Maya directed us to pick up her limbs and move them to the rhythm of the music. We were in love with her and she with us.

When morning came, Maya could barely be awakened. She took the MDMA sublingually, and promptly went back to sleep. Her sleep became peaceful, without tics, spasms, moans or gasping for breath. Maya’s dad joined us when I told him I believed Maya would not wake up again. For the next eight hours while Maya slept peacefully, we told stories, played games and caressed Maya with love.

At 10 p.m., Maya awoke. Her dad was stroking her and I was reading aloud from Laura Huxley, about the importance of loving touch and the nobility of death. She opened her eyes with an expression of absolute wonder, reached out to touch her dad, and died.

We are grateful beyond measure to Theo, and to those working to make psychedelic therapy legally available. We are honored to have witnessed and shared a holy experience, my daughter’s good death. •

* Fictional names were used to protect the privacy of the individuals in this story. ** Ketamine was prescribed by Maya’s palliative care doctors to reduce the increasingly dangerous levels of other pain medications. It was offered as a last resort; doctors were concerned that it would elicit out-of-body states, a prospect welcomed by the patient.

Upcoming Club Drug Research at Columbia University

Only a limited number of laboratory studies have evaluated empirical data regarding the acute effects of “club drugs” in humans. This study will evaluate the residual effects of MDMA on workplace performance. Workplace performance will be measured using a wide range of tests that evaluate cognitive functions such as divided attention and memory. In these studies, researchers will determine the effects of acute and repeated club drug administration the day of administration, as well as the morning after administration (i.e., “hangover”), on behaviors relevant to workplace performance.

Drugs to be tested include methamphetamine (speed), methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, ecstasy), gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB), or zolpidem (Ambien). Low drug doses will be evaluated, minimizing the number of drug deliveries per participant. The primary goal of this NIDA-funded study is to carefully evaluate the effects of club drugs on ongoing behavior under conditions simulating those outside the laboratory. The dosing regimen employed in this study will closely parallel recreational use of club drugs by humans in our society. Because there is little data available from laboratory studies on human performance after repeated controlled administration of club drugs, the proposed studies will make a unique contribution to the scientific database about the acute and residual effects of club drugs. •

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RESEARCH

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:
The Substance Use Research Center at Columbia University seeks healthy men or women (age 21 - 45) users of MDMA/ECSTASY to participate in residential studies evaluating medication effects. Live on a research unit at the NYS Psychiatric Institute for 15-17 days. You can earn approximately $1129. For information, call (212) 543-5982.

The proposed studies will make a unique contribution to the scientific database about the acute and residual effects of club drugs.