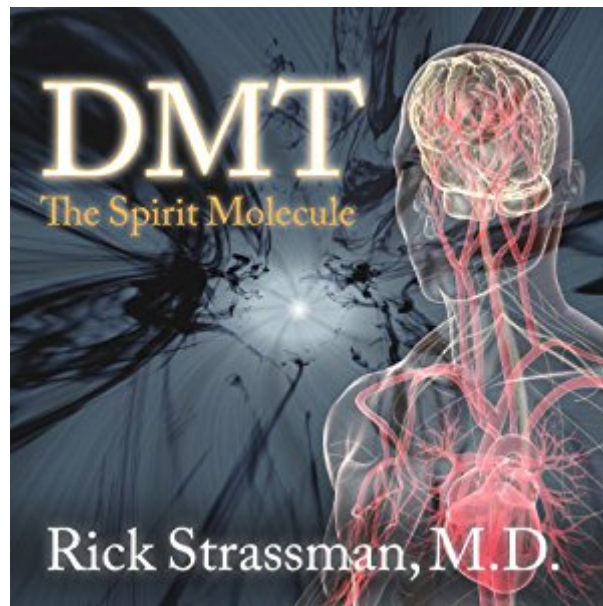


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DMT: The Spirit Molecule: A Doctor's Revolutionary Research Into The Biology Of Near-Death And Mystical Experiences



Synopsis

From 1990 to 1995, Dr. Rick Strassman conducted U.S. government-approved and funded clinical research at the University of New Mexico in which he injected 60 volunteers with DMT, one of the most powerful psychedelics known. His detailed account of those sessions is an extraordinarily riveting inquiry into the nature of the human mind and the therapeutic potential of psychedelics. DMT, a plant-derived chemical found in the psychedelic brew ayahuasca, is also manufactured by the human brain. In Strassman's volunteers, it consistently produced near-death and mystical experiences. Many reported convincing encounters with intelligent nonhuman presences, aliens, angels, and spirits. Nearly all felt that the sessions were among the most profound experiences of their lives. Strassman's research connects DMT with the pineal gland, considered by Hindus to be the site of the seventh chakra and by René Descartes to be the seat of the soul. DMT: The Spirit Molecule makes the bold case that DMT, naturally released by the pineal gland, facilitates the soul's movement in and out of the body and is an integral part of the birth and death experiences, as well as the highest states of meditation and even sexual transcendence. Strassman also believes that so-called alien abduction experiences are brought on by accidental releases of DMT. If used wisely, DMT could trigger a period of remarkable progress in the scientific exploration of the most mystical regions of the human mind and soul.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 13 hours and 21 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Tantor Audio

Audible.com Release Date: March 30, 2011

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B004UDLZI4

Best Sellers Rank: #5 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling >

Psychopharmacology #6 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Psychopharmacology #23

in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Occult & Paranormal > Parapsychology > Near-Death

Experiences

Customer Reviews

Although this book reads more like a journal paper than one might expect based on the trade paperback format and trippy Alex Grey cover art, Dr. Rick Strassman is, after all, a research scientist, not a novelist, and thus may be forgiven for not having a thorough grasp of pacing and the value of dramatic intrigue. Specifically, about a quarter of this book deals with Strassman's convoluted attempts to gain permission to study DMT (which is, for the unfamiliar, LSD's faster-acting, shorter-lasting, knockout-punching cousin), which is admittedly an interesting story, but I am sure I'm not alone in wishing he'd given us a few extra chapters of DMT case studies instead. And the case studies are intriguing indeed. Through various permutations of set, setting, and dosage, Strassman's volunteers experience DMT trips ranging from explorations of personal emotions and thoughts to full-blown sojourns into Cosmic Consciousness. And somewhere between these polarities of personal ego and impersonal Absolute there reside experiences of an altogether different order. It is these experiences that perhaps set the DMT molecule drastically apart from the other major psychedelic drugs. They're perhaps best explained with an example, and generally go something like this: A person is injected with DMT; within fifteen seconds the person feels a rush and suddenly finds him- or herself perceiving a completely different environment, with no major alteration in the quality of awareness, and usually there appear one or more "beings" in this environment who interact with the person and are felt, with certainty, to be entirely "real" entities, independent of, but not exactly separate from, the DMT tripper's mind.

Rich Strassman's account of his ground-breaking research program with the psychedelic drug DMT is more than a scientific chronicle. His tale of the rigors of such an extraordinary undertaking, from the years he spent gaining permission for the study, getting access to the drug, and carrying out the experiments with human subjects, is suspenseful to the end. DMT or di-methyl-trptamine is produced by many organisms and is found abundantly in plants and animal tissue. In humans it is believed that it is produced in the tiny pineal gland, which is situated deep within the brain. Its location in the brain corresponds with Eastern Ayurvedic traditions of the highest "chakra". In reptiles, the pineal is a light sensitive organ, and though this function has been lost in humans, it has been referred to as the "third eye". Descartes called it the "seat of the soul", and in modern times it has been a focal point of consciousness research. Though the academic purpose for the research at the University of New Mexico from 1990 to 1995 was to find the purpose and function of "endogenous" (produced in the body) DMT, as well as its relationship to psychosis, it was Strassman's emersion in the teaching of Buddhism that was his inspiration throughout. Ironically, the findings of his research undermined many of his beliefs and left him alienated from the Buddhist

community. Many of his research subjects were experienced psychedelic users, but they were unprepared for the intensity of DMT. One volunteer described his acute ten minute voyage into another dimension as being hit by a "nuclear cannon." While LSD allows the user a self-guided trip, the DMT experience has its own agenda, stripping the subject of any goals, expectations, and ego.

The book reveals and analyses Strassman's clinical research into DMT, a plant-derived substance which is also produced by the brain. As such this is one of the most thought-provoking studies on altered states and the nature of consciousness. The volunteers reported an amazing array of positive mystical or frightening hallucinatory experiences including encounters with intelligent entities. Strassman's research connects DMT with the pineal gland; this corresponds to the esoteric belief that the pineal, connected with the Crown, Keter or Sahasrara chakra, eases the spirit's movement into different levels of consciousness or various dimensions of existence. Graham Hancock's *Supernatural* similarly explores the use of psychedelics to induce altered states or allow the soul to explore other dimensions. Psychedelic substances in science and society, the chemical qualities and molecular structure of DMT, the pineal gland and its role in the psychedelic experience are all discussed in the first part. Part Two relates the history of the author's research, from the actual research proposal through the process of obtaining permission; this section may be skipped by the average reader. Next Strassman describes the process of selecting volunteers, obtaining DMT and the first experiments, whilst in Part Four he examines the case reports: what the volunteers said and did, their behavior, etc. This makes for strange and fascinating reading. Some experiences were positive and illuminating, resembling uplifting meditative states, whilst others were eerie or deeply unpleasant.

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