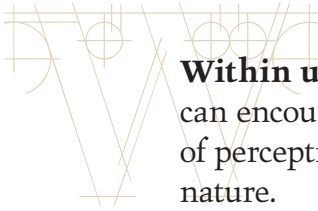


A Healer's Perspective on Psychedelics and **the Body to Mind Connection**

By Trevor Getsla



Within us all there are numerous levels of perceptual experiences we can encounter. All of us already possess within ourselves a powerful field of perception that is simultaneously physiological as well as conscious in nature.

We shall look at the body to mind relationship through the lens of touch therapies, and in reference to the psychedelic experience. Additionally, we'll see one perspective of the psychedelic experience and what it can reveal for a healer's work with their own and other human systems.

The human "Being" can be thought of as the meeting of mind, body, and spirit – all three of which are intrinsically linked and interrelated. When we move into the world of healing the human system, we can access from any of these vantages.

Our mind is a perceptual hub and intellectual realm filled with the "I"– things like identity, beliefs, and ideas. The body is animal in nature, and is the "functioning unit" of the human system complete with its own rich nonverbal intelligence. The spirit is ethereal and permeates all. Consciousness and spirit itself is difficult to quantify and explain.

The mind is notorious for its misperceptions of itself and for being resistant to change. The mind excels at concealing, protecting, and adapting to its own traumas. When attempting to unravel deep psychological wounds or functional issues in the body, the mind alone is frequently not sufficient. Often the mind is attempting to manage and quantify everything about the human experience. Therefore, if we can find a back door around these challenges by approaching through the body, that could be extremely helpful.

So we come to the body. The body tells the truth plainly and simply. It is an excellent arena to gain clear information about the entire Being, as well an arena to create and evaluate changes. As mind, body, and spirit are all linked, if there is a change in one we should be able to observe something occur within the others. Of the three, the body is easiest to observe. Likewise inducing change in the body can result in changes in the mind and spirit. Through the body we also open to the experiential and functional elements of the human system. When true change occurs in a human we can identify this by observing/experiencing change in function. Without functional change it is difficult to judge if our mind is simply wanting to "believe" that change has occurred.

For those readers who have done psychedelics, have you ever noticed how you seem to "straighten up" your posture under the influence of a low-to-mid range dose of MDMA, psilocybin, LSD, or 2C-B? Or how easy and smooth your motion may become? Or how your perception of the "space" around you seems to expand, as though you're "touching" the entire room and all the objects in it? Or perhaps the quality of your breath and energetic expansion of your system moving fully throughout the whole of your Being? Maybe experiencing your body in a profound and novel manner? Or perhaps the subtle movement of emotions, energy, or memories/experiences related to the tensions and perceptions of the functional body? There are many more possible similar experiences which you may



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have observed. Pay attention to them in your future experiences.

There is also the profound experience of feeling release of the nervous system and structural components that is produced as the body becomes freer and moves towards greater integration. These changes toward integration seem to extend beyond the psychedelic experience, and can even become permanent – especially so when effective therapies are applied that allow the tissue structures of the body to become more adaptable to expressing the fullness of the changes in the system. It also works the other way around. If one has experienced changes in structure induced by any variety of therapies, then the psychedelic experience can become a realm for the mind to actively connect to the now-freer physical body. This reconnecting of the perceptual system within the body to the functional components of the body can be quite a powerful experience.

These are actually quite potent experiences, and much more than just incidental occurrences. They have to do with how the shape of the body organizes itself in space in relation to our perception of the world. With a greater sense of “space” our system begins to reorganize, self-adjust, release old patterns of all sorts, allow more energy to flow, and many other amazing gifts. Once one is aware of expanded “space” it is an internal experience that can be found again without psychedelics. It is not always so easily done, as the “I” has a bad habit of getting in the way of allowing the fullness of the system to express and function. Various internal practices and healing methods cultivate awareness of these states of Being both with and without the use of psychedelics.

A more biomechanical explanation could be that the experience of the nervous system taking in more information prompts an improvement in the structure of the body in relation to the perceived world. This is an often-talked-about subject and observed phenomenon of psychedelics. The conscious mind becomes aware of the activity that is occurring within it already, and is able to observe more of the nervous system at work than is usually possible. It may allow access to held patterns, and go through an ex-

perience that finally allows the nervous system to release itself from that pattern/trauma. Through such an experience all the various structural components intertwined with it are released. Likewise, during the psychedelic experience touch and having traumas of the body accessed may reveal patterns deeply guarded within the nervous system/mind and allow a completion of their processing. Psychedelic chemistry affects the brain, allowing the mind to consciously “turn up the volume” on some very quiet processes which are occurring far in the background of the nervous system all of the time.

Any particular “issue” in the human system is always a complex meeting ground of many different elements coming together. The proper tools have to be employed with each of those systems for an “issue” to truly change. Imagine it as if there are many different languages being spoken within a human being. Each system has its own family of techniques for dialoguing with that particular system. Liken the human being to a pizza, with each slice representing some aspect of the human system. Each “slice” or particular system is always present in creating the whole, though the size of each component and the needed therapy to assist each in rebalancing and integrating will vary from situation to situation. Hands-on touch therapies can facilitate access and affect many of these.

All manners of touch therapy communicate with the various levels of the human system. Imagine touch as dialogue, with information being communicated both ways. As a person receives touch their entire system is paying attention to everything about the area of the body being accessed. As a therapist touches a person, they are both receiving information about the human under their hands, as well as placing input into that system. Literally, touch brings the receiver’s system to pay full attention to the place in the Self that is being accessed, and all the innate intelligence and information stored within the whole of the system regarding that place. Touch can also bring a system to eventually reconnect with areas that have become blocked to the nervous system due to trauma or other factors.

Expanded perception from psychedelic experiences allows a richer and more available realm of information to be accessed. Practitioners making use of psychedelics have access to greater perceptual space, and can receive more of the intelligence of their own system to innately know “how” to assist a person they are working with. The expression of this will be in context with the healer’s skill set and belief structures. The “I” has been quieted down and is more open to receiving information from the perceptual network. The practitioner’s healing skills set seems to come to life and know exactly what to do to deeply affect the receiver. This is the realm of the shamans and mystics. This place is rich with many gifts, including potent healing. As the practitioner becomes more accustomed to expanding their own system consciously, it becomes easier to do it without the aid of substances.

Beyond any technical training or particular skill set there is a critical truth to walking the path of the healer: it is not just what you do, it is about where you stand inside yourself as you do it.

Terrence Mckenna challenged us with the task of reaching into the psychedelic experience and bringing back medium-sized ideas and experiences that we can actually translate into a tangible effect in our daily reality. By opening our consciousness, our perception, and our nervous system through the psychedelic experience, we may be able to move beyond the barriers which make access to the information inside ourselves difficult to touch in our day to day experience of ourselves. Once understood, the skill of doing this can be a great boon to oneself and those who seek our healing services.

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Trevor Getsla instructs advanced level bodywork, and he runs a structural integration practice in Santa Cruz, California. He is also a lifelong martial arts student, and all-around body geek. Trevor can be contacted directly through Facebook, or reached for a bodywork session through midlinemassage.com.