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DMT and PTSD

 Asher Gibson Sep 17, 2020 · 9 min read ★

How this powerful psychoactive could help combat vets



Psychedelics have been making a comeback in recent years, and in a good way. With reputable organizations like Johns Hopkins and Imperial College forming ground breaking research centers, the stigma surrounding hallucinogens as harmful street drugs is slowly transforming into that of respectful medicines. This is good news for a population where mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety, are growing at an uncontrollable rate.

As a combat vet diagnosed with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries, my daily life was met with increasingly difficult mental challenges. Most of my fifteen years in the Army were spent in Special Operations. Deployments all over the world had thrown me into countless combat situations. Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria bore the brunt of these experiences. Multiple IED explosions, mortars, and firefights took a toll on me. During my last year in the military, I attended an intensive traumatic brain injury clinic in Washington D.C. It was there I was diagnosed with a myriad of ailments

and injuries that eventually lead to a medical retirement. It was a welcome turn of events. I had had enough.

The military's way of dealing with soldiers in my situation is to stick a bandage on it and send them on their way. So, in no time at all, I had accumulated what looked like a small pharmacy on my bathroom shelf. Cocktails of different antidepressants and anxiety meds, pain meds, and a variety of different sleeping pills began to dominate my life. I knew this couldn't go on. Something had to change.

I heard about DMT, or Dimethyltryptamine, from an old friend last year. We've always been very close and he was worried about the effects that fifteen years of combat had taken on me. His concern led him to offer an unconventional solution: psychedelics. In particular, a powerful hallucinogenic brew made from plants from the Amazon called Ayahuasca. He shared a recent experience with Ayahuasca that dramatically helped him through a hard time and wondered if I'd be interested. Finding the time for me to attend a proper retreat with the guided healing of a Shaman proved unrealistic at the time, so he suggested sourcing some DMT, a smokable extract from the plants.

Dimethyltryptamine is the naturally-occurring psychoactive compound in the Ayahuasca brew. It can be found in many plants throughout the world, as well as being endogenously produced inside the human body. Could this powerful psychedelic help me in ways traditional prescription drugs couldn't? My curiosity compelled me to give it a try.

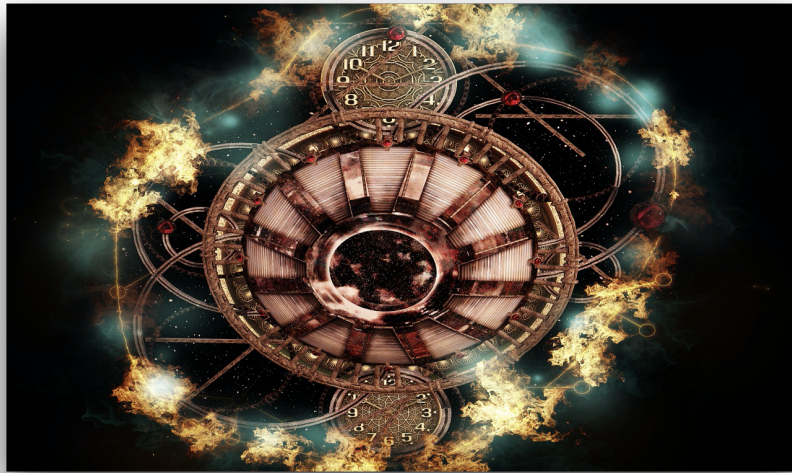
As they say, when the student is ready, the teacher shall appear. At precisely the right time, this teacher came in the form of DMT. As with most plant medicines, the lessons are profound, and DMT being one of the most powerful psychoactive substances on the planet, it was no exception.

My first couple of experiences with this spirit molecule, as some call it, were interesting to say the least. But with the small introductory doses I had taken, around 20 to 40 milligrams, it had failed to deliver the esoteric experience I was looking for. I yearned to wanted step into that inter-dimensional classroom, however, my gut told me to proceed with respect and caution. Years of listening to my intuition taught me that this approach would inevitably deliver better results, so I waited. I once read that, when ready, DMT will call to you. That call came to me one evening as I lay comfortably in bed watching the documentary *Psychedelica*. It was time to open my doors of perception, and journey into hyperspace.

I told my Google assistant to play the specific playlist I had prepared for this event, and poured a breakthrough-appropriate amount of DMT into the pipe, somewhere between 60 and 80 milligrams. I cleared my lungs with a few deep breaths and a short meditation, and then began the process. The first two hits went down smoothly, but as my world began to break apart in fractal hallucinations, I struggled to take in the third and final hit. Working

through it, I inhaled deeply and cautiously put down the pipe. I gently laid my head on my pillow, and closed my eyes.

Within seconds I was blasted through a kaleidoscope of vibrant colors and patterns, and was immediately shot out of my body through space and time. It was so fast I could hardly make any of it out. Everything was very bright and very colorful, mainly yellow and fractal. It seemed like I was being brought through multiple dimensions all the way to the beginning of time and back at the speed of thought. At one point it was as though time ceased to exist, or more like all time was happening in one moment. Eternity in its truest sense, I suppose. Eventually things began to slow down and I was brought through different rooms, some pure white, some with colorful shapes, some had different color puzzle pieces all over, and some had what I could describe as children's toys. I felt the presence of other beings there with me the entire time.



Eventually, I found myself standing by the side of my bed, not remembering how I'd gotten up. I was still deeply immersed in the experience, though, and I was simultaneously standing in a bright yellow room with an overwhelming feeling that I had just figured out the universe. It was as if I had been shown everything in all of time and I had reached the end of the game. With my hand clasped against my head I kept saying, "Oh, my, god... oh, my god!"

A number of entities appeared in front of me, seven or so, each framed in an arched shrine backed by a bright yellow and white light. They were blue with oversized hands, sitting down, and they seemed to be clapping. I heard voices, not through my ears, but through my consciousness.

"Congratulations...you've made it...you've arrived," they were saying.

Standing there in pure ecstasy and awe, I was smiling and still repeating, "Oh, my, god!" I eventually asked, "This is it? It was that simple all along? All I had to do was take DMT? That's all we all have to do?"

“Yes!” They replied, still congratulating me and affirming that I had arrived.

But arrived where? I was still in my room, kind of. And then it dawned on me. Had I just died? I asked them, and they confirmed with a congratulatory, “Yes!”

My elation quickly subsided and was replaced by fear. True, deep, horrific fear. What had I done? Had I taken too much DMT and killed myself? I fell to my knees as the terror washed over me. I felt like a small boat in the wake of a tsunami. “What have I done?” I kept repeating to myself. I hadn’t said goodbye to my family. What would they think? How would they ever forgive me?

For some reason I thought of a story I once had read of a guy in college who tripped and fell on the pavement and hit his head. He was knocked unconscious for a few minutes, but in his head he lived an entirely different life. He was born, grew up, got married, had children, a job, everything. One day he was in the living room sitting with his wife watching TV and he noticed the lamp next to him seeming like it was in a strange dimension. As he stared at the lamp, a slow realization flooded him that this life was not real, it was all just in his head and he began to slowly remember his other life. The feeling of horror crept up on him knowing he was slipping away and was about to lose everything he had ever known. He slowly started to leave that world, and woke up on the pavement with the horrible realization and sensation that he left his wife, his children, and an entire life behind. Had I just awoke from a dream I thought was my life? Was my life just an illusion that I somehow had blasted myself out of?

“Why am I still in my room?” I asked them.

“Because this is where you solved it,” they replied.

It was as if the room was just a set, a familiar place, the last place I was when I figured it out, and if I walked out the bedroom door I would walk in somewhere else and never come back. This fear compounded the horror I was already experiencing. Then something truly odd happened. I was back at the beginning of my trip again. I was brought back in time repeating the exact same thing I had just experienced. This continued in what seemed like an eternal time loop. Exactly the same thing from start to finish, believing I had discovered the beginning, middle, and end of time, died again, and returned, over and over. What eventually broke the loop was my cat. He appeared from under the bed where he had been the entire time. I quickly realized that I was experiencing the most profound trip of my life. I started laughing and praising the sheer awe and massiveness of whatever this was. I picked up my cat and lay down on my bed, kissing and thanking him for bringing me back.

As I rested my head on the pillow, I reminded myself why I embarked on this journey. I came to heal. As this thought passed through my head, the ceiling opened up into what seemed like a portal, with the dark night sky in

the background. Entities began to appear around the edges, looking down on me. They slowly descended towards me. It seemed as if they came through and into me, into my head. The feeling was pure ecstasy. I remember my whole head being ecstatic and numb, like the most wonderful electrical massage on my brain. The feeling moved down my neck and shoulders and eventually filled my entire body. At this point I had no body, became pure energy, and was floating. I entered a place of nothing. No where, no time, no thing, and I was no one. Just pure consciousness.

I eventually came to and the effects of the DMT began to wear off. As I lay in my bed, contemplating what I had just gone through, I realized there was almost no pain in my neck and shoulder. The injuries that had debilitated me for years were almost non-existent. Tears of joy gently fell down my cheeks as a true appreciation of this gift, this miraculous experience from beginning to end, washed over me.

My life was transformed. The ineffable experience was difficult to digest. Explaining it to myself and others would be like trying to describe what a sphere is to a two-dimensional being. For the days and weeks following, I had an awakened clarity I never had felt before. It was as if the weight of the world I had been struggling with for so long had finally been lifted. I began the wonderful and curious journey of consciousness discovery. Daily deep meditation brought me further insights. Yoga, exercise and healthy food became the norm. My Kindle library began filling with books like The Power of Now and the Kybalion. My relationship with my family blossomed into one of more love and appreciation than during my dark years of constant combat deployments. I no longer take the plethora of prescription drugs I was dependent on for so long. My debilitating mental state and chronic physical pain has subsided to manageable levels.

While DMT isn't the magic button that fixes everything, I believe it's a powerful guide to help you do the work yourself. It helps you understand that the problems you create are just that: you're the one who creates them and only you can fix them. You're able to look at yourself with a fresh set of eyes, a new perspective of personal responsibility. The ability to transform and heal yourself is opened up and the difficult work mending your mental state seems less daunting. With medicinal psychedelics on the rise, we could be looking at a brighter future not only for our combat vets, but also for those in the general population who suffer from mental illness.