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Acid Test: LSD, Ecstasy, And The Power To Heal



Synopsis

“A book that should start a long-overdue national conversation.” —Dave Barry
Despite their illegality, many Americans are already familiar with the effects of psychedelic drugs. Yet while LSD and MDMA (better known as Ecstasy) have proven extraordinarily effective in treating anxiety disorders such as PTSD, they remain off-limits to the millions who might benefit from them. Through the stories of three very different men, award-winning journalist Tom Shroder covers the drugs’ roller-coaster history from their initial reception in the 1950s to the negative stereotypes that persist today. At a moment when popular opinion is rethinking the potential benefits of some illegal drugs, *Acid Test* is a fascinating and informative must-read.

Book Information

Paperback: 464 pages

Publisher: Plume; Reprint edition (August 11, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0147516374

ISBN-13: 978-0147516374

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (58 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #173,121 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #43 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling > Psychopharmacology](#) #44 in [Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Psychopharmacology](#) #176 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Mental Health > Post-traumatic Stress Disorder](#)

Customer Reviews

What *The Grapes of Wrath* did for the 1930s’ economic calamity, *Acid Test* may do for today’s PTSD plague. Just as *Grapes* caught a wave of public opinion and helped produce economic policies, *Acid Test* catches a wave of changing public opinion about psychedelic drugs and is likely to inform health policies. *Acid Test* comes just as research on the psychedelic psychotherapeutics reenters the medical and scientific mainstream. For example, the July 4 issue of *SCIENCE*, the prestigious flagship publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, presented two supportive articles. The first reviews current worldwide research such as that on going at the Johns Hopkins Medical School and at NYU’s Langone Medical School in conjunction with Bellevue Hospital. The second features Rick Doblin, one of *Acid Test*’s three

principal characters. Starting separately, *Acid Test* follows the lives of three men from their adventurous young adulthood to socially responsible maturity. • Rick Doblin is the scion of a North Shore family near Chicago who lived a life of nude swimming, building a handball court and house, and an easy-going life at New College in Sarasota, Florida, until he experienced a life-changing psychedelic trip and dedicated his life to psychedelic psychotherapy by founding the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies. As Shroder writes, • from a rebellious hippie to the sponsor of cutting-edge scientific research in some of the nation's more conservative institutions. • Nicholas Blackston lived in a trailer near Paducah, Kentucky, much bullied as an outsider and because of his strange experiences.

This is probably the best written book on the subject of using psychedelics for legitimate medical treatment of various mental health issues that there is. Most people would probably be surprised to learn that a tremendous amount of medical research was done on psychedelics prior to the harsh government crackdown on these incredibly useful medicines. The research was very promising. Through the use of this special and unique class of medicines, it's possible to completely cure (yes, I'm using the "C" word) various mental health issues including depression, anxiety, OCD, PTSD, and others. Researchers were certain that psychedelics had a very bright future in the field of psychiatry. What happened? The excesses of the 1960's counterculture happened, that's what. The War on Drugs was launched to crack down on the counter culture of the 60's and sadly, unfortunately for those who suffer from debilitating mental illnesses, psychedelics were made illegal in this crackdown, despite strong testimony from medical researchers and practitioners that this class of drugs DID NOT belong in the same category as other Schedule 1 drugs. In the past few years research has slowly and quietly resumed on the use of psychedelics to treat mental illness. This book gives a brief history of psychedelics, the ensuing government crackdown, and the rise of new medical studies. This is not a boring read at all. The chapters of the book alternate between the lives of several people including Rick Doblin, founder of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), and his tremendous efforts to make MDMA-assisted psychotherapy legal.

I agree with the reviewer who said the personal stories go on too long. This may be wise for setting a good foundation for people new to the psychological benefits of psychedelic and mdma therapy; but for those of us who use these sacraments in our spiritual practice, this was little more than biography. Yes I enjoyed learning more of Doblin's background, or Mithoefer, but I read about these

guys all the time in the entheogenic literature. Now i know that MAPS and those who conduct these important studies are necessary to gently widen the crack into the resistant mindset of the mainstream objectified materialist researchers. And I strongly suspect Doblin and these fellows speak of far wilder realities in private. Still, I was hoping for a much broader survey, showing how these wonderful substances are opening hidden doors for many who have suffered long, or for spiritual seekers hoping for more than grape juice and bread wafer "communion" with the Divine. It made its point with detailed histories, and that serves a purpose for the academics. But **eff those guys! What a pity we have to prove to the "meatheads" that there is some value to these sacraments! Many of us in the underground gnostic community use these substances, in combination, and with others. MAPS etc., timidly tiptoes around mixes like acid+mdma, (and I understand why), but here is where the action is, cross pollination between the visionary and the heart centered. Dynamite. There is a Zen book, some title like After the Ecstasy, the Laundry! True enuff! BUT.... how about, After the Ecstasy, and the psychological cleansing and Release, the Joy of knowing Self as Spiritual Being? THIS is the ferment that will change and uplift human evolution.

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