

Ecstasy

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18 December 1995

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A lot has already been written about MDMA, and relating my experience probably won't add anything new to that body of knowledge. Nevertheless, I am relating my first experience with Ecstasy in the hopes that others like me, who like to gather every last possible piece of testimony about a drug before trying it, will find it useful.

We were going to my second rave. Before we left, I cut my usual line of crystal, but because I thought I might take Ecstasy, I divided the line in two, took half, and put the other half in a vial to take to the rave in case I decided not to do MDMA.

By the time I paid and entered, I had decided that I would take Ecstasy. From a trusted source, I obtained a tablet which looked more like a capsule of white powder, though I didn't examine it in the dim lighting. I took the table at 12:15 AM.

A few minutes later, my perspective changed. I guess I got a pleasant bit of vertigo for an instant or two. I assumed this was the E and was surprised because I had read that it takes almost an hour for its effect to start. By 1:00, the vertigo was all I had felt, and I was a little upset that this was all I was getting from a \$20 drug.

I went to meet some friends at the juice bar, as planned, but they didn't show up. While I was waiting for them, I noticed some young girls rush together and hug. I spent a minute wondering why they did that. Was it a generational thing? I had never understood it, even though a few of my own friends are semi-frequent huggers, even with me.

Annoyed at my friends for not showing up and at the E for not working, I went back to the dance floor, snorted the other half-line of crystal I had brought, found my friends, and got back into the music.

At 1:29, the colored lights got real interesting, and I kept dancing. Then the lights got really pretty and cool, and everyone in the lights, especially my friends, were really cool. I really admired all these people and wished I could be like them. The music, too, got shimmery. Everything was brighter, and I could see better.¹ I commented to one of my friends that the E had just kicked in, and kept dancing. I was almost overcome with child-like (or simpleton's) admiration for the lights, the music, and everybody, and the feeling just kept getting stronger. I had lost a little coordination and was dancing a little slower, but I didn't mind.

After about 15 minutes (but I wasn't keeping track of time any more), the lights got too bright and the music too shimmery. I felt a heat flash and sweated a lot for a second or two. Then I didn't feel like dancing. Then I felt sick to my stomach. Then I felt like everyone was avoiding me; I thought they must be able to tell that I wasn't having a good time, and they were keeping an uncomfortable amount of space between us. I couldn't decide if I should run from the room, tell my friend next to me that I was having a bad trip and ask for help, or curl up into a ball. I hated how I had just idolized everyone. I wanted to die. I realized that if I ran from the room, I would wander around all night feeling like this; if I asked my friend for help and he took me somewhere and tried to talk me into a good trip, we'd both be having a bad time until I perked up (and it would be my fault and I would be embarrassed at having a bad trip); and if I curled up into a ball on the dance floor, I'd still have this terrible problem.

So I started dancing again and felt better. I danced harder and broke through the bad trip and saw everything new again. The whole bad trip probably lasted less than 60 seconds and maybe less than 30.

The effect now was way different. The room was cooler; just right, in fact. I was clear-headed, unlike the first part of the trip, I had more energy though the loss of coordination still forced me to dance slower and with less energy than I had hoped. The lights weren't as interesting, and the people weren't idolizable. Instead, I felt a sort of gratitude that we were all here, doing our own things (mostly dancing). I was feeling a sort of basic human friendship towards people, and I could feel the same from them. So this was why it was first called "Empathy"; yes, that was definitely a more appropriate name. People's faces had a dark, tan glow to them.² The glamor of the first part of the trip was clearly a shallow imitation of this; it had almost been fake. The effect now was more intense but more subtle, more quality.

Though I was caught up in the dance, I was also introspective and made a lot of pleasant, constructive observations about myself. I took a break for water and saw people hugging like I did before. This time it was obvious why they hugged; they were on E, and general friendly feelings are fun. How could it have escaped me all this time? I noted that anyone on crystal would have energy without warmth; he might glow black; he would clearly be missing the

¹I really could see much better, but as I write this, I don't know if the drug had opened my pupils or if someone had turned up the lights.

²I suspected that part of this was due to the black light over the dance floor.

point of the experience. I chuckled at the realization that I couldn't imagine how a "black" glow would differ from the "dark" glow of my fellow friends on E. Crystal was bad; it was evil energy. I made plans to introduce other friends to E later.

I don't know if the introspection was the drug helping me analyze myself, or my usual self analyzing me on the drug. I'm usually fairly introspective, anyway. Eventually, the introspective mood faded away and I just danced, happy to be doing it. Unlike with crystal (which, remember, I was still on), in which I neither know nor care if people are watching, I definitely knew people might be watching. Normally, that would bother me some, but it didn't.

Periodically, I'd get another hot flash, feel my energy dip, and get a little nervous. It was the same effect as the first bad trip. All these later cases were minute, and I knew how to deal with them, so they didn't matter at all. I danced through them without pausing. I doubt any of them lasted more than five seconds. I didn't count the number of times they happened, but it was probably five or less, and each was weaker than the previous. In short, they didn't bother me a bit, and I even enjoyed the refreshing cool room sensation as they flip-flopped back into good E trips.

A girl said something I couldn't understand and pointed to the bottle of water I was holding. She must want a drink, I thought, so I handed it to her. She sighed and grinned with humored understanding, took it, politely pretended to drink so as not to hurt my feelings, handed back the bottle, said thanks, and left. I realized she had wanted directions to where she could get her own water. Oops. She'd find it. Back to dancing.

Another girl said something I couldn't understand and pointed to the bottle of water. Okay, she must want directions to where she can get her own, so I told her. There's no way she could have heard me. She pointed at the bottle again, so I handed it to her. I realized that even my immune system (in whose amazing powers I've always taken much pride) couldn't stand up to this, so I finished the water and put the bottle in a trash can.

Got hugged by a random person once. She took me by surprise, since I generally dance with my eyes closed. Unlike so many others I had seen, I hadn't felt the urge to instigate hugging on anyone (random or not), but I understood the sentiment now so I had no trouble hugging back. I suspected that the hugging urge must be strongest either when the first part of the trip starts or when people break through the bad trip into the clear-headed second part, but I wasn't sure, not having felt it myself.

The special effects of Ecstasy slowly decreased as I danced. After some number of hours (maybe at or shortly after 5:00, probably even later, but I had long since ceased keeping track of any kind of time), I noticed that I was on speed and nothing else. At this point, I was back to my old cynical, individualistic self and I chuckled at the E-inspired groupist-self I had just left behind. I didn't think I'd be a repeat customer of MDMA. The "evil energy", as my E-inspired self had condemned it, was clearly better. I had regained all coordination and energy that I would have had just on crystal; I kept dancing and had an even better time.

The whole experience was a blast. No regrets.

The next day, I slept, which really surprised me. With meth, I'll rest my eyes for 30 to 90 minutes after a long night, but I won't sleep at all for a total of almost 24 hours. This time, though, I slept well for a few hours. I don't know if this was from the E or something else I did different. Didn't feel like eating for 24 more hours (almost 36 hours total, no surprise). Drank grape Gatorade and orange juice (not together; separate glasses). Went about my usual Sunday business except that I kept things quiet (forgot to take earplugs to the rave; oops). Did *not* feel irritable, anti-social, or any more hostile than usual. Reflected on my Ecstasy experience.

It's now 2 days after I arrived at the rave and I swallowed the tab of E. Here are some of the results of my reflections about the experience.

The first thing I realized was that, contrary to my initial disappointment in the lack of a speedy effect in the first parts of the E trip, I did like the experience. Sure, it slowed down my dancing and cost me a bit of coordination, so if I just wanted to dance in a trance, crystal was a better choice. E's effect isn't less; it's different. So is it's appeal. Now I have three options at a rave: crystal, E, and plain.

Similarly, I decided that I don't need to be revolted by the groupism feelings I had felt on E. (Remember that, after the E effect had finished and I was left with mostly speed, my jaded self returned and looked down on my friendly self.) Instead, I could learn from it. In fact, as a person who usually avoids any kind of group-oriented belonging, I might have more to learn from it than other people. I'm sure I'm going to remain jaded and cynical—and I'm glad of that, but I'll be able to incorporate E's general good will into myself. I'm quite pleased with this. I'll probably be significantly less hostile to people.

The crystal was probably unnecessary. (It was probably unsafe, too.) I'll have to try E by itself to be sure, but I suspect it's speedy enough to keep me awake for the full show.

I understand hugging! It's friendly! It's fun! Why was it a mystery all this time?

The triumph of the evening: I overcame a bad trip. I don't like marijuana because it makes me self-conscious; that's right, I've had bad trips on plain old pot. During the bad trip on E, I felt out of control of my environment and at society's mercy, which is similar to—but worse than—my last few experiences smoking marijuana. It felt terrible. Unlike the bad trips on pot, however, I didn't just leave the room, curl up into a miserable ball, and wait it out. I didn't even tell my friend who was dancing next to me. I stuck it out and worked through it and had a blast when it past. I honestly didn't know I was capable of this. If I had thought I was going to have that kind of bad trip, I would never have taken the E.³ Nevertheless, I'm glad I did have the short-lived bad trip. It was a learning and growing experience. Something they don't teach you in school or at home. An inner exploration. A triumph. And all that stuff.

³I had read that some people report exactly this temporary bad trip, but I had conveniently forgotten that detail and didn't remember it until hours after the rave.

Wonderful.

I'll certainly do E again. The temporary bad trip doesn't frighten me; I'll just work through it again. Maybe it'll be easier next time. Maybe it won't even happen. I can't wait to find out. I am curious about what caused that part of the trip. Did my thoughts turn a bit self-conscious and paranoid, or was it more chemical?

I can't recommend E to anyone. Its legal status and the lack of complete medical knowledge of its effects prevent that. I can submit for your approval my own experience as a person who's generally very cautious about drugs. I've grown because of it, and I had a great time.

End