



MAGIC N' MICRODOSING

with Matt Simpson

EIGHT MICRODOSING MISTAKES YOU DON'T WANT TO MAKE

It's 2024, and for good reason, there is a massive cultural phenomenon centered around taking "micro" doses of psychedelic medicines. It's estimated that a third of C-level Silicon Valley executives are leveraging the power of microdosing for elevated creativity. Many more are engaging in this novel strategy for mental health, performance, and well-being. Big thanks to Steve Jobs for inviting a generation of seekers to push this edge when crediting his success with Apple to his LSD journeys. It's a relatively young area of focus; there is a lot we don't know about microdosing. Before 2010 all of the attention was on the macrodose/peak/ceremonial experience. No one thought to look in this direction, surely a testament to the sensational nature of the high-dose psychedelic experience.

Why now? What is happening? Why the surge to embrace this unconventional strategy for health and well-being? MAPS, The Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelics Studies, has been granted "Breakthrough Status" by the FDA and now has a cure for PTSD. MDMA-Assisted Therapy will likely be approved by the FDA as early as August 2024. This has potentially cataclysmic implications for our collective mental health, and according to Dr. Rick Doblin, the Executive Director of MAPS will be "The domino that tips all the others" and a huge step towards: "MAPS' long-term goal of mass mental health and a spiritualized humanity." And, well, yes, it's an election year with extreme polarization and political discord, our human family is at war with itself, and we are amid a mental health crisis with addiction, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicide numbers all soaring! This meta-crisis is inviting people to call BS on the BS Inc. limiting belief scarcity programs at root of our dis-ease, discord & disharmony, and try microdosing.

The focus of my book [*Worth The Fight: Acting for a Better World: A Guide to Spirituality, Psychedelic Medicines & Overcoming Trauma*](#) was mostly on the incredible potential in macro/peak/ceremonial psychedelic experiences. This is something entirely different; microdosing is nothing like the higher-dose psychedelic experience. While microdosing, we go to work, go to the gym & grocery store, spend time with friends and family, walk the dog, etc. We are doing all the things slightly elevated. Think 3% more Self-awareness, 3% more empathy, and 3% more courage. That doesn't seem like much, but magical things can happen in a two-month dosing protocol. In these fearful polarized times of unprecedented disenchantment, maybe these lovable, playful mushrooms can better help us navigate these choppy waters with a little more joy & grace. While people report microdosing a wide range of plant medicines/psychedelics, this manual will focus mostly on psilocybin.

For the past five years, I've been serving as an Empowerment Coach and Microdose Mentor guiding disenchanted high-achievers back to the path of passion & possibility. I help my clients to get the most out of psychedelia to be healthy, happy, and strong and to do the work they are here to do. I closely adhere to psychedelic pioneer Dr. Gabor Maté, MD's belief that all "dis"-ease is a by-product of unhealed trauma. In our past hurts there is a wondrous opportunity to liberate the energy of trauma into the energy of life. It's my earnest hope and prayer this guidebook will serve as an illuminating introductory roadmap for the path ahead, helping you get the most out of an intentional microdosing protocol whether you engage plant medicine for healing, deepening your spiritual connection, elevating creativity, or for accelerated personal growth.

Always remember, the supreme mantra for microdosing psychedelics is:
START LOW. GO SLOW. AND TAKE TIME OFF.

++Disclaimer: None of this is medical advice. While there is a thriving Psychedelic Renaissance and a movement to decriminalize these potent misunderstood molecules, they are still illegal Schedule 1 substances Federally.

Power of Intention

MISTAKE #1 *"I'll do this willy-nilly. I'll take a microdose here and there when I feel like it"*

Sure, you can do as you will, and maybe that lackadaisical approach might work for some people, but you might be leaving big potential benefits on the table. It's thought that 20-40% of microdosers won't stick with a protocol past the first few weeks because they don't notice any changes or they dose too high and aren't prepared to process the novel insights. The problem with a care-free approach is the lack of intention and not being clear as to why you are engaging some of the most powerful medicines on Earth. Yes, we are only talking about taking "micro" doses of psychedelics. But from my vantage point, these medicines are a slow-drip-rocket-fuel that should be given the deepest reverence and respect—microdosing is a spiritual discipline that can yield Infinite rewards. Something magical happens when we make bold, heart-centered intentions and fully commit to the journey.

Why does intentionality matter?

When setting an intention, we are declaring our "what and why" for engaging these medicines. Think of your intention as an anchor that will keep you from drifting too far off your charted destination and desired end result.

How to set an intention:

At the beginning of our microdosing protocol, we set a strong intention for the 60 days, or however long you will be dosing. Why are we microdosing? What do we hope to co-create with the benevolent plant medicine? It's important to reconnect to our intention every day and on dose days, especially setting intentions that will reliably deliver us to our overarching microdosing goals. Typically, a few conscious breaths can anchor us into the present moment. For me, it looks a lot like prayer, expressing my deepest gratitude for the sacred plant medicine and the forthcoming creative insight.

What is microdosing like?

Again, think 3% more Self-awareness, 3% more empathy, and 3% more courage. What are the common intentions? Boosting mood and energy levels, healing trauma, discontinuing pharmaceuticals, elevating creativity, harmonizing addictions/imbbalances, deepening into Self-love: Clarity & Connection, etc. For those that are new to microdosing: **KNOW THE RULES BEFORE BREAKING THEM.** Follow the protocol to the best of your ability for at least 2 months to know the real potential of an intentional microdosing journey. In our instant oatmeal society, discipline gets a bad rap. But for the potential Infinite rewards, it's worth the fight ;)

Standardize your dosage/Finding your sweet spot:

Dr. James Fadiman's expansive "citizen science" of over 2000 participants from 51 countries, ages 21-94, shares his dosage protocol as one-tenth to one-twentieth of a high dose. In my integrative coaching practice, we typically start lower than that and build up. After coaching hundreds of microdosers, I've found that around 80% of my clients find a sweet spot between 100 mg and 300 mg. Some dose lower, some dose higher. It's important to have the dose standardized to eliminate variability. Please know that agitation and tension can be part of this process. Remember, no free lunch here. Discomfort is a sign that we are changing; that we are rewiring our brains and nervous systems to a more adaptive setting. In order to truly know our sweet spot, we must push the ceiling. What does hitting our ceiling feel like? It was a challenging day. I'm glad I made it through. Perhaps there was too much discomfort, tension & agitation. Let's dial it back a bit for a more sustainable dosage point.

The two most common microdosing protocols:

The Fadiman Protocol, which is dosing every third day: Day 1, Day 4, Day 7, Day 10, Day 13, and so on for at least two months (20 dose days). It's not a magic pill; we give ourselves two months, so we have a long enough duration to cultivate healthy habits and embody aligned behavioral change. The Stamet's Stack is four days on, three days off, or five days on and two days off for the same time frame. In addition to psilocybin, the stack calls for 500 mg (up to 3 grams) of Lion's Mane and 50-100 mg of niacin (vitamin B3). Taking days off is important to preserve tolerance and keep the experience fresh and insightful. To get the most out of a microdosing protocol, dial in your focused intention and fully commit to the journey within.



Integration Theory

MISTAKE #2 *“It’s just another pill. The plant medicine will fix me and do all the work”*

This couldn’t be further from the truth. The Pharma “pill-a-day model” has been one of the most prolific marketing campaigns ever conducted; from my vantage point, a top BS Inc. offender promoting a disempowering victim script that says you are broken, and we need a pill to feel whole. What if our bodies were infinitely wise? They are. When embarking on a microdosing journey with psilocybin, you are embarking on an Epic journey of co-creation with the benevolent plant medicine. In Johns Hopkins clinical trials, 67% of participants rated a high-dose psilocybin journey as among the top 5 most meaningful experiences of their lifetime. Those findings illuminate the incredible potential of this misunderstood medicine. Integrate means to “make whole,” and to get the most out of a microdosing journey, we must be willing to put in the work: This unconventional process works much better when we work it.

Again, there is no free lunch here. It’s the strangest of paradoxes: discipline equals freedom. In having practices, habits, routines, and rituals in place on a daily basis we are positioned to safely, reliably, and sustainably get the most out of an intentional microdosing journey. Constraints in our day-to-day lives give us the freedom to push and explore our growth edges with more vim and vigor. The principles of microdosing psychedelic medicines are Universal. They apply the same to those seeking to heal from trauma and those who want to explore their limitless personal growth. These medicines are indeed slow-drip-rocket-fuel with built-in natural guard rails. They connect us to a part of us that is omnipresent, a part we are typically cut off from. Since the answers are coming from within, they are easier to digest and metabolize, making the novel insights actionable to our daily lives. One of the biggest benefits of microdosing is we can struggle better; we can do the hard things. Our edges soften. We feel safe leaning into our shadow and going to “that place” we normally ignore at all costs. We can sit with our traumas and ask the tough questions that don’t have clear answers. There is indescribable grace in this process.

How does it all work?

If we do this correctly, we won’t know exactly where the benefits come from. Is it coming from the microdosing? Or is it coming from the newly adopted or renewed meditation practice? Or maybe the fact that we feel inspired to exercise more and eat healthier? Or perhaps because we are getting more out of the day and sleeping better? It doesn’t really matter where the benefits come from when we are back on the path of passion & possibility. Microdosing can be a therapeutic protocol but also a novel lifestyle design strategy or means of unleashing your limitless personal growth. When we are willing to put in the work, we feel empowered to co-create with plant medicine to bring forth the positive change we aspire to cultivate from within. There is a wondrous opportunity to set in motion a virtuous upward spiral of good, perpetuating more good.

Building the Foundation

MISTAKE #3 *“I just want to microdose — meditation and exercise are not for me!”*

In other words, you want to build a skyscraper on a sandlot? That doesn’t sound like a good idea. Microdosing without foundational practices in place isn’t sustainable and might be missing the entire point. The only hard-line non-negotiable with microdosing is we must have foundational practices to capture the insights and get the most out of this process. Remember, microdosing is akin to 3% more Self-awareness, 3% more empathy, and 3% more courage.

We don’t want those insights to slip through our hands—we want them to land in our journals. Don’t worry—the foundational practices are easier to adopt and deepen into while working with plant medicine. It’s time to build, strengthen, and reinforce our foundation with Meditation and Movement.

As humans, we so often over-complicate things. With microdosing, there is an incredible opportunity to get back to the basics. One of the biggest leverage points of microdosing is how these powerful state-shifting tools promote neuroplasticity that is associated with accelerated learning. What is neuroplasticity? Stanford neuroscientist, and host of the Huberman Lab Podcast, Dr. Andrew Huberman, states, “Neuroplasticity is our nervous system and brain’s ability to change to internal and external conditions.” The marker used to measure neuroplasticity is Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF). BDNF is commonly known as “Miracle grow for our brains.” And, well, yes, [psychedelics promote BDNF \(Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor\) and promote a “Window of Neuroplasticity.”](#) where we grow new cells, existing cells have more dendrites and richer complexity with more connections.

Want more BDNF? According to psychedelic pioneer and Bulletproof mogul Dave Asprey, in addition to psychedelics, these are the most common ways we can elevate our BDNF: Exercise, deep sleep, meditation, polyphenols, hypoxia (Wim Hof Style Breathwork), sunlight, and Intermittent Fasting.

Meditation Practice

There are 1000s of scientific papers online espousing the incredible benefits of meditation to increase focus and reduce stress. There are many ways to meditate. At its purest essence, just closing our eyes and focusing our attention on our breath will be more than sufficient, although we might have a mantra: I am letting go. I am safe. I am ready! etc. When we find ourselves creating an inner story or attached to an emotion, or memory, we come back to the breath (and/or mantra) without judgment, just observing our thoughts.

Why do we meditate? Because this potent daily practice helps us cultivate inner peace and creates structured space in our busy day-to-day lives for novel insight. As we deepen into our meditation practice, we notice we’ve expanded from our thoughts/triggers, empowering us to access the present moment more



consistently. Meditation cultivates non-reactivity so we can more consciously respond to life's stressors as opposed to unconsciously reacting. As we deepen into this ancient practice, our emotional regulation improves—we can see more objectively what actions/behaviors are aligned with our intentions and what are not, so we can make the necessary adjustments. With all of this, meditation is the secret sauce.

Movement Practice:

We all have 37.2 trillion cells that are screaming at us to get a move on. It doesn't really matter how we move our bodies—it is more important that we just do it: Walking, running, biking, resistance training, yoga, swimming, dancing, hiking, and sex, are all productive ways to get that move on. There is no right or wrong here, or one size fits all. Everyone is at different fitness levels. Find your edge and push it! Even if that edge is getting outside for a 10-minute morning and evening walk which science supports can boost our mood and well-being. As Dr. Peter Attia says, "The best longevity drug is exercise." The hallmark of microdosing is a boosted mood and energy levels. Plant medicine can be a divinely timed catalyst inviting an opportunity to recommit to a movement practice. First, we create our habits, and then our habits create us. It isn't all about the microdosing but how it can promote rapid habit adoption.

Journaling it Out

MISTAKE #4 *"I'm feeling anxiety; this isn't working"*

When we microdose plant medicine, we are willingly bringing more into the fold to work with. I often ask my microdosing clients, "What is the difference between anxiety and fodder needed for a deeply informative journaling session?" When shifting the frame around anxiety, we can process and clear energetic blockages all by our lonesomes. That is empowerment. We have the tools to work through whatever microdosing bubbles up to the surface. This is called medicine work for a reason. But it's fair, it's honest, and the insights are coming from within. It's local; nothing is lost in translation compared to macrodosing. According to esteemed NYU professor, neuroscientist, and author Dr. Wendy Suzuki, there is a "good anxiety." Her latest book: *Good Anxiety: Harnessing the Power of the Most Misunderstood Emotion*, illuminates the potential power within anxious thought energy. Dr. Suzuki says, "Adapting our responses to the stress in our lives and using anxiety as a warning signal and opportunity to redirect that energy for good." Thanks, Dr. Suzuki, for your commitment to public health and education around the power of meditation, movement, good sleep, and deliberate cold exposure (She gets giddy talking about her cold showers :)

***Action Item*:** Please go to Walgreens and buy a notebook. Be brave, and put pen to paper. Even if we follow psychedelic luminary Tim Ferriss' "5-minute Journal" directive in the AM and PM, we will be way ahead of the game. It's important to think of our journals as a landing zone for our thoughts. A safe place for our left-brain chatter to go to help us work through any heaviness we might be feeling. We use the journal to set bold intentions, contemplate our curiosities, and keep tabs on our mood and energy levels. When in doubt, lean into gratitude and focus on the blessings we already have. Remember, anxiety is a warning signal and can be a good thing if we have the proper systems and processes in place.



Breathwork

MISTAKE #5 *"I am too busy to do breathwork"*

That is like saying, "I am too busy to rebuild/reinforce my nervous system—I am too busy to have the best sex of my life!" More on that later :) Yes, it can be a lot to get in our meditation, journaling, exercise, and breathwork too. You might be thinking: "This commitment to Self-love and being my best might be more than I bargained for?" Hold on, breathwork is an active form of meditation that can yield very different benefits. Maybe swap part or all of your stillness meditation for a conscious breathing practice. Breathwork can help us move through traumas and emotional blockages and is scientifically proven to boost our immunity, reduce pain and inflammation, and boost our energy levels at the cell/mitochondrial levels.

It is work and not for the faint of heart, but with practice, we can access deeply insightful quasi-psychedelic states with very low risk. It's free and right under our nose and not subject to regulation by BS Inc.

Both psychedelics and breathing practices can consciously disrupt the Default Mode Network(DMN). The DMN is responsible for many mental activities, including daydreaming, self-reflection, and thinking about the past and future. A highly active DMN is responsible for excessive rumination and rigid, over-analytical thinking, which can block us from the present moment. These breathing practices are all very aligned with microdosing plant medicine: Wim Hof Method, Holotropic breathing, and Dr. Huberman's Non-Sleep Deep Rest(NSDR) protocol.

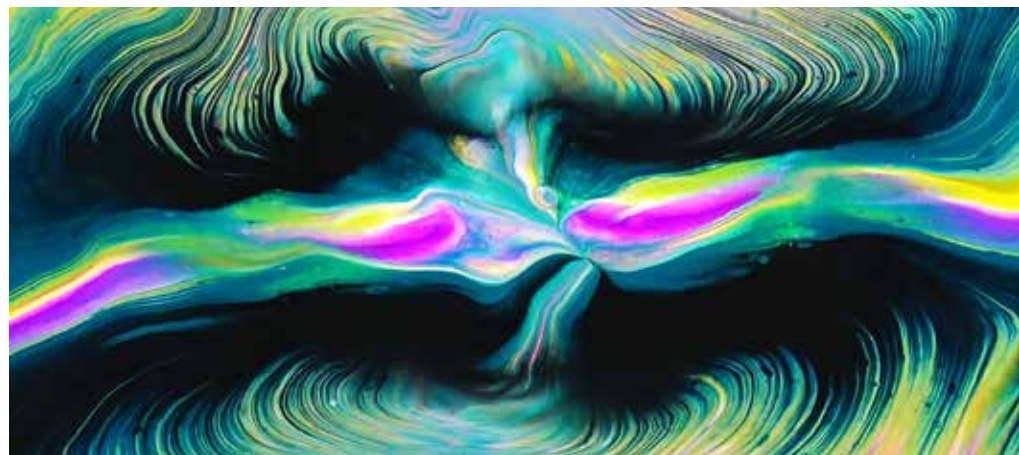
Back to mind-blowing sex, breathing practices are foundational for any aspirant pursuing the path of tantra; the degree to which we can connect with ourselves is the very same degree to which we can connect with our chosen intimate partner. These novel breathing practices can cultivate the confidence to stay connected to our breath in tense and stressful situations, inspiring more presence and empowering the ability to up-regulate and down-regulate our nervous systems with our own conscious will.

Possibility & Peril

MISTAKE #6 *"I am in a constant flow state"*

As Steven Kotler, author of *Stealing Fire*, so aptly says, the constant flow state has another name: schizophrenia. While microdosing psychedelics is very low risk, this is where people can get themselves in trouble: "I want to macrodose while engaging a microdosing protocol." That is cool. I suppose. Again, people will do what they are gonna do. But when we mix an earnest microdosing protocol with a peak psychedelic experience, we may be taking on too much too fast. Having a peak psychedelic experience during the microdosing protocol can disrupt your flow and create a chemical imbalance. Our brains are pattern recognition & meaning-making machines, and when we have excessively elevated levels of dopamine, we can be in danger of finding patterns where none exist. It's recommended that we have two weeks as a buffer before and after engaging in a high-dose psychedelic experience. Adhering to this directive will give us plenty of time to reset our tolerance and properly integrate both the microdosing protocol and the peak psychedelic experience. The truest test and BS meter to ensure we aren't becoming a bliss junkie off the path is how we show up for our foundational integration practices.

Microdosing & Flow: In her pioneering book on microdosing, *A Really Good Day: How Microdosing Made a Mega Difference in My Mood, My Marriage, and My Life*, Ayelet Waldman takes the reader on her life-changing microdosing journey and masterfully covers it all with lots of wit and humor. There is good reason why the Silicon Valley tech community is all the craze around microdosing; this novel strategy for health and wellbeing definitely has the potential to elevate cognition, often regarded as a "nootropic," a fancy word for a smart drug. As I cited in *Worth The Fight*, there is an astounding Possibility when tapping into the flow state for massively elevated productivity, creativity, and learning. Go forth and conquer. But always remember, what goes up must come down.



Optimized Biology

MISTAKE #7 *“Transcendence? Nah, I’m good. I am not that interested in exploring a more optimized health”*

Psychedelics have a way of illuminating the best version of ourselves. I believe the degree to which we lean into the darkness, our pain, traumas, and adversity, is the very same degree to which we can stand and love in our light. Post-traumatic growth is a relatively new concept. The degree to which microdosing helps those struggling with mental health challenges, depression, and trauma, is the same degree to which the benevolent plant medicine can help “healthy normals” reach their goals and dreams, dare I say it: 10X faster. But we have to give to get. Remember, there is no free lunch. This process works best when we work it. Psychedelics connect us to nature. Literally. Through reconnecting to nature, we can reconnect to our true nature. We are meant to be healthy, happy, and strong. We are meant to live life to the fullest. We are all meant to embody the “Beyond Love” I write about in *Worth The Fight*.

More actionable tips and strategies aligned with psychedelia and a more optimized health:

Check out the *Worth The Fight* podcast for aligned content, where I host inspired guests who illuminate the incredible potential of the new frontier of psychedelic medicine. In what was one of the more meaningful conversations I’ve ever had: [Worth The Fight podcast #95 with Dr. James Fadiman: Microdosing for Macro Results](#). It was a Sacred honor to push the edges with the “Godfather of Microdosing” and show that microdosing is not just for mental health but for deeper connection in all of its wondrous forms.

Huberman Lab Podcast for all things optimized health. Dr. Andrew Huberman is telling an updated, hopeful story of what is possible, leading with cutting-edge peer-reviewed scientific data. He brings world-renowned experts on his podcast to deliver actionable next steps we can deploy for elevated mental health and performance.

And, in good conscience, the Huberman Lab Podcast for all things optimized health. Dr. Andrew Huberman might be my favorite person on Earth. He is telling an updated, hopeful story of what is Possible with cutting-edge peer reviewed scientific data. He walks the talk and graciously shares the mechanism at play, always delivering actionable next steps we can deploy for elevated mental health and performance.

Get a handle on your sleep hygiene: In this past decade, a new story has emerged around sleep and its role in neuroplasticity. Modern neuroscience and wearable tech have demystified sleep, and it’s now viewed as a superpower skill we can cultivate with adoption and adherence to sleep best practices: morning sunlight, mindful caffeine consumption, daily exercise, mindful PM tech/screen time, etc.

Cacao: Leverage this synergistic plant medicine ally, super food, and potent natural antidepressant. Pour a cup of raw, ceremonial cacao and tap into the flow state. Cacao has the neurotransmitter Anandamide. Ananda, meaning “bliss,” is known for producing mild states of euphoria and feelings of bliss. Anandamide is an active ingredient in cannabis/sativa and is associated with elevated creativity and lateral outside-the-box thinking.

Gradual, deliberate cold exposure: Be brave and turn that dial in your hot and toasty shower to cold, even if it takes 10–20 seconds to start. Quality peer-reviewed scientific data supports that we can boost our endogenous dopamine(motivation) levels by up to 250% and norepinephrine[adrenaline](focus) by up to 500% through deliberate cold water immersion.

Diet, nutrition & fasting: With microdosing, we can embody the banal maxim “We are what we eat” and leverage the boosted awareness to be more mindful of the foods and beverages we consume. What does my body need? How can I better nourish my body? Could I benefit from fasting? Fasting/Intermittent Fast(IF) is a powerful health directive where we eat 8 hours (or less) and fast the other 16. This forbearance is aligned with our evolutionary biology, where we didn’t always have access to food. Fasting promotes autophagy where our healthy cells recycle our damaged cells. This ancient practice has radically changed my life, and countless clients of mine have benefited from this simple lifestyle design strategy and shift.



Buddy System While Outside the Pale

MISTAKE #8 *"I've got this. I can go at this alone!"*

In the Information Age, we can YouTube most things and get by—not with microdosing plant medicine. Especially if you are serious about getting the most out of an earnest intentional microdosing protocol. Out towards this edge, when possible, the buddy system is always recommended.

It's supremely important to have a guide, coach, or therapist who has been through their own psychedelic journeys. Has your sherpa climbed the mountain that impedes your path? This is a very nuanced terrain with no shortcuts to holding proper space. The depth to which your guide has gone within on his or her respective journey, is very likely the same depth to which the guide can facilitate healing and soulful transformational growth.

At the very least, find a group or community to learn from the experiences of others. In my [Psychedelics & Limitless Personal Growth Meetup](#), I host a weekly Microdosing Monday Meetup at 7pm CST on Zoom. This is a special opportunity to learn microdosing best practices and learn from your peers.

Microdosing has immense promise for big benefits with a very low-risk profile relative to the high-dose psychedelic experience. But in going at this alone without a guide, you might be leaving huge potential gains on the table. If you are interested in being fully supported by an experienced guide please inquire about my Magic n' Microdosing Mentorship program, where I guide disenchanted high-achievers back to the path of passion & possibility.

More than ever, we need us all fit for service doing the work we are here to do.

Lean in. Be brave. Feel it all.

If you are struggling, please know there is another way: Intentional microdosing yields macro results. We can liberate the energy of trauma into the energy of life! Even in these precarious times, I've never been more hopeful for The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible.

Thank you for reading. From my heart to yours.

Love & peace,

Matt

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