

Psilocybin 101

A Beginner's Guide to The Magic Mushroom Journey



Version 1.14
(Nov 15 2022)

This book is yours.

You are free to share, quote, copy and paste, rewrite, republish, and repurpose this document however you wish, with or without credit.

Please email hello@mushroomtao.com with any questions, suggestions, or comments.

This is dedicated to Truth,
and all those who live, share, and seek It.



Image: [Nicolas Rosenfeld](#)

"Heal yourself, with beautiful love, and always remember: you are the medicine."

~Maria Sabina, Mazatec mushroom healer

Table of Contents

Preface	7
Introduction	8
History	14
Getting Started	18
Microdose or Macro dose	21
Safety	23
Psilocybin and Medications	26
Cultivating a Support Network	30
On Retreats, Facilitators, and Guides	32
Questions to Ask Facilitators and Guides	35
Obtaining and Storing Psilocybin	38
Microdosing	40
Planning For a Macro dose	44
Prepare Your Mindset	48
Prepare Your Setting	55
Day-of Checklist	58
Integration Overview	58
Integration Process	61
Meditation & Mindfulness	65
Food and Drink	67
Physical Practices	69
Caring for Your Indoor Environment	71
Sleep and Rest	72
Cultivating Gratitude	74

Sharing Psilocybin	76
Compassionate Practice	77
Remembering the Divine	78
Learn & Explore	79
Visualization	80
You Are Enough	81
Resources	82

Preface

This book is a blend of various essays and articles written since 2020. It has been a collective effort -- many teachers, visionaries, psychonauts, facilitators, writers, editors, and mushroom journeys have contributed to the final result.

The main editor of this book has been blessed to experience the myriad benefits of working with psilocybin. In addition to his personal journeys, he's had the opportunity to support countless others on theirs - from curious seekers to established guides, growers, and community builders. He has organized psilocybin retreats in the Netherlands, US, and Costa Rica, and is the founder of [Tripsitters](#), [Mushroom Tao](#), and [Psilocybin Foundation](#). He microdoses regularly and undertakes the occasional macrodose.

In the following pages, he aims to transmit the essence of the wisdom that he has received from his human teachers and the mushrooms. Any errors, omissions, and imprecisions in this manuscript are his and his alone.

All the merit generated by creating, coming in contact with, reading, and sharing this book is dedicated to the Mushroom Spirit; all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout time and space; all the sages, saints, seers, prophets, monks and nuns; all the mothers and fathers; and all beings.

Wishing you safe and healing journeys.

Introduction

This book is a beginner's guide to the psilocybin journey. It will help you cultivate the mindset, perspectives, and practices necessary to receive the full benefits during your exploration with psilocybin. It addresses some of the most common questions, concerns, and inquiries from beginner psychonauts, and covers topics such as the history of psilocybin, preparation, microdosing, macrodosing, and integration.

The book is divided into small sections to help you focus on the parts that are relevant to your journey. Please feel free to skip around, take what is useful, and ignore what is not.

The process of healing, growing, and experimenting with an unknown substance can be daunting, but you are not alone on this journey. Even though, until recently, many people have largely perceived psilocybin as a recreational substance, humans have consumed psychedelic fungi for millennia in order to receive visions, heal diseases, and commune with Spirit.

The Psychedelic Renaissance

For the past few years, psilocybin, the primary psychoactive ingredient in certain psychedelic mushrooms and truffles, has been enjoying a massive resurgence in mainstream awareness as a tool for personal and spiritual growth, and as a therapeutic medicine for common challenges such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. Some reasons for the heightened interest in psilocybin include:

- The growing number of people suffering from various forms of mental, spiritual, and physical dis-ease due in large part to the traumatizing nature of living in a late-stage industrialized society
- The widespread failure of Western pharmaceutical medicine to address, or even recognize, the root causes of common mental and emotional health challenges
- Increased desperation amongst those who have tried many types of traditional treatments and medications to no avail

- Increased number of universities and researchers conducting studies on psilocybin and publishing their findings
- Increased media coverage on the benefits of psilocybin
- More individuals sharing testimonials about their psilocybin experiences
- Growing number of entrepreneurs and companies creating and marketing psilocybin products and services
- Increased number of successful drug policy reform campaigns
- Growth of online psychedelic forums and communities

In the span of a few years, psilocybin has gone from being a traditional sacrament suppressed by various political, religious, and economic groups to a science-backed treatment attracting celebrity endorsement and billions of dollars of investment. Given the generally slow progress of most psychological and psychiatric therapies, the acceptance of psilocybin indicates a sense of collective urgency to find progressive ways to move forward as individuals and as a society.

Unfortunately, despite increasing enthusiasm for psilocybin, it remains illegal in most jurisdictions. Thankfully, as a growing number of researchers and media outlets continue to publish promising data about the potential of psilocybin, more people are finding the courage to experiment and discuss their experiences.

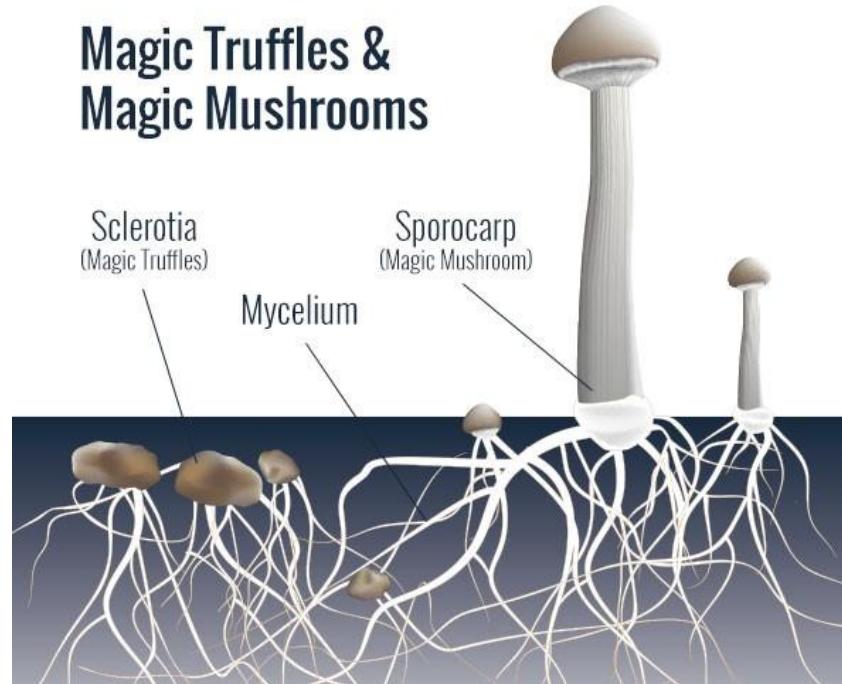
Forms of Psilocybin

Magic mushrooms flourish on every continent except Antarctica, and they are relatively easy to [grow indoors](#). You can consume them fresh or dried. Nowadays, an increasing number of growers and distributors offer them in gummies, capsules, chocolates, honeys, or tinctures. Especially in the US and Canada, they are becoming [easier to access](#).

Their underground counterparts, [magic truffles](#), are, simply put, hardened mycelial masses that form when conditions are not perfect for the mushrooms (the fruiting bodies of the fungi) to grow aboveground. These truffles, also known as sclerotia, contain food and energy reserves that the fungi can use to sprout into mushrooms when conditions improve aboveground. As with all psilocybin containing fungi, when consumed, these psychedelic truffles provide an experience almost identical

to that of magic mushrooms. They are legal in the Netherlands, and are sold openly in gift stores and “smart shops.”

Fig. 1. Parts of Psilocybin Fungi



Source: [Truffle Magic](#)

Other jurisdictions in which psilocybin enjoys some level of decriminalization or legality include Austria, Canada, Uruguay, Portugal, Spain, the Bahamas, Brazil, Nepal, and Jamaica. You can learn more about the nuances of psilocybin laws [here](#).

Furthermore, due to the recent interest in psilocybin, at least one [nonprofit organization](#) and several [pharmaceutical companies](#) have figured out methods to produce synthetic psilocybin along with a host of other analogues. These analogues mimic the chemical structure of psilocybin and possess similar pharmacological properties as the original compound.

Because the fruiting bodies (mushrooms) are more commonly used than truffles or synthetic psilocybin, this book will focus almost exclusively on mushrooms. However, much of the information is applicable to other forms of psilocybin and other psychedelic substances.

Benefits of Psilocybin

The benefits of working with psilocybin are undeniable. Research from [Johns Hopkins](#), [Imperial College London](#), [NYU](#), and other universities supports long-established anecdotal evidence that psilocybin can help:

- improve your emotional state
- strengthen your connection with nature and other beings
- reduce alcohol and nicotine dependency
- alleviate depression, anxiety, cluster headaches, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and anorexia
- increase levels of creative thinking, empathy, and well-being
- generate a childlike sense of awe
- increase the rate of neurogenesis (the creation of new neurons), which allows your brain to heal
- increases neuroplasticity, which makes the mind more flexible and allows you to more easily form new mindsets and habits

When you work with psilocybin, you may at times feel more present, connected, resilient, grounded, open, optimistic, grateful, healthy, and happy. You may also find that you are able to feel more compassion and love for yourself and others.

You may experience an increase in energy levels and mental clarity. With an expanded sense of empathy and compassion, you may be able to process difficult emotions with more wisdom and maturity. Your relationships, habits, memory, and vocabulary may improve. Your nervous system and hormones may feel more balanced. Psilocybin can connect you with your innate embodied intelligence and free you from rigid thought patterns and limiting beliefs.

Simultaneously, you may experience less stress, brain fog, and negative self-talk. Your judgments about oneself and others may lose some of their power. You may experience a reduction in physical pain. But, how is all this possible from something as innocuous as a little fungi?

Mushrooms are highly intelligent. They sprout from a vast underground mycelial network, which has been referred to as the [Wood Wide Web](#) as it provides

communication and connection between individuals (e.g., trees) and the entire ecosystem.

Similarly, when ingested, psilocybin mushrooms increase your awareness of the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit. You can connect to the oneness of everything: thoughts, emotions and memories; your family and communities; nature. This awakening or remembering can lead to new insights and a more inclusive worldview.

And, just as mycelium decomposes dead organisms and recycles them into new lifeforms, so do psilocybin mushrooms break down tensions, traumas, and toxicities in your system, transmuting them into positive emotions and states of mind.

At times, you may experience the mushrooms as teachers, therapists, counselors, advisors, leaders, guides, parents, children, aliens and a host of other energies. The mushrooms can act as a mirror and help you connect with these aspects of yourself.

Terminology

Before we dive into the rest of the text, here's a brief word about some of the terminology used in this book:

Although some repetition is unavoidable, the author has done his best to use varied word choice.

Medicine, sacrament, substance, psilocybin, magic mushrooms, mushrooms, entheogen – all point to the same thing.

Psychedelic and psilocybin: In this book at times the word psychedelic is used interchangeably with psilocybin. Although, traditionally, "psychedelic" also refers to other substances such as peyote, ayahuasca, DMT, LSD, and san pedro, we are mostly referring to psilocybin .

Guide, facilitator, space holder, and tripsitter: all these terms refer to someone who sits with and supports another during their psychedelic experience. Some people who act in these roles are also able to provide support before and after a journey, while others are focused solely on the day of the ceremony.

Journey, session, and ceremony: Each refers to the four to six hours during which one is under the direct influence of psilocybin. The word journey is also sometimes

used to refer to the larger arc of your exploration with psilocybin, which can be weeks, months, or years.

Now, to give you a big picture overview of the world of magic mushrooms, let's review a bit of the history of psilocybin.

History

Many historians, anthropologists, mycologists, and researchers have confirmed the use of psychedelic mushrooms in various cultures throughout human history.

[Terence McKenna](#), a well-known ethnobotanist and psychedelic visionary, proposed the "Stoned Ape Theory." This idea posits that *Homo erectus*, an early human ancestor from two million years ago, may have foraged and eaten magic mushrooms.

This theory hypothesizes that these early interactions between the primitive human brain and psilocybin mushrooms may have accelerated the development of information-processing abilities and sensory awareness, leading to the formulation of language, art, and hand tools.

Of course, McKenna's theory is highly speculative, and we can only imagine how our earliest ancestors interacted with psilocybin. But archeological evidence for the use of psilocybin-containing mushrooms is widespread and dates back further than you may think.

Rock art in present-day Algeria depicting the use of *Psilocybe mairei* is estimated to be at least 9,000 years old. Similar cave art in Spain suggests humans in this region used psilocybin at least 6,000 years ago.

We can find more recent evidence for ritual and religious use of psilocybin mushrooms in Central America and Mexico. Mayan statues known as "mushroom stones" are linked to the ritual use of psilocybin as far back as 1000 BCE.

Traditional medicinal and religious use of these mushrooms, which were referred to as "Teonanácatl" ("Flesh of the Gods") by the Aztecs, continued into more recent times. Spanish missionaries describe the ceremonial use of cacao, followed by elixirs made of mushrooms and honey.

While Spanish authorities forbade these practices during the colonial occupation, the knowledge and traditions have been secretly kept alive by small groups, most notably the Mazatec in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico.

Maria Sabina and Gordon Wasson

The story of how modern awareness of psilocybin mushrooms became widespread revolves around two individuals: [Maria Sabina and Gordon Wasson](#). Wasson worked as a banker in the US and was an amateur mycologist. Having read tales of the Teonanácatl mushroom, in 1955, he decided to track it down.

His investigations led him to the Sierra Mazateca, and eventually to Huautla de Jiménez, where he met a local curandera, Maria Sabina Magdalena García. Sabina worked with [Psilocybe mexicana mushrooms](#) to cure illness through a velada healing ceremony. To get closer to the medicine, Wasson convinced her to let him participate in the velada by pretending to be concerned for his own son's health.

Wasson would return to study with Sabina a total of eight times. In 1957, he published an account of his experiences and discoveries in Life magazine, which quickly popularized the use of magic mushrooms worldwide. By the 1960s, the Oaxaca region in Mexico was well-known for its mushrooms and the experiences they produced. An increasing number of people, including [Timothy Leary](#), traveled there to experience the mushrooms for themselves.

It is worth noting that Maria Sabina never made any significant financial profit from providing the gift of the mushrooms to Wasson and died in poverty. Today, as an increasing number of individuals and corporations devise ways to benefit from psilocybin and other psychedelics, the idea of sacred reciprocity (that we must give and receive in equal measure to live in balance with nature) has become an important topic of discussion.

If you enjoy the benefits of psilocybin, you might consider contributing to [Esperanza Mazateca](#), a sacred reciprocity project that supports locals in Maria Sabina's hometown.

Counterculture & The War on Drugs

The 1960s and 70s were a tumultuous time socially and politically. The Vietnam War, civil rights movement, hippie movement, and growing popularity of psychedelic substances all played a role in fueling the revolutionary fervor and the reactionary backlash.

Psychedelic therapy, mainly using LSD, gained a promising start in the 1950s. Among the psychedelic pioneers during this period were characters such as [Alfred Hubbard](#), [Albert Hofmann](#), [Humphrey Osmond](#), [Aldous Huxley](#) and [Bill Wilson](#). Dr. J.C. Greer [writes](#), “[t]he greater Los Angeles area was the site of over six hundred psychedelic therapy centers by 1960. Much of the interest was driven by psychiatrists and psychologists, who promoted LSD as a miracle drug capable of treating everything from schizophrenia to writer’s block.”

Nevertheless, some research in the 50’s and 60’s was considered controversial and unethical. For example, two prominent researchers, [Timothy Leary](#) and [Richard Alpert](#) (later known as Ram Dass) eventually lost their Harvard professorships over the use of psilocybin with and on undergraduate students. Meanwhile, the CIA was conducting their own problematic research as part of the [MKUltra mind-control experiments](#).

Still, by the late 1960s, psychedelic substances had become widely popular, and, according to Greer, “[t]here were hundreds of psychedelic churches active in the late 1960s.” Leary, who after leaving academia encouraged American youth to “Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out,” had become a counterculture icon.

In 1970, sensing a threat to existing power structures, Congress placed most popular psychedelic substances in Schedule I of The Controlled Substances Act (CSA) as part of the [Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970](#). In 1971, Richard Nixon, seeing the opportunity to weaken his political enemies, namely the political left and African-Americans, officially declared the War on Drugs. He claimed that drug abuse was “public enemy number one.” Greer says, “So as to halt the unification of black militants and acidheads, the Nixon administration escalated COINTELPRO, a secret government program that blackmailed and even assassinated high profile activists.”

As a result of the War on Drugs, psilocybe mushrooms became illegal throughout the US, and after the adoption of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances by the United Nations in 1971, most (though not all) countries followed suit. Those who advocated for the benefits of psychedelic substances were marginalized and perceived as “enemies of the state.” Greer states, “Drug-related arrests and convictions exceeded any other type of crime by the 1980s, and the American

criminal justice system soon came to depend on the fifty-eight billion dollars generated annually by this domestic "war".

Consequently, psychedelic research ground to a halt until [the late 1990s](#).

Underground Research to Modern-Day Use

Despite the laws prohibiting their use, cultivation and possession, fungi are intelligent and adapt to even the most difficult circumstances. Just as mycelium forms truffles that store energy and potential when conditions prevent mushrooms from growing, psilocybin has found ways to survive and even thrive after it became illegal.

Some countries, including the Netherlands, Costa Rica, and Jamaica decided against prohibition. In nations that banned it, some local communities decided not to enforce the laws (i.e. mushroom shakes sold at bars in certain parts of Thailand and Cambodia). In some countries in Latin America, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Peru, psychedelic substances are permissible as part of indigenous rituals.

All over the world, networks of mushroom enthusiasts, underground therapists, and counterculture rebels kept the movement going. With the advent of the Internet, these folks found new ways to connect with each other and bring psychedelics into mainstream consciousness.

Despite the heavy potential legal consequences of using and sharing psilocybin, anecdotal stories of the healing power of mushrooms continued to emerge and spread. By the 2000s, scientists, who already knew psilocybin was safe and non-addictive, were inspired to resume formal research into its therapeutic benefits. Thankfully, in a short time, clinical research on psilocybin has gone from almost nonexistent to attracting significant funding.

Getting Started

As you start researching and exploring the world of psilocybin, you may think to yourself, "There's so much information out there. How do I even get started?"

Despite how overwhelming it can feel when you first begin, the process is actually relatively simple once you clarify your intentions and understand your options.

There are many ways to work with the mushrooms. First, you'll want to take an inventory of your environment, responsibilities, available time, support network, and finances. Then you can consider which options are most feasible based on your life circumstances.

As you consider your first steps, ask yourself a few questions:

- Why do I want to work with psilocybin?
- What are my expectations?
- What thoughts, ideas, habits, relationships, possessions, and environments are holding me back from reaching my full potential, and how willing am I to let go of them?
- Am I ready to face the parts of myself that might trigger shame, guilt, grief, or anger?
- How open am I to developing the patience, fortitude, and courage necessary to face the difficult aspects of my life?
- What lifestyle changes am I willing to make to live a happier, healthier life?
- How much time and energy am I willing to dedicate to my psychedelic journey?
- What traumas have occurred in my life, and how ready am I to feel the pain these events have caused?
- Who can support me on my journey, and how do I connect with them?
- How will I source and maintain a safe and consistent supply?
- If I am on antidepressant medications, am I willing to consider tapering off?

- What type of financial resources am I able and willing to invest in my journey?

Although psilocybin is generally safe and many journeyers experience benefits from its use, it may not be the right fit for everyone. Those with a history of psychotic episodes or people taking certain psychotropic medications are especially at high risk of adverse outcomes.

Mushrooms are not a magical cure-all, a quick fix, or a means to escape reality or avoid taking responsibility for your life. Psilocybin reveals thoughts, emotions, and traumas that your body and mind, consciously or unconsciously, may have ignored, suppressed, numbed or ran from. Some core unpleasant emotions—shame, guilt, grief, rage, frustration—may surface during your psychedelic experiences. The benefits of psilocybin come when you practice sitting with painful emotions that have been buried in your heart. At times, especially if you are experiencing mental and emotional turmoil, this process can be intense, shocking or confusing.

If you hold onto expectations of only having pleasant experiences, you will stunt your personal growth and set yourself up for disappointment. Although society may have conditioned you to achieve a specific goal, working with psilocybin is a practice of letting go of the grasping mind and honoring whatever experience arises. The more you surrender to the process and open to the unknown, the more benefits you will experience.

Psilocybin has a way of shaking up your sense of self and leads you to question long-held beliefs about the world, who you are, and your place in the universe. During your explorations, you may experience an existential crisis. Psilocybin is most beneficial for those who are ready to experience and process profound truths, even when uncomfortable. You'll gain the most from the experience if you are open to self-reflection, taking ownership of issues that arise in your life, and listening to your innate wisdom.

As you step into the unknown and face difficult truths and emotions, you may, at times, experience intense fear. Breaking out of your comfort zone and embarking on a path of personal growth requires courage to feel and release these fears fully.

The psychedelic experience is just one aspect of the spiritual path. Psychedelic journeys are part of a continuous awakening and eternal unraveling. For some, it

may only take one strong experience to understand this. For most though, it seems several are necessary.

You will experience the greatest benefits from your psilocybin journey if you incorporate or strengthen other healthy lifestyle practices, such as:

- meditation, prayer, and breathwork
- being with spiritual teachers
- nurturing a strong support system
- spending time in nature
- tai-chi, yoga, dance, and other mindful movement practices
- healthy diet and regular exercise
- journaling
- making art, music and other creative endeavors
- volunteering and serving others

Through this process, you will benefit from an increased ability to let go of relationships and habits that no longer serve you. You will be able to cultivate thoughts and habits that are more aligned with your values.

Love yourself. Be gentle. Start slowly. Reach out to others for support when necessary. Challenge yourself to explore beyond your comfort zone so you can break the chains that hold you back. This will allow you to realize your full potential.

Microdose or Macrodose

A common question that many journeyers ask is “should I macrodose or microdose?” Macrodosing and microdosing are not mutually exclusive and neither is inherently better than the other. To begin, you’ll want to choose the one that best fits your intentions, life situation, and personal goals. As time goes on, you can experiment with different doses.

Macrodosing refers to the practice of taking larger doses of mushrooms. Based on your sensitivity, these doses can range from one to five or more dried grams.

Microdosing, on the other hand, is the practice of ingesting a tiny dose (in general, .05 - .2 dried grams) of psilocybin more regularly. Microdosing is sub-hallucinogenic, meaning you may feel something but won’t have anywhere close to a full-on psychedelic experience.

In between a microdose and a macrodose is a large gradient of possible experiences. It’s important to expand your mind beyond these two popular concepts so your thinking is more aligned with the nuanced reality.

It takes time and effort to properly prepare your mindset and environment for a macrodose. When you go on a big journey, over the course of four to six hours, you might relive and process suppressed emotions you’ve been holding onto for years. Sometimes, high-dose mushroom journeys can involve mystical experiences, which allow you to feel connected with “Infinite Love” or “Ultimate Truth.” The higher your dose, the more likely you are to lose control of some of your bodily functions and movements.

On the other hand, the practice of microdosing is ideal if you want to start at a slower and gentler pace. You may prefer microdosing because it:

- is easy to incorporate into your daily routine without any significant impairment
- requires less rigorous preparation and integration support, as the effects are more subtle and gradual
- allows you to experiment with dosages and protocols while tracking results in a more controlled manner

- allows you to work on your mental, emotional, and spiritual health without overwhelming your nervous system

A simple guideline is that the lower your dose, the more you can do, and the higher your dose, the less you can do. For example, you can microdose and have an otherwise typical day. You may even go to work. Most people will not know you have taken anything unless you tell them. On the other hand, if you take a larger dose, you're more likely to be unable to fulfill any worldly responsibilities. You will probably not be able to interact with others as you normally would, and you definitely want to avoid driving a car.

Here are a couple of analogies that may be helpful in understanding how different dosages work.

Taking a macrodose is like climbing a high mountain. You'll likely want to prepare mentally and physically, gather the appropriate gear, and seek some guidance from experienced climbers. You may even want to be accompanied by a professional guide who can help keep you safe.

Microdosing is like making it a practice to regularly show up at the base of the mountain to meditate before going about your day. This practice can help you get a feel for the energy of the mountain and perhaps gather the courage to climb it one day.

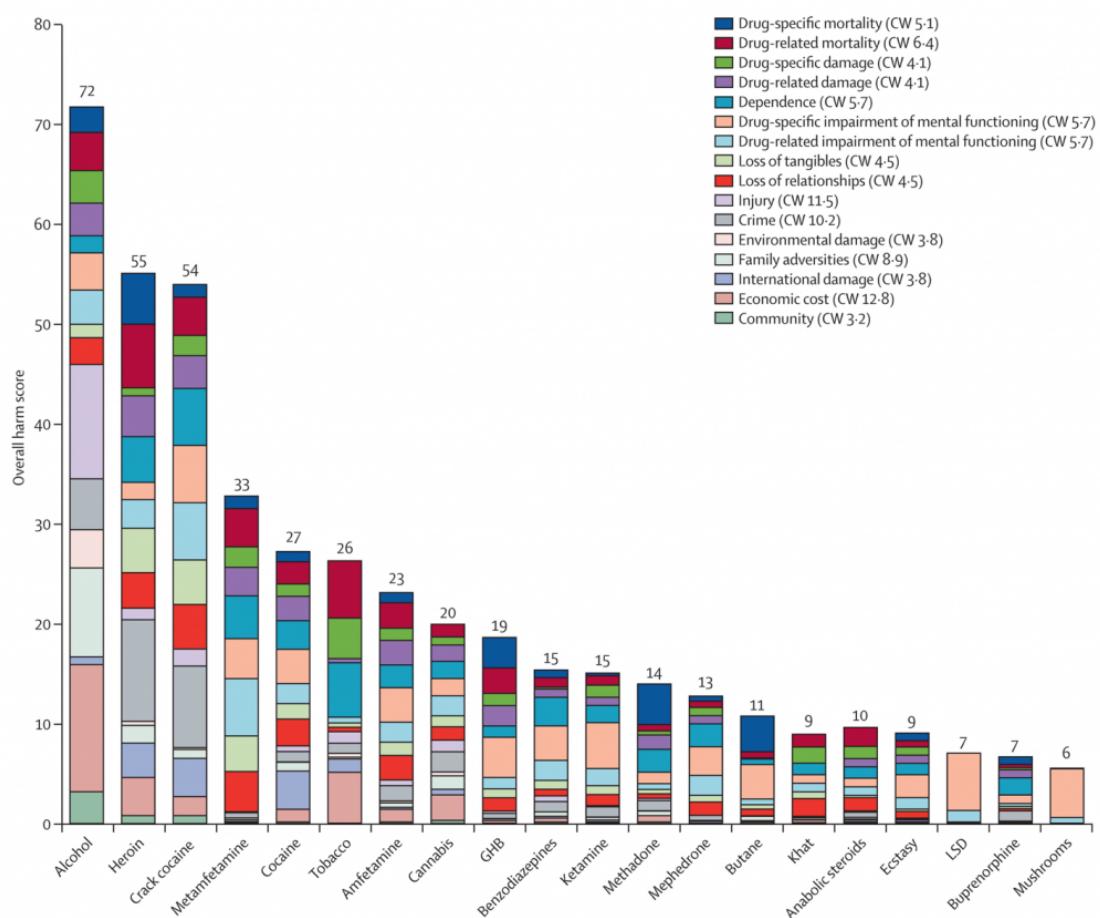
In terms of cleaning, microdosing is like washing the dishes after breakfast. It's routine, takes little effort, and can give you a sense of satisfaction. Taking a macrodose is like doing a deep clean of your entire home, which may take a whole day and some planning. It might be exhausting and challenging, but afterward you are left with a sense of accomplishment and wholesomeness. After you're done, you'll feel fresh and happy being in your home. And you probably won't need to think much about cleaning for a while.

Later on, we will discuss the practices of microdosing and macrodosing more in-depth.

Safety

In general, if taken in a clean and secure environment with proper emotional support, psilocybin is a safe substance. In a [2010 study by British Professor David Nutt](#), which measured harmful drugs in the UK, mushrooms proved to be the safest of the twenty substances studied, as shown in the figure below.

Fig. 2. Overall Harm for Various Substances

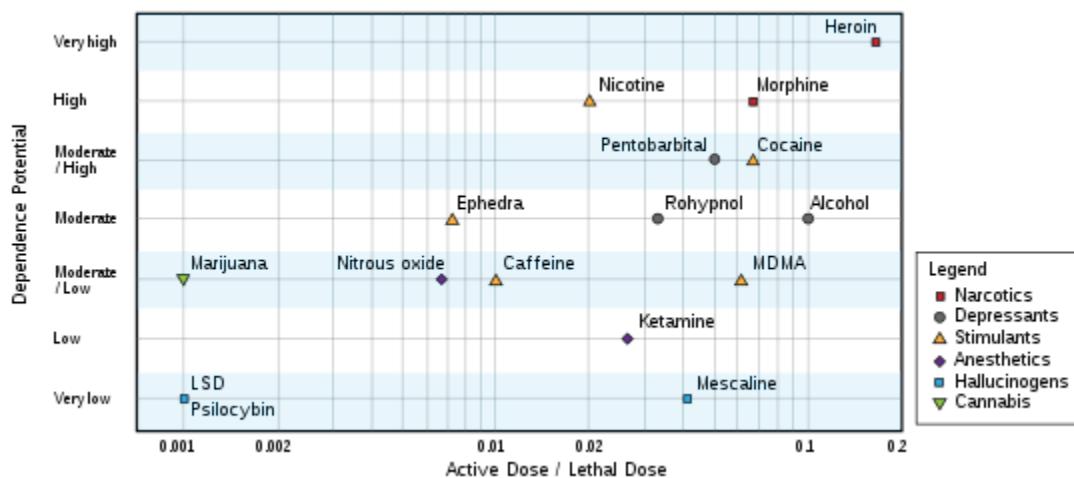


Source: Nutt, David J, et al. "Drug Harms in the UK: a multicriteria decision analysis." *The Lancet*, vol. 376, Nov 2010, p. 1563, <https://www.ias.org.uk/uploads/pdf/News%20stories/dnutt-lancet-011110.pdf>

While studying the toxicity of various substances, [Professor Robert Gable](#) found that psilocybin (along with other psychedelics such as LSD and mescaline) has little to no potential for creating substance dependence. Magic mushrooms are also

physiologically safe—they cannot physically harm you, even at extremely high doses.

Fig. 3. Active/Lethal Dose Ratio and Dependence Potential of Drugs



Source: Gable, R. S. "Acute Toxicity of Drugs Versus Regulatory Status." In J. M. Fish (Ed.), *Drugs and Society: U.S. Public Policy*, pp.149-162, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005.

Potential contraindications

Because psilocybin is such a powerful substance, you'll want to understand how it can interact with certain conditions and medications. If you may be impacted by potential contraindications, it's best to work or consult with supportive and knowledgeable mental health or medical professionals. Toward the end of the next chapter, you'll find a list of potential resources.

In any case, if you want to try psilocybin, you'll want to "start low and go slow." You can always take more, but cannot take less. Having solid community support will help your mental health journey, regardless of your circumstances.

If you wish to experiment with psilocybin, it's recommended that you do not have a history of schizophrenia or psychotic disorders. If you have a known family history of schizophrenia, and are under the age of 30, you'll want to be extra careful.

Some journeyers have reported success using psilocybin to treat certain personality disorders (e.g., borderline, narcissistic, schizoid, anti-social), but excellent care and support is necessary in these cases. Please proceed with caution if you have been diagnosed with a personality disorder.

Those with Bipolar Disorder I or II diagnoses have traditionally been excluded from clinical research with psilocybin. However, there have been [some reports](#) of people with these diagnoses who have seen tremendous success with psychedelics. A growing segment of researchers and mental health professionals believe BPD II is a nervous system dysregulation resulting from trauma, in which case psilocybin may be an ideal medicine. In any case, please proceed with caution if you have been diagnosed with Bipolar and are considering psychedelics. Please refer to the next section on medications if you are taking any for this condition.

Psilocybin can temporarily increase heart rate and blood pressure, so you'll want to take precautions if you have heart issues such as uncontrolled hypertension, cardiovascular disease, or aneurysms.

If you have an addiction-related condition such as active alcohol withdrawal, please seek medical support and avoid psilocybin for the moment.

If you have a history of neurological disorders (e.g., stroke, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury), you'll want to proceed with caution and experiment with smaller doses to start.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you'll want to do your [research](#) and consult with those who have expertise in this domain.

Psilocybin is not recommended if you have anger management problems, or active suicidal or homicidal ideation. If you've had previous suicide attempts that required hospitalization, you must understand that psilocybin can amplify certain thoughts, and may not be the best fit.

If you have an unstable life situation (e.g., housing, relationships), you may find it helpful to first stabilize yourself. For some, microdosing has helped them take steps to accomplish their goals.

Ultimately, the choice is yours. Whatever you decide, please remember that you are responsible for your choices. In the next section, you'll learn about how psilocybin interacts with certain pharmaceutical medications.

Psilocybin and Medications

Many people turn to psilocybin as a natural way to decrease their dependence on certain pharmaceutical medications, most commonly antidepressants, opiates, and antipsychotics. This section will briefly discuss potential interactions between psilocybin and antidepressants along with a few other substances.

Please recognize that each person is unique. Just because two individuals take the same medication, it does not necessarily mean that they will benefit from the same course of action. Your medical history, intentions for taking medication, and how long you've been taking medication are all factors to consider.

If you are currently taking any medication, we suggest exercising caution, doing extensive research, and consulting with competent professionals, before experimenting with psilocybin. Here are some conservative guidelines you may consider:

1. Common antidepressants (e.g. Zoloft, Prozac, Lexapro, Effexor, Remeron). In general, it seems safe to take psilocybin with these medications, but you may find that they dull or nullify the effects of psilocybin. You may need to take more psilocybin in order to make up for the blunting effect of the antidepressant. You may consider tapering and discontinuing these types of medications prior to using psychedelics. However, many journeyers start taking psilocybin while they are still on antidepressants.
2. Bupropion (Wellbutrin). It is safe to take psilocybin while on Bupropion as they do not seem to interact in any meaningful way. Still, you may consider tapering and discontinuing this medication depending on why you are using psilocybin.
3. Antipsychotics (e.g. aripiprazole, asenapine, cariprazine, clozapine, haloperidol, lurasidone, olanzapine, quetiapine, risperidone, ziprasidone) are typically prescribed for people who have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder I or II (collectively, BD), or schizophrenia. They are also given to people who are suffering from depression, anxiety, insomnia, and OCD. If you have a psychotic disorder, it is not recommended that you work with psilocybin, as it can trigger psychotic episodes in some.

These medications might severely blunt the effects of psilocybin. If you are on these medications, you'll either want to taper off them before starting psilocybin or, if you do not want to wait until you taper, then you'll want to trial with a test dose of psilocybin.

4. Lamotrigine (Lamictal) is used to treat seizures, and as a mood stabilizer for those with diagnosed BD. It is also sometimes prescribed for anxiety, OCD, and depression. If you are taking Lamictal for depression, it may dull your psilocybin experience or may have no effect. If you are taking it for BD, it may increase the risk of having a manic episode. However, some who are diagnosed with BD report no interaction between lamictal and psilocybin, and also no manic episodes.

There is no clinical research done on the interaction between psilocybin and epilepsy, so if you suffer from epilepsy and want to try mushrooms, please proceed with caution.

5. Benzodiazepines (alprazolam, clonazepam, diazepam, lorazepam) are prescribed for conditions such as anxiety and insomnia. Benzos are also known to be "trip-stoppers," so they may dull or nullify your psychedelic experience. If you want to taper off and discontinue these medications, please ensure you have proper medical and psychological support as it can be highly dangerous if done incorrectly.
6. Trazadone is an antidepressant that is often prescribed for sleep. This medication can blunt the effects of psilocybin, so you might consider discontinuing for one or two days before using psilocybin. Some people report that they are able to receive full benefit from psilocybin without discontinuing.
7. Buspirone is an anti-anxiety medication that may blunt the effects of psilocybin. Because buspirone leaves the system rather quickly, you might consider discontinuing buspirone for 24 hours before using psilocybin to get the full effects.
8. Tramadol is an opioid that is also an antidepressant. There are varying reports on mixing this substance with psilocybin; some say it has no effect on the psychedelic journey, others report a dulling effect, and still others argue that

the combination is dangerous as it can increase the risk of seizure. Please proceed with caution. You may want to consider discontinuing Tramadol for a few days before using psilocybin. If you are combining the two, consider starting with a very small dose of psilocybin.

9. Lithium. If you are taking lithium for BD, please refrain from using psilocybin. See [this article](#) for a more in-depth discussion on lithium and psychedelics.

10. MAOIs (bifemelane, caroxazone, isocarboxazid, metralindole, moclobemide, phenelzine, pirlindole, selegiline, tranylcypromine, tolaxatone). The most commonly reported effect of combining pharmaceutical MAOIs with classic psychedelics is a reduction in the effect of the psychedelic. Combining these with psilocybin does carry a small risk of serotonin syndrome¹, so it's recommended that you taper and discontinue for at least two weeks prior to psilocybin use. If you do decide to take psilocybin without discontinuing the MAOIs, you may want to stick with a smaller dose.

The combination of magic mushrooms and certain MAOIs such as syrian rue or *Banisteriopsis caapi* can create a [psilohuasca](#) experience, which can be longer lasting and more intense than a pure psilocybin experience. If you are thinking about combining MAOIs and mushrooms, please do in-depth research so you know what to expect.

11. 5-HTP, St. John's Wort or any other supplements that may affect serotonergic function. It may be best to discontinue these substances for a few days before using psilocybin.

To support your research, consider:

- browsing and asking questions in community forums such as [/r/shrooms](#), [/r/microdosing](#), [Shroomery](#), or [Microdosing Institute](#)

¹ From [Mayo Clinic website](#): Serotonin syndrome is a serious drug reaction. It is caused by medications that build up high levels of serotonin in the body. Symptoms that can range from mild (shivering and diarrhea) to severe (muscle rigidity, fever and seizures). Severe serotonin syndrome can cause death if not treated. Milder forms of serotonin syndrome may go away within a day or two of stopping the medications that cause symptoms and, sometimes, after taking drugs that block serotonin.

- consulting with experienced professionals in the mental health, medical, or psychedelic fields such as [Spirit Pharmacist](#), [Dr. Emily Kulpa](#), [Dr. Katie Simons](#), and [Dr. Erica Zelfand](#)
- reading articles discussing interactions between psilocybin and various medications, such as [this](#) and [this](#).
- consulting [this guide](#) from Harvard Medical School or exploring the [Surviving Antidepressants forum](#).

For some, the process of letting go of their dependence on one or more of these medications may be a difficult, painful, and emotional ordeal lasting several months or even years.

Many pharmaceutical medications are like band-aids—they can cover up and numb symptoms in the short term but fail to address the root causes of your suffering. Psilocybin, on the other hand, helps you become aware of and face uncomfortable truths you may have been ignoring or avoiding for years. It's important to let go of expectations of having only pleasant journeys.

Cultivating a Support Network

“Spiritual friendship is not half the spiritual life. It’s the entire spiritual life!”

~Buddha

Humans are social creatures. We have an innate drive to feel connected, seen, and understood. The more you relate with others, the more you realize that your perspective is shared by many. As time goes on, you begin to observe your journey through a different lens, and may feel less alone as you realize that others share similar patterns and struggles. A problem shared, is a problem halved.

Psychedelic experiences can bring to light complex, suppressed emotions and patterns to the surface. As this process can be quite jarring and confusing, it can be overwhelming to navigate on your own. When you create deep bonds and connections with other like-minded people, your parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for relaxation and social engagement, is activated. Cultivating solid relationships with those who care for you and know how to listen can help you on your journey. As Terrance McKenna says, “find the others.”

Therapeutic Support

If professional support is an option, it would be beneficial to consider connecting with a preparation and integration specialist prior to embarking on your journey. These specialists are experienced in supporting people before and after a psychedelic experience. Many people find a therapeutic relationship with either a licensed professional/clinician (e.g. psychologist, psychiatrist, psychotherapist, counselor, etc.) or a trained professional (e.g. preparation and integration coach, spiritual guide, etc.) extremely helpful.

Online and In-Person Communities

Professional relationships are far from the only options available on your journey. You may be able to find psychedelic societies or communities in your area or online that organize sharing and integration circles. [This airtable list](#) is an excellent resource for finding organizations and groups near you.

You may find the plethora of online groups and forums to be a good starting point to find peers and experienced psychonauts with whom to share your experiences. Although you may not find licensed therapists or professional support in this way, these online forums are a free, first step in connecting with like-minded folks on similar journeys.

Non-human Support

Sometimes being around animals can feel like the best support. Animals don't judge as humans do and some, especially dogs, can share unconditional love. Being around animals can make it easier to overcome self-centeredness and connect with the wider world.

Being in nature is one of the best ways to ground yourself before, during, and after a psychedelic journey. It can strengthen your sense of connectedness, inspire awe, and help you build confidence. Being in nature can also remind you that you are part of the web of life. You are made of the same elements that make up the natural world -- the trees, rivers, mountains, oceans, animals, and insects. Being in nature can often be one of the most effective forms of therapy and is often free and accessible.

On Retreats, Facilitators, and Guides

Having someone trustworthy with you before, during, and after a journey will provide an extra layer of comfort and safety. Together, you'll be able to express and process complex thoughts and emotions. Having someone with you may make it easier for you to let go of control and submit fully to the mushroom experience. Knowing you have someone on whom you can rely to take care of any emergencies can diminish any anxieties you might experience.

You can compare the path of the mushrooms with that of climbing a mountain. When you climb a mountain for the first time, you may want to employ the services of a seasoned guide who has plenty of experience climbing and leading others up the mountain. So, too, on your psilocybin journey, you may wish to ask for support from someone who is skilled in helping others explore altered states of consciousness.

Trust, rapport, and therapeutic alliance are the most important factors in determining the success of facilitated sessions. Make sure you get to know your sitter before the journey. It's best to work with someone you know well, and, at the very least, trust fully.

As you explore your options, you may consider attending a psilocybin retreat or working with a professional facilitator or guide. You may also consider asking a trusted family member, friend, or community member to be your sitter, as a sober person to help ground and comfort you, and who can step in if an emergency arises.

It's essential to enter the space with humility and gratitude for anybody who takes time to support your journey. A sense of entitlement will lead to challenging and disappointing journeys, which may teach you important lessons. You may be used to being in control and getting what you want, but the medicine shows you life does not always unfold as planned. The more you surrender to the process, the more an invisible force seems to support you.

In the end, an unexpected friend or community may appear to support you on your journey. When you, the student, is ready, the teacher will appear. At first, you might not even think someone is a guide, but you may change your mind retrospectively.

Sitter's responsibilities and qualities

A sitter's role may resemble that of a babysitter, nurse, listener, or parental figure at different points in the journey. Their main priorities are to remain non-judgmental and present, and to ensure your psychological and physical safety. The best sitters are kind, humble, service-oriented, gentle, spiritually mature, and compassionate.

They will be curious about you without assuming they know better than you. At different times, you may feel they are present in the background, accompanying you by your side, or watching over you. They may hold your hand, give you a hug, help you go to the bathroom, or smile when you need it most.

A good guide may feel like a parent, grandparent, sibling, or a teacher. They will act as servants waiting on you rather than a king or queen wanting your obedience, respect, and adoration. They will follow your lead rather than pull you from the front. Mature facilitators practice "non-doing" and do not push, rush, puff up, or have anything to prove.

Usually, most people simply want to connect with someone with whom they can talk openly and vulnerably. An effective guide will help you feel more confident and self-sufficient. They will listen and point you back to yourself. You may realize that they are nothing other than a reflection of your true self. You have everything within you to wake up, realize the truth, and make meaningful changes.

On Finances

The financial resources you are able and willing to invest in a psychedelic experience will determine the choices you have. Most guides, therapists, and retreat organizers will ask for some form of compensation. If you are on a tight budget, you'll need to be realistic about your options.

At first, you might question why you would pay for someone to sit with you. Sometimes, the value of having a guide becomes evident only in hindsight. After going through an experience or two, you may understand the depth of work involved and the importance of being able to talk with and process emotions with someone who has seen many others undergo similar processes.

Although your initial mindset may be something like "paying for a session," it may be more helpful to think of the required energy exchange as an investment in

yourself and your spiritual growth, or as a gift to someone who has your best interests at heart.

You may be lucky and find a guide who does not charge anything for their time or services. Some psychedelic guides may offer support as a friend. In fact, this is how most "professionals" start: As a friend who listens and cares, and to whom people come for advice about psychedelics.

The most affordable option is to grow your own mushrooms or to pick them in the wild. If you forage wild mushrooms, it is important to identify them correctly. Two easy ways to do this is first to check the stem and see if it bruises blue or purple. You can also use a UV blacklight and see if the gills glow due to the presence of beta-carboline, a precursor of psilocybin. If in doubt, please post pictures in forums specifically geared toward identifying mushrooms.

Depending on where you are, you may be able to find a grower or distributor who can share some with you. If you are on a tight budget, it's probably best to focus on obtaining your medicine, and finding free online communities and resources to support you as you start your journey.

Finally, although having someone with whom you can talk through emotions is helpful, many people start by microdosing or taking small doses without the physical presence of a guide. Have faith in yourself.

Private vs. group sessions

Each facilitator's offerings might be different. For example, some may only offer one on one sessions and others may offer group sessions. Some may offer both. Sometimes, people who are skeptical at first about experiencing psilocybin in a group setting are amazed at the power of being part of a circle of peers. After a group ceremony, others may feel that a private session is more suitable for them. Keep an open mind about this question as you continue your exploration.

Questions to Ask Facilitators and Guides

If you are considering attending a retreat or working with a facilitator, guide, or tripsitter to support your journey, here are some important points to touch on. Don't be afraid to ask questions because feeling safe and comfortable during the experience is key to getting the most out of your session.

Do they offer preparation or integration sessions?

Facilitators who discuss and emphasize the importance of preparation and integration are more likely to understand the holistic nature and long arc of psychedelic work. Preparation sessions help you build trust with the guide, which can lead to more effective ceremonies. Integration helps you feel held and loved after a session. Some guides provide care before and after your session, while others partner with specialists who do. The more support you receive before and after the journey, the more likely you will experience long-lasting benefits.

Do they have any reviews or testimonials?

Do your research. Many individuals and organizations that have experience supporting journeymen will have some type of internet presence. If they don't, you may want to ask for references. On the other hand, the lack of an online presence does not mean the guide is inexperienced; they may rely solely on discreet word-of-mouth referrals. Some of the best guides are unknown to all but their clients and a few trusted associates.

What is their history and relationship with the mushrooms?

How reverent does the facilitator seem? How much faith does she have in the mysterious workings of the medicine? What attitudes does she have toward the mushrooms and the work? To what spiritual practices or lineages is she connected?

Having many personal experiences does not automatically qualify a person to be a trustworthy guide. And, even if a person has had only a few experiences with the medicine, their spiritual and emotional maturity may make them an excellent facilitator.

Spiritual guides are committed to living in truth and being of service. A mature facilitator listens more than they talk. They have no need to prove or sell

themselves. You will feel safe and comfortable around them. A competent facilitator will exude a sense of confident calm and joy.

Do they follow a code of ethics?

Ethics is a paramount issue in the psychedelic space. Small ethical slips can have far-reaching consequences when working with these medicines. Make sure your guide has a strong moral code.

Does the guide feel grounded? Do they want you to think they are someone special? Do they listen more than they speak? Do you feel comfortable and safe in their presence? What drives them? Listen to and trust your gut.

What kind of agreements do they create with their clients around topics such as boundaries, consent, and appropriate touch?

This [code of ethics](#) provides examples of the attitudes and qualities of a competent facilitator.

Is medical supervision available?

Some retreats provide medical supervision, but many individual guides will not unless they are doctors, nurses, or psychologists themselves. Keep in mind that, for millennia, people have been taking psychedelics without medical supervision. A facilitator's academic or clinical training may or may not correlate with her ability to support you, and many competent guides lack any formal training. However, the mere presence of licensed clinicians may reassure those with more delicate mental and physical health.

Do I need to source my own mushrooms, or does the guide provide the medicine?

For legal reasons, some guides may request you to source your own medicine. If so, ensure you can do so before deciding to move forward.

What are the policies about smoking, alcohol, and other substances?

If you are a heavy smoker or drinker, your guide may ask you to abstain from these habits for a specified period before, during, and after a session. Most guides do not allow the use of alcohol or cigarettes during a session. Some guides may allow or encourage the ceremonial use of cannabis or [rapé](#) (tobacco snuff) before, during, or

after a session. If you have been dependent on certain substances, be prepared to sit with intense cravings.

Does the guide take mushrooms during my session?

Some facilitators will microdose to tune in to the field of the mushrooms while sitting with you; some may also take larger doses when they tripsit. The intention behind this decision is important: Why is the facilitator dosing? Do the facilitator's actions aid their ability to support you?

Skilled guides may be able to take the sacrament alongside you without experiencing adverse effects, whereas inexperienced tripsitters may run into problems. Make sure you know what the guide will do on the ceremony day.

Your choice

Ultimately, you decide how to move forward on your journey. Before you decide on working with a guide, make sure you understand what you're getting yourself into. The clearer your intentions, the more you will be able to discern a guide's intentions. When you choose a guide, make sure they are reliable, mature, and an excellent listener.

Obtaining and Storing Psilocybin

How you acquire medicine depends on where you live. Because psilocybin is a highly controlled substance in many jurisdictions, obtaining psilocybin may require you to take actions that are illegal or in a legal gray zone. This guide gives you all the information to make informed decisions, but you are ultimately responsible for all of your actions.

In any case, here are some suggested options for sourcing psilocybin:

1. [Grow your own.](#)
2. Forage in the wild (please read [this warning](#) about identifying mushrooms before taking this route).
3. Purchase from a reputable website.
4. Ask trusted friends and family members.
5. Find experienced psychonauts who may be open to helping you.

For more options, consider reading [this in-depth article](#) on where you can buy magic mushrooms.

Proper storage is vital for psilocybin to retain its potency, especially if you intend to store it long-term. We recommend keeping psilocybin in the refrigerator or a cool, dark cabinet or pantry area. In this way, dried mushrooms can last many months and sometimes a year or more.

The enemies of successful long term mushroom storage are light, oxygen, moisture, and heat. Mason jars and other airtight containers are great storage devices, especially if they are treated to be UV resistant. An easy way to convert a mason jar into a top-of-the-line storage vessel is to wrap the container in window tint.

Make sure you monitor your storage container for moisture or fogging, as humidity can build up and cause spoilage. You can use a desiccant or humidity pack to keep things dry.

Vacuum sealing is an effective way to keep dried mushrooms fresh over long periods. Consider reading [this article](#) to see a full discussion about storing your mushrooms.

Microdosing

"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

~Martin Luther King Jr.

Microdosing is a slow, steady, and gentle approach to exploring psilocybin. You may experience benefits from your first day microdosing, or it may take weeks or months to recognize the positive effects. It's essential to be patient and develop faith in the practice.

If you commit to the process, you are bound to experience the benefits—even when they manifest in unexpected ways. This section will help you understand how to microdose safely and effectively.

Dosage

Determining the ideal amount to microdose may require some time and experimentation. The general advice of the microdosing community is to "start low and go slow." You can increase your dosage at any time.

Remember that each psilocybin mushroom species and strain contain varying potency levels. Even if you are an experienced mycologist or psychonaut, it can be tricky to know the exact strength of an individual mushroom or truffle until you ingest it. [Here](#) is an excellent resource if you'd like to learn more about different strains and potency.

You may want to begin with a dosage between 0.05 and 0.15 grams of dried mushrooms. You can adjust the dosage as needed as you start to understand how psilocybin affects your body and mind.

It can be helpful to keep a journal or log of your dosages and experiences during the first few days or weeks of your microdosing journey. This way you can more easily work out a dosing protocol that works for you. Writing can be a powerful practice in reflection and expression. You can either start your own or get a microdosing journal such as [this](#) or [this](#).

Alternatively, you might consider using tracking apps such as [Houston](#), [Microdosing Tracker](#), [Tune In Psychedelics: MicroDose Tracker](#), or [Microdose.me](#).

If you are microdosing for the first time, it may be best to try it on a day where you don't have too much going on. Especially when first getting used to micro dosing you may find that you've accidentally taken more than a microdose resulting in effects that are stronger than expected. If this happens, it is helpful to remember that the effects will pass in the next few hours. A few tips for combatting any negative emotions or fear that arises is to remain calm, focus on your breath, and take a moment of silence to collect yourself. Smile and remember the journey will always end.

Ideal microdosing schedule

There are different approaches to creating a microdosing schedule. If you are a beginner, some structure and planning may be helpful. Once you gain some experience, you may develop a more intuitive "go with the flow" approach. The psilocybin journey helps you remember to trust and listen to your intuition.

Here are some scheduling ideas to get you started.

Dr. James Fadiman recommends a one-day-on, two-days-off schedule, in which you would take your microdose one day, take the next two days off, and then repeat the cycle.

Paul Stamets recommends a four-days-on, three-days-off schedule. Previously, he recommended a five-day-on, two-day-off schedule.

Some journeyers take a microdose every other day or on the same three days each week (for example, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays).

As with any substance, the body can build a tolerance to psilocybin, causing diminishing returns. The "off" days allow this tolerance to dissipate.

Some veteran psilocybin users recommend taking one to two weeks off from microdosing every two to three months to avoid building a long-term tolerance to psilocybin.

One helpful way to determine how to start is to read or ask questions in forums such as [r/microdosing](#) where beginners and experienced microdosers discuss their practice and recommend scheduling protocols.

Many people who microdose would suggest taking your dose first thing in the morning. This way, any beneficial stimulating effects will endure throughout the day and not interfere with sleeping patterns. You can microdose on an empty stomach or with food or drink.

On the other hand, some people only microdose at night because they feel too tired if they take their dose during the day.

As you can see, there are varying ideas and opinions about microdosing schedules and protocols. As you gain experience, you'll be able to develop your perspective.

Taking your microdose

There are several ways you can take your microdose.

If you have access to medicine that has already been processed into capsules, gummies, tinctures, or chocolates, follow the instructions provided by the person or company from whom you sourced the products.

If you are working with whole dried mushrooms, you can keep it simple by weighing your dose on a precise digital scale and consuming the mushroom as it is.

Alternatively, you can grind the mushrooms into a fine powder so you can put them into capsules or add them to a non-alcoholic beverage such as water, tea, juice, or your morning smoothie.

To grind the fungi, you can use an electric spice or coffee grinder, food processor, or high-powered blender.

In addition to the psilocybin, you may also add other healthy ingredients such as:

- medicinal mushrooms such as lion's mane, chaga, or cordyceps
- herbs and superfoods such as maca, ashwagandha, or turmeric
- various vitamins

Unpleasant side effects of microdosing

When microdosing, you may experience what could be perceived as adverse effects. For example, initially, feelings of depression or anxiety may seem to worsen instead of improving. You may feel irritable, tired, drowsy, or experience headache, nausea, or lack of focus. You may be unusually sensitive, frustrated, or quick to anger.

Ask yourself: Am I willing to stick with the practice, even in the face of challenges? Am I willing to fully feel even the unpleasant sensations? Can I practice contentment even when life doesn't go as I want or expect?

Throughout this process, you may find it challenging to focus on work. Because microdosing can expand your awareness and engender a sense of spaciousness, your analytical mind may shift into the background. In the short-term, mundane problem-solving skills may seem to weaken. You may find it hard to focus on spreadsheets, documents, or conversations.

At times, you may feel spaced out or ungrounded. You may fear you are losing control. These experiences can be jarring if you have developed a solid attachment to the intellectual aspect of mind.

The key is to stick with the practice, even when it might be challenging. It's like going to the gym with the aim of strengthening your body and building muscle. Ask any body builder or fitness instructor and they will tell you that achieving your goals will take time and continued persistent effort. By making the commitment to consistently go to the gym even when things are tough and you'd rather sit on the couch and watch a movie, you will inevitably start seeing changes and feel yourself becoming healthier. It is much the same with microdosing -- in order to get the best results it's important to be dedicated to the practice, give the mushrooms time to work, and allow yourself to integrate new thought patterns. A big part of the practice is letting go of ideas and expectations of instant gratification. Microdosing is a long progressive journey. Your patience and diligence will pay big dividends.

Planning For a Macrodose

"The Master doesn't seek fulfillment.

Not seeking, not expecting,

she is present, and can welcome all things."

~Tao Te Ching

The importance of preparing for your psychedelic journey is often understated but thoughtful preparation ultimately leads to better outcomes.

The next few sections provide guidelines that will help you prepare your body, mind, and spirit to maximize your chances of having a safe, positive, and life-affirming psilocybin experience. Following these general rules will help you to minimize the risk of an unpleasant or traumatizing experience.

Implementing these suggestions will not guarantee a pleasant and joyful experience. The quality and dosage of the medicine you choose, along with various cultural, environmental, and psychological factors, will all influence your experience. In the psychedelic community, your mental and emotional states and physical environment are commonly referred to as set (as in mindset) and setting.

Sometimes, the most challenging and painful journeys provide the best opportunity for personal growth and can act as major wake up calls. Psilocybin allows various subconscious and even deeply suppressed thought and behavioral patterns to rise to the surface and show you what you need to see. As Stanislav Grof, one of the founders of transpersonal psychology, states, psychedelics function as "nonspecific amplifiers of the psyche." In other words, psychedelics act as a mirror for your heart and mind, allowing you to more easily connect with your true self.

Mushrooms embody a living spirit (that also lives within you and of which you are a part). Preparing your heart and mind before a journey allows you to make the most of your time with the mushrooms and the Spirit.

Setting intentions

When setting intentions, you prime the mind with your main objectives, motivations, and questions—the whys—of your exploration with psilocybin.

Intentions set the tone for the journey, acting as a purposeful bridge into the unknown and an anchor point to which you can return when things become confusing. Intentions can reflect a commitment to work on yourself. Setting intentions before a journey will help you to cultivate the proper mindset and establish a framework and lens through which you can understand and integrate your experiences. Intentions can range from:

- the simple and light, such as: "have fun with friends," "enjoy a blissful day at the park," or "laugh and release"
- to the serious and personal, such as: "forgive myself and others," "overcome bad habits," or "improve my relationships"
- to the existential, such as: "understand the purpose of life," "realize God," or "be one with ultimate reality"

You can also frame your intentions as gentle, humble requests to the mushrooms: "Could you please show/teach/guide me...?" Many perceive mushrooms as a living guide that can help you reconnect with your Inner Healing Intelligence.

Setting an intention is not the same as holding on to an expectation. The latter can often lead to disappointment and resentment. To get the most from your experience, it's wise to keep an open mind and let go of your expectations of how you think the journey should unfold. Holding these expectations can often hinder you from what the mushroom wants to show you.

Some people prefer to go into a session without a stated intention—surrendering to whatever the medicine shows them. In these cases, an intention may feel more like an attitude or state of mind rather than a goal or objective. This perspective might be: "What do I need to see?" or "teach me, I'm listening." The key here is the act of surrendering.

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself as you get started:

- Where and how do I feel stuck?
- What is holding me back?

- What do I want to let go of?
- What have I been resisting?
- What makes me afraid?
- What changes do I want to make?
- What do I want to forgive?
- What do I really want?
- What am I?

It is beneficial to contemplate and examine feelings that arise when you ask these questions. The practice is to move from the head to the heart and from the intellect to intuition.

You may want to write down and review your intentions before a journey to solidify them in your mind and deepen your commitment to persevere through even the most painful or challenging moments.

Prepare one or two intentions per session. The idea is not to create a rigid agenda or a checklist of things to achieve but to be curious and open the mind to new ways of perceiving, relating, and being.

Set a date

Planning a journey can give your mind and body time to settle and enter a more contemplative mood. You can schedule days, weeks, or months in advance.

Progressively wind down unnecessary activities and create the time and space to explore and investigate your inner world—an infinite vortex of complex thoughts and feelings.

Sleep may be difficult while under the influence of psilocybin, as it tends to stimulate energies that have been suppressed, stuck, or blocked. Therefore, for a moderate or high dose, set aside seven to nine hours for the journey and post-journey reflection period, and assume you will be awake during this time.

If possible, you may want to give yourself an extra day to recover and integrate your experiences before diving straight back into your obligations. Give yourself as much time as possible to allow new perspectives to settle.

Determine dosage

The amount of mushrooms you decide to take depends on several factors, including:

- the medicine's potency
- your previous experiences with certain doses
- your body weight
- your tolerance and sensitivity
- the quality of your setting
- the presence or absence of a tripsitter
- other medications or supplements you are taking

You may feel more comfortable taking a higher dose in a relaxing setting with a trusted guide. On the other hand, when alone in a less familiar environment, you may decide to stick to a smaller dose, to retain more control over your body.

For additional questions about dosage, consider browsing online forums such as [Shroomery](#) or [erowid](#), on which many people share their personal experiences with various doses. On these forums, you can also ask experienced psychonauts for advice about your specific situation.

Prepare Your Mindset

Attitude

Openness, curiosity, and surrender are the best attitudes to foster when you experiment with psilocybin. The fewer expectations you have, the happier and less anxious you'll be before, during, and after a session. Holding on to unmet expectations is a cause of unhappiness.

You may be disappointed if you expect to have the same experience you have read or heard about in videos, books, or trip reports. Your unique life experiences will result in a journey that cannot be compared with those of others'.

Accept discomfort

Some journeyers may feel different types of discomfort during the journey. Anxiety is common during the come-up phase, which may last an hour or so after ingestion. Some sensitive journeyers may feel unpleasant sensations throughout the experience. Nausea and stomachache are the most common side effects of taking mushrooms.

Here is a list of potential physical effects you may experience during your journey:

- Increased heart rate
- Muscle relaxation or tension
- Shakes/tremors
- Jitteriness
- Cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Pupil dilation
- Dry mouth
- Sweating

- Chills
- Numbness
- Drowsiness

To help reduce the risk of gastrointestinal discomfort, you may want to grind your mushrooms into a powder and make a mushroom tea or soak them in lemon juice for 15-20 minutes before consuming. Ginger tea, ale, or candies might alleviate some symptoms. Some people recommend taking ginger half an hour before the mushrooms. Other remedies for nausea include digestive enzymes, papaya enzyme pills, dry crackers, lemon or peppermint or cinnamon essential oil, chocolate, kola nuts, Dramamine, and Gas-X tablets. Each person reacts differently to these substances.

Here is a list of potential psychological effects that might manifest:

- Heightened senses or awareness of physiological processes (e.g., heartbeat)
- Restlessness
- Trouble focusing
- Disorientation
- Inability to determine what's real
- Tension
- Anxiety and panic
- Paranoia
- Euphoria
- Visual illusions with eyes open and closed
- Intensification of colors
- Proprioceptive changes (e.g., body may feel large or tiny)
- Synesthesia (e.g., seeing sounds or hearing colors)
- Experience of merging with the environment/universe

- Time and space may be experienced as infinite or nonexistent
- Perception that the experience will never end
- Highly symbolic experiences (e.g., involving religious or mythical signs, symbols, and scenes, perhaps beyond your personal field of experience or knowledge)
- Regression to a younger age
- Reliving the birth experience
- Sensations related to any diseases or operations you've had
- Experiences described as mystical or spiritual
- Loss of subjective self-identity, or "ego dissolution"
- Perception of losing your mind or going crazy (related to the "ego dissolution" experience)
- Transpersonal experiences that transcend the limitations of space, time, and your physical senses
- Assuming the identification/experience of another person
- Heightened transference (i.e., projecting strong emotional attitudes of key figures from your past/present life, especially close family members, onto you or your environment)

If you struggle, remind yourself that everything is temporary and the journey will end. You are safe, and it will all pass. Trust that whatever physical or psychological effects you encounter are natural. Welcome every sensation with curiosity. Accept and fully surrender to whatever arises. The decision to surrender often transforms the experience instantly into a positive one.

Taking deep, slow, and continuous breaths may help you through challenging moments. Putting your hands in a prayer pose or on your heart or belly can also soothe your mind and body.

If you have a sitter with you, you can always ask her to hug you or hold your hand. You can also ask for help to navigate, breathe, or ground. You may find asking for help difficult, so simply the act of asking and receiving can be healing.

Recognize and embrace fears

Most human beings operate out of the fear of the unknown or the fear of loss. Many people never leave their comfort zone. It is familiar and reliable. Anything that challenges their beliefs or worldview can feel overwhelming. Paul Stamets, a mycologist and psilocybin advocate, says, "the fear of the loss of self-control is the central issue amongst all users as their dosage increases. Those willing to let go and who do not fear their inner self, seem better prepared to tolerate higher doses. They flow with, not against, the tide of the experience."

At certain points during your journey, you may feel like you are "losing your mind" or dying. You may be afraid to lose or let go of control, or feel confused about rapid psychological and emotional changes. You might forget who you are. You may worry that you'll remain stuck in this state forever or encounter a sense of emptiness or nothingness. These experiences are extremely common. It's essential to release the desire to control, and surrender to wherever your mind might wander. Breathe and remember that you are safe.

There's no way to predict what you will see or experience during your journey. Some of your experiences may feel alien, other-worldly, horrifying, terrifying, confusing, shocking, or painful. If you can face these unpleasant experiences with curiosity and accept that they are temporary, you will come out of the journey lighter and brighter.

Allow emotions

You may encounter your hidden strengths on your journey. You may feel innocence, softness, resilience, love, or compassion. You may also come across painful thoughts, feelings, and impulses you don't usually allow yourself to see or feel. Shame, guilt, grief, anger, frustration, restlessness, and suicidal ideation may all come up during your journey.

To feel whole, practice opening to every aspect of yourself, and expanding the range of emotions you allow yourself to feel. You cannot cut off parts of yourself.

Some of the most pivotal journeys can, at some points, feel overwhelming or challenging. Your journey allows you to fully experience and release pent-up emotions safely without hurting yourself or others. You may express or release emotions in many ways: yelling, cursing, crying, wailing, laughing, dancing, singing, speaking, writing, making sounds, rolling on the ground, praying, shaking, trembling, punching a pillow, or vomiting.

At times, you may feel like you have lost partial or full control of your body's movements. As long as you are safe, it's usually wise to let your body move the way it wants, no matter how weird or scary it may seem. It knows what it's doing. Cultivate patience, stillness, and equanimity with everything that happens during your journey.

Some say that there are no "bad trips"—only difficult ones in which old traumas, energies, and undesirable patterns come to the surface, stay a while, and then dissolve. That being said, having the proper setting will greatly reduce the chances of having a "bad trip." No matter how weird, uncomfortable, or scary the journey gets, remind yourself that you are safe, and the journey will end.

Prepare a mantra

A mantra may help you through challenging periods of the journey and act as an anchor for weathering the most intense parts of the experience. Make up your own or borrow one you like. Here are some examples:

- Trust, let go, be open
- I am safe
- It's okay. Everything is okay.
- I am being guided where I need to go
- All shall be well
- Listen, learn, love
- Breathe through the wave

If you have faith in God, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammad, Krishna, or another entity, spirit, person, or energy, you may wish to include them in your mantras or

throughout your journey in general. You may find prayer beneficial or even essential before, during, or after your journey.

Prepare your body

For days or weeks before your journey, commit to living a healthy lifestyle and abstain from certain sensory inputs that may cause unwholesome and uneasy states of mind.

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and other substances that similarly affect the body, mind, and spirit.

Some people consume cannabis in the form of CBD or THC before, during, or after a journey. For others, avoiding cannabis may be the best option.

Reduce or eliminate animal products and processed foods that cause mucus to accumulate.

Eat foods that nourish your body, including organic fruits and vegetables, drink plenty of water, and make juices or smoothies. Kombucha and other fermented foods and drinks can help rebalance gut flora.

Make sure you sleep well and feel rested.

Consider pampering yourself with a massage or a day at the spa to help calm your nerves and prepare you for surrender and inner exploration. A warm bath at home with music or essential oils can also provide the same benefits.

Transition into a calmer, more reflective state of mind and body. Practice regular meditation, yoga, breathwork, or other self-care techniques.

Spend more time in nature and reduce screen time.

Ideally, you want to begin your journey with clean, empty bowels. On the day of your journey, consider fasting for four or more hours before ingesting psilocybin. Sometimes, you may want a light snack (e.g., a sandwich, nuts, fruit, or a smoothie) with your dose or slightly beforehand.

If you are using any medications or other drugs (prescription or otherwise), research potential contraindications and, if necessary, follow guidelines for tapering off these substances.

As shared in a previous section, microdosing is also a great way to prepare for a more substantial dose.

Prepare Your Setting

Environment

"Setting" is the physical and social environment in which you will have your psilocybin journey. You want to be in a place where you feel safe, open, free, comfortable, clean, protected, and empowered.

First, decide whether you want to be inside or outside. A familiar indoor space (e.g., your bedroom or living room) often allows for a more introspective state of mind while providing a greater sense of safety and insulation from unpredictable elements (e.g., people, machinery, weather, sounds, etc.).

A safe outdoor environment can help you connect with the vastness and beauty of nature. Being with the trees, mountains, rivers, oceans, animals, birds, insects, clouds, and wind, and watching life "breathe" can inspire a new relationship with nature.

An ideal option, if it is available to you, is a setting that provides the benefits of both indoor and outdoor spaces. For example, journeying at a secluded cabin with a patio and large windows in the middle of a forest will let you move between different types of environments quickly and safely. In any case, the ability to move about freely without distractions is important.

If you are not in a warm indoor space, have plenty of warm clothes and blankets available to stay comfortable and to feel relaxed getting naked if called.

In any case, have a safe, comfortable, and quiet place to lay down and relax, and easy access to a toilet or a natural area to relieve yourself.

Organize and clean your environment. Remove clutter and objects you might trip over or give you unhappy feelings (e.g., a pile of dirty laundry). Be mindful of sharp or breakable objects. Removing them can help you feel more relaxed and at ease. The cleaner your space, the better; it is impossible to predict what you will want to do and where your body will be in the room or environment. For example, at a certain point, you may want to lay on the floor or roll around the room. Having soft pillows and blankets can be comforting.

A stressful, fearful, noisy, or dirty environment may result in an unpleasant experience. Conversely, a warm, cozy, and safe place is more conducive to a relaxing and joyful experience. Thus, to maximize the chances of having a pleasant, healing, and mind-expanding journey, take the preparation of your physical space seriously.

Music

You may wish to prepare a playlist of healing music lasting at least five or six hours. Many curated playlists are available on the internet.

You are also free to create your own playlists. It's best to select music you find comforting, calming, and awe-inspiring. You may want to consider including:

- Classical music
- Native American/First Nations' flute, drumming, and prayers
- Ayahuasca icaros
- Buddhist or Sikh chants and mantras
- Tibetan singing bowls
- Gregorian chants
- Ambient music and nature soundscapes
- Ragas

It's best to avoid angry music or pieces with too many lyrics. However, everyone has different tastes: the author has heard a story about someone who had a transformative experience while listening to death metal. They have also supported someone who only wanted to listen to loud, raucous classical music that others would find aggressive and jarring. This journeyer had life-changing experiences.

Towards the end of the journey, on the comedown, you can listen to whatever you wish, including songs with lyrics.

You will also want to prepare headphones or speakers with your music selection. Speakers may be the preferred option for higher doses because keeping headphones over your ears may prove challenging during parts of the journey.

Sometimes, silence is exactly what you need, especially if things feel overwhelming. A change in music or a shift to silence can change the tone of your experience. If in nature, you may not want music at all—nature sounds carry their own vibrational frequency, which can be healing. A birdsong or an insect's buzz can interrupt rigid thinking patterns and be a reminder of how simple life can be.

Objects

You may want to prepare a favorite picture, flower, plant, painting, or image to have around you. Pictures of your parents, siblings, ancestors, and children can be powerful, especially if these people are related to your intentions. These artifacts can bring up and help you feel and process complex emotions. You may wish to create an altar of sacred and meaningful objects.

Journeying with a companion

If you are with a companion who will also ingest a substantial dose, understand and accept that you will each be on your own journey and may not be able to support the other. Expect to have completely different types of experiences because each individual has a unique mental, emotional, and physical makeup. You may want to separate and come back together repeatedly during your journey. This recognition will help you to avoid misunderstandings or conflicts about anything that happens or doesn't happen during the journey.

If you journey with a companion, you'll want to discuss and agree upon a few basic ground rules regarding touch, boundaries and privacy. Get absolute commitments from all those who will be present with you during and immediately after your journey. Also, take into consideration how your companion's gender or sexuality may affect your mindset.

You may want to share your intentions with your companion so they can better understand your motivations and remind you of them if necessary.

Day-of Checklist

- Verify dosage
- Clean, declutter, and purify your space
- Take a shower or bath, or take a plunge in a natural body of water
- Prepare warm blankets, pillows, and cushions
- Create a comfortable lounging area
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes or get naked
- Pack underwear, socks, and extra layers (if you are leaving home)
- Fast or eat a small healthy meal or snack
- Hydrate and have plenty of water available
- Stretch or practice yoga, meditation, contemplation, or breathwork
- Review, contemplate, and write down intentions
- Have art and writing supplies available
- Turn your phone off or put it on silent
- Turn on music, if desired
- Have ginger tea or ginger/peppermint snack available to ease nausea
- Prepare tissues, eyeshades, and a bucket (for spitting or purging)
- Empty bowels

Finally, surrender and let go. It's all good.

Integration Overview

"Before enlightenment: chop wood, carry water.

After enlightenment: chop wood, carry water."

~ Zen Proverb

Integration is considered by many to be the most important aspect of a psychedelic journey. This is the lifelong process of making sense of and incorporating the insights gleaned from your psychedelic journeys in ways that benefit both you and your community. While the actual psychedelic experience is a powerful source of healing, the work to integrate its lessons into your daily life is just as important and often more difficult. Proper integration ensures the insights become meaningful, active parts of your life rather than distant memories.

Some of your psychedelic experiences are bound to be more challenging than others. Integration practices can help you ground, re-center, find your balance, and move forward confidently with the new knowledge you have gained.

The healing that begins with your medicine experience continues as you practice loving kindness and compassion in every aspect of your life, especially the areas you tend to ignore or overlook. You learn to be gentle, soft, and generous with yourself and others. You practice consciously choosing how you relate to and act in the world. Even the anger, grief, shame, and guilt you may experience can become teachers instead of enemies to destroy.

While it might be tempting to hang on to the memories of your psychedelic experience like a lifeline, you must continue looking and moving forward. An integration practice that increases quality of life while minimizing the risk of retraumatizing behaviors and interactions requires planning and diligent effort. Approach your integration with purpose and mindfulness.

Each psychedelic experience allows you to reach a mountain peak. You can sharpen your tools and skills between climbs, allowing you to venture into the next climbing experience with more perspective, wisdom, and hopefully less suffering.

But where do you start? This can be an overwhelming question, particularly if your experience with the medicine was difficult. Even if you had a pleasant journey, what can you do that will ever recreate the clarity you experienced while you were in it? You may feel the need to change everything about your entire life all at once...but how do you do that? And *should* you do that? It may be better to wait at least a few weeks or even months before making major life decisions, but you are the person who best knows what you need. Remember to trust your intuition. Everything you need is within you.

Integration Process

Coming down

Integration begins by creating a soft, gentle landing as you return to the earthly plane. A light meal and the presence of a loving guide or friend can help you feel grounded and aid in a smooth transition back to an ordinary state of consciousness.

Regardless of how your journey went, you may want to spend most of the following day relaxing and reflecting. Let yourself rest and sit with any paradigm shifts you may have experienced. You may feel emotional, vulnerable, and raw, especially if you had a challenging time. If you had a blissful ride through magical realms, you might feel a bit let down by how mundane life can seem. Either way, ideally, you can treat yourself to a healthy and peaceful day off. You may wish to spend the day being in nature, listening to soothing music, having nice meals, or doing whatever else you enjoy. Make sure to replenish your body with plenty of water and electrolytes.

During your journey, you may have had groundbreaking revelations about your partner, job, or living situation. You may feel like you need to make drastic changes immediately. However, the few days after your journey are usually not the best time to make major life decisions. Consider giving yourself time to reflect on the experience before taking action.

Reflecting on the experience

What kind of visions, thoughts, memories, blockages, or somatic sensations did you experience? Reflect on what arose in your heart, mind, and body. You will naturally begin to reflect on the experience soon after you come down and for a few days after your journey day. You may find it helpful to write or record a trip report, or draw what you saw on your journey.

While reflecting on your experience, you might contemplate the following questions:

- What did I see, hear, smell, sense, or taste?
- What did my body feel like?

- What emotions came up (joy, love, sadness, anger, serenity, etc.)?
- Did any of my experiences contain symbols or special meanings?
- What is my subconscious mind telling me through these experiences?

During your reflection, you may realize that a particular vision or experience is more significant than you initially thought. Or not. Reflection is an ongoing process that continues long after your psychedelic journey, so there's no need to rush for definite answers.

Making meaning

After you've let the experience settle, it's time to start unpacking its meaning. Looking back at the visions you wrote or drew, ask yourself what they mean to *you* rather than what they represent in the grand scheme of things. How do they make you feel? What do they remind you of? Often, the meaning lies not in what you see but in how you feel about what you see.

Learning to trust your intuition—your gut feeling—is an important practice. Intuition is often called “the sixth sense.” Do you feel like you “know” things as clearly as if you see them right in front of you? Do you have unexplained hunches or inclinations? When reflecting on your psychedelic experience, pay attention to this “unexplainable” knowledge.

Keep in mind: learning to be aware of and listen to your intuition is a skill that takes time and practice to develop, especially for those who have experienced significant traumas. If you don't know what your intuition is saying yet, it's okay. Keep an open mind and listen to whatever may come up.

The subconscious mind can remember much more about your psychedelic experience than the conscious mind. During your journey, your brain forms new connections and patterns. Sometimes, these new pathways can be too complex for conscious processing, so the mind tries to alert you on a subconscious level through memories, emotions, and images from the past. Pay attention to these. As the great poet Rumi once said, “There is a voice that doesn’t use words. Listen.”

As new meanings emerge over the following days and weeks, you'll get to know yourself better. You may become aware of beliefs you didn't even recognize you

held and how they influence your behavior. Memories from your childhood may surface.

As you open up to your emotions, you may realize what's truly important. You might discover parts of yourself you've repressed or forgotten, or admit to certain detrimental behaviors you need to address. If you encountered mystical consciousness on your journey, you might find yourself contemplating existential questions about the nature of reality and life. You might experience a new zest for life or a desire to change what's not working.

Remembering your intentions

Remembering your intentions allows you to see the positives from your psychedelic experience. When you see the desired outcomes, you may realize any challenging period of your trip was worth it.

What did you want from the medicine? Was your intention fulfilled? If you didn't already write down your intention before the experience, you might find it helpful to do so. The medicine often brings you closer to your desired results in ways you didn't expect.

How did the experience change your perspectives? Even if your original intention was not addressed, did you learn other lessons? Sometimes the most uncomfortable and painful journeys are also the most humbling and transformative. Life can teach us through suffering. Sometimes we need to feel insignificant to realize our power. Sometimes, we need to feel powerless to cultivate gratitude.

Practice

Merely understanding the meanings of your experience is not enough; it's important to incorporate the lessons you've learned into daily life. In creating an action plan, you'll want to establish integration practices that nourish you in the realms of body, mind, spirituality, community, and environment.

Integration is a great time to try new things, as your mind is more flexible and open after a journey. But make sure these practices are more than just another item to check off on a to-do list. This process is not about adding more stress, pressure, and rigidity to your life, but about aligning your actions with your priorities and values.

Ideally, you would have implemented at least one of these practices before embarking on your psychedelic journey, but it's never too late to begin.

While integration is unique to each individual, sometimes it may require further sessions or modalities to bring an unfinished process to completion. This is especially relevant if old traumas resurface or you relive a birth (or death) experience. If you haven't already, you may wish to reach out to specialists, therapists, or healers who have experience working with trauma or psychedelic integration.

You'll find it helpful to get connected with community. It's much easier to process your journey with the support of likeminded people.

Meditation & Mindfulness

The ultimate aim of meditation, much like the use of magic mushrooms, is to develop awareness, calm, and insight. To practice meditation means to be present with feelings, thoughts, and breath without attachment, judgment, or reaction.

Thich Nhat Hahn, the Vietnamese Zen master, said, "Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor." Meditation trains you to find solace not in temporary pleasures but in the peace, joy, and freedom that arises from letting go and living in the present moment.

Meditation is often encouraged as a core practice on the path to enlightenment or self-realization, and can be used to elevate consciousness, both on an individual and collective level. Meditation may also be used to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, or pain.

It's best to integrate a regular practice (a few minutes a day) into your daily life rather than practicing in spurts (two-hour sessions once a month). Consistency leads to the best results and can help you adapt to the process seamlessly.

The practice trains you to be an observer of your experience and loosens the grip of your ego over your personality. Meditation is not about stopping or getting rid of thoughts, but accepting and opening up to whatever arises. It prepares you to sit with the uncomfortable and the unknown. It helps you to develop the habit of accepting each experience as it is rather than forcing it to be how you want.

These attitudes are valuable to cultivate before, during, and after the psychedelic experience. This will better equip you to deal with any difficult truths that may arise. The practice of meditation can also help prevent certain psychosomatic symptoms such as nausea or panic attacks and provides a smoother experience. A long-term meditation practice has been shown to increase activity in the prefrontal cortex, which means the conscious mind will be more likely to remember the experience and understand how to make sensible decisions after it.

You can practice meditation regardless of your beliefs. Pema Chodron remarks, "Meditation is a process of lightening up, of trusting the basic goodness of what we have and who we are, and of realizing that any wisdom that exists, exists in what we already have. We can lead our life so as to become more awake to who we are and

what we're doing rather than trying to improve or change or get rid of who we are or what we're doing. The key is to wake up, to become more alert, more inquisitive and curious about ourselves." The practice isn't about becoming something other than what we are. Rather, it's about being content and open-minded.

As you can imagine, there are numerous meditation techniques and themes. Methods include insight meditation (Vipassana), breath awareness, and loving-kindness meditation (Metta). Meditation can be practiced alone or in a group, in silence or with audio guidance. It can be helpful to try different methods and find what suits you best. Once you find a teacher or method you resonate with, it's advisable to stick with it for some time instead of continually searching for a "better" option.

Having a teacher or guide when you are starting out is essential. You can connect with this teacher either in-person or through different technological means. This person can help you avoid common pitfalls and accelerate your progress.

Here are a few resources you may find useful as you start your exploration, along with a [basic guide](#):

[Dhamma](#) – free 10-day Vipassana meditation retreats around the world.

[Headspace](#) – online guided meditation resources via a website and mobile app.

[Insight Timer](#) – smartphone app and online community for meditation.

[Waking Up](#) – smartphone app with meditation course by Sam Harris and lessons from great thinkers.

Food and Drink

Maintaining a healthy, balanced, and nutritious diet is a vital self-care practice. After a psychedelic experience, your body and mind will be sensitive to nutrients entering the system. Listen to your body's needs. Be aware of how different foods and drinks affect your thoughts, mood, and energy.

After a psychedelic experience, you may find that your body will gravitate less toward tobacco, alcohol, processed food, and other substances that either dull or overly excite the senses.

Cooking

If you eat out often, you may find it beneficial to take time to cook for yourself. The cooking process can help you ground and feel more connected with your food and the source from which it comes: Mother Earth, water, plants, and animals. Cooking can be highly grounding and especially beneficial if you have a tendency to overthink; using your hands in a way that serves and nourishes you is a great way of getting out of your head and into the present moment. It can be even more fulfilling to cook for others.

Mindful eating

You can make eating a sacred activity. You can learn to be aware of how food shows up on your table and acknowledge all the beings involved in that process. You can appreciate how food fuels your body and mind and allows you to live another day.

Thich Nhat Hanh's "Five Contemplations Before Eating" is helpful.

1. This food is a gift of the earth, the sky, numerous living beings, and much hard and loving work.
2. May we eat with mindfulness and gratitude to be worthy to receive this food.
3. May we recognize and transform unwholesome mental formations, especially our greed, and learn to eat with moderation.
4. May we keep our compassion alive by eating in such a way that reduces the suffering of living beings, stops contributing to climate change, and heals and preserves this precious planet.

5. We accept this food so that we may nurture our brotherhood and sisterhood, build our Sangha, and realize our ideal of serving all living beings.

Like your psychedelic experiences, the set and setting for your meals are just as important as the physical food. Mindful eating allows you to gain control of your eating habits and to feel fuller, not only physically but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Praying and blessing your food before you eat allows you to practice gratitude. When you give thanks for all the hands, energies, and beings that worked together to bring food to your table, you realize how abundant and fortunate you are.

Aim to eat your food in a peaceful and relaxing environment. Where are you eating? Are you eating at a clean table, or are you eating on a bed or cluttered couch while you watch television? Are you listening to music while you eat? Are you distracted, or are you fully present? Removing devices from your body and table while you eat allows you to give your full attention to the food. It can also be a refreshing change to eat in natural settings.

Physical Practices

You've heard it many times before: Regular exercise offers countless benefits for your body, mind, and spirit. After a psychedelic experience, you may need to move your body to channel unlocked emotions and energetic currents coursing through your being.

Be Present with the Body

The body carries an intelligence beyond thought and ideas; we tend to make better decisions when we listen to it. Practice tuning into the body's wisdom and listening to what it tells you. When you tune into your body, you can hone your intuition, release rigid thinking patterns, and train yourself to locate where you hold emotions, memories, and traumas.

Learning how to live, move, and be happy with your body is essential to healing and growth. Physical activity can be an enjoyable expression of your body's natural intelligence and creativity. Challenge yourself. Expand your comfort zone.

Remember that exercise is about being happy and not about suffering unnecessarily. Like Bessel van der Kolk, a psychiatrist who wrote *The Body Keeps the Score*, says, "Self-regulation depends on having a friendly relationship with your body. Without it you have to rely on external regulation—from medication, drugs like alcohol, constant reassurance, or compulsive compliance with the wishes of others."

Start small

If you have been living a relatively sedentary life, incorporating exercise into your life may seem daunting at first. However, little steps and small changes can make a difference. Instead of putting pressure on yourself to become an overnight athlete, you can consciously decide to be more active in your daily life. For example, take the stairs instead of the elevator, park your car further from your destination, conduct walking meetings, or walk or bike instead of driving a car.

Relaxing Practices

Intense lifestyles and burnout are epidemics in the modern world. To counteract the stresses of daily life, you may find solace in more calming practices that allow you to

slow down and unwind, creating space for self-compassion and kindness. These practices activate your body's natural relaxation response and help to relieve stress, ease muscle pain and tension, alleviate anxiety, and improve overall mood.

You might practice different types of yoga or qi gong. You might receive sound healing, or body work. You can go to a flotation tank. You can stretch, pray, meditate, or practice breathing exercises at home.

Caring for Your Indoor Environment

After your psychedelic journey, you may become more aware of how your environment is a manifestation of your mindset, and how your surroundings affect your energy. As the mind becomes lighter, brighter, and more joyous, you will naturally want your space to mirror the same qualities. When you take care of and maximize the potential of your home or office, you do the same for yourself. As the saying goes, "cleanliness is next to Godliness."

Committing to tidying up your environment and life is the first step. Visualize the life you want and what you need to get there. What seems to be getting in the way or blocking the flow of energy? What thoughts, objects, or relationships seem draining or heavy? If you are unclear of your direction in life, are you surrounded by objects and dust that cloud your vision? Living in a cluttered space can impede you from developing the clarity of thought necessary for reflection and personal growth.

As you progress on your spiritual path, you may opt to create more space by letting go of old possessions. As you may awaken to or remember the value of open space, you may find yourself resonating less with certain material objects. Life seems to flow more easily when you release what no longer serves you.

You may want your indoor space to be an extension of your favorite outdoor environments. You might take steps to maximize natural light and airflow. You may wish to incorporate some natural elements such as flowers and plants into your indoor spaces. In addition to increasing oxygen flow, these items can remind you to connect and be grounded in nature. The stillness and aliveness can help to balance the forces of advanced technology.

Your environment can support new rituals and routines after your journey. You may dedicate a certain space (even a corner) to your meditation practice. You may clear a shelf or desk to make room for an altar. There are many ways that you can tweak your environment so it reflects and helps you remember your priorities.

When organizing, you may be inspired by professional organizers such as [Kondo Mari](#).

Sleep and Rest

In the days after your psychedelic experience, you may feel tired and drained. Your body is letting you know that it needs to rest and recover. Sometimes you don't know how tired you are until after a psychedelic journey.

Sleep facilitates physical and mental recovery. When you sleep or rest, you give the body time and space to heal, restore cells, and replenish energy levels. The mind uses sleep to process new stimuli and make sense of all the information it receives during the day. Rest is invaluable after a psychedelic experience as the mind is busy processing what it saw and felt.

How much recovery time you need depends on the nature and intensity of your experience and how tired you were in the days, weeks, and months before your journey. Some people can return to their normal routines quickly, while others need more time to readjust.

If you have trouble falling and staying asleep, certain deep breathing and body scanning exercises may help. Deep breathing, which focuses on breathing from the belly rather than the chest, can activate the relaxation response and lower heart rate, blood pressure, and stress levels to help you drift off to sleep. By focusing attention on different parts of the body, you can identify where you're holding any stress or tension and release it. Here's a basic practice:

- Lie on your back, legs uncrossed, arms relaxed at your sides, eyes closed. Focus on your breathing for about two minutes until you feel relaxed.
- Focus on the toes of your right foot. Notice any tension while continuing to also focus on your breathing. Imagine each deep breath flowing to your toes. Remain focused on this area for at least three to five seconds.
- Move your focus to the sole of your right foot. Tune in to any sensations you feel in that part of your body and imagine each breath flowing from the sole of your foot. Then move your focus to your right ankle and repeat. Move to your calf, knee, thigh, and hip, and repeat the sequence for each extremity. From there, move up your torso, through your lower back and abdomen, upper back and chest, and shoulders. Pay close attention to any area of the body that feels tense.

- After completing the body scan, relax and take note of how your body feels. Embrace the calm and feel the warm embrace of sleep.

You may also consider a guided yoga nidra meditation such as [this one](#).

Alongside these exercises and meditations, various herbs can help you fall and stay asleep: lavender, chamomile, magnolia bark, valerian root, hops, skullcap, passionflower, and red ginseng all have relaxing and calming qualities. Keep in mind even herbs can be misused. Sometimes, medications and herbs interact with each other. Make sure you research and consult a knowledgeable professional, especially if you are already taking other medications.

Following a regular sleeping schedule can give the body and mind the consistency it needs for optimal functioning. While it may require some lifestyle changes, establishing a bedtime routine can promote good sleep and improve your overall mental health. Do your best to develop a routine that begins around the same time each evening. A warm bath, gentle yoga, or a good book can help the mind wind down and signal to the body that bedtime is coming.

Watching television or checking your phone before bedtime or in bed can confuse your mind. As soon as you look at a screen, your body suppresses the production of melatonin, a vital hormone for sleep. Keeping electronics near your bed can also be detrimental to your sleep hygiene. Do your best to keep them off the bed during other times as well, so your mind does not associate your bed with anything other than rest.

Evaluate your sleeping environment. Is it comfortable? Do you enjoy the way your sheets feel? Is your bed big enough? Quiet, dark, and cool environments lead to the best sleep. Earplugs or machines that produce white noise can be helpful if you are a light sleeper.

Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and other stimulants close to bedtime. Drinking a calming beverage, such as herbal tea, before bed can be helpful.

Cultivating Gratitude

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others." – Marcus Tullius Cicero

Cultivating gratitude improves our lives in countless ways. This mindset grounds you in your heart rather than your head. Instead of focusing on your worries and problems, channel your energy to give thanks for everything the universe provides.

As with any spiritual practice, you must commit to consciously developing gratitude every day. No matter how easy it is to fall back into old habits of complaining, do your best to refrain. The ability to turn complaints into feelings of gratitude is powerful. As with all good things, the key is simply to begin.

Writing a gratitude list is a straightforward way to instantly shift into a more positive perspective. In the morning or evening, practice writing a list of three to five things for which you are especially grateful. This allows you to focus on happiness and improve your outlook. In a [study carried out in 2003](#), researchers proved that those who kept a gratitude journal exercised more often, reported better mental and physical health, experienced better sleep and a greater sense of interconnectedness, and felt more optimistic.

You might decide to hand-write a letter to a person you are particularly grateful to have in your life. Be detailed. Express all the wonderful qualities of this person and how they have improved your life. Not only will this practice help you develop your gratitude, but it will also create a positive experience for the person to whom you write the letter. Being a positive light to those around you is vital to the collective healing process. As the famed polymath Albert Schweitzer said, "At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

It doesn't have to be complicated. Each small action has a compounding effect and makes a difference. You can tell someone you love and appreciate them. You can notice nature's beauty. You can deepen your friendships instead of constantly looking for more stimulation and new connections. You can pray before meals and

thank all the hands involved in bringing food to the table. You can practice complimenting rather than criticizing. When you are grateful, it's hard to complain.

Learn more about [gratitude practices](#) and their [benefits](#).

Sharing Psilocybin

Once you experience the positive results of psilocybin, you may feel an urge to share the good news and shout from mountaintops about how psilocybin can change the world.

Some people may not be as supportive and open-minded. Although the stigma attached to psychedelic use is quickly fading, many still believe that “all drugs are bad.” Practice patience and compassion with those who seem disinterested or closed-minded.

If you become too zealous, preachy, or pushy, you risk damaging relationships or turning people off psilocybin altogether. As you find ways to share the benefits with others, keep in mind that psychedelic substances are not suitable for everyone.

Develop a sense of discernment about who is open to receiving what you have to share. As you cultivate active listening skills rooted in love and compassion, you’ll inspire curiosity about psilocybin and transmit the mushroom message.

People will come to you when they are ready. Positive shifts in your behavior and mood are often the best ways to attract people open to learning more. When you are at peace with yourself, you’ll naturally embody the wisdom of the mushrooms.

Compassionate Practice

Shantideva says, "All the suffering there is in this world arises from wishing our self to be happy. All the happiness there is in this world arises from wishing others to be happy."²⁷

As you integrate, it's important to find ways to offer yourself to others, and shift focus from "you" to those around you. Sharing your time, energy, and resources with big-hearted people and organizations can connect you with a higher vision. You may want to reach out to friends and family with whom you haven't connected for some time. As you continue to work on yourself, you can inspire more joy and optimism in those around you.

Practicing self-compassion is paramount. The person you may have the most trouble feeling compassion toward is yourself. You may often be your harshest critic. You may say or do things to yourself that you wouldn't even say or do to those you dislike. Lack of compassion for yourself impedes your ability to practice compassion toward others. If you realize that you don't include "you" in your circle of compassion, it's best to begin now.

When talking with yourself, you'll want to adopt a tone with which you would speak to a close friend or a baby. Practicing loving-kindness meditations can also help you develop compassion and self-love. When you begin to love yourself, sharing good feelings with others becomes second nature.

Remembering the Divine

Psychedelics may open you to ineffable spiritual insights, feelings, and ideas. You may feel that you finally understand how “everything is connected,” that “everything is one,” and “it’s all love.” At the same time, you may ask, how do I bring spirituality into my daily life? How do I regularly create reminders of these experiences and my connection to the Divine? Here are a few ways you might consider.

You may find it beneficial to gather, study, and contemplate the works of spiritual teachers that inspire you. If you’re lucky enough, you’ll be able to visit and spend time with some of these beings. Their insights can help you remember important truths.

Rumi shows how pain is often necessary for growth: “The wound is the place where the Light enters you.” The Dalai Lama shares: “Remember that sometimes not getting what you want is a wonderful stroke of luck.” Amma teaches, “When we perceive goodness in everything, we will be filled with God's grace. That grace is the source of all success in life.”

To help you remember and maintain your connection to your teachers and their messages, you can create an altar with pictures or objects you find meaningful. Every altar is different, and there are no rights or wrongs. If you feel like your altar helps you connect with an essence both within and beyond yourself, you are on the right track. You can learn more about creating an altar [here](#) and [here](#).

At certain times, you may wish to visit sacred sites such as retreat centers, churches, mosques, temples, or monasteries. At these places, you may also be able to connect with a community of likeminded individuals. Feeling part of a larger community is integral to the integration process. Your psychedelic experiences teach you how vital setting is to your well-being.

Learn & Explore

When you approach life with a beginner's mind, you'll be able to spot possibilities and opportunities with ease. Your psychedelic journey can help you return to a childlike state where you can see life with a fresh set of eyes. Coming to terms with how much you don't know is the first step in gaining a better understanding about yourself and the world. As Mahatma Gandhi says, "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

There are many ways to expand your knowledge. On your psychedelic journey, you may encounter beings, insights, or messages that spark an interest in a wide range of topics such as history, ecology, religion, philosophy, politics, rituals, symbolism, magic, plant medicine, therapy, psychology, or indigenous cultures. As you commune with psilocybin, you may become more curious about your ancestry and that of many others. Your exploration into these rabbit holes can help you deepen your understanding of the interconnectedness of everything.

A commitment to lifelong learning trains your mind to be open, flexible, and inquisitive. It teaches you to question your assumptions and consider other perspectives. Learning can bring joy and play into your life while increasing motivation and confidence. You are free to experiment with your learning process; there is no right or wrong.

Visualization

Your mind responds to visual stimulation, so imagining and creating images of your desired life allows you to move in a positive direction. Visualization is proven to work; successful people in every field use various visualization techniques to bring their ideas and intentions to fruition. Energy flows where your attention and intention go.

Emotions are the vibrational energy that activates the Law of Attraction. Committing your emotional focus to your highest vision, even when it feels out of reach, can help you feel like you have already achieved it. As the book *The Secret* affirms, "The law of attraction is forming your entire life experience and it is doing that through your thoughts. When you are visualizing, you are emitting a powerful frequency out into the Universe."

As you practice training your body and mind to be joyful, believe in yourself and your vision. Soon you will realize that the life you have imagined for yourself is more attainable than you may have previously thought. Visualization practices will help your mind to be more positive and open to possibilities. Ultimately they can help you become a happier and healthier individual.

You Are Enough

Psilocybin can help you grow, heal, and connect. With the proper support, you may be able to work with years of unprocessed and suppressed emotions. Your mushroom journey can help you feel lighter and more joyful.

The Buddha (paraphrased by Thich Nhat Hanh) says: "A finger pointing at the moon is not the moon. The finger is needed to know where to look for the moon, but if you mistake the finger for the moon itself, you will never know the real moon."

Reading testimonials, listening to podcasts, delving into scientific research are the finger pointing at the moon.

You, your intuition, your experiences, and the truth are the moon.

The key is to obtain medicine, get started, and stick with it, even when your experiences might be confusing, disappointing, or confusing. Make sure you understand the general principles of harm reduction. Start low and go slow.

Practice being kind and generous with yourself. We encourage you to listen to, follow, and strengthen your intuition as you explore the world of psilocybin.

Connect with community. Everyone benefits from having trusted people with whom they can talk and process life's struggles and conquests. Never be afraid to ask for and receive support when necessary. It can be difficult to overcome negative thinking patterns alone.

You are enough and have everything inside of you to be a happy, healthy human being. The process of discovering and understanding who you are is one that will be lifelong. Integrating psychedelic experiences should also be approached in the same way as they are part of a continuously unfolding and evolving process. As you change, so will the insights and messages you receive. We encourage everyone to navigate your psilocybin journey with an open mind and a willingness to learn, adapt, and let go of that which no longer serves you.

Have faith in yourself.

Wishing you safe and healing journeys!

Resources

This is a brief set of additional resources. To explore a more comprehensive list, please consider visiting the [Tripsitters Directory](#).

Reciprocity Ideas

[Historias y Memorias Mazatecas](#)

[Esperanza Mazateca](#)

[Indigenous Reciprocity Initiative of the Americas](#)

[First Nations Development Institute](#)

[Trees for the Future](#)

[Trees, Water & People](#)

Communities

[Reddit - Shrooms and the Psychedelic Experience](#)

[Reddit - Microdosing](#)

[Shroomery](#)

[Microdosing Institute Community](#)

[Psychedelic Society Map Community](#)

[Nectara](#)

Obtaining and Storing Mushrooms

[How to Grow Magic Mushrooms](#)

[Where Can I Buy Magic Mushrooms](#)

Wild Mushroom Identification Warning

How to Store Shrooms

Cultivation Classes

DoubleBlind Magazine

Fungi Academy

Fungi.org

Myco Rising Fungi

Psychedelic Society of UK

Meditation

Dhamma

Headspace

Insight Timer

Waking up

Online Microdosing Classes

Double Blind Magazine

Microdose

The Third Wave

Psychedelic Society San Francisco

Embracing Your Light

Microdosing Apps

[Houston \(only on App store\)](#)

[MicroTracker](#)

[Tune In Psychedelics: MicroDos Tracker \(only for Android\)](#)

[Microdose.me](#)

[Quantified Citizen](#)

Integration Journals

[Wakeful Travel](#)

[Psychedelics Today](#)

[Conscious Microdosing Journal](#)

Psychedelic Pharmacists and Medical Professionals

[Spirit Pharmacist](#)

[Dr Emily Kulpa](#)

[Dr Katie Simons](#)

[Dr Erica Zelfand](#)

Other Practices/Therapies

[EFT \(Emotional Freedom Technique\)](#)

[EMDR \(Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing\)](#)

[Family Constellation](#)

[TRE \(Tension & Trauma Release exercises\)](#)

[IFS \(Internal Family Systems\)](#)

[Somatic Experiencing](#)

[Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy](#)

Books

[My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies - Resmaa Menakem](#)

[The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma by Bessel Van Der Kolk](#)

[Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma: The Innate Capacity to Transform Overwhelming Experiences - Peter A Levine](#)

[The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness, and Healing in a Toxic Culture - Gabor Maté](#)

[No Bad Parts: Healing Trauma and Restoring Wholeness with the Internal Family Systems Model - Richard Schwartz](#)

[Food of the Gods: The Search for the Original Tree of Knowledge a Radical History of Plants, Drugs, and Human Evolution by Terence McKenna](#)

[The Psychedelic Explorer's Guide: Safe, Therapeutic, and Sacred Journeys - James Fadiman](#)

[Shroom: A Cultural History of the Magic Mushroom by Andy Letcher](#)

[Decomposing The Shadow: Lessons From The Psilocybin Mushroom by James W. Jesso](#)

[How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us about Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence by Michael Pollan](#)

[Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World - Paul Stamets](#)

[Psilocybin Mushrooms of the World - Paul Stamets](#)

[Psilocybin: Magic Mushrooms Grower's Guide - Terence McKenna, Dennis McKenna](#)

[Your Psilocybin Mushroom Companion: An Informative, Easy-To-Use Guide to Understanding Magic Mushrooms - Michelle Janikian](#)

[The Psilocybin Mushroom Bible - Dr. K Mandrake](#)

[Growing Gourmet and Medicinal Mushrooms – Paul Stamets](#)

[Psilocybin Mushrooms: A Step by Step Guide to Growing, Microdosing and Using Magic Mushrooms – Ronald O'Neil](#)

Movies

[Dosed \(2019\)](#)

[Fantastic Fungi \(2019\)](#)

[From Shock to Awe \(2018\)](#)

[The Kingdom: How Fungi Made Our World \(2018\)](#)

[Magic Medicine \(2018\)](#)

[A New Understanding: the Science of Psilocybin \(2017\)](#)

Podcasts

[Adventures Through The Mind](#)

[Psychedelics Today](#)

[Psychedelic Medicine Podcast](#)

[The Third Wave](#)