

Testimonial on 5-MeO-DMT

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The 5-MeO DMT experience is unique. It is unlike any other psychoactive substance that I have experienced. There is no altering of normal perception as with psychedelics, for example, where the ego is still present, but in a very altered state of consciousness. In the 5-MeO DMT experience, the ego disappears. Initially, there is an experience of the most pure and intense white light. Then the ego simply ceases to be. This extraordinary freedom is not grasped until there is a return to the ego state with a sense of being cleansed of the usual habits that shape the way we see ourselves and the world. The habits of meaning that make up the ego/body do necessarily begin to reassert themselves, but it is an opportunity for a fresh start, a kind of gestalt shift in perspective that allows former limits to come into view far more clearly, AS limits, emotionally and conceptually. The meaning and neural patterns that are laid down in experience during our lives stay with us. They set the conditions for much of our habitual behavior and how we experience things going forward. However, these become much more malleable for a limited time after the 5-MeO DMT experience. There is an opportunity to establish new brain and behavioral patterns.

Limits and objectivity are intrinsic and absolutely necessary to awareness, but no limit is absolute. Unfortunately, we take our limits of meaning as if they are truth and reality. Usually, seeing and feeling are mistakenly taken as direct contact with what there is. This is the basis of much of our belief about the world and ourselves. But with careful reflection, one can come to realize that all perception and feeling only come to us through our habits of meaning. Due to always experiencing things through our habits of meaning, we fail to distinguish what is present to our awareness and what we make it mean. The latter is the prison of the ego. Having an ego is necessary to living a human life. Being trapped in the projections and abstractions of the ego is not. After a 5-MeO DMT experience, the flow of experience becomes prominent rather than the objectivity and meaning we impose on that flow. What we normally call "reality" or "truth" loses its grip on us and we are freer to just be and let others be without judgment. This is love-overflowing rather than the love-lack humans are typically caught in (attachment, possessiveness, craving for security and certainty). The 5-MeO-DMT experience can promote a sense of hyper responsibility to engage fully in the task of self-overcoming and a profound respect and awe for the process of the energy of consciousness as it manifests in temporary objectivity and separateness of self and other. This engenders an authentic ethics of compassion that comes from within, not a moral "ought" imposed from without.

In Buddhism, there is a saying: "One must have a self to overcome the self." The point is not to escape the habits of meaning we call "self," but to open the possibility of a different relationship to the habits we call "self," to become receptive to the potential for wakefulness to what it is to be a finite meaning-making being always operating within limits that set the conditions for illusion, ignorance, craving, and aversion. The point is to no longer be trapped in our habits of meaning so we can be in touch with something more fundamental than what can be grasped through our limiting beliefs, truths, and sense of reality, something that can't be said, yet can be acknowledged. We become free to have a sense of deep reverence toward the mystery of consciousness and intelligibility without overly imposing our finitude. We can only have any experience from and within our finitude, but our finitude is our opening on to what cannot be said. Without this reverence, human finitude tends toward arrogance and the illusions of self-sufficiency and control. All spiritual awakening is seeing through these illusions. If we were not vulnerable meaning-making beings attempting to articulate our

experience, we would not be self-aware at all and could not “touch” the unsayable through our love, openness, and humility.

We need to separate what is meant by the “sacred” from any doctrines and conceptions of divinity. The sacred is a deeply felt-sense of awe and humility in the face of the overpowering sense of being. But to objectify this into divinity is typical when the ego returns from such an experience. A more enlightened way to respond is simply with a sense of gratitude and love toward the world without allowing the ego to invent stories to hold on to the sacred. Ironically, the sacred is invariably destroyed by this attempt to hold on to it as a “truth” when we turn these sacred stories into doctrines. (See Pickard, D., *The Idolatry of Doctrine* (www.deanpickard.com) The 5-MeO-DMT experience can facilitate this overcoming of the ego for a brief period so we can “touch” the sacred directly and then bring it into our lives.

INTEGRATION INTO ONE’S LIFE: The 5-MeO DMT experience is a state of super lucidity that can move you beyond whatever level you have taken your awareness to in life. It facilitates a diminution of the normal state of being controlled by your expectations, prejudices, and habits of meaning that opens onto new possibilities for living and being. But one must engage this opportunity with practice of mindfulness in order to integrate this liberated state into ordinary awareness. That means to truly embrace such moments of liberation as sacred so we live more sacred lives of deep reverence for all things with less fear, judgment, expectation, and desire for control. This may seem wrong or dangerous to ordinary ways of thinking. But it is at the heart of the teachings of Parmenides, Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Mohammed, and other great spiritual teachers. It arises out of liberating experience, not beliefs. It is freedom from belief that can bring spiritual freedom, freedom from fear, insecurity, and desire for control. 5-MeO DMT can provide access to this in a way that few other things can. It can provide a transformative experience that allows an immediate felt and lived sense of the wisdom of these great teachers rather than merely believing a story that attempts to objectify it. (See Pickard, D., *Mystical Experience and Ontological Claims*, (www.deanpickard.com))

The 5-MeO DMT experience is not a substitute for the basic task of self-understanding that is intrinsic to human awareness. Being oblivious and naïve is not the same thing as being liberated. Blissing-out is not wisdom. Believing is not wisdom. Wisdom is seeing through what you thought you knew. It is a genuine movement toward freedom which is what characterizes human experience when it does not get stuck in its insecurities.

It takes time, practice, and humility. But 5-MeO-DMT can facilitate the process of coming to see that we are finite, vulnerable, meaning-making beings and that this is our fundamentally shared condition regardless of differences in belief. We are not isolated units of reality. We only have identity at all in relation to everything else. We must keep our most profound and liberating insights at hand in what we do. Mindfulness is being present to what is in the immediacy of our awareness. It is a skill called phenomenology: being present to what appears in consciousness as sensations, as emotions, as thoughts, not resisting and not getting trapped in any particular habits of meaning so we are free to explore the mystery of consciousness. Wisdom is seeing through anything we think we know, always using limits to overcome limits. 5-MeO-DMT obliterates limits for a time so the ego can return to itself with an enhanced openness to possibilities that are beyond limits. That is the movement we call freedom. Holding on to the ego and the prisons of its truths is a loss of this intrinsic emancipatory feature of human experience. Mindfulness is a skill, an ability that takes effort and practice in daily life. Without this, the possibility for living a more liberated life fades. Repeated experiences with 5-MeO-DMT can be useful to keep enlarging that opening onto a more liberated awareness. At some point it becomes unnecessary. Only you can judge when you live in the presence of that white light and can radiate compassion to everything around you.