**THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A BAD TRIP (?)**

“There’s no such thing as a bad trip” is a concept that is rising in popularity among experienced drug users. However, I don’t subscribe to this concept. To me, there is such a thing as a *bad trip* and it is determined by how we choose to deal with an uncomfortable experience. This choice determines whether the challenges we face during a psychedelic encounter will be a *bad trip*or a *hard trip,*which are two qualitatively different experiences.

A *bad trip* is when we become overwhelmed by an anxiety resulted from the resistance of an altered state—i.e., wishing we were not high anymore or wishing the experience was different. This is usually a result of taking drugs without an understanding what we are getting ourselves into, inappropriate dosage or taking drugs in a destructive environment. As a *bad trip* subsides, often there has been no lesson learned and we, relieved to be free of that “bad” experience, are quick to leave it all behind and forget the experience altogether. Not all *bad trips* are that bad, but they certainly aren’t very enjoyable. The elements that create a *bad trip* and their consequences can often be avoided by knowledgeable use and proper guidance.

A *hard trip* is when we are presented with the darker aspects of *self*, the *shadow*. But instead of resisting the discomfort of that encounter, we embrace it, we *surrender* to it. It is these *trips* that hold the most potential for personal growth. And learning how to *surrender* into the honesty of emotional experience, especially if it is challenging, enables this growth most effectively. The key difference between these two types of experiences is that during a *bad trip* we close ourselves off to what is being presented; during a *hard trip* we open ourselves up.

[*Learn more about the book here*](https://www.jameswjesso.com/decomposing-the-shadow/)

For example, the psilocybin mushroom can send us into a full expression of emotional potency. It amplifies whatever emotional state may be present within us at the time, known or unknown, positive or negative. The mind then compiles and brings awareness to all the thought patterns and memories attributed to the *meaningfulness* of the emotional state we are in. If during this process we fixate awareness on feeling uncomfortable by resisting an uncomfortable emotion, we amplify the potency of being uncomfortable in an effort to explain that discomfort to ourselves through various thought patterns, memories, or feelings.

If, when confronted with the same uncomfortable emotion, we choose to *surrender*to its presence, we will generate a different *meaningfulness* towards that discomfort. A *meaningfulness* of being healed, for example, will generate a different set of thought patterns and memories. Essentially, whether we go through a detrimental *bad trip* or a beneficial *hard trip* is decided by choices we make—I personally find this very empowering.