



Conscious Life presents

Psychedelics: Neuroscience and Historical Use

Guest: Dr Maya Shetreat

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[00:00:13] Meagen Gibson

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, your co-host. Today I'm speaking with Dr Maya Shetreat, a neurologist, herbalist, urban farmer, ceremonialist, and author of *The Dirt Cure*, and the newly released, *The Master Plant Experience: The Science, Safety, and Sacred Ceremony of Psychedelics*.

She's been featured in The New York Times, The Telegraph, NPR, Sky News, and The Dr Oz Show and more. Dr Maya created quantum drops as a vibrational master plant product that is safe, legal, and deeply transformative. She's also the founder of The Terrain Institute, where she offers training for psychedelic-informed practitioners, as well as an upcoming quantum practitioner certification. Dr Maya, thank you so much for joining me today.

Dr Maya Shetreat

Thank you so much for having me.

Meagen Gibson

So, a neurologist. I need to start right from the get-go. We were all taught psychedelics were drugs. And why are doctors now talking about them as legitimate treatments for things like PTSD and depression and palliative care?

Dr Maya Shetreat

Well, I think a lot of people don't realize that psychedelics have long been studied. Actually, in the 1950s and '60s, there was this huge body of science and research that was ongoing and very, very promising. And we could talk about why, and maybe we should talk about why, it went sideways

around that time. But what ended up happening as an outcome was that all of that research and science got shut down.

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So all of the promising benefits for depression, for OCD, and a lot of actually famous people and movie stars were... Cary Grant had, I think, done over 100 LSD trips, and basically was like, "I am a changed person. I am so much less attached to my ego." It was a very profound treatment at that time.

And then slowly in the 1990s, after decades of not touching it because of stigma and legality, psychedelics came back into research slowly, slowly. And again, the benefits were just profound. I think one of the early studies was on nicotine addiction. Like cigarette addiction.

There was a study done at Johns Hopkins where over 60% of people were free of smoking after a year of having two journeys. That was it. Two journeys with therapy. But of course, they'd had therapy. They'd done all that stuff. And that's what we're seeing with all this research is just one experience or two experiences with professional support before, during, after. That's every study. And people are seeing unprecedented results for conditions that we now in modern medicine really, really struggle to treat.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. And it's funny because you mentioned nicotine cessation and smoking cessation. I had the pleasure of going on a trip to Miami in December, where they're building a new treatment center to divert people who are ending up in the court system for things like alcohol and drugs and things like that. Psychological disorders, people that don't belong in our jails. How are we going to treat them and keep them out of the courts and out of jail? They're building this huge treatment center.

One of the things that they had to really incorporate was, how are people going to be allowed to smoke in this facility? Because so many people with trauma or with mental health problems, it goes so deeply hand in hand. The two things are often seen together. Something that can both treat PTSD or treat OCD or treat something like that and also have incredible benefits to smoking cessation in such a short period of time.

It saddens me that we spent 30 years and we just stopped all the research. It makes me sad for all the people... A whole generation of people that could have been helped much quicker and all of the intergenerational trauma that was caused as a result of that lack of treatment. There's not a question there. I'm just heartbroken about it.

Dr Maya Shetreat

Yeah. I think when people ask me why I dedicate so much of my time to talking about this and training people in this kind of therapy, it's in large part because it can be life-saving. Literally life-saving. And I think I want to go back to something you just said, which was around these "psychological disorders." And I think there is a misunderstanding. Long-standing misunderstanding of what is psychological, what is physical, and what is spiritual.

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One of the things that I learned in training with my indigenous teachers, that was probably the most paradigm-shifting seminal piece of learning, is that they believed that physical illness and, in fact, mental illness, are downstream problems from spiritual illness. And if we think of spiritual illness... It's like, what does that even mean in the mainstream world and with our vocabulary and all of that? Is it religious? No, not religious.

Spiritual well-being has to do with being in right relationship. Right relationship with ourselves, with each other, with the land that we're on and the beings on that land. With our ancestors, and with the invisible. So if you think about this idea of right relationship and how to be in right relationship with ourselves. When we're out of that balance, when we're out of a good relationship, then it downstream, it'll make us...

What they would say is we'd have "soul sickness", really. We have soul sickness or soul loss, and a lot of what we would now call trauma. And I talk about this in my book... I learned in Ecuador when I was studying about this concept called *susto*, which is like a shock. And in that shock, a piece of our spirit is the best way to say it, or a part of our soul disconnects.

And I know this is for all the science-minded people. It's like, "What the heck is she talking about?" But what's really interesting, and we'll get into maybe some of the physiology and science, but this idea of *susto* is we lose a part of ourselves, and it's fractured. And then we're not able to function in the same way.

And now we do know that trauma experiences are a fracturing experience physiologically, and what psychedelics are doing is actually reconnecting these fractured parts of us. So it's been so interesting for me to learn from indigenous teachers... Really not just indigenous wisdom, but indigenous science, which is science, not... It's not just a nice word. It's actually real science.

And to then see how it correlates with what we are learning now, especially around psychedelics... Which they wouldn't call psychedelics, right? They don't use that word. Compounds, drugs, psychedelics. They're like, "Pah". They call them *Masters*. *Master plants*. So the whole paradigm is different, but there's so much alignment between what we're learning and what they have long known.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah. And what occurs to me, and is so beautiful about the stories that you're telling, is that out of all of the interviews that I've done about psychedelics... And there's been dozens, everyone agrees on this factor that comes out of it, which is connectedness.

And that everybody that comes out, that's the transformative experience and effect of these experiences, is this sense of connectedness. And I think if I'm hearing you right, that that's what you're talking about. Is that the fundamental... The downline problems are their own, and that fracturing is in our connectedness to ourselves, to the world, and to the things that we cannot perceive. Am I hearing you right?

[00:09:14] Dr Maya Shetreat

Yeah, absolutely. And then that translates to culture. So what we experience, we're all living and you could look... Sometimes I feel like when I go on social media even, I'm seeing people's... Their content is almost this expression of their own trauma. And it's very rigid, and it's very... All of this being super-hard on yourself and whatever it might be.

But that then translates into our politicians. It translates into our medical system. It translates into culture and civilization. So we are actually... I don't want to say the first. Because I can't say if we're the first, actually, having not lived through many civilizations.

But the first that I know of, civilization over the past maybe 400 years that doesn't incorporate ritual and ceremony and community in the same way that correlates with cycles of nature, like solstice or equinox or, on and on.

There's little fragments, but not really what we have had. We're in a system that doesn't honor the cyclical nature of life or the mystical nature of life. And I think when you talk about connectedness... And that's literally, I want to say, on a physiologic level. A lot of times when I talk about psychedelics, I start by talking about cell danger.

And when our cells feel that they're in danger, which could... A lot of times that could happen between the ages of zero and five. Early on, before we even know or even sometimes remember the kinds of things that happen. Our mitochondria, which everyone's like, "Oh, the energy-makers of the cell." Probably, right? They actually change structure. They go from being connected spaghetti-type structures to being balled up meatballs.

So you just always remember spaghetti and meatballs. Happy mitochondria are connected like spaghetti, long spaghetti. And if they're traumatized, if they're in protection mode or danger mode, they're like meatballs. Neurons in depressed people or lonely people are less connected. Our synapses dissolve when we are depressed or we are lonely. And I want to clarify that being lonely is not about being alone. It's about feeling alone.

So you could have a spouse and friends and a community, and you could still be lonely because you don't feel known, right? And sometimes that has to do with that fractured feeling. So even our neurons become lonely. Parts of our brain don't communicate when we feel this sense of being fractured. So what do psychedelics do? Psychedelics, among many other things, connect parts of the brain that don't normally speak to one another.

They can reconnect neurons through new synapses, through synaptogenesis. And they actually help coax, let us say, the mitochondria from meatballs to branch spaghetti, to that connectedness. And I want to just also say all of this with the caveat that, that is not a guarantee from every psychedelic experience, because when we open these periods of plasticity...

There are these critical periods of plasticity, CPPs, that we have when we're children, and they exist then because we have to learn lots and lots of things in a very short time. We have to learn to walk and talk and potty train and learn the rules of our family and learn the rules of our community and our culture so we don't get thrust out into the dark night.

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We want to be part of that thing. And then we still have plasticity after that. When I was in med school, they said, once you're 18 or 20, no more. Just downhill. But no, now we know we have plasticity our whole lives. But these critical periods of plasticity don't persist. Psychedelics open those, reopen those for a period of time. And anything can happen in that period of time when they're reopened.

You can heal very profoundly from things that have been stuck since you were little and you didn't even know. But you also can be retraumatized, right? If you're not in the right container... It doesn't mean it's always going to be a good experience. Healing is not always pretty. It doesn't always look like rainbows and...

Meagen Gibson

It's not always comfortable, right? We're not talking about comfort. Yeah.

Dr Maya Shetreat

Often the opposite, I would argue. But the outcome is worth it, right? So it's not to say, "Oh, if you have a difficult experience with psychedelics, it's automatically going to retraumatize you." But you can, when those periods are open, be retraumatized if you don't have a container, right? And this is why people talk about set and setting. I used to turn my nose up at those terms because I was like, no. Not because I didn't believe in it, but I was like, you can't make those clinical.

But set and setting. This idea of your own mindset, how you come into it, and the container, meaning the space you're in, the person or people who are with you, the music. There's this whole other part to it that is the ceremony. Whether or not you're traveling to Peru and having a traditional ceremony or you're in a clinical setting. That also can be ceremonial.

You can go to a traditional ceremony that doesn't feel ceremonial, and you can be in a clinical white coat room, and it can be very ceremonial for you. It just depends, but that's where set and setting make a huge difference. How you prepare for it, who you're with, and all of that.

Meagen Gibson

And I also want to talk about what you understand afterwards. So we're in this stage of neuroplasticity, and we've got this opportunity, regardless of how our actual experience was. We've got this opportunity and window of creation and integration, if you will. And for I think, the typical person... I'm always of the mind of like, "Who's got the time for this kinda stuff?" I mean, we create it.

But I can also never imagine... Okay, so let's say I got a day to go do this, but then I would just be thrust back into my life. Which I enjoy and is immensely wonderful, but is not necessarily set up for exploration and integration on a daily basis. It's more like making some dinner and wrestling some kids into bed. What does the typical recommended set and setting seem like and look like? I know it's going to differ for every person, but what timeline and scenarios are we talking about here?

[00:16:28] Dr Maya Shetreat

Well, so the set and setting is for the experience itself. So however long you're giving over to that experience. Preparation can take as long as it takes. Well, I want to unpack that, but I want to make sure we also unpack this integration part. Because I actually feel like that is where a lot of disruption and chaos can transpire, where people don't expect that to happen. So I think I'm going to start with integration, even though, linearly, it does not make sense to start.

Meagen Gibson

We can back into it. Yeah, absolutely.

Dr Maya Shetreat

Because you've had this profound experience, perhaps, of some sort. And I want to say it won't always feel profound or like you had some... It could feel that way. It may not feel that way. I have certainly had experiences with certain plant medicines, and I'm not someone who's constantly... I'm a big believer that there's a right time and not a right time.

And I also believe that when I get a very meaningful experience, that I can really unpack what it's meant to... It's a gift from a master. And if I'm given a gift from a master teacher, I am going to do my best to integrate and unpack that until I don't have anything left to unpack, before I go back to ask for more teachings. So that's my particular way of engaging.

So just to be clear, I'm not going in and going in and going in, but I have a number of times. And I don't always walk away... In fact, I was just discussing this earlier today. Experiences where I'm like, I don't know what the hell happened there, honestly. I really couldn't say anything about it in terms of whether it was meaningful.

But I know that it changed me in a significant way. And sometimes it's just like I've said. For me, sometimes it's like I got through that. I don't know what... I can't say, "I learned that." But I could say, "I learned that I could go through something very disorganizing and come out the other side, and I am okay."

Now, whatever happens on the other side of that, right? Now you go back into your life as you say, and you're like, "What the hell am I doing here?" And I think it's so important because I am really a believer in, don't make any sudden movements. It can feel like, "Why the hell am I with my partner? What the hell is this job?" Etcetera. I know there are a number of people, I don't have percentages, who just literally up, leave their marriage, leave their whole life, and move to Peru. And that's like, boom. They're like, "Screw this."

And maybe that would have been the right thing to do, but take a little time because there's something about having these experiences that we call ineffable experiences, or these numinous experiences, where you've stepped outside of ordinary reality and you've experienced something very profound, whatever it may be. To go back into the ordinary is always going to feel like a let-down.

It's always going to feel difficult. Really, really, really, really difficult. So there's a lot of dust that has to settle before... Now, I want to say, I myself did leave a marriage after an experience, but not

quickly. It took time, right? I'm not fast moving in that way, and it was a long marriage. And so I'm not wanting to be a hypocrite here. It doesn't mean...

[00:20:19] Meagen Gibson

It does happen...

Dr Maya Shetreat

It does happen and...

Meagen Gibson

Relationships end a lot, not necessarily all because of psychedelics.

Dr Maya Shetreat

Truth. I mean, I do think there is not no correlation between this. But part of it is because you start to see your own trauma patterns, and ways that you engage, decisions that you've made. And all of that are not maybe healthy for you or healthy for your partner or healthy for your family. And it doesn't mean you have to leave. What it means is you have to have a partner that is going to be interested in evolving with you, right? And that's a dance.

And if you don't have a partner who's interested in evolution and the healing process, that's going to be hard. That's going to be hard because it's hard. You can't unsee what you've seen. And so then it's like, "What is this thing?"

But that's why no sudden movements. Because the other person may not have had the experience you had with the numinous and the seeing and that sense of connection. And they're not necessarily in that same magical space. So you have to see if they're going to come along for the ride, if they can.

And same with jobs. It's like, sometimes you might know very quickly, right? Oh, this is not it. But what I would say is there are things that will come up in a journey for many people. I would think of integration as an unpacking of that. And that unpacking can take months and years. So that means doing something new. As you say, right? You're wrangling kids. That's life.

There's never a time where you have... Well, I don't wanna say never, but it's rare in life, when you have to put one foot in front of the other every day, that you're going to be like, "Ah, I'm putting four hours of creative activity for myself every day from one to six."

Most people just don't have that flexibility in their life, but saying, "Well, I'm going to do something new and creative once a week", or "I'm going to journal for a few minutes every day", or "I'm going to build an altar space that is just pictures of places and people that make me feel good, make me feel safe, or help me feel inspired, and I'm going to go be there for five minutes or 10 minutes every morning." Things like this, maybe journaling, meditation.

But it's not like this. It's a real unpacking. And to me, it's the most important part. Not the fireworks and cannonballs, but how do you bring the extraordinary into the ordinary?

[00:23:38] Meagen Gibson

I love that answer. I really like the "no sudden moves" principle. I wonder about your experience, because I can't relate to having an experience and then coming home and disbanding everything. But I can relate to having big experiences alone. I used to travel a lot for work, and I would do these big fancy television shows and movies and things like that and have this giant life-transforming experience.

Then I would come home and couldn't explain what had happened and couldn't explain why it had changed me. It would sometimes make me feel very lonely. We were saying earlier, you can have everything and still feel fundamentally very alone. I'm wondering if people ever have these experiences and have an increase in their feeling of loneliness. And then how you sit with that in integration, especially with the "no sudden moves" rule of like, "Okay, so what is this really about? How is my loneliness mine and not as a result of my circumstances?"

Dr Maya Shetreat

Right. Well, so that's really like a product of spiritual awakening. This sort of spiritual awakening. In my book, I call it a provocation because awakening sounds so nice and like "Ah, I've awakened." But it doesn't feel like that at the moment, usually very nice. Back to our healing conversation, right? The awakening, it feels like you're being provoked. It feels like, "What am I doing in this place with these people?" And it is. It's incredibly lonely.

And people change a lot during those times. Again, no sudden movements is a really big, important part. But yeah, I do think in the beginning, it can be lonely. And that's where having someone helping you through integration, whether it's like there are integration groups or professionals. I mean, I do integration coaching with people, and it's such a beautiful and fertile time, but it is also challenging and can be lonely.

And that goes for any provoking experience, right? Like anything, which can be... They can be very joyful, and they can also be very difficult. But think about it. It's kinda like a death. It's like the same way that you could feel if you lose somebody that you care about a lot. Only that person is, in some small way or a large way, it's you.

And now you're mourning this you, right? Everybody's like, "Why do you feel so disoriented?" The same way people could say, "Oh, you should be over it by now", or "We don't get why you're..." So I think it's understanding that there is a loss involved sometimes. Almost always. Not always, but almost always. When you come through it, it is very worth it.

But I do strongly, strongly recommend having someone who can support you or some group that can support you through such an experience, even if it's not psychedelic, right? It's just spiritual growth. It is disorienting and can be lonely for sure.

[00:27:24] Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. And there's a ton of research and data, too, on peer-to-peer support models and community support models and how effective they are in helping people in this process. So there's definitely a lot of evidence. It's not just like, "You'll find a group." It's like there's a lot of evidence that supports that it's supportive. Repetition of the word supportive.

You mentioned something earlier that we didn't really spend much time on, and I want to come back to, which is this idea of a master plant. Is there a difference between a master plant and a psychedelic? How are they the same? How are they different? I'd love it if you could explain a little more.

Dr Maya Shetreat

So master plants, as I said, are... And I don't speak for indigenous people, obviously, but a commonality for many of my indigenous teachers is they don't even know the word "psychedelics". They call powerful plants, "Masters. Master plants." And it's because these plants are considered ancient teachers that transmit wisdom that is necessary for the human experience. And so it shifts human consciousness and behavior.

Now, not all masters are psychedelic, right? So for example, cacao or coffee are both master plants. Not psychedelic. But we know, what will people do for their coffee or for their chocolate? People will go quite a bit out of their way. Tobacco is a master plant. The coca plant is a master plant. So we know that these are powerful plants. It doesn't necessarily mean psychedelic, meaning it's going to give you a journey.

But all psychedelics are masters. All psychedelic plants. And when I say master plants, it's flora, fauna, fungi. So it could be mushrooms, it could be animals. It's not a botanical term in that sense. And so going back to this idea of a master. There is a sense that you are coming to someone powerful, and you have to come with humility, and honor, and reverence, and respect, and gratitude. Or maybe not the greatest things could happen.

And that's a big conversation in indigenous communities is how these plants... If you ask them, "Are master plants all good?" They don't say master plants are good, and they don't say master plants are bad. They say they are powerful. So how do we come in relationship to power? What is our relationship to power? So we're not really taught a lot in our culture about things like reciprocity and humility and reverence in the face of power. We're like, "We want it. We want power. Who has the most power?"

Meagen Gibson

Consumption, not reverence. Yeah.

Dr Maya Shetreat

Yeah, right? And so there's this commoditizing. So I think like what this... And this is part of why I wrote my book, in fact. The unfolding of this is going to be really interesting, and maybe this takes us back to the 1950s, 1960s. And what happened back then in the United States was this

free-for-all, where we had professors at Harvard encouraging all of the professors and students to all try LSD and mushrooms.

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And then it went to the streets and Haight-Ashbury and all these people who were unprepared for such experiences ended up in ERs and so on because they weren't prepared. And nobody was prepared. And it became this out-of-control thing that on the one hand, yes, there were political reasons.

There was a lot of crazy military stuff going on, like MK-Ultra, where the CIA and the military were actually dosing unknowing CIA agents as well as civilians with mushrooms and LSD and seeing if they could do mind-control. I mean... It was a free-for-all on many levels, and there were a lot of political reasons that they were made Schedule I drugs and stigmatized in the way that they were.

There was this move from the administration at that time to want to imprison people protesting the war, etcetera. But also there was this lack of reverence, lack of respect, lack of knowing how to be in right relationship with the masters. And so that is, I think, this really important part of the whole picture is the people who have been the custodians for millennia. Really many millennia, we now know.

We used to know cave art showing pictures of shamanic activity and pictures of mushrooms and cacti, and even in some cases, DNA evidence. So we know this has been around tens and tens of thousands of years. But how do we engage with these masters? That's the big question.

Meagen Gibson

It's fascinating to me. And how much of that has been brought into the actual medical study and clinical trials? That part feels like... It feels like there's a lot of respect towards set and setting, but not necessarily toward the compounds themselves.

If we're talking about ketamine, it is not a plant. But psilocybin is a fungi or a fungi. People say it differently. There are some things that are actual plants, and there are some psychedelics that are not plants. How do you see the research going in that regard with respect to these medicines?

Dr Maya Shetreat

It's interesting because I came to this as... Yes, I'm a neurologist, but also an herbalist. So I'm very plant, fungi-oriented. And it's funny because psilocybin is actually a description of a compound. It's not the mushrooms or the psilocybin mushrooms. But we all very generally will just say psilocybin when actually we're probably finding that psilocin is going to have a lot of activity that's going to be more potent than the psilocybin anyway.

And we're also seeing this entourage effect. I love it because herbalists have forever said, "The plants and the mushrooms are the most potent when they are the whole plant." Because they're beings. This is not something we compute in Western medicine. But we're seeing that, too, with the mushrooms. There was just a study that came out that showed that psilocybin versus the whole mushroom is not as effective.

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So again, I think we're just gonna... We want to learn and relearn. I will say, however, that... Well, one thing I've seen also that I think supports that is people will say very clearly to me after they've had a mushroom experience or a plant experience. Ayahuasca, or San Pedro, or mushrooms. They'll say, "Ayahuasca told me...", or "The mushrooms said..."

Nobody ever does that so far, I'm not saying I couldn't. They don't say, "Ketamine told me or MDMA..." They'll say, "When I took MDMA, I learned how to forgive my mother." But they won't say MDMA said to me. It's clear that there's some difference. I don't want to relegate these other entities like LSD or MDMA or ketamine, which I used to be definitely more biased against, but I'm not now. I think they're all these... kind of like, molecules of divinity.

I mean, they're here. They're doing their thing, but I do think it's different. They're just different. They're different from these beings. And so going... And this maybe will take me, even though you didn't ask, to how do people decide what they might try if they want to try?

And I would say, "What do you feel called to?" And this goes to that idea of we're in conversation. And this is something I've witnessed on a number of occasions in even doing micro-dosing coaching or preparation for people is, they know they're interested. They felt a call. They reach out, they schedule time with me, and their lives have already started to change in really significant ways.

And I was like, "Weird." It is so clear that the relationship has begun before you ever ingest anything. And that ended up being the birth of quantum dosing and quantum drops, which if you want, we can talk about. But what I really discovered is... Again and again, I just feel like I get what my indigenous teachers have said, confirmed again and again through my own observation, which is this is the spirit of these beings. Communicating with your spirit. Has nothing to do with compounds at all. That's their position. So it's interesting.

Meagen Gibson

It is interesting. I do want to get to quantum dosing. But first, before we get there, I think there's one step which is, do we have to trip to benefit from psychedelic master plants? Or are there ways to benefit from them that don't include mind-altering experiences?

Dr Maya Shetreat

Well, so good. I'm going to unpack what you just asked because there's some parts in there that I think are important. Do we have to trip? In other words, do we have to take a big, giant dose of a psychedelic or master plant? I don't think the answer to that is "Yes." I think we don't. I think for some people, yes. And for some people, it is truly life-saving. And I will reiterate that 100 times.

And I don't think big doses are for everyone, and I certainly don't think they're for everyone all of the time. And so there is something we do need. And the thing that we do need... And I have presented for grand rounds, doctors, etcetera. What I present in my talks that I discovered after paper is that the mystical experience is actually a really important part of what indicates if there will be profound healing from the depression, the OCD, the TBI, the addiction, the eating

disorder, the sexual trauma, and on and on and on. And so then I was like, interesting that there's so much data that says, "If they had a mystical experience, then the percentage was XYZ of them healing."

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So what I would say is having mystical experiences is a medicine of its own. And for many people, that large dose is a... Not a foolproof way, but a pretty reliable way to have some mystical experience. Not everybody needs that to have a mystical experience. I live, as I tell people, in a pretty psychedelic reality all of the time. To me, I feel trees are alive, and I feel the birds are chirping. I'm in it all, right? That's just my nature.

My first book was called *The Dirt Cure*, and it was very scientific, but also it's because I experience the world that way, and some people really already do. And what I found is that with micro-dosing and quantum dosing and other things, I mean, breathwork, sensory deprivation, experiences of great awe and wonder.

There's a number of ways that we see, even on a neuroscience, neurophysiologic level, that you can have similar outcomes to psychedelics through very deep, profound meditation experiences. All of these different things that I just listed.

So the answer is, "For me, no." I know that I am not in the majority in the psychedelic movement with that understanding. But I've seen both in myself and in other people that it's very possible to have a mystical experience without the giant dose.

Meagen Gibson

And I'm sure it's contextual and individual, right? Some people, based on their primary disposition, might be more accessible. Your trauma history, all kinds of things might come into how available that is to you. Your actual acute safety, things like that. Because you were speaking about mitochondria earlier, and I was talking to Dave Asprey earlier today about energy. And he was saying a lot of the same things about mitochondria. I'm sure it's very individual as to how accessible a mystical experience might be based on micro-dosing or macro-dosing.

Dr Maya Shetreat

Well, so I'll say briefly that what we know about the mystical experience, at least in part, is that we all have this sensory gating. And sensory gating is actually a clinical term. We can measure it in hospital settings, in clinical settings. Certain people, like multiple sclerosis or schizophrenia, might have altered sensory gating, and that helps with the diagnosis.

But sensory gating is also the window of perception, right? So we can have auditory, visual sensory gating that could be wider, could be more narrow. If you're a musician, your sensory gating... Your auditory sensory gating is going to be more open. And if you are a person with perfect pitch who is a musician, how much more so, right?

But we can alter our sensory gating based on... Let's say you hear your name in a crowded room. Suddenly you're like "Tchew", right? You become very attuned to a particular sound in a particular

place. Sensory gating is also correlated. It's correlated with a lot of neurodivergence. So all of the neurodivergent spectrum. Not just autism. ADHD, and sensory integration disorder on and on, bipolar, also... So a lot of diagnoses that we think of as pathological are actually very correlated with wider sensory gating.

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That means that they have a greater capacity to perceive reality with the associated challenges of having to filter as well. But also gifted people have wider sensory gating. And this has been shown again and again. Creatives have wider sensory gating. So we've created this world that teaches us to tamp down our sensory gating, right? And if you don't, you're ADD, or you're, "Oh, disobedient", just let's say.

But that's where this mystical experience capacity, I think, is going to be very interesting. And that's where I work with people a lot on how to modulate that sensory gating, because you could be... And trauma, by the way, blows open your sensory gating as well. It does, as do psychedelics. So yes, to everything you said. I, 100% agree with all of that. It does depend, and it depends on you... Also, I think, mostly depends on how much you can be in conversation with your own sensory gating.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. Through practice or through environment or mentorship or all the things, experiences. All right, I want to switch and shift into quantum dosing because I have no idea what that means. And I know that you're passionate about it, and I really want you to tell me about it and help us understand what you're talking about.

Dr Maya Shetreat

Sure. So the idea of quantum dosing, basically... There are a lot of ways we could talk about it, but I think the most basic way to think of it is that we know that plants oscillate, and we can even measure that oscillation. It makes music, right? We can actually translate it into music.

And one of the ways that indigenous people have worked with plants in this vibrational way is through icaros. So in an ayahuasca ceremony, in any ayahuasca ceremony, and also in other plant ceremonies, there will be these songs that the maestro, the ayahuasquero, will sing. And these songs are not actually composed by that maestro. It's actually given to them in their training, their dieta, with the plant.

And it's considered to be a vibrational transmission of the plant that they then are given and can share as medicine. And it's considered to be as potent as drinking the medicine. In fact, there are not so many in the more mestizo shamans, but in more of the indigenous traditional shamans. There are a lot of situations where they themselves will drink a little bit of the brew, but they won't give it to the person that's getting the healing.

They'll just sing the icaros. And anyone who's listened to icaros in any ayahuasca ceremony will know that some of the icaros make you vomit. You literally will feel like you need to vomit. Some

will make you weep and cry and cry. Some will make you feel like you're coming back into your body.

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And so there is this long-standing tradition of vibrational medicine that comes from the plant, and that it's considered very potent. So I had this very seminal experience. I grow master plants. So I grow an ayahuasca vine that's over 10 years old. I grow San Pedro cacti. I grow Brugmansia. I grow a number of these plants as my service to them. It's like my reciprocity. I don't consume my plants. It's tending, right?

And as I was tending them one day, I got this message that was in words, and I promise I was not altered. It's just my psychedelic reality at play, I guess. But I just heard, "Why do people think they need to ingest us in order to experience our medicine? Show them another way." So I, being a neurologist, and as someone who's practical. I'm like, "What the hell did that just mean?"

And this was a while ago, a number of years ago. And I thought, "I don't know. I know what homeopathy is. I know what flower essences are. Yes, I think there's something to that. But what am I really being asked to do here?"

And I played around for years... And finally worked with my plants to create basically vibrational medicine, which is the music of the plants, of each plant. My own medicine songs that have been given to me from the plants in a ceremonial setting.

So I'm also someone who holds ceremony with an altar, and certain times of month, certain times of year. I actually found someone eventually, and this is how I knew it was the right time, who does bottling. But also was like, "Yeah, I know you're going to want an altar." So he's like, "I'll just build you a table in the space that will be permanently there."

He plays the music of the plants while it's being bottled. And so we call it Ceremony in a Bottle, right? They're quantum drops, but they're Ceremony in a Bottle. And for a long time, I mean, I also didn't even really know, would this work?

Is this something that would help people? And then we started to hear these really profound stories. And I don't think that the way to quantum dose is only through quantum drops. I mean, the cover of my book has a slice of the sacred geometry of an ayahuasca, right? To me, that's like, you get a quantum dose of ayahuasca when you look at that beautiful slice.

Growing the plants is a way of quantum dosing. So I think there's a lot of ways that we can engage on that level with the plants and experience their medicine. But just as an example, I had this doctor who was not into this stuff at all. And he said, "I'm going to try these quantum drops", he said. And I'm like, "Okay." He's like, "I don't get it, but I'm going to try it." Like, "Sure."

So he comes to me the next day. We were at a conference, and he said, "I don't know if it did anything. I took them last night, and I took them this morning. But I'm meeting nice people, though, and I feel really good." I said, "Great." And he said, "Oh, and by the way, I built an altar to my father who died a few years ago, and I kneeled down and I prayed to him."

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And I was like, "Oh, well have you done that before?" He said, "Well, no. But I'm Chinese, and we pray to our ancestors. And I just thought, I had the drops, and I took them, and then I pulled up this picture of my father, and I put these things next to it, and I put a towel on the floor, and I kneeled down."

And I was like, "No, that's incredible." I said, "Do you have an altar at home? And he said, "No." He said, "My wife isn't Chinese, so there's nothing Chinese in my house. But I just felt really connected to my lineage." And it was like such a bury the lead kind of... Like, "Well, I feel okay."

He just said it in passing. "Oh, by the way, I don't know why I made an altar to my father this morning."

And then a lot of other very cool experiences where we just see... It really does seem like it's this activation of the sensory gating, being able to modulate that sensory gating where people can see and experience what they wouldn't normally, but not like you're tripping. Not like you're out of commission.

And also it's legal, it's safe. If you're sober or pregnant or a child or just a sensitive creature, which is my whole neurology practice. Or people who aren't maybe quite ready to do the whole big thing. But then we even had... I had another doctor who, he said... He was interviewing me, actually.

We got on a Zoom, and he said, "Oh, Maya, I have to tell you. I've been dancing every day. Before we start, I've been dancing every day." I said, "Oh, cool." He said, "No, you don't understand. I get up. I don't even get dressed or take a shower, drink coffee, nothing. I just put on music and I start dancing." And he's like, "I didn't get it. Why was I doing that? And then I realized it started when I started taking the children."

So we have three. We have grandmother, grandfather, and the children. He said, "I started taking the children. And that was when I started dancing every day. When I looked back, I saw that." So it was just these very beautiful stories that really seem like people being able to access states of being that were mystical, more joyful, more reverent, more connected, very cool manifesting moments.

Because I think it's helping us get out of our own way, all of that programming and cellular memory in ways that we block our own selves. As master plants do, they help us see through that. At least according to what I was given to do. It doesn't always have to be a trip to Peru with a shaman to get the kind of benefits that can help you heal.

Meagen Gibson

And so if somebody were... They were coming to your site, how would they even make a choice? How would they know which... If they're curious and they want to engage with this, how would they even know how to begin?

[00:53:16] Dr Maya Shetreat

So they're sold as a set, so you don't have to choose. They come as three. And that is after very clear experiences for a long time realizing it works well that way. And it takes away the need to make a choice in the moment. And then they get a guide. And so it'll tell themes that come up with each of them, although the details will vary.

So children can be very inner child. It can be very playful. It can be very mycelial. It's the mushrooms. The grandmother might be mother wound-related or going into the wise woman lineage or things like that. And grandfather can be a lot. San Pedro Cactus. And again, it doesn't contain the plant. So it's legal. It goes through customs. They're sent all over the world. No problem. People take them on airplanes, etcetera.

But it's made with the plants. With my plants, in fact, but not from them. So the grandfather can be the father wound. It can be a lot about heart medicine, like healing the heart. It can be very much about standing in power. So these are themes, right? They're themes that come up. The details will vary.

And what I found, we give a bunch of suggested protocols to people. But what I found again and again and again, is... Number one, you receive them and you put them in a beautiful place because they're vibrational and they're beings, right? They are a representative of beings, and they want to be in a beautiful place, and they will never be exactly the same as if they are on your altar or just people are like, "Oh, I know exactly where I'm going to put them."

And then you go, and you don't even have to look. You reach out, and you will pick the one that you need. And it has been repeated so many times that I know that this is true. Actually, I was at a retreat. We had 50 people. Each of them, we just said, "You could look at it, but just take the one." And each person would take it. And then look at it and be like, "Of course."

Sometimes it's so literal. Like the person who's about to be a grandmother, picks grandmother. The person who's a grandfather, picks grandfather. You could just... But sometimes people are also very drawn.

They see the themes, and they're very drawn to start with this one or that one. So it's low risk. That's a very nice thing about it. And what I think is one of the keys... And this is also for people who are in preparation or an integration of a big experience, right? Or when they're micro-dosing, I have people who will do that as well, because micro-dosing is not every day, usually.

But it's also really like, what is the outcome that we want from psychedelics is to become more curious, more playful, more open. So there is this way in which quantum dosing facilitates, again, bringing the extraordinary into the ordinary. How do you bring these profound kinds of experiences into your everyday life? Or how do you make ordinary days more extraordinary?

It's not simple. I don't find it simple. So I can't imagine. It's something that I really practice, and it's a muscle I've really developed. And I still sometimes find it very challenging. So having these allies in that process is very special. And I also think that the plants aren't being put out and being consumed, right? What's going to happen if this really does become profoundly available?

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It's going to become pharmaceuticalized. It's going to become medicalized. I mean, I hope not, right? I hope it won't be quite like that. But there are ways. And I actually think, in general, this is an indigenous way of healing. Vibrational healing. And I think it's the future of medicine. We can talk again in a decade or so and see if I'm right.

Meagen Gibson

If things have come full circle from the beginning, before we had it medicalized and in labs and we're studying it. Yeah, absolutely. Okay. So if people want to know more about you and what you do and your books and everything we've talked about today, how can they find out more?

Dr Maya Shetreat

Well, the best way is just to go to drmaya.com, D-R-M-A-Y-A.com. They can also go to quantumdrops.com, but they'll find everything they need on my website. And also I have the first three chapters of my book for free there. So you can sign up and get those first three chapters if you want to get a little deeper dive into the things I've been talking about.

Meagen Gibson

Fantastic. Dr Maya, thank you so much.

Dr Maya Shetreat

It was my pleasure. Thank you so much for having me.