

Thirty Years of Rheumatoid Arthritis Cured After Third MDMA Session

Rheumatoid Arthritis was diagnosed in 1964 when I was 13 years old, but family and friends and I concluded it must have begun by age six when there is evidence I was having the same symptoms. My hand surgeon in the 1980's suggested it may have started when I was much younger, based on the appearance of my wrist bones. The worst flareup 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 chloroquin, 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 experienced LSD and psilocybe mushrooms for the first time 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 Andy 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 was working at the national observatory, having switched the year before from geological to astronomical programming, and had written to many observatories and planetariums soliciting 35mm slides, as I wanted to put together a Cosmos Slide Show to accompany my new focus on astronomy and cosmology.

The slide show was nearly complete by late August 1986, and 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 took 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 free of arthritis.

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

