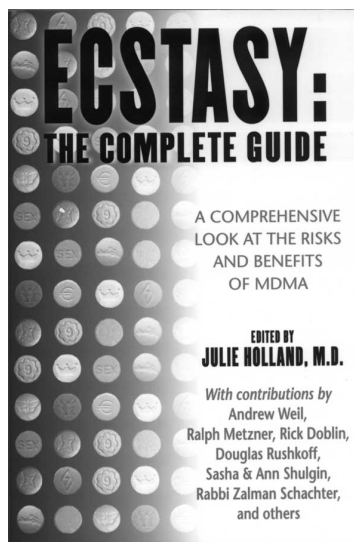


ECSTASY: THE COMPLETE GUIDE

Book Review by Adam Fish (love4wisdom@hotmail.com)



Ecstasy: the Complete Guide is available from <http://maps.org/books/> for \$19.95

With 24 chapters, six sections, and a detailed appendix, *Ecstasy: The Complete Guide* (Park Street Press, 2001), edited by Dr. Julie Holland, is the most comprehensive book written on MDMA to date. It adeptly navigates the canon of preceding research, answers many novel questions, and excavates much misinformation. *The Complete Guide* is packed with the confessions of 30 researchers who expertly opine on MDMA. In tandem they assert that “the judicious, supervised, and infrequent use of single oral doses of MDMA as a psychiatric medicine may be a revolutionary tool to assist in the fields of psychology and psychiatry.”

Each of the six sections triangulates a facet of MDMA research. The first section deals with the history, pharmacokinetics, and the molecular structure of MDMA. In the second section the latest findings on the toxicology of MDMA are presented in a reader-friendly manner. The subsequent sections deal with MDMA research, psychotherapy, culture and the role the molecule plays in clinical settings. Through *The Complete Guide* one can discover the legal and research status of MDMA internationally, the effects of MDMA on memory, the claims by clergy of the potential for MDMA to incite rapture, and much more.

The Complete Guide displays the wide application of MDMA and the passionate conviction with which its use is supervised. Dr. Holland conducted interviews with Ann and Alexander Shulgin, Emanuel Sferios, Dr. George Greer, Dr. Andrew Weil, Dr. Charles Grob, Rabbi Zalman Schachter, and Rick Doblin, Ph.D. The manifold professions represented in the book speak well of both the exemplary scholarship directed at MDMA and the suppleness of this substance.

“Pain control” is Dr. Holland’s goal. A psychiatrist at Bellevue Hospital, she is adamant about harm-reduction in two forms. *The Complete Guide* intends to protect those who may hurt themselves through an abuse of MDMA and support the claim that MDMA is a safe and effective medicine for physical and mental pain. Dr. Holland hopes that *The Complete Guide* will be the “instruction manual” that will train and educate people in the beneficial use of this potent technology to remedy avoidable suffering.

If a balance of rigor and compassion is an attribute of medical inquiry, then Dr. Holland of the NYU School of Medicine is an icon. Take for example the Baggott and Mendelson article, “Does MDMA cause Brain Damage?” By claiming that high or repeated doses of MDMA can damage neural functions,

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the article, besides answering a critical question, evinces how *The Complete Guide* embraces both the indications and contraindications of MDMA's benefits. But because Dr. Holland advocates infrequent, efficiently dosed MDMA sessions in the treatment of specific illnesses, Baggott and Mendelson's findings do not discredit the ideal forwarded by *The Complete Guide*.

Reading *The Complete Guide* would be a particularly effective lesson for parents, teachers, and physicians who have been misinformed by *60 Minutes*, *Oprah*, *MTV* and *20/20*. *The Complete Guide* has the potential to reform abusers of MDMA, educate the prejudiced, and stimulate veteran entheonauts to further explore personal dimensions. By educating the public and state representatives about the therapeutic potentials of MDMA to remedy post-traumatic stress disorder, pain, alienation, depression, spiritual bankruptcy, and schizophrenia, *The Complete Guide* may contribute to the reformation of MDMA laws and the dissolving of Ecstasy myths.

When finished with the 450 pages it is possible to re-taste that delicious fragment of the emotional center that MDMA awakens. After reading *The Complete Guide*, one gets the impression that this “soul-penicillin” should be used intentionally and infrequently. Ann Shulgin suggests that one should use MDMA no more than four times a year. Ralph Metzner and Sophia Adamson poetically examine the religious flavor of MDMA when used in sacred spaces. Douglas Rushkoff explores the links between cognitive enhancers, cultural fluorescence, and tribal consciousness.

If scholastic academies were to recognize

the intimate role entheogens have had in human evolution then *The Complete Guide* would be the textbook in the widely popular Entheogens 101 lecture at the University of Utopia. *The Complete Guide* is to the psychotechnician what the Physician's Desk Reference is to the family practitioner. *The Complete Guide* is exhaustive and exhibits the completeness possible only with a multidisciplinary study of Mind.

All profits from the sale of the book *Ecstasy: The Complete Guide* (Rochester, Park Street Press Vermont, 2001) will go towards funding clinical research with MDMA. The book costs \$19.95 and is available from MAPS. Donations to the Holland Fund for Therapeutic MDMA Research can also be made at Dr. Julie Holland's website: Drholland.com, or by sending your tax-deductible check to: The Holland Fund c/o MAPS, 2105 Robinson Avenue, Sarasota, Florida 34232 ■

MAPS congratulates **Kim Hewitt** on the completion of her dissertation "Psychedelics and Psychosis: LSD and Changing Ideas of Mental Illness, 1943-1966." Kim will receive a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin in August 2002. Her dissertation, for which she received a \$500 grant from MAPS, was nominated for the Gabriel Prize, the UT award for Best Dissertation.