

Mindfulness, Compassion, & Psychedelic-Assisted Psychotherapy

What Clinicians Need to Know About Non-Ordinary States

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Non-Ordinary States in Psychotherapy

Prehistory

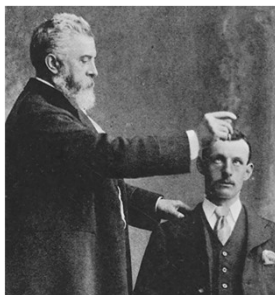
- Fasting
- Wilderness Journeys
- Chanting
- Drumming



Animal Magnetism or Mesmerism 1780s



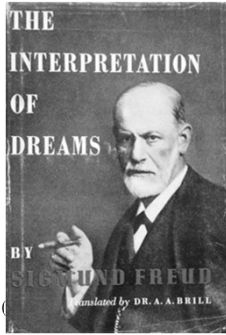
Hypnosis, or "Rational Mesmerism" 1850



Free Association 1892



Dream Interpretation 1899



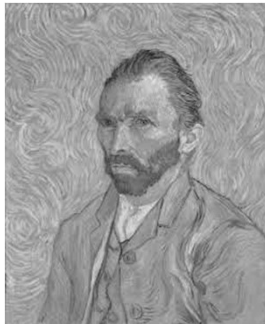
Freud, S., & Strachey, J. (1913). *The Interpretation of Dreams* (p. 217). New York: Gramercy Books.

Body Therapies 1933

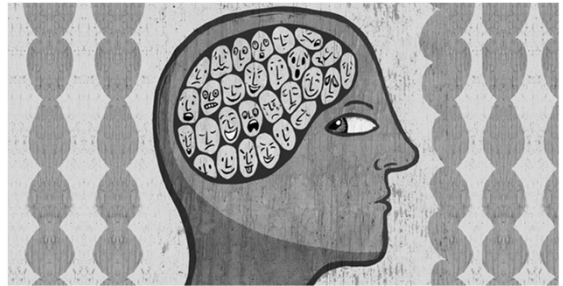


Freud, S., & Strachey, J. (1933). *Charakteranalyse* (p. 217). New York: Gramercy Books.

Art Therapy 1940s



Internal Family Systems 1980s – 90s

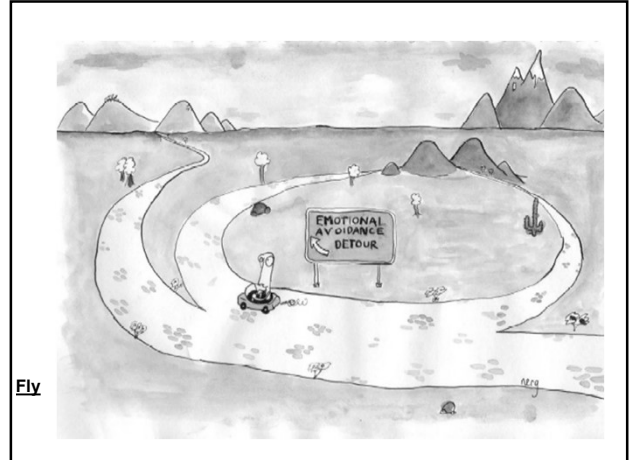


EMDR 1988



Why Evoke Non-Ordinary States?

We Didn't Evolve to Be Happy



The Thinking Disease

- Analyze past pleasure and pain
- Maximize future pleasure and avoid future pain



Reification



The Problem With Selfing

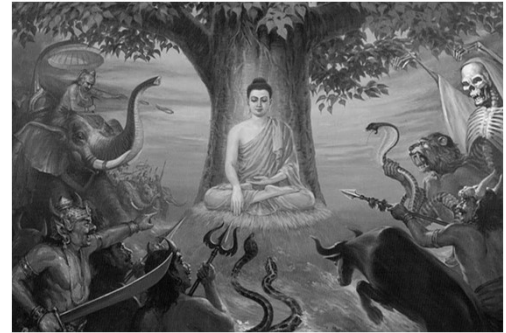


Antidotes: How They Help

Antidotes

1. Befriending our demons
2. Developing metacognitive awareness
3. Embracing impermanence
4. Developing transpersonal awareness

1) Befriending Our Demons



2) Metacognitive Awareness

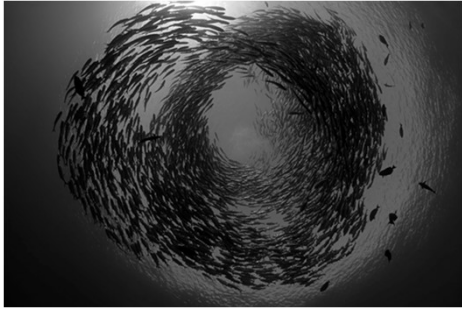
Thoughts are
not facts. . .
I am not my
thoughts. . .



3) Embracing Impermanence



4) Transpersonal Awareness



Psychedelic Assisted Psychotherapy (PAP)

Cautions

- Not suggesting, recommending, or condoning any activities that are illegal or outside of ethical clinical practice

Cautions

- Using psychedelics outside of legal and safe treatment contexts is dangerous
 - Impurities
 - Inaccurate doses
 - Insufficient preparation or support before, during, and/or after experience
- Risks psychological, social, and/or physical injury

Cautions

- Clients are highly vulnerable to narcissistic/exploitive therapists
 - Client may experience intense emotions and needs, sexual arousal, lack of boundaries, impaired judgement, loss of awareness
 - Long sessions increase intimacy and alter perceptions of boundaries
 - Agreement to supportive touch may be exploited
 - Illegality creates secrecy and additional dangers

Cautions

- Even if treatment is done well...
 - Recovery of previously unknown traumatic memories → destabilizing
 - Attachment to positive experiences or bypass → stalled healing, inflation, grandiosity
 - Attachment to model → devaluing or rejecting therapy without psychedelic

(Adapted from Jim Hopper, PhD)

What's in a Name?

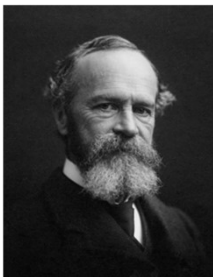
- Psychedelic
 - Mind Manifesting (Aldous Huxley, Humphrey Osmond)
- Entheogen
 - Accessing the Divine Within (Huston Smith)
- Hallucinogen
 - To Wander in the Mind (Latin "Allucinari" – Charles Grob)
- Alternatives
 - Deliriant, "Delusionegens, Eidetics, Misperceptinogens, Mysticomimetics, Phantasticants, Psychodysleptics, Psychogens, Psychointegrators, Psychosomimetics, Psychotogens, Psychotomimetics

(Adapted from Charles Grob, PhD)

Sahara Desert Cave Painting ~ 8,000 BCE



William James 1901



"Depth beyond depth of truth seems revealed to the inhaler [of nitrous oxide] Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded."

James, W. (1885). *The varieties of religious experience* (Vol. 15). Harvard University Press.

Bill W.'s Takes L.S.D. 1956

3:07

(Bill is still lying on back on sharp steps)

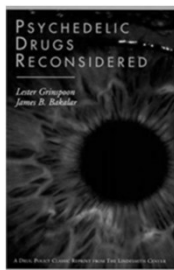
"I once wrote, with the first great perception, that only those to whom God has granted this gift do know freedom of spirit. I beg Thy forgiveness. Oh Divine Word for wishing to be separate! Forgive this stockbroker for wishing to be separate."

"There now I see the tree for the first time. Where I was, was infinitely beyond...but here is Paradise too. Does this drug cause me to over-dramatise? To the best of my knowledge, no. There is the way, not narrow nor straight. The highway to the Infinite extends from everywhere. I know, now I see this is universal."

1950s & 1960s

"Over a thousand clinical papers were published in the professional literature discussing the experiences of 40,000 patients treated with hallucinogens."

— Grinspoon and Bakalar, 1979

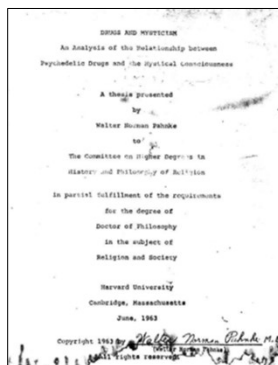


Harvard Psilocybin Project 1960-1962



Drs. Timothy Leary & Richard Alpert

The Good Friday Experiment 1962

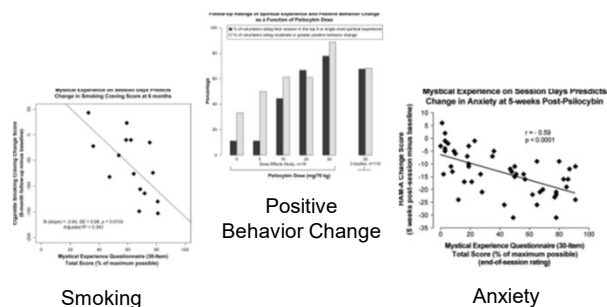


Mystical Experience Questionnaire

1. Mysticism –
 - a. Internal Unity
 - b. External Unity
 - c. Noetic Quality
 - d. Sacredness
2. Positive Mood
3. Transcendence of Time and Space
4. Ineffability



The Role of Mystical Experience



Paradigm Shift



- Conventional Psychopharmacology
 - Drug administered daily for long periods
 - Ameliorates a presumed pathological brain state
 - Usually by suppressing nervous system
 - Relief not dependent on patient's attitude or insight

(Adapted from Charles Grob, PhD)

Paradigm Shift



- Psychedelic-Assisted Psychotherapy
 - Preceded by preparation sessions
 - Drug administered once or a few times, with support
 - Softens repression barrier, loosens defenses
 - Facilitates insight
 - Often produces mystical or transpersonal experience
 - Followed by integration sessions

Usual Therapeutic Approach

- Non-directive, supporting emerging experience
 - "Inner healing intelligence"
 - Going inside: Reclining, eyeshades and headphones with music
 - Alternating inner focus and talking with therapists

(Adapted from Jim Hopper, PhD)

- Trust
- Let go
- Open



Psycholytic vs Psychedelic

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low doses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekly or biweekly ▪ Loosen defenses ▪ Expanding consciousness while remaining in room, in body, and in contact with therapist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High doses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Usually weeks or months apart ▪ Dissolve defenses, schemas, sense of separate self ▪ Aiming for transpersonal or mystical experiences |
|---|---|

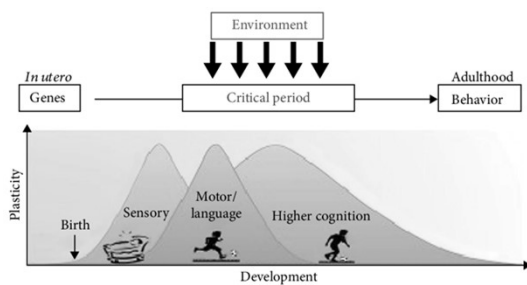
(Adapted from Jim Hopper, PhD)

Mechanisms of Action

Enhances Neuroplasticity



Reopens Critical Periods



Set

- Personality
- Preparation
- Expectation
- Intention

Setting

- Physical
- Social
- Cultural
- Environment
 - Operation Midnight Climax vs. Santo Daime ritual

Mindfulness

Therapeutic Mindfulness

1. Awareness
2. Of present experience
3. With loving acceptance

Loving Acceptance



Compassion in Psychotherapy

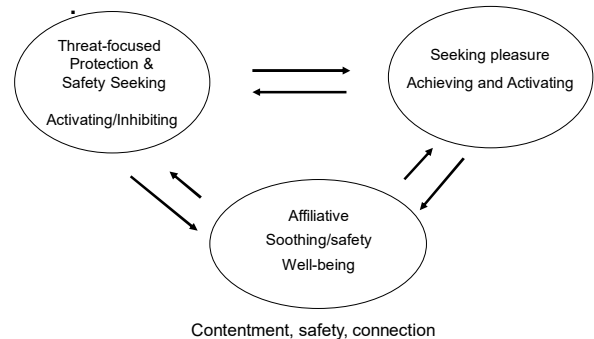
Wisdom and Compassion



Motivational Systems

Anger, anxiety, disgust

Drive, excitement, vitality



Compassion

- Latin: *pati*; Greek: *pathein* (“to suffer”)
- Latin: *com* (“with”)
- Compassion means to “suffer with” another person.

Self-Compassion

When Things Go Wrong

Unholy trinity of

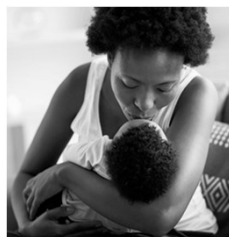
- Self-criticism
- Self-isolation
- Self-absorption

An Anidote: Self-Compassion

- Self-kindness
- Common Humanity
- Mindfulness

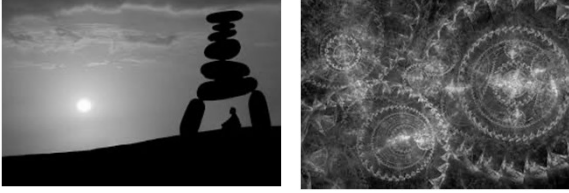


Attachment



Synergies

Different Doorways



Mindfulness & PAP

- Mindfulness practice useful for
 - Preparation
 - Enhancing therapist presence
 - Integration



Mindfulness & PAP Research

- Mindfulness meditation enhances positive effects of psychedelics ¹
- Psychedelics increase mindfulness ²
- Mindfulness facilitates lasting change following a psilocybin experience ³

Who Am I?

Cultivating Transpersonal Awareness

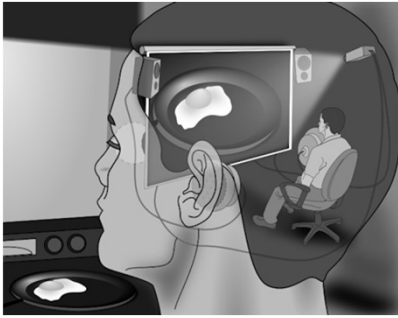
Therapeutic Benefits of Glimpsing *Anatta*

1. Increased affect tolerance
2. Radical acceptance of parts
3. Freedom from self-esteem concerns
4. Deeper connection to others

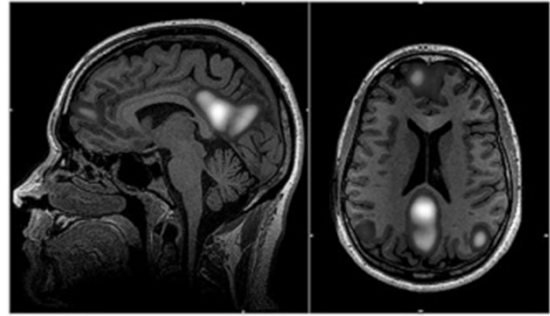
Thinking



Homunculus?

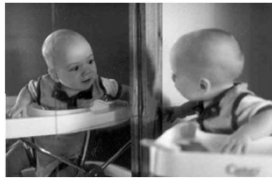


Default Mode Network



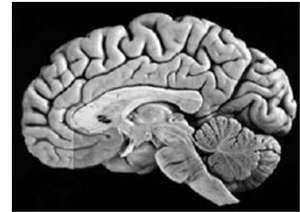
Who Am I?

- Two types of self-reference
 - Narrative focus (NF)
 - Enduring traits
 - Talking to ourselves about ourselves
 - Experiential focus (EF)
 - Moment-to-moment experience
 - The mind-body in action



Medial Prefrontal Cortex (mPFC)

- Links subjective experiences across time
- Holds memory of
 - Self traits
 - Traits of similar others
 - Reflected self-knowledge
 - Future aspirations



DMN & Psychedelics

- Increased DMN activity in pathological rumination in depression, craving and relapse in SUDs, PTSD
- Decreased DMN activity and functional integrity with psilocybin, LSD, ayahuasca
- Magnitude of deactivation correlates with experience of ego loss

1) Increased Affect Tolerance

Selfing & Affect Tolerance

- Not “my,” but “the”
 - Sadness
 - Fear
 - Anger
 - Joy

2) Acceptance of Parts

Our Polytheistic Mind



Jung's Shadow

- We identify with some attributes while rejecting others
- We become defensive when shadow is illuminated



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3) Freedom from Self-Esteem Concerns

What Defines Me?

- Skills & Talents
- Accomplishments
- Pedigree
- Appearance
- Physical Fitness



The Failure of Success

- The pain of I, me, me, mine
- Narcissistic recalibration
- Impossibility of winning consistently

4) Safely Connecting to Others

Harvard Study of Adult Development

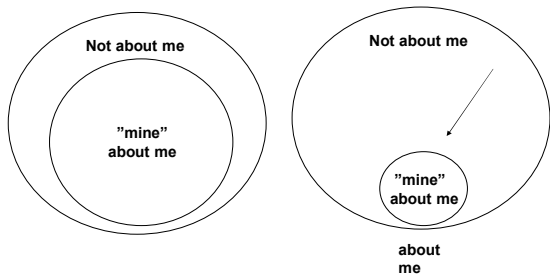
- 724 men studied for 75 years
- Since 1938
 - 1/2 Harvard students; 1/2 poor young men in Boston
 - 60 still alive
- Most important predictor of happiness, mental and physical health was quality of relationships

Make a connection, not an impression.

Service



Therapeutic Progress



-- Adapted from Engler & Fulton

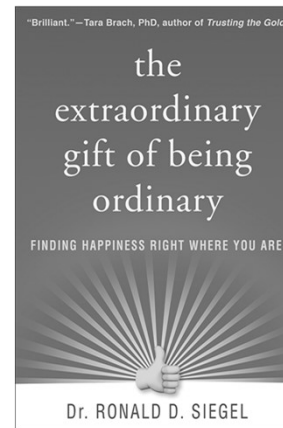
Why Are You Unhappy?

Because 99.9% of everything you think, and everything you do, is for yourself. And there isn't one.

-- Wei Wu Wei

Remembering the Antidotes

1. Befriending our demons
2. Developing metacognitive awareness
3. Embracing impermanence
4. Developing transpersonal awareness



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www.DrRonSiegel.com

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