Dear Alice,

I've recently dropped acid about 5 times a week for oh... about 3 months now. I have grown mentally and spiritually in ways unimaginable. But friends tell me I am in a false reality now; this brings me off my trip although I now only trip mentally (without the drug). In your opinion, has acid hurt me or helped bring my level of consciousness to a higher level? Am I reaching a state of Nirvana or am I simply a burn out? Please answer this question... I haven't the gall to ask anyone else.

sincerely,
Zeldar

Answer

Dear Zeldar,

LSD users are commonly preoccupied with philosophical issues. This focus on philosophy is augmented by both illogical thought processes and impairments in judgment accompanying LSD use, and may lead the user to think that s/he has discovered new truths, or deep insights. Unfortunately, these newfound insights generally do not make sense to those who are not under the influence of LSD at the time they are hearing about them. This is possibly what is occurring with you and your friends.

LSD is a highly potent drug, which does not cause physical dependency but can cause psychological dependency. The aftereffects of LSD use can include flashbacks and spontaneous reoccurrences of an LSD experience. It's been hypothesized that these flashbacks are caused by a behavior that is learned through the influence of LSD-created psychophysiologic arousal, and stimulated by nervous system arousal. This may be what's happening when you are having "non-drug induced mental trips."
No one can judge whether you have achieved some higher level of consciousness, though you need to know that many users claim that LSD unlocks artistic or intellectual potential. Keep in mind that your frequent LSD use does provide you with an altered state of reality through the illusions and delusions that are its characteristic effects. Being on an LSD trip may clash with any other type of reality. Only you can decide whether you are a burn out or have reached Nirvana. In the meantime, why not work on staying straight for awhile and rationally looking at the positive and negative effects of your tripping? Since you can't change what you've already done, focus on integrating the positive aspects of your drug use into your personality and future endeavors.

Alice!
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Published date: Mar 23, 1995
Last reviewed on: Jul 01, 2008

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