

## Personal Essay

*Contained within this essay are the personal experiences of a close friend of mine, who has used psychedelic mushrooms in an attempt to treat their clinical depression, and has chosen to remain anonymous*

I don't think a lot of people understand what depression really is. In my experience, it isn't just being sad, it isn't something you can pull yourself out of just by hitting the gym or getting a pep talk. It's a complete loss of will to go on. The complete and total belief that there is no meaning or purpose to living and absolutely no reason to even get out of bed in the morning. It's not sadness. It's complete emptiness. It's the loss of the will to live.

I talked to my parents about how I was feeling, and they were wonderful. They understood what I was going through, and told me their experiences with depression, which was comforting. I started going to a therapist, talked to my doctor and started Antidepressants. Over the course of about 6 months I tried 3 different medicines, both SSRIs and SNRIs. After those 6 months I decided to quit antidepressants. They had several side effects, such as fatigue, nausea, insomnia and the inability to orgasm. It felt like I was trading one issue for another. The worst part was on the 3rd medicine I tried, it felt like it cured the depression, but it only did this by stopping me from feeling all emotion at all. I remember breaking down in tears to my mom over "not feeling like a person anymore." I also ended therapy after my therapist told me I needed to start "thinking like an adult" after telling him what the root of my problems were. I'm absolutely not saying that anyone shouldn't try therapy and/or antidepressants. I'm saying

that for me and a large amount of other people, they aren't the solution. I think if i found the right therapist it could absolutely be beneficial, but i haven't yet found that person, unfortunately.

I learned about psilocybin and it's anecdotally, and now scientifically observed properties as a potential treatment or cure for various mental ailments such as the ones I have been experiencing. I decided to give a shot.

Unfortunately due to the prohibition on Psychedelic Mushrooms in my country, I was not able to do them in a controlled state with someone to help me. I did them out in nature and paired it with meditation, which i think is the next best thing.

The trip felt incredible. I felt such an overwhelming sense of wonder, love, joy and ecstasy. It felt like it was exactly what I needed to get me out of my rut. I have felt a large amount of my depression and anxiety melt away. I feel more capable and organized than I have for years. When i was tripping i felt completely and totally at peace with both myself and the world. I just wanted to lay down and hug the grass and stare at the cool stuff happening up in the sky. What an absolutely wonderful feeling. It legitimately felt like I hit a reset button on my brain. It broke me out of so many negative thought loops I was stuck in. It gave me a deep appreciation for this world and everything within it. It allowed me to really slow down my thoughts and go through each one meticulously. Without feeling grief or anger. Just really pick the last several years of my life apart, in a good way. This is the first time since i was a child that i have stayed up at night, not because of existential dread, but because i legitimately felt hope

and excitement for the future. It almost brings me to tears talking about it, tears of joy.

My whole outlook on life has changed. It was like something clicks after each trip, it's hard to explain. A lot of research currently seems to suggest it repairs connections in your brain, which would make sense to me, considering what i've experienced.

Coming down off shrooms is different than every other drug too. As soon as you are done, your first thought isn't "Wow, i want to do that again!", it's "Oh my god...." and you just sit there and think and think. It's very introspective.

It's not a magic happy pill, by any means, nor would I really want it to be. What it did give me is a fresh look on life. It feels like it was treating my problems at their root, not just trying to mask the symptoms. It felt like I had just closed a browser with 600 tabs open and I had a fresh start. I felt like a whole new person. It showed me that even if life has no inherent meaning, that i'm here anyways and can give my own life meaning. It showed me that even though we live in a hellish world that seems to be crumbling and controlled by pedophiles that value corporate profits higher than human life, that I'm here anyways, and maybe I should go out and do something to try and make hellworld a little less hellish.

I just feel so different. Not that I don't still have any issues at all, but right now it literally feels like I'm cleaning up the mess of my past self, a whole different person.

Your mind as a human, gets stuck in these thought loops. Things like “i need a drink to get through today” or “I will never be loved”, these kinds of thought patterns, these thought loops, are very efficient, but can reinforce some very destructive behaviors. It can also keep your mind closed to new ideas. We are creatures of habit and we have mental algorithms that organize our response to everything, and even though that's efficient, it blinds you to experience and everyday wonder. In my experience psychedelics, especially shrooms, help soften those, and helps you get out of those grooves.

I think that's a big reason why it's illegal. Obviously there's not much evidence of that, but it makes sense. It dissolves all your preconceived notions about the world and makes you look at both your life and the world from an outside perspective. It breaks you out of negative thought patterns we all fall into and it gives you immense amounts of empathy.

I am of the opinion that in addition to legalizing psilocybin for medical use, we need to be focusing on preventative care, addressing the things that cause depression and anxiety in the first place, such as financial insecurity.

Do your research, psychedelics are amazing and have personally improved my life, i would even go as far as to say using them is why i'm still here today, but they are to be respected in every sense of the word.

I just want to end this and say Do NOT just go out on a limb and do shrooms because you read this or read online that they cure depression, shrooms are one of the more intensely thought

provoking and mind blowing substances, and if you go into it unprepared it can be incredibly uncomfortable, and even deadly if you have an underlying psychotic illness it may bring to the forefront.

*This story is one of thousands out there on the internet, and i would highly encourage you to go out and read other people's anecdotes about how it has helped them, from combat vets with PTSD to your everyday man struggling with depression and anxiety to those poor souls who have found themselves ensnared in addiction.*