

An Interview with **Ann Shulgin** on Psychedelics and Self-Discovery

Editor's Note:

This past summer, the Sybil Society and MAPS co-sponsored the Women's Visionary Congress, a unique gathering of women working to implement realistic alternatives to drug prohibition and to re-define society's understanding of psychedelics. Prior to the Congress, several interviews were conducted with elder stateswomen unable to attend in person. The interviews were recorded on video and shown at the conference. MAPS staffer and Bulletin co-editor Sarah Hufford took part in an interview with Ann Shulgin, a portion of which is transcribed below. For more information about the Women's Visionary Congress, including audio and video of conference presentations, see visionarycongress.org.

Sarah: Can you discuss the influence of psychedelics on your own personal growth? Are there specific psychedelics that you consider particularly helpful tools for self-discovery?

Ann: Every single human body has a different chemistry. So, just because a particular drug or visionary plant is my favorite, or has taught me a great deal, doesn't mean it's going to be so for anyone else.

In one recent case, I said often, too often, that something called 2CB Fly was absolutely great for me. To me, it's the loveliest thing, especially for eroticism. But I found out that it's not interesting to anybody else. I realized that having said that, I was putting things in motion. The Internet was full of 2CB Fly, and people were asking about it and I thought "uh-oh." It turned out that it's a disappointment to most other people. So if I say what my favorite psychedelics are, it's almost meaningless for other people, because they have to find their allies very carefully.

For example, 2CB, I think, is one of Sasha's really great inventions, and I think that 2CB is a pretty good friend to most people. But you come to something like ayahuasca—a close relative of mine feels that it's the greatest teacher that she's ever come across in the psychedelic world—and I can't take it. Sasha and I had two interesting experiences with ayahuasca. We went to a special place where the cer-

emony was conducted by very dear friends of ours, and it was a lovely experience. Sasha has totally different kinds of experiences than I do, but both of us felt that it was not going to be a dominant thing in our lives, although it was pleasant

and we had enjoyed it. So we were quite ready to try it again six months later. We went to the same place with the same people, and we took a very small amount. We were being very cautious, because we usually are. I spent the entire time holding onto my seat, hoping that I was going to survive, because I was being run over by a train. There was no way to learn anything, except how to stay alive. Sasha had a totally different experience, which was just as negative in its own way. He did a lot of vomiting, while I did none at all. Toward the end of my train ride, a voice in my head said, "Don't come here again."

I thought, "Uh-oh, well I'm not liable to, actually."

But then the next

day, when everyone was having the second session, we decided we would participate. But, we decided to take a miniscule amount, just a half or third of what we took the day before, which was a pretty minor amount in the first place. The train started coming at me again, and the whole thing repeated for both of us, except it didn't last quite as long. And the voice came back, and it said, "Didn't you



They teach you
that you're much saner
than you thought, and
that you probably are
much stronger,
mentally, than
you suspected...