



# **WORKING WITH ENTHEOGENS**

## **— a very brief introduction**

*Entheogens are not drugs.  
The gods have given them to you as keys  
to speak with the divine.*

## **On the subject of entheogens**

Entheogens are psychoactive plants, mushrooms and substances that among other things make it possible to get in contact with the higher and the inner, our potential and our visions, but also with our pain. This makes them excellent tools for healing mentally and emotionally, to tap into creativity, and to find solutions and paths forward in life. They are also tools for opening the doors to the spirit world. In all these ways and many more, they have been used by shamans, witches and medicine people for thousands of years. It is probable that their use might even predate Homo Sapien and be closely linked to our very earliest shamanic, and later, religious practices.

Some of the most common from the plant and mushroom kingdoms are cacti containing mescaline, cannabis, mushrooms containing psilocybin and the brew Ayahuasca containing DMT. The most well known entheogen chemical is probably LSD.

The use of entheogens within the context of healing and personal development is on the rise. Where Western school medicine struggles to find effective treatment, entheogens are often reported to have miraculous effects. This is especially true in hard to treat conditions such as depression, addiction, trauma and coming to terms with death. While scientific research is taking an ever greater interest in entheogens, it is important to note that entheogens are still illegal in most countries, even when used with a purely therapeutic or spiritual intention.

With the use of entheogens on the rise I believe that it is important that those who turn to them have reliable information on how to use them safely, no matter if they do so legally or not. In this leaflet I have gathered the bare minimum of what I believe someone on that journey should know. Some of the advice is specific to the mushroom, but most of what I discuss is true for working with all entheogens.

# Inner preparations

## Intention

Why am I doing this? What am I looking for? Many who find their way to entheogens do so because they want to get unstuck or find a new perspective and align with their purpose, find vision, or work on healing trauma or negative thought patterns.

Write down your intention. A few sentences or even words will do. An intention can be specific or general. A specific intention will address a specific area or question that you want to dive into while a general intention might be something along the lines of “Give me what I need and the strength to face it”.

Setting an intention will make it easier to move in the direction you want, but sometimes we might actually be yearning for or need something very different. If the journey takes a different path you might need to let go of your intention and be open to what comes.

## The promise to oneself

Promise yourself that whatever comes up, you will deal with it. One way of doing this is by going into a meditative state and saying something along the lines of “I promise myself to take care of whatever comes up during the journey” until one’s whole being is saturated by the promise to oneself.

## Set & setting

Your journey will, to a great extent, be shaped by what is commonly referred to as set and setting.

**Mind set.** Where am I mentally? One does not need to be in the best mindset to use entheogens, but one does have to be willing and able to handle what arises from it.

**Heart set.** What does my soul long for? We are often quite aware of what we want mentally, but less aware of what our heart and soul wants. Entheogens will often speak to the latter.

**Skill set.** What skills do I or the people that I’m journeying with have that can be helpful in this experience? Therapeutic tools, creative expressions and such can all be of great help on the journey.

**Setting.** What space fits my intention? The best setting (place) is usually one where we feel safe and stimulated to explore ourselves. I recommend access to nature, which naturally heals and balances us. Nature is also great at helping us let go of that which no longer serves us.

# Physical preparations

## Dose

The dose is individual and you need to figure out what dose aligns with your specific intention.

A low dose might be good for gaining new perspectives and having a more social experience. A medium dose is more of a working dose with potential for diving into things or having a therapeutic experience. A high dose is often preferable when doing deeper therapeutic work, spiritual work or going on a vision quest.

A light dose of *Psilocybe Semilanceata* is approximately 11-44 mushrooms (0.25-1 g), a medium dose 44-88 mushrooms (1-2 g) and a high dose is anything above that. Five grams (220 mushrooms) or more is sometimes referred to as a heroic dose.

## Eating

Some will adhere to strict diets for weeks when preparing for a journey, while others will simply prepare by eating lightly or not at all the same day. How one does it depends on the entheogen, tradition and intention.

When working with the mushroom it is sufficient to stop eating 4 hours before ingesting it. Eat lightly leading up to that point. Fruit, a sandwich, tea, salad, and such.

Don't eat during the journey. Hold water and tea to a minimum, unless you need to purge. In that case, drink a tall glass of water first.

## Ceremonial preparations

### Preparing the space

Clean the space you will be using, first physically and then energetically. Physically by clearing clutter, tidying up and vacuum cleaning. After that clean the space energetically with sage, mugwort, drumming, song, and such.

### Preparing yourself

Wash yourself and wear clothes that are comfortable and in line with the experience. When doing a ceremony, you might want a ceremonial outfit or something extra comfy, while you might need something different if you're going for a hike.

It is common to also smudge or in some other way energetically clean oneself before opening the sacred space for the ceremony. This can for example be done with sage, mugwort, drumming, or with water.

### Opening a sacred space

Open a sacred space by inviting whatever energies you want to work with and have along for the journey. Ask them to keep you safe and help you in your healing. Also ask them to keep away energies that don't have your best at heart and welcome energies that want to help.

Close the sacred space when the ceremony is over by thanking for the help you have received.

### Respecting the entheogen

The sacred mushroom is a powerful entity and should be treated with respect. In a traditional setting the respect can be seen in the ceremony surrounding the use of the entheogen. Respect should however not be confused with tradition or ceremony. Respect is shown in your good intention, how you treat others, following through on what you have set out to do and meeting the entheogen as the teacher that it is.

## Navigating the experience

### Meditate into the journey

When the mushroom starts to take hold, lie down and meditate with it. You can say something along the lines of "Welcome into my body. Please help me heal and grow and see what I need to do. Please work with me and don't be shy to show me what you are doing". By doing so we are going into direct communication with ourselves and the entheogen.

The mushroom will tell or show you when the meditation is done. Then it is time to do something else. The meditation usually takes 20-60 minutes.

### Go with the flow and accept the challenge

As in life things get complicated when we try to cling to or get caught up in our (mis)conceptions. Think of the journey as a river and float downstream, instead of trying to swim towards the current or grabbing onto a root sticking out into the water.

The best way of facing a challenge is by accepting and meeting it. It might be frightening or upsetting, but by going into it you will also eventually come out of it with greater insight.

### Changing variables

If you feel bad during a journey it might be because you have something to face. In that case, accept and go into it. Sometimes we cannot locate what bothers us within, which might mean that it is something outside.

By changing the variables of setting we can change our experience. Go outside, go inside, go to another room, change the music, turn it off, talk with someone else, or be by yourself. By changing the setting your feelings will often also change.

### Emergency landing

If you need to land — eat. Food is earth and will gently take you down. It won't be a crash landing but rather a somewhat quicker descent. It might take a while and will not cut the energy.

With Ayahuasca I have been told that chili or lemon will cut the energy, but I have never seen it done.

I don't recommend emergency landing with the help of medicines, alcohol or cannabis. They might make the descent less controllable, or even intensify the journey and make it more confusing.

## Integration

Integration is the act of taking the insights from the experience and putting them to use in your everyday life. Some common tools for extracting and clarifying these insights are meditation, contemplation, journaling, coaching and the use of creative expressions.

The insights will then often lead to such things as a change of priorities, relations, deepened therapeutic work or a remake of one's life.

I would argue that integration is the most important, but also most overlooked, part of the journey. Some will find it easy to make the changes they need while many need help doing so.

If you don't do the work and come back to the entheogen with the same questions over and over again, your journeys will become much harsher in order to push you to make the change you need.

## About Daniel

Daniel Wilby is a teacher and mentor of personal and spiritual development, psychedelic coach and nature therapist working in close contact with Mother Earth and the spirit world. A significant part of his work has been focused on shadow work, exhaustion, depression, addiction and trauma. Moving forward he is however more interested in focusing on co-operation, co-creation, relations and love, in the many forms that these can be expressed.



He has 16 years of experience working with entheogens in the context of healing, personal growth and spiritual practice. His closest ally is the sacred mushroom and he has worked extensively with LSD, which he considers a sacred tool. He is also good friends with Ayahuasca and San Pedro. The information in this leaflet is cherry picked and shortened from his upcoming Swedish book *Läka och växa — en shamans verktygslåda* (eng. *Heal and grow — a shamans toolbox*) which contains a chapter on working with entheogens from a therapeutic and shamanic perspective.

In the area of entheogens Daniel might be persuaded to:

- offer guidance to people planning their own sessions
- support in integration work
- give talks on how to safely work with entheogens
- offer mentorship

Daniel lives in Sweden and is fluent in Swedish and English.

