

LIFE IS A TRIP! MY BUFO DMT JOURNEY

The following is an account of my journey with Bufo Alvarius through Avalon's beautiful, transcendent healers on November 18, 2023, in Barcelona, Spain.

A Little Bit About Me

I am a writer from the U.S., originally from Kentucky, most recently from Colorado, who narrowed my possessions down to three suitcases and two boxes, giving everything else I owned to charity. I left Aspen on October 14, 2023, for an adventure overseas, starting in Florence, Italy, for three months, followed by Tunisia and Montenegro.

An extensive marketing background, working for leading marketing organizations, and an MBA reveal my hemispherically balanced left brain/right brain propensity toward logic and creativity.

My books and screenplays often explore transcendental themes like life purpose, reincarnation, love, and other metaphysical mysteries. The tagline for my novels is:

Lose yourself in the fiction... find yourself in the Truth.

My spiritual journey began in the early/mid-1980s. Probably sooner if you include Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* as a teen, which is still a favorite. Other eye-openers for me were Richard Bach's *Illusions*, Shirley Maclaine's *Out on a Limb*, and, years later, Dr. Michael Netwon's *Journey of Souls*.

Why Bufo?

In June a friend told me she'd recently returned from a ceremony where she "smoked frog venom" describing it as "twenty years of therapy in twenty minutes." That got my attention! I asked my (amazing) therapist, who eagerly encouraged me to do it, too.

I've never considered taking an antidepressant. Whenever a doctor recommended it, I replied, "I don't want to feel better about being unhappy; I want to be happy." Said another way: I don't want to cover up the problem; I want to *solve* the problem.

We discussed psilocybin, aka magic mushrooms, as microdosing is now legal in Colorado, but that never interested me. I'm not into drugs. The last time I did marijuana, I had an edible and just wanted it to *end*. Plus, I prefer keeping a clear head when I write, so I'm opposed to anything ongoing.

Living in Colorado at the time, I had few legal options, and legal is crucially important to me. I could travel to Mexico, Costa Rica, or Peru, but that would

have been outrageously expensive, over \$10,000. And since I was planning a move to Italy, I checked out Europe and discovered Avalon in Barcelona.

Why Avalon?

As soon as I reviewed their website, it was an instant "Yes!" I loved their energy, their dedication, and their thorough process. It's the perfect blend of spirituality and science, integrating mind, body, and spirit. Their application process includes a safety screening with the collaboration of a doctor, and the fact that it was legal, affordable, and close to Florence made it a no-brainer.

<https://weareavalon.love/>

Avalon offers multiple options for mind expansion, from Ayahuasca to Magic Mushrooms to Bufo and more. Still, I chose Bufo because it was quick, powerful, scientific, and life-changing on a spiritual, mental, and physical level.

Preparation

I was as ready as I could be going in. I did quite a bit of research and talked with friends who had done Bufo/Ayahuasca.

On the research front, I watched the documentary *The Spirit Molecule*, written and directed by Mitch Schultz and Rick Strassman, and several talks from Dr. Robin Carhart-Harris¹. I also read articles from multiple sources. (Links below.)

I'm not a scientist, so I'll let the experts speak for themselves. I'll just share what stood out to me.

DMT is endogenous, which means it already exists in the body. You may have even gotten a glimpse into DMT when meditating or engaging in another ecstatic practice.

The fact that DMT, or N,N-Dimethyltryptamine, works in the brain to create lasting change, makes it more than just an experience; it's a catalyst. Dr. Carhart-Harris talks about how DMT stimulates the serotonin system 2a receptor, opening up a window of neuroplasticity, giving us a chance to press "reset."

More formally, Neuroplasticity is defined by the National Institutes for Health as the "ability of the nervous system to change its activity in response to intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli by reorganizing its structure, functions, or connections."

Bufo medicine is also known to produce "spontaneous insight," leading to the potential for significant transformation, especially for people with addiction, PTSD, depression, or life-threatening diseases like cancer.

The substance is non-addictive. In fact, many people experience it once, and that's enough to give them the life-affirming message they need.

Regarding personal accounts, the more specific others were about their experience, the more it helped me prepare. However, most stories were limited to just a few sentences, lacking the detail I craved.

Now that I've been through it, I understand that it can be an emotional, physical, or mental experience, sometimes all three. Some people may not consciously retain specifics and are left with more of an emotional feeling afterward. I also suspect it's like trying to recall a dream. If you don't write it down immediately, the visions could float into the ether.

I learned that some people face difficult situations under Bufo in order to heal. Or, as I say in my first book, "Face it, Feel it, Free it." I knew I had to be ready

for *anything*. As a firm believer in considering "what's the worst that can happen, and can I handle it" so I can be prepared, I did that, too. I was *ready*.

I also talked with my therapist and a member of the Avalon team beforehand, offering me further affirmation and guidance.

All in all, the more of a reference you have going in, the better your experience will be, hence the reason for this article.

Intention

Everyone suggested getting super clear on my intention in advance. What did I want from the experience? Did I want to see "God" as many report? To feel the oneness? Was I looking for internal shifts or external results?

I have experienced a lot of failure. I have failed so many times and so spectacularly that I've been a keynote speaker at two different failure conferences. (Yes, they exist).

It wasn't just that I took risks that didn't work out. Or even that I failed in extreme ways. It was that for every venture, I felt "divinely guided" along the way, only to end up feeling betrayed and abandoned when it resulted in bankruptcy, foreclosure, and homelessness.

You see, my issue wasn't just about failure; it was about abandonment from "the other side." And worse, I felt like the biblical "Job" with two oppositional forces fighting for control over my destiny.

As I write this, I'm completing a 3-book metaphysical fantasy novel series I've been working on for years entitled *We Meet Again*. It's not only my best writing; I also genuinely believe it has the potential to make a positive difference in the world.

Therefore, one of my goals with Bufo was to remove the blocks and get my work out to a broad audience.

I know many people might say that the obstacles are "within" and want to suggest things like visualization, meditation, therapy, religion, and other self-help solutions. I hope you trust me enough to respect me when I say I've "been there/done that" with almost everything.

As someone who is known for proclaiming the benefits of understanding the "why" things happen, the explanation I got was far from satisfying. In fact, it was *infuriating*. Without going too deep into my own woods (I might do that later in another article or book), I knew I had been blocked for a reason (after all, I am the person who literally "wrote the book" on things happening for a reason, *Five Reasons Why Bad Things Happen*). Still, I couldn't find an effective way around that reason.

With Bufo, I wanted answers.

I wanted to know why I had been abandoned, to feel more love "from above," and to have an advocate on the spiritual plane who could help me break through the blocks.

Pre-emptive Effects?

As weird as this might sound, getting clarity actually started solving some issues before I even took the Bufo medicine. (Cue Twilight Zone music here.)

One area related to my "place in the world." I permanently left a place I'd lived for seven years to go to a country (Italy) where I didn't know anyone, couldn't speak the language, and could only stay for 90 days before moving on to another country (Tunisia) where the same conditions apply.ⁱⁱ Because of that, I only had a plan for 180 days with no idea where I'd go afterward, which was unsettling. I hoped Bufo would help me get direction on those next steps. However, I gained clarity and a defined plan a week before the Bufo ceremony.

I was also wrestling with some recurring issues that could have interfered with the Bufo process, but after I did a few clearing meditations, I no longer carried that resentment. Such a relief! (Links to the clearing meditations below).

My writing had also stagnated somewhat for the previous few months. I struggled with a particular group of scenes pivotal to completing my *We Meet Again* series. Since much of WMA is set in Italy (in different time periods), I came here to be inspired. Yet those scenes had been difficult – you get it – until the week or so leading up to Bufo. Now I'm writing some of the best work of my life.

Is it because of Bufo? Can the medicine work on a mental level before you even take it? Who knows. As any artist/writer/athlete will say, "Don't judge the flow and just embrace the results."

A Block to Removing The Blocks

If you've read this far, it might not surprise you to learn that whatever/whoever was blocking me from my dreams and goals also activated a health issue as a shot at trying to stop me from the Bufo experience. Luckily, those hurdles were overcome in time.

Thanks to all this preparation, I was as peaceful as a yogi on a mountaintop and was ready to explore the unknown.

The Experience – Arrival and Prep

Other than my personal preparation methods, Avalon had a list of things for us to do and/or avoid. The guidance to cut caffeine for ten days prior was fairly easy for me, but for others, it may have been a challenge, and they might have needed more time for withdrawal. Either way, I was so glad not to have that chemical in my bloodstream.

I flew from Florence to Barcelona on Thursday, two days before the big event, to get settled and see the sights. Spectacular city. I'm looking forward to returning.

The ceremony began at 8:30 on a Saturday evening at a lovely yoga studio in the heart of Barcelona. After signing some paperwork, we were guided into the yoga room, beautifully lit with soft colors and candles. There were ten participants and two facilitators, a male guardian/translator named Pⁱⁱⁱ and a female shaman (a sha-woman?) medicine woman named Ness Dalgà – both remarkable, beautiful people. We started with introductions and intentions, describing what we hoped to get from the experience.

I loved that there were people from all over: Russia, the UK, Poland, Germany, and me from the U.S. via Florence, Italy, with only one a Barcelona local. The ages ranged from early 20s to maybe late 70s or early 80s. I was glad I wasn't the oldest, though I'm unsure why it mattered.

A few had been through a DMT ceremony, whether Bufo or Ayahuasca, before, which helped offer comfort and context to those of us preparing for our first trip.

While I won't give away anyone else's intention or outcome (it's their story to tell), I will say that it seemed similar to the reports I'd heard, including finding their life purpose, seeing "God," going through a near-death experience, and breaking habitual behavior.

After sharing our stories, we danced and sang off any anxieties we might have had—great, fun music. (You'll hear me say that more than once).

Then they explained what to expect. Bufo comes from, I kid you not, the Colorado River toad (*Incilius alvarius*), also known as the Sonoran Desert toad – talk about irony! I travel thousands of miles away to smoke venom from a toad that lived where I came from. (For the record, toads are not harmed in the process). From what I understand, the toad's venom is crystalized and lit, turning it into inhalable smoke. We each had our own individual glass pipe with a single dose.

After instruction on inhaling the medicine^{iv} (and yes – it IS medicine), we were ready. Each had a yoga mat, pillows, and an eye mask to block the light and

remove distractions. One by one, each of us inhaled, applied our masks, and lied down.

The first participant immediately started giggling – a good sign!

The Trip

Then it was my turn. Consciously visualizing the medicine as "love," I inhaled (a bit too quickly), put on my mask, and reclined. My first reaction was to spit. Not vomit, just spit, spit, spit. I'm not sure what I was expelling, but it wasn't bothersome; it's just what I did. Finally, I swallowed and fell under the effects of the medicine.

My first vision was like Han Solo making the jump into hyperspace with colors. All the while, I kept repeating the mantra, "Whatever happens, I know it's coming from love, and I'm open and ready." I wanted my subconscious (Superconscious? The Medicine? Something/someone else?) to know I was receptive to any experience. Even if it might venture into "dark" territory, I trusted.

The next thing I saw in the bottom left field of my vision was a blending of oranges and reds I instantly related to the iconic poem *Inferno*. I wasn't afraid in the least; instead, I was curious to wherever it wanted to take me.

Next, I saw a stream of colorful, arched stained-glass windows moving along a path to my left.



Then a famous figure from history came to see me. It wasn't what I asked for, but it shouldn't have been too surprising since *We Meet Again* is a *DaVinci Code*-type mystery about this person. The spin in my story is that it follows his multiple lifetimes, an idea that might shock my protagonist: Dante Alighieri. Yes, the famous medieval poet of *The Divine Comedy* and *La Vita Nuova*, among other works. A man also known as much for his enduring love for Beatrice as for his timeless writing.

A bit nervous about his thoughts, I told Dante, "I want to do your story justice."

He said, "It doesn't matter if it's true. It only matters that it's Truth."

Gotcha. Then I asked, "Am I you?"

He replied, "I am everyone. And everyone is me."

After some unconscious dialogue, he gave me a BIG smile. As a historical figure not known to have been one to be a particularly jovial person, (there are no paintings of him smiling), this was a big deal, which provided me with the most beautiful validation and encouragement.

Considering my experience with failure and knowing I can use all the help I can get, I asked, "Will you help me get it out into the world?"

To which the energy shifted, and a big, booming voice declared:

Help Brownell

Heal Brownell

Love Brownell

It was both an affirmation and a command, like a call to arms summoning the universe for assistance. The voice repeated the phrase over and over again until I wasn't sure where or who it was coming from. "I am everyone. Everyone is me," right?

I didn't know it at the time, but according to Rick Strassman, Clinical research psychiatrist, father of the American psychedelic research renaissance, and bestselling author of *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*, the messages often come in a 3-syllable rhythm, corresponding to a heartbeat. For someone with a heart rhythm issue, it blows my mind!^v

The next part will take a bit of explaining to make sense. Many years ago, I adopted a practice from the Huna religion to come up with a "name" for my body. (I discuss the value of this technique in some depth in my *Reasons Why* book). It was life-changing and has served me well for decades. During the "trip" I got a message to merge my name with hers, creating a new hybrid name. I've been doing this in the days since the experience and can already feel a shift.

Some other memories I have are: Being aware of the music playing, seemingly going from soft to loud and back to soft as I sang/hummed along; feeling my brain rewiring, like synapses firing and shifting; and the sensation of merging/floating with the floor beneath me.

One of my favorite books is Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor's *My Stroke of Insight*, and her description of her experience parallels a lot of what I felt on Bufo, "I felt like a genie liberated from its bottle. The energy of my spirit seemed to flow like a great whale gliding through a sea of silent euphoria. Finer than the finest of pleasures we can experience as physical beings, this absence of physical boundary was one of glorious bliss. As my consciousness dwelled in a flow of sweet tranquility, it was obvious to me that I would never be able to squeeze the enormosity of my spirit back inside this tiny cellular matrix."

People often talk about the loss of "ego" during Bufo. As far as I know, I never lost "consciousness," but I did release control while feeling ultra-aware the whole time. I suspect had I inhaled more of the medicine, I might have "integrated" better but lost more of my recollections. Whatever the case, I had the ideal experience for what I needed.

At one point, my fingers started tingling. Many years ago, a trance channeler told me that I have an innate healing ability that manifests through electrified fingertips. I haven't done much work in that area in years, and it felt like the Bufo medicine was reminding me that I need to do more.

I asked if I could see the team I work with on the other side^{vi} but got nothing. Sometimes, no answer is an answer. And when I inquired if I would find love, the reply was along the lines of "If it happens, it happens. Let it go." I didn't feel like it was a "no," just not a topic for this session.

As I was in stillness, I asked for help accepting love, and instantly, at that very moment, a song about "amar" – love in Spanish – came forth. Was it synchronicity or just a coincidence?

Throughout, I had a vague awareness of time. I consciously knew the experience would last roughly 20 minutes, yet it also felt timeless. However, knowing there was an end helped me appreciate and make the most of the time I was given.

As I came-to, I heard gorgeous singing and music I sang along with. It wasn't until I sat up and took off my mask that I realized it was Ness playing the guitar and singing. Loved the music! Again, so perfect. And such talent. The first thing I said when everyone was awake was, "We need the soundtrack!" Hopefully, our lovely sha-woman Ness will head into the recording studio so she can share her transcendent talent with the world. I know it would help all of us to have the music to play to help bring back the experience.

These emojis sum it up:



AFTER

The group shared their experiences, which varied quite a bit, from someone saying they didn't get anything to others having profound visions and emotions. I found it especially funny when, after I mentioned the music's effect on me, another said, "There was music?"

Ness told us that the medicine works whether we had a vision or not, and it continues to work long after we return from the trip. This confirms what I've read, since it works in the brain at the level of the 2A serotonin receptor. (A video in the links explains this much better than I can).

The whole process took us until around 1:30 in the morning. I got settled back at my hotel around 2:15, but I wasn't tired even though it was way past my bedtime. I was still processing the experience.

When I woke, I meditated and saw some beautiful colors swirling in my vision.^{vii}

Later, I went on a long walk to the Barcelona beach and felt my consciousness return to "normal." Well, sort of.

As I write this, it's the Wednesday following the Saturday experience. Since then, I've been taking more notes and getting additional insights.

Retrospective Assessment

Was it real? According to Rick Strassman, it doesn't matter if it's real or not. It only matters that DMT shows us a world that "was previously invisible and it contains information."^{viii}

My personal opinion is that I think one of the things DMT does in the brain is it opens up connections so that you have the freedom to make different decisions without that attachment to what you've done in the past. Choices aren't autonomic anymore.

DMT helps you make decisions differently so you can make different decisions.

I have felt my brain adjusting to the shift and watched myself making more conscious choices in what I focus on and how I respond on everything from what to eat to how to reply to a social media post to how to prioritize my time. It also helped me recognize patterns and allow for changes.

Did I achieve what I hoped? Do I have an advocate? I think so. I definitely feel more supported in pursuing my purpose, which largely centers around my *We Meet Again* book series. Will Bufo influence my writing? I think maybe it already has. Will it help me overcome those pesky blocks to success? I certainly felt like that was a key message delivered during my trip, but only time will tell.

What tangible changes will happen going forward? I plan to:

- Take advantage of my new, more attentive methodology for making decisions.
- Call on the advocate who came to me in the vision and relish the support I received in the session.
- Remember my hybrid name when I'm tuning into myself, which has already shown promising results in just a few days.
- Enjoy the new, energized flow of my writing.

Will I do Bufo again?

Yes, probably in May when I return to the E.U. Many people think once is enough. They got what they needed. For me, I have more questions.

My Advice

- Make sure you choose a safe and legal place with proper screening and attention to health that feels right for you. Don't just find someone you hear about from a friend of a friend.
- I saw a documentary about some places where it might be legal, but far from safe or regulated. (See link). Some accounts were downright terrifying, especially for women.
- Follow the preparation instructions, especially the rule against caffeine and drugs.
- As soon as you book the appointment, work on your intentions going in. Who knows? You might start solving those problems or getting those answers weeks beforehand. I did.
- If you have a therapist, get their counseling beforehand to prepare and afterward to help integrate the experience into your life. Having a supportive professional was crucial, as well as working with the beautiful souls from Avalon.
- Meditate and do clearing exercises. The more you're free of attachments and issues, the better.
- Look at the medicine as love. That helped me so much.
- As soon as you can, grab a notebook and pen and write down everything you remember.

Conclusion: Life is a Trip

Life is a trip. Like any voyage, getting the most out of it requires the ideal blend of preparation and plasticity, form, and freedom. Being open to new experiences and change can be scary, but so can being stuck in the same old rut with the same old patterns. Whether you decide to experience DMT or not, remember that you already have natural DMT inside your body that can be accessed by meditation and other transcendent experiences.

Bon Voyage!

And stay in touch! I'm the only Brownell Landrum in the world, so I'm pretty easy to find. Links are below.

Links

Avalon

- <https://weareavalon.love/>

Ness Dalgà

- https://www.instagram.com/ness_dalga/
- <https://weareavalon.love/the-family/ness-dalga-2>

DMT documentary: The Spirit Molecule

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwZqVqbkyLM&t=1s>

VICE documentary – PLEASE WATCH

This documentary is not only enlightening, it includes a crucial warning about the dangers in doing DMT in an unregulated environment.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RonFMPnZq8>

10 Astonishing Facts about DMT the "Spirit Molecule"

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMcIfM8MeLo>

DMT Quest Documentary

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My95s6ZryPg>

MINDSET Lecture Series: Robin Carhart-Harris, PhD

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jY4c2sNWUc&t=11s>

NIH Research: “revealed robust increases in global functional connectivity”

- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36940333/>

Meditation to Face Your Fears

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vd7vnn4qmMU&t=1s>

Meditation to Cleanse Negative Energy

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rR8a2LCDccw&t=2576s>

Psychedelics expert Dr Robin Carhart-Harris on what exactly happens to the brain on a trip

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPerHB6Y2SQ&t=1272s>

Spiritual exploration is the top reason people consume 5-MeO-DMT, study finds

- <https://www.psypost.org/2018/06/spiritual-exploration-top-reason-people-consume-5-meo-dmt-study-finds-51387>

Psychedelic drugs like DMT and LSD promote neural plasticity the brain

- <https://www.psypost.org/2018/06/psychedelic-drugs-like-dmt-bsd-promote-neural-plasticity-brain-51459>

Study provides evidence that DMT is produced naturally from neurons in the mammalian brain

- <https://www.psypost.org/2019/07/study-provides-evidence-that-dmt-is-produced-naturally-from-neurons-in-the-mammalian-brain-54051>

A single dose of 5-MeO-DMT produces rapid and persistent improvements in life satisfaction and psychopathological symptoms

- <https://www.psypost.org/2019/09/a-single-dose-of-5-meo-dmt-produces-rapid-and-persistent-improvements-in-life-satisfaction-and-psychopathological-symptoms-54486>

New study offers a detailed glimpse into the otherworldly encounters produced by the psychedelic drug DMT

- <https://www.psypost.org/2022/02/new-study-offers-a-detailed-glimpse-into-the-otherworldly-encounters-produced-by-the-psychedelic-drug-dmt-62617>

Psychedelics may better treat depression and anxiety symptoms than prescription antidepressants for patients with advanced cancer

- <https://www.psypost.org/2023/10/psychedelics-may-better-treat-depression-and-anxiety-symptoms-than-prescription-antidepressants-for-patients-with-advanced-cancer-213997>

Andrew Huberman on caffeine

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olaVegee-Qw>

Brownell

- Website: <https://brownellandrum.com/> Includes:
 - Brownell's free clearing and other meditations.
 - Information about *We Meet Again* and her other books.
- Also check out:
 - Brownell's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/brownell.landrum.author>
 - Her *We Meet Again* Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063820366457>
- And if you're into reincarnation and past life stories, please consider joining Brownell's Life is a Trip Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lifeisatripstories>
- Brownell's Amazon Author page: [Amazon.com: Brownell Landrum: books, biography, latest update](https://www.amazon.com/Brownell-Landrum-books-biography-latest-update)

ⁱ Dr. Robin Carhart-Harris is a British [psychopharmacologist](#) and Ralph Metzner Distinguished Professor and Director of Neuroscape Psychedelics Division in the Department of Neurology at the University of California, San Francisco and was previously the Head of the Centre for Psychedelic Research at Imperial College London.

ⁱⁱ At the time I was leaving Aspen, Italy wasn't taking visa applications, which meant the only way I could travel was to obey the 90-day rule.

ⁱⁱⁱ The ceremony was mostly conducted in English, with some translation from Spanish; all the participants could speak English.

^{iv} Tip: Try breathing in the medicine in slowly (envisioning it as love), perhaps with air, so you don't inhale too much intense smoke at once.

^v <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcdItgUjZnY>

^{vi} Another story for another day.

^{vii} I have practiced many different forms of meditation, from guided to TM (transcendental meditation) to "sitting" and more and personally found a method that works best for me. I close my eyes and watch the colors and lights swimming in my vision. As I watch the "show" (almost like colorful clouds or a lava lamp) I watch how my field of vision shifts. Every time a thought comes up, I just shift back to watching. I find this more effortless than thinking about a specific color. My process doesn't require thinking at all – it's just being a spectator. I've also never been a fan of concentrating on my breathing because as you get to nirvana your breathing slows so much it almost stops, making that approach counter intuitive. I haven't read about anyone else doing what I do. It just came naturally.

^{viii} Quote from Rick Strassman's interview with Joe Rogan in August 2022.