

Detroit Doctor Reports on Safer Use of LSD, Part I

Henry Waldorf, MD.

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Editor's note: Henry Waldorf is the pseudonym of a physician practicing in the eastern United States. Dr. "Waldorf" agreed to write the following article out of a sincere belief in his work and asked only that his real name be kept from appearing in print.

As the circle of people who have had psychedelic experiences continues to expand at an ever increasing rate it becomes more and more common to encounter young people with many questions about the drugs. These are the people who are vaguely aware of the message behind the allusional terminology of expanded consciousness. They are so curious about themselves and the world around them that their gravitation toward psychedelic chemicals is inevitable.

However, as the drug experience extends itself to more and more people by leaps and bounds it would appear that such things as understanding, planning and safety measures are being left far behind.

A drug which should have a high margin of safety is having some of this margin shaved away by what I feel is misuse. With all of the wonderful possibilities available through LSD it seems absurd to leave the experience totally to chance. Why risk a "bad trip?" Why not make an honest effort ahead of time to guarantee yourself an enriching experience?

The "bad trip" is the ultimate fear of those considering using psychedelic chemicals. It is a fear which has its roots in the earliest history of psychedelic chemistry and now exists somewhere in the limbo between fact and fiction.

It stems from the LSD taken while shopping in a busy downtown department store or swallowing the drug and going to classes or taking it in rush hour traffic. It took many experiences and much mental anguish for the early investigators to discover that there were better conditions for LSD. Why should anyone repeat their mistakes?

The fear of the "bad trip" is no longer logical 'in view of our advanced state of knowledge concerning the use of these chemicals. It seems to me that this fear is being fed today from 5 basic sources:

- 1) The rumors and limited insight of people who have had little or no experience with the drug.
- 2) The inane prattle of our modern day messiah—the psychiatrist (whose experience is limited to opiate addicts and the few articles he may have read on these new chemicals).
- 3) The unmentioned fear in all of us that we are not far from the brink of madness.
- 4) Not recognizing that calling it a "good trip" or a "bad trip" is someone else's interpretation.
- 5) The frightening experiences of a few people who lacked any knowledge or foresight before they took the drug.

I don't know for sure where the concept of the "bad trip" started, but it must be stated that there need be no such thing.

It is like the story of the blind men and the elephant. Each man described the whole as a simple extension of one particular part. If you happen to get into the rectum when you take LSD please don't assume that the whole experience smells like that.

The experience is simply the experience. We are all catapulted out of the same reference system. We all float through the same archetypal universe and comprehend it as best we can. We all don't, however, see things with the

same emotions, and the bliss of one man's void is the terror of another man's psychotic loneliness. Both having the same basic experience yet one looks terrified while the other smiles peacefully at the swirling pattern of a carpet/universe.

All who have taken psychedelics have experienced both the best and worst, but only a few realize that there is no difference between the two.

Beware the man who has only "good" or "bad" experiences. Seek rather the man who has only experiences. Realize that there is constancy in the experience and it is only the fluctuation of our perceptions that allow us to label it as "good" or "bad."

It is my belief, after considerable time spent with psychedelic chemicals, that there need be no such thing as the "bad trip" even in a situation with no medical controls as long as the people taking the drug use some common sense ahead of time. The concept should be regarded as an anachronism and need no longer have application.

The "bad trip" exists only when precautions have been totally neglected. It is avoidable if one honestly agrees ahead of time to pay the price. But what is the price? In answering that question we get into symbols that are incomprehensible to some and perfectly obvious to others. The price you pay for a psychedelic experience is your mind, but to anyone who has never had a transcendental experience this sounds melodramatic, obscure and frightening.

The closest literary description of what I mean can be found in STEPPENWOLF, by Herman Hesse and I would certainly recommend this book to anyone searching for a better understanding of the LSD experience.

I wouldn't however, recommend this explanation to anyone worried about taking LSD. It smacks of dark secrets and eternal mysteries and will generally frighten many people before they even start.

Arthur Kleps, Chief Boo-Hoo of the Neo-American Church, expresses this idea best when he points out that if a beginner is asking for help it should be remembered that he is working on a foundation and wants help in lifting the shovel rather than a lot of nonsense about how to tile the roof.

The price for the first one or two experiences shouldn't be this obscure or terrifying to the neophyte. It could be better expressed as a willingness to swallow your ego and go along with some rules made up by someone else.

I propose to set up suggestions for avoiding most of the discomfort and which will help allow each man to "go out of his mind" peacefully. As far as I have been able to test these suggestions they are applicable in all cases and when adhered to they will eliminate a lot of the discomfort. I have never known anyone who had an "adverse reaction" to LSD when these suggestions were followed.

It should be realized, however, that nobody is going to take all of the discomfort out of the psychedelic experience. Without that discomfort I'm not sure the experience would still be classified as "psychedelic." It seems to me that this would leave you with euphoria and LSD is far more than that.

You should be aware of what it is I seek to achieve with LSD before you read my suggestions. The goal that I have in mind when I make these suggestions is transcendence. If it is your purpose to achieve transcendence whether you call it cosmic consciousness, satori, nirvanah, moksha, samhdi or any other name then you might do well to read these suggestions for they haven't been easily learned.

If, however, your goal be in a different direction, if you choose to take LSD for the purpose of learning a foreign language or for increasing the variety of your social games, for example, then these suggestions aren't meant for you and I don't believe they would still apply.



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