen means "that has God within it", which I translate as

the medium that puts you in contact with the Divinity everything is made up of, including yourself.

This passage could seem a bit tricky and many may think that after all we are talking about a chemical that can be reproduced in the laboratory (psilocybin), so what does God have to do with it?

In a mechanistic world, the one described by Newtonian physics, the Universe is like a great mechanism, with action and reaction, cause and effect, in which I exist and there is a reality external to me. This is the world as we were taught by our parents and at school, except that since the beginning of the 1900s some physicists have hypothesized - and subsequently experimentally verified - a completely different world, able to explain things that the mechanistic view could not even conceive: quantum physics.

It will take time, but just as the Newtonian vision has slowly built our vision of the world, so will the new vision, born of the rigorously scientific discoveries of quantum mechanics. Scientific means that a phenomenon can be described and reproduced regularly, and in this sense both the Newtonian and the quantum views are true, only that the quantum view explains things that would be considered impossible by the physics described by Newton, in particular in the world of the infinitely large and the infinitely small.

What does all this have to do with mushrooms?

In this first part of the book I explain the practical aspects, while the ones I described above are theoretical aspects that for many could be anything but interesting. However in the second part of the book I elaborate on this and other aspects, so that you may read it if you want, or ignore it without missing any information required to begin the journey of self-knowledge with sacred mushrooms.

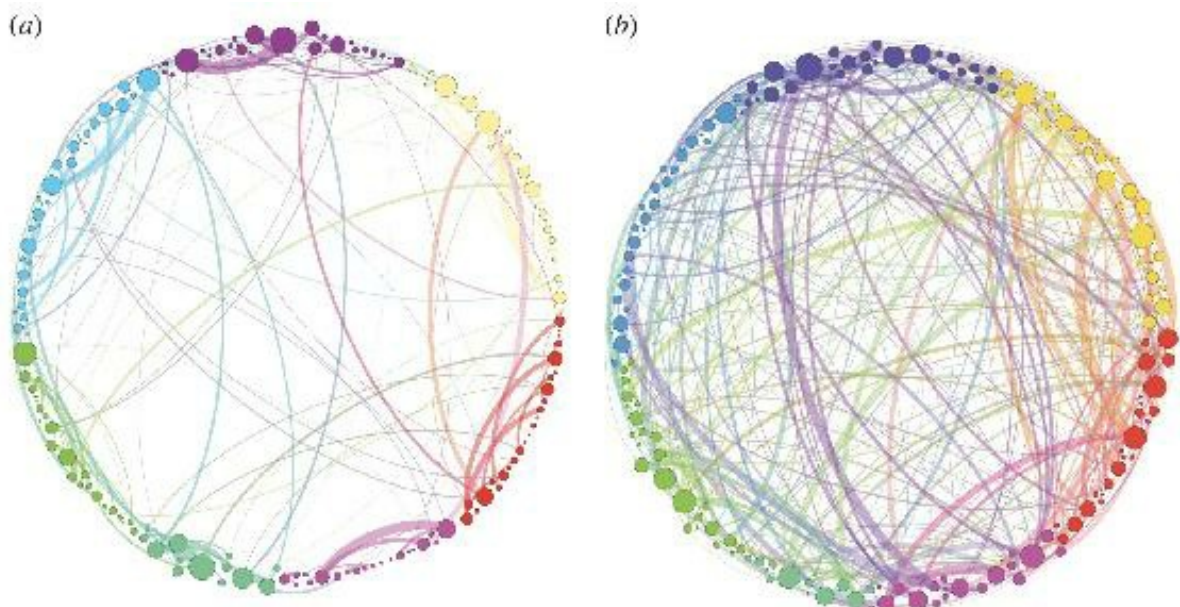
But here I want to make known that many experts are convinced of the fact that psychoactive mushrooms, and not only these, are the result of an "exoplanetary" technology, in simple words the result of an intentional project born outside of the planet Earth. I am also deeply convinced of this and at the same time I realize that to many this statement may seem like

science fiction, but direct experience has led me to this kind of understanding. If you want to continue reading, you will find my reflections about this in more detail in the second half of the book.

Try to suspend your judgment for a moment and imagine that an intelligent entity has really designed a molecule that makes our brain work differently, a change in the way of functioning, like the one known to those who have read Carlos Castaneda's books, when Don Juan speaks of the displacement of the "point of union". The point of union is like a window that allows us to see only a small portion of the vast reality we live in. However if we moved the window we could see something different and decidedly unusual compared to what we are used to. These realities are no less true than the ordinary one we normally perceive. The reality that we believe in is only a matter of sensory perception and the brain's interpretation: what is more real, the reality perceived by a fly or the one we perceive? Neither of them; they are only partial representations of something that we cannot conceive in its entirety.

In shamanic culture it is believed that this shift of vision can also occur through the intake of psychotropic substances, including mushrooms.

Whoever designed this molecule that changes our attunement to reality is a genius; it is like a key that opens us up to perceptions that would otherwise be inaccessible except with techniques that would be difficult, strenuous and often hard to learn.



Activation of brain areas and the number of interconnections in the brain, (a) in the ordinary state, (b) under the effect of psilocin. There are more active areas, more connected to each other and with connections that are not present in ordinary conditions. (Detection carried out with Functional Magnetic Resonance - fMRI)

At the end of the book I will go deeper into this topic, but I have given you this information in advance so that it can make sense to you if I say that we are talking about a substance - psilocin - but also about something / someone that is not just a chemical substance; it is very much more than this. The chemical substance affects the physical level so as to allow the brain to function differently, to tune into "non-ordinary" planes of perception - see previous image. Let me explain this also by giving you another example. Music is made of notes, but music is also a portal that allows you to access emotions and much more, so to say that one type of music is the same as another because they are all made up of notes surely contrasts with your direct experience. Saying that psilocin is a chemical like all other chemicals is the same thing. I'm not here to convince you but to inform you, and that is why I don't want to limit the information I would like to give you just in order to stick to the chemical substance. From my experience I know that chemistry only explains this to a certain extent.

The intake of psilocin (whether mushrooms, truffles, psilocybin, psilocetin) is not a scientific matter, or rather, it is at the lowest level, the physical level where the substance binds with some specific receptors, but the experience starts from the physical level and then develops far beyond this plane.

In addition to the physical plane, you also experience it directly on the emotional and mental levels. At that moment you have a direct experience of the fact that the chemical is the vehicle of something acting on your brain as a receiver of your consciousness (like a radio), and this expansion of your brain function allows you to experience your consciousness in an expanded way, different from usual. It is not only this, because you "feel" that there is something / someone that accompanies you during the experience, something different from you. What is that something that acts on your consciousness? We will see it better later on, for now I can say that it is as if the substance worked on the physical level like a gearing in

the context of Newtonian mechanics, while the "information" conveyed by the substance acted on consciousness in the context of quantum reality, therefore both are true but the second transcends the first.



We will elaborate this topic later, now let's go back to mushrooms, in particular I'm talking about psilocybin mushrooms, a family that includes over 110 different species. In the book I will speak mainly about the genus *Psilocybe Cubensis*, the most widespread and simple to cultivate.

There are other psychoactive mushrooms that do not belong to this family, for example the active ingredient of *Amanita Muscaria* is different (the main components are three, ibotenic acid, muscimol and muscazone), but I know them in theory and not in practice; they are much more difficult to manage for an experience and therefore we will not take them into consideration. Mushrooms of the psilocybin kind are generally more reliable, the psychoactive substance contained is more homogeneously spread within the mushroom (and the magic truffle), the percentages for overall weight are statistically more constant and so we know what we can expect from a gram or three grams, whereas with *Amanita Muscaria* things are much more complicated and relatively less secure. Paradoxically this mushroom is not forbidden by the law.

Consider that in recent years new varieties have been created with selections and crossbreeds - I refer for example to those offered by many websites, in which the desired characteristics have been improved and enhanced, some authors in fact speak of over 140 species - others say beyond 200 - probably for this very reason.

You can find a lot of material on the internet about mushrooms and their characteristics, but what I present to you is what you need to know, so let's start looking into the active principle.

Psilocin, the chemical key

Psilocin (4-HO-DMT) is the active ingredient, while the more well-known psilocybin (4-PO-DMT) is a precursor of psilocin, in fact it loses a molecule in the stomach (it is "dephosphorylated") and becomes the active

ingredient, that which takes us into a parallel world.

Mushrooms contain psilocybin, but many also contain psilocin, so when evaluating a mushroom's strength we must take into consideration the two components plus a third, baeocystin, which appears to have effects though this has not been confirmed with certainty; the higher the percentage of these substances, the more powerful is the mushroom. Some mushrooms also contain norbaecystine, but this is relatively rare and it is not known to have psychoactive effects.

A magic mushroom that is now found almost everywhere in the world, *Psilocybe Semilanceata*, has a slender and light appearance, but in reality it is one of the most powerful mushrooms due to the high concentration of active ingredients.



Psilocybe Semilanceata mushrooms,
frequently found in Europe and North America

Psilocin is not found only in psilocybin, it also exists in another precursor called psilacetin (4-AcO-DMT), which loses an acetyl molecule in the

stomach and becomes psilocin. Psilocetin is presented in powder form and is synthesized in the laboratory. The effect is identical, but if for dried mushrooms we talk about grams, here we must talk about milligrams. Remember that one gram of psilocetin corresponds to over 100 grams of dried mushrooms, enough to have a "heroic" journey at least 20 times - with 5 grams of dried mushrooms each time. So remember to check well what I say about quantities because mixing them up would be a big problem.

Are fresh or dried mushrooms different from the substance synthesized in the laboratory? If the synthesized product is made precisely as it should be, there are no differences, but I would like to explain this with two examples. Listening to a musical note produced by an instrument in front of your eyes and then listening to it through a good hifi system, what is the difference? With your eyes closed, are you sure you could recognize which is which?

The second example, more concrete and relevant than the first, concerns Maria Sabina, a Mazatec healer, who led a ceremony of healing through mushrooms in the mid-1950s - a *velada* (from "vela", candle in Spanish) - hosting Westerners for the first time, in particular Dr. Gordon Wasson, an American ethnomycologist who wrote about his experience in "Life" magazine in 1957. From that moment magic mushrooms were rediscovered by the vast Western public, propitiating the birth of the Hippie movement shortly after.

Wasson then gave some mushrooms to Albert Hoffman, the person who first synthesized LSD, in fact it was also he who synthesized psilocybin for the first time.

All this to tell you that Wasson gave the synthesized psilocybin to Maria Sabina, who then confidently stated that there was no difference, that the spirit of the mushroom was also present in the powder. Is there a difference between fresh and dried mushrooms? Apparently fresh ones are a little stronger, but I have never done any tests; I prefer 3 grams of dried mushrooms to 30 grams of fresh ones to obtain the same amount of active ingredient.

Now let's move on to the underground brothers of mushrooms, truffles.

Magic Truffles

Truffles are very interesting because they are easier to find and also because to begin with they are relatively safer, therefore more suitable for beginners. Unlike mushrooms that have been prohibited since 2009, truffles have remained legal and are therefore freely available in the Netherlands. They are sold mainly in sealed envelopes containing about 15 grams, but for some time now different formats have also become available: 10 and 100 gram envelopes for example. If you want you can buy “grow boxes”, which are very convenient in relation to the weight of truffles they can produce, but you have to wait at least four months or more before they grow and can be harvested. There are several varieties, such as Mexicana, Galindoi, Tampanensis, Atlantis, and Hollandia. Each is described in terms of its power on a scale going up to 5, where we would place Hollandia and Atlantis for example.

Technically they are not real truffles but "sclerotia", swellings that are formed in the mycelium of some types of mushrooms when there are no favorable environmental conditions for the growth of mushrooms.

Although they are made of the same constituent ingredients, there are some differences between truffles and mushrooms. The most common questions I have been asked are:

- Are truffles legal?
- Are they stronger than mushrooms or not as strong?
- Is tripping with truffles different than tripping with mushrooms?
- Is it safer to trip with truffles?

Truffles are legal in the Netherlands and Dutch sites generally ship everywhere in Europe. These distributors declare that there are restrictions for some countries, but they are clearly indicated. Remember, however, that all products containing psilocybin are prohibited, so you can never consider it a completely safe shipment, in fact in some countries there have been seizures and trials that have ended in convictions. In Spain, Portugal and the Czech Republic it is legal to cultivate and possess modest amounts of magic mushrooms. Learn more about this on the internet if you are interested because laws change and by now rules could be different.

Mushrooms or truffles are not strong in themselves but in relation to their content of active ingredients. The two have different concentrations: for the same weight fresh truffles have a lighter effect than dried mushrooms, so the doses may be less precise than those required for mushrooms. If you take 4 or 6 grams of fresh truffles you will have a slightly different effect, whereas if you take 1 or 3 grams of dried mushrooms the effects will be considerably different.

The trips can be identical, but given the differences in the quantities needed to produce the same effect, experiences with truffles are on average more suited to beginners and therefore a little safer.

Here is a concrete example: to take the equivalent of 3 grams of dried mushrooms, I should take more or less 15 grams of truffles. Chewing 15 grams of truffles is less pleasant than eating 3 grams of dried mushrooms, which is why it is harder to exaggerate with truffles, making them relatively safer for beginners. It is a little easier to take them if you dry them and grind them with a coffee grinder, but we can see more about this in chapters 2 and 3.

From this issue about quantities we can deduce that starting with truffles is generally easier, above all because it is sufficient to order them online and receive something that is ready for use. If I add that you can obtain them within about a week, the first contact with truffles is certainly easier and safer than somehow getting hold of some mushrooms.

Mushrooms have a tradition that dates back tens of thousands of years, while truffles became known after Holland decided to prohibit mushrooms. But you should not think that truffles are a fall-back; if you eat 15 grams or a whole bag of Hollandia truffles you will have an intense psychedelic experience.

Truffles are easier yes, but always remember not to underestimate them. The set & setting (how you are, with whom and where) is always very important, in addition to the general recommendations that I summarize in the quick guide and in the paragraph dedicated to those who must not take them.

To begin with, never exceed the quantities I recommend in Chapter 3,

"The First Time". All doses of truffles are explained in detail in chapter 2 as well as those of the other substances.

Psilacetin

Technically, psilacetin is not a completely synthetic substance, it is semi-synthetic, a bit like LSD, which is synthesized as a component of a psychoactive fungus parasite of rye, Ergot. What does semi-synthetic mean? That a molecule is made in the laboratory through a process of synthesis starting from a substance that exists in nature; the result may be the same molecule found in nature or an almost identical one, where perhaps the difference consists of an additional bond, in this case an acetyl group instead of the phosphate group present in psilocybin.

What are the differences between the natural product and the semi-synthetic one? What happens if I take one or the other? The effects of psilacetin tend to rise faster than those of mushrooms or truffles, to have a slightly higher peak, and to finish a little earlier. This is my subjective experience, repeated several times, while others have different opinions, but I believe that these differences in perception are justified by individual physiological differences.

On the other hand, there are different opinions about whether there are differences between experiences had with mushrooms and with psilacetin. Some people consider them indistinguishable, others observe clear differences, while remaining within the framework of very similar experiences. I have had great experiences with both of them (for mushrooms I refer to *Psilocybe Cubensis*, but there are many other species with slightly different psychoactive characteristics), and frankly I have not noticed great differences. In any case even between two trips with the same quantity and the same type of mushroom there will always be many differences; each time is always different from the other. Any differences are really difficult to perceive, so I feel I can stand out more among those who consider the two substances equivalent.

In practice you will find yourself with a substance to be dosed more carefully - milligrams instead of grams - but lighter to digest. In fact, mushroom may require a little effort by the digestive system, more

noticeable when you increase the amount of grams taken. Five dry grams correspond to 50 fresh grams, considering that when the dried mushroom is in the stomach it rehydrates and regains part of its original weight. Raw mushrooms are not as digestible as cooked ones, so I would say that for quantities up to about 3-4 grams you can take the dried ones without problems. For more than 4-5 grams of dried mushrooms, taking psilocybin could have some advantages, especially after the experience, because recovery will normally be faster and more pleasant; you will also be less likely to experience nausea early on in the experience.

Sometimes the after experience with both substances can bring a little headache or rather a tension headache, but it passes quickly after resting, without consequences.

How would I do it? I would take psilocybin by also chewing a dried mushroom, so as to have contact with all the original matter, but entrusting the task of making me trip to the powder. The psilocybin required for a dose is measured in milligrams, which requires a suitable digital scale - never approximate! - while dried mushrooms and truffles, I remind you, are measured in grams. Details about doses are found in the next chapter.

2. PREPARATION

Mushrooms are not a substance to be taken for fun or lightly and this is confirmed by the fact that preparation is indispensable before any experience, in addition to compliance with all the contraindications and individual impediments. For first experiences in particular you need to observe a number of specific precautions that are absolutely necessary until the effect of the substance on the body and mind has been experienced in person. Ignoring these basic rules could cause you a disastrous first encounter, with all its consequences, as if a severe court selected those who started badly because they acted without due respect for this sacred substance. A bad trip can be the absolutely worst experience of your life, but consequences could be even worse.

This chapter's aim is to communicate clearly the necessary attentions and precautions needed in order to start well. These instructions are presented in a practical and concrete form because the encounter with the substance begins on the physical plane, although you must always remember that mushrooms are much more than a chemical active principle. For millennia they have been loved and respected as Sacred Mushrooms and it would be appropriate for you to also consider them as such. Further ahead in the book you will discover some of their qualities and characteristics that have left even our modern scientists and researchers literally stunned, therefore the respect required is not only a prerogative of our "primitive" ancestors.

Set & Setting

This paragraph is very important, much more than the one about doses. The literal translation of set & setting is "your psychophysical state" and "the environmental context", which I translate more simply as "how you are, with whom, and where".

I have devoted much space to the contraindications to be considered if you are thinking of taking a psychedelic substance. You can find everything in the paragraph "Who must NOT have the experience", where I describe the physical and psychological conditions that are absolutely incompatible with the substance. All authors agree on these fundamental contraindications for the use of mushrooms, just as everyone agrees on the importance of the people you are with during the trip. It is very important to choose well who you trip with; normally they should not be strangers, or there is a risk of making ugly discoveries while you are all in an altered state of consciousness.

I want to assume that no one will take mushrooms if they do not comply with the basic requirements, but I would also like to specify what contributes to having an ideal psychophysical "set" for the experience. The first and most important element, absolutely essential, is trust. If you are with others you must be able to trust them; if you are alone you must trust the mushroom at least, better still you should trust that life will only present you with what you need for your personal evolution.

Trusting life does not mean being irresponsible. An Arab proverb rightly reminds us to: "have faith in Allah but bind your camel well". If you trust mushrooms, if you feel good physically and psychologically, if the place is beautiful and safe and the friends are trusted, then the set & setting will support you so you can have the best possible experience, have no doubts about this.

Remember, never underestimate the importance of set & setting; they are the first and most important things to consider. If only one of the two is not satisfactory, postpone to a better occasion without hesitating - I often had to cancel because unexpected difficulties arose. You can see when things do not combine well, whereas when the time is right everything fits perfectly, magically. I speak from direct and repeated experience.



Some authors extend the list of important points well beyond the set & setting, going as far as describing a total of "6 Ss for the use of psychedelics". The "2 Ss" that I recommend and insist on are essential and

indispensable. In any case I will also explain the others, you will find more details about them throughout the book.

SUBSTANCE: it concerns the substance and doses, a topic that I explore in the next chapter, the third.

SITTER: this element is also looked into later on and concerns the presence of someone who can be present and of help, especially for first experiences; I stress this too, it is important.

SESSION: it refers to the time of the trip and its particular aspects. According to some authors there are six phases in a session with psychedelics:

- Taking the substance
- Initial onset
- Opening up and letting go
- Peak or plateau
- The sweet glide
- The end of the formal session

As you will see these points are described in the continuation of the text.

SITUATION: this phase refers to how the experience is integrated into one's life. It starts with the end of the formal session and then continues for several weeks or months. This phase of integration is very useful and implies a reflection on the understandings or on the indications received during the experience about different aspects of your life.

Behaviors or relationships with some people? Decisions to take? General behaviors to change? Understanding of values and priorities? It is essential that you do not make any major or radical changes in your life immediately after the trip; better to let it settle down for a certain period of time. It is much more useful to work out and write down your thoughts as soon as you are able to do so, after the experience. If you wait and let some time pass, you may forget many useful insights and interesting ideas. Writing them down helps you to review them later, so that you can act without the strong emotional charge that you always have just after the experience. This is a general indication and sometimes it may be better to act immediately. It is difficult to generalize.

A valid rule of thumb is not to tell everyone about your trip, but to keep it to yourself. Almost no one will be interested in the stories of your visions, but above all you will disperse that flame which would otherwise continue to burn inside you after the trip. This allows you to keep an internal reference of what you have experienced for as long as possible.



I am writing to those of you who have not yet had a psychedelic experience, and as much as you may have read and been informed, theory is one thing, practice is another. Set & setting are too often underestimated, as well as individual sensitivity to the substance, which I write about in detail in the next chapter. It is not taken into account sufficiently: you don't know how your body will react to the substance, you don't even know how your mind will react. Two important things like the physiological aspect and the mental / emotional aspect are unpredictable if you have never had any experience. This is to stress the importance of being with one or more people who can help you in case of problems, as well as being in a place that allows you to feel calm and comfortable.

It can be useful to have an accessible bathroom. You can vomit pretty much anywhere, but if you get diarrhea (sometimes fear can cause this) it is better to have a toilet nearby. If the presence of a bathroom is a good thing when you are sick in normal mental conditions, imagine how important it becomes if you are in an altered state of consciousness, where everything is very amplified, distorted, and unpredictable.



In the list of "6Ss" you saw the importance of having a "sitter", the presence of a person you trust, a true friend, who has experience and / or who remains lucid while you are tripping. Well, I repeat that it is very important; maybe they won't have to do anything but it will be useful for you to know that they are there. I recommend having the sitter close by but not in the same room, so they can check on you every now and then, to see

that everything is fine, but I don't find it so pleasant to be observed while having a psychedelic experience.



I've told you the essentials about "with whom" to do it, implying that it is best to avoid having your first experience alone. I am not strict about this point only because your first experience should be with a low dosage - I will talk about it better in one of the later chapters - and therefore not particularly risky, but I insist that it is worth being with someone you trust.



The place

In summer being out in nature is fantastic, but you must evaluate well the unknown variables. Is it a place where there are dangers, where you can hurt yourself? Mountains are magnificent, but it is easy to fall, for example, the weather can change quickly and you may not be in such psycho-physical balance to be able to find shelter in good time.

Beware of places where there are people in an ordinary state of consciousness because it is normal not to feel comfortable with them and one usually tries to avoid having to deal with them. What if these people were police officers and they asked to see your documents or they wanted to search you? I assure you that in a state of altered consciousness you could get very bad paranoia, making it easy for them to discover what you are up to. The nightmare would become reality.

I always ask myself these questions, although I am sure that after all the experiences I have had I would be able to deal with them better than others. Why should I take mushrooms in a place where I could risk having bad encounters or bad situations? Why do it in the company of people if I don't know how they could react? It is easy to become paranoid in certain situations - it is not like being drunk, you can handle that if you have experience - this is a condition of very altered consciousness, completely different from any alteration induced by non-psychedelic substances.

Psychedelic states are very special and have profound effects on how you think and perceive yourself and reality. If you have never experienced this, it is hard to imagine. The outdoor place should already be familiar to you, a place that you know well with all its characteristics in order to provide peace of mind, comfort and safety. Later in the next chapter we will come back to this point.

Doing it at home is certainly better, at least for the first experiences, as long as there are no relatives or others who can suddenly show up, for example, your parents, if you still live with them. I assure you that it is very difficult to explain yourself in certain conditions, but it is even more difficult to check your own state of mind. You could easily start laughing without control, or get stuck and not be able to utter a single word, this and many more things might happen as reality changes form and color all the time, both with your eyes open and - even more so - with your eyes closed. You will also have very dilated pupils that are difficult to hide without sunglasses.

You cannot pause the experience, there is no button that allows you to stop what is happening, you have to stay with what is there and you probably will not be able to control and manage what you are experiencing.

I do not know you, I do not know who is reading, so please understand that I have a duty to warn you. I tell you about the experiences I have had and that I have seen in others who were with me or who told me about them: be cautious and always put yourself in the best conditions. On English language websites I have read about many literally appalling experiences that helped me understand well an aphorism by Friedrich Schiller: "Against stupidity the very gods themselves contend in vain". Yes, I would like to prevent you from ending up in bad situations, I want your happiness and hence please continue reading.

To sum it up: always try to have your first experiences with someone who can help you in case of difficulty. Choose a safe place, both in terms of the place itself - for example, avoid cliffs, just to mention a dangerous place - but also safe from unwanted contact with people who are not having the experience. When you are having the experience, contact with people who are in an ordinary state of consciousness is rather difficult, and if these

people happen to be policemen, agitation is assured. Of course you should turn off your phone. Further ahead there is a chapter devoted to the preparation of the first experience, meanwhile we continue with some necessary steps to be taken beforehand.

How to find the substance and equipment required

As you know, mushrooms are illegal, I'm really sorry, but it is so. Furthermore, finding them is risky, and so is trusting what some strangers are offering to sell you. I have heard of normal mushrooms "sprinkled" with LSD or worse; if it were real LSD it would not be so bad.

There are psychedelic substances that have similar effects to mushrooms or LSD but are actually quite different. Some of these substances are even very dangerous, for example 25I-NBOMe looks like LSD, but there have been cases of death as a result of taking this "rc". See here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ybctu2ul>

"rc" means *research chemical*, which is what they call new substances synthesized in a laboratory, formulated so as not to fall within the tables of illegal substances in certain nations; they simulate the effect of known substances without having the same chemical composition, so as not to be illegal.

Research has found that most of the magic mushrooms purchased online were normal mushrooms with LSD, PCP or other substances added to them. An 11-year study examined 886 samples, noting that only 28% of the samples were magic mushrooms, 35% contained mainly LSD or PCP, while 37% contained no psychoactive principle at all:

<https://tinyurl.com/y5rosd3l>

Finding ready-made mushrooms is not easy, so magic truffles are the best alternative and can be found for sale online, or you can buy a grow kit for mushrooms online and grow them yourself. An interesting alternative is to prepare the base for the cultivation of mushrooms and inoculate the spores from which the mycelium is born; spores can be found for sale very easily. There are many videos on Youtube that explain how to do this, or you can

search for "PF-Tek" on Google, a simple and effective technique explained step by step; cultivation in this way is much cheaper than with the grow kit.

Do you have a friend who grows them and is willing to let you try them? Or do you have the possibility of finding psilocybin? The technical name is 4-AcO-DMT. Here you will find a form on Erowid, the most reliable website for information about psychoactive substances:

<https://tinyurl.com/nj4ss7h>

Whatever you are looking for, you can find it starting from a Google search. Until last year, 2018, "sourcing" was allowed on Reddit.com, that is the sharing of names of the sites to buy from, with reviews and opinions of enthusiasts, but this is no longer so, it is now forbidden, and so is private communication with other subscribers.

At this point I can only tell you that the most reliable labs are in Canada. In this country they can sell substances "not intended for human consumption", although formally they are supplies for laboratory research only. They ship to almost everywhere, but remember that these substances are not legal so there will always be an element of risk. In any case, any product purchased online must be checked with a Drug Identification Test Kit, easily available on the web.

Warning: you need the reagents that identify the substance, obviously not those to check their presence in urine. These products have similar names and it is easy to get confused.

Almost all websites where you can buy psilocybin require payment with cryptocurrencies, such as Litecoin for example. Acquiring them requires some study, but as usual instructions are more complicated than the practice itself.

What you have read is all the information I can give you; it is not complete but you have all the necessary references. Always beware of substance purchased on the web. Anyone could be hiding behind anonymity.

One principle I used to select these sites is to evaluate what they sell. I am only interested in tryptamines, and when I see that they produce and sell strange or dangerous substances - such as the 25I-NBOMe - I discard them

without hesitation.

The last way of finding mushrooms is the oldest and most traditional way, that is, to go and look for them in places where they grow. Small *Psilocybe Semilanceata* are widespread and very recognizable, but you must look for them in the right places, in the right period, and perhaps they will not let you find them anyway. On Giorgio Samorini's website you can find more information, but remember that if you are not experienced with mushrooms it is risky; eating poisonous mushrooms causes serious physical damage and is often lethal.

Type *Psilocybe Semilanceata* on a search engine and you will find tens of thousands of indications, and if you narrow your search down to a few keywords, such as "find" for example, you will have enough material to study for many days.

Storing mushrooms and truffles

The relatively safer solution is to grow them. Now imagine that you have just had your first harvest, for example 200 grams of fresh *Psilocybe Cubensis*. What to do now? You can't consume them all, and fresh mushrooms only last about three or four days in the fridge. The only possible solution is to dry them, because these fresh mushrooms cannot be frozen.

The drying must take place at low temperatures, better not to exceed 40-45 C °, otherwise the substances contained could be altered, even though some authors indicate a maximum temperature of around 60 C ° - generally obtained in a ventilated oven at minimum temperature, keeping the door half-open. In addition to the oven there are different systems, but the best is always a domestic dehydrator. For little money you can find ventilated models with temperature regulation.

The flow of warm air will dry them in a day or two and you can store them when they are dry, that is, when you can break them and they have the consistency of a cracker. If they do not break so easily you should let them dry a little longer because if they are not perfectly dry they will not keep well. The biggest problem with drying is oxidation rather than

temperature, so I do not recommend putting them in the sun as if they were tomatoes. In summer it is fine to leave them in the open air, but always in the shade; protected from insects.

If you do not have or cannot buy a dehydrator, place them on a net to facilitate air circulation, at comfortable room temperature - low humidity if possible - then move the air with a fan. When they are like crackers, they are ready. How would I do it? Dehydrator at 35 ° C until they are well dried. You can raise the temperature up to 40-45 ° C to speed things up, but why hurry? In my opinion time is also important for obtaining a good result.

Once they are dry you have several possibilities. For example, use a tightly closed jar - if you have a bag of silica gel to remove the moisture in the jar it is better - then put it in the refrigerator. The ideal solution? A vacuum sealed bag, then in the freezer, so they will keep well for years. When you need mushrooms, open the bag, take what you need, then vacuum it again, and put it back in the freezer.

Another useful tool is a coffee grinder - unfortunately a blender doesn't work because the dried mushrooms fly around in the big glass container almost without touching the blade. I recommend the coffee grinder because it can be used to grind the mushrooms when you want to take them. This is the best way in my experience for several reasons, but I will tell you more about how to take them in the next chapter and later on, when I speak about microdosing. Alternatively you can use a pestle and mortar if they are very dry, but it is a long job and the result will be poor anyway.

The last tool, but by no means the least, is a digital scale.

I know many people who have taken mushrooms but none of them had any idea of how much they took. This seems unbelievable for a fussy person like me because there are huge differences between one dose and another so how could you possibly rely on chance?

Above all, dosage is essential the first few times you take them, yet many people do not even know the difference between doses for fresh or dried mushrooms.

For our purposes there are two types of scales, both digital, differing only in the sensitivity of the measured weight. The scales we are looking for weigh hundredths or thousandths of a gram. If you plan to use the synthetic powder principle, buy one that weighs the thousandths; it will always work very well and the cost does not change. On Amazon you will find several models that cost very little.

Option: if you are interested in microdosing, which I will talk about later, buy a capsule filler as well - a small device for fast encapsulation – with its capsules. A size "0" capsule filler costs less than 30 euros and you can prepare 24 capsules at a time (or even more depending on the models), each containing at least 0.2 grams of fine ground mushroom; you can find vegetable or animal based capsules so choose according to your preferences.

If you buy machine and capsules at the same time you should spend less than if you buy the two separately.

To Summarize: you will need the things I have advised you to buy, but if you want to save money and only buy the essential, the scale should not be missing. I repeat, the one you use in the kitchen is not really good, even if it is digital and measures individual grams.

The definition of a dose

There are mushrooms and truffles, both fresh and dried, and psilocybin, so doses are obviously different, but there are fairly precise proportions for obtaining the same effect. I will start by establishing that fresh mushrooms contain about 90% of water, so 10 grams of fresh mushrooms once dried become about 1 gram. It is not necessary to weigh fresh mushrooms - it is less common to consume them as soon as they are picked - the important reference is the weight of the well dried ones.

In fact when we say, "I took 3 grams" we always refer to dried mushrooms, whereas when we speak of fresh mushrooms the normal reference is the number of mushrooms. This makes sense as long as they are *Psilocybe Semilanceata*, which are all small and almost the same size, but if we talk about *Psilocybe Cubensis* things change a lot, dimensions

can vary considerably, and the number of mushrooms is no longer a reliable reference.



In the pictures you can clearly see the differences between Semilanceata and Cubensis.

Personally I have only tasted the Semilanceata a couple of times, when I picked them while walking in the mountains. I have no references except what I have read. Many say you should eat between 20 and 50 specimens - this seems to be the most common dose among people with experience - but I don't really know because I lack direct experience.

If I went to the mountains to look for them, I would still take my digital scale, because it is difficult to calculate the difference between 10 and 30 fresh grams, but the experiences they give you are literally poles apart, believe me.

Do not take risks especially if it is your first time, and despite my experience I would still be very careful. Take them home, dry them, and weigh them, or weigh them and consume them directly in the middle of nature, but always with caution and respect.

Psilacetin is measured in milligrams. In my experience the relationship with dried mushrooms is this: each gram of dried mushroom of the Cubensis species contains the equivalent of less than 10 milligrams of psilacetin - to be precise between 8 and 9 mg. In fact, if you add up the psilocybin and psilocin contained in mushrooms, on average you will not reach 1% of the content of the total weight of the dried ones. So 16-18 mg is equal to 2 grams of dried mushroom, 24-27 mg is 3 grams and so on.

It is very simple, but be careful when weighing. I read the account of an experience had by a person who accidentally took 350 mg instead of 35 mg, the equivalent of over 35 g of mushrooms instead of about 3.5 g. Well, he did not die because the substance we are talking about is the safest of all prohibited substances, but it was not a piece of cake.

Some more information on Psychonaut Wiki about 4-AcO-DMT:

<https://tinyurl.com/nyh3e3z>

Overdosing with mushrooms is practically impossible, with psilacetin it is almost as impossible. I speak of psilacetin and not of psilocybin because I have never found the latter on the market.

To be correct, I would add that the information about toxicity found in the paragraph on LD50 (Lethal Dose 50) always refers to psilocybin; I assimilate the two, but there is still no scientific evidence to confirm my assumption.

Truffles

Finally, some information about truffles too, seeing as they are more readily available and therefore the best candidates for first experiences. I have never found tables indicating the relationship between quantities of dried mushrooms and fresh truffles, what I am writing is based on my experience, repeated and confirmed by others. On this empirical basis I can say that 3 grams of good dried mushrooms correspond to about 15 grams of fresh truffles.

No greater accuracy is possible, the variables are:

- the type of mushroom
- the type of truffle
- the amount of active ingredient contained in each

I go deeper into the topic of doses for the various substances in the next chapter, but I can already tell you that the ratio "1 gr of dried mushrooms" equal to "4-5 gr of fresh truffles" is a reliable practical reference.

The newly purchased truffles must be kept sealed in their plastic bag in the refrigerator; they remain edible for about one or two months at most, then

they go bad. Truffles can also be dried, albeit with greater difficulty because they are more solid and compact than mushrooms. Their consistency is perhaps slightly denser than that of a walnut kernel, therefore they take longer to dry than mushrooms, which are softer and lighter. In this case a dehydrator is recommended.

When dried, the fresh truffles lose two thirds of their weight becoming very hard, which is also a reason why they are nicknamed "philosopher's stone".

If mushrooms are reduced to a tenth of their original weight, truffles are reduced to a third of their weight when fresh. In this form they can be kept for a long time, in a closed jar in the refrigerator, even better if in a vacuum bag stored in the freezer. For calculating the dose of dried truffles – to be certainly taken ground up - refer to the next chapter, chapter 3.

LD50

In order to continue reading this book you need to know the meaning of LD50 - Lethal Dose 50 or "median lethal dose". LD50 is the value for which a certain amount of substance (in mg per kg of body weight) causes the death of 50% of guinea pigs involved in a laboratory experiment.

Psilocybin has an LD50 of 280 mg / kg. of body weight. To give you a better idea, caffeine has an LD50 equal to 192 mg / kg, nicotine between 6.5 and 13 mg / kg, cocaine 96 mg / kg and heroin 21.8 mg / kg.

If you weigh 70 kg – and you are in normally healthy physical conditions - you should eat 19.6 grams of psilocybin in order to have a 50% chance of dying. This is contained in about 2 kg of dried mushrooms.

This should reassure you about the safety of the substance itself, but not give you strange ideas about exaggerating with quantities. You must first find out how your body and above all your mind will react. The effects are always related to the quantities taken; when you increase the dose you change the effect. Later I will explain better what effect means.

Addiction and tolerance

Psilocin and many tryptamine substances in general have two important

qualities: they cause no addiction because you develop tolerance.

Addiction means that your body begins to need the substance in order to continue feeling good; tolerance means that you have to increase the dose over time in order to achieve the same effect.

There is no way to become addicted, also because you develop tolerance very quickly.

Tolerance means that if you take a dose now, after a little more than three hours you could take another equal dose and have no additional effect, even if you were to take double the dose or more. In order for you to have a new experience, you have to wait a week or so, before that time the substance would have very little or no effect at all; this is due to the tolerance you develop to psilocin. As you can see, with these characteristics you cannot become dependent, not only because of tolerance, but also because the substance itself does not induce physiological addiction.

Heroin, on the other hand, is highly addictive, and even cellular cultures accustomed to administration of heroin show dependence - withdrawal symptoms - if it is suspended. Those who manage to overcome heroin addiction are heroes; overcoming strong physical dependence and very strong psychological dependence is an uncommon undertaking.

Mushrooms allow us to stay free, an extra quality that adds to the many other qualities they possess.

3. THE FIRST TIME

We have finally come to the most intriguing chapter, because the first time is always the most exciting for everyone, right? No, it will not be the most exciting, every subsequent time will be more exciting, even after dozens of experiences.

Even for me, every time is always a special thrill, a mixture of love and fear, because every single time I can never be sure that things will go according to my hopes and expectations. Paradoxically, your first contact with mushrooms should be the most peaceful and safe experience, because you need to start well if you don't want your first time to be the last.

Taking mushrooms requires respect for many good reasons, because basically you are putting all of yourself in the hands of an energy that acts very deep inside of you and inside of *who you think you are*. It is a very intimate experience with yourself, as you have never had in your life before.

How much to start with? The dose is important, but before that you must always remember the set & setting. It seems strange but it is much more important than the dose; an adequate set & setting saves you from any bad trip or at least drastically reduces the intensity, the effects, and duration.

The first dose must be low and you must first of all understand your sensitivity to the substance. This is the most important practical information contained in this book, as well as the contraindications and the set & setting.

Ever since I met magic mushrooms, I have been surprised several times by the differences in people's sensitivity, until after a while I realized that there are basically three levels. This understanding might seem trivial but it is important and should always be kept in mind:

- high sensitivity
- normal sensitivity
- low sensitivity

How is your sensitivity?

It is literally impossible to know until you have had at least three or more experiences. Please do not think you know just because you have had experiences with other substances, not even your first time with mushrooms can give you definitive indications. For example, experiences with cannabis are different. You could hold up well with grass but lose yourself into absolute nothingness with a dose of mushrooms that would still allow me to converse quietly with a policeman. Cocaine, for instance, can make you feel more secure and sharp, but it does not alter the foundations of the reality you perceive in normal conditions, unlike what happens with psychedelics.

You may have had dozens or hundreds of experiences with ayahuasca, so you have a lot of experience, but mushrooms might take you by surprise and send you on a terrifying trip. I personally know quite a few people who had had hundreds of experiences with ayahuasca and were taken to the edge of the precipice by mushrooms.

I have the example of a dear friend taking mushrooms for the first time, who in the light of his many experiences with ayahuasca decided to take just over 4 grams. On that same occasion I took a little more than he did, about 4.5 grams. Damn, I spent almost four hours looking after him as he went into another dimension, didn't see me, and didn't even remember having taken the mushrooms. I had to assist him in order to stop him from getting hurt, but also to accompany him to the bathroom. In the end he only remembered fragments of a scattering of himself in a universe that he could not even conceive. For him it was a very instructive experience, but definitely not an easy one, nor was it easy for me as I had taken more than him, but this shows you the difference in individual responses to similar quantities of mushrooms.

They told me about the experience of a dear friend, also a veteran with ayahuasca, who took 1.5 grams of dried mushrooms and spent hours of

hell. More than once they thought they had to call for medical help. Luckily a shaman was present, who took on caring for her suffering and helped her to heal from the immediate problem, but also from those she had been carrying since she was a young child. It was an unexpected and profound healing, but the risk of hospitalization, or worse, continued for a long time, with great fear for all participants.

And it was only a gram and a half.

The correct quantity is really an unknown variable until you have experienced it in person, and not once, better at least three or more times. Only in this way do you have a reference that does not depend on the psychophysical conditions of that one occasion.

I also give you the example of two of my personal experiences.

The first goes back to when I was still approaching mushrooms and took only one gram. It was a very interesting experience on a perceptual level, but very physically tiring; I had a feeling of restlessness and physical agitation that did not find relief even while lying down comfortably. At one point I had to go for a walk in a park near where I was staying and walked for a long time before the effect came down. Only after that was I able to return inside and rest.

The second experience took place some time later. One night I took 8.47 grams alone. I was in a room in the dark and in silence. I intentionally stood still for over four hours to test myself; I managed to keep the memory of myself and of the place where I was, in a state of presence and grace, as in deep meditation. Of course it was a very intense experience as presence and grace do not necessarily indicate an easy experience, so do not take dosing lightly, especially for your first experiences.

Do I have lower sensitivity than others? Perhaps, even though the effect of a single gram does not confirm this. The only thing I am sure of is that I am experienced and that I am psychologically solid, besides not having the slightest fear - out of trust, not out of recklessness.

Being experienced, centered and trusting are the main pillars that allow you to trip alone with high doses; it is not just a matter of high or low sensitivity, although this is important especially for the first few times.

These pillars allowed me to always have good experiences with all the different substances that I have taken over the years: Cannabis, LSD, Salvia Divinorum, Ayahuasca, and Mushrooms.

If I were to define the single most important element for solitary extreme explorations, I would undoubtedly say it is trust. I trust mushrooms, without reservations, just as I have faith in the fact that life loves me and presents me only with the experiences I need. Until you have this inner centering, wait to have intense experiences on your own; you don't have to prove anything to anyone, so don't be in a hurry.

To summarize: first of all check your sensitivity, then have patience, and over time have experiences increasing the quantity gradually, to check how you respond. After a while you will have understood better your relationship with mushrooms, only increasing the dosage if you have complete confidence and are emotionally and psychologically balanced. Take into account the fact that the risk of having a difficult experience is always present and unpredictable, despite the experience you may have gained in the meantime.

Safe doses for first experiences

The first 3-4 times are exploratory experiences in order to establish a good relationship with mushrooms. It makes no sense to think of trying "randomly", just to see how it goes. You will see this over time by building a relationship with mushrooms, and this can only be achieved by starting on a path, not through improvised experiences. In this paragraph I will give you instructions for starting safely; if you start with a bad experience then it will be difficult for you to develop trust, an indispensable element in order to continue in the best way over time. My instructions will be synthetic so as to be clear and understandable, but remember that we are speaking of a "Master Plant" and not simply a chemical.



To find out your sensitivity you have to start with a small dose, there is no other way.

Take it strictly on an empty stomach. You should have had your last light meal at least 3 or 4 hours before, otherwise there is a risk you might feel sick.

I repeat: you need a digital precision scale, approximation is not good at all, nor is using the kitchen scale. A suitable scale can be found online for about 20 Euros, both with precision to the hundredth of a gram and to the thousandth; it is money well spent. Here are the ***first experience doses for each substance***:

- Dried mushrooms: 1 gram
- Fresh truffles: 4-5 grams
- Dried truffles: 1.5 grams
- Psilacetin: (4-AcO-DMT) 8-9 milligrams

You can take dried mushrooms and fresh truffles by simply chewing them well and then swallowing them. If you have powdered psilacetin you can put it in a capsule or directly in a drop of water - it has an unpleasant bitter taste. Dry truffles must be ground otherwise it is impossible to chew them because they are very hard. Dried truffle powder and dried mushroom powder can be taken with water or lemon juice, as I describe in a later paragraph about "*Lemon Tek*".

The effect rises in about half an hour and will last about 3-4 hours considering that for your first time you will have taken a small dose. But remember that the time for returning to ordinary reality is approximated and very personal. I remind you that you can not take the substance again the next day as it would have no effect because you immediately develop tolerance. You have to wait about a week before you can take it again. Wisely the mushroom forces you to take some time to integrate the experience.

After this first experience you begin to understand how your body and mind react.

The second time? Let's see how much for each substance.

Dried mushrooms. Was it an intense experience? Increase by about 0.5 grams, maximum one, to reach a gram and a half, maximum two.

Was it a light experience? You can think of increasing the dosage by one gram, maximum one and a half, and then reaching two or two and a half.

After the second time you can see how to go ahead. If you "hold up" well, then the third experience could be with 3.5 grams, a surely effective quantity, which will give you further indications on your sensitivity and if and how much you may increase the following times.

Remember that 3.5 gr. is a considerable dose and quite intense. Just think that it corresponds to over 35 grams of fresh ones. When the sale of magic mushrooms was still allowed in Holland, the quantity suggested to customers in coffee shops was around 10 grams of fresh ones per person, equivalent to 1 dry gram, enough for many people to freak out – and they were often taken together with alcohol and joints, very risky combinations. This ignorant, stupid and dangerous behavior of many "patrons" was also one of the reasons that led to the prohibition of mushrooms.

If you want to increase the doses, I invite you to first have many experiences not exceeding the quantities I have indicated, always giving set & setting the utmost importance, even more than the dosage itself.

Fresh truffles. I repeat the same things I said for mushrooms, but you have to multiply those quantities by four or five.

- First time, about 4 grams, maximum 5.
- Second time between 7.5 and 10 grams approximately.
- The third time you can take the whole 15 gram bag, if your sensitivity allows you to.

You can roughly divide the contents of the bag into three equal parts in order to understand how much 5 grams are. The precision balance in this case is not essential.

Dried truffles. Here, too, I repeat the same indications I gave for dried mushrooms, but this time you have to multiply those quantities by 1.5.

- First time, about 1.5 grams
- Second time between 2.5 and 3.5 grams approx.
- The third time you can take 5 dried grams, depending on your sensitivity.

In this case the precision scale is necessary.

Psilacetin. The scale is indispensable and must weigh milligrams.

- First dose 8-9 milligrams
- Second 15 mg.
- The third depends on your sensitivity. If you hold up well then try 25 milligrams, if you are very sensitive, do not exceed 20 mg.

Psilacetin is absorbed faster, so the effect rises quickly and has a higher peak, while the duration of the experience is a little shorter. This is why I tell you to take less than the equivalent of the mushrooms.

I summarize all dosages for the first time: 1 gram of dried mushrooms = 4-5 grams of fresh truffles = 1.5 grams of dried truffles = 8-9 milligrams of psilacetin.

Higher values are obtained by multiplying properly.

For example 3 grams of dried mushrooms are equal to 15 grams of fresh truffles, almost 5 grams of dried truffles and between 24 and 27 milligrams of psilacetin.

A note about fresh mushrooms: they contain about 90% water, so 10 fresh grams correspond to 1 dry gram. Calibrate quantities accordingly, but be careful and reduce them a little as many authors claim that the effect is a little stronger if the mushrooms are fresh. I do not have as much experience with these - less than with dried mushrooms - and I am just quoting this for your safety.

During your experience, turn off your phone and don't think you can drive a car or a motorcycle, obviously, or even a bicycle.

Some observations about doses and intensity of the experience

I know some people, including myself, who trip very well with 5 grams, while others can do this with 2 or 3 grams at most. The latter are lucky as they need less raw material in order to have the desired effect. Don't get caught up in the idea that more is better. Quantity is an individual physiological parameter and varies from person to person; 3 grams can be

much more for you than 5 grams is for me.

Whatever your sensitivity, there are about 3 levels of intensity of an experience. I know that some authors describe 5, some even 6, but in my experience 3 are more than enough: the first level is light, the second is intense, and the third is beyond the possibility of being described.

Categorizing is generally a somewhat coarse simplification, but it is above all useless. I describe these levels because in the beginning I was interested and wanted to know everything, but understanding what an experience is like by using levels is just a useless fantasy.

I'll give you an example: I have had enlightening and useful experiences with less than 2 grams, as well as experiences with very high doses that have given me very little. The description of the intensity of these levels will help you not to be taken by surprise, but when you are in it I assure you that this information will be of little use to you.

The first level is objectively light: alteration of colors, slight alteration of physical sensations with some consequence on your sense of balance, but basically it is a soft and pleasant experience, or vice versa only slightly paranoid and annoying; it could also be an alternation between the two polarities. The effect on the mind and thoughts is perceptible. Obviously, you mustn't drive vehicles of any kind.

The second level is the one where you come to face yourself and others, you know you are in the experience, you remember having taken the mushrooms, there are many colorful and fractal visions, you are in a distorted reality for better or worse, but in the end you are there, even when you ask yourself if you will ever be able to return to reality or why the hell you put yourself in that situation, or you tell yourself: never again in my life! The effect on mind and thoughts is intense to very intense.

The third level is the one generically defined as "ego death", the death of who you are, when you enter into that dimension where you just are. It might not seem like much, and for many people it is not appealing, in fact I confirm that it is not suitable for everyone, just as mushrooms in general are not suitable for everyone. To go into this dimension you must have the perfect set & setting – this is essential - but you must also be balanced and trust that life loves you and the love is mutual. Here the trick is not to

resist, but to flow into what you experience, because if you resist you are in trouble. Without these essential foundations, the experience could become a horror trip. At this level you could experience the loss of mind and thoughts, something very similar to a complete loss of consciousness. In fact at the end of the experience many will not keep any memory of what they went through and what happened around them - or they will not be able to find ways to describe their experience or find appropriate words and mental concepts. During the experience, references to space-time are completely lost so it is a very special feeling!

What is the dose of **dried mushrooms** that takes you to each of these levels? On average to reach the first level you need maximum 1.5 grams, maybe less; for the second level you need up to about 3.5 - 4 grams; for the third around 5 grams or more. How much more? An African American, Kilindi Iyi, takes as much as 40 grams and says that if taking 5 grams is like wetting your feet in the water, taking 40 is like diving into the ocean. He is one of those people who claim that mushrooms are the product of an exoplanetary technology, that is, conceived and built outside our planet.

If you are very sensitive, we should say 1, 2, and 3 grams.

If you are less sensitive 2, 5, and 7 grams (the latter is a dose to be taken with much respect, even if you hold up well).

Fresh truffles? Remember the 1 to 5 ratio: 4-5 grams of truffles correspond to about 1 gram of mushrooms, so make the calculations while reviewing the doses of dried mushrooms in relation to your sensitivity.

Do you understand why mushrooms are more popular than truffles? If for diving into the depths of yourself you need to eat 20-25 grams of truffles instead of 5 grams of mushrooms, you immediately understand that less is better, whether they are mushrooms or truffles - just taste them and you will understand why.

The most pleasant and light solution - digestively speaking - is when 5 grams of dried mushrooms become a capsule containing about 45 mg. of psilocybin. For psilocybin you make the calculations in relation to your sensitivity. I remind you once again that 1 gram of dried mushrooms corresponds to about 8-9 mg of psilocybin.

You have decided that you want to have the experience

Are you ready to disconnect from the world for a few hours? With low doses consider no less than 4 hours, which will increase if you have experiences with larger quantities. If you can relax and feel comfortable even a few hours after that, it is better. Turn off your mobile phone.

Strictly on an empty stomach for at least three hours, better if a little more. The last meal before the short fast should be light, moreover, from other people's personal experience and my own I suggest you avoid shellfish and mollusks which might make you feel agitated and you might have greater difficulty in letting yourself go to the experience. Be careful also with pork and similar products; in many traditions these foods are forbidden and I think there are good reasons for this so I would also avoid them.

If you only eat cooked vegetables and eggs you will not have any problems, avoid heavy foods, red meat, legumes, coffee, but without worrying too much. There are not as many food restrictions as before an experience with ayahuasca and those who organize experiences with that type of substance absolutely have to inform participants about them.

Ayahuasca contains Monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs), while mushrooms do not. MAOIs are dangerous if you have previously eaten food containing tyramine, such as smoked herring, seasoned cheeses, yogurt, processed meats (chicken liver, salami and sausages), soy sauce, aged red wine, fish, chocolate, avocado, figs, broad beans, packaged or canned soups, ripe bananas, coffee, brewer's yeast, alcoholic beverages, and many more.

With mushrooms there are no particular limitations, but if the meal you had before the experience is light and easily digestible - as well as being at least 3-4 hours before taking the substance - it will obviously be much better for you.

You should not drink any alcohol in the 24 hours before the experience, at least. Mushrooms and alcohol don't mix well, mushrooms and cannabis do, but obviously I don't recommend it for the first few times. Weed increases

the duration of the experience with mushrooms, but before you understand your sensitivity, you should avoid it.

A note on alcohol

Alcohol is a drug, the most boring of all drugs, but it is the most socially accepted, a fact that makes people underestimate its real danger: it dulls consciousness. This is why it is so widespread and advertised. This effect is the exact opposite of what mushrooms do - they expand consciousness. What is the point of taking mushrooms and drinking alcohol? As well as being a deep lack of respect for mushrooms, they are vehicles with opposite "qualities", and it is a meaningless combination that also increases the risk of having a bad trip.

Finally, do not mix substances in general. I repeat this again because it is important. The experience with mushrooms does not need additives, but if you are only looking for strong sensations then leave the sacred mushrooms alone because they could overwhelm you and give you a hard lesson. Better look for that elsewhere, not with tryptamine substances.

How to take mushrooms?

There are several ways, some are even quite imaginative - you can find many online - but I would like to give you just a couple of simple and verified methods.

The first is very basic: you weigh the dried mushrooms, then eat them and chew them well, at the end you can help yourself with a drop of water to swallow the crumbs and clean your mouth.

The second is what I recommend below. I and many others have always used this method and it is good for both mushrooms and truffles, dried or finely ground.

Lemon Tek

Prepare your quantity of mushrooms, then grind them so that they become a uniform powder if possible. Transfer the powder into a jar with a lid, add the freshly squeezed lemon juice, the amount should be sufficient to wet

the powder well, covering it a little with the juice.

The powder and lemon must be in contact for 20-25 minutes at most, after this time you drink it. While you wait every now and then shake the contents well (the jar must be airtight), so that the mushrooms and lemon mix well with each other. If you do not shake well, some lumps of powder may not get wet with the lemon juice, so do not be afraid to really shake.

After the time has elapsed (I repeat, 25 minutes at most), you can add a little water to make the mixture more liquid and easier to drink, then drink the contents. Finally add a little water to the jar to rinse it and drink this too.

This technique is called Lemon Tek. On the internet you will find several descriptions, but here I have explained everything you need to know.

Why take mushrooms with Lemon Tek? The lemon covers the flavor of mushrooms a little and this makes it easier for us to drink it quickly; it may not be very good, but if you have ever tried ayahuasca you will find Lemon Tek delicious. The main reason that we use lemon is because its acidity starts the transformation of psilocybin into psilocin, which would otherwise take place in the acidity of the stomach and take longer. It is actually this time of conversion in the stomach that could be uncomfortable for the first half hour, so lemon reduces this time and the consequent risk of nausea and malaise.

This system works. If you feel a little nausea it will not last as long, but I don't really think it intensifies the experience. On the internet I have read statements that seem very unlikely to me, for example that it gives you "double or more the effect of the dose". On average, it starts sooner and a little faster - this is likely - but doubling or tripling its power does not correspond to my experience at all.

As the effect is rising other symptoms are teary eyes and yawning; the latter can be particularly intense or deep, but do not worry, just enjoy them. Temperature perception: you may feel cold and hot, even in sequence, but cold is the most common sensation. Be prepared to cover and uncover yourself, being physically well helps ensure that you will have a good experience.

What to expect after taking them?

Each experience is different, but there are some phases that are common to all.

The phase immediately after taking them is called "body load" and it is that period of time during which the body "loads" the substance. It lasts 15-20 minutes to an hour approximately. Sometimes the body load lasts even longer than an hour and this could give the impression that the dose is not having any effect, but if you have taken a sufficient amount the effect will certainly rise up. Sometimes with ayahuasca or salvia divinorum you take one or more doses and nothing happens, but this cannot occur with mushrooms. A friend told me that once he had taken 5 grams of dried mushrooms, but after an hour nothing had happened and he decided to take another 2 grams. The effect rose shortly after that and was a frightening experience. It was the last time he ever took mushrooms! Remember, the dose of magic mushrooms always works, even if it takes longer than usual.

The first few times during the body load you may have a little nausea or discomfort in the stomach, which may last about half an hour, however the discomfort will pass as soon as the effect begins to rise. Frequently people feel a little anxiety and agitation, but at a certain point this will also go away, so do not worry about it and remember that it is normal.

After the body load comes the most intense phase; you reach the peak of intensity about 30-40 minutes after you begin to feel the effect. This more intense phase can last between 1 and 3 or 4 hours, after which the effect begins to decline. You can start considering that the experience is over 4 to 9-10 hours later. I know I am not saying anything specific, but it depends on how much substance you take and on how you respond. These are the durations that I have experienced over time.

During the trip you may feel hungry and thirsty, and if you do not exaggerate with the quantities you can eat dried fruit without problems - better walnuts - and you can drink water. If, on the other hand, you eat sugar - in drinks or food, including fresh fruit - take into account a slight reduction in the intensity of the experience. Sugar can be a way of lowering the pressure of an experience that you are struggling with, to be

kept as a last resort if you really think you can't cope and you need a little help.

When you have finished your experience and you absolutely need to get back in touch with reality quickly, you can take products that contain sugar, such as biscuits and Coca Cola, but it is better if you can avoid it. Sugar is not healthy but above all you would lose the pleasant state of lightness that would otherwise last a few days after the session.

To clarify, you will be able to perform daily actions without interferences, but with a kind of peacefulness and inner centering that will make you feel good. If you can, then avoid sugar, stimulants, and of course alcohol, so as to prolong this state of grace for as long as possible. This beneficial subtle action is also a characteristic of microdosing. I write about this further ahead in the book.

What to expect from the experience? In a nutshell, you must expect to face different levels of intensity. Intensity is something very personal, but even by adopting your personal scale you will certainly experience a rise in intensity, a peak, and then a descent. During the experience there are often fluctuations, such as waves that rise and fall, this is a typical feature of the inner journey with mushrooms; you can feel them while you are in any phase of the journey and therefore at any level of intensity. In the moments when the wave brings you to the lowest point you may think that the effect is ending, but shortly it will start rising up again, making you realize that you are still on the high seas, and maybe the maximum intensity of the journey has yet to come.

The term "intensity" is not sufficient to explain the evolution of the journey, just as I find the description of what you see and how you see it to be quite superficial: different colors, fractals, walls that breathe, paintings that move, colored auras, etc. You will have visions mostly with your eyes closed, but sometimes they can become so intense that you will want to open your eyes to decrease their intensity.

The most interesting thing that happens is that mushrooms shift, sometimes "turn off", the perception that you have of yourself. To explain this better, what you think you are, who you think you are when you say "I", this "ego" is sometimes profoundly changed or even turned off. This

can be pleasant or not.

I said sometimes because it does not always happen, but this is the magic of the mushrooms that I personally enjoy the most. You can open up to a very different perception of the "self" (who I am), a kind of new "I" which is not a definite point but is dilated out of space and time and is closer to the "being" you find in some mystical experiences, "the drop that discovers it is the ocean".

You are no longer separate from what is "outside of you", you are everything and vice versa. What you see and hear comes to you without the interposition of the mind, which is silent at this moment. The mind is now a tool you no longer identify with, that you can use in a detached way. Usually the mind is like a radio that makes noise without interruption, without any control on our part, right inside our head. Now you can use it only if you need it. In this state of grace you can also not use it and experience the direct perception of reality, without the filters of the mind, without the labels that describe and attribute meaning to everything around and within you.

One of the most important gifts that mushrooms can give you is to experience the understanding that you are not your thoughts: you are a presence that is beyond the mind and beyond the usual identification with your physical body. If you pay attention, you will easily realize that we have almost no control over thoughts and that they always tend to take us away. Meditation is proof of this: when you are in a state of inner quiet, anything is enough to distract you and you get lost following your thoughts, forgetting your initial intention of simply observing them. I consider meditation an excellent exercise to train two qualities: developing the ability not to let yourself be carried away by thoughts and realizing that we are not our thoughts, that behind this flow of thoughts there is always an imperturbable Witness, which is what we really are.

A trip, whether beautiful or bad, can make you understand many important things. Mushrooms can make you experience and understand what it means to be in the *here and now*, the *present moment* that all ancient and modern traditions of wisdom speak about. But do not deceive yourself, if you really want to change you also have to "work" in your ordinary state

of consciousness. Mushrooms give you the vision and take you to a divine dimension, you then have to consolidate this by following a path of inner growth in your everyday life. Remember that once the experience is over, you inevitably return to the starting point.

If you are already following a psychological or spiritual path and you realize that you are a bit too conceptual or mental in relation to your path, perhaps for once, thanks to mushrooms, you will be able to let yourself go to a direct experience without ego interference. With mushrooms you could have a first-hand experience where there is no room for conceptualism or abstract mental representations.

The perfect and legal solution for your first experience

You are fascinated by the possibilities of expansion of consciousness offered by psilocybin, you are attracted by the revelations that you could have during an inner experience through the intake of an entheogenic substance, but you hesitate because the substance is illegal or for any other personal or context-related reason.

You would like to try but you fear the legal, physical, social, and personal consequences, so you are about to give up, although you feel very sorry about not having this experience at least once in your lifetime. Maybe you are not sure if you are suitable for this experience, you would like to understand better whether you should deepen this interest or forget about it.

What to do? The solution is simple, safe, and perfectly legal, it is called *Synthesis Retreat*.

A group of researchers have created an ideal set & setting in the Netherlands, where the use of truffles is legal. It is a large villa, of spectacular beauty and surrounded by nature just outside Amsterdam, where they offer experiences with psilocybin both individually and in groups. You can see the pictures of the place here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y5jo5e9d>

As you can see, this is not about buying truffles in a coffeeshop and

closing yourself in a sad hotel room and hoping that everything will be fine!

Here you can find all the information about what they offer and how they do it:

<https://tinyurl.com/yycjxv5l>

They have everything needed to ensure that you have the best experience, from medical check-ups to individual interviews; during the ceremony there are a number of trained facilitators to assist participants. It is certainly the most well structured and avant-garde organization in Europe.

During the experiences they collect data - strictly anonymous and only if you authorize them - and they collaborate with Imperial College London, the only center in Europe doing scientific research on the applications of psilocybin. I support their work because I see it as the only hope that one day this miraculous substance can be decriminalized.

Their website is already evidence of how well they work, while the testimonials left by participants are proof of the beauty of the experience and of the organizers' professionalism and hospitality. The prices are in line with the qualities of the place: 5-star hospitality, presence of medical staff, high level assistance and professionalism of the operators. If you can afford it, I recommend it without reservations.

In the next chapter we move on to a magical component that should not be missing and what to expect from the experience depends very much on this important element.

4. MUSIC, THE SOUNDTRACK OF YOUR TRIP

The content of the soundtrack is obviously a very personal choice, but there are some fixed points to be considered true for everyone.

Whoever wants to create his own playlist will first have to divide all music into three categories:

- music without quality
- music of quality
- inspired music

Only during the experience with our mushroom friends are we in the ideal conditions to distinguish them. I have created playlists after years of listening and selecting, especially during ceremonial experiences. I will write about ceremonies in the second part of the book, after exhausting all the practical aspects.

My music playlist has evolved after repeated listening. The first times I had obviously included all my favourite music, but then I eliminated most of it because I discovered the abyss that separated this from inspired music, which determines very different experiences. You can understand what inspired music is when you hear it during a trip, because it can guide you in the experience and speak to you - literally – about what you need at that moment.

Listen to Bobby McFerrin, for example, don't stop at "Don't Worry Be Happy" and find out who he really is: a Medicine Man who helps humanity with his compositions. There are several authors like him who

make magical music, so look for them with this intention and you will find them. In this link you will find an article about playlists for experiences with mushrooms, not so much because I like the music they suggest, but for you to understand the importance of music:

<https://tinyurl.com/y64njmey>

and also here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7uad7fl>

There is nothing to say about music without quality, except that it can make your trip worse, so better avoid it, although you will understand this by having experiences.

Quality music, on the other hand, has a more subtle and elusive limitation, it is the author's emotional and mental projection. This music does not rise above its level and cannot rise to the high and subtle level of perception you could be in at that moment, whereas inspired music succeeds very well in this. Inspiration was granted by Muses, divinities that artists of all ages turned to in order to be able to conceive creative work, so mythology shows us that inspiration is superior to the intellect and is outside of us; it comes from a higher plane.

I know that this passage is quite abstract. Distinguishing between quality and inspiration is something that can only be done through direct experience, but here I would like to give you a gift, an inspired song that can make you understand this difference and that will facilitate you in your search. That which is special can be felt even in an ordinary state of consciousness. Use quality speakers or headphones, then close your eyes: <https://tinyurl.com/y3u96pmq>

You can create a playlist that is suitable for experiences by applying other specific instructions that you find below:

- do not have entire albums by a single author. Create a playlist with different authors. There may be more than one song by the same author, but try to have more variety.
- do not include tracks that are too long, *10 minutes is a very long time in a non-ordinary state of consciousness*, so I advise you to stay within about 6-7 minutes. One track that lasts 10 minutes or more should be an exception if it is a super special track, but most should

not be so long.

- you should also alternate genres, do not put many authors of a single musical genre. Electronic music is fine, but so is music with "natural" instruments, innovative but also "traditional" music. Classical music might surprise you, among Mozart, Bach and Beethoven it is hard to find something uninspired.
- avoid songs in a language that you and other participants can understand, at least in the first and most intense phase. This is to avoid stimulating the rational mind, but also to avoid texts that could be inappropriate to what you are experiencing. Human voice intended as an instrument is always fine, there are some really wonderful songs, but they work better if they are in incomprehensible languages.

Towards the end of the experience, or after the formal closure, you can play whatever music you prefer, always favoring inspired or at least quality tracks. Having said that, the importance of alternation and variety derives from the fact that during the experience music becomes a portal that allows you to access different moods and especially different states of consciousness. A track can take you to hell but sooner or later it will end and the next one completely changes you by taking you somewhere else.

If you create a beautiful playlist, it is like planning a rich and varied journey.

Play it in random mode and you will be surprised to discover sounds that you had never heard before, even though you may know every single track very well. This aspect is truly surprising and I have often found myself not recognizing tracks that I had carefully chosen and selected, that I knew very well because I had listened to them literally dozens of times.

Music is a wonderful portal, it gives a structure to the experience – as well as content if it is inspired music - and makes it varied and safer, because it helps you interrupt unpleasant situations that you may experience. When the music changes, your mood changes immediately. If you want you can prepare a precise schedule, although it is difficult to program in relation to the phases of the experience. I succeeded after many experiences but then went back to the random mode anyway because not knowing what awaits

you is more effective for what it will produce inside of you.

You just have to select a lot of inspired music and then let it play at random – chance notoriously does not exist, in fact you will always get the right music at the right time, another example of the magic of mushrooms. During the experience you can pause the music and leave periods of silence, and discover that paradoxically the intensity might rise in a magical and wonderful way.

The complete absence of music for the whole duration of the trip makes sense only if you have had enough experience. In fact I always choose it for my solo night ceremonies, so I can avoid distractions and go even more within myself. If, on the other hand, you are a beginner, then it is better to have music, because if disturbing or paranoid thoughts are triggered, for example, it will be harder to eliminate them without changing the music. The change of music has the power to interrupt or tone down any inner state of fear and other disturbing emotions; for this reason I recommend tracks that are not too long, 10 minutes can seem like hours in certain conditions.

Another useful suggestion for the playlist is to think of making at least a couple of them: one for the first phase, more intense, and the other more social, for when the peak passes and you resume contact with others, so the first part would be "each one alone" and more introspective, while the second part more open to the world.

Finally, who is in charge of the music? Be cautious, music is important, there is nothing like shitty music - let's call it by its real name - to make you feel very disturbed. When you are alone you have no problems because you can change or pause it, but when you are with others, in an altered state of consciousness, annoying contrasts can arise about what to play.

Since initially you will always have experiences with one or more people, I suggest you agree beforehand about who is in charge of the music, perhaps the person most of you appreciate for their taste and knowledge in music. Once again, the essential importance of set & setting is confirmed, choosing who you trip with is never secondary. Do not do it with just anyone, just to "take some mushrooms together" as if it were like smoking

a joint. It could become a horrible experience so it is much better to avoid this.

5. THE BAD TRIP

I start by pointing out the difference between a Bad Trip and a Challenging Trip. A bad trip can be defined as a horrible trip that can produce psychological damage, more or less serious, whereas the challenging trip is an "uncomfortable" trip, which when integrated produces long-term benefits.

The set & setting play an essential role in causing negative experiences and if even one of the two elements is inadequate you are very likely to have a bad experience.

So what is a bad trip? Again we go back to the two levels, the physical and the emotional-mental levels. A bad trip always has a strong emotional and mental component, but sometimes what triggers a bad experience can be a physical cause. In the absence of pre-existing physical pathologies - heart problems or epilepsy for example - physical discomfort can be caused by not having waited at least 3-4 hours after the last – light! - meal, or having had coffee or alcohol shortly before taking them.

Remember that during the half hour after taking mushrooms you have the body load, which can cause malaise together with the excitement mixed with tension and fear, quite common when you are about to start the trip. This phase passes when the effect starts to rise and this moment is announced by more or less colored visions that you see mainly when closing your eyes. At this moment the malaise ends and you begin to enter into the experience.

The bad trip does not necessarily last as long as the total duration of the effect. Just as it can start quickly, it can end just as quickly and turn into something completely different. When the music you are listening to changes, it is most likely that your mood will also change. You are

experiencing fear and insecurity, it is normal for beginners.

"Will I ever be able to come out of the trip?" or "what mess am I in?" are the typical questions you ask yourself when you are having a crisis and start having paranoid thoughts. In certain moments it is very easy to beat yourself up, so observe the tricks that your mind is playing and do not identify with them, let them go and observe them with curiosity and without fear.

There are also other effects that could manifest, such as total loss of control over your thoughts and physical coordination, spatial disorientation and profound alteration of the concept of time. Do not try to control things and keep a conscious center, capable of observing what is going on inside of you.

When our perceptions are altered by magic mushrooms we tend to become much more sensitive to external factors such as sounds, smells, images, and the energies and expressions of the people around us. This overstimulation can be frightening and we often react by stiffening and trying to reject its effects, only making the situation worse.

What to do? Do not fight it, let a part of you observe what is happening and flow with it. It is much better to feel curious than afraid. Therapists who use psilocybin in sessions with their patients have summarized very well what needs to be remembered in times of difficulty: *"trust, surrender, let go"*. Remember that you are always safe, have faith. Your fear only has the effect of increasing its strength because "energy follows thought".

This is why it is very important not only that you have good mental health, but that the people you are having the experience with are also trustworthy and pleasant. These are two essential aspects in order to overcome these possible obstacles. I will never stop repeating the importance of set & setting, which is very evident especially in these moments. The right set & setting helps you come out of a bad trip, but before that it helps you not to get into it.

If on the one hand the effects of magic mushrooms can be amazing, on the other they can create situations that you experience as oppressive. Sometimes the beauty of a psychedelic trip can hide a puzzle of mental

jokes and enigmatic visions. You must be strong enough to let yourself be carried away by this flow of thoughts and observe how far the psilocin will take you. Trying to reject these effects is only counterproductive, so absolutely avoid fighting the initial feelings of fear, just welcome them and observe them, knowing that they are part of the psychedelic experience. Remember that psychedelic means "manifestation of the psyche", so if possible just enjoy the show.

However, if the 'bad trip' does not go away, you can adopt some strategies that could help you solve the problem.

- Find a quiet, secluded place where you can sit or lie down. Check the room temperature; a room that is too hot or too cold could worsen your sensations.
- Concentrate on your breathing, which must be calm and deep. Force yourself to breathe in this way and you will calm down.
- Drink a sugary drink to help your blood flow neutralize the effects of psilocin. You will immediately feel stronger and willing to resist bad thoughts.
- There are some relaxing herbs that can help decrease your fear and negative tension. Valerian tea and pills can be very effective.
- Rinse your face repeatedly with fresh water.

It is very important to remember that everything that begins always comes to an end, so this experience will undoubtedly end just as it began.

Remember that you are in a psychedelic experience, that you have eaten psychoactive mushrooms, that even if you feel afraid and insecure, everything is still okay because all of this can happen, and now it is happening to you.

Despite this, a psychedelic journey can be a wonderful experience, from which you can learn many things about yourself, and experience moments of pure amazement and profound wisdom. Psilocybin has a strong effect on our mind and a bad trip is almost always caused by fear.

Even the strategies you adopt to overcome your fears and face the tricks of the mind will be a reason to remember the experience with pleasure,

learning useful lessons for your daily life.

Before you start, it is important that you and the other participants explicitly declare that each one of you must take care of him/herself and others. Because you are friends, it will give you confidence to know that everyone is ready to help everyone else and will help you and others to face what awaits you more peacefully.



Finally, I report the summary of two researches carried out by Johns Hopkins University on almost 2000 people who had bad experiences (bad trips) with psilocybin mushrooms. The results are interesting and useful to know.

The most relevant finding is that 84% of the people said that they benefited from it despite the psychological distress experienced. They were not easy experiences considering that 28% of them said that the bad trip was among the 5 worst experiences of their lives and 11% said it was their worst experience ever. Most of those who were afraid of dying or had feelings related to their own death reported that the experiences were highly spiritual, and the more fear they had, the more the experience proved useful to improve their lives, precisely in relation to the aspect of fear.

After analyzing the information obtained from the interviews, the researchers were able to identify 7 characteristics common to all the "bad trips", although they were not necessarily all present in the same experience: fear, pain, physical malaise, feeling of going crazy, isolation, death, and paranoia.

7.6% of the survey participants had to resort to psychological treatments in the following year, during the experience 2.6% of them behaved aggressively or violently, and 2.7% received medical assistance. I remind you that all the subjects, 2000 more or less, were interviewed because they had had bad experiences with mushrooms, the "good trips" were strictly left out of the study.

Perhaps the most surprising but very interesting fact is that when asked "if

they would repeat the experience with the same difficulties and problems", 47% answered yes. In conclusion, researchers made the following observation: "The incidence of risky behavior or persistent psychological suffering is extremely low when psilocybin is administered in laboratory studies to selected, prepared, and supported participants". In fact they repeat the same points we examine in this book: selection, preparation, and set & setting.

Why do you want to take mushrooms?

Have you ever asked yourself why you would like to take magic mushrooms?

I have found that in most cases mushrooms are taken for fun, for recreational purposes. Unfortunately, I repeat, it is a wrong motivation. I can only understand those who decide to take mushrooms in a natural context, because thanks to nature you can discover that there is much more. Mushrooms are an extraordinarily effective tool for expanding consciousness and self-knowledge, but only if you are willing to question yourself. You can obtain a bigger view of life, have positive repercussions on everyone's existence, and increase your understanding of yourself and the life you are living.

In the second part of the book I will elaborate on how you could do this.

6. MEDICAL ASPECTS

I remind you of what was written in the introduction, in the part entitled "No medical or psychological advice": this is essential. When I write "to cure" or similar terms, I am not talking about scientific truths that are accepted by Western medicine. I simply report what has been stated by studies whose sources I will include.

Where I list the common over-the-counter drugs - or active ingredients - that are not compatible with psilocybin, I should clarify that I cannot describe all incompatible drugs. If a drug you are taking is not on the list, it does not mean that you can take psilocybin without problems: always consult your doctor. I do not want you to harm yourself and I would not want to end up in jail. I am not a doctor and by law I cannot – nor do I want to - take on this responsibility. The responsibility is only yours.

Psilocybin and drug compatibility

Since psilocybin is a powerful serotonin agonist, it is best to avoid taking it while using drugs that alter the serotonin system, such as SSRI antidepressants - like Prozac for example.

Here you can find more about this topic: <https://tinyurl.com/y78bk3np>

Moreover you should avoid drugs that contain monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs), which could greatly increase the intensity of the effect and even have lethal side effects. The same type of recommendation applies for lithium or other tricyclics used to normalize psychological states: be careful and avoid them. The drugs I have indicated so far can induce Serotonin Syndrome, a type of serious poisoning that you can investigate here: <https://tinyurl.com/jt9aloj>

Moreover do not take insulin, oral hypoglycaemic agents, antiepileptic or

cardiovascular drugs (except for antihypertensive drugs).

DO NOT take over the counter pharmaceutical products, therefore purchasable without a prescription, containing the following components:

- Dextromethorphan (contained in some well-known cough syrups)
- Pseudoephedrine (symptomatic for the flu and many over-the-counter antiallergic drugs)
- Codeine (analgesics and antitussives)
- Bitter orange synephrine (it can cause tachycardia, hyperagitation, arrhythmias, hypertensive crisis and heart problems in general)
- Linezolid (antibiotic with MAOI properties)
- Nasal vasoconstrictors
- Salbutamol Sulphate (such as Ventolin, for example, which could cause dangerous blood pressure changes)

I wanted to list these indications because there is a tendency to underestimate the fact that these products, although some are available without a prescription, are drugs with dangerous effects if they interact with psilocybin. The golden rule is NOT to take psilocybin if you are taking any kind of medication, otherwise you should always ask your doctor.

Psilocybin used as medication

Treatment of Cluster Headaches

Cluster headaches are often described as the most painful and disruptive type of headache. They are described as more intense than migraines, but generally have a shorter duration. Night-time attacks are often more painful and intense than daytime attacks, but obviously both of them significantly interfere in a person's life.

Systematic studies describing the results of treating cluster headaches with psilocybin have not yet been published, but many anecdotal reports have attracted the attention of the medical community. In the mid-2000s,

medical professionals began to take note of psilocybin and LSD as possible treatments for cluster headaches, after some of their patients reported remission of their condition following personal psychedelic use (and subsequent self-medication).

A recent survey reported that psilocybin could be a more effective treatment than currently available drugs, with nearly 50% of patients describing psilocybin as a completely effective treatment. Further information and insights on Wikipedia: <https://tinyurl.com/bvyrt26>

and here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyh3k2oz>

and here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6f4x2su>

I have no more information than what can be found online about the quantities and ways to treat this serious ailment, but I personally would consider microdosing to start with as it has no side effects and is not as "invasive" as could be higher doses with psychoactive effects. More information on microdosing can be found in the in-depth analysis, in the second half of the book.

Treatment of depression

Mushrooms offer two distinct ways to treat depression, which could also be combined at a later time: microdoses and single high doses. In this part I dedicate more space to the use of a single high dose for this specific purpose, the treatment of depression.

The high dose is a shock treatment, often justified to quickly obtain a change in a sick or seriously ill patient, where time is particularly precious. In this case we speak of depression due to severe trauma from receiving a serious diagnosis, such as that of a potentially lethal cancer, but also of depression lasting for years or decades and resistant to all traditional, psychological, and pharmacological treatments.

Before the end of this paragraph you will find two videos in which these therapeutic aspects of the single high dose are studied in depth, but they can be an excellent alternative - or complement - to microdoses only if the patient is assisted by a trained therapist.

Preparation begins before the experience and there must be a number of

meetings that help the person understand what they are getting themselves into and focus on the topics they will want to dive into. The work continues after the experience with the necessary integration, consisting of elaborating what has emerged, in order to understand and use it - but even to use it without necessarily understanding it for the moment.

It goes without saying that the experience is also assisted by the presence of one therapist, often two, who accompany the patient during all the phases that arise, supporting him/her when needed. The results are very encouraging, for example complete remission of symptoms of depression for many months.

In the first video we see Rosalind Watts, a psychotherapist who was able to experiment with the use of psilocybin for patients with severe symptoms of depression at Imperial College London, patients who had been treated for even 30 years with all the methods available - medicinal and non-medicinal - without any results. A single session with a high dose was sufficient to resolve many patients' symptoms, but not only this, it allowed them to go directly to the causes and resolve them without any side effects. After the session, many patients began to live again, to undertake activities, to have relationships, and to work: a new life in every sense.

These extraordinary and encouraging results are surprisingly in contrast to the image of magic mushrooms used to get stoned and maybe to throw yourself out of the window thinking you can fly. The results obtained on many patients continue for a long time, and in some cases they can be considered permanent healings - if after 30 years of being continuously depressed you come out of it for two or more years, perhaps you can consider it a permanent recovery.

Magic mushrooms are literally "psychedelic", that is, they make the content of the psyche explicit. Those who are depressed often completely block emotions within themselves, hiding them deep because of the great suffering they would feel when they get back in touch with them, whereas mushrooms bring everything out, often reviving the causes buried under layers of suffering, but with a capacity for reconnection – inner and outer – that can help us understand past events and forgive those involved.

While drug treatments are only symptomatic, typically sedating the

emotions, mushrooms are a real cure that produces immediate relief and with effects lasting for weeks and months. Not everyone has had lasting benefits, but many have, a success that had never been achieved by any of the allopathic products normally used.

Here are the two videos, about the high doses that require therapeutic support:

<https://tinyurl.com/y5dshtaj>

and <https://tinyurl.com/kfgr827>

It is also worth having a look at the data sheet on some research done at Imperial College London: <https://tinyurl.com/y3vr6ex8>

I would also like to remind you that the word "depression" is commonly used to describe states of emotional alteration, sometimes transient, whereas the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) uses this term for serious cases that require the advice of a psychologist or psychiatrist. I must remind you that I cannot be held responsible for an inappropriate use of this information.

Seriously ill and terminally ill people

The terminally ill are people who are approaching the end of their lives on this Earth and for whom there are no hopes of recovery. The only thing to do in these cases is to accompany them in the best possible way towards the end of life, limiting or eliminating physical suffering through palliative treatments.

In many cases, the greatest suffering is not only a physical one, more frequently it is an inner one, first of all the suffering of going towards death and the unknown, but also of regrets and of having to abandon people and things. This is the moment when you think about your life and ask yourself if you made the right choices.

A nurse called Bronnie Ware worked for many years in a hospice assisting many terminally ill patients, and she collected their thoughts and testimonies. She described them in a beautiful book called "*The Top Five Regrets of the Dying: A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing*".

Here they are:

- I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
- I wish I hadn't worked so hard.
- I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
- I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
- I wish I had let myself be happier.

These are important facts that we should all consider now that we are not on the verge of death because we still have the time and opportunity to deal with them by making the right choices, now.

But what do mushrooms have to do with this? Experimental doses of psilocybin have been given to patients with potentially lethal cancer, to see if the psychedelic experience could somehow alleviate the anguish that many feel about impending death. Several universities and research institutes are experimenting - legally – with psilocybin on seriously ill patients, with the aim of understanding the effects on mood, depression, and attitudes towards others and life in general. These are among the most important structures that are researching; the links refer to research done or still in progress:

- New York University (New York, USA) <https://tinyurl.com/y7q5a7oz>
- UCLA (Los Angeles, USA) <https://tinyurl.com/y2egj5zf>
- Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, USA) <https://tinyurl.com/yxmn6tqf>
- Imperial College (London, UK) <https://tinyurl.com/y5f7bcjk>

Results have been excellent, and follow up after the experience was carried out regularly and confirmed the stability of the participants' inner acquisitions: below is the extract of the results of one research that summarizes the meaning of all the research carried out so far. If you would like to read them in full you can find the details in the links above.

“This study has shown that psilocybin has produced substantial and sustained improvements in anxiety and depression in patients with life-threatening cancer. The psilocybin-induced mystical experience mediated

the therapeutic effect of psilocybin on anxiety and depression.

Participants, staff and community observers assessed the participants' moods, attitudes and behaviors during the study.

High doses of psilocybin produced great improvements in mood and sharp decreases in anxiety and depression, both through self-assessments and clinical assessments, along with an increase in the quality of life, finding meaning in life and optimism, and a decrease in anxiety about death.

6 months later, these changes were maintained, with approximately 80% of participants continuing to show a clinically significant decrease in depressive mood and anxiety.

Study participants claimed improvements in the expression of life / self , mood, relationships and spirituality after an experience with high doses, more than 80% manifested an increase in well-being and life satisfaction, moderate to high, this was further supported by the evaluations made by community observers who were around the patient .”

A psychologist specialized in these therapeutic sessions observed that "six hours of session were worth six years of psychotherapy"! Extraordinary, a truly incredible result.

Scientific language, however, fails to underline the importance of the human aspect, as there are no great differences in the reports of research concerning mice or humans. If I wanted to emphasize the human aspect of the above research, I would say that the most important finding is the increase in the sense of inner and outer connection. In other words, the feeling of being part of a humanity that you are not really separate from, realizing that the value of the human experience is given by the quality of relationships and the love between you and the people you know: yourself, family members, friends, and acquaintances.

The second aspect, perhaps the first in order of importance, is that the experience with mushrooms reveals that there is something more behind your personality, and this something more exists regardless of the physical dimension. Hence the decrease or even the complete disappearance of the fear of death.

Later on I will go deeper into this topic as it is probably the most important gift we can receive from the Sacred Mushroom and from Master Plants in general, whether it is Peyote, San Pedro, or Ayahuasca.

Note: when they speak of high doses in these researches they are referring to about 30 mg of psilocybin, in some cases then reduced to 22 mg; if you review my indications for the doses of psilacetin you will notice that they correspond precisely. I recommend not underestimating the dosages that correspond to about 3 g of dried mushrooms, which are always a guarantee of deep and intense experiences even with a limited quantity.

In this video of a TED conference, a psychologist specialized in psychedelic research talks about her clinical experience with the use of psilocybin. Some passages are moving: <https://tinyurl.com/yy9uo2g7>

whereas here you find an interview with a patient, in which he speaks about his personal experience: <https://tinyurl.com/y5h75ql8>

Discovering all these qualities of mushrooms was an exciting journey for me, at times it seemed too good to be true, but it is really so. As the famous mycologist Paul Stamets says, “mushrooms can save the world!”

If you watch this video you will discover the 6 ways in which they can do this - truly magical mushrooms even when not psychoactive :

<https://tinyurl.com/y44azjnb>

SECOND PART – INSIGHTS

“There is a world beyond ours, a world that is far away, nearby and invisible. And there is where God lives, where the dead live, the spirits and the saints, a world where everything has already happened and everything is known. That world talks. It has a language of its own. I report what it says. The sacred mushroom takes me by the hand and brings me to the world where everything is known. It is they, the sacred mushrooms, that speak in a way I can understand. I ask them and they answer me. When I return from the trip that I have taken with them, I say what they have told me and what they have shown me.” (Maria Sabina)

7. MICRODOSING

What it is and how it's done

Doses of dried mushroom can be increased but also decreased, down to below the threshold of the psychoactive effect, which begins by taking between 0.5 and 1 gram, equal to about 3-8 mg of the active ingredient, of psilocybin for example. Below these thresholds some have the feeling of having taken something, but there are no mental and perceptual psychedelic effects.

The microdose falls below the psychoactive thresholds I have just described; the quantity is between 0.20 and 0.25 grams. The difference between these two quantities is barely noticeable as the weight of the psychoactive principle is equivalent and is around 1 mg. This single milligram cannot have psychoactive effects, but rather it is compatible with daily activities that require attention and / or concentration, and stimulates lateral thinking and creativity.

The capsule is filled with the right amount of fine ground mushroom and when needed you prepare 24 at a time with the capsule filler. I recommend a size "0". You grind 4.8 grams of dried mushroom and place the powder in "The Capsule Machine". Follow the preparation procedure explained in the instructions of the appliance, distributing and pressing the powder in the capsules so as to have an average of 0.2 grams in each one.

The capsule is taken in the morning on an empty stomach a few minutes before breakfast, not after breakfast on a full stomach.

It is not taken every day but once every 72 hours. To clarify, if you have taken it this morning, you will not take it tomorrow, nor the day after tomorrow, but you will take it the following day, and continue with this alternation for 10 weeks. Then you should pause for a few weeks and possibly start again with another cycle, if you wish to do so.

To summarize:

- in the morning on an empty stomach
- have breakfast a few minutes later
- every 72 hours

In order to take it for 10 weeks you need 24 capsules, almost 5 grams of finely ground mushrooms.

Microdosing with truffles

You can also microdose with truffles, both fresh and dried. It is more convenient to use the dried ones for reasons of preservation, because the duration of a cycle (two and a half months) exceeds the time you can keep fresh truffles in the refrigerator. If you still want to use the fresh ones, the quantity to be taken is equal to 1 gram, while for dried and ground truffles it will be equal to 0.3 grams in each capsule.

The greater quantity of powder (0.3 grams of truffles instead of 0.2 grams for mushrooms) does not require capsules larger than the "0" used for dried ground mushrooms because the truffle powder is more dense and there is no problem even in the smaller capsules, the # 1.

The protocol is the same as for mushrooms, as well as the rule of taking the capsule on an empty stomach and before having breakfast.

Microdosing with psilacetin

The quantity of substance to be used for microdosing is approximately 1 milligram, a small quantity that is difficult to weigh precisely with the cheap digital scales that are on the market. If you make a mistake and take 2 mg there would be no particular problems, in fact the psychoactive effect - which when microdosing is an undesired effect - starts with 3-8 mg, according to individual sensitivity.

I suggest you do not prepare the dose every time; it is better to prepare the capsules - the smaller size (# 1) is perfect - in quantities sufficient for the entire cycle, 24 pieces. This dry preparation guarantees perfect preservation of the substance, but remember that the accuracy of cheap digital scales is insufficient for such small quantities.

There is a more precise system for dosing very small quantities that is also used for LSD, whose doses are measured in a millionth of a gram: the volumetric preparation. It consists of dissolving a certain quantity of the substance in a volume of solvent that can be water or alcohol. Water does not preserve substances well, so it is better to use alcohol. Normally we use vodka (there are no problems of "conflict" with the psychoactive substance, it is literally a matter of taking only one drop at a time).

Specifically: for a complete cycle of microdosing you have to dissolve about 25 mg. of psilocybin in 25 ml of alcohol, to be then stored in the freezer so that it can last a long time. Every time you have to take the microdose you will use an insulin syringe so that you can take a single milliliter, after shaking the bottle well, ensuring that it will contain one milligram of the dissolved substance.

For further details read this precious article from The Third Wave, a source of much valuable information: <https://tinyurl.com/y2t75ywt>

Why do microdosing?

There are a number of possible uses, all of which are attributable to a subtle and on-going effect on the mind and emotions, until a moment when, suddenly, you realize that some aspects of your behavior and attitudes have changed.

A very interesting and promising use is for curing depression, even serious depression, normally treated pharmacologically with various side effects but without ever succeeding in healing or relieving the issue, because allopathic medicines can only sedate the patient.

Psilocybin is a very substantial line of depression treatment. To date, three methods of administration are being tested:

- assisted treatment with the administration of a high dose, with a preparatory work between the therapist and the patient
- microdosing
- a combination of the two

Microdosing helps stimulate creativity, find solutions to problems, energize, and support meditation: it only has positive effects without particular contraindications. You only have to follow the doses and timing procedures to find yourself in a state that is slightly different than usual, so that after a while you will start making changes. Here you can find an article on microdosing with truffles: <https://tinyurl.com/y6tmvlhr>

Another interesting effect of taking psilocybin, described by some authors, concerns an improvement in accessing memory and emotions. I cannot say if the improvement in memory is true by referring to my direct experience, but certainly psilocybin has been confirmed as a substance that has no negative side effects, obviously following the LD50 and the set & setting.

In this link you can find the details of a research on the effects of psilocybin on the brain: <https://tinyurl.com/y43pounc>

If you are depressed you will see a rapid and long-lasting effect, although we still do not know whether this leads to a permanent healing that lasts even after you stop taking the capsules. In the worst case scenario you will have to continue taking them, without side effects, unless you have serious cardiac pathologies in progress; and even in this case the toxicity has not been proven. I speak more about this aspect a few lines into this chapter.

If you have to study or meditate, if you are in crisis, or if you want to make some changes, microdosing is a very interesting tool. We must be careful not to create the illusion that a capsule will save our lives because salvation can only come from ourselves, but if we want something to change, psilocin supports us deeply.

Among those who have taken microdoses there are people who have recovered their energy, others who stopped getting angry about things that always made them react, those who found a different way of playing the piano after more than 40 years of activity carried out at a professional

level, those who went through a very difficult period at work without falling into anxiety or despair, and several other cases.

In all these people there was the determination to microdose carefully and observe what was going on within themselves. It is only in this way that results can be reached because energy always goes where you place your attention. This energy adds to that of the mushroom and of course something happens on the outside because something changes inside.

The use of a diary helps the process of self-observation and is always a useful practice for all journeys of research and personal development of which microdosing is also a part.

It is a shame that mushrooms cannot be used legally, even though there are clinical trials in several universities in Anglo-Saxon countries. I very much hope that the opposing pressure of pharmaceutical lobbies will not prevent the development of this research. The molecules present in nature are not patentable and unfortunately this is why pharmaceutical companies will not give up easily; psychotropic drugs are a huge and constantly growing business.

So those who want to work on themselves with the help of mushroom microdoses take a legal risk as it is a forbidden activity.

Here you can read a short history of microdosing:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6l8pfgu>

Who should avoid microdosing?

Contraindications are the same as the physical ones for mushrooms: epilepsy and serious heart problems. I should add that if you are taking any medications you must consult your doctor. I speak about the issue of drug interaction in general in chapter 6, but you can read about cardiac risks in this interesting article that appeared on a specialized site:

<https://tinyurl.com/y7zsvm2l>

What happens when I take a microdose?

I remind you to have an empty stomach and follow all the indications as for taking mushrooms; you should always take them on an empty stomach

otherwise you risk having stomach problems. Eat breakfast normally, only drinking coffee is not good because the exciting effect of caffeine is not suitable for the sensations that you might feel in this initial period.

In fact, during the first three hours or so you may feel a slight physical sensation, which you perceive as a tendency to feel restless, slightly strange, but not at levels that prevent you from doing and acting as always. This passes within approximately three hours, whereas with subsequent ingestions this sensation could firstly be reduced and then not reappear.

The mushroom's action begins with probable physical sensations for 2-3 hours, then passes to more subtle, almost subliminal levels that you can perceive especially from the second day.

I have an important recommendation: be cautious with alcohol. If you use it, drink long before or after taking them, but I would suggest limiting or eliminating alcohol completely during the microdosing cycle because it is an intoxicating substance that acts at the level of the central nervous system and the brain. The CNS and the brain are the receiving apparatus of the intuitions you open up to thanks to the subtle work of psilocin, while alcohol acts in the opposite direction. If you find it difficult to go without alcohol, I suggest you look at this addiction and face it. If you cannot go without alcohol, cigarettes, or any other substance or habit, you are not free. If you wish, microdosing can help you face these challenges, too.

Below I add other useful resources to learn more about this.

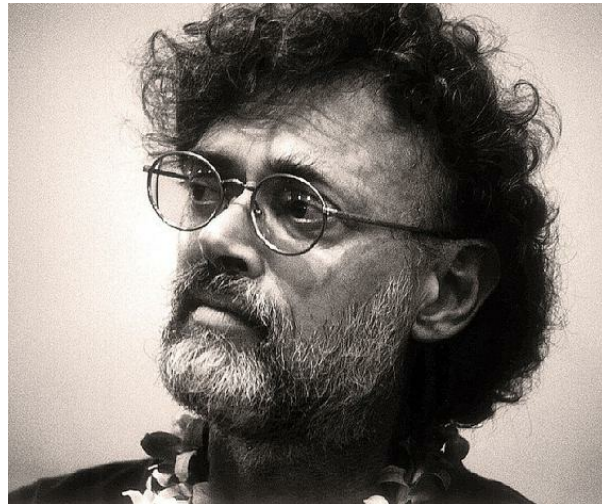
Introductory article on microdosing: <https://tinyurl.com/y2kbo8f5>

Here you will find a very well-made page, in which there is the state of the art of this experimentation, with sources : <https://tinyurl.com/k4xvzt9>

Summary: stick to the maximum doses indicated, take them every 72 hours, do a cycle of 10 weeks, self-observe and write a diary which will be very useful.

8. TERENCE MCKENNA

I have great admiration for Terence McKenna, as you might have guessed from my dedication at the beginning of the book. If you want to know more about who he was: <https://tinyurl.com/z9hysgc>



Terence McKenna photographed about one year before his passing

Once he said that "the library is the first place to go when looking into taking a new compound" and this is what you are doing too, by reading this book. Knowledge is power. I really appreciate that you have come so far.

I recommend watching and listening to his interviews, many of which you can find on Youtube.

Many have talked about and explained their experiences with mushrooms, but McKenna said that most of these people had taken a maximum of two or three grams, a dose that certainly produces its effects, but very different from those obtained beyond the five-gram threshold. He called this quantity the "heroic dose", the one that makes you enter completely into the deep dimension of the mushrooms' reality. From my direct experience

I can confirm that with 5 grams and above not only does the intensity change, but it becomes a somewhat different and higher level of experience.

This quantity of mushrooms, and even much higher doses, cannot kill you - we previously saw the LD50 - but it can convince you that this is happening, and at that moment every single cell of your body has no doubt that you are about to die. Someone I know phoned a friend at that time to give her his last farewell because he was sure he was about to leave us.

There is no danger for your body, says McKenna, but there is for your mind. The 5 grams are a threshold beyond which you enter into very deep "mental" waters, which justifies the "heroic" adjective for this important dose.

As I wrote in the dedication, I have great admiration and also a great fondness for him, I always find his interventions intriguing and brilliant, often a source of great laughter. For these reasons I decided to dedicate an in-depth study to him regarding two topics that he has covered on several occasions, and which I find particularly relevant to the topic of this book: the *Heroic Dose* and the *Stoned Ape Theory*.

Experience with the Heroic Dose

Every so often in the book I have written "heroic experience" and "heroic ceremony" because for me these terms are more or less equivalent. The set & setting for both of them is that which I describe in this paragraph, but with some differences for the ceremony that I will specify later on.

The heroic dose allows you to have a profound visionary experience, profound enough to "kill you" (not physically!) and thus allow the mushroom's message to become clear. In substance it means getting rid of the ego, the personality, the chatterbox monkey in your head that doesn't allow you to get in touch with the subtle realm in which spirits live, including the mushroom's spirit.

McKenna often spoke of the mushroom as an entity that has consciousness and intelligence, that interacts with humans with perfect awareness, and that answers the questions it is asked. McKenna frequently repeated this

statement and also reiterated the primacy and importance of "understanding through direct experience", as opposed to a dogmatic point of view. I do not want to commit a criminal offense - by instigating the use of forbidden substances - but I agree with him, precisely because I have had direct experience of what he said and my heroic experiences confirm it without a doubt: psilocybin mushrooms are the Sacred Mushroom, a benevolent - and often playful – spirit, who wants and supports our evolution.

The heroic dose is not only a very precise quantity of dried mushrooms - 5 grams – but also a well defined set & setting.

The instructions are very simple: *five grams of dried psilocybin mushrooms, taken alone, on an empty stomach, in silent darkness and with the eyes closed.*

With 5 grams you are guaranteed at least six-seven hours of intense experience, multiplied by the silence, the darkness and by being completely alone with your eyes closed. It is not a walk in the park, but if one day you feel ready it will certainly be a turning point in the exploration of your unknown depths.

N.B.: if you have had numerous experiences with mushrooms and you decide to have the experience suggested by McKenna, then you are a hero, but if you have had little experience and you decide to have the heroic experience you are just reckless. I hope this is clear as I have spelled it out.

The instructions are clear and simple, but it is worth specifying them.

Alone means that it will be a trip in which you will be the only participant and that is why you need to be experienced. You can not dive into solitary exploration if you cannot swim well because you will not have anyone to hold your hand.

On an empty stomach means that the more hours passed between your last light meal and taking the mushroom, the better it is. After 6 hours of fasting you can rest assured that you will have done your best to avoid stomach problems even though there is no absolute guarantee.

Silent darkness means in a place with the lights off, the blinds or shutters

closed, nothing to look at, to read, or listen to.

It is not specified but from my experience I can tell you that it is better at night than during the day, when there is a different energy and fewer thoughts around because almost everyone is asleep. During the day there is traffic and there are noises that are not there at night, or are much less than usual. In the condition of hypersensitivity typical of the ceremony, do not underestimate the aspect of external noise. If there are some noises it is also fine, but silence is something else.

I do not use ear plugs and I do not feel like recommending them, but if you prefer and think you will be more isolated you can use them without contraindications. You should know that during the experience even noises take on a meaning, therefore excluding them could take something away from your experience.

Eyes closed in the dark? Yes, by always keeping your eyes closed you do not allow the pressure of your visions to be lightened and they will be able to express themselves with all the strength they are capable of, much more than if you keep your eyes open. It is not easy to obtain absolute darkness in a room, unless you have a *dark room*, so closed eyes are necessary.

Remember to go to the toilet at the beginning, because later you may have some difficulty doing this, probably even finding it; this is what spatial disorientation means, in fact once I think it took me about ten minutes to find the door of the room and go out! Keep a bottle of water and some shelled walnuts with you, in case you get hungry.

Prepare a mat on the floor or better still a futon, cushions, blankets, dress in layers, so that you can easily add or remove clothing depending on your sensation of temperature. If you have a comfortable sofa or a wide bed available, of course they are fine instead of the futon on the floor. I prefer the latter, however, for various reasons: it is soft enough to be comfortable but not too soft hence making it harder for you to move and take the positions you prefer. Finally you have less risk of falling and more space to move as you want. Some of my experiences have been somewhat acrobatic, on a bed or sofa I would have been very limited. See what you prefer; I opt for the futon but it is not essential.

You can take the 5 dried grams with Lemon Tek, which is what I do, but you can also chew them as they are.

Do you need to have an intention in order to take a heroic dose? Perhaps the first time you can do it without expectations to see what comes up, but certainly having a question or an issue to clarify is fine. The mushroom answers your questions.

You could have expectations, but you must consider the inherent risk in having them. Expectations are the imagination of how things should be, and this exposes you to two relevant consequences: the first is disappointment, the second is even worse. In fact disappointment does not allow you to realize that maybe the result obtained is better than you would have expected, but so different from how you imagined it that you cannot recognize it as something good and useful for you, thus losing an opportunity for understanding and growth.

Does it make a difference if you lie, sit or stand? Lying is a passive, feminine, receptive position, and predisposes you to receiving what arrives. Sitting or standing is an active and masculine attitude, and is more suitable for the inner journey in which you have a goal and navigate to find the answers you are looking for. Ask and you will get an answer. During the experience you could go through different phases and positions so how you position yourself is fine anyway, you just have to respect the simple rules for this type of experience.

In this solitary journey McKenna accompanied the intake of mushrooms with an abundant use of cannabis, both before the intake and during, to intensify, support and prolong the effect. Mushrooms and cannabis go together well but be careful, the intensity increases and if you are on your first heroic dose I advise you to be cautious, because the risk of being overwhelmed is always lurking. My personal suggestion is to use it, if you really want to, when the peak of intensity has passed, in order to support and increase the duration of the experience. Smoking it before this may be too much, especially if you still have relatively little experience. Always be cautious with using a different substance - Cannabis - together with mushrooms, although the Heroic Dose is the only exception that I can conceive. More than the use in itself, the quality of your intention is what

makes a difference, supporting and prolonging the experience is different from just the pursuit of a buzz.

It is difficult to say what to expect but for sure you will take a deep dive. I loved all my heroic doses and I repeated them several times, although other people I know well have found it to be a very strong experience, which they never repeated. In some cases, after the heroic dose, the person completely stopped taking mushrooms, definitively.

How can an experience with the heroic dose, according to McKenna's instructions, become a ceremony as I described previously? For the ceremony you should add the preparation of the space and the altar but keeping the candle unlit during the experience, as well as the opening and closing rituals. After closing you can light the candle and put some music on when it becomes an excellent time to take notes and begin the integration of what has emerged.

There is nothing more to add about the heroic dose. The instructions are simple and if you can do it at night in a quiet room in the middle of nature, or in a private garden, or even just in the middle of nature and not in the center of a city it would be perfect - but it is only for the bravest and most experienced people.

The Stoned Ape Theory (and about the Intelligence of Mushrooms)

McKenna stated that the contact between humans and mushrooms must have taken place in the distant prehistoric past of mankind and, in fact, mushrooms can be picked and eaten immediately without needing particular preparations, as is needed for ayahuasca and other entheogens.

Based on this encounter between man and mushrooms he developed the Theory of the Stoned Ape: magic mushrooms stimulated and supported the evolution of consciousness in primitive humans, therefore also of their behavior and activities. Mushrooms helped the almost human monkey to evolve. This theory is perhaps difficult to prove but very consistent and we will take a better look at it further ahead.

The trajectory of the evolution of the human species separated from the

primeval one of fungi about 650 million years ago and even today biologists recognize that mushrooms are closer to the animal kingdom than to the vegetable kingdom. For example, mushroom cells consume oxygen and emit carbon dioxide just like animals and humans, as well as having sensitivity to the same bacteria and this fact allows us to obtain antibiotics from mushrooms, a new development in medical research.

The number of connections that exist within a mycelium, which can be extended over several square kilometers, is greater than those that exist within the human brain, making many scientists wonder if this could imply the existence of intelligence and consciousness in mushrooms.

If this intelligent consciousness exists, how could we communicate with it?

I find it extraordinary that someone has asked themselves this question and has looked for ways to verify it. In Japan they have succeeded with surprising results. There is a video link below that will show you.

Prof. Toshiyuki Nakagaki of the University of Hokkaido depicted the map of Tokyo and its subway stations on a surface, placing nutrients for the mycelium in correspondence to the stations - in this case they were oat seeds. The mycelium was inoculated and then began to expand in order to feed on the oat seeds distributed on the surface. After a short time the mycelium had spread out to reach all the nutrients, moving along certain lines to pass from one to the other, optimizing them so as not to waste energy.

The result - to be seen in the video - is incredible, because the connection lines between the stations / nutrients were organized more efficiently than had actually been achieved in reality with the metro network. The same experiment was carried out on maps of France and other countries, with the nutrients arranged in correspondence to the cities, and again we see an organization of the connections that is more efficient than that designed by the planners over time.

Here is the short video: <https://tinyurl.com/yxncluu5>

You can find more information in the last video I have introduced at the end of the chapter.

Prof. Nakagaki carried out another brilliant experiment with mushrooms, putting a particular yellow mushroom in a maze. At the bottom of the maze he put some food, this time a little sugar. The first time the mushroom expanded, it found the food by accident. In a second study, the professor put some mycelium of the fungus from the first experiment in another maze, the same as the first one, with the sugar positioned in the same place as in the first experiment. In this case the mushroom did an extraordinary thing: it divided itself up into two parts, and while the first part headed towards the food following various possible routes, the second half climbed the barriers of the labyrinth, choosing the shortest way to get to its destination.

The experiment was repeated several times with the same result hence it was understood that the mushroom "remembers" the old route and at the same time looks for a direct route. The existence of a cellular intelligence, different from human intelligence, was proven. This intelligence is so different that it could be defined as alien - also considering the probable "exoplanetary" origins of fungi.

Here you will find a long speech by Kilindi Iyi about this and other interesting matters, if you want to deepen the topic. He also talks about his experiences with over 30 grams of dried mushrooms:

<https://tinyurl.com/yy6awa7n>

The exoplanetary origin of mushrooms is met with a very cryptic scientific term which I mention without claiming to explain it exhaustively. It is really very articulate and specialized so I will just do my best to explain its general meaning.

I am referring to "Epigenetic Neurogenesis".

Taken individually these terms are very complex, when combined together they are a research frontier that has not yet been fully explored and understood. I will try to give you an idea by focusing on the topic that interests us, magic mushrooms.

Epigenetic Neurogenesis means the growth of new neurons through an action on DNA, but without modifying it. It is not technology of the future, it is psilocin. Psilocin stimulates the creation of new neuronal pathways

and the birth of new neurons.

DNA is involved in this process but there are no genetic modifications. There is something that acts by activating and deactivating parts of the DNA, resulting in differences compared to the genetic instructions contained in the DNA itself. What is it that acts on the DNA allowing portions of the chain to be activated and deactivated? It is simply our impressions in response to environmental inputs. It seems incredible, but if you read Bruce Lipton's book, "The Biology of Beliefs", you will find objective confirmation and evidence of this fact that changes the scientific paradigm considered valid until now, that of "DNA supremacy".



Psilocin activates or intensifies the functioning of numerous brain areas, increasing the number of connections between them. The consequences of this process are evident in perceptions during an experience with mushrooms: hyper connection with reality, mystical experiences, deep understanding and healing, as well as psychotic and / or paranoid crises if you try to resist or control the experience.

Wikipedia about epigenetic regulation of neurogenesis:

<https://tinyurl.com/nza87zl>

All of these premises support Terence McKenna's Theory of the Stoned Ape. Rather than a theory we should call it a hypotheses: a theory has the elements required to be eventually verified, whereas a hypothesis is at an earlier stage and it seems to me that this is currently the situation regarding McKenna's intuition (I want to thank Paul Stamets, I share this reflection of his).

Around two million years ago the hominids living in the forests of Africa were forced by climate change (an ancient "global warming") to move to the savannahs, which were expanding at the expense of forests. History is very complex, articulated and controversial, unclear about the lines of development of the *Homo* genus and its species, to get to the current *Sapiens*, but certainly the basis of this evolution came about as a result of environmental changes, in this case drought. This led to major changes especially related to food supply and new hunting techniques had to be

developed because the environment was very different. The ability to observe signs and traces of the presence of animals, such as footprints and dung of different species, increased.

In particular, numerous species of psychoactive mushrooms were already growing on the dung and in the close proximity, precisely the psilocybin mushrooms that we are also interested in. Nowadays there are 23 species of primates that consume mushrooms when they find them, including humans, for this reason it makes sense to think that these hominids used to collect them and eat them.

As still happens today, after about 30 minutes the psychoactive effect rises, activating a different state of consciousness on a psychophysical level. You should know that all animals, from gnats to elephants, seek the state of alteration induced by the consumption of psychotropic substances, even if it seems like behavior that often goes against the survival instinct.

Here you can find more about this: <https://tinyurl.com/y6aou4fx>

The text is in Italian, so use Google Translator because it is worth it, otherwise there is this BBC article, a little less articulated, but in English: <https://tinyurl.com/pyvxqq5>

What happened to these pre-human apes as a result of repeated exposure to psychoactive mushrooms? Imagine that this was repeated and continued for millions of years.

These continuous stimulations activated the Epigenetic Neurogenesis I wrote of previously, which in practice meant the development of new brain pathways for knowledge and consciousness, the increase of language centers, the ability to predict and plan, as well as more empathy and courage.

The size of the brain increased as these qualities developed, doubling from about 800 cubic centimeters to over 1,600 in a short time, precisely a period between two million and 300 thousand years ago, a very short time in terms of evolution.

In addition to these abilities to generate and support brain development, when taken, psilocybin produces a sort of neuronal reset, that is, it loosens

the connection that exists in the brain between an event and the reaction of stress or fear and associated pain, typical of traumatic experiences. Because of this precious feature it is also used to treat and solve post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). But more importantly, it helps the person open up, receive the input of new data and change the existing situation. Empathy is one of the results of the hyperconnection experienced with it, a perception that is difficult to explain unless you try it.

In this beautiful video you will find the important points mentioned in this paragraph. It is Joe Rogan interviewing Paul Stamets:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6l2ny22>

Mushrooms are a real cure to evolve faster, even if we can never avoid the real work of self-knowledge carried out tenaciously in every moment of life, in a state of ordinary consciousness.

It is an aid, not a shortcut, just as explained in the popular saying “Heaven helps those who help themselves”.

9. THE MUSHROOM'S SPIRIT AND THE ORIGINS OF LIFE

The first fungi arrived on Earth over two billion four hundred million years ago and were among the first living beings to start life on this planet. I intentionally write "arrived on Earth" instead of "appeared" or "formed" because I am sure they were not born on Earth, and as a consequence this is true of all life forms. No, I have not eaten too many mushrooms. Let's continue and you will see what I mean.

The mathematician, physicist and astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle once said: "The chance that such complicated and complex matter as is a cell might have emerged spontaneously and by chance on Earth is comparable to the chance that a tornado sweeping through a junk yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein." I would say that Sir Hoyle had some doubts about the possibility that life, DNA, had arisen "randomly" on Earth from the "primordial soup", made up of a number of special substances and environmental conditions.

What is the Primordial Soup:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primordial_soup

Who was Fred Hoyle: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Hoyle

Francis Crick and James Watson received the Nobel prize for medicine in 1962. Together they discovered the double helix structure of DNA. Crick said that he reached this understanding during a session with LSD, which at the time was not yet forbidden.

After the Nobel, Crick continued his research on DNA and its origins until

the day he reached a similar conclusion to Hoyle's: life could not have been born on Earth, so it had to come from space. Together with Leslie Orgel, a brilliant chemist, he wrote a book called "Directed Panspermia" according to which life arrived from space on meteorites and/or comets, in the form of bacteria that later evolved.

Directed Panspermia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panspermia>

DNA: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DNA>

Over time, many scientists and scholars have agreed that it is statistically impossible for life to have originated here, but how it got to Earth is still an unresolved issue.

Origin of Life: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abiogenesis>

At this point it is certain that mushrooms arrived on Earth over 2400 million years ago, as I said at the beginning, but how did they get here? I have an idea that is supported by the discoveries of some notable scholars whose experiences and experiments I will tell you about. They are Nobel prize winners, some of whom I have mentioned previously, as well as scholars with professional curriculums at the highest world level.

One of the greatest, whose studies are the basis of the experiment I will write about shortly, is Prof. Giuliano Preparata, little known to most people but a really extraordinary mind. His biography on Wikipedia reveals his great professional qualities, recognized by the most important universities in the world: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuliano_Preparata

One day I read about a laboratory experiment done by another Nobel Prize winner, also for medicine in 2008, Dr. Luc Montagnier, who continued Giuliano Preparata's studies. He was experimenting on the DNA of a bacterium (chosen for its fairly simple organic structure) by diluting this DNA in more and more water. The procedure was like the one used for the preparation of homeopathic remedies.

The substance of interest is diluted in water, stirred according to an established procedure, then one part of that water is taken, one tenth of the total, and it is poured into nine other parts of pure water. This dilution and dynamization (stirring to mix) is repeated several times, until you can be mathematically certain that nothing of the initial substance - not even a

molecule - is contained in the water after the process.

Montagnier did this starting from the very simple DNA of a bacterium, while at the same time measuring the weak electromagnetic field of water as the process progressed, and he noticed that the signal coming from the water increased its intensity after each step, to the point that he could record it on a digital device.

This digital file was sent by email to another laboratory hundreds of kilometers away, where they reproduced it as an electromagnetic frequency inside a container of water in which the nitrogen bases of DNA (Adenine, Thymine, Cytosine and Guanine) had been placed, with the reagent substances required.

After about 20 hours, the DNA which Montagnier had started off with was found in the water.

Here you can find the scientific report :

<https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1742-6596/306/1/012007/meta>

and especially this educational article, understandable even for those who are not scientists. Use the automatic translation again as it is a truly enlightening text:

https://www.scienzaeconoscenza.it/blog/scienza_e_fisica_quantistica/l-acqua-e-gli-organismi-viventi-intervista-a-emilio-del-giudice

Prof. Emilio Del Giudice was another great scientist, possessing great humanity and communication skills, who worked a long time with Giuliano Preparata.

Here is his biography on Wikipedia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emilio_Del_Giudice

Now here is my reflection, which is not scientific - I do not know that it has been validated by the academic world - but seems very likely and very interesting to me.

On Earth there were all the necessary DNA ingredients, but the fact that those ingredients were combined together in the right way was caused by information - lots of information - that came from outside the planet. It is something similar to the Domains of Coherence that Emilio Del Giudice

talks about in his last interview. Coherence domains are organized structures of weak electromagnetism, described in quantum physics.

The experiments of scientists and Nobel prize winners are an important support of this reflection that I have had for several years.

There are basically three things in the experiment: water, very subtle electromagnetic information, and the presence of the necessary ingredients. The frequency penetrates the water, which translates this electromagnetic information into operational instructions to combine the ingredients: here we have DNA, the basis of life.

In ancient traditions, in religions, we always find a Father and a Mother: he is Heaven, she is the Waters, he is penetrating, she is welcoming, and so on. The Father creates, the Mother generates, the physical world is born first in the world of Ideas and even higher above and only later can it manifest and be born on Earth. This is a phase of Creation.

The Idea of the Mushroom was born there, then in the form of information - the Holy Spirit? - it arrived on Earth and as soon as there were the minimal basic conditions, it appeared on the planet over 2400 million years ago. Kilindi Iyi is right when he talks about exoplanetary technology. According to me the evidence is in these experiments, as well as making sense from an evolutionary and spiritual perspective.

Perhaps it may seem strange or worse to combine "technology" with "spirituality", but even God the creator respects his own laws that are necessary so that the Cosmos may be order and not chaos. The Divine manifests on Earth through the processes of life, of the interrelation between all things, and therefore also through the chemical, electrical, thermal, etc. processes, because on the physical plane things work in this way.

An Idea of God becomes matter through the laws of matter; the experiments of Montagnier and Del Giudice show one of the ways in which the "subtle" – such as weak electromagnetism - creates life on the dense material plane.

This is to say that psilocin was not formed by chance but as a consequence of an order that comes from Heaven and Space, an incredible piece of

information if I think of the extraordinary teachings and understandings that I have had during many experiences with Plants and Mushrooms.

A Spirit like that of the Sacred Mushroom is not like a person with magical powers. It is a different entity from us human beings, very different if you consider that most people are not really aware of themselves, while the entity is perfectly aware of itself and of you, who you really are.

Its intelligence amazes all those who begin to understand it, who see its brilliant way of making you face what concerns you and what you need. Psychotherapists are among those who are most amazed and fascinated by the solutions implemented by mushrooms to help people. The video is a TED conference by a psychologist, Katherine MacLean and is worth watching. Many passages are riveting: <https://tinyurl.com/y5vbg9xh>

10. THE CEREMONY WITH SACRED MUSHROOMS

Premise

Now you have understood how body, emotions and mind respond to the intake of mushrooms, you have respected the set & setting, and you have discovered that during the experiences there were special moments - both good and bad - that gave you something you would like to understand better and elaborate on. Are you interested in understanding how to continue the exploration? If it interests you as a possibility, you could consider transforming the intake of magic mushrooms into a real ceremony.

If the term "ceremony" disturbs you because it may seem to have religious implications (which I do not intend it to have), you can use other synonyms, such as protected space or therapeutic ritual, for example. I use the term ceremony because it includes both of these meanings and adds another level, a spiritual one. Spiritual does not mean religious or belonging to a religion. It is rather a level in which opposites are reconciled, whose values are inclusive and beneficial for all, beyond judgment and duality, and therefore not subject to the transience of worldly things.

Einstein said: "We can not solve our problems from the same level of

consciousness that created them". The spiritual level is the one that really solves the conflicts and problems that reside on the lower levels, i.e. physical, emotional, and mental. Solving a problem while remaining at the same level that generated it is only an adaptation or a compromise, it does not work if not temporarily. The real solution is only healing, not an adjustment of some kind. For example, healing from an illness, a somatized conflict that is expressed on the physical level, will never happen if you understand the causes on the mental level. In fact, if you understand that you have liver problems because you are grieving, this knowledge alone will not heal you.

Healing comes only through a "wow moment", in which comprehending occurs instantly through an intuitive supramental motion. Understanding is a mental function, comprehending is an intuitive function, that is, at a level that is higher than the mind and therefore belongs to the realm of the spirit. Only in this way can the reason why the disease manifested, which was to show our conscience something that it otherwise would not have wanted to see - or been able to see – disappear.

This need to access a level that is higher than that in which conflicts and problems occur is well highlighted by some branches of the most advanced psychology, such as "transpersonal psychology" and "integral psychology", developed by researchers such as Roberto Assagioli, Stanislav Grof and Ken Wilber, just to mention some important names. The meaning and value of what you live is understandable only by accessing a level that is higher than your ego's problems.

The ceremony is a process of unveiling the unconscious, as C.G. Jung said: "Make the unconscious conscious, otherwise the unconscious will guide your life and you will call it destiny". The ceremony satisfies this imperative but it does even more than this, as Jung says: "True therapy consists in the approach to the divine; the more one reaches the experience of the divine, the more one is freed from the curse of pathology".

In the ceremony the mushroom's spirit finds the set of qualities necessary to carry out in the best way the task of "cleaning and care" of body and soul, terms so dear to the "Icaros", traditional songs of South American

shamans during ceremonies with ayahuasca:

<https://tinyurl.com/y26gxys4>



Obviously I do not claim to be able to teach how to do a ceremony; it is an experience from which you learn rather than a teaching that can be transmitted in writing. I can and would like to communicate only a few proven guidelines so that they can serve as references for you to start practicing with reliable friends and companions and then continue on your own.

Organizing a ceremony is the arrival point of a path of self-knowledge. Three qualities are needed to follow it: will and love combined with discipline.

Initially any path requires rules and perseverance and if you cannot trigger a change on your own, ask for help from a qualified therapist. You have to put yourself out there in order to heal from personality / ego problems. If, on the other hand, you are already on the path of personal and inner growth, you can also receive the help of the Sacred Mushroom: if you give it your unconditional trust you will be covered in blessings and your life will change. Solving your inner problems changes your life and makes everything more beautiful and vibrant, and these are only part of the blessings that await you.

Honor your choice to grow innerly, at which point the ceremony becomes a sacred context in which you get in touch with the Divinity everything is made of, including yourself.

Going deeply through a ceremony with the Sacred Mushroom is a precious transformative experience and in order to welcome it without resisting you must maintain your trust in the Mushroom, so as to allow it to show you yourself and reality completely transformed, in a way that you can not even imagine at the moment. If you are confident, you will manage not to resist and you will ride the tiger with unspeakable joy. You will experience the Magic of the Sacred Mushroom, the reason why they are called "Magic Mushrooms" by all those who encountered them with the right set & setting.

Deciding to take mushrooms within a ceremonial context means making the choice to start on a path that will develop and deepen more and more. Each time you will understand things that you can apply in the following experiences because you are actually building something that will grow over time and sooner or later will bear its fruit. Do not have expectations, do not expect to get something immediately; probably at the beginning you will have to give - as is always the case in life.

In this approach to the ceremony I have privileged the aspect of healing and would like to clarify that I mean this in the broadest sense, in the sense of healing from what limits or prevents our reconnection to the spirit, to the flow of life and the joy of living. The healing aspect takes second place for those who have already realized this state of being, and in this case the celebration of the divine prevails, and being at the service of all the participants to the ritual. Every time someone connects with their inner light it is of great benefit to all those close to him/her.

To explain what a ceremony is and how it works, I will take the example of ceremonies with ayahuasca.

How a Ceremony takes place

Any ceremony, not just the one with ayahuasca, should consist of three parts:

- preparation
- experience
- integration

If the first and/or the last part is missing it is no less sacred, it simply becomes less effective for the desirable consequences it should have in daily life.

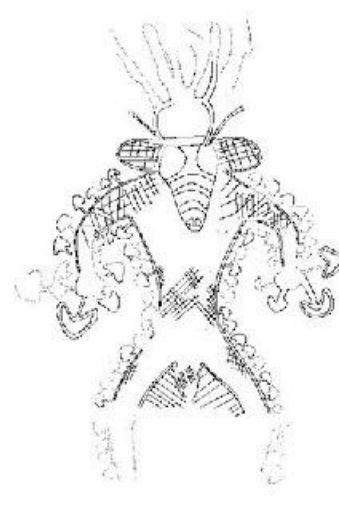
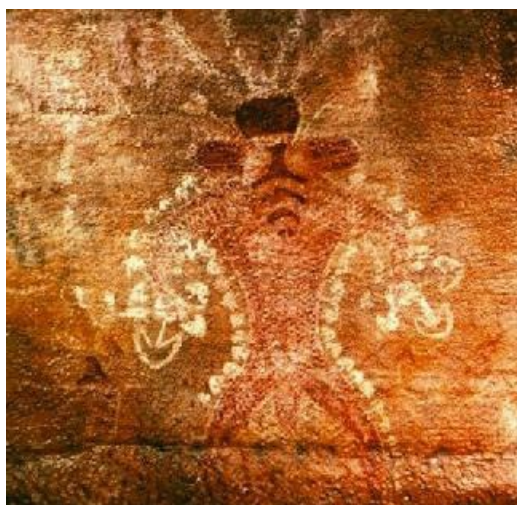
In addition to these three parts, all ceremonies are always an agreement between participants to have the experience together respecting some rules. Further on you will find a paragraph summarizing and explaining the fundamental rules that need to be known and applied.

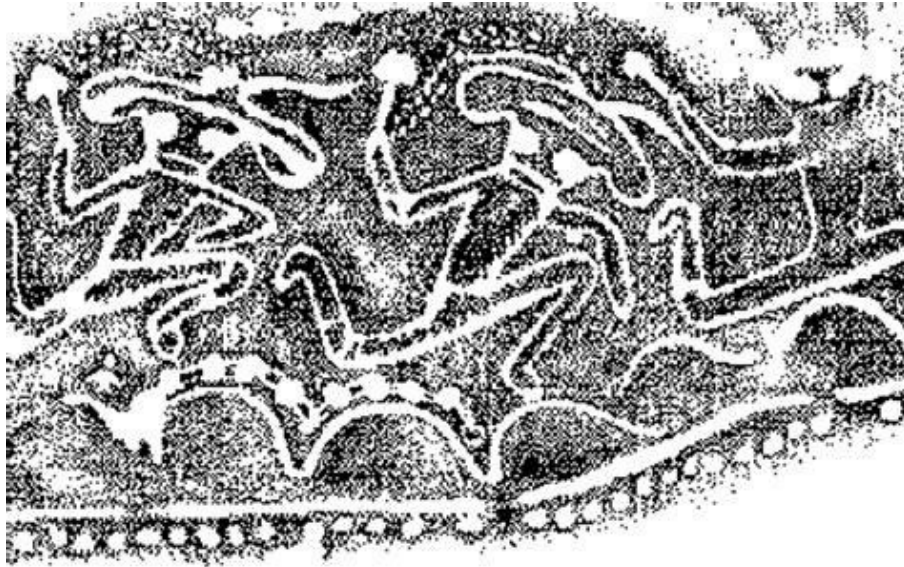
Ayahuasca is administered in a ceremonial context and the experience is

guided and mastered by a shaman, a man or woman who knows how to move, communicate and act in the spirit world and is not a simple guide or facilitator. The shaman knows with what means and how to get everyone to their destination. The latter is at the end of a journey in which we face the causes of our inner and physical evils, therefore the path is often tormented and not easy. I am simplifying a lot for there would be much more to say, but for our purposes I describe the minimum necessary and it should be sufficient. These practices have been codified for millennia and are traditions that are handed down with the long practice of a student at the service of a shaman, who in turn is at the service of the community.

Ceremonies with ayahuasca in the West are like those of the Amazonian tradition. This is not the case with mushrooms because true traditions that could be guidelines of how to perform a ceremony with mushrooms have not arrived in the West. It seems that in Central America there are still different local traditions but not much is known. My personal impression is that they have been hidden. The invasion of Westerners in the village of Maria Sabina after the publication of an article in "Life" in 1957 was a hard lesson for all of them. *The white man* always carries many problems with him and I understand those who want to avoid them, so I really appreciate the courage of those who have brought ayahuasca to the West.

Mushrooms are collected and eaten and because of this extreme ease of contact and use they certainly have a much longer tradition than all the other entheogenic substances. Many prehistoric cave paintings confirm this affirmation of antiquity.





Carvings found in the Tassili mountain range, in the Algerian Sahara desert, dating back to around 10,000 years ago.

Knowing the ceremonies with the Plant and wanting to apply their qualities to an experience with mushrooms, I based myself on what the shamans did during the ceremonies I attended. It was a research that developed on two fronts: a practical one, while I was experimenting with mushrooms, the other more theoretical and conceptual, comparing experiences with my fraternal friends and companions of experiences. Evoking the values of a ceremony with a shaman while experimenting with mushrooms allowed us to draw up a series of ceremonial rules, so that we could use mushrooms in a sacred context even without the presence of a shaman.

Ceremonies without a shaman are partly a necessity but also an evolution towards the creation of a group of people who are at the service of each other, empathetic, attentive, connected, and supported by a greater sense of individual and collective responsibility.

All sacred ceremonies are always at the service of the participants' healing on all levels, from the treatment of pathologies - ayahuasca is also called Medicine - to the resolution of past emotional wounds, and much more. Healing is the ultimate goal of any sacred ceremony. From these shamans I learned to consider and practice the healing ritual as a sacred experience, to allow for the healing contact with the transcendent.

The Mushroom (and any Sacred Plant) opens you up to this contact with

the Divine, creates a special magic and manages to put aside the "personality" that prevents us from constantly feeling the presence of God (or of the Universe or of the One or however you want to call that sense of connection that you feel at certain moments) in everything there is. From this special perceptive point we are able to look at ourselves, the personality we always identify with, in a radically different, potentially very healing way.

The personality, or ego with a small "e", is made up of all impressions, experiences, convictions, beliefs, education, etc. that we have experienced so far, but this "thing" is not what we really are. Who we really are can be perceived in special moments, sometimes during deep meditation, or in the state of grace that we can find ourselves in while we are walking in nature, when we are passionately doing something that we really like, for example writing, playing, or singing. It has even happened to me while riding my bike on some spectacular roads in Corsica! In those moments we are free from the grip of our ego and we can experience what we really are, in the flow of life and connected to our Self. Personality is a temporary construction that we use to have experiences on the physical plane. It is as illusory as a rainbow, which seems real but is actually perceived only due to a number of concomitant factors, including the observer's position. If only one of the factors that give it this appearance of reality varies, the rainbow changes or vanishes. Our personality is like this, an outfit that we can take off if we commit ourselves, and that we will definitely leave behind when the physical body dies. The more we are identified with the ego, the less we will be conscious of ourselves in this transition called death, while identifying with the Self is what will make us immortal.

The ceremonial experience has this purpose: to recognize our personality for what it is, while we experience that state of grace which is Presence. I deepen this point in the last chapter "Are mushrooms the red pill of awakening?".



Aside from Maria Sabina, I have never known about or heard of shamans who used mushrooms for ceremonies, so we had to improvise to define a ceremonial structure that would be adequate even without a shaman.

A ceremony with Sacred Plants always has a well-defined beginning and end, to delimit the sacred space and time of the experience. You can also see this in the celebration of Mass in the Catholic tradition in which there is a clear and evident beginning and end.

Protection and expansion

Shamans always start with an opening ritual, which together with the closing ritual delimits the protected space and time. Protected from what? In shamanic traditions, there is contact and interaction with non-physical entities called spirits, allies and other definitions specific to each local culture. According to the shamanic tradition, the world is much more than what we can perceive with our five senses; human beings are not the only sentient beings living on this planet.

There are non-embodied or non-bodily entities that feed on energy, such as that of emotions for example, and when in a ceremony we move energies and emotions which these entities literally feed on to live, we must be very careful. For many of them pain is nourishment, so it goes without saying that they have every interest in supporting and reproducing it by attaching themselves to those who suffer at the time. They live in a body made of subtle matter, but it needs nourishment exactly like our bodies of denser matter and without it they would die. These entities sometimes parasitize people who suffer from pain and above all addictions, so they arrive in the ceremonial space brought by their unconscious succubus, not only attracted by what a ceremony moves in the minds of the participants.

I am simplifying and I ask for understanding from those who know these topics well, but I would like to make everyone understand that the creation of a loving and luminous space keeps away and prevents these parasites from feeding off us, so that the suffering in which we can find ourselves is no more than the physiological suffering due to the ongoing treatment process. Despite the presence of shamans and protections, during these ceremonies we fight powerful energies, easily perceived by the majority of participants.

You may not believe this rendering in which incorporeal beings act, but it

does not change the fact that the rituals characterizing the ceremonies still have emotional and symbolic power, capable of producing effects on the participants' experiences and on the results obtained.

The ritual's significance

What is a ritual? It is a series of intentional actions carried out in order to do something specific. The practice of a ritual allows you to learn the necessary actions - be it a tea ceremony or the practice of Tai Chi - but above all it supports the awareness of being there while you are doing something. It helps you stay in the presence, in the "here and now".

Rituals also act deeply on our subconscious, which does not understand the rational and logical language of our reasoning, in fact through mental reasoning you can understand your inner problems but not solve them. Rituals speak the language of the deepest part of us through the use of images and emotions, as well as archetypal symbols valid for all human beings, all elements that are perfectly understood by our subconscious.

A ceremony is always a process of healing on all levels of the human being: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Healing occurs when we manage to integrate and connect all the parts we are made of, transforming fear into love, that which separates into that which unites.

The ceremony has a quality of protection, but it is also a space-time that supports and promotes self-knowledge and expands the search for solutions to all kinds of problems, even those of important choices in life outside the ceremony.

The ceremony is therefore both a physical space and a defined time, to protect and simultaneously support whatever helps us face our problems; it is the set of conditions for this space-time to be considered safe and suitable for the intense experiences we have while taking an entheogenic substance. How do we accomplish these conditions?

We are back to the importance of set & setting - I can never repeat it enough - and therefore the choice of the place is the first step, assuming that the people who will be together are united by common intentions and

by the understanding that what is being undertaken is an experience that is completely different from simply doing something together. At this point the participants' agreement to respect the rules is essential.

Rules and freedom

The ceremony is a precise and defined set & setting, a container within which you are sure you can work in the best way. There are therefore a set of rules, of posts within which you must remain, of things to do and not to do that we intentionally accept by limiting our freedom. Within a ceremony it may happen that you feel tight and limited in your freedom.

Freedom for many is the ability to do what you want as long as you don't harm others. In theory, this type of freedom is always available, until we discover that we are not really free because there are social conditionings that prevent it, but above all inner conditionings. In fact, no one is truly free until he awakens. But even at that moment the choice of freedom that an awakened one makes will be to be completely at the service of the will of God - as reported in the narratives of those who have achieved this state of grace.

I will come back to this paradox later on and return now to the freedom of doing what you want. In everyday life it is difficult to feel completely free, which is why you can understand the desire to feel free at least when you take mushrooms: why should I have an experience with rules to follow? Why can't I do what I want?

The rules of a ceremony help you turn inwards, towards the only real thing that exists, because all of reality is only a projection of our consciousness; this has also been scientifically proven. Supporting what passes through our mind directs us outwards while the special sensory effects entertain us and can be really beautiful, but staying on the surface does not lead us anywhere. It is a bit like going often to the cinema and seeing always the same kind of film, in the end you become more demanding and it is increasingly difficult to find something interesting. The ceremony gives you a higher direction than just sensory enjoyment. It helps you tune in to your inner being with a higher quality.

What would a sporting match without rules look like? Sporting regulations are what make competitions exciting, otherwise they wouldn't make sense. The same goes for psychedelic experiences: if you have rules you can apply them every time and you can progress in a defined direction, which is useful for your evolution.

Not having rules is like considering mushrooms a recreational substance. But this is a serious mistake. I repeat that mushrooms have a thousand-year history of sacred use: look for references on the net for Soma, the sacred drink of the Vedic religion, or for Kykeon, another sacred drink linked to the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries, both of which were entheogenic drinks almost certainly derived from mushrooms, at the time often represented in sacred sculptures and images. If you want to find out more, look for Ambrosia and Amrita too, both entheogenic drinks. They are all substances which open us up to contact with subtle realities, the astral world being the one closest to ours. Entities of all kinds live in this dimension, many of which should stay well away from us.

If you don't have direct experience with these topics you might think that I am crazy or stupidly superstitious, but it is not so. The fact that you cannot see something doesn't mean that it does not exist. The purpose of this book is not to prove it to you. I know that these planes exist from my direct experience, even without the use of substances that expand perceptions. My aim is rather to warn you against using powerful substances such as mushrooms without a high quality intention. Intention makes the difference! If you do not pay attention, you will attract energies and situations whose quality is similar to that of your approach. Deception at this point becomes easy and it only takes a moment for you to find yourself entangled in illusions that will bring pain and suffering, pure nourishment for these astral energies. Have you ever entered into a betting shop? How did you feel? If you perceived some of the murky energies present, you must know that facing an experience with mushrooms without due respect will put you in touch with a world that will make the betting room seem like a children's playground. Despite my paying attention, twice I clearly noticed an attack during two different ceremonies. Once I was alone and had taken a very high dose but I was centered and I recognized it for what it was, managing to keep it away from me with

difficulty, whereas the second time I was with a friend and it seemed like the scene from a horror movie! Even the three cats that were at home noticed it unequivocally. Once again this was not a hallucination!

In addition to these dangers, you must consider that "recreational" experiences have an intrinsic limitation, that is, they must be fun, and this is why some people become explorers of all substances, mixing them, going from one to another looking for new experiences and sensations without ever going deeply into what they are doing, like tourists always traveling in search of new and different emotions. If you see them you can easily understand that these people have been "hooked" and it is very clear to an external observer that they do not realize this. If you do not turn your attention inside, you will not get anywhere. The outside is just an illusion, and after a while the special effects repeat themselves and become boring and it is time to look for a new substance. In addition to the many drugs existing, laboratories churn out new "rcs" every day as unfortunately there will always be new customers.

The ceremony's rules give meaning and direction, as does a glass with the water it contains. It is true that it limits it, but by doing so it makes it useful when you are thirsty. In fact, without a glass - a limitation - water could only be scattered on the table or on the floor and in this way you would remain thirsty while having water at hand. Do you drink from the tap or from a bottle? These are also limitations that allow water to reach you.

The ceremony is a set of limitations that expand your freedom, just as true freedom is achieved through the discipline of love and will. It does not work if you do whatever comes to mind, because we do not really have the slightest control over our mind and thoughts. If you have any doubts regarding this statement, I invite you to observe yourself so that you can verify that thoughts always come by chance and never by choice.

I intentionally submit myself to a set of rules in order to expand my freedom. This is the Truth of the paradox that includes opposites: just as an awakened one is free only by placing him/herself completely at the service of others, like a liver cell that finds its realization by doing that for which it exists, that is, being an element of the liver it belongs to.



As I said at the beginning of this chapter, the ceremony consists of three parts: preparation, experience and integration. I continue with the description of what is needed for the preparation. They may seem like actions unrelated to the actual experience, but the intention and attention that I put into this preliminary part are essential to guide what I will get from the experience. The preparation also makes post-ceremony integration simpler and more meaningful, which allows us to bring the understandings and healings obtained during the experience into everyday life. In my opinion this is the most useful result.

A ceremony should always involve taking a "committed dose", a quantity of mushrooms that inspires respect. Keeping this always in mind will help you have the best attitude in order to carefully do what is needed to prepare the space.

Indoors or outdoors?

Ceremony indoors

Personally I prefer the outdoor solution, being in the middle of nature, but the first few times it is easier to manage an indoor space, possessing the essential characteristics: a bathroom (remove the key from the lock during the experience because if a participant locks himself inside and no longer wants to go out, it could be a problem) and a heating system - the altered perception of temperature during the experience - of cold in particular - requires you to be in an adequately heated room. The same attention to temperatures is necessary if it should be very hot since excessive heat can increase the risk of having bad experiences.

Later on I will describe the differences of an outdoor ceremony.

Participants

In order to organize a group ceremony you need at least two experienced people who will have the role of "facilitators", while the others who join must know their own sensitivity. If they do not, they must do as described

in the chapter "The first time", taking a low dose without exception, otherwise you are likely to have problems.

Remember that anyone who participates must also meet the psychophysical requirements, clearly described in the book's introduction. See the chapter "Who MUST NOT have the experience".

The place

Do not settle for any place. It must be a place that you like and it must be suitable. Please do not choose a garage. Finding the right place is part of the journey towards doing a ceremony, to which you began to sacrifice - in the sense of "sacred doing" - even before its opening.

There are some holistic centers offering spaces for activities, including those with ayahuasca, that you can research discreetly. On house sharing sites you can find suitable houses in the countryside and you can share costs, with mats and sleeping bags so you can do it during a weekend. If you can do it at home or at a friend's house it would be perfect.

If there is a fireplace or a stove with an open fire in this place, it would be ideal. Fire is not only a source of heat, it is a presence that adds so much to the quality of the energies present during the inner journey. In this case one of the participants will be the "Guardian of Fire" and will have the task of caring for it and feeding it.

The chosen place must be cleaned first, if necessary, which can be done physically with a broom and a rag. But above all it must be cleaned energetically with fumigation throughout, with particular attention to corners where it is more likely to find stagnant energy. To do this we can use, in order of effectiveness: Palo Santo, White Sage, and Frankincense, the classic church incense. Do it with the intention of purifying the environment, with a feeling of gratitude, which is the quality closest to Love. It will be like turning on a light in a dark room. Bless the place.

The altar

A very important element for the ceremony is the presence of an altar

consisting of a small carpet or a piece of fabric of significant value, placed in the center of the room around which the participants will be arranged, ideally like rays around this center.

On this altar you will place one or more candles and a holder to light incense on (Japanese ones are better as they do not have a wooden core). In addition to these elements that should not be missing, you can add others such as flowers, stones, a bowl of water, or objects that are significant for participants.

What are these objects? Whatever is important for you, for example the photo of someone you admire (I have an image of my spiritual teacher or a Buddha), a medal that you were given when you were little, a ring you care about, something that you consider a lucky charm and that you always carry with you, in short, something to which you attribute a value and / or the capacity to protect you (such as amulets and talismans). You can also have objects or photographs that are representative of the issue you want to tackle.

Diffusion of music

The music speaker (there are many bluetooth models with rechargeable batteries that do not need to be placed near the power outlet) can be placed on the altar so that the diffusion of music is central for everyone, making this altar even more the center of attention and a reference point for all participants during the trip.

The importance of comfort

Comfort is an indispensable requirement so organize everything to make the place comfortable.

Each participant should have a mat, a cushion and at least one blanket. It would be best to have a bucket or a basin available for those who need to throw up; this happens rarely but it is better to avoid having to clean up vomit from the ground afterwards. One is sufficient, it is not necessary to have one per participant like for ceremonies with ayahuasca.

There should be paper tissues, water in bottles, and bowls or dishes with dried and fresh seasonal fruit available for participants near or around the altar, while in a corner it would be good to have a kettle for hot water and some assorted herbal teas and cups.

Create a beautiful and comfortable space that will be useful and appreciated by all.

How to dress

The principle of comfort described above also applies here so consider that you should be able to put things on and take them off easily if you feel hot or cold. If you can, choose to wear something special, maybe picked specifically for the event. For example, I always use a sweatshirt with a large hood that allows me to cover almost my whole face if I want to isolate myself from the light, instead of using a bandana or a mask.

I wanted to specify something about clothing too, just to highlight the importance of making an intentional and not a casual choice, that is, not wearing the first things you find or the same things you would wear to go to the gym. The care and attention you put into choosing the right clothes is one of the small rituals that contribute to making the experience more centered and meaningful for you, like all the other details you take care of in the preparation phase.

Clothes are not important in themselves, apart from the required comfort, but they are just a tool for focusing your intention on creating and supporting a sacred space.

Light or darkness?

If the ceremony takes place during the day, you can choose whether to use natural light or close the shutters and blinds in order to create a more cozy and welcoming environment, aided by the light of candles and a fireplace if available.

I decide according to the situation and context - there is no fixed rule - but keep in mind that the initial phase, as well as the more intense one that

follows, are better supported by semidarkness or by an environment lit with dim lights such as candles. If the external light is beautiful, for example if the sun is out, you can close the blinds for a while and then reopen them later on. If the external light is not beautiful, maybe it is cloudy, you can leave them closed and after the more intense phase you can light more candles to make eye contact and interaction between participants and the environment easier.

If taking care of shutters and blinds is not appropriate or possible for some reason, you can avoid it and suggest the use of eye masks instead. The first two hours are often full of internal visions that are facilitated by visual isolation.

The Ceremony's opening and closing phases

As we saw in one of the initial paragraphs, the ceremony is delimited by the opening and closing rituals that are two formal moments requiring appropriate attitudes. In fact, all participants will be in a circle around the altar, not lying down or distracted, so you need a posture that encourages you to be attentive and present to what you are doing, for example sitting cross-legged.

Use a prayer or mantra, the same one for opening and closing. This is the most suitable and effective way. It is not a religious matter - the Buddhist or Christian religions have nothing to do with it - it is only a matter of using a formula practiced and repeated countless times over the centuries or millennia. Mantras and prayers have their energetic charge, fueled over time by all the practitioners who have recited them, a kind of benevolent and positive Egregore that has developed over time and that you can tap into.

I use the Mantra of Vajrasattva, also called the Mantra of the Hundred Syllables, which I repeat three times for opening and as many for closing. But the recitation of Our Father, the only prayer Christ taught to humanity, can be used with the same effectiveness,. Do you have a prayer or invocation that has value and meaning for you? Use that. Do you prefer the

prayer of St. Francis, the Ave Maria, or a poem? They are certainly fine, as long as they have a meaning for you, as they help you focus a benevolent and protective intention on the space that you are consecrating in this way, making it sacred.

Does reciting a prayer or mantra in front of others make you feel embarrassed? Well, start facing this difficulty and do your duty, make this sacrifice (sacred doing) to propitiate the environment and the best energy for carrying out this ritual. Ceremonies of all traditions require a right place and rituality and all lead to the creation of a protective energy field that will help you limit problems and encourage solutions. It is even better if the prayer or mantra is also known by other participants, so that they too can recite it with you.

Do a magical act! And if problems arise anyway, at least you will know that this is the best place and situation to face them. You can always ask the divinity for help, the one you recognized and celebrated in the opening ritual, with the certainty of having done your best to propitiate its presence, care and protection.

Before starting the ceremony you can draw a random card from the Tarot to get information on what awaits you in this experience, one for all or one for each participant. It is fine to do what you feel.

In the same way, *before the opening ritual*, participants can share the intentions they have for the trip, to help them focus and maintain these during the trip; expressing the fears felt helps to reduce them or at least to make them known to others, so that if needed, you can count on more focused help during the experience.

Intake of the substance

After the opening ritual, therefore within the protection given by the ritual, you can take the substance. Here there are no fixed rules, just be careful if there are different doses because it is good if everyone takes their own and there are no inadvertent exchanges. I really like how ayahuasca ceremonies take place, in which participants are arranged in a circle and approach the shaman in turn, clockwise, to drink the substance. The

moment of intake of the substance is always very intense so use this emotion for the ceremony's benefit. These formal and ritual aspects are important for the participants' subconscious and are an additional resource available for the experience.

The three rules to be followed

The ceremony is a set of rules accepted and shared by participants, whose purpose is to keep the time and space of the experience safe. There are only three rules: one related to behavior and two to activity. They are simple but important. Besides, complex rules could easily be forgotten as soon as your state of consciousness changes.

One of the facilitator's tasks is to supervise that everything proceeds in compliance with the ceremonial rules. But participants must also be involved, for taking individual responsibilities is part of the evolutionary path in life as well as, by analogy, in the ceremonial context.

Rule of conduct: an adequate attitude must be maintained throughout the ceremony, that is, a dignified, respectful attitude towards oneself and other participants. Talking about dignity might seem old-fashioned, but in this context it simply means "doing and being so as not to cause shame and embarrassment to oneself and others". A practical example: during an experience, a participant began to say nonsense and laugh at his own jokes, letting out a series of phrases and laughter. We will see better later, but this type of behavior must be resolved even before it occurs, not so much because it may be annoying, but because it indicates the presence of entities of the lower astral, which are evidence of the fact that there are problems of protection of the ceremony's energy field. There is a solution that we will see later in the paragraph dedicated to problems.

Rules of activity: these are related to doing and not doing and there are two.

The first requires participants to move within the spaces of the ceremony, identified and described before the beginning. Do you want to leave the room to smoke a cigarette or go to the garden to be in contact with nature? It is fine, as long as it has been agreed beforehand and the facilitator has

included these spaces in the purification ritual. I remind you that rituals act on many levels simultaneously and their effect is real if you practice them with an intention of quality.

The second rule is this: everyone goes through their own experiences and nobody can know what is actually going on in their neighbor's head. Avoid assuming to know how the other is feeling because you can't know until you ask them, and you should only do so if necessary for some good reason. Actually, in the first phase it is better to avoid interactions with others and let everyone have their own inner journey. The visionary part of the journey is when you allow whatever the experience brings you to emerge freely. It can be spectacular, intense, very significant, and worth giving it space without outside disturbances, so stay within yourself and do not interact with others unless it is needed.

Summary: Maintain an appropriate attitude for the whole duration of the ceremony. Stay inside the protected ceremonial spaces. Do not interact or disturb other participants during the first more intense phase, which can last about two or three hours, but continue being cautious even after this phase.

On the other hand, if you need support, you can ask for it at any time. Knowing that you can always count on others is already of great help.

As you can see, from a practical point of view the facilitator apparently does very little. His real "job" is to be at the service of others, to put the participants' needs before his own. Giving is receiving and this practice of facilitating and being at the service of others is very powerful.

What do we do during the Ceremony?

Nothing in particular. We simply remain with whatever is there, at all times and with the state of consciousness induced by mushrooms. Simply stay with others around this altar, with alternation of music and silence. This does not mean that you cannot move, but your reference is the circle and the protected space. You can obviously go to the bathroom but then you return to the others.

As there is no shaman to mark the rhythms of the experience, there will only be the facilitator who is primarily responsible for managing the presence or absence of music. I could tell you about my experience, but trust that the Spirit of the Mushroom will let you know what to do and how to do it. If you are animated by the desire to be of service to others, you will certainly do the right things.

Being at the service of your companions of the ceremony means being available to do whatever is needed, for example, to accompany someone to the bathroom, or to bring light with your attention and with your silent presence in moments of someone's crisis. I saw a participant in difficulty being helped by a short shiatsu treatment given by a companion who knew this technique; in this state of connection it is quite easy to understand what needs to be done, so if you have doubts just ask. All participants are available to those who need help, according to what is needed.

A half hour after taking the mushroom you will start with the music, but if you want you can choose to play it from before taking the substance, as you prefer. Put your playlist into random play mode, and if at some point you feel it is better to stop, pause it and leave some space for silence, then watch / hear what happens.

After a while you will feel when to put the music back on, perhaps moving on to the second, more "social", playlist, and you will also feel that you have gone into a different phase of the ceremony, from the introspective one to the one in which you open up to contact with the outside and with others. This could happen about 2-3 hours after the beginning, but remember that the perception of time is altered, so a timer or a clock, if you want, could be useful to you. From here on, it is more likely that participants might feel like talking to each other, which is fine. The facilitator can support the exchange or mitigate it by putting the music on or by pausing it. These decisions are in the hands of the facilitator, and although it is not always easy to understand what is best for participants, the experience and sensitivity that is acquired over time will help you do the right thing.

Problems during the ceremony

During the ceremony there should be no problems if you have followed all the indications given in this book. People with physical and psychological problems should be strictly excluded, as described in the introduction. Nobody should take mushrooms without knowing his/her sensitivity well, in which case they could participate by taking a very small dose, as described in chapter 3. Nobody participates unless they understand and share the essential rules that you find in the previous paragraphs. With these premises, what problems could there ever be? Yet problems may arise anyway, very rarely if you stick to the indications, more often if you don't respect them, to which I can testify.

In my path of experimentation I have made many mistakes, above all that of participating in ceremonies with people who had no previous experience, whose sensitivity had been underestimated or overestimated. Many had had experiences with ayahuasca - a path that I have also followed for a long time, which is why I have many friends who come from that world - so it was assumed that their sensitivity was adequate to take medium or even higher doses. Mushrooms have a lot in common with ayahuasca, but I have found that there are more differences than similarities.

Having had experiences with other substances is not indicative of anything. Perhaps only LSD can be a useful reference because if you hold up well with LSD then it is very likely that you will also hold up well with mushrooms. But you can not be sure, and moreover, you can not even be sure after having had your first experiences with mushrooms. In fact it takes at least three or more trips in order to understand how your body and above all your mind responds.

The problems I experienced are consequences of the violation of the rules that I described above. At the time I had not yet understood them and therefore I found myself involved in dealing with problems that you should not have. But exceptions always prove the rule, therefore I would like to describe the most common problems that could arise.

The bad trip or demanding trip can happen to anyone even after having had many experiences, but if you read the chapter dedicated to this topic you should be able to manage any situations that may arise. In most cases

it is sufficient to reassure and calm the person down, keep calm and remain centered and you will be contagious, otherwise apply the instructions I wrote in chapter 5.

Here it is difficult to describe and manage all the difficulties that could arise. Sometimes people forget that they are under the psychoactive effect and believe that their behavior at that moment is absolutely normal. In these cases you just have to manage the situation so that there is no dangerous or inappropriate behavior, and if this is the case you must physically stop the person to prevent them from getting hurt. For this reason, it is appropriate for there to be a few experienced people in a ceremony, or at least two people to manage these situations.

Once a participant took his clothes off and wanted to climb over the garden fence and run naked towards the sun! I stopped him and told him to lie on the ground - still naked - under a magnificent oak tree. I was calm and authoritative and perhaps for this reason he obeyed without problems and I am sure that the direct contact with the earth did him a lot of good. If you have correctly applied the criteria for selecting people, you should not have any particular problems, although in that case they actually had not been applied.

If you have the feeling that there is something strange in the environment it is useful to light incense and / or Palo Santo and it is a good idea to light some White Sage and take a tour of the room to spread the smoke and purify it. It might seem like a slightly New Age solution but it doesn't matter because it works, so use it.

What to do if a participant feels physically ill? We can rule out the possibility that the substance may cause physical problems to a normally healthy person, so be reassured at least in this respect.

We could feel sick at any time of life so if this happens incidentally during a ceremony you have to face it for what it is: if it is prolonged and / or serious you need to call a doctor or an ambulance. In this unfortunate case, the most lucid person should wait for the health worker together with the participant, while the others should go elsewhere because the situation is managed better by one person than by several people all together in an

altered state of consciousness.

This is the worst problem that could happen because even if the substance is completely safe it is actually illegal. The real risk when medical personnel arrive - apart from the risk related to the sick person's health problem - is that there may be legal consequences for the activity itself. Here I have no advice to give you apart from that of having your experiences in Holland, the Czech Republic, Spain, or Portugal, as I have done on several occasions, since according to the law of those countries you cannot be prosecuted.



Almost all people's problems - in ceremonies and in life - concern problematic or unsolved relationships with mom and dad. Before having serious experiences with mushrooms, psychological work should be done with a qualified therapist, possibly also some meetings with Family Constellations. Regular meditation practice is always helpful.

Ceremonies with ayahuasca can begin at this point on the path because the plant is very effective for working on our value systems and trauma, although the guidance of a good shaman who supports psychophysical healing is essential. When you are starting to walk alone you can start to face the powerful and deep experiences with mushrooms, but remember that with them you must be your own shaman.



At some point, on the soft descending glide that leads us towards the end of the ceremony, if any of the participants want to play an instrument or sing or do an artistic performance of some kind, it will surely be welcome. I have experienced many magical moments in this phase and I wish you may also experience them.

When to close the Ceremony?

I normally close it even if the mushroom's effect is still present, although you must feel when the time is right. I do not close it when the effects are

finished because the qualities of presence and intensity that characterized the whole experience cease to exist and I consider them useful in a significant moment such as closure. When you see the conclusion of processes that people went through during the experience, then you can do the ritual to close the ceremony.

If you still see internal processes in progress, wait or ask how it is going, and if everyone is more or less well then you can invite participants to take an upright position, sitting on the cushion, and start with the prayer or the closing mantra. Being able to recite something is a sign that the ceremony can be closed, but if you are not yet able to do it, you will have to wait a little longer.

Once the closing ritual is over, you can relax, and if you want you can eat something sweet and / or salty and drink something to help return to material reality. This only after the closing. Before this you should only have water and dried and fresh fruit.

Normally you change the music; you can put on something more normal, however, remember that the experience is not completely over and many might still be far away.

This is normally the time to start sharing something, when everyone can talk about their experience and impressions, provided that they wish to do so. This integration phase is precious because it is the moment when you can better extract any understanding you reached during the experience; listening to others can be of great help in realizing the sense of one's experiences. Being still in an altered state of consciousness can make it easier to process visions or processes that are still very present, but are destined to diminish or disappear as the effect wears off, a bit like a dream after waking up. Remember to have pen and paper at hand.



When everyone is in possession of their capacities, you can tidy everything up and return home to everyday life, unless it is possible for you to sleep in the same room and take a means of transport after a night's rest.

Outdoor ceremony

Doing it outdoors in cold weather is practically impossible. Under the effect of the substance, your physical movements may become as fluid as those of a Tai Chi master or they may become a little difficult, but seeing as the second option is much more likely than the first, staying still in the cold under the influence of mushrooms is not recommended because when you take them you usually already tend to feel cold.

Therefore, this is only possible in summertime when the presence of sun and shade are very appreciable for an outdoor ceremony. Tranquility, nature, perhaps being under or near a tree in a beautiful location, in this case too, do not settle for second best but look for a beautiful place. When you find it you will know, because you will like it. You must like it for it to be suitable, and if it has the required qualities of tranquility and privacy and you like it, then it will be perfect.

Find a place for the altar and prepare it. Candle lit if possible and I would say yes to incense. Always pay attention to the fire and evaluate this well while you are still lucid.

Delimit the space where you and others can move, normally within sight of the circle but this must be defined, as well as a place that serves as a toilet in case of need, providing somewhere to put the used paper so as not to leave dirt behind when you go away. Make sure participants have everything clear before starting.

The same rules apply to music, although outdoors you have more chances of remaining silent from start to finish. Due to a technical problem, once we were left without music; at the beginning we were sorry but actually it was a memorable ceremony for the sounds of nature were better than any music. Since that time we have left more space for silence in nature, gaining even more wonder and teachings from this.

Outdoors at night

This is certainly a great challenge and definitely not easy. Everything is amplified - who does not know the effect of the night, which magnifies

thoughts and worries? It is not a task to be dealt with lightly, especially if you do not have much experience. There are some rational aspects that need to be addressed but also many subtle aspects that are not easy to explain but equally important.

The ideal place would be a garden that guarantees privacy and is therefore closed and private. This choice would immediately solve a number of problems that you might have in a place that is accessible to anyone, including animals. Having a wild boar nearby while you are in the middle of your trip is not necessarily dangerous in itself, but you may find yourself in a very difficult state of mind.

What would solve everything is the presence of a fire because of the sense of protection that derives from it, but also for the presence of an element possessing many subtle qualities that are really precious when you are in that state of non-ordinary consciousness. It becomes an ally that can give you strength, teachings and protection.

What if you can not light a fire? In many outdoor places it is forbidden, and even though it might not be really dangerous to light one, it could attract law enforcement and in that case perhaps it would be better to be visited by a boar!

If you have experience of trekking and free camping you will probably find my recommendations useless, but think of those who do not have this type of experience and how many things they must foresee in order not to find themselves in difficult conditions: for example the presence of insects, very likely in summer time, the only season when you can have this type of outdoor experience, or the humidity at night, whether it is a lawn or even a beach. There are plenty of things that can create uncomfortable situations if you are not properly equipped.

As already mentioned in a previous paragraph, you must be well equipped in order to ensure your comfort, which is an important element so as not to transform the experience into a nightmare. You must always consider the state of consciousness you will find yourself in, which is not the ordinary one: your sensations can be greatly amplified and distorted and the discomforts you may feel will also be magnified. Remember that what you

now find mild and acceptable may become unbearable during the trip.

Once the practical issues have been taken care of, the equipment and the possible presence of fire, there are those related to the subtle aspect. At night there are different qualities than in the daytime. This is obvious to everyone, but its importance is much more evident if you have taken mushrooms. Everything changes, everything is amplified, even nighttime entities are different from those of the daytime and personally I find them more disturbing, more insidious because of the effects they have on the psyche.

In order to do an outdoor ceremony at night you have to be even more centered and confident, because any fear would immediately find support and would grow much more than it would in the daylight.

An outdoor experience at night is more like an initiation rite than a ceremony, but remember that traditionally the ritual is assigned by others and not by yourself, so carefully evaluate what you are undergoing. There is always the possibility that you might be underestimating or overestimating something.

Would I recommend an outdoor ceremony at night? The answer is obvious: yes, but it depends on the set & setting as well as on you, at what point you are in your life path, the experiences you have had, whether you have complete trust in mushrooms and mastery of yourself even when taking a dose for a ceremony. If you feel unsafe even on one of these points, it is better to wait. At night you can always do it indoors while you wait for the right opportunity to come along. Sometimes you just need to be patient.

Integration

Integration is that bridge connecting the experience had during the ceremony with the one outside the ceremony, in everyday life. Integration can be helped by the phase of sharing with other participants, but it is materialized by writing, because writing is an act of power and one of the ways to manifest what otherwise would remain only in thoughts, therefore still abstract.

It would be ideal if you could write while you are returning to your ordinary state of consciousness because after a night's sleep there will already be fewer elements available; they will have disappeared who knows where. The time of integration is important and you should consider it within the ceremony. It allows you to reap the fruits of the experience just had and to be able to use them, otherwise they would be lost. Remember to have pen and paper to write, and if you know the very useful Mind Maps I suggest you also have colored pencils because in that state of inner and outer connection you can access many precious inspirations.

What dosage for the Ceremony?

In order to be facilitator of a ceremony you must be experienced and know your sensitivity to the substance well. Do you know how you react if you take a lot? What is a lot for you?

The ceremony should be faced with a "committed dose", a dose that inspires you with a little fear. Don't overdo it if you don't know how the *fraternal circle* works yet, so that you can act if needed. My committed dose is very high but I always set a reasonable limit on the quantity, therefore lower than the dose that inspires me with respect because I must be able to be present for those who need it.

In any case, if you hold the substance very well and have adequate experience - this applies to anyone who participates with these characteristics - do not go beyond 5 grams. It is still a demanding dose and you will be at the limit to be able to interact with others if you need to help.

Others who feel almost at their limit with 3 grams, for example, perhaps can increase by half a gram in a ceremony and face a different intensity, while always remaining within their safety margins.

If you decide to welcome someone who has never had an experience with mushrooms - the ceremony is perhaps the best way to have a first experience - always remember that you cannot skip the sensitivity verification part, otherwise during the ceremony there is a high risk of having problems, such as those described in a previous paragraph.

How many people for a Ceremony?

I have had experiences even with twenty people, with rather low doses because - alas - we didn't know each other well, but I don't recommend it. The ones I prefer are with up to eight people, better six or less. Why? This is my preference after various experiences, also confirmed by other practitioners.

The minimum number is one, therefore alone, but these "extreme" experiences are reserved for those who are solid and tested. I speak about this when I go deeper into explaining the Heroic Dose.

When to have a Ceremony?

A fundamental requirement is to be able to disconnect completely for about ten hours without having to worry about appointments or commitments close to the event, otherwise you could have more difficulties. Take some time for yourself - this is already healing in itself. If you can't even do this forget it for now and wait for a better time.

In addition to strictly practical reasons, there are other elements that should be taken into consideration when deciding the date.

Just as traditional and religious holidays happen at very specific times and not by chance, you too can choose moments that have a special quality, in order to have special energies available while you are in a deep inner experience.

Here are some interesting dates:

- New moon
- Full moon
- Winter and Summer Solstice
- Spring and Autumn Equinox
- Epiphany
- Candlemas
- Easter
- May Day - Beltane
- Wesak
- Pentecost

- Saint John's Day
- All Saints - Samhain
- Christmas

You can find other significant dates in your personal story on which to celebrate or sacrifice something during a ceremony dedicated to an issue that is important for you and for everyone. If you express a specific intention to have a ceremony, you can obtain surprising insights and understanding.

Quick Guide to a Ceremony

For your convenience I will summarize the many points covered in this part.

The ceremony begins with its preparation, then the rigorous selection of participants, the choice of a safe and comfortable place, and the date. Respect for the ceremony's specific set & setting is the best guarantee of having an experience without problems, which could otherwise be serious and numerous.

The ceremony is a sacred space delimited in time and space, opening and closing rituals are required, and herbs and incense are needed for the purification and protection of the place.

The necessary ingredients are the altar that you set up and the specifically selected soundtrack. You can only do without music if you are outdoors in the middle of nature.

Participants respect three simple rules: maintaining appropriate attitude and behavior, remaining in the space of the ceremony, and during the most intense phase not interacting with others unless it is necessary.

The facilitator is at everybody's service, just like everyone is at the service of all other participants.

We take a dose that inspires respect, but those who have experience and confidence with the substance must not exceed the limit beyond which they may have difficulty interacting with others; indicatively never more than 5 grams of dried mushrooms. It is never a race to see who takes more.

As a last point, summarizing and concentrating all the previous ones, consider the possibility of having your first experience, both with the substance and with a ceremonial approach, in Holland at *Synthesis Retreat*; starting well is the first step in the right direction.

Addendum

Writing a book is relatively simple if you know what you want to say. The hard part is editing, that is, the text's critical revision and correction. In my case it was so, and probably most of the text was written in this stage, much with the help of mushrooms, and not during the first draft.

A few days ago I was sure that the text was finally ready and defined, when a friend told me that in a few days there would be a mushroom ceremony conducted by a South American shaman: what, there really is a tradition that has survived to this day? I could not resist and so I went, though admittedly I was a little worried at the thought that perhaps I would still have to rewrite a substantial part of the text. But in the end I had already done it several times, so I thought that in any case it would be a success.

I had written about the importance of the dosage, as well as the elements that define a ceremony: would I have to rewrite everything? I couldn't imagine that a shaman would weigh the mushrooms for each participant, so how would he do it? And what about all the other elements that are so important in my experience? The day of the ceremony finally arrived and my excitement was more than usual and increasing as the time approached. The full moon certainly helped to support this growing emotion.

Before the beginning I managed to speak to the shaman with the help of a translator because I wanted to know about his tradition and if he was part of a lineage. Lineage is a word whose etymology derives from the Latin "linea", and in fact it indicates an unbroken line that comes from the past regarding culture, traditions, or even genealogical and blood descent. In the case of the shaman I wanted to know if the ceremonial tradition with mushrooms he performed had a lineage.

The answer was not very precise – far from my expectation of clarity - but

basically he came from the ayahuasca tradition even though he claimed to know and to have used mushrooms for a long time. He was also part of a group of people who were trying to recover the hidden traditions related to the use of mushrooms by the elderly in the small communities still present in his area of Colombia. So a slightly frayed lineage with no uninterrupted transmission from master to student, or teachings that pass from one generation to another as happens in many spiritual and religious traditions, such as in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. But it was better than nothing. At least he had experience in conducting ceremonies with "los honguitos".

It was a ceremony like those with ayahuasca but without anyone vomiting, accompanied by a corollary of medicines and substances used in the South American tradition. We were given rapé and other substances that I honestly did not understand, such as a preparation based on tobacco and salts obtained from some plants that we had to dissolve under our tongue or on our gums, a fine powder such as talcum probably made of peyote (or Coca leaves?) to be turned around in our mouths, then a sip of a pleasant drink of unknown origin. These are the ones I remember. Some participants had difficult moments, but the shaman intervened as in other traditional experiences with tobacco smoke (the mapacho) for example, and by spraying a liquid with his mouth (like *Agua de Florida*) always succeeding in taking the situation back to the relative normality you may find during an intense experience.

I didn't understand how much mushroom I took because it was crumbled and mixed with other ingredients, mainly honey. The shaman distributed it to the participants with a spoon, over and over again during the night. In my perception, according to the effects I experienced, I think I took between 3 and 4 grams, no more, enough for a medium intensity trip compared to my standards. Despite this it was an intense ceremony, very similar to those with the plant.

The biggest difference from the indications I wrote in my paragraphs about the ceremony was the absence of an opening and closing ritual, and I missed them a lot, especially the closure. At some point someone went to the next room and someone started sleeping. I wasn't sure what to do and I didn't understand if we had finished or not, until the moment I slipped into

the sleeping bag and decided to sleep - with many difficulties, perhaps because it is not easy to sleep if you are still under the effect, but also because someone snored.

The most important confirmation regarded the presence of the altar in the center of the room - beautiful, made of many flowers. According to the shaman, it is the most important element and he devoted a lot of time to preparing it the day before the ceremony. His job as a shaman, he told me, was to maintain the connection between the mushrooms, the altar and the participants. He considered this to be of utmost importance for the safety of the experience and for the protection of the ceremonial space from spirits, with the help of a benevolent entity.

The shaman sang icaros, helped by some of the organizers who accompanied him with songs and the sound of different traditional and non-traditional instruments, such as rattles, fans, percussion and above all the guitar. I was lucky because the participants who sang and played the guitar were among the most extraordinary musicians I have ever heard! So the presence of music was confirmed as essential within group experiences. I appreciated it a lot also because I was able to be a participant without having to worry about assisting others, therefore free to immerse myself in my difficult inner process, with the music helping me not to sink into my own sufferings. If in the ceremonial group there are one or more participants who know how to play and sing, their presence and willingness to do so for the group is absolutely welcome. Perhaps only in the first more intense phase can the experience be accompanied by the first playlist, the more introspective one, while the continuation could also be an alternation of recorded music and live performances by those who have the desire to perform.

In conclusion. Ceremonies with the shaman are probably preferable to those without one, because the responsibility lies with a person who is able to take on this role. However instead of entrusting myself to a pseudo shaman, incompetent or worse, a ceremony carried out as I described in the previous paragraphs is certainly better and suitable for the purpose of making participants work in a direction of healing and personal evolution. In light of this experience I would not change any indication and confirm

them as useful to have a safe and profitable experience in the absence of a true shaman. Moreover, a ceremony without a shaman helps participants to take responsibility, an absolutely important achievement, because being able to help others is a wonderful privilege, a gift that helps you evolve more than any other practice.

Just as ayahuasca shamans are emerging who have no skills and are only doing business and serious damage, I am sure that other self-proclaimed shamans, self-styled experts of ceremonies with the sacred mushroom, will emerge just like mushrooms. It was not my case, also because I ascertained the integrity of the shaman and of those who had organized the experience. I admit that when I went to participate I was very suspicious and cautious, prepared to give up and go home without hesitation, but when I saw the flower altar made by the shaman with so much care and attention I calmed down; whether he was a true shaman or not, I felt like a mushroom brother, and after all I felt no reason to fear anything. If you have no experience, be very careful, because in the state of openness induced by mushrooms you can fall prey to very negative entities, somehow helped by unscrupulous people who act for money even at the expense of others, organizing ceremonies that have absolutely nothing sacred, whose rituals are only a harmful show for the unfortunate.

"The only roads worth taking are those with a heart." When in doubt, remember this, for it will always help you understand what to choose and what to do.

11. THE HEROIC CEREMONY AND THE BARDO OF DEATH

What is a Heroic Ceremony?

The Heroic Ceremony combines Terence McKenna's prescriptions regarding the Heroic Dose with the rules of a Solo Ceremony. The opening and closing rituals are the same as for the ceremony and McKenna's rules apply for the two rituals but with a difference regarding the quantity of mushroom. Your “committed dose” is not fixed at 5 grams, but starts from this and increases up to the quantity that makes you feel fear. Following this approach over time I have taken progressively higher doses, experiencing a paradoxical combination of fear and trust each time. Trust in the mushroom has never been in question but fear has almost always stemmed from the fear of feeling bad, which actually never happened thanks to the impeccable set & setting.

After the closing ritual you can light candles and put some music on to begin the integration phase. You should have a pen and paper to write and draw, which are important activities. Use Mind Maps if you know them.

What does Bardo mean?

Bardo is a Tibetan word indicating a state of consciousness that has a beginning and an end. There is the bardo of dream in which the state of consciousness changes, as well as the bardo of life. Between one life and another, our consciousness has a number of experiences, and - according to Tibetan Buddhists - it passes through several bardos. For simplicity we will call them all "bardo of death", although in reality the different phases have specific names. But here we will not go into these distinctions. Just as there is a bardo of dream and one of meditation, we could also say that there is a bardo of the psychedelic trip, which in my experience has things in common with what we experience after our physical death.

DMT and death

An interesting but not completely scientifically proven fact is that at the moment of death the pineal gland releases large quantities of DMT, the natural substance that is the basis of the psilocin molecule, into the bloodstream. This information, although not yet certain, would make sense in relation to what I talk about later. The presence of a greater amount of DMT during death would be further confirmation of the link between the heroic ceremony and the bardo of death. I do not base my reflection on this data, which still has to be confirmed, but simply believe that it would be yet another confirmation of what I have experienced personally.

Two articles about this topic: <https://tinyurl.com/y55jbopx> and <https://tinyurl.com/y9cpnq48>

The fear of death

Talking about death is not very well-regarded in our so-called civilized world. I remember well a time when I had to make formal recognition of the deceased mother and wife of some friends of mine who did not have the courage to see her dead! The problem was not with her because to my surprise I discovered that all of them had an immense fear of death to the point of not being able to do the recognition required by law, so they asked

me to do it.

This is perhaps an extreme case, but the fear of death is widespread. How can you live with the fear of the only certain thing we have in this life? Everything that begins will end, it is inevitable. How can you live ignoring that you will die? Few people are looking for answers to the inevitable question that everyone will sooner or later ask him/herself: what will happen when I die? We will all die one day, but not knowing when it will happen, we act as if it will never happen, unless suddenly something makes us aware that it also concerns us, such as disease, a strong fright, old age, or the death of a friend or relative.

Studying death is good for life for the two are inextricably linked. Understanding death is good for the quality of life and gives it meaning and direction, making us understand the importance of the 'essential' that Antoine de Saint-Exupéry wrote about in *The Little Prince*: “*Here is my secret. It is quite simple: One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes*”.

The world of the living and of the dead

I was five when I asked myself for the first time: “*What happens when I die?*”. Since then my research has been constant, until I began to have answers, discovering that death is a mystery for most people but not for those who know. There is no need to hide information, it is accessible to anyone, but only when you are ready do you find certain information and from that moment it begins to have meaning for you.

I have read many books about this and I have participated in a number of experiential seminars and in dozens of heroic ceremonies, all this to tell you that today I know what happens when we die. I am in no hurry to get there but I am not afraid.

When you have an intense ceremonial experience with mushrooms you enter dimensions that really exist, that are not the result of hallucinations. In fact I have been back to those places and recognized them every time, experiencing situations that are really difficult to describe.

When you die you are still you, but the reality around you responds to what you think and feel instantly, while on this physical plane there is a delay due to the greater inertia of dense matter. Also after our physical death we have confirmation that reality is a mirror, although the "reflection's" speed of response is much greater and more evident. If you are angry and full of attachments your reality instantly materializes what you are, and it may not be pleasant if you have unresolved issues like attachments and regrets, feelings of anger, fear and hatred. These are the passages described in the Bardo Thodol (the Tibetan Book of the Dead) in which we face trials and monsters whose illusory state must be recognized. They are only manifestations of what we are and what we have inside.

The most surprising fact that occurs after the death of the physical body is that very often we do not notice that we are dead! Some realize it immediately, some after a while, others can spend a long period of time in a state of enchantment, like certain manifestations of madness or unawareness that we can also see on Earth. The factors that determine this condition are numerous, the main one linked to the state of evolution of consciousness: the more it is identified with the personality and the physical body, the more difficult it will be to notice what has happened.

An awakened person, that is, someone who has realized the constant presence in the here and now and the opening of the heart - which I explain further in the next chapter - passes into the afterlife without interruption of his/her state of consciousness, perfectly aware of what is happening. On the other hand, those who lived in complete sleepiness - most of humanity - will struggle to notice their death because they will create an absolutely credible illusory "astral" world, which will reflect it perfectly. Hell, purgatory and paradise exist, but they are all passages linked to a sort of "energetic purification" that takes place in the different bardos we will be passing through before returning once again into a physical body. Hell is eternal in the subjective perception of those who have to "burn their sins", but of course that phase also ends and continues with the same path as for most of us in "Saṃsāra", the Wheel of Life, the cycle of life, death and rebirth destined to end only in the realization of the Awakening.

Death as a state of consciousness

The heroic ceremony puts you in a voluntary sensory deprivation in which you are in absolute darkness and in silence, and it obliges you to turn within yourself, where you will find yourself when you are dead. What happens when you take a committed dose with this set & setting is a combination able to set aside the ego - the one with the small "e" - and to allow the contents of your psyche "to explode" and to manifest without the restrictions of the personality we normally identify with.

For me, heroic ceremonies are a preparation for death, for what happens when you take your last breath. The heroic ceremony shows you who you are and makes you experience "being" in a way that you would hardly be able to experience in an ordinary state of consciousness. Death is a non-ordinary state of consciousness just as the one you are in after ingesting a high dose of mushrooms.

Everything is Consciousness and the reality you experience is only the result of your state of consciousness. The Sacred Mushroom opens your consciousness in a literally brilliant way and thus takes you where you need to be most in order to heal and evolve.

What does evolution mean?

The ancient sacred texts of many religious and mystical traditions answer this question, however I personally appreciate and understand better the explanation given by Theosophy, perhaps because it expresses the concepts in a more comprehensible way for a man of this age, in need of more rational and somewhat more scientific explanations.

According to this philosophical doctrine Man is made up of several bodies (and planes):

1. physical
2. etheric
3. astral
4. inferior mental
5. superior mental

6. causal

I'm sorry I can't go deeper into this - you can find suitable texts in the bibliography (I recommend all those by Arthur Powell) - but you must know that most of the western world is aware, more or less, only of the first four bodies.

The physical body is evident, while the etheric one is the energy matrix of the physical one. It is that body on which many oriental disciplines work: an example is acupuncture, which acts precisely on this fine energetic network.

The astral body is the body of desire and emotions, a very powerful body that lives in an illusory world – as illusory as our daily reality.

The lower mental body is that of concrete thought while the upper one is the seat of abstract thought.

The causal body, also called the body of glory, is the seat of self-awareness, of our soul.

Above these bodies there are other planes - buddhic, atmic, monadic and divine - that we are also made of, but for us these are so far beyond that it is as if they were still unconscious.

After this brief introduction, let us go back to the meaning and purpose of evolution. Humans must start realizing the existence of these bodies and gradually learn to control them. It is a long term job that develops over the course of numerous incarnations and comes alive when you begin to master emotions and thoughts.

How to do it? This is the meaning and purpose of many paths, first of all psychological and then spiritual. How to understand if the path is the right one for us is explained in the words of Don Juan Matus, Carlos Castaneda's teacher: "For me there is only the traveling on paths that have heart, on any path that may have heart, and the only worthwhile challenge is to traverse its full length. There I travel looking, looking, breathlessly."

Knowing oneself

The first steps on this path go towards the recognition and understanding of our emotions; in parallel we continue with the mastery of the mind and thoughts. I'm still simplifying - I can't do otherwise - but you must know that over time we will come to use these subtle bodies with skill. The stories of some saints and other extraordinary characters are evidence of this inner integration.

The ultimate goal is "to do the will of God", but if you are an atheist and don't believe, I can say it in another equally true but secular way: to go beyond the barrier of our ego, beyond the dual personality we identify with, recognizing that we are made up of body, emotions, mind and much more. Today we have no mastery of any body, and very often we do not even have awareness. We do not know how to sit for an hour without losing energy by making many useless movements, we do not control our emotions and our thoughts, and the latter, the little radio inside our head that I wrote about earlier, really do what they want.

The heroic ceremony throws you into all of this and helps you see what stands between you and your evolution, what prevents you from flowing in life.

If you apply the rules of the heroic ceremony and remain in ceremonial space and time, there will never be beautiful or ugly ceremonies. Every time there are loving teachings, which brilliantly touch you where you need it most at that moment. Our personality is what we believe we are, but we are not really that set of characteristics that is our personality, that is why the Mushroom often touches us precisely on the elements that hold together this illusory image that we call "I". Fear, pain, fixations, emotions, convictions, beliefs, opinions, points of view, and certainties are all filters that alter the true reality and our true Self; you cannot *See* because you have these "obscuring veils". If you add to this the lack of presence in the here and now, you understand how easy it is to feed an experience that you would call challenging.

To these loving - but not always pleasant - requests you cannot respond by resisting and stiffening, but must flow, otherwise you suffer. It is the same type of lesson that you also get in daily life: if you resist, you suffer. What do you resist? Unity. We feel separated and this makes us suffer because

deep down we know that everything is made of God, including us, but our personality does not perceive it because it is obscured by its veils, which separate it from the direct perception of reality, the one that Plato described in the myth of the cave.

Only Consciousness exists

During the heroic ceremony you will be able to feel at what level your consciousness is moving. Are you in the realm of desire, the astral realm? Are you in the lower mental world, that of concrete ideas, or in the higher mental world, where there are abstract ideas? Or maybe even beyond, in the spiritual realm, far beyond the usual dual dimension. This is a possible key to understanding the general sense of what you are experiencing in every moment of the experience.

When you undergo heavy, mean, ugly emotions, you are in the lower planes of the astral, a bit like in Dante's Inferno. As you go up you find higher emotions, then higher thoughts, then you could access spiritual frequencies, gradually ascending within yourself. Remember that only your consciousness exists, that creates your reality.

This type of description - that is, I move my consciousness (my awareness) into my different bodies and access normally unattainable states of consciousness – can give a sensible structure to what I experience during a heroic ceremony.

The more my consciousness expands to include higher and higher frequencies, far from the usual ones, the harder it will be for me to remember this when I return to the starting point. I have been to places that I am unable to say anything about, but I am sure I had already been there because I remember recognizing them. In fact I said to myself, "But how could I forget!" and I went back there several times.

The less we are confident of our more subtle bodies, the more this forgetting happens. For example, if you have already developed the mental capacity of abstract thinking, when you return to an ordinary state it will not be as difficult for you to access the meaning and memory of where you were and who you were at the peak of that experience.

Evolution is integrating everything we are made up of, and the school in which we learn to do this is our life on the physical plane.

A great achievement that sometimes occurs during trips with mushrooms is to feel that we exist despite the physical dimension, an experience that de-identifies us from the biological machine that we believe we are. When this happens, our relationship with death changes, if we manage not to dismiss the whole experience as a hallucination - and it is not - then after the trip we will be very different from how we were before we started it. It may take a long time to integrate what we experienced so intensely, which is why the post-ceremony time is so important. Being able to bring these teachings into everyday life is a challenge that unfortunately few people succeed in.

Many are convinced that "chemical" awakening can replace the daily task of self-observation and think that if you take more psychedelic substances you will evolve sooner and wake up faster, like a kind of shortcut! In the 1960s, many were convinced of this absurdity. Times have changed and now the "Third Wave" of the use of entheogenic substances is rising. After the first wave of primitive men and ancient civilizations, followed by the second wave of the hippies, today awareness is growing about the fact that these sacred substances are an aid for us to reconnect, inside and out. But we have to do our part. Post-ceremony integration can be a demanding job but it is the only one that makes a difference on our evolutionary path.

The heroic ceremony is a sacred ritual because it puts you in touch with the essentials, but you must have confidence that everything - even that which seems painful and ugly - always happens for your own good, because God loves you. Even if you are an atheist there is a sensible explanation. Beyond identification with the ego, hence beyond the dual division of good and evil, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, you can discover a dimension of deep love, which for those who believe is the very essence of God. If you awaken you will understand it instantly.

12. ARE MUSHROOMS THE RED PILL OF AWAKENING?

What is the awakening?

For decades I have been reading and hearing about "awakening" but I honestly never understood what it was. I vaguely imagined that it was a "supernatural" state attainable only by yogis and saints at the cost of tiring and endless exercises. But I also knew that sometimes it "accidentally" happened to normal people as well, as if they had won a kind of divine lottery. Not having even an intellectual understanding of what this state was, I did not know what to strive for, what to commit to in order to move in the direction of awakening, and I had no idea of what could be useful for working correctly on myself. But one day I finally understood. I remember well the moment when it happened, and from that moment everything changed and I immediately understood what to do. Here I would like to share my understanding which has been aided and expanded by experiences with mushrooms. I hope it will be useful.



The Awakening is spoken of by the ancient traditions of wisdom, the

mystics of all religions and spiritual schools, the Buddha, whose etymology is "the awakened", but also by modern authors such as Eckhart Tolle and Mooji who in their books and "satsang" speak of "here and now".

A similar concept that belongs to the western tradition is that of "presence" or "self-remembering", with modern standard-bearers such as Georges Ivanovič Gurdjieff and the Italians Salvatore Brizzi and Piergiorgio Caselli who add another essential inner achievement to "the opening of the heart" taught by Gurdjieff. In English presence and self-remembering are debated by E.J. Gold and R.E. Burton.

The two essential elements of awakening

Presence and openness of the heart are the two elements at the base of the awakening, the arrival point of the human path and at the same time the starting point for the subsequent evolution in the spiritual world, which is a kingdom higher than the human one. Humans in this state of awakening no longer identify with their physical body but with their eternal and immortal soul, and use their biological machine as a vehicle to carry out their evolutionary mission on Earth.

It is easy to explain what presence is, but it is difficult to understand it. In the bibliography I have selected some texts that I recommend without reservation in order to know this topic, fundamental and indispensable for finding meaning in our lives on this material level. In this short text I cannot fully deal with what has already been elaborated and clarified in many books dedicated to the topic, but I will try to give you some insights and above all the desire to go deeper because understanding what awakening is instantly changes your life.

Experiences with mushrooms can make you feel both the presence and the opening of the heart, but only knowing what these are will allow you to recognize them and bring this understanding into everyday life. If, on the other hand, you don't know what they are, you could experience them as beautiful sensations but without the possibility of combining knowledge

with experience, that is, understanding, which is a level higher than just an intellectual understanding.

Presence

Let's start with presence. Being present means being present to yourself, that is, constantly feeling that you are here. This ability is developed by practicing "divided attention", that faculty you have of knowing you are here and at the same time being attentive to what is happening, for example driving a car or watching a movie. It means being in the world but not of the world, as Christ said in the Gospels. It means not being identified and absorbed by what happens to such an extent that we no longer remember ourselves. The practice of presence means constant self-observation.

I'll give you an example from my personal experience. I was arguing with my wife (now ex). I was furious and was "flying into a rage", with high heart rate, a high and not very conciliatory tone of voice, when suddenly a part of me noticed what was going on and began to observe it. It was as if I was divided in two: my body (with emotions and thoughts) was completely involved in quarreling while at the same time a part of me had detached itself and looked at this situation without judgment, perceiving a great energy that ran through my body without any control. One part was involved and arguing, the other was detached and observed while feeling the "fire" that passed through it, a perfect example of divided attention. At that moment I was present and experiencing divided attention although I didn't know what I was experiencing. It was only years later that I recognized and understood it.

The best way of understanding - not only intellectually - what this mysterious feeling is, is to experience it. It can happen randomly in a situation like mine or there are some exercises designed specifically to make you realize that almost all of the time you are completely absorbed in different types of thoughts, that is, you are never present in the here and now.

All of these thoughts that move you away from presence can be basically

divided into two categories:

- thoughts about the past
- thoughts about the future

Concerns and anxieties about the future and, in general, everything else about the past. As a result there is no awareness of the present time, the only one that really exists, seeing as the past is gone and the future does not yet exist. To find out more, visit Salvatore Brizzi's website in English where there are a number of valuable articles and you can also download some texts in PDF format : <http://escapefromthelabyrinth.com/>

So if I am in the here and now I am awake and alive, otherwise I am immersed in a daydream, literally asleep, which is why getting out of this condition is called awakening. Don Juan Matus called it "stopping the world".

The opening of the heart

The opening of the heart is strictly connected to presence, but it is not necessarily co-present, whereas the opposite is true: if I am in the heart I am present. How do you understand if you are in the heart? Giving an example is simpler than giving a long theoretical explanation: *wherever I am and whatever I am doing at that moment I feel it as perfect and it fills me with joy*. When you experience the opening of the heart you are experiencing a state of grace and can see the beauty you are experiencing all around you, no matter where you are.

Sometimes it happens that the heart opens up and the mind becomes quiet, enters into presence and ceases to put labels on everything. It simply perceives everything there is without filters, finding it perfect as it is, with heart-warming beauty. It can happen anywhere, perhaps in the middle of nature but also in the busy and polluted center of a big city. If you have experienced this direct perception of reality even once, you know what I mean.

Some exercises of presence

Seeing as there is no translation of Salvatore Brizzi's essential texts into English, I will describe some of the exercises found in one of his books, originally used in ancient esoteric schools. They are very useful for training over time but above all essential to make you understand the state of sleep we are constantly in. Do not think that you are immune and that it only concerns others. Only a "wow moment" can give you the perception of how deeply you sleep during your daily actions.

The exercises should be carried out in seven day cycles, so exercise I during the first week, exercise II during the second week, and so on.

Remember that being present means knowing what you are doing, not doing it mechanically while your mind is lost following thoughts. Some exercises are not as difficult as others, for example being present the whole time as you get dressed and undressed. Others are easier to miss because they concern moments that do not last long and happen often or suddenly, such as the one when passing through a door.

Get involved and do them, for only in this way will you be able to understand, otherwise you will continue sleeping, I repeat, with the illusion that sleep only affects others.

Exercise I

Remember yourself as you get dressed and undressed.

Exercise II

Remember yourself as you get dressed and undressed.

Remember yourself every time you walk through a door.

Exercise III

Remember yourself as you brush your teeth, wash your face, have a shower, shave.

Exercise IV

Continue with Exercise III.

Exercise V

Remember yourself every time you walk through a door.

Exercise VI

Eliminate one word from your speech.

Remember yourself as you get dressed and undressed, as in Exercise I.

Exercise VII

Eat with awareness.

Exercise VIII

Eat with awareness.

Eliminate one word from your speech.

Exercise IX

Imitate the posture and gestures of the person you are talking to.

Remember yourself every time you get up and sit down.

Exercise X

Relax the muscles in your body at least once every hour.

Decide to no longer assume a certain posture.

These ten exercises are not all the ones practiced on the path of Awakening, but they are sufficient to give you a direct experience, worth more than dozens of books on the topic.

We can continue some of these exercises beyond the established seven days and transform them into our "travel companions". For example, there is no reason why we should not always remember ourselves while we get dressed and undressed, as well as while we eat or every time we get up and sit down. Also eliminating mechanical expressions from our speech (such as verbal tics) is an exercise we can always continue.

It is not important whether you succeed or not, rather it is essential that you make an effort to remember and do them as they are assigned. The effort to remember is the key. If one week has not been as successful as you wanted, you can repeat it for another seven days (not just a few random days), then move on to the exercises for the following week. Discipline is essential and you will see what an incredible experience it is. However the difficulties are far greater than you can imagine, and the rate of giving up is even higher - sleeping is much easier than trying to stay present.

The awakening

Awakening is therefore the combination of these two qualities, presence and openness of the heart.

Awakening cannot have causes in this dualistic world because it is beyond duality. I can facilitate it by exercising presence through willpower and loving discipline, but I will not obtain it as a consequence of this commitment. It is a paradox: will and discipline help but they cannot be the cause of awakening. If you think about it, it makes sense, otherwise it would mean that those who have these qualities, such as sportsmen, would be favored in awakening if it depended only on how much they commit themselves. But if my tenacity and application are unconsciously motivated by a desire for revenge and social redemption, do you think I could awaken just because I have the will and discipline?

Awakening is a miracle, a state of grace that comes without warning, that might disappear and return, until the moment - we do not know when - it finally becomes stable.

In the bibliography you will find references to go deeper, but now I would like to share some reflections on the usefulness of Sacred Mushrooms for this work on yourself.

Mushrooms for experiencing the awakening

For experiences with mushrooms it is also useful to create categories that help us analyze the topic. I use the same distinction made for categories of music because it is useful for determining the ceremony's quality, while the categorization of experiences helps us understand whether or not we are supporting the work of self-observation:

- Experiences without quality
- Quality experiences
- Inspired experiences

We discard the first ones, the ones had without a criterion, random and dangerous: "Instead of having a beer with friends tonight I will take some mushrooms that my cousin gave me". Nothing good comes out of this and potentially you will only get problems.

Quality experiences are those that respect the rules of set & setting with

the right doses and include experiences of many types that could be beautiful and full of important understandings. These small or big insights, however, are likely to fade away as soon as the effect of the mushrooms' magic dissolves and afterwards there are only memories without useful references to integrate and apply in everyday life. I remind you of the importance of the third phase of the ceremony, the integration phase, since neglecting this makes the insights received disappear like dreams after waking up in the morning.

Inspired experiences are more easily had within ceremonies. If you create a sacred time and space - as I describe in this second part of the book – then you are supporting the personal self-observation work that you are probably already doing in everyday life. If you use mushrooms in a ceremony to work on yourself, you can consciously have the practical experience of this magical moment of presence in the here and now and of opening the heart. Mushrooms often offer this gift.

Knowing what to look for in order to recognize it

If you know what you are looking for, you can recognize it, otherwise it becomes one of the beautiful "magic" moments experienced with mushrooms, without you being able to grasp its essence, to recognize it for what it is: a state of awakening. Remember that when the effect ends you return to the starting point, the difference being that now you know this state exists because you have experienced it.

With this awareness you know what you have to strive for in your daily task outside the ceremonial space, but you must realize that mushrooms cannot do the job for you. There are no shortcuts to your commitment day after day. You can also experience that magical state of the experience in everyday life but you must conquer it with constant self-observation, that is, work on yourself.

Presence as the main work on oneself

When you have understood what the state of presence is, working on yourself is very simple but at the same time difficult to do. It is a matter of remembering to be in the presence during daily life, especially when you feel emotions, both positive but above all negative, as happened to me - unfortunately unknowingly - in the quarrel with my wife.

If you are present while you are experiencing an emotion and therefore able to observe it, you transform it, even if only a little. Something, however, changes, an "alchemical" transformation takes place whereby a part of that raw and uncontrolled emotional energy becomes awareness. The next time you find yourself experiencing that emotion it will never be the same again, a bit like in quantum physics where the observer influences and modifies what he is observing. If you are able to stay in constant presence, you will not need to do any other psychological work or even use mushrooms. Constant presence shows us our mechanical way of being, that is, the falling asleep that makes us act as a consequence of automatic and unconscious psychological patterns.

The problem is being able to remember to be present. Only those who try applying the exercises explained in one of the previous paragraphs know how hard it is! Doing an exercise of presence that lasts even a few minutes is a task of incomprehensible difficulty for those who have never tried it, confirming the power and strength of this inner work.

This is the "main" work on oneself, and although I recognize that it is not at all easy. I can do other simpler and more specific tasks at the same time, to help me along the way, so as to tackle from other angles that which continually takes us back to the state of mechanical action, making it so difficult to maintain the state of presence.

If we were able to maintain our presence, we wouldn't need anything else to evolve, but in practice we need everything because mechanical action is difficult to undermine. In the meantime as we engage in the exercises of presence let's see what we can do to complement this, what is the work that can help us on this path.



The precautions and contraindications I speak of throughout the first part

of the book remain the same but, if used well and carefully, mushrooms can be very useful and become like a finger indicating the goal that you can now see. Here I would like to delve deeper into the nature of difficulties, those that after the magical experience bring you back to identification with the personality, in the so-called ego.

The basic work of psychological healing

In order to go on a spiritual journey, you should first solve the basic issues of personality problems, otherwise unresolved issues will always bring you back to the starting point, that is, within the ego. To begin with, it is essential to heal relationships with mom and dad, a crucial step that would solve most of our problems. It would take an entire book to explain the importance of relationships with our parents, those who gave us life and who represent our male and female aspects. In this text I cannot go further but believe me, if you still have problems with mom and dad you do not have the opportunity to find happiness within yourself and awaken.

How to do it? In relation to our roots, specifically the relationship with our parents, you can work with Family Constellations, a very powerful but gentle method, therefore accessible to anyone without contraindications. I recommend it without reservation. There are other numerous very useful psychotherapeutic paths, both individual and in group, which are often indispensable, so if you look you will surely find what is right for you. Finally, I recommend the regular and disciplined practice of Vipassana meditation, instructions that come directly from the Buddha who lived about 2,700 years ago.

Vipassana is a practice that helps calm the mind in order to detach yourself from the internal chatter, to perceive yourself as a presence distinct from the continuous inner dialogue that is always present and beyond our control. Its constant and regular practice helps us achieve a state of presence that is very different from the state of dullness and sedation that is obtained with some meditation techniques or with the recitation of certain mantras.

There are mantras and meditation techniques that have the sole purpose of

calming the mind and emotions. They do not help sustain presence but can be useful for a certain period of time, like medicine to be taken only when we are in difficulty. The real purpose of Vipassana meditation is to constantly cultivate a state of presence in the here and now, gradually extending it from the moment of practice to all your daily life. It is a job that requires persistence for many years, but it is worth it. Warning - you do not have to meditate for hours every day, for that much time could be dangerous. 20-30 minutes is more than enough and it can only be good for you.

You could continue this work of inner cleansing and healing by participating in ceremonies with ayahuasca, where the shaman becomes a reference point for navigating the troubled waters of your unawareness. You must know that ceremonies with the plant are not suitable for everyone since all the psychophysical contraindications that I have described for mushrooms and even more apply. If you are not suited to experimenting with ayahuasca it is better that you also avoid mushrooms. There are always paths you can follow so consult a good psychologist who will help you find what is most appropriate for you.

Those who know ayahuasca realize, directly or indirectly, that you often vomit and feel very bad, which is rather unlikely with mushrooms. This does not mean that mushrooms are easier, in fact, strange as it may seem, I guarantee that they can be much more fearful if you still have basic psychological problems to deal with.

I simplify: ayahuasca is fine if you have to heal your body and spirit, while mushrooms allow you to go deeply into yourself. Of course mushrooms also heal and the plant also helps you in your evolutionary path, but if you are still "troubled and problematic" it will not be easy for you to face yourself with mushrooms. It is much better with ayahuasca, with the help of a good shaman.

In this well defined framework - that is, you have solved your basic psychological issues with the necessary work, ongoing personal and spiritual research, and you are motivated to act - then the use of the mushroom is an effective tool that adds really precious information, insights and intuitions to your life. If these conditions are not met,

mushrooms will never do the work for you and could even be negative and counterproductive.

Are mushrooms the red pill for awakening?

Mushrooms, like all tryptamine compounds, are simultaneously sacred tools and substances, but they are also all the possible definitions in the middle:

- psychological and psychiatric therapy (with the presence of qualified professionals)
- exploration of the mind
- shamanic rituals
- religious and spiritual quest

Each of these uses is beneficial but not real. In each of them we always have to deal with a reflection of ourselves, to put it simply "it is I who is having an experience", that is, we are in a dual experience, hence illusory by definition. *Maya* in action.

Mushrooms are simply a pill; whether it is red or blue depends on you.

Beyond illusion

The highest and most extraordinary use of this sacred substance occurs when one can transcend the dual separation and have the direct experience of being at One with Everything, of being pure Conscious and Infinite Awareness, understanding that nothing exists but Love. This is the ultimate goal of the human journey and everything else is undoubtedly a necessary stage but must at some point be transcended. Once you have crossed the river you have to leave the boat behind.

There is no hurry but also no time to waste. Every choice is important and it is necessary to remember that we are on a long journey, the aim of which is to realize that only Consciousness exists, that is, Enlightenment. In order to identify with the Self we must go through a compulsory stage.

Awakening is our next goal.

We can work to create the best conditions for awakening only through the constant practice of Presence, for by doing so it will be more likely that we win the divine lottery, that is a sudden and apparently random awakening. Mushrooms are a useful complement for practicing presence in an expanded state of consciousness, which can be sustained with a purely ceremonial use of sacred substances.

Be careful, never force. After each experience do the integration and leave the necessary time between one experience and another so that you can allow your insights to settle and practice them in daily life. Rushing into things can cause irreparable damage. Remember that the world is full of "nut jobs".

To summarize: mushrooms and ayahuasca are useful and powerful tools, but they must be used correctly. Shamans help you with ayahuasca while you are alone with mushrooms. Experiences with mushrooms cannot replace psychological work that helps you solve basic issues, or if not to solve them completely at least to recognize them. As long as you are convinced that the cause of any of your problems is external to you, I strongly urge you to consider doing basic psychological work, only after will you be ready for the use of entheogenic substances. Practice exercises of Presence regularly.

“The outside is inside” says Draco Daatson (<https://tinyurl.com/yxslvpzq>). Reality takes us back to who we are. Mushrooms are the finger that indicates, not the goal.

QUICK GUIDE

Necessary and important warnings

The so-called magic mushrooms are NOT to be taken for recreational use. Having fun and interacting with others after taking a modest dose can be a very difficult and demanding experience, one that you would never have looked for if you had known what it was like. I invite you to read, or reread, the book if you have doubts about this warning: mushrooms are not a recreational substance to be taken for leisure or as a pastime.

The doses for mushrooms that you find throughout the book refer to the *Psilocybe Cubensis* species, the most widespread in home cultivation. There are species that contain higher amounts of the active ingredient, but with these you must pay more attention when increasing doses after your first low-dose experiences. Do not underestimate the greater potency of some species, which can have twice the active ingredient and therefore a decidedly stronger effect.



This guide was not written to promote the use of legal or illegal psychoactive substances. The intent is only and strictly to reduce or eliminate damages caused by taking mushrooms without proper knowledge.

This guide does not encourage illegal activities. Any information provided is only for education and information purposes. This guide is not intended to replace medical advice, diagnosis or professional treatment. Always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health professional for any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

This is not only a mandatory declaration as you can imagine - the unconscious use of so-called hallucinogenic substances can be very dangerous, as well as being prohibited by the law. Despite the prohibitions established by the law, many people violate the established rules, and this is a fact that cannot be ignored.

Human beings have always transgressed laws and rules. With this in mind, this Quick Guide is meant to inform about and describe the risks you can incur, in order to avoid damage or worse consequences for yourself and others.



Psilocin, the psychoactive principle found in so-called "Magic Mushrooms", is illegal in most countries, as well as all the substances with a tryptamine base, those that include DMT in their molecular structure.

N, N-dimethyltryptamine (N, N-DMT or DMT) is an endogenous psychedelic tryptamine, present in many plants and in the cerebrospinal fluid of human beings, first synthesized in 1931.

If a substance is illegal, its possession, sale and use are punishable by law, and the author cannot and does not want to support or encourage illegal activities in any way.

Ignorance is always harmful. This Quick Guide intends to give a summary of all the useful information in order to help you understand well beforehand if it is appropriate to take psilocybin mushrooms, and, if so, to know how and what to do and especially what not to do.

Too often prohibitions seem made to be transgressed and doing so is part of the indomitable human spirit, but even the libertarian Netherlands decided to ban magic mushrooms in 2008 after a - controversial - death connected to the use of this substance.

The name "Magic Mushrooms" seems light and funny, and actually the experience can be like this, but it can just as well be a horrible experience, even with serious consequences, therefore caution is necessary.

Knowledge is power, and salvation I add.

Enjoy reading!

Very important recommendations

Do not take products containing psilocin - the active substance, but also its precursors such as psilocybin - if you have any of the following problems:

- you suffer from *epilepsy*
- you have *heart disease*
- you have *abnormal liver functions*
- *you are taking medication* in general (in one specific chapter I go in-depth into the problem of interaction with medications, but in general if you are taking medication avoid these substances)
- you have *problems with alcohol* (alcohol and psilocin are enemies)
- you have *drug addiction* (only addiction to Cannabis is not critical)
- you have a *psychiatric illness*
- you have been diagnosed with a - *borderline* – personality disorder or a more serious clinical condition
- you are *emotionally unstable*
- you have a *family history of psychiatric disorders*
- you are *pregnant*
- you are taking *medications with MAO Inhibitors* - MonoAmineOxidase

These recommendations are essential and I speak more about them in the book, but if you take psilocin without observing these indications, you risk hurting yourself or losing your life. I think that what I am saying is clear enough.

Psilocin is taken by ingesting the following products:

- Magic mushrooms
- Magic truffles
- Psilocybin
- Psilacetin

NB: psychedelics are a category in themselves so it does not matter if you have had experience with other drugs. The fact that you can handle other substances well is not indicative of your sensitivity to psilocin. Until you have tried it, you cannot assume anything, I assure you, so the first step is to find out how you respond on a physical and psychological level.

How to do it?

You can find out after at least three experiences, but before moving on to the dosage let's look at the importance of Set & Setting, which precedes the dosage in order of importance.

Set & Setting

This paragraph is very important, much more than the one about doses. The literal translation of set & setting is "your psychophysical state" and "the environmental context", which I translate even more simply into "how you are, with whom and where".

How you are: you must be in a good psychophysical condition before starting, otherwise it is better to postpone it. It is easy to bring stress and worries into the experience, which would be magnified, and therefore it is better to avoid this.

With whom: have the experience with someone who can help you in case of need, or who can simply have a laugh with you while you are having your first experience, so choose someone with experience; better if they are also friends you trust. Do not do it with simple acquaintances, or worse, with people you don't know, otherwise it is very likely you will regret it.

Where: in a comfortable place, where you will not be disturbed, where you can be relaxed and with an accessible bathroom. Outdoors only in the summer, but even then, being careful of environmental dangers and the risk of contact with others in general, because it is not easy to interact with people who are in an ordinary state of consciousness. Generally I respect policemen but I avoid them when I'm in an altered state of consciousness.

If even one of these three points is missing, postpone to a better moment, otherwise you risk having serious problems. Here I have to be short and clear and I can't repeat everything I would like to say, but believe me, respect the set & setting if you want to avoid problems, even very serious ones.

The dose

In order to discover your sensitivity the only way is to start with a small dose.

Take them strictly on an empty stomach, the last light meal should be at least 3 or 4 hours earlier, otherwise you risk feeling sick.

You need a digital precision scale because weighing by approximation is not good at all, nor is using the kitchen scale. A suitable scale can be found on Amazon at low cost, both with precision to the hundredth of a gram and to the thousandth.

Here are the doses for the first experience with each substance:

- Dried mushrooms: 1 gram
- Fresh truffles: 4-5 grams
- Dried truffles: 1.5 grams
- Psilacetin: (4-AcO-DMT) 8-9 milligrams

To take dried mushrooms and fresh truffles, just chew them well and swallow them. Put the psilacetin powder in a capsule or directly in a drop of water – it has a bitter taste. Dried truffles must be ground with a coffee grinder otherwise they are impossible to chew because they are very hard. The powder can be taken with water or lemon juice, as I describe in the part about Lemon Tek.

The effect rises in about half an hour and lasts about four hours considering that for the first time you must take a small dose. But remember to consider the time for returning to ordinary reality as approximate and depending very much on each individual.

You can not take the substance again the next day as it would have no effect because it immediately gives tolerance. You must let at least a week go by before you can take it again.

After this first experience you will know how your body and mind react.

How much should you take the second time? Let's see the quantity for each substance.

Dried mushrooms. Was it an intense experience anyway? Increase by about 0.5 grams, maximum one, to reach a gram and a half, maximum two.

Was it a light experience? You can think of increasing by one gram, maximum one and a half, and then reaching two or two and a half grams.

After the second time you can decide how to go ahead. If you "hold up" well, the third experience could be with 3 grams or 3.5 grams, a quantity that is sure to have an effect and will give you further indications on your sensitivity and if and how much to increase.

Remember that 3.5 gr. is a respectable dose and is already intense, so why take a chance and increase it? If you want to increase it, I invite you to have many experiences first, remembering that set & settings are always number one in importance, even more than the dosage. Always keep this in mind.

Fresh truffles. I repeat the same things I said for mushrooms, but you have to multiply those quantities by four or five.

- The first time, about 4 grams, maximum 5.
- The second time between 7.5 and 10 grams more or less.
- The third time you can take the whole 15 gram bag, if your sensitivity allows it.

You can roughly divide the contents of the bag into three parts to understand how much 5 grams are, in which case the precision scale is not essential.

Dried truffles. Here too I repeat the same instructions as for dried mushrooms, but this time you have to multiply those quantities by 1.5.

- The first time, about 1.5 grams.

- The second time between 2.5 and 3.5 grams more or less.
- The third time you can take 5 grams dried, paying attention to your sensitivity.

In this case the precision scale is necessary.

Psilacetin. A scale that weighs milligrams is indispensable.

- First dose 8-9 milligrams.
- Second 15 mg.
- The third depends on your sensitivity. If you hold up well try 25 milligrams, however if you are very sensitive, do not take more than 20 mg.

Psilacetin is absorbed more quickly, so it rises more quickly and it has a higher peak, but the duration of the experience is a little shorter.

I summarize all doses for the first time:

1 gram of dried mushrooms = 4-5 grams of fresh truffles = 1.5 grams of dried truffles = 8-9 milligrams of psilacetin.

You can obtain higher values by multiplying adequately.

For example 3 grams of dried mushrooms are equal to 15 grams of fresh truffles, almost 5 grams of dried truffles and between 24 and 27 milligrams of psilacetin.

A note about fresh mushrooms: they contain about 90% of water, therefore 10 fresh grams correspond to 1 dry gram. Adjust the quantities accordingly, be careful and reduce a little, because many authors argue that the effect is a little stronger if the mushrooms are fresh. I have less experience with them so I just report this for your safety.

During the experience turn off your phone and don't think you will be able to drive a car or a motorcycle, of course, or even a bicycle.

Can you eat and drink during the experience? Dried fruit and water, no alcohol. If you eat and drink sugary foods, the trip's intensity will decrease because you are giving quick energy to the body. But do not think you

have a "pause" button for your experience because it only stops when it is over.

In the book read at least chapter 5, dedicated to the Bad Trip, although if you scrupulously follow the simple instructions I have given you, it is unlikely that you will have problems.

Summary

- contraindications
- substance
- set & setting
- dose

If these points are clear you will be fine.

Do not overestimate yourself and do not underestimate the substance.

Do not drive any means of transport or get involved in potentially dangerous activities requiring attention and concentration.

Remember that all of this is forbidden by the law, so as you can imagine it is important for me to repeat this.

If you have only read the Quick Guide but you would like to know more about this fascinating topic, continue reading the book, otherwise have a good trip!

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EPILOGUE

During these months spent writing - and rewriting, especially after some ceremonies full of "advice" from the mushroom - I have continued to explore the topic in every way. I have read, seen and reviewed countless videos, but above all I have talked about this topic with many people. I have come to the conclusion that the time is ripe for mushrooms to become the means of development and healing already used in ancient traditions around the world.

A few days ago a referendum decriminalized the use of magic mushrooms in Denver, Colorado, a nice confirmation in the direction of the complete rehabilitation of mushrooms. I only hope that the situation is managed well, otherwise they will take a step back again as has happened before in England and then in Holland, where mushrooms have been banned. The only solution I see to avoid this possible step back is to inform people well, because knowledge prevents people from getting hurt. Anyone who touches a mushroom should at least study the fundamentals of my Quick Guide!

I wonder how it is possible to legalize mushrooms and avoid problems, which arise basically when taking them despite personal contraindications and without the necessary set & setting. Ongoing scientific research is discovering and showing the numerous and extraordinary qualities of mushrooms, while scientists and researchers around the world are asking governments to move mushrooms to a different category than the one they are in now, together with heroin.

This could be a good step forward, although for me it would not be completely satisfactory. In fact I would not want the use of mushrooms to be allowed only in the context of medical and scientific research. I want to be able to use mushrooms responsibly without owing an explanation to anyone but my conscience. But how could this right of use be extended without anyone getting hurt?

A possible solution would be to issue a permit, or a kind of license, allowing the person who obtains it to use them freely. In order to get the license I would have to do some interviews and take an exam, following which it would then be certified that I know how to use mushrooms without causing harm to myself and others. The same criteria apply for the purchase and possession of firearms, so it could also be a valid system for non-hazardous substances that are not suitable for everyone.

If I don't harm anyone, why on earth should they stop me from using them? I am a free citizen, of age, why should I give someone an account of what I do? It is frustrating to admit that we are not really free, but reality is a mirror in which we reflect ourselves, so let's get busy, for by setting an example we can spread the desire to understand and take responsibility, each one for their own personal reality.

Speaking to many people and trying to be simple and clear, I have summarized in one word the first and most important characteristic of our magic mushrooms. It is a word that makes profound sense to all human beings, a magic word that if applied would instantly change the fate of life on our planet. **Reconnection.**

Mushrooms are a natural tool of reconnection with everything there is, something we all need very much, disconnected as we are from our spirit, from nature, and from other human beings. Mushrooms reconnect you inside and out, they make you experience being part of the whole, they make you experience the Unity everything is made of, including yourself. If it is integrated, this experience has profound consequences on how we

relate to ourselves and reality, since reconnecting means moving more and more towards harmony and joy, all together. This is the solution and magic mushrooms are made in this way to help us bring Heaven to Earth.

I feel very frustrated, times are arduous, the world risks a third world war, and the causes are all attributable to a serious mental pathology: neoliberalism. This is not only an economic doctrine but above all a serious form of selfishness and separatism. Mushrooms could help understand how everyone's fate is linked to everyone else's, as reconnection is the purpose and meaning of all Sacred Plants. I am convinced that it is no accident that magic mushrooms have become easier and easier to find throughout the world. Help is everywhere around us and those who seek shall find. I wish you the best.

Finally a hidden surprise, a special gift only for those who have read to the end.

Write to me at this email:
mushrooms.circle@gmail.com

I will send you the list of songs from my music playlists, the ones I have selected in the last years. There are over eleven hours of inspired music, divided into three playlists. In the email I will give you precise instructions. I can't send you the music files for obvious copyright reasons, but you will save a lot of time searching and be able to enjoy them within a short time. I must confess that I am a little jealous of my selection, which took me years to compose. It is hard to believe how many times I tested it; but I cannot fail to share with you the extraordinary effect that inspired music produces - it becomes a portal that transports you to ineffable dimensions. A friend told me that while he listened he felt that entire universes were thrown open within him, and I fully agree.



Finally: if you liked the book, would you leave me your best review on the website you bought it from? If you did not appreciate it enough to give me five stars, please write to me and tell me why. Your criticism could be invaluable and maybe you will contribute to improving the next edition of this book, with my thanks.

Contribute to spreading the culture of the conscious use of these gifts of nature. If no one gets hurt by using mushrooms in an informed and responsible way, the meritorious work of decriminalizing nature, which has already started in the United States, can continue. After the first magic mushroom revolution that began in Denver, Oakland took another step forward by decriminalizing all these active ingredients:

- psilocybin – contained in magic mushrooms
- mescaline – contained in cacti, such as peyote and san pedro
- ibogaine – contained in the iboga
- DMT contained in plants – for example in ayahuasca

Brave pioneers have struggled for years to achieve these results and finally succeeded. I am grateful for their commitment as they are creating an important precedent. Everyone can do their part by taking responsibility for conscious use, increasingly expanding their comfort zone (and conscience) but without ever endangering themselves.

This book is meant to inform: if you think it has succeeded talk about it with those who you think will appreciate it, and remember to leave me your review.

Thank you. I wish you all the best.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DM Tripson



He

published his first short stories when he was 15 years old, certain that he would soon become a writer, but after a few decades spent doing something completely different, in the end he had given up. One day he discovered magic mushrooms, an extraordinary encounter, one of those events that change your life. Mushrooms were co-authors of this book, without them it would never have been written.