

How To Change Your Mind Summary

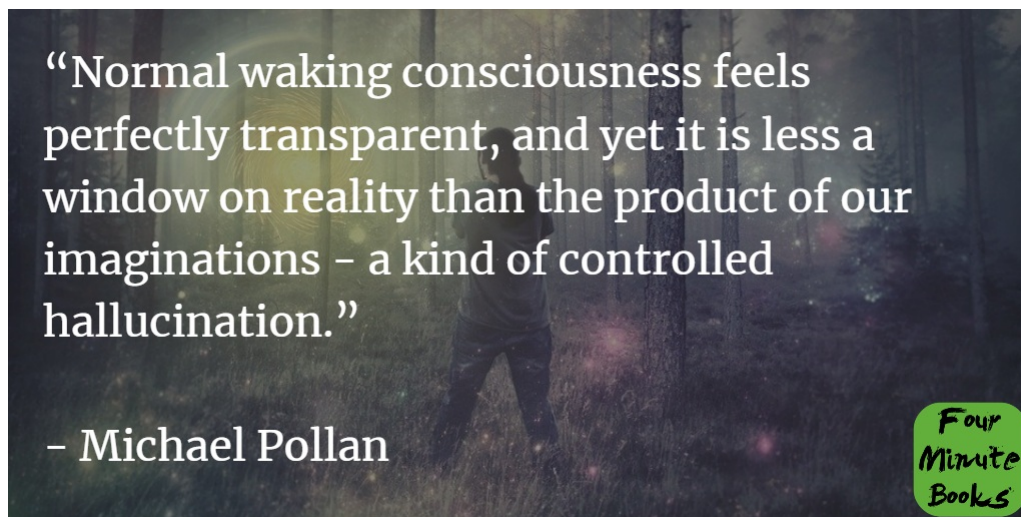


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1-Sentence-Summary: *How To Change Your Mind* reveals new evidence on psychedelics, confirming their power to cure mental illness, ease depression and addiction, and help people die more peacefully.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



We all know somebody battling mental illness, addiction, or cancer. Sadly, these are all part of life's experience and we can't escape them. Or can we?

If you knew there was a new miracle drug that proves to fight depression, cure addiction and make end-of-life transitions peaceful and painless, would you consider it? What if the treatment was in the form of psychedelic drugs?

In his latest book, *How to Change Your Mind; What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression and Transcendence*, Michael Pollan investigates this revolutionary treatment. Pollan personally experiments with these mind-expanding drugs himself, once considered dangerous, toxic and a sure road to danger.

Here are 3 mind-expanding trips that helped me to reconsider this course of treatment:

1. Mexican Indian tribes have been using mushrooms containing psilocybin as a healing agent for centuries.
2. During a hallucinatory experience, the brain is more interconnected so that memory, emotion and visual information all interact.

3. Early tests suggest that psychedelics could be more effective than pharmaceuticals in treating depression.

Let's dive right in and see if this book might change your mind!

Lesson 1: Mazatec Indian tribes of Mexico introduced mushrooms containing psilocybin to Western travelers.

When we think about the term psychedelic drugs, often what comes to mind is illegal substances, synthesized in some remote lab. We might also think of shady deals conducted in some dark alleyway by street thugs in hoodies. It's easy to forget that the true origins of these drugs is in nature and that they are organic.

It was during the 1950s in southern Mexico when western travelers first saw mushrooms containing psilocybin. The Mazatec Indians have been using the mushrooms for centuries as part of their spiritual rituals and also as an agent for healing.

It wasn't until later that decade when chemists began to artificially synthesize psilocybin in laboratories. And it was nearly 10 years later when people began to view these substances as a danger to society. This was the beginning of the war on drugs.

Few people saw that humans consumed this natural drug to provide a mystical, spiritual experience. Though it takes expertise to identify a true mushroom from a deadly kind. It's not recommended to forage for these mushrooms on our own.

Lesson 2: We actually are seeing things we normally can't see during a hallucinatory experience.

Have you ever heard somebody describe their hallucinatory, psychedelic trip experience? You might hear them talk about seeing changing colors, melting objects and otherworldly lights. Does this mean we can see things that we normally can't, or are we just hallucinating?

In 2014 there was a study on psychedelic drugs conducted at the Imperial College in London. Neuroscientist Robin Carhart-Harris and his colleagues used brain imaging technology to gather more details on how psilocybin affects brain activity. They could show a side-by-side comparison of how different areas of the brain interact normally and while under the influence of psychedelics.

The test showed that under psilocybin the brain gets rewired dramatically. Areas that normally function independently from one another begin to communicate. Each specialized section becomes less contained and the brain becomes more integrated as a unit. Many

neuroscientists believe this interconnectedness produces a profound and visual drug trip experience that can be magical and mind-blowing.

So if you can imagine areas of the brain that are normally dedicated to emotion, visual and memory all suddenly interacting together, this is what prompts a whole new way of seeing things in a vivid way. When the event is positive it can lead to new insights, ideas and can be transformative.

Lesson 3: By creating a new sense of connection, psychedelics can help alleviate depression.

Psychedelics are becoming increasingly more acceptable and mainstream. As recent as 2017 the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) called for a study that would demonstrate the effectiveness that psychedelics have on treating those with depression.

In spite of the many prescription pharmaceuticals available, depression still remains one of the most widespread illnesses in the country. So far there's a good body of evidence to confirm that psychedelic drug treatment is an effective means in alleviating depression.

The first evidence to support this came once again from a 2016 study by Robin Carhart-Harris and the team at London's Imperial College. Of the participants in the study sample, 80 percent reported an improvement in their symptoms, while more than 60 percent said that their depression was gone completely.

This was a small sample of 20 people, all receiving a week of treatment. There is still much testing required to assess the lasting duration of the treatment and sustainability over time. But what is almost certain is that one of the ways psychedelics work to ease depression is by allowing patients to find a new sense of connection in their lives.

People with depression can look at something of beauty in nature and fail to feel a sense of happiness. But **according to some of the test participants, psilocybin has some property to reconnect them more to the world and the people in their lives.**

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How To Change Your Mind Review

How To Change Your Mind is a fascinating read that Michael Pollan serves up in his usual well-researched and digestible style. Whatever your stance is on alternative medicine and psychedelic drugs, this book will have you rethinking some of those notions. I give it two thumbs up!

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Who would I recommend the How To Change Your Mind summary to?

The 30-year-old mindfulness and spiritual coach, the 42-year-old journalist who eats up all of Pollan's written works, and anybody over age 65 who longs again for those trippy, hippy, psychedelic years.