Dear MAPS,

I have recognized the importance of psychedelics in my life since my first exposure to LSD on June 14th, 1962 at the International Foundation for Advance Studies in Menlo Park, California. I was required to produce a detailed history of my life and was examined by a medical doctor and by a psychiatrist for any problems. After these I had 10 weeks of Carbogen [a psychoactive mixture of gases] inhalation experiences before my day with 300 micrograms of LSD. I was a stubborn, know-it-all, college-educated, mid-westerner, ex-Catholic, that had this whole world figured out. What a shock to learn that there is more! Both my wife and I had profound experiences and with them came positive changes in our lives. We offered our services as "baby-sitters" — we stayed with and supported others during the evening and overnight the day of their sessions. We personally witnessed some dramatic changes in individuals — nearly all positive. We also opened our home to those who wished to meet and share their experiences.

We have to thank Myron Stolaroff for having the courage to forge ahead against some of society's most rigid pre-conceived beliefs and social fears and start a Foundation. I was an engineering manager at Ampex, the same company that Myron left to start the Foundation. Management, and especially the Personnel Manager at Ampex, were tracking those of us who experienced LSD at the Foundation. I'm unsure what they believed was happening to us but I knew the "big" boys were quite afraid to have an experience themselves. I now know that some with big egos protect themselves from change.

In November of 1965, I had the opportunity to participate in a problem solving session at the Foundation. It involved 27 individuals of various disciplines. The first day we completed one-half of a battery of the standard creativity tests — without LSD. The second day we ingested 100 micrograms of LSD, then completed the remaining portions of the tests. We also worked on a specific "technical" problem that we had brought with us. I was very pleased with my test results without LSD, as I felt I was a very creative, problem solving engineer. I was utterly amazed that with the use of 100 micrograms of LSD my horizons were broadened considerably. I've never forgotten that experience.

During my 35 year career I managed teams of engineers in high-tech development projects, mainly in the recording field — including the first instant replay equipment. I've been fascinated with the process of creativity and its output in engineering efforts as inventions. I have 15 or so inventions, but only in one can I clearly identify the creative process taking place. Other experiences in my life, including one or two with MDMA, have made me recognize that there is a "source" for really outstanding inventions, concepts, and solutions to all sorts of problems.

I intend to complete a book about creativity. A key premise in my book on creativity is based on the need to contact the "source" — to learn how to call on support from these higher powers of creativity when one has exhausted one's own creativity powers. My work speaks to this method of becoming creative. I also discuss different levels of creativity and believe we can learn to activate the highest level that is quite different than normal consciousness.

I believe under specific circumstances, set and setting, that MDMA is one of the few materials that allows an individual to focus on a particular "request." MDMA doesn't always carry me into realms of psychological problems and offers possibilities for exceptional creative results. Most others using psychedelics that I read about seem to focus on personal and/or interpersonal relationships and I believe there has been little investigation on using MDMA specifically for creative purposes. I don't mean to belittle the benefits of using material for these purposes I am speaking of a different emphasis.

I would like to know of others who have used MDMA specifically for creative purposes or are possibly considering getting a study approved.

The reason I target MDMA as vehicle is that I believe it is a substance that does not overwhelm the individual, like LSD or other materials, allowing one to direct or focus for specific results.

Walter J. Cheney
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We have to thank Myron Stolaroff for having the courage to forge ahead against some of society's most rigid pre-conceived beliefs and social fears

MDMA Psychotherapy: A Therapist's Perspective

(The following excerpt was written by a therapist who worked with MDMA in his practice, prior to its scheduling in 1985. In a six-year private study, he used MDMA as an adjunct to psychotherapy with eighty subjects.)

...Because the unconscious psyche is seldom accessible to our normal, everyday waking consciousness, we need to alter our consciousness to access this realm experientially. Therapists use dreams and altered state-inducing techniques such as free association, hypnosis, special breathing and body work to access the unconscious. None of these non-drug modalities can reach the unconscious as deeply, directly and profoundly as the use of drugs like MDMA in controlled therapeutic settings.

Deep emotional healing is an excruciatingly slow process, typically requiring many years of expensive weekly sessions that are well out of the financial reach of masses of suffering people. Since most people do not even begin serious therapy until mid-life, timeliness is invaluable. Drug-accelerated therapy offers the promise of genuine metamorphosis and healing in a fraction of the time and cost required by current mainstream therapies.

I routinely work with neurotics who have been in cognitive psychotherapy for up to twenty years and are still chronically depressed or anxious, stuck in patterns of dysfunctional relationships and unhealthy addictions. In a yearlong program of therapy incorporating four to twelve separate six-hour MDMA-assisted sessions, these people make significant life changes and quantum leaps in personal growth, healing and recovery.

The miracle of MDMA-assisted therapy begins as the drug melts defenses and "opens" the client's heart. Comfort with the therapist develops rapidly, and soon the subject is talking candidly about painful, embarrassing issues they may never have felt safe to disclose before. Layers of emotional armor continue to soften as the client floats into the soul-satisfying state of well-being that characterizes the MDMA "high". This relaxed, euphoric experience is imprinted and learned during the session, enabling the client to reproduce it later, without drugs. Once the heart "opening" occurs, it is common for clients who have been emotionally blocked to notice a permanent increase in the richness of their emotional response to everyday events and situations.

MDMA is not a "quick fix". Nor is it an appropriate medicine for everyone. However, with the guidance of a sensitive, experienced therapist, MDMA has proven to be a miraculous tool to enhance and accelerate the deepest alchemy of the psyche.

Sincerely,
Randy Coleman

The spiritual use of MDMA at a rave...

Dear MAPS,

Thanks for sending the latest issue of MAPS and congratulations on the breakthroughs in the research. "Perseverance furthers" - *I Ching.*

Well, I not only had a ball in England at the rave, but got an education and personal liberation. I had not been to a dance since I became a monk yet I used to love to dance and was part of the scene in the 60's.

What blew my mind was the fact that I'll be 70 this year (In late November - I will be in Bangkok on that day at a Buddhist conference). I was so *taken* by the MDMA and the music that I danced from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. It had a very strong impact on me, since I could totally give myself to the rhythm and was in a sort of trance, which reminded me very much of the Native American dances which I witnessed in New Mexico. It also occurred to me that the DJ was a kind of shaman. Having gotten over the initial 'shock' of the rave, I have had time to muse over the whole experience. I've come to the conclusion that rave dancing could be a very important aspect of the spiritual path. It is not only fun and relaxing but is also creative, that is, liberating. The other night I went to a nightclub to dance with three visiting monks from Mt. Baldy!

As to the use of MDMA, of course, I'm all in favor IF it is done in the proper way under the right circumstances— whatever that is. I would have to give it much more thought and experimenting to have the answer to that.

The effect MDMA has on me is like a magnifying glass. I use it only once or twice a year (my supply is very limited) for meditation. I can focus more sharply and the content becomes more magnified and I see more with my mind's eye. The only thing I don't like is that I become rather intent with a strong feeling of urgency. I gave a talk about a year ago while under the influence of MDMA and that didn't go over too well, saying things that were beyond the listener's grasp.

Hope you are happy & well.
H. K.

Members of Congress Voice Support for Marijuana/AIDS Research

Through the efforts of concerned MAPS readers and dedicated activists, members of Congress are learning of Dr. Donald Abrams' proposed pilot study comparing smoked marijuana and the oral THC capsule in improving appetite and weight gain in patients suffering from the AIDS Wasting Syndrome. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has not yet decided if it will supply the marijuana necessary for the study, although, for the last several decades, NIDA has provided marijuana to every FDA-approved research project requesting it.

Dr. Abrams' research project has been supported by the Physicians Association for AIDS Care, the nation's oldest and largest association of physicians involved with AIDS research and treatment. The Federation of American Scientists has also issued a statement supporting his study.

It is the hope of all who follow this issue; patients, caregivers, family members, scientists, and friends alike; that permission will soon be granted to begin this research. Thanks go to those who have concentrated their efforts on urging its swift implementation.

Here are excerpts of some of the letters from members of Congress who support marijuana/AIDS research:

"I am writing to urge speedy approval of his [Dr. Abrams'] still pending request."

— U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D–MA), to HHS Secretary Donna Shalala on November 1, 1994

"I agree with you that the federal government has no business usurping from doctors the authority to determine whether marijuana's medicinal properties can be beneficial to certain patients."

— U.S. Rep. Martin Hoke (R–OH), to a constituent on December 1, 1994

"Given that the Food and Drug Administration has already approved this project and knowing of the beneficial effects that marijuana has for many patients of deadly diseases, I actively urge that this project be carried out as was originally planned."

— U.S. Rep. Harry Johnston (D–FL), to Dr. Philip Lee on December 12, 1994

"Research could provide data the medical community needs to determine the effectiveness of smoked marijuana as a treatment for a variety of significant problems, including appetite enhancement for the AIDS wasting syndrome. ... I, therefore, encourage your agency to support the continuation of such research."

— U.S. Rep. Melvin Watt (D–NC), to Dr. Philip Lee on January 4, 1995

"I contacted the organizations involved [HHS and NIDA] regarding the study of medical uses of marijuana. ...I continue to believe that those who can benefit from the medical use of marijuana should be able to get the drug when prescribed."

— U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman (D–NY), to a constituent on January 5, 1995

"I am writing to express my support for Dr. Donald Abrams' request to NIDA for the marijuana necessary to begin his AIDS research."

— U.S. Sen. Paul Simon (D–IL), to Dr. Alan Leshner, director of NIDA, on January 6, 1995

"I share your support for the medical use of government-supplied marijuana and understand marijuana's potential to ease the side effects of many diseases and illnesses, including AIDS."

— U.S. Sen. John Glenn (D–OH), to a constituent on January 6, 1995

Marijuana has harmful side-effects... Nonetheless, I am a strong supporter of medical research and an advocate of the National Institutes of Health. In addition, I trust that the National Institute on Drug Abuse will continue to approve government sponsored research projects according to the established criteria. Should you find that a proposed project is unjustly rejected, I would be interested to see the documentation.

— Rep. John Porter (R-IL) to a constituent on January 18, 1995

NIDA is the only legal source of marijuana for clinical research purposes. Given the institute's past support for FDA-approved research, I am at a loss to understand the present delay. Dr. Abrams' research proposal has been approved by the FDA, the University of California Institutional Review Board and the California Research Advisory Panel and has been endorsed by the Physicians Association for AIDS Care. Surely we can all agree by now that such decisions should be based on scientific merit and not held hostage to political considerations. Officials of NIDA have apparently expressed some concern that the institutes' supplies would not be sufficient to enable Dr. Abrams to proceed to more extensive trials should his results so warrant. Yet such a hypothetical concern is hardly a sufficient reason to refuse to supply the modest quantity which would allow research to go forward. The effective management of HIV-associated wasting syndrome could prolong the lives of many who are living with HIV/AIDS. I urge that this request be speedily approved.

—Gerry Studds (D-MA), to HHS Secretary Donna Shalala on January 23, 1995

I am writing to encourage you to remove administrative barriers to scientific research on the therapeutic effects of marijuana. Last year, The Public Health Service (PHS) refused to reopen the single patient investigational new drug program for therapeutic marijuana because of insufficient scientific evidence to establish safety and efficacy. Now researchers at the University of California, San Francisco are experiencing resistance from the PHS in beginning the necessary clinical trials to answer the scientific questions outlined in last year's decision. As you know, there is strong support for the medical use of marijuana among AIDS and cancer patients. If objective scientific studies are needed in order to assess the safety and efficacy of this drug, then the PHS should be of assistance in facilitating such research.

— U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), to Dr. Philip Lee on February 14, 1995