Podcast Introduction

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And that just, that amazed. Welcome to the Two Curious MD podcast. I'm Dr. Ali Ahmed. And I am Dr Surya Ravan. With the wisdom from holistic, alternative, and these conventional medicines, we are here to challenge the status quo.

We're curious about the connectivity and complexity between diverse fields of knowledge as a relief to consciousness, chronic illness, mental health, resilience, learning more about the art and science of healing, or listening to stories of extraordinary healing.

You're in the right place. Let's dive in. Welcome, everybody, to the Too Curious MD podcast where we ask those unasked questions in ketamine treatment, psychedelic healing and integrative medicine, and of course, my favorite, narrative medicine and storytelling and the Art of Healing through the sciences.

Today we have a very special guest. His name is Richard W.

Richard's Early Life and Navy Career

He is a Navy veteran who's been in treatment with ketamine assisted therapy I would say over a year and has been really doing the work from day one to even now.

And he's going to talk to us about his practices in integration, what worked for him, his ketamine experiences, and things that I feel patients need to hear because it has so much more impact and so many more meaning.

So welcome, Richard. Welcome to our podcast. We're so excited to have you and do this podcast today. Thank you very much. Very nice to be here. So Simmy is also here today.

Hello, Simmi. And I'm sure you're going to help us start this conversation. Let's begin. Absolutely. Richard, it's so wonderful to have you here. Thank you so much.

I do want to say that, you know, in getting to know you, I think today's discussion is going a lot of different directions, and I we're gonna be able to tie it all together.

Learn from you i think our patients learn from each other sometimes our experiences are lots of different threads that run through our experience is but it's also some of the most inspiring and interesting work and meaningful work that we're doing so i really hope that our listeners can really find you know maybe answers to the questions that they have.

in their own life, some of the big answers that we're kind of trying to grasp at, right? And so thank you so much for your time, for energy. We just love to hear from someone who's going through their healing journey, because each time we do, there's something in it for each of us.

I learn every time. So thank So I'll just start you off with a little getting to know you, icebreaker. Can you tell us a bit about your early life? Your life as a, maybe in the services or, you know, just kind of the pieces that you might want to share with us that help us to understand who is Richard?

I will start a litte bit before that. I actually grew up here, I moved here when I was two years old from Arizona. And we lived near Whitney Avenue Elementary School.

We had a brick, a red brick house with walnut trees in the front and the back. And then back in old days, you used to burn your trash. So that trash burning area.

You know, I remember going in in back, it would be barbecuing or something. and all of a sudden these jets would just come flying over and they turned out to be blue angels.

Or no, that was McClellan. It was the Thunderbirds. I was just amazed by that. That got me interested in aviation. So I have that kind of background from way, way back.

And when I got into the Navy, I was lucky enough to be in aviation. So, got to a jet mechanic and I worked at Woodbury Island in Washington state, which was a really beautiful place.

We only spent about, out of three years I there, probably about maybe a month total because we were always doing workups and getting ready to go. I had a really good career.

I started as an E1 and by that time I left my duty station and I would have stayed, but they didn't have a billet for a second class petty officer. So I ended up in San Diego.

And I was so far above what I expected that I could do. So it gave me a lot of perspective and it taught me leadership and I'm very grateful for those days.

That's, that was my beginning there. Thank you for sharing that. Does that answer your question? Absolutely. I'm getting that picture of the story of a young boy being inspired by the jets going above and how that must have felt when you first went to the Navy.

Depression, Recovery, and Life After the Navy

And tell us what happens next after the navy. What was life like and, you know, how did we end up or some of pathways that led you to this place here today?

I've always had problems with depression. And it kind of cycled. In the Navy, I was so on all the time and kind like in alert mode all of the times. I would work out and stuff, but I didn't really take care of myself mentally that much.

Eventually I got an ultimatum from the navy, stop drinking or pack your bags. And I decided to take the stop-drinking route and introduced me to Alcoholics Anonymous.

That really helped me a lot. Many, many awesome adventures. Got to go to Seattle, San Diego, two world assemblies, which was just out of this world. It's like 60,000 people in recovery and they're all just having a blast.

We were at the SanDiego Invention Center up on the second floor and we were dancing. There were so many people up there, the floor was actually starting to like this, and stuff was on the stage, up and down, they had to calm us down a little bit.

And that really helped me a lot. I met some wonderful people there. While I was in the Navy, my wife, she had her boy, She was pregnant. She hadn't had Brendan yet.

When that happened, I remember teaching a class on fuel systems, We were about to do a major inspection for airframes. We had all the engines in our squadron.

So part of that was teaching everybody about the power plants and the fuel systems. And at the same time, I knew that my ex-wife was flying out of San Diego airport while I was giving the lecture and I finished it.

But when I walked out, it was like I broke. And I couldn't think clearly. I didn't know which side I would get directions to go work on a starboard report side of there.

And by the time I got it out there, I don't really know. So I told my vision officer about what was going on. and then he said, okay, well, we'll get you some help and have me working or in the tool room.

so I ran that for a while and the depression got really bad. And to the point where I tried to commit suicide a couple of times. And kinda what time I just came out of the other time, I knew that I was really going down and I kind of chickened out and called my sponsor and ended up in the hospital and the Navy decided that they, that it would be better for me to take an honorable medical discharge that continued.

So I always let go honorably, but I would let it go. After that, it was kind of like everything was in slow motion. You're going from working on a flight deck where it's extremely choreographed, extremely high tempo to just slow-motion.

There's no more of that. That dance that goes on and no, more strict routine and, you know, no challenges like that so. I really didn't know what to do with myself when I got out.

And through Alcoholics Anonymous, I met another person in the program that worked for Qualcomm and he's a hardware guy. He'd build the stats that the trucks used to, they used the truck, the trunks that would be going to interstate.

And he was very knowledgeable about that. and while I was in a Navy, we went from doing the vids math forms, which were man hours and supplies and that sort of thing.

a whole bunch of like seven copies or something to the computer. And that just scared the Jesus out of me. But I had another guy in the squad who loved computers because you could look at pictures and play games.

He's like, no, man, you got to check this out. So I started learning about computers through him. Then I kind of self taught after that. With my friend who worked at Qualcomm, he was really in hardware and I was in software.

So we kind of back and forth, caught each other. So I ran a tech business for a few years, and then I worked for place called Aces. What we did was we worked from the city of San Diego, like the senior homes.

I helped them with a program that was Windows based. We used a DOS based program way, way back then. And the Doss program, it would call people up and if they didn't answer the phone, would flag them.

And then the senior center would call them and check up on them. We were implementing it, beta testing it and then rolling it out and training the people.

They did not like change, how to use the things. So that's the kind of stuff I was doing. And I, was working in a company called Advanced Windows Technology.

It wasn't computer windows, we were actually putting windows in. And it was the most fabulous job. I worked with a carpenter who was a history teacher, and he'd just rather be out putting windows in and teaching history.

So it, it just really fun to be around and work with, but they didn't put me on the books. And I'm like, okay, I can't, It's just too risky. You could get hurt.

so I quit and I work for a telephone company for awhile. and then they called back and said, Hey, we really need you. We'll put you on to books, come back.

And about two days after that, we were working on an emergency medical doctor's house in San Diego, California. It was a big round house and it was like cursed or something.

Cause they had to get a crane to the sliding glass door windows in and things kept going wrong. And everybody went to lunch, but this new guy in me and we're upstairs and he's putting the window and I'm pushing the windows up.

So on the second story. And he's putting the, the cocking on it and getting it ready. Well, he got some cocky on his hand, and he was so, we grabbed a towel and you went over like that and hit the window.

And I fell backwards off the ladder, two stories and I landed in like this pile of dirt. It was going like, this and it landed like. So all the energy was released through my left knee, my tip bib and my right foot.

They both just kind of exploded. But luckily there was a doctor sending herself in the backyard.

Finding Ketamine Therapy

So help was really close. That was at 10 year recovered from that. And it involved a lot of painkillers. You know, I think at one time I was up to 240 milligrams of OxyCock today.

It's just unheard of. I, was like a walking zombie that weighed 300 pounds. Was a mess. And another person in the program and they helped me find the South Beach diet.

And I lost a hundred pounds on that diet and then the next evolution was to start working out at the gym. and I met a trainer named Langford Jackson, who's a master trainer and he got me so excited about kinestallogy and how that all worked that I became a training myself, which was, you know, that was pretty cool.

Then I moved out here. And still the depression would come back and it was like over time, I would be spending more time depressed than I was out of it.

And I tried all kinds of drugs and therapies and nothing worked. Or they worked for like three months and they just stopped. So I remember coming in to Shevine's the first day and I had no expectations.

I wasn't like, okay, the doctor. Said, try it out. Okay, I will. And I'm sitting there in the waiting area and I see this girl come bouncing in. I'll chip her, you know, and like, wow, she's pretty chipper.

Maybe this works. No, no, pretty Chipper song. It's a word. That's kind of me. Yeah. It's so beautiful to hear the missing pieces of your puzzle, of you story, and there's much more richness to what I know about you today through what you just shared and also the impression of the first entry.

To me, I'm always very curious about that when patients come in through the doors like You know, they can either see it and say, oh, this is weird, or this, where am I?

Or what is this? Yeah, it was a beautiful vibe. So calm in there and so peaceful. Yeah. That was very nice. It's not like the straw environment that you usually get.

And then you gave us a three star review. Do you remember? Yeah, it was because I was trying to be honest. I don't believe this place. And it's something to, like, to-be-determined.

And I haven't written the last one yet, because it's so long now. Hopefully I'll cover some of that here. But my God, it is so much. I did laugh at that review.

When I saw the review, Cindy, my practice manager, showed it to me. And, I said, oh, he's wondering what's going on here, and is this real? Is this for real.

It is real, is it going to work? Is this you know to be determined as TBD and love the I was trying to honest with everybody because I got good vibes Yeah, and that chipper person coming in and and then the ketamine which was a little bit scary, but I Have a background that involves some psychedelics.

So I like them, you now and I Believe the mistake that I made with psychedelic since I didn't have a guy They're sacred and they need to treat as their sacred And in my past history with them, they were something to explore, to change the way I felt.

And here it goes so much deeper. You're actually rewriting your past with a perspective that can make it so better. My first Ketamine, can I talk about that?

Yes, of course. So the first ketamine experience I had, My mom was, she had been separated from dementia for about 10 years and had gotten really bad and she was now in intensive care at Sutter Hospital in Roseville.

And, you know, I could look at her, it was like she has this translucent mask on. She was way under there, but she wasn't there anymore. So the way I dealt with that was I sat with her and she loved Frank Sinatra, so I put Frank's Sinatra on every time I came in.

Psychedelics, Jung, and Sacred Healing

My first experience, you know, while this was going on, first K experience. This is in my journal and I'll read it to you. So this is my first k experience my dog Oliver by my side.

First I followed the sounds. Then I had a drifting in and out experience kind of a dissolution or disorientation. Then I was dancing with my mother and it wasn't dancing where they're physically yet, but I could see these green and white chakras and we were there shining and kind of dancing each other.

What a wonderful experience. The experience after that, I'll show you the picture. There we go. On this big pile of the mechanical, the mechanics of everything in the universe.

And I had looked back and they had these giant wings made of flesh on my back. I thought that was pretty interesting. Then I saw my mom and I flew up and grabbed her hand and we were flying and dancing around the Universe and in Cosmos.

I wouldn't have believed it unless I'd actually gone through that experience. So, I just felt like, if you're going to say goodbye to somebody that's already not there anymore, what a way to do it.

How does this work? How was I able to this? So I got a lot of, like I'm really curious. Yeah. so, Kedemay made me very curious, so I started reading all these books and trying to figure stuff out.

That was my fall of two experiences. I believe you have a curious nature anyways and just from your journey of all the types of work that you've done and how you really enter into different careers, different ways of thinking.

only by your curiosity. And I really think that curiosity invites that new way, neuroplasticity, self-reflection really gives us so much more insight into being out of the box, stepping out.

I have always been out-of-the-box. It's not always a good thing, I think. That's true. Because it doesn't fit right in the normal, societal norms that, you know, people go by.

So it's, and I don't think I'm really good at expressing that. I've gotten a lot better, but when I was younger, I wasn't really going to express it. Yeah, yeah.

And I want to ask you about some of these books that you've been reading. Okay, sure. Just because as Aliyah was saying, your life journey, it feels like you have lived many lifetimes already.

and just the different stages, and I got so much of your heart. There's heartbreak there in your story, there's recovery there, There is community there.

I love that image of the floor, just you guys jumping on the, dancing on a floor. At least like 5,000 people at least.

What a journey and how much I really appreciate saying that, you know, everybody who comes to this ketamine therapy, there's skepticism.

It's like, is this ever going to work? Or, we come to it with having maybe lost hope in recovery, because as you just described, this journey is long and arduous.

and how we can step into curiosity and reclaim some of the magic of being human. I mean, of course, there's this heart opening. There's just this wonderful discovery that you can go into.

And I am just curious as to seeing, yeah, who are the people you're reading? What are some other things that are connecting and making sense right now because you've embarked on this part of journey?

Well, Carl Jung would be the first doctor that really piqued my interest. And in recovery, there were a lot of people that would talk about his philosophies, and I thought those were very relevant and applicable, you know?

But I read his autobiography right after I'd gotten out of the treatment center while I was in the Navy. I wasn't able to piece together a lotta bit. There was…

You know, it's from Venice. There were language issues and then the time issues, the way that people talked back then. I didn't really put it together until I started reading the book that was the Psychonauts Encyclopedia, volume one and volume two.

And it starts with Freud and the the, way Freud Young worked together. Kind of a disagreement. Freud was kind of like everything is sex and young was while it's spiritual.

And so they both went up in their little camps, kind like AA meetings. If you don't agree with it, start your own, get a bottom, go. and that's kind a way psychiatry has, they've worked together, then they'd gone out on different avenues.

And then you know, you have like, taught, and you had behavioralists, cognitiveists. You have spiritualists and in a way they all get, the problem is it's kind of like church.

They're all talking about God, any church, anywhere in the world. If you look at the progression, it is the same. But you have an interpretation where people say, if you don't sign our version, you're going to go to hell.

And I just could not buy that, and I think it's the same thing with psychiatry. It's more like, what is your heart telling you? What is you heart? That's kind of what you need to follow.

Then I saw how powerful psychedelics could be when they were used sacredly and used correctly. And an environment was set up so that people could recover in them and find themselves.

And it's really like handing somebody a key. There you go. If you use this key, you have a chance. We're going to set the conditions for you. Use the key and if you were willing to grow, You're gonna go somewhere.

And that just amazed me. It really did. So that's all of them. That's my favorite book. Yeah. Wow. What a great metaphor. You're such a storyteller. I see these images as you're talking.

Ketamine, Trauma Reprocessing, and Intention

Yes, I think you were referring to Wave the Psychonaut Volume 1 and 2 by Stan Grof, is that correct? Exactly. Groff is brilliant. Yea, that is a good book I still listen to podcasts on YouTube.

Tell me a little bit more now, I guess, from your perspective, as you look back, what did ketamine treatments or even the treatments that you sought with therapy and even or trans-cranial magnetic stimulation, if you want to talk about that, how has that changed your thoughts and feelings, because I often get asked this question on the intake.

Is ketamine going to change me? Is it going make me crazy? To one patient asked me, is it gonna change my personality? And I was gonna say in my head, of course it will.

but I instead said, no. I don't think so, but that's a great question. It is a hard one to answer. So how has ketamine changed you? Your thoughts, your feelings, and your personality.

What has Ketamine change for you and the key that you used to get to where you are? One of my intentions was to rewrite the trauma in my past. Before I'd spent a year doing EDMR work with my last therapist and trying to go back as far as I could.

So I was able to, through my body, release a lot of trauma. But as did that, more stuff was coming up. One of the things I had a really hard time when I was in school, because I, was educationally handicapped, but I got a pretty good vocabulary.

So it's kind of like he's a retard that's smart or something. I don't know. It was really confusing. Like go to try to read a page and not skip half the page.

And if it happened or I wouldn't get it, you know, and one of those things that I did when, I wasn't in first grade. I was a Disney kid, you know, the way I viewed the world was you grew up to be the hero.

You went and you saved the maiden. Then you got married, then you lived happily ever after. That's what they said. So that must be what it is. so I'd make up all these stories in my mind and that's kind of where my head was at.

And when it came to doing the academic part, mechanical part of it. I couldn't put it together. I had no idea what I was really looking at. And I wasn't really scared.

So one time, and what i figured out to do is like, okay, what am I going to and I did this was I went up to a kid's paper, then it turned his assignment in, erased his name and put my name on it.

Which is a terrible thing to, but that's what did. Then I ended up in the principal's office. Of course I got caught. One of my ketamine experiences when I was going, my intention was to go and rewrite the narrative of like past traumas.

And all of a sudden I would standing in that first grade classroom in front of the counter with those papers, the assignments all stacked up, not in a dream.

I looked out the window and I always in Whitney Elementary School. Looking at the kindergarten playground and when I look back, I was looking at those papers and in front of me, that kid's name, my name came up the paper and the kid name went back on it and bam, it came back.

It makes me tingle and I want to think about it. it was real. I mean, absolutely real in my mind. That's what happened. And I realized at that point that not only is it possible to go back and change.

certain things, I can go back and totally rewrite it. And the important thing is that my intention, which is my motives, what I want to do is pure and true.

That's the most important. If I'm trying to get an agenda out of it, it's not going to work. I am going back for a pure reason, a true reason. Then there is something in the collective consciousness That will guide me to that when that's the time to do it.

It is what it is, you know, with that stuff, but that what happened. And I'm like, wow, I can really do this. You know? I don't know how it works. I didn't.

No, it's going to happen when it was going happen. Now what's gonna happen? But I know if I go in, and I set

intentions to get better, they're going. So it kind of happened as there'll be times when I have a ketamine experience.

And synesthesia always happens, and that's when you're seeing through your ears. So what your years are hearing, you are wearing your mask and you seeing colors and patterns and shapes.

And I'm seeing, sometimes it's like caricatures or cartoons, like all these like cards that are people and I am going through this thing and winding around, kind of stuff like that.

And it won't make sense. You know, I'll be okay. Well, that was really interesting. And with music, it could be anything. But then within the week after I had that ketamine journey, these coincidences start happening.

I start noticing things that connect synchronicities. That's what they're called. It's amazing. All of a sudden I'll meet somebody that's talking about, or can get me to the next spot that I need to be in my recovery.

Like, for example, I have to have somebody drive me for kidney therapy, right? And my doctor kind of laughs, he goes, oh, sorry about that. And I'm like, well, yeah, you are, but this is a big problem.

How am I going to do this? Then my next-door neighbor goes oh I don't have any problem, we'd love to. Right out of the blue. I just mentioned it and she goes, oh yeah, I'd love to take you.

And so she did. Through the majority of all my treatment, she's driven down there and an artist, so should be working on her art. She draws while I'm doing my therapy and then we'll go get lunch and go home or something.

But stuff like that, those are the kind of synchronicities I am talking about. Amazing. We say science that you don't understand is magic. Well, it's magical.

I love that I'm getting to sense that your mechanical mind, your ability to understand kind of how things work and putting them together and that constant curiosity is really helping me, you know, and I think our listeners to really understand this is an unlocking.

This is a opening of our capabilities because not all patients have this level of recognition that they have the ability to go in and their intention, you know, You just said about the clear intention.

If the intention is clear, then everything will come together. I can trust it. the right thing happens. And that is just so profound, because I think not everybody finds their way to that place.

Ithink it's that combination of your curiosity, your kind of willingness to explore, kind think outside the box, and really kind question yourself like, is this true?

Is this real? Can I confirm it? How does this work? What do I have to do to optimize this? All right, let me learn some more. Let me do more of the thing.

Before you know it, you're cooking with gas. And I got a lot more questions than I start when I started. I love that. And just in a year, you've gotten to almost flipping the script on your own narrative going, here's the narrative until this point, and then here is the new narrative I get to tell about it and learn from it.

Even the trauma I've lived with now, is something I can, you know, just what you said about rewriting. That's such a clear way. Like your psyche said, I wish I hadn't done that.

Now I understand why and I've been carrying it for so long. Let me let it down. And what's the best representation of that is in the individual Erase that, your name out, and put the other boy's name back.

And hey presto, it's like it never happened. The trauma, right? It's been released. I think I'd like to point out when you first started telling about rewriting your history, This is not about rewriting, but re-envisioning it in that moment.

That's a really good way to say that too, yes. I mean, there's so many versions of what you described that could be understood. And I imagine this boy standing there with holding the papers, having two thoughts.

One, I'm going to do this, and I want to write my name on it, who cares? And the other thought that, hey, I don't need to do this. It's not right. This is not my work.

But what we recall later on after the act has been made is that one thought, and not the other thought that was, I also had that thought. So that juxtaposition of two different ways of doing things, the way of the psychonaut, right?

You're going back into psychologically, where were you in that moment? learned from, what did you learn coming back in that you are not all that. I agree.

Journaling, Synchronicity, and Inner Guidance

It's kind of like having a new pair of glasses. Yeah. As an adult too. I mean, there's an ability here to time travel in some ways. What you just said is you're standing there and you are looking out the window and your right there.

It's in experience. So your entire body, this is not just I'm imagining this or I am making this as a scene, I actually in the scene. Actually going through it emotionally and physically and something in that is so deeply healing that I've transformed.

That was the decision point. I got to re-choose. And it's the butterfly effect, I guess. I thought it was a better choice. You know, like as a pediatrician, as I'm hearing your story, you know?

As a child who was struggling to read and was unable to, there's just not a lot of recognition of the challenges of being smart, and yet having maybe some academic difficulties.

in reading that were not addressed and how desperate that can feel. That boy making that decision at that moment did it only because he was pushed that far.

How, as an adult, we can source that self-compassion towards that boy and be like, that's all right, buddy. It's okay. I would have done the same thing when I was you.

Oh, I won. I can't wait to hear how you're doing it. I want to see under the hood here and see what the techniques are, what's happening. So let's ask that question, that unasked question that isn't me, is how do you set an intention?

What is your technique to getting to that true and clear intention that is so pure by nature that it will result in what it's going to result. But how did you prepare?

I had a sponsor that was an engineer and everything he built was always crooked. I couldn't tell, but he would tell me it was crooked, You know, and he was extremely intelligent.

He was a really smart guy. And he would talk to people after the meetings. You would see the guy with the deer in the headlights look and you would just talk and be very knowledgeable.

But one of the things he told me was above all, do no harm. That's a very important principle because When I adopted that, what that means to me is that I need to think about how my decision is going to affect not just me, but the people around me.

Even the small ones. So when I go to have an intention, that's the kind of way I approach it. Is it going be beneficial for me and not hurt people that are around or anybody on earth for that matter.

So if it's a pure intention and it is put out in the right way with faith, it has a lot of power, I think. That would be what I do. Does that help? Is that right?

Do you write? What's your journaling practice? Or how do you get these words to kind of make sense? About what? about these images and pictures and things that you're getting.

How do put them to words? Are you a daily journaler? do do morning pages? I'm only a journal because I have to be. When it's important, I'll write it down kind a guy that's turning more into, Is that about intention still?

Yeah. I feel like sometimes when we write, especially by hand, and I've seen that you're writing by-hand, there's such a process and we talk about this in narrative medicine where sometimes we are just kind of taking notes.

When we're sometimes writing, it's like byhand. it can feel like what's flowing comes from a different place, from, for a higher place. And that's always a fascinating, you know, kind of place to be.

Cause yeah, to go from being a non-journaler or I only have to write it down when I want to, and so many of our patients struggle with this, that I love the process of writing.

For me, writing has always been kind like this. You know? It's like- I've got a little weapon here that- There you go. I haven't started yet. Oh my gosh, I'm excited for you.

I can't wait to hear, because that is one of those things. It really gets at what that's about, the spiritual aspects of this process that we have, that all possess, which is writing and art and creativity and all the ways in which we can express ourselves.

And I am just curious as to what your process has evolved into or how it's evolved. So you are not much of a journaler. What are you doing now and how are bringing in the artist's way and things like that?

This whole thing, the intensity of this process has really blown my socks off. It's like nothing I've ever experienced before and it's global. When I say that, I mean that it affects every cell of my body, every part of me and its bigger than that.

That affects my neighbors, my community, and the world. So I'm trying to learn how to listen to my heart, the quiet voice. I always know when it's not, cause the other one is like, you know, it was really loud.

Quiet voice, very subtle. And sometimes I'll have an intention and then I change it because the heart is just came up with something else and I don't always get it right.

You know? But I'm trying to learn how to do that. And that that's big. I think that somebody was to that like that, then they could expect something. It's not going to be nothing because this universe cares enough about us and God is within that you know, I don't know who's everybody has a different aspect on that and it changes back and forth.

But. Being truthful to yourself or myself is the biggest part. It's, okay, this is what my heart's saying. This is where I need to look at. I mean, I could say something else, but do I want to get well?

I'm focusing on my recovery from depression or am I trying to manipulate my way out of something in the past? They're both there. They are. And the one with the ego, it never works.

It makes bad karma. Makes you work karma! Well, you started the podcast really talking a little bit about doing psychedelics without therapy, without facilitation, or without a guide.

And I have to highlight this because this is important. There's a lot of talk in ketamine treatment platforms about the combination of ketamines and psychotherapy.

and the combination being so important to some. And the evidence, more recently there's a paper released on, there is no benefit, no evidence that therapy with ketamine or psychedelics shows any better effect or better result or a better outcome in terms of treatment of depression.

Is that really true now? Yeah. What would be your opinion here?

Therapy, Ritual, and the Limits of Research

We do this, I do, this work every single day and I cannot even imagine. I can't imagine people doing this kind of work, the work that you just described, really with all the intentionality without facilitation.

You know, not being left alone in the room without, you know that setting that really allows one to explore those inner places, those intercontinental.

You're not left along in a room. No, no. But what would be your opinion in terms of doing this with therapy? What has that experience been like for you?

with the facilitation of the setting versus, again, having no therapist in the room. And that does happen. I was going to try this to the best of my ability.

It was kind of like a Hail Mary pass. So my attitude, I think the attitude is very important of patients. to go in and be willing. That's the key is willingness to try.

And there's people that aren't there. Unfortunately, there are people who just shut down. It's not going to happen and they won't let it happen. Those people won' t get helped.

I really don't believe they will. My experience, and I've had a few with different doctors and different psychiatrists is a lot of doctors, they're highly invested in those dissertations, to the point where it also, it kind of forms this myopic environment towards anything new.

So they are right, and those are probably the guys that hurt people, I don't know, but that's dangerous. And I think that you can set, studies are statistical, right?

So you can set the numbers up any way you want. And what I'm saying is you could set to study up to fail for either kids. That's been done. It was done in the apology.

Its been in medicine. I mean, definitely I think I want to paraphrase a little bit here. You know, when we talk about the study, I definitely think that part of this question is about, the difference between, you know when you kind of did mention that doing the psychedelics back in the day when it wasn't done kind with a therapeutic intent, right?

Versus now you're doing it. I'm going to take enough drugs so I see them. Right. They never work. And so you're noticing the differences when it's with that true intention versus the intention of just having fun.

And those are two different things. Nothing wrong with it. Right. There's something that's much more regimented about it that is really important. The rituals that we have in traditions are extremely important, every religion has their traditions and their rituals.

Even like Medicine Man, you go back to Native Americans, They don't just take the drug. They do a whole thing to prepare themselves. There is timing involved, there's astrological things involved.

there is community things involves. It is so encompassing, the things that make up those rituals. And they're community rituals, they are not individual thoughts.

This is what they do and this is how it works. and it's the same with Christianity. Same with Buddhism, same with shamanism, all that stuff. But you need to look at, in Christianity, the wafer is Christ's body.

The wine is, Christ blood. And that's not a metaphor. That's a spiritual reality. I'm saying with Christianity because that the audience is probably going to like this the most.

It's the first audience that is going see it. If you look Native Americans, if you looked at Indians, you know, any society, they're going to have a community that has a shaman or a religion to heal and the community is trusting that person to do that and it's taken extremely seriously.

And I think that any study that does not include those aspects is falling way short. They're not going to hit it. You're going miss it by 100 miles. So that's what I think.

That's so well put. I totally agree with you. The studies are so devoid of that kind of context. of healing that you're talking about, right? And that's what this, I think they showed is that, you know, they gave one cohort ketamine and then one-cohort ketamines with that extras added psychotherapy.

And then you put the numbers together and it's like, oh, it is a wash. Well, yes, It's a watch because both conditions are, not optimized. That's kind of, yeah, absolutely.

I totally believe that we're not able to like you have a data set and then we haven't really looked at the individuals in this data and seeing how different they are.

Because I think that's what we're learning here as being practitioners of this is it's going to be really hard to prove this by the numbers because everybody is so different.

Everybody's healing journey is as individual as they. It's like a fingerprint, no two are alike. And so how are you going to really come up with a way to quantify it that works?

Yeah, something of that nature. And I think that's, yeah, that might say, am I getting that? That's it. We've got to have a have way of quantifying. So I'm wondering, as we're looking at this, and we don't have to solve that problem right now, but like, how do you quantify for yourself?

What are seeing that changing within you that, you know, on that personal level for you. And I think that's what I ask my patients. I'm like, how is your life changing?

You know what has shifted? Cause that is the information that really important here. Uh, I agree. You, know that what needs to be put into the data sets and it needs be followed very closely and that was just to, You need a whole group.

You need a community. And that would give it a little bit of, I think it would be more valid that way. This book I love, this one I hear. Oh my goodness.

When I was growing up, my doctor lived two houses down from me, Dr. Neuberger. And I remember when I had strep throat or I was sick, he would come and he'd make house calls.

He'd see me. And for other stuff I'd go into his office. But he knew me, I played with his sons. We hung out together. This is a return to that. I think we need as a society to do that, that's very, very important.

Because what's happened in the last few decades is we don't have doctors anymore. We have technicians. Or like a machine, you know, it's like, I mean, i'm really good at fixing computers.

You really get to fix some bodies, machines, totally different, You know it is. you need to know. And that's one of the things I really love about she minds is you start by getting to, no, the person and listening.

and providing a way for that person. Kind of like building up the structure around that that he can use or she can lose to recover. Modern medicine doesn't do that anymore.

And that's why I think that we're getting band-aids instead of solutions. It really is mind, body, soul. If you don't have those together, you're not going to get things done.

And we're in such a hurry now. We're moving so fast. I can't keep up.

Mind-Body-Soul Healing and Closing Reflections

It's like, okay, whatever you say. Beautifully said. And I think you're hitting something really deep here, which is that things are moving fast right now that we don't have the luxury of the pace at which this current healthcare system is going.

We don't have the resources to treat all the people who are suffering in this way and the quicker that we can get to this transformation, the tools, and I really look at ketamine as an interventional tool.

Right? And it's just as effective, you know, when we put any other kind of infusion intervention molecule that induces rapid change. And this rapid changes, as you're saying, is mind, body, soul.

What we're suffering from is the disconnection of the three. Exactly. I agree with that 100%. We are disconnected from it. We have those receptors in our mind.

Our brain comes equipped with ketamine receptors. It's like it has DMT receptors. You know, it's not like this is boring to us. This is a part of us and it is useful.

But we are this magnificent collection of enzymes and chemicals and reactions and different life forms all within us, and one of the things that's really interesting is that Dr.

Ali is doing this DNA growth. therapy, and that's where to start. That's exactly, I believe that is exactly where we start because what's happened over time is we've gotten all these impurities, our lifestyle, the way we think, we do the poisons, stuff that we're around all the time has changed us.

And it's not healthy. You know? And a start is this model of mind, body, soul, because that who we are. We're mind body and soul. And I'm so grateful that you guys have the vision to do that.

That's amazing. And, I hope in five years, they're everywhere. I really do. I don't know what your vision is for shamans, but man, I really hope it grows.

It can help a lot of people. Thank you, and that's why we're having this conversation to really share to their experience, you as a patient, us as healers and the third space between the two, what heals between us.

You heal, we heal with you. Your neighbor heals with, it's so much bigger and broader than just a prescription pad, than a procedure. It's like a smile's contagious.

Yeah. A smile is contagious. You can feel a certain smile, right? And I'm feeling that return to joy, a return, to empowerment even, that when we align, self-empowerment, when can reclaim ourselves because we feel so disempowered in this everyday reality because of the way it's structured.

And yet we are so powerful. It's like that, you know, Hanuman, the monkey God, right? We're kind of in that moment where we've forgotten, or we're been made to forget, we have been so steeped in the poison that we absolutely lost touch with our way back to that.

that we are so powerful. I believe that's probably exactly where we're at right now. But I think we have a young generation. What I've been noticing is our children are getting more attuned and they're more intelligent.

That's just my opinion. If you put out good energy, you're going to get that back big time, especially from the children. It's the ship that is happening.

And there's an old school, the old guard, that's so afraid of letting go of power and money and change, period, you know? It's inevitable. That's the only constant in the whole universe, change.

And it's happening. I just wish it would happen faster. We're in the hard part, we're on the difficult part but I really am with you in that I think what we are noticing in this new generation is a real return to that knowing yourself.

that having that relationship with your true voice and authenticity and not taking a story that's been made for you, but writing your own story. And I think those are some very important messages that I we're leaving our audience with today.

It's like putting seeds down. Yeah. Seeds. You've done just that today, Richard. I'm so excited to have had this conversation with you. Thank you so much.

Now you can water them and tend them, and not let them grow. That's exciting. I'm going to conclude here with one thing that I've learned about you today, Richard, is that you have great timing.

You have a great time in your humor, in you seriousness, your realism, you humanism. Your next career, stand-up comedy. Okay. That's cool. You know what?

Once I get over that fear of that, I'll do it. We'll be there. I really enjoyed this. Absolutely. you wear it so lightly and so gently. And I think there's such a wisdom in just the way you've delivered your story today.

So thank you. Thanks for joining us on the Two Curious MD podcast. We hope today's episode inspired you to ask new questions and explore fresh perspectives.

we challenge you ask us those unasked questions that you're curious about in your medical practice, condition, health and wellness. If you enjoyed the podcast, don't forget to subscribe, share it with somebody just as curious and leave us a review.

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