



Psychedelics are getting a lot of attention lately in the mainstream press, in mainstream research and in mainstream therapies. What's going on? The desire to experience altered states of consciousness has been common to cultures all over the world for as far back as we can document. Ancient forms of altering consciousness included drumming, dancing, chanting, fasting, meditation, shamanic journeys, other spiritual disciplines, as well as the ingestion of various edible substances. These have all been used for thousands of years to catapult one out of their normal, daily experience of reality into states that range from ecstatic to terrifying and that can catalyze one's self discovery, healing and growth.

Ketamine is one of the legal medicines being used in therapeutic (as well as, yes, recreational) settings. Its application has been found to be especially helpful for people with depression.

My interest in experiencing ketamine's effects had more to do with my ongoing spiritual explorations and personal growth. Highlights and insights from my first ketamine journey are offered below.

Preparation

A good friend administered the medicine at her lovely, private studio in the woods. She is a licensed therapist and trained psychedelic guide. I followed the necessary recommendations of no food 4 hours before and no water 1 hour before.

The more unusual preparation that I did was to use the CREATE! process to get my intention for the journey. CREATE! enables me to access my unconscious and bring guidance up from the otherwise inaccessible source of my being. I used a simple intention: **Give me my intention for this ketamine journey.** I won't replicate the entire writing that came through, but the message was to embrace my shadow. If you are interested in reading the entire divination, let me know and I'll send you a link.

Honestly, I wasn't thrilled about doing more shadow work. I know it's necessary. And I know I've done a lot of it. I was willing and trusting my bodymind to bring me what was most useful for my evolution at this time.

I wrote again the morning of the journey with the intention: **My soul speaks.** Again, I won't include the entire writing but it ended with All is well. All is well. All is well. Definitely felt reassurance that I was up for whatever emerged in the session.

Journey

The journey took place at a lovely setting: private, quiet, surrounded by woods with a loving, competent guide. She had suggested bringing items for the altar which I would create as part of the preparation for the journey. I chose to bring my soul collage cards. This is a deck originally created using Seena Frost's Soul Collage methodology. My deck of collage cards have been created over a decade and a half. A subset of the deck (not in Seena's original system) are my shadow cards. Originally I thought I would pick one or two of them for the altar. As it turned out, I put most of my shadow cards up around the altar but also many of my other cards that felt relevant and asked to be included.

Reclined on a comfy couch with a weighted blanket and eye shade, lozenge under the tongue and quite quickly I was experiencing intense physical sensations starting in my mouth and spreading throughout my body.

Some of my brief notes right after the journey included the following:

Pervasive, intense ecstasy — the orgasmic experience of being alive

Unbearable beauty of being — similarly recognizing the beauty of all life, all aspects of life, including me

Recognition of my unquestionable riches — in who I am and the experiences of my life. This recognition was stimulated late in the journey when I got up to use the bathroom. Coming back, I saw my altar, my cards, my creativity, my lifelong self-exploration, realization, actualization.

One powerful experience was being a “mother log.” That was the language that came with the experience of being prone on the forest floor in a redwood forest. From my body were growing the next generation of redwoods. And from their branches grew the next generation of redwoods and on up to the canopy. It was later in the conversation with my guide that I remembered these are called nurse logs not mother logs. But mother log it was for me. In this life, I am a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

There were other personal insights and visions throughout the journey.

My Ketamine Altar



Decoding / Debriefing

In the debrief, I realized I had revealed several significant shadows to myself, not the dark shadows that I anticipated but the golden shadows of ecstasy, riches and beauty. In my life, riches, beauty and ecstasy had seemed elusive, or only available at certain times or in certain circumstances. This enabled me to own that these are who I am always, whether my awareness is focused on them or not. This has been a fundamental shift for me. I am still doing what I'm doing but now I can come from a place of wholeness instead of deficit.

Integration

On returning home from the journey, I created a digital image capturing some of the intense feeling state of the experience.



I also went for a long walk in the woods to satisfy my desire to be outside, immersed in the natural world. I live in the Pacific Northwest, so I was surrounded by ancient evergreens. And I began a series of collages to represent the key gifts from my journey. So far, I've done 3 CREATE! writes as part of the integration process, as well as created 4 soul collage cards.

The intentions I have used are:

Write #1: **I integrate my ketamine journey.**

Write #2: **I fully integrate my ketamine journey.**

Write #3: **I am rich.**

I will write on the other gifts:

I am beauty. Or I am beautiful.

I am ecstasy. Or I am ecstatic.

I am reminded of the old joke that telling everyone that *you are god* will get you put away. But telling everyone that *they are god* will get you recognized as a wise spiritual teacher. So with that, let me remind you:

You are ecstatic.

You are rich.

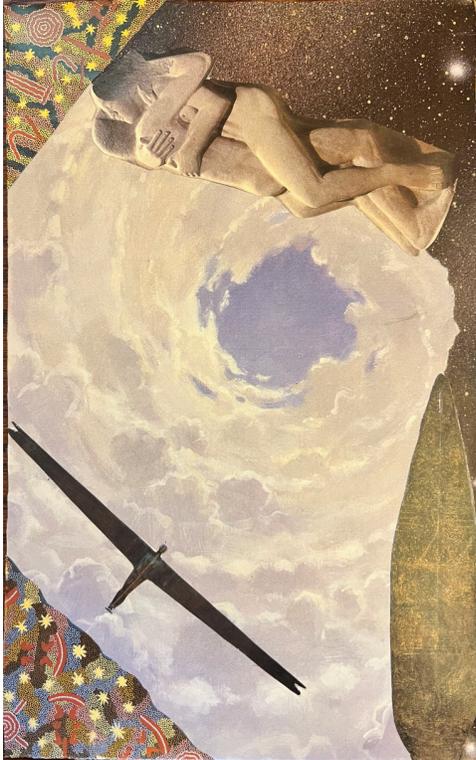
You are beautiful.

A bonus was meeting a new ally, the dragon. Haven't named it yet but realized that the dragon guarding (or hoarding?) my riches is technology. I am on a steep technology learning curve getting my CREATE! work online. CREATE! has been a workshop I have offered for many years mostly to small groups locally. Covid showed me that offering it online was viable and the students were there.

The Dragon Card



The following three collage cards that have supported the integration process, follow.



You are ecstatic / I am ecstatic



You are rich / I am rich



You are beautiful / I am beautiful

The possibilities of using CREATE! to prepare for, decode and integrate journeys are unlimited. This one example of a recent journey and the riches that have come out of it give you a sense of what's possible. Whether you have journeyed recently or are wanting to mine older journeys for more insights, this tool belongs in your toolkit.