

**Psilocybin Intensifies and Facilitates the Process of Kundalini Awakening**

Willem A. Fonteijn  
Essence Institute, The Netherlands

**Abstract.** Both the process of kundalini awakening and high dose psilocybin can occasion profound mystical effects of which the oneness experience is a core phenomenon. This article describes the spontaneous kundalini awakening of the author during an intensive vipassana retreat and his recent experience with high dose psilocybin. The central insight is to cultivate the neutral internal observer. The neutral observer stance creates opportunities for beneficial and enduring change. The neutral observer stance is trained during meditation. The previous experience with kundalini awakening and development of the neutral observer stance intensified the mystical effects of the psilocybin retreat with a profound oneness experience as a result.

**Keywords:** psilocybin, kundalini, mindfulness, awareness, oneness, mystical experience, meditation

**Introduction**

It is one o'clock in the afternoon. I am lying on a couch listening to the psychedelic playlist of the John Hopkins University. A playlist that is used all over the world for research purposes to explore mystical states during psilocybin retreats. Just half an hour ago I took several zips of a high dose psilocybin truffle tea mixed with ginger and emptied my glass. My body starts to shake in a familiar pattern that I recognize as Kundalini energy floating through my body. Strong waves of energy dictate my body to resonate with the music. I enter the zone. Kaleidoscopic colors fill the space of my awareness. Old faces of Hindu gods appear and I feel carried by their wisdom and comfort. I understand completely without any doubt the connection between them and us the people. My energy starts to coincide with a Hindu deity and I feel his energy rushing and resonating all through my body. I understand how every conscious being just wants to be recognized and acknowledged. I see my parents who passed away a decade ago. I get insight into the purpose of my life, the deep connection between me and my wife and my two sons. I see how our daughter in law is spiritually preparing for her child to be born. I see her true nature in all her transparent radiant beauty. All this time my body shakes with the kundalini energy resonating all through my body. Purifying my body and mind. Psilocybin and kundalini energy merge and expand my awareness. It was revealed to me that awareness doesn't and cannot take any responsibility. Awareness seeks and facilitates Oneness. Every opportunity for restoring oneness will be facilitated. It is me as the person who takes responsibility for my actions. Me as a man who takes responsible decisions and is accountable.

This retreat was in March 2019. A decade before I had experienced the process of kundalini awakening (Fonteijn, 2019). During that 10 days Silent Vipassana retreat in 2003, my awakening started. In the first three days, I felt a lot of bodily discomfort with a backache. I got memories of destructive experiences in my life and made a firm decision that this negative spiral must stop. The fourth day the awakening began with shaking and vibrating all over my body. The remaining days of the retreat were emotionally calm and serene even though the shaking continued. Visions about the circle of life appeared. I had an OBE and a vision of my passed away father in law with a personal message for me.

The years after the retreat was like a roller coaster, meditating early in the morning, participating in several vipassana and tantra retreats. The kundalini energy was very active and rushed through my body especially during meditation and tantra. I went through a period of

hypersexuality, had multiple affairs, divorced my wife, and I had severe depressive moods. In 2006 I decided to join an oneness retreat in India. It was there that I received Shaktipat or Deeksha and learned how to transmit this kundalini energy to others. During that retreat, I experienced a state of oneness with my ex-wife while she was in Holland and I was in India. It became completely clear to me that our marriage should be healed. The years after kundalini energy smoothly integrated into my personal and professional life. My body kept on shaking, sometimes very intense, sometimes very gentle and comforting. The neutral observer was awake and supported me all the way. My life came in balance. I ended my affairs with other women. I expressed my unconditional love for my (by that time still ex-) wife. We started to cooperate as mindfulness trainers in Circles of Awareness. In 2010 we remarried with both our sons as our witness. The process of awakening went on and the spiritual domain became more and more a naturally integrated part of my personal and professional life (Fonteijn, 2016). It is only till recently that I became to understand the nature of this spiritual awakening and could put the pieces together. With the help of many inspiring others, I now realize that this awakening is a natural evolutionary process. The neutral observer, the witness, the container is now working through me allowing others to experience the healing capacity of awareness (Fonteijn, 2018). It took years for me to digest this experience and to contain the transformative impact of this process of spiritual awakening. Nowadays I am in a relatively calm phase.

### Discussion

Kundalini is generally understood as an energy that influences both our bodies and minds. As such, several physical and psychological characteristics may be expected to identify kundalini arousal (Sanches & Daniels, 2008). Kundalini is described as dormant energy in the Central Nervous System that can be activated or awoken (Greyson, 2000). After awakening, it circulates through the body. During its rising it causes the CNS to throw off stress. A process of mental and bodily purification. There is a variety of symptoms of kundalini awakening. Not all of them will happen in individuals undergoing this process of spiritual awakening. This process of awakening starts suddenly and spontaneously. It will take years to develop and it continues through a lifetime. There seems to be no endstate to it.

The table below shows the divers known major symptoms of the kundalini awakening process.

**Table 1. Kundalini Symptoms**

Category	Symptoms
Body	Spontaneous movements
	Sensations of some form of energy (almost like an electric current) circulating along the spine or the arms and hands or, sometimes, stored in the genitals
	Shaking and vibrating of the body
	Tingling
	Spontaneous Kriya's (Yoga postures)
	Heat and cold sensations
	Inner sounds and lights
	Pain in specific parts of the body that begin and end abruptly
Abnormal breathing patterns	
Emotion	Variety of emotional states: ecstasy, bliss, peace, love, devotion, extreme fear, anxiety, depression, hatred and confusion

	Hypersexuality ad hyposexuality
	Cathartic release of repressed feelings
Cognitive	Speeding up, slowing down of thought process
	Moments of no thoughts at all
	Distortion of thought process
	Detachment, dissociation
Spiritual	Observing oneself, including one's thoughts, as if one were a bystander.
	Oneness experience
	Extra sensory perception
	Dissolution of ego mind
	Equanimity

The process of kundalini awakening is not without risk. Especially on social media circulate horror stories about the terrifying impact of the process. Several authors (Karmokor, 2006) report an intense crisis they went through during the process of awakening before reaching a state of equanimity. One can get stuck in a phase during the process of purification of body and mind. For instance, body posture can become catatonic. The mood swings can be overwhelming and too intense to contain for the individual. Reality testing is an important faculty for mental health can be seriously be distorted. There are reports of merging with psychiatric diagnoses like bipolar disorder. As we can see in the table above, some of the symptoms of kundalini awakening are the same as symptoms of psychiatric diagnoses like panic attacks, depression, and PTSD.

According to Sanella (1987) kundalini awakening is not simply an altered state of consciousness, but an ongoing process, lasting from several months to many years, during which the person passes in and out of different states of consciousness. The process falls outside the categories of both normal and psychotic because a person undergoing the awakening has phenomena far removed from normal, usually without becoming so disorganized as to be considered psychotic.

Psilocybin is known for his mystical effects. A recent double-blind study of Griffiths et al. (2011) shows that psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences having persisting positive effects on attitudes, mood, and behavior. Psychedelics like psilocybin induce a transient disintegration and desegregation of intrinsic brain networks that will prevail and correlate with high-level psychological phenomena such as ego-dissolution which is intimately related to the so-called unitive experience – that is a profound sense of personal interpersonal and existential 'oneness' and/or interconnectedness (Carhart-Harris, 2018). This unitive experience is thought to be the core component of the so-called mystical experience (Stace, 1961). According to Stace (1961), there are eight basic components to mystical experiences. The eight components he identified were: ego loss, timelessness/spacelessness, total unity, inner subjectivity, positive affect, sacredness, noetic quality, and ineffability.

Both kundalini awakening and psilocybin facilitate mystical effects, states of ego-dissolution, inner subjectivity, sacredness, ineffability and, oneness experiences.

From my observation as a facilitator for psilocybin retreats, I have seen how several participants went through a process of kundalini awakening. Their body's started to shake and they reported mystical effects oneness experiences. The participants that reported oneness experiences had a history of meditation training.

The neutral observer stance is a condition of possibility for the Oneness experience to occur. Without proper preparation, the individual will easily get overwhelmed and absorbed by the experience and won't be able to integrate and digest the experience. In the neutral observer stance experiencer and experienced merge together and there is no longer an "I" to comment on the experience. In the neutral observer stance, the ego dissolute.

Psilocybin is generally described as a drug with mild risk. Still, if individuals have a history of bipolar and psychotic psychiatric it is generally recommended not to take the drug. During the psychedelic journey, reality testing is severely disturbed and this can cause several anxiety symptoms. The effect of psilocybin is described in terms of relaxation of belief systems (Carhart-Harris & Friston, 2019). During a psychedelic journey the flexibility of belief systems of individuals is challenged. This can cause adverse effects in the ego to restore those belief systems and individuals can get stuck in this defense mechanism. Adverse symptoms that can be recognized as stress reactions like inability to surrender to the process, hypertension in the muscles, unrest, hyper-alertness.

Both the process of kundalini awakening psilocybin have a risk of decompensation of ego defenses and can result in a variety of psychiatric symptoms. So what can one do to minimize the risk and optimize the chance for beneficial effects?

From my experience, the key ingredient of the spiritual awakening process is the cultivating of the neutral observer. Stay present and add awareness to the process that is going on. Observe your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. Accept them just as they are. Allow change to happen. Use your body as a mirror for thoughts. Focus on the bodily sensations and see how they reflect your state of mind. Be aware of your posture and notice how your posture reflects your mood and core convictions. Spiritual awakening is not about the entheogenic content of the process, be it colorful perceptions, encounters with deities, insights in the purpose of life, etc. It is about staying present with what is happening. It is about not getting absorbed by the experience, not getting attached to it, but about accepting that everything that has a beginning has an end too.

As illustrated above the combination of kundalini energy and psilocybin can indeed intensify the process of spiritual awakening and opens you up to beneficial change still to happen. Changing from an ignorant individual to a more conscious or aware being.

Awareness has healing potential for the individual. In psychotherapy, awareness is the major ingredient for sustainable and beneficial change. Clients are trained to become aware of their feelings and (hidden) thoughts. By doing so clients learn how to make better decisions and to cope with dysfunctional beliefs and emotions. For all of this awareness is the key ingredient (Fonteijs, 2018).

For allowing change, beneficial change, to happen, and to facilitate the reoccurrence of beneficial change, we need a broad awareness. We need to cultivate neutral attention to create a broad awareness. The first step is to learn the client to focus on one neutral aspect in the body, for instance, the movement of the breath in the body. Or the touch of the feet with the ground. Redirect the attention to this neutral aspect and notice how the awareness is broadened. Notice the change in bodily sensations and posture. Allow that change to happen. Stimulate curiosity. You can actively change the posture of the body and notice the effect of that change on mood and thoughts. Experiment with redirecting attention and broaden your awareness. This method is learned during mindfulness meditation.

During mindfulness meditation, the individual learns to cultivate the neutral observer stance. Mindfulness meditation enhances the positive effects of psilocybin (Smigielski et al., 2019). The neutral observer stance is trained during meditation. The individual learns to observe whatever is coming to awareness and not to react on it, not in action and not in thought. This can be trained in a relatively ordinary daily life. You don't need to seek specific circumstances for learning to meditate. Daily life offers enough to stay aware.

During the psilocybin experience, the neutral observer stance is what brings you deeper in the process of what helps you to surrender to it and trust the process. Allow your mind to step back. It doesn't have to disappear forever. Just to step back for a while, allowing you to open up to the process and let happen whatever happens. The oneness experience is just there waiting for you to allow it to happen. Nowadays there is promising research that shows that psilocybin has psychotherapeutic potential for various conditions including end-of-life anxiety, OCD, and treatment-resistant depression (Carhart-Harris et al., 2016).

### Conclusion

The process of kundalini awakening is just one road to develop spiritual awareness and open the individual to the oneness experience. Psilocybin is another road with a similar effect. In both cases, the neutral observer stance seems to be the condition of possibility to develop the oneness experience. In both cases mindfulness, meditation is good preparation for further developing mystical experiences.

### Acknowledgement

We hereby acknowledge the members of the Essence Institute in the Netherlands for their inspirational contribution during the psilocibin retreats.

### References

- Carhart-Harris, R. L. (2018). How do psychedelics work? *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 32(1), 1.
- Carhart-Harris, R. L., & Friston, K. J. (2019). REBUS and the anarchic brain: Toward a unified Model of Brain Action of Psychedelics. *Pharmacol Rev*, 71, 316-344.
- Carhart-Harris, R.L., et al. (2016). Psilocybin with psychological support for treatment-resistant depression: an open-label feasibility study. *Lancet Psychiatry*, 3, 619-27.
- Fontejn, W. A. (2016). *Circle of awareness: Using the body as a mirror for thoughts*. Amsterdam: Warden Press.
- Fontejn, W. A. (2018). Healing power of Awareness. *International Journal of Clinical Research & Trials*, 3, 128.
- Fontejn, W. A. (2019). Integrating the process of kundalini awakening in personal life and psychotherapeutic practice. *Int J Psychiatr Res*, 2(5), 1-3.
- Greyson, B. (2000). Some neuropsychological correlates of the physio-kundalini syndrome. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 32(2), 123-134.
- Griffiths, R., et al. (2011). Psilocybin occasioned mystical-type experiences: immediate and persisting dose-related effect. *Psychopharmacology*, 218, 649-663.
- Karmokar, G. (2006). *Kundalini From hell to heaven*. Zen Way Centre.
- Sanches, L., & Daniels, M. (2008). Kundalini and transpersonal development: Development of a Kundalini Awakening Scale and a comparison between groups. *Transpersonal Psychology Review*, 12(1), 73-83.
- Sannella, L. (1987). *The kundalini experience: Psychosis or transcendence*. Tucson, AZ: Integral.
- Smigielski, L., et al. (2019). Characterization and prediction of acute and sustained responses to psychedelic psilocybin in a mindfulness group retreat. *Scientific Reports*, 9(1). DOI: 10.1038/s41598-019-50512-3
- Stace, W. T. (1961). *Mysticism and philosophy*. London: Macmillian.