



Microdosing

Which Medicine Has Which Personality?

LSD • Psilocybin • San Pedro

For decades, most of the conversation has centered around the profound experiences that can occur with larger doses - mystical experiences, ego dissolution, emotional breakthroughs, expanded states of consciousness and sometimes life-changing shifts in perspective.

But in recent years, research is showing that there is tremendous power when medicine becomes a whisper rather than a roar.

Thankfully, finally, microdosing is beginning to be researched, but there are books now detailing anecdotal experiences of the power of microdosing.

There are many different reasons to microdose – some people want to expand or open their creativity and focus. Others are looking to move through the world feeling their heart open. Others want a greater sense of connection in relationships and their world. Others may use it for pain management, or as way to feel comfortable socially.

In other words, the reason depends upon the person.

And perhaps one of the most interesting things we are learning is that all microdosing experiences aren't necessarily alike.

LSD, psilocybin and mescaline-containing San Pedro are all classical psychedelics. But people frequently

describe them as having remarkably different personalities.

This isn't about one being better than another, but rather, where does each one invite your attention?

PSILOCYBIN: The Inner World Medicine

Emotional • Introspective • Symbolic • Meaning-Oriented

Psilocybin often seems to turn attention inward, with people describing becoming more aware of feelings, memories, habitual emotional responses and the stories that they carry about themselves and their lives.

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The primary orientation is Insight. **Emotion. Meaning.**

It is characterized as symbolic, mythic and inward.

Psilocybin reports focus on emotion and meaning, which can feel beautiful. At the same time, what may become visible and felt may be exactly what you have spent years avoiding.

THE PERSONALITY OF PSILOCYBIN

If psilocybin could speak, maybe it would say: **Come inside. There are worlds within you that are worth noticing and feeling fully. And what do you think those feelings are telling you?**

People often use it for: emotional awareness, creativity, introspection, connection with nature, perspective, meaning, awareness of patterns and greater psychological flexibility.

WHAT THE SCIENCE CURRENTLY SAYS

This is one of the areas where the research gets fascinating.

In three recent double-blind placebo-controlled studies involving **171 participants**, researchers found that psilocybin microdosing improved one particular aspect of creativity: the **quality of divergent ideas**.

But it didn't improve every measure of creativity, including convergent thinking.

So saying "psilocybin makes people more creative" goes further than the evidence, but there is a strong basis through years of reports indicating that creativity feels enhanced. And that is interesting enough.

LSD: The Mind & Pattern Medicine

Crisp • Alert • Cognitive • Systems-Oriented

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LSD is described as being clear **Focus, Noticing Patterns, Breakthrough Ideas, and Energy.**

Its orientation is **mind, pattern recognition and systems**, and the quality of the energy is described as crisp, electric and stimulating.

People report using LSD microdoses while writing, designing, problem solving, brainstorming or working on projects requiring sustained mental engagement.

THE PERSONALITY

If LSD could speak, I imagine it would say: **Look again. There's another way to see this. Be present to how these pieces connect. What pattern have you been missing?**

People report exploring microdosing with LSD for Focus, Energy, Pattern Recognition, Innovation, Strategic Thinking, Problem Solving, Creativity and Productivity.

WHAT THE SCIENCE CURRENTLY SAYS

LSD actually has some of the strongest controlled microdosing research of these three substances.

A 2024 review examined **14 controlled studies** involving low doses of LSD. Researchers found measurable acute changes involving things such as mood, pain perception, time perception, blood pressure, sleep, neural connectivity and social cognition.

And repeated **LSD microdosing didn't reliably improve mood or cognition on the measures researchers studied.**

In a six-week controlled creativity study, people taking LSD **reported feeling more creative** on dosing days while objective creativity testing found no significant improvement, which is intriguing because **feeling different and performing differently may be two separate things.**

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SAN PEDRO: The Heart & Body Medicine

Warm • Grounded • Relational • Embodied

San Pedro is a mescaline-containing cactus with thousands of years of ceremonial history in South America and it is often described as the most grounded in the **body and heart**.

The primary orientation is the **Heart, Body and Relationship**.

Its emotional qualities are described as compassion, patience and forgiveness, while creativity is felt as embodied, sensual and poetic.

People sometimes report becoming more aware of physical sensation, nature, relationship and the emotional space between themselves and others.

San Pedro is not necessarily about figuring things out, but rather **the experience of feeling what is already there**.

It is frequently described as warm and slow, often subtle.

THE PERSONALITY OF SAN PEDRO

If San Pedro could speak, perhaps it would say: **Come back into your body; feel your feet on the earth and feel this very moment in your heart**. Notice what happens between you and those around you.

People often use San Pedro for microdosing for:

Embodiment • Connection • Compassion • Relational awareness • Creativity • Nature connection • Emotional warmth • Vitality

WHAT THE SCIENCE CURRENTLY SAYS

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Right now, there is little scientific research on microdosing of San Pedro, compared to the research that exists on LSD and psilocybin.

The descriptions of San Pedro being more relational, compassionate, embodied or regulating are **traditional, observational and experiential reports and are not yet established clinical findings.**

Because mescaline can have a long duration of action and because San Pedro cactus preparations can vary considerably in alkaloid concentration, and because there is little research on microdosing San Pedro, an optimal microdosing schedule doesn't exist at this point and there is less certainty.

That doesn't make the reports meaningless, rather it means that science hasn't caught up with the conversation YET.

THE FADIMAN PROTOCOL: Why the Days Between Matter

James Fadiman has been one of the central figures in bringing contemporary attention to microdosing.

The protocol associated with his work became one of the most widely known approaches.

Its elegance is its simplicity:

DAY 1 — Microdose. Notice.

DAY 2 — Transition Day. Notice (Often described as the peak or favorite day)..

DAY 3 — Baseline Day. Notice yourself without the medicine.

DAY 4 — Begin the cycle again.

And the space between experiences becomes part of the experience. You get to notice yourself. , What is changing in my mood? Patience? Creativity? Sleep? Connection? Reactivity? Relationship? Energy? The ability to shift myself or get unstuck.

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This is where keeping a journal is incredibly helpful in your own growth and use of the microdosing.

Recommendations then note that after 4-6 weeks, taking a break of 1 ½ to 2 weeks supports greatly in cleaning out your system and to prevent building tolerance to the medicine.

It is also noted that **LESS IS MORE**. Meaning that people are used to thinking that more is better, but with psychedelics, the opposite has shown to be true. Often lessening the dose after time will yield the same results. It is like your body has stored the memory of the medicine and can access it with very little support over time.

SO WHICH SCHEDULE IS “RIGHT”?

There are different protocols for microdosing, and at the point science doesn't have a clear answer.

I have included the Fadiman protocol given that he is known as the father of microdosing, has written books on it and made his life about singing the praises of microdosing and exploration.

The science does have one clear answer and that is that a **protocol is a framework—not proof that a particular schedule is safe, effective or appropriate for a particular person.**

The Fadiman protocol has become widely known because it creates something valuable beyond the dosing schedule itself: Space to Observe your Self.

Some questions for your Journal and noticing:

What happened?

How long did it last?

What happened to sleep?

Was there greater focus or greater stimulation?

Was emotional openness useful - or overwhelming?

Did creativity actually increase - or did it simply feel as though it did?

What happened in relationship?

And several weeks later, is anything meaningfully different?

You are not just examining the medicine, you are paying attention to YOU.

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WHAT ABOUT COMBINING MEDICINES?

Sometimes people want to combine **LSD + Psilocybin – Sequenced**
or **LSD + San Pedro Combined Together**

This may be something that is done during limited relational windows rather than long term.

There is an important caution: combining San Pedro and LSD can become physically or psychologically intense, and it characterizes the combination as potentially producing somatic overload or a “harsh” experience when poorly matched.

For LSD + San Pedro, it is sometimes recommended that this be the **least frequent pairing, approximately every 5–7+ days**, because of mescaline's longer duration and potential cross-tolerance.

NOTE: These **combination practices are much further ahead of the research than single-substance microdosing**. They shouldn't be interpreted as clinically validated protocols.

There are increasing reports of taking two weeks in between microdosing one medicine and then switching to another for a 4-6 week period, keeping notes on what the distinctions were that you noticed.

WHAT ABOUT ENHANCED PERFORMANCE?

Silicon Valley stories helped popularize the idea of microdosing for creativity, productivity and innovation.

And people continue to report those experiences.

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Science now backs that up, with some nuances.

A 2024 review of **19 placebo-controlled microdosing studies** found evidence that low-dose LSD and psilocybin can produce genuine changes in neurobiology, physiology, subjective experience, affect and cognition.

In other words: **Something is happening.**

The same review found inconsistent evidence that those changes translate into improved creativity or cognitive performance. Researchers concluded that it is also premature to dismiss microdosing as simply placebo.

And a broader 2025 review of **57 human studies** reached a similarly interesting conclusion: observational studies tend to report more benefits than controlled experiments, while outcomes vary considerably between individuals and appear influenced by expectations, mindset and environment.

Another way of saying this, is that the ideas around psychedelic medicines often is so strong, that a placebo performs far better than with other drug testing.

So, the question isn't **Does microdosing work?**

Maybe it is: **What changes within me? What is my own mindset going in? What is the setting in which those changes occurred? And how do I know?**

THE MEDICINE IS JUST ONE PART OF THE EQUATION

This is one of the ideas I find most compelling: Two people can take the same substance and describe entirely different experiences.

Because we all arrive with our own nervous system, our history, expectations, relationships, sleep levels, fears, doubts, intentions, medical history, medications, physiology, emotions, levels of consciousness, psychology....

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What research now shows is that the mindset of the person + the setting + intentions/ expectations may all contribute to what occurs.

In other words, **the experience is never only about the medicine.**

The medicine is responding to the question of who am I?

THREE MEDICINES.

THREE VERY DIFFERENT INVITATIONS.

PSILOCYBIN *What inside me wants to be seen or understood?*

LSD *What pattern might I see differently?*

SAN PEDRO *Can I come more fully into my body and heart?*

This is not **What will this substance do to me? But, what do I want to discover and how will I know whether something meaningful has actually changed?**

Your curiosity matters. Your intention matters. Integrating what you are learning into tangible actions and changes in your life matter.

The science will continue to catch up with the human experience. What will yours be?



Research & Further Reading

1. **Polito, V., & Liknaitzky, P. (2024).** “Is microdosing a placebo? A rapid review of low-dose LSD and psilocybin research.” *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 38(8), 701–711. DOI: 10.1177/02698811241254831.
This is the particularly useful review I referenced. It examined **19 placebo-controlled studies** and found measurable effects involving neurobiology, physiology, subjective experience, affect and cognition, while concluding that current evidence cannot establish that microdosing's effects are simply placebo.
[PubMed study page](#)
2. **Petranker, R., Anderson, T., & Farb, N. (2024).** “Microdosing Psychedelics: Current Evidence From Controlled Studies.” *Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging*, 9(5), 500–511. DOI: 10.1016/j.bpsc.2024.01.002.
This review examined **14 controlled LSD studies**. Acute low doses produced measurable effects on such variables as blood pressure, sleep, neural connectivity, social cognition, mood, and perceptions of pain and time. Importantly, **repeated dosing did not produce reliable improvements in mood or cognition on the measures studied**.
[Read the open-access review](#)
3. **Murphy, R. J., et al. (2024).** “Multimodal creativity assessments following acute and sustained microdosing of lysergic acid diethylamide.” *Psychopharmacology*. DOI: 10.1007/s00213-024-06680-z.
This is the wonderful “**I feel more creative versus am I demonstrably more creative?**” study. Eighty healthy adult men received LSD or placebo every third day for six weeks. Participants reported feeling more creative on dosing days, while objective creativity tests showed **no significant acute or lasting improvement**.
[PubMed study page](#)
4. **Murphy and colleagues (2025/2026 publication record).** “Microdosing psilocybin and its effect on creativity: Lessons learned from three double-blind placebo controlled longitudinal trials.” *Neuropharmacology*.
This pooled work is useful for the psilocybin/creativity discussion. It provides a more nuanced picture than simply saying microdosing “increases creativity”: some dimensions of divergent thinking showed effects while creativity as a whole did not uniformly improve.
[Study abstract and publication page](#)
5. **Roop, P., et al. (2024).** “LSD increases sleep duration the night after microdosing.” *Translational Psychiatry*, 14, 191.
Another fascinating one if you want to retain the discussion of **tracking sleep**. In an 80-person randomized controlled trial, participants receiving 10 µg LSD every third day slept an average **24.3 minutes longer on the night following a microdose** than placebo participants.
[Nature / Translational Psychiatry study](#)
6. **Fadiman, J., & Gruber, J.** *Microdosing for Health, Healing, and Enhanced Performance*. St. Martin's Essentials.