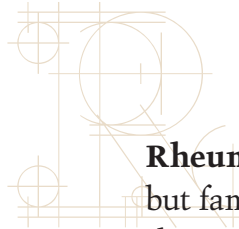


## Thirty Years of **Rheumatoid Arthritis** Cured After Third MDMA Session

By Steven Rooke



**Rheumatoid arthritis** was diagnosed in 1964 when I was 13 years old, but family, friends and I concluded it must have begun by age six, when there is evidence I was having arthritis symptoms. My hand surgeon in the 1980s suggested it may have started when I was even younger, based on the appearance of my wrist bones. The worst flare-up came when I was 22, when I could barely walk with crutches for a month, but symptoms varied widely throughout my teens and twenties; sometimes I could hike and even run for a few months at a time.

Over the years I was on many medications, from cortisone and prednisone to chloroquine, gold injections, and many NSAIDs. Rheumatologists would always ask about stress, and sometimes I could see a strong correlation: getting dumped by a girlfriend and receiving my draft notice exacerbated the inflammation; falling in love made it recede. I had a vasectomy when I was 26, largely because I did not want to become a parent passing this condition on.

I took LSD and psilocybe mushrooms when I was 25, and consistently had the following experience: the arthritis pain would recede as the mental effects increased. Not only would the pain recede, but I could close my fists—otherwise impossible—and do a deep knee bend. However, both pain and decreased range of motion would return fully as the mental effects wore off. In 1980 Andrew Weil said to keep an eye out for MDMA (which was still legal at the time), as it might have similar effects.

In 1986 I acquired some MDMA, and observed the same reduction of pain and increased range of motion on the front end, but unlike LSD or mushrooms it took as much as 24 to 36 hours for full symptoms to return. I had recently started working at an observatory, and was putting together a Cosmos slide show to accompany my new interest in astronomy and cosmology.

As the slide show neared completion in 1986, circumstances resulted in friends coming over three Friday nights in a row to take MDMA with Cosmos. I was able to weave together the story of how stars are born and die,

seeding galaxies with ever heavier elements, illustrated by glorious images on my 8-foot screen, dramatically enhanced by MDMA. The first two times, arthritis symptoms were back to baseline by Sunday. The third time was different...

On Saturday I drove my pickup to help some geologist friends move, carrying lots of rocks, plants, books. Returning home, on automatic I drew a hot bath to relieve the extra pain, and didn't realize until I was in the tub that actually, nothing hurt. It didn't return on Sunday. As the days went by I began to realize that for the first time since childhood, I was



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I had a 3-day flare-up in 1991, which ended on MDMA in a walk in the forest, and a 6-week flare-up in 1993 which ended abruptly not with MDMA but with a particular mind exercise. I remain completely free of arthritis in 2010.

While clearly catalyzed or enabled by MDMA, surely the remission was not caused by the compound all by itself, or else many rheumatoid sufferers would have been cured, and everyone would know about it by now. My own guess is that I had unconscious internal conflicts—some part of my psyche fighting some other part, similar to the autoimmune condition, where my white blood cells were attacking my own connective tissue. On MDMA the Cosmos slide show strongly impressed on us the connection of life with the physical universe—life belongs, rather than being an improbable accident. Perhaps something in my psyche had felt it did not belong, was disconnected—and when that disconnection was dissolved, something resonated all the way down to the cellular level in my immune system.

Some seven million people in the United States apparently have rheumatoid arthritis. If one percent of them developed an interest in deep psychological work, and one percent of those succeeded in digging up relevant hidden conflicts in the unconscious, there would still be 700 candidates for full remission if ordinary psychological methods could work to unlock a mind/body link to the underlying autoimmune condition – a number you'd think would have been noticed. The MDMA has to have played an essential role in this mind/body process, though not a sufficient one by itself.

In any case, that's what appeared to work for me, but how would you translate set and setting for someone else with rheumatoid arthritis (and maybe other autoimmune conditions)? If my remission was one-of-a-kind, there might not be enough that could be learned from it. But what if there are ten people with full RA remissions on MDMA, willing to be studied? Then someone might be able to

factor out the important parts, to apply to others perhaps in some future clinical trial.

Has anyone else had a long-lasting remission from rheumatoid arthritis on MDMA?

"...and a 6-week flare-up in 1993 which ended abruptly not with MDMA but with a particular mind exercise" I decided to call it a "mind exercise" rather than go into enough detail to explain what happened, which is this: At noon on a Saturday, 2 years after the 3-day 1991 flare-up, and 7 years after the

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remission, I had a sudden fierce RA flare-up out of the blue. At 3:00 pm I decided to take a full dose of San Pedro cactus to try to stop the flare-up, but all my joints remained fully stiff and painful right throughout. About 7:00 pm I also took a dose of MDMA, getting pretty worried by now. No effect on the RA. I finally dozed off after midnight.

I learned the next morning that my closest (and only) neighbor, 100 yards away, had committed suicide that evening at 12:30 am. He was a SWAT team cop whom I did not like at all, but whose face resembled my late father's—they could have looked like brothers. My flare-up had started 12 hours before he shot himself. The flare-up would not stop, even getting worse, and I had to start taking an NSAID (Voltaren). There were strange unexplained bangings and noises around the house, and finally at the two-week point I called Candace Lienhart, who had been trained rigorously as a Hawaiian Kahuna (she is mentioned in Fred Alan Wolf's book *The Eagle's Quest*). She "took a look" and said my neighbor's spirit was still hanging around, and yes, my

RA flare-up was somehow connected. She invited me to come to her "Kahuna Kindergarten" class the next morning, number 4 in a series of 7, held once a month on Sundays, saying she felt that I knew enough from an earlier interaction in 1992 to skip the prerequisites.

Candace gave us a homework assignment during this all-day class, but I kept putting it off until the night before the next class a month later—now six weeks into the flare-up with no signs of diminishing. The exercise was called "Ho'opono'ono," and the instructions were to sit quietly with your eyes closed and after the setup, "line up all the different selves you have been during this lifetime, stretching away into the past in a straight line in front of you." I had no idea how to do this, but it worked, taking about two hours. When I had the earliest memory/self lined up, I followed the instructions, which amounted to using my voice for each prior self to apologize to me (up here in the present) for harming myself "in any way, shape or form, in any thought, word, or deed, in any time, any place, past present or future," and then reciprocally apologizing and asking forgiveness from me up here in the present back to each of them in the past. You then "ignite with your will" this command to the parts of yourself that know how to do it, and immediately get up and occupy your mind with other things so as not to interfere.

The RA was even worse that night, possibly the worst night ever. I was constantly waking in extreme pain and having to move all my limbs to loosen up. At Candace's class the next morning I asked how long it took for this past-regression exercise to work, and she said oh, it can take several days. Exhausted, I fell asleep that Sunday night, and when I woke up Monday morning – all traces of RA were gone, 36 hours after the Ho'opono'ono. No pain. No reduced motion, just like I had been before my neighbor's suicide. That was Spring 1993, and I have had no further flare-ups to date, 2010. •