

Hey Matt, how are you doing today?

David, I'm doing well. How are you doing?

I'm all right. Where does this podcast find you today?

I'm in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and you're up in New York?

David Stewart (03:00.022)

I am in New York City today, yes.

That's where we lived before we moved here, but it was over 20 years ago, so.

All right. Well, it's the same, just more. So I'm curious about your work. And just before we get in on the podcast, you told me you had a brand new book that just dropped called Beginner's Guide to Psychedelics, which I think is, as I mentioned, I thought, wow, that's, it's like so 1967, like you see that book in like a Haight Ashbury or something.

Exactly.

Matt Zemon (03:29.368)

You know, it feels like a flashback to the sixties these days that there's this whole kind of resurgence of interest in psychedelics for a variety of reasons. And yeah, I can see how that could be a flashback to the San Francisco days.

I've read how really what, and you probably know more about this than I do, but how in the 40s and 50s and even through like the early 60s, that specifically LSD was really highly therapeutic. And I recall, I think it was in Saskatchewan, it was the primary treatment for alcoholism.

It was, and then we had great work being done down in Maryland here in the States. And Bill W wanted LSD to be part of the 12-step program with Alcoholics Anonymous. He did not win that discussion, but he certainly lobbied for it.

Yes, I've heard a little bit about that and I heard it was a branding decision. Essentially, they thought it was bad for the AA brand and what I have heard, and again, I don't know if this is true, so Bill W. lore of AA is that he had this sort of white light experience and created all of AA out of that experience, but I have heard that that white light experience was actually under the influence of Belladonna, that he was actually tripping when this happened.

It wasn't walking down the street and wasn't touched by God. was something else.

Matt Zemon (04:53.064)

I think he had kind of multiple experiences over those formative years, but his premise of step number one is to accept or acknowledge there's some type of higher power, some type of

source, some type of universal consciousness. And his thesis was that LSD or other psychedelics would be a way to help people take that first step who aren't naturally inclined to take that step. It is amazing. And we're seeing

Of course, there's been ceremonial use of psychedelics forever, but we're even seeing in clinical research that some of the research is occasioning these mystical experiences. And what does science do with that? It's really interesting.

Now we're sort of on this addiction track here. So talk to me about the intersection of addiction and PTSD.

And obviously psychedelics. I'm going to break, I'm have to break it down in chunks, I think. So let's start just substance use as a challenge. What happens when we get into these repetitive thinking patterns that manifest in using a substance that might not be beneficial to us. The thesis or theory behind psychedelics for substance use is that it breaks those repetitive thinking patterns. It helps us remember that there was a time before we were having that behavior manifest.

And that there's another way to do it. And once we remember that, we can then act that way in all the days following the psychedelic experience. So they're using, they're doing tests with alcohol and with smoking and having just tremendous results with a specific psychedelic called Ibogaine or Iboga is the root. They're doing tests with heroin. So PTSD, many people are, whether these are first responders, these are veterans, these are victims of sexual assault.

Matt Zemon (06:43.182)

For some of them, the thinking patterns, this is a way of soothing. This is a way of self-medicating because the antidepressants and the talk therapies aren't working for them. And the, again, the theory is that, okay, we can use psychedelics to break those repetitive thinking patterns, but then also to tap down shame, blame, and guilt, and have them re-examine the stories that they've been telling themselves, and hopefully transmute that into some, a new story.

that can then help them move forward.

What this brings to mind is that I'm probably getting a lot of trouble with mental health people when I say this, but there's a certain sort of like similarity of thinking with PTSD and addiction in that there's sort of a reduced optionality of response. That things are very tight in and that the possibility of, it's terrible, keep thinking like, Demetri, expand your mind, increasing optionality and saying like, like,

There might be more here than what this sort of rut that I'm in.

Yeah, and I think that's the same reason why we're looking at psychedelics for depression and anxiety and OCD and eating disorders, workaholism. These are all just the ways humans

manifest repetitive thinking patterns. So we all do it in different ways. We're funny as a culture, we'll judge some harsher than others. It's, poor person, they can't get out of bed, but we'll put someone who ignores their family and works 40 hours a day on the cover of Fortune.

Matt Zemon (08:17.534)

So we're funny about that. But yeah, these medicines remind us that there are other ways to think about ourselves, our relationships, our jobs, our lives. And with that remembrance, different choices can be made. And it's just, it's incredibly powerful. So I'm not, and I want to be super clear here and early on clear that I don't believe psychedelics are cure for anything. This isn't Western medicine. This is not a pill you take and boom, it does something. What it does do.

is it's a catalyst. It puts us into a frame of mind where then we can search ourselves and have our own voice come up and show us our own way of moving through whatever challenge we are processing in that experience. And that's really different than how we look at kind of Western medicine. If I'm going to take this, I'm going to lose weight. I'm going to take this pill and it's going to make this situation better. That is not what psychedelics do.

As you were talking, the thought that entered my mind is that if we look at so much of the diseases of the modern world, so obesity, metabolic syndrome, so much of this are diseases of addiction, of repetitive self-destructive behavior. It's occurred to me that as a survival mechanism, humans are sort of wired for addictive, repetitive behavior. Like we left the cave, we walked over here, there was a bunch of berries, I ate them, okay, that worked. I'm gonna do that again.

again and again and again. I don't know, that how we are or that reductive of me?

Yeah, I see where you're going with it. And the challenge I have is I think we're also swimming in a culture and swimming in an industrialization that is working against us. So for example, we may be pre-wired to enjoy sugars, but now we have a culture and an industrialized food complex that's putting a ton of them into everything we're eating. So it makes us want to do that more. We may have a attention that looks for things that are dangerous.

Matt Zemon (10:17.012)

it's no surprise that we are then following the news and looking at social media in ways that are not healthy for us on our phones. we have, there are cultural things that are happening that make that challenging. What I think is interesting about this particular time with psychedelics is that we have, on one hand, we have kind of an inner knowing that we all have that,

There's too much depression. There's too much anxiety. There's too much loneliness that there's not enough connection. And there's enough people who are saying, these antidepressants that you've given me have tamped down my emotion, have caused sexual lethargy, have caused weight gain, have caused issues in my relationships. There has to be another way to deal with this. That's not just numbing the symptoms, but that gets to the root.

And I think that inner knowing that we all have is why we are looking at those studies. And I think, simultaneous with that, we have people leaving institutionalized religion at a tremendous pace and turning towards these direct spiritual experiences with psychedelic ceremonies and saying, I don't want to be told about a story about somebody from some, from long ago from another person who doesn't really embody that experience.

I want to go search for spirit myself. And these tools, these psychedelics, in this case, I would call them entheogens. That's what we call psychedelics when they're used in the spiritual sense. That's what they were used for for thousands of years. So it's, again, we all, think we're pre-wired for that as well. So just different ways people are accessing these tools for different reasons, but I think it's all connected. I know it's all connected.

People say we live in the attention economy, and I would say we live in the addiction economy. social media is about addiction. It's designed. Doritos are designed for addiction.

Matt Zemon (12:22.459)
New gambling apps are designed

Oh my God, blows my mind that these things are allowed. Gambling is bad enough and now you're going to supercharge it and you're going to put it in the hands of like 16 and 17 year olds who are you out of your mind? Sorry, my bad, but yeah.

I think it's important, and I think actually this ties back to some of the Buddhist theories of we have to be careful with what we consume. And we can consume through our mouths, we can consume through our eyes, we can consume through our hearts. And these tools, these things that look benign in our phones are not benign. And it takes a lot of attention and intention to use those and not get sucked into these different, again, repetitive thinking patterns. And whether that's...

that's fear, the economy's going to hell, the world's going to hell, this is the end of the universe, or whether it's addiction with gambling or, yeah, whether it's just the I'm gonna use DoorDash and have bad food delivered to me all the time. Yeah, we have to, we have an opportunity to think about what we consume and all these aspects and the phone is a big tool we all use for that.

I don't think it's a coincidence that on the one hand you have these, I'm gonna call them the forces of like industrial addiction. that's what's happening. That people used to say like TV will rot your brain. Well, that ain't nothing. They didn't know. And at the same time, you have this sort of counter. When I say the word counter, always and I go back to like 1967. 70 Liri.

David Stewart (14:11.084)
And I really see this, this sort of rebirth of the interest in psychedelics, which even five years ago, we wouldn't be having this conversation, but I think it's that it's a counter move towards what you said, like connection, community, and regaining agency over your mind, over your

thoughts, getting out of that. And so I keep going back to this idea of addiction as this sort of like, this rut that you just sort of circling around and around and...

My only possible response is this. can't, over here doesn't exist to me. I'm only in here and I don't think it's a coincidence.

So I think we as, think there's so many, there's so much happening right now that is, that's just new. So relatively new in the history of, of, of humankind. And we have this, we have what we're seeing in the political world. Meanwhile, we have vertical farming, we have AI on the rise, we have autonomous cars coming out. have all of this amazing shifts in technology. And meanwhile.

we as humans are becoming more more lonely. We are participating in less civic groups, we're participating in less spiritual groups, we're not bowling together, we are becoming more and more isolated. And then I think for the listeners of this podcast, we also have this generational shift. We have our parents who are either aging and experiencing the effects of aging, or they're dying, and then we have our kids who are moving into this space.

who are, okay, how are they gonna afford a home anywhere near where I live, given what's happened with the rising of home costs? And then how do I keep my family near me? What am I responsible for? And all of these questions are arising. And then meanwhile, a technology that's very old is coming back into our attention and we're realizing, my gosh, I didn't know I was in a prohibition. I just thought these were bad for us, but no, it turns out.

Matt Zemon (16:11.576)

They're not bad for us. That wasn't the reason why they were prohibited. So then what are these and how do they work and how can I use them to fill in the blank? And some people are going to say, because I have a medical reason, I have depression, I have anxiety, I have OCD. Great. And others are going to say, no, I don't have any of that or I don't want to do it because I have enough of any of that.

I want to do it to explore my consciousness. I want to it to explore how I can become a better person in this chapter that I'm in, in this life. And how do I think about all of this change that's happening? And how do I think about all of this change that's happening as working for me and not against me?

There's a lot there. I've heard a saying, one of the folks who I've spoken to about this, I think he used the term the betterment of healthy people. in addition to people who have issues that can be challenging to them, it's people who would be considered healthy and well-functioning, the betterment of them. I think that that's interesting, sort of an explanation. Here, I'm going to tell you a little story. You want a story?

love a story.

Two months ago, I was talking to a breathwork guy and somewhere in my mind, this, this holotropic breathing thing. I said, yeah, what is that? Can I, and he said, yeah, yeah, you want to see this woman, a Laria, she'll like do this thing for you. And I just sort of forgot about it until about 15 minutes before she was going to come in. I thought, what, what is this thing that I'm doing? And then I looked it up and I was like, my God, what have I signed up for? Laria's Italian, she's very nice. And I said, could you.

David Stewart (17:52.64)

explained to me like what's going to happen here. And she said, well, have you done breathing? I said, well, I've done like Wim Hof and I've done some other breathing, but I don't think like what we're about to do. And she said, no. And so he gave me this whole sort of like 10 minute talk about, she said, well, your hands may curl up, you may get in a ball, you may start screaming, you may start crying, you may feel the need to dance, to sing, these spirits may leave your body. And I'm thinking like,

Okay, Sunday afternoon, why not? Let's see where we can go with this. So none of that scary stuff happened. What did happen though was holotropic breathing is it's basically you're breathing in, out, in, out, and you don't stop for I think this is 45, 50 minutes or something. So at some point in there, muscly it gets a little challenging. And I just sort of paused and then it was like,

I don't know how long that sensation happened, but this was, and I'm not an aficionado of psychedelics, but it was definitely, I was in another place outside of my body with a lot of other stuff going on. That was not my normal reality. I don't know how long it lasts, not too long. And then I just suddenly went back to breathing. But anyway, that was my psychedelic experience on Sunday.

Those non-ordinary states of consciousness that you're referring to are special and in this case for you Was it purely somatic or did you have any? No anything come up for you?

She warned me that like, well, it's trauma and other things. And then, no, no. What happened was I experienced greatness. I experienced what actual greatness felt like. And it was just like, wow. Greatness is about having this excess capacity where you can help other people. It's what came to me. And I was like, wow, that's really awesome.

Matt Zemon (19:48.471)

really awesome.

Revelation, yeah.

I love the word revelation in this context because I think that's what these things are. And, and if we look historically, the historic name for that type of experience would be a mystical experience where I had a experience where I somehow was connected to something bigger than myself. In

your case, you use the term greatness. And in that moment, I saw something that I didn't, I knew, let me try that, something that I didn't really understand viscerally before. And.

There's lots of ways to do that. You can go and sit in the desert for 40 days and we can do holotropic breath work and we can go hide out in a cave and we can fast and sometimes from epilepsy or different seizures, these things create this. sometimes using a psychedelic can get us into this condition where we're in this non-ordinary state and we understand, we know, we remember that we're not separate and apart from nature. We are nature.

and that we are not separate from even you and I, but that we are deeply connected. We might look like different waves, but we're part of the same ocean. And with that, I can align in terms of what do I do and every day with that understanding. And that can change potentially how I work and how I interact with people and how I bring presence to different conversations. But that experience is a beautiful gift.

Matt Zemon (21:20.718)

to be able to have and something that I can't imagine now that you've had it. Like there was life before you had that and now you know you can experience that.

We'll be right back with Matt Zeman after a brief word from our sponsors. You know, I've spent years talking about health longevity and optimizing how we live, but here's something we don't talk about enough, what we're cooking with. Most nonstick pans are still loaded with forever chemicals, stuff like Teflon and PFAs that can leach into your food and even the air in your home. Not great. That's why I've switched to OurPlace. Their cookware is completely toxin-free, high-performance, and ridiculously easy to clean.

Their four-piece cookware set replaces an entire cluttered stack of pots and pans, saving space and saving you \$150 when you bundle. Plus it comes in their signature gorgeous colors. I have the cast iron always pan in sage green and it is beautiful. Upgrade your kitchen and cook with confidence. Head to ourplace.com slash agist and use code agist for 10 % off site wide with a 100 day risk free trial. Why wouldn't you try it? Did you know that just

pounding water all day is not going to keep you hydrated. You need the right mix of electrolytes in that water to help that water be absorbed properly and also to help your body function well with the right electrolytes. Element. LMNT contains sodium, potassium, and magnesium, which are critical for helping our brains and our bodies function. One of the unfortunate facts is as we get older, it's harder to drink water, essentially because our thirst response is diminished.

So we need to put extra emphasis on drinking water, staying hydrated with the right electrolytes. Of course, if you are pre-hypertensive or have hypertension, check with your doctor before having anything with sodium in it. For the rest of us though, Element is a great solution. Go to drinkelement.com. That's D-R-I-N-K-L-M-N-T dot com and get yourself a free eight serving sample pack with the purchase of any electrolyte drink mix.

David Stewart (23:23.936)

mental health professional tell me once that all human beings have three core delusions. And the problem is their core and they are delusions. They're very deeply held. I think that one of the things that, you know, as we talk about this industrial addiction world that we live in, separating out what the delusion from what we really are.

people out there listening, this is not an advertisement for doing psychedelics. I'm just, we're having a conversation about this. Psychedelics in a lot of places are illegal, so you want to be careful with that. there are medical things you want to set in setting, very important.

So.

Matt Zemon (24:03.616)

And source, also important. And source.

Yes, yes. But I think that these things may open a way of seeing, pulling away some of these core delusions. So in the case of addiction, this idea that there is no alternative, I must have this response to this feeling or someone in PTSD said there's a stimulus which requires a response which the person may feel is appropriate, but maybe if they had a different belief system, wouldn't be. Over simplifying things that are really, complicated and difficult for people, I realize that.

But I think that having this other glimpse there of like, as you were saying, we're all connected. We share the same molecules. We live in the same world here. There isn't this separation. Perhaps a lot of the things that we feel compelled to spend our attention on, it may not be in our best interest.

That resonates deeply. I'll tell you a story. I'll flip it around on you. So in theogenic journeys I was on, I actually went through a dying process. And in the dying process, I went so far as actually seeing myself as worm food, as decomposing earth. And there was a piece of me that was sad for not saying goodbye to my wife and my kids and feeling like I left this planet too soon.

But there was also part of me that was just, this is so beautiful that all of these, like, I am not just a thing. I am comprised of a gazillion things that are now coming into this communion with earth. And it was beautiful. And then in a flash, I noticed I breathed. And in that breath, it was like, I'm alive. And the fear of the, the feel of awe.

Matt Zemon (25:53.878)

and gratitude was overwhelming. And the remembrance for me, so we talk about the delusions, there's really two major delusions that went away. The first one was that I am becoming anything. It was no, I already am everything as are you. And I don't need to become, I need to be. And that is a very different than the fast paced, high charging executive role that I had played for so many years. And that was this incredible

relief and release. And then the other is switching from almost a scarcity mindset to an abundance mindset, a mindset of there's not enough. I need more. I need to accumulate more. need, I, I, I'm scared versus, my God, the earth is supporting me. Everything around me is supporting me. I don't need much to live in that place. And there's plenty, not just for me, but for everyone.

And how can I be a part of helping others see that and experience that? And I know I come, I say that knowing I come from a place of great privilege and it is an abundant world. There is plenty out here. And it just, these non-ordinary states can help us re-see the world in ways that, and re-feel the world in ways that we do not prior to that experience.

You work with a lot of veterans. My father was military and I have an enormous amount of respect for the services. I've never served, but I've been around them. And I can tell you that they are extraordinarily impressive. I think only if you've been around them and you see how they function, it's amazing. But there can be reentry difficulties. There can be issues. Talk to me a little bit about if you have

Until...

David Stewart (27:47.872)

story you want to share of someone who transformed by what you do.

So I spent about a year working on this book, The Veterans Guide to Psychedelics with a group called Heroic Hearts Project. And Heroic Hearts Project is one of a number of nonprofits that take our veterans and send them either to Central and South America or to Oregon, where they can access legal psychedelics. And they started doing this work. Right now, depending on which research you accept, somewhere between 17 and 44 veterans a day.

are killing themselves. It's a big number. We've had since 9-11, well, I think there was, I think it was under 5,000 soldiers in combat who were killed. We've had over 30,000 veterans and soldiers take their lives. So it's a tremendous, tremendous challenge. And this challenge stems from if the antidepressants and therapy that they're given, they just don't work on enough of them. They work when they work. And when they don't, they don't.

These tools are potentially a lifeline for them. So what did I notice working with them? I noticed that a lot of them had really traumatic childhoods. So they came from, in many cases, more poor or rural backgrounds. They had dysfunctional families and the military was a way out. A military was a way into structure. A military was a way for them to, to become Luke Skywalker, to become, I want to go serve. I want to support. I want to save the world. I want to help. Beautiful.

And they're coming in, in many cases, with some traumas and some challenges without a lot of resources. And then they're moving into a system where a lot happens very quickly, from shaving their head, from loss of identity, from you are not enough, from being poked with

needles, to very dangerous training that's hard. And then some of them go on to combat and see a whole bunch of things that you and I don't normally see.

Matt Zemon (29:47.658)

Then when they come back, they went from having a brother and a sisterhood, having a mission, having a role and having responsibility to in many cases small town America, where they go from being important in their minds to working at a factory for a little bit over minimum wage. And they lose their identity and they've lost their tribe. And they are, as we could understand, sad.

and experiencing depression and anxiety and manifesting these addictive behaviors that you were talking about earlier, and in many cases, killing themselves. What we have found is when we give these veterans a specific psychedelic, in this case, most of the research has been done with MDMA and with therapy. So they have like three sessions of therapy, a session with the medicine, three more sessions, and they do that like three times. Over 70 %...

emerge without a PTSD diagnosis. It's a big number. Now the FDA said it's not enough research. It was a phase three clinical trial, two part. The FDA said we need more. So they're going back into this. going to be another couple of years, but that's the kind of results that we're seeing with this tool, where this tool allows them to look back at what was my role in that situation? What was my role in my family?

What am I responsible for and how can I relook at it how can I make more meaning of the world I'm actually living in with this wife and these kids or this husband and this house in this town? And what am I gonna do with the rest of my life? And it doesn't tell them the answer. I wanna be super clear that these aren't cures. It doesn't do the work for the veteran, but it puts them in a condition where they can do their own work and move forward. And that's really, really different. We all know...

If someone tells us something, that's one thing. And if we believe and learn something ourselves, it's another. And that's how these work. Yeah.

David Stewart (31:45.42)

Yeah. I'd be fine. If you told me whatever, I would sort of go into my knowledge bank and say, that's kind of interesting. And it may cause me to take an action, but it's the action that I learned from.

And I just want to also stress, so we're talking about veterans right now, but I do want to generalize this. And when we're talking about PTSD, that affects first responders, it affects our healthcare workers, it affects victims of sexual assault. There's many, many people who have PTSD in our country that aren't veterans and the same principle works. And this research was done on other groups besides veterans with very similar results. So I just want to make sure that's out there, that this is not unique to veterans.

Yeah, thank you for saying that. There's a lot of people in the world that suffer from PTSD, and you don't have to be in the military to have that happen to you. Bad things can happen in a lot of different ways.

How do we as the living and how do we as the surviving and how do we as the ones that have the opportunity to carry on, how do we use whatever that was as something that was for us and not to us? And I know that's hard. The alternative, the suffering is harder.

Let's go back to that. When we say for us versus to us, I look at this as one is sort of an optimistic mindset of possibility, and the other one is a pessimistic mindset of things are fixed.

Matt Zemon (33:08.174)

Yeah, it's that abundance versus scarcity. It's how do we want to live our lives and how do I want to live my life? And I would much rather live it in a creator, creative state versus in a victim state for me. And I'm saying anyone else has to do this, but I'd rather assume that everything that happens to me is part of my learning, healing, and growing. And if I can frame things like that,

And I'm talking, I mean, it can be awful things. If I can frame things like that, okay, I somehow manifested this in my life. Okay, now what am I gonna do? And I just, would prefer to live in that frame of reference for all things. like, for me, that makes life easier and more enriching for me. And again, that's, not saying anyone else has to do that, but that's how it works for me.

This is super interesting. I might get you in legal trouble by asking this question, but you don't have to answer it. If someone was interested in, I haven't read the Beginner's Guide to Psychedelics, it just came out. There might be information in there on this, but if I was as a reasonably well person, and my wife would probably take issue with that, but let's assume that I am. And for the betterment of someone like myself, and I wanted to increase my sense of abundance and

optimism and positivity and possibly explore more of myself through psychedelics. What would I do?

think there's three main ways that people access psychedelics in America. So some are going to say, well, what are my legal options in the United States? Okay, great. So you can access ketamine in all 50 states. Well, it's technically not a psychedelic. It's a disassociative anesthetic. It acts like a psychedelic, so people kind of group it together. So that's an option. You could fly to Oregon and soon Colorado and maybe soon New Mexico and have a psychedelic experience there.

Matt Zemon (35:11.594)

Those would be your legal options in the states. Others will say, you know, I want a spiritual experience. And there are hundreds and hundreds of psychedelic churches across the United States. Now these operate, but the exception for them have federal exemptions for to be allowed to legally serve psychedelics. The others say, wait a minute, we're protected by the

Constitution. We're protected by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. We're protected by our state constitutions.

to be able to practice our religion. So they practice in this legal, in this gray zone where they're protected by law and statute, but illegal at the same time. Those are options. Some will say, want to hop on an airplane and go to Peru, Central America, Jamaica, the Netherlands, and experience a psychedelic retreat. And for those that can afford to do that, that's a beautiful option. What I encourage people to do if they're going to do this is to try to find a psychedelic society near them.

Psychonaut Society New York and see what's available. know in Manhattan, as an example, there's one in New York, there's one in Brooklyn, there's one in multiple New Jersey, but find ideally a group of people who are doing this work and that you can look at them and say, okay, well, you look kind of like I can, I think I can understand what you're saying and tell me what's happening in this area and tell me what you're doing and tell me what are my options here and see if any of that feels okay to you.

I think trying to find someone, whether it's an underground therapist or a church community or a coach who can help bring you on this journey can be a better way to do more risk reduced way to do things. But doing the research to find out and how you feel about whomever you're going to work with is a key part of that process.

would think so. I would think that you would want a high degree of trust and comfort with doing this kind of work. You're in a very malleable state. I anyway would want to feel good about that.

Matt Zemon (37:09.482)

Stay on that for moment. I want to just talk about risk for a moment. Yeah, please. A lot of people in the psychedelic space will point to a few studies and say, well, look how much less dangerous mushrooms are to alcohol or to heroin or to nicotine. Great. I agree. But there's still even in that little bit of danger that's there, there's still danger there. Acidaminophen, the active ingredient in over-the-counter Tylenol, kills over 450 people every year in America. So all drugs have risks.

And if we're going to use these medicines, we need to understand what those risks are and work to mitigate those risks. So you brought up malleable. Absolutely. When we're in a non-ordinary state of consciousness, we are impressionable and we need to be very careful of who's around us and what they're saying and what they're playing and what they're doing. We're also not in a place where we can give consent.

And we're not in a place where we can protect ourselves. So making sure that there's lots of eyes on the scene and that no one's going to do anything to us while we're in an altered state is super important. Johns Hopkins does say though, that if we pay attention to source, where did your medicine come from? Is it pure? Set? What's my mindset? Do I know where I am? Am I

informed? I there? Because it's my choice. And setting the physical environment, if we watch those three things carefully,

the probability of a truly bad trip is very, very, very, very, very low. The challenge is making sure we do those things. And I want to be super clear on one more point. That's true even if you're doing legal ketamine, because there are a variety of doctors, there's a variety of ways that ketamine is delivered in America that's all legal, but doesn't mean it's right for you. And I'll give one simple example. You can go to a ketamine clinic on 32nd Street.

where you will have a nurse anesthesiologist meet you. She'll put an IV in your arm. You'll have a, they will consider a biochemical reaction and you'll recover and they'll send you on your way. And you can go to another one on 32nd street where they believe it's a biochemical psychosocial spiritual process. And they're going to make you set intentions. They're going to talk to you about why you're there. And they're going to put a blanket and music and eye mask. And then they're going to work with you afterwards about what came up for you. Both are legal.

Matt Zemon (39:31.106)

very different experiences. And I'm not saying one is better and one is wrong. They're just different. And what one is right for you is what to ask. So legal, illegal, underground, retreat, church, what's right for you?

Well said, Matt. It's been a real pleasure having you on. And as we're recording this today, our leader has decided that it's best to put tariffs on the rest of the planet for reasons unknown. And it's causing a lot of tumult. And I think that, as you pointed out, we're in a time of tremendous, the velocity of change is really increasing.

Understanding one of the things that I'm, I think about a lot is what does it mean to be human in the 21st century and how to be a good human in the 21st century. And I think that that's changing from what it was in the past. The idea of an enhanced human is not 10 years in the future, it is now. So a lot of the things that we considered were sort of bedrock that we could count on are rapidly changing and our ability to

You know, as you said, see ourselves as connected and not necessarily disconnected and have a sense of agency and that we are creative within this. And how did you say the difference between creative state and victim state? I think it's very easy in times of what we're experiencing now and we'll be experiencing even more and more in the future. This tumult, this tsunami of change that's coming on us so we can fall into victim state.

we can fall into dial or we can stay in creative state. And I think that anything that we can do to keep that creative state mindset is going to be critical to be human in the 21st century. That's what I think.

Matt Zemon (41:25.708)

I think that's beautiful, David. I couldn't agree with you more. I think what's coming forward for me is as we're in our fifties, our sixties, our seventies, our eighties, how are we going to live the best life that we have with the afflictions that happen to us in this period, with the loss of friends and family that happened during this period? How do we celebrate the love that exists? How do we repair what needs to be repaired? How do we

make the most of this life that we have while we're here because it's later than we think. And while all these distractions are happening all over here, these distractions take us, take me, I won't talk about you, it takes me away from this. And it takes me away from having really meaningful discussions at the dinner table. And it takes me away from loving my kids as much as I can. It takes me away from friends and family. So how do I balance

There are things that need, I can work on. There's places to spend my energy to make the world a better place. And how do I make this place right here? This very, very hyper local that starts with me and then moves on slowly to we, how do I make that better now? And I believe that these tools we've been talking about can help and so can breath work and meditation and a lot of other ways. This is just one way that's worked for me.

expand the toolbox. More tools is always good.

Yes, I think so.

David Stewart (42:57.122)

Matt, thank you so much. We're going to put links to your two books. I'm actually today going to order The Beginner's Guide to Psychedelics. I find these things very interesting. And I think that my recollection, you can help me out on this. I think the history of this is Timothy Leary essentially got in a fight with Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War was on. And I think Leary was like, this stuff is all crazy. Like, don't do this.

Appreciate that.

David Stewart (43:24.184)

tune in, tune out, I don't know what it was. And Nixon was like, no, we can't have that. then the whole curtain came down on sort of like street action that was going on with it. But there was an enormous amount of serious scientific therapy that sort of just got locked in a closet for 40 years. we decided maybe it's time to look at that again.

Absolutely.

Matt Zemon (43:50.178)

Yeah, over a thousand papers. had multiple conferences and psychedelics and respected institutions were looking at this. really, Nixon, one of Nixon's lawyers actually said, we had two enemies. We were, we were against the anti-war left and black people. And we knew, did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did. But they knew by criminalizing drugs,

they could infiltrate both groups. And that met their agenda. And yeah, Leary and Nixon were not.

But that was really about civil rights and the Vietnam War. And here we are, but here we are. So we have all that. We now understand how prohibition didn't work. We're seeing states taking this into their own hands and saying, we need to get people access. have, again, an epidemic of loneliness, as our Surgeon General says. And we have a tool that's been available.

And we now just need to figure out how to create a collaboration between science and spirit.

All connection is good.

All connections are good. Yes.

David Stewart (45:01.432)

Matt, thank you so much for your time today.

These are great questions and I appreciate just the conversation. Thank you.

Absolutely. Thank you. Thank you for all you do. Thank you for your work with the veterans and for people out there who need help. This is a good thing.

I certainly believe it is. You're not broken. You just forgot how powerful you were.

Love that. I'm going to take that. That's a good one.

Matt Zemon (45:22.67)

I might have to write that down. like that reaction.

Thanks so much. Take care now, Matt. Thank you, Dave.