Trippy: Scientists Using Hallucinogens to Treat Depression

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Turning back the clock more than 40 years, researchers are once again experimenting with hallucinogenic drugs as a treatment for a variety of ailments. Are we on the verge of creating another Timothy Leary or Ken Kesey? Probably not, but the trip is likely to be mighty interesting.

In the story, appearing in *The New York Times*, the researchers provide assurance that they're being extremely cautious this time around about over-hyping their positive results. Nevertheless, what they've found so far is compelling.

Clark Martin, a 65 year-old man from Vancouver, Washington, told the *Times* about his own experience in one of the studies, when his chemotherapy-induced depression failed to respond to standard treatments. He entered a study where researchers led him on a controlled six-hour trip with psilocybin, the active in ingredient in "magic" mushrooms.

> "All of a sudden, everything familiar started evaporating," he recalled. "Imagine you fall off a boat out in the open ocean, and you turn around, and the boat is gone. And then the water's gone. And then you're gone."

> "It was a whole personality shift for me," he continues. "I wasn't any longer attached to my performance and

trying to control things. I could see that the really good things in life will happen if you just show up and share your natural enthusiasms with people. You have a feeling of attunement with other people.”

According to Martin, this single trip down the rabbit hole helped him overcome his depression and improve his core familial relationships--and the effects have persisted for a year. Researchers think the treatment could be particularly useful in people confronting terminal illnesses--and they’re actively testing this theory.

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