License to Love

Altered States of Consciousness, Awe and Connectedness

Research Question

When an experience makes us feel closer to other people or to nature, does that feeling carry into what we do afterwards? Here, *love* is the editorial theme. The studies measure more specific outcomes such as personal meaning, belonging, nature relatedness and helping.

01 · Psychedelic Experience and Personal Meaning

In a controlled comparison under supportive conditions, Griffiths and colleagues found higher ratings of mystical-type experience after psilocybin than after methylphenidate. At two months, participants rated the experience as personally meaningful. This measured reported experience and meaning in a selected sample. [1]

02 · Connection to People and Nature

In a prospective survey of group psychedelic sessions, greater felt togetherness was associated with later self-reported social connection. A separate naturalistic survey found increased self-reported nature relatedness after planned psychedelic use. That study had 654 baseline responses and 64 at two years. Self-selection, setting and attrition limit causal interpretation. [2–3]

03 · Dancing, Awe and Helping

A group-dance experiment found that synchronised movement and exertion each increased ratings of social bonding. In a separate research programme, some experiments linked experimentally induced awe to immediate helping or generosity. These studies offer non-drug comparisons for the festival theme. Lasting care remains a separate outcome. [4–5]

04 · Meditation and Prosocial Behaviour

A systematic review found that effects varied by outcome and study quality. In its analysis, the compassion result depended on conditions such as use of a passive control. A felt change and an observable change in behaviour warrant separate measures. [6]

Editorial Interpretation

Ozora, ritual, vows and the Mind-TARDIS can frame a first-person account of wonder and care. The cited studies examine experience and behaviour. They supply no measurement of a cosmic field, a white-hole mechanism or a shared mechanism across all these practices.

A Testable Next Step

Proposed Study and Source Notes

Hypothesis

Adults randomly assigned to synchronised group movement will report greater immediate social closeness than adults assigned to matched asynchronous movement. A one-week helping measure would test whether the difference extends into behaviour.

How to Test It

Hold the playlist, session length, group size and exertion as constant as practicable. Record closeness before and immediately after each session. Prespecify one primary outcome, the smallest worthwhile effect and how groups will be analysed. Record a separate, voluntary helping choice at one week. This is a proposed study.

How to Interpret It

A reproducible result would support the role of synchrony in short-term bonding under these conditions. If only closeness changes, the study supports a short-term feeling in this setting. An estimate precise enough to exclude a worthwhile change would narrow the claim. A wide interval leaves it unresolved.

Sources

[1] Griffiths RR, Richards WA, McCann U & Jesse R (2006). Psilocybin and mystical-type experiences. *Psychopharmacology*, 187, 268–283. 10.1007/s00213-006-0457-5

[2] Kettner H et al. (2021). Psychedelic communitas in group sessions. *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, 12, 623985. 10.3389/fphar.2021.623985

[3] Kettner H, Gandy S, Haijen ECHM & Carhart-Harris RL (2019). Psychedelics and nature relatedness. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16, 5147. 10.3390/ijerph16245147

[4] Tarr B, Launay J, Cohen E & Dunbar R (2015). Synchrony, exertion and dance. *Biology Letters*, 11, 20150767. 10.1098/rsbl.2015.0767

[5] Piff PK et al. (2015). Awe and prosocial behaviour. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 108, 883–899. 10.1037/pspi0000018

[6] Kreplin U, Farias M & Brazil IA (2018). Meditation and prosocial effects. *Scientific Reports*, 8, 2403. 10.1038/s41598-018-20299-z

Closing reflection · Feel the connection. See what carries into care.