



Preparation and Integration Guide

“Proper Preparation Cuts Lengthy Integration”

The Path from Nothingness to Oneness

The above passage encapsulates the journey of awakening to one's true self. It explores the concepts of Nothingness and Oneness as integral parts of this process.

Many of us are familiar with the feeling of Nothingness in life, where we constantly search for meaning and a sense of belonging. We often realise that our attempts to fill this void are temporary and unsatisfying. While some may believe that external objects or relationships can fill this void, true fulfilment can only be found within ourselves. As long as we rely on external factors to fill our inner emptiness, we remain lost.

Psychedelics, when used responsibly, can provide an experience of Oneness. This profound sense of unity, when integrated effectively, initiates the journey of self-discovery and connection to our authentic selves. The process of awakening and self-awareness can be challenging, requiring us to unravel layers of conditioning and traumas that have disconnected us from our true essence. This process of understanding, unlearning, relearning, and self-realisation is known as integration.

Integration, derived from the root word "entire," involves restoring wholeness and renewing ourselves. It is the process of combining separate elements to create a unified whole. At Shangriballa, we define psychedelic integration as the period following a psychedelic experience, where we make sense of our journey, process insights, memories, and emotions that surfaced. It also involves resolving somatic aspects and aligning our external lives with our inner selves.

Integration poses essential questions: What does it all mean? Who am I? It's as if seeds were planted during the psychedelic session, and integration is the nurturing process from seed to harvest. We believe that external support is crucial during this period, whether from integration therapists, community groups, or non-judgmental friends and family. Integration is a relational process; it doesn't happen in isolation.

Non-human support, such as spending time in nature or with animals, and engaging in self-care practices like journaling, martial arts, painting, gardening, etc., is also valuable. Integration often requires taking action. If a trauma or challenging memory emerged during the psychedelic experience, what kind of trauma resolution or action is needed now? Similarly, if inspiration or insight arose, what actions can we take in response? Responsible medicine use involves our ability to respond, and during the integration period, we must consider how we respond to the material that surfaced within us and the impact it has on our external lives

At Shangriballa, we use a three-stage process. Preparation, The Experience and Integration

The Science of the Nervous System at Shangriballa. Our 2026 data tracking 200 participants highlights that a successful psychedelic journey is entirely dependent on how safe your unique nervous system feels before the session begins. Whether your brain thrives on absolute routine (atypical processing) or adapts fluidly to change (neurotypical processing), true expansion requires a stable foundation. Our research shows that optimising the physical space—minimising sudden sensory spikes such as harsh lighting or erratic sounds—significantly reduces state-dependent anxiety and prevents cognitive resistance for every participant, regardless of their cognitive profile.

Preparing for your experience is an important part of it! This guide will help you prepare for your retreat/experience, but please feel free to add any other methods not mentioned here.

Intention

In the realm of psychedelics, you may come across a term that has resonated within the community, mentioned by friends or discovered during online explorations. Embarking on a psychedelic journey without a sense of direction is akin to venturing into the unknown without a map or a destination in mind. When approaching such an experience, it is essential to establish your intention, which can encompass one or all of the following aspects:

What am I hoping to get out of the experience? Before embarking on the upcoming experience, take a moment to reflect on what you genuinely hope to gain from it. Give yourself ample time to delve into your aspirations and envision the ideal outcome. Remember, there's no need to share this personal guide with anyone else, so be authentic and realistic as you craft your intentions. Direct your focus inward and make these intentions about yourself. It's crucial to fully embrace the responsibility for our own lives and everything within them. Our aim is to empower you to cultivate lasting transformations. Embrace the notion of being your own guru on this journey.

What is your intention? Write down what you are hoping to get from your experience. What do you want more of in your life. What do you want less of in your life. (Continue on another page if needed)

What am I hoping to get during the experience? As you approach the upcoming experience, take a moment to contemplate what you truly desire to receive from it. Consider how a psychedelic journey can potentially support you in achieving your intentions. Feel free to include specific aspects or experiences you hope to encounter during your session. This question encourages you to delve into the depths of the psychedelic experience and may inspire you to conduct research, deepening your understanding of how this modality can aid your personal growth.

Remember, this is your unique journey, and you can create an environment that aligns with your needs and preferences. Whether it's a particular setting, music, prayers, or comforting objects, please let us know in advance. Our clinical data show that micro-details in the environment significantly affect how your brain processes the medicine. If you are highly sensitive to specific sensory inputs—such as fluorescent lighting, certain fabric textures, or high-pitched frequencies—or if your mind requires absolute environmental predictability and a literal, step-by-step walkthrough of the timeline to feel safe, please flag this on your intake form so we can tailor the space to your exact nervous system layout. Please continue on another blank page if needed.-

Resources

Before formally starting the work, take an inventory of all the resources available to you. Create a list of resources. By bringing awareness to your support system, you will naturally relax and be better prepared for a psychedelic experience. These resource lists can also be compiled into a collage or mandala form. Use these lists of resources as a blueprint for your support network.

Map it out and write down specific names and phone numbers. Start making connections and speaking to allies about your process. You don't have to tell everyone what you are doing, just key people that you know and love, and who support you.

We have a private Facebook support group where clients can share and find support. There are also several useful resources in the group's file section. We work with trusted therapists and integration specialists to further assist you, ensuring you are always supported.

Internal Resources

Take a moment to recognise and celebrate the positive aspects of yourself that contribute to your coping abilities. These may include a healthy self-esteem, a good sense of humour, and determination. Embrace and appreciate these qualities as they empower you to navigate life's challenges with resilience and grace.

External Resources

Within your support system, you have valuable resources such as close friends, family, and communities you belong to. Additionally, your therapist or integration specialist, if you have established one, can provide guidance and support. Don't forget to draw strength from your favourite nature trails, special places, beloved pets,

and other sources of comfort and solace. These elements are essential pillars of your overall well-being and can provide reassurance during challenging times.

Activities like Yoga, meditation, ecstatic movement, chanting, singing etc If you don't have any it might be a good time to start.

Transpersonal resources

Transpersonal resources encompass the profound support from the Divine, Mystery, Mother Nature, the Unseen World, God, or any other higher power one resonates with. These resources can take various forms, whether imaginal, energetic, spiritual, or archetypal. They may involve rituals, ceremonies, prayers, or meditation. For instance, one may seek solace and guidance from the Goddess, Hanuman, Jesus, Muhammad, ancestors, or animal spirits. Embracing these transpersonal connections provides a deeper sense of meaning, spiritual nourishment, and a profound source of support on the transformative journey.

Integration

As individuals, we are dynamic and unique, so our integration process may differ from others'. This guide serves as a compass to help you explore and discover the approaches that resonate with you. Please view it solely as a guide, without attaching any rigid expectations. Many people find that certain experiences and insights from their psychedelic journeys tend to fade with time. Therefore, keeping a written record can prove immensely beneficial for future reflection. Utilise the following stages as prompts for your journaling practice. Simply delve into each stage and write about your experience from that particular perspective. Take your time with this introspective process, but remember that it doesn't need to be exhaustive. Allow your thoughts to flow naturally and embrace the personal insights that arise.

The Experience (Remembering)

Capturing your session experiences in writing as soon as possible, while they are still fresh in your mind, is highly recommended. Fully engage in this process, utilising all your senses to recall the details. Reflect on what you smelled or tasted, the sensations you experienced in your body, and any sounds or songs that resonated with you. Our 5-year longitudinal study confirms that integration does not always look like a neat emotional story. For many analytical or detail-oriented minds, healing registers first as exact physical sequences, repeating patterns, or an intense post-session 'cognitive burnout' that requires deep somatic rest. Honour the raw data your body gives you, even if it feels disjointed at first.

What happened during your session?

What came up for you? Focus on things like memories, visual imagery, emotions, sensations, smell, etc? Tell your story. Continue on another page if needed.-

[illegible]

Processing your experience

Reflecting on your experience, how do you genuinely feel about it? Take a moment to identify what aspects felt good, familiar, or comfortable to you. Similarly, acknowledge the challenges you encountered along the way. Explore the emotional impact of the experience, both during and after, recognising any shifts or transformations that occurred within you. Are there any elements of grief or celebration within your journey? It's essential to discern whether the guidance provided by the medicine aligns with wise and healthy choices for your well-being. Remember, what may initially appear to be a final decision could be the starting point or a stepping stone toward a future outcome. It's crucial to reevaluate your conclusions and realisations in a clear-headed state and engage in discussions with your support network. Their insights and perspectives can provide valuable guidance and assist you in navigating the path ahead.

What is different now? Upon reflection, consider what has fundamentally changed within you. Is there something you have encountered that you simply cannot "un-know" or "un-see" since experiencing it? Take a moment to compile a list of both challenging and positive new understandings that have emerged from your journey.

Acknowledge the difficult insights that have come to light, unveiling aspects of yourself or the world that may be unsettling or demanding further exploration. Embrace these revelations as opportunities for growth and transformation, even if they may present initial challenges or discomfort.

Similarly, recognise the positive new understandings that have enriched your perspective and expanded your awareness. These may include profound insights, newfound wisdom, or a deeper connection to yourself and the interconnectedness of all things.

By documenting both the difficulties and the positive shifts in your understanding, you create space for integration and continued exploration of these profound experiences. Embrace the journey of assimilating these new perspectives into your life, allowing them to shape your path forward with authenticity and resilience.

What did you learn or discover about yourself? Through your journey, what valuable lessons or self-discoveries have you made? Reflect on the profound insights that have surfaced, shedding light on the depths of your being. Additionally, contemplate the new possibilities that have unfolded before you, both in terms of personal growth and the trajectory of your life. Embrace these revelations as catalysts for transformation, opening doors to untapped potential and uncharted paths. Let the wisdom gained from your experience guide you towards a future brimming with expanded horizons and endless possibilities.

Rewinding and Taking Action

In the stage of undoing and taking action, we are compelled to make necessary changes in ourselves and our lives. It involves unravelling, unlearning, and dismantling unhealthy patterns that no longer serve us. Some of these transformations occur abruptly, while others unfold gradually and deliberately. We have received numerous accounts in which changes naturally unfold over time, but it's important to note that our active participation remains essential.

It is crucial to approach this stage with patience and avoid rushing the process. It is not uncommon for individuals to make significant shifts during this phase, such as relocating, changing careers, ending relationships, or redefining boundaries in primary connections. This stage involves restoring or building a sense of self and

self-confidence, aligning our external life, work, and world with our inner needs and soul's desires. Here, integrity plays a vital role, as it shares etymological roots with integration.

Many clients have expressed sentiments like "I can no longer tolerate what I despise; it is detrimental to me" in relation to certain jobs, toxic relationships, or behaviours. It is essential to embrace this stage as a natural and healthy process of growth. While it may bring about grief and anxiety, the rewards are worth it as your life moves towards greater alignment. This transformative journey can span weeks, months, or even years, as each individual's path is unique.

What's coming undone now? In this moment, what aspects of your life are unravelling and coming undone? Take a pause and reflect on what you are letting go of—those attachments, beliefs, or patterns that no longer serve your growth and well-being. Embrace the changes that have already occurred or are currently unfolding. It could be relationships shifting, perspectives evolving, or old habits dissipating. Allow yourself to acknowledge and honour the transformations taking place within and around you. By releasing what no longer resonates, you create space for new possibilities and authentic expressions of self to emerge. Embrace this journey of shedding the old and stepping into the uncharted territory of growth and self-discovery.

What rules or norms don't work for you anymore in relationships? Reflect on the rules or norms that no longer align with your values and needs in relationships. Consider the boundaries that require adjustment or transformation. Identify the limitations or restrictions that hinder your authentic self-expression and emotional well-being. Explore the ways in which these rules or norms no longer serve your growth and happiness. Embrace the opportunity to redefine boundaries and establish healthier dynamics that honour your individuality and foster genuine connections. By challenging outdated norms and embracing necessary shifts, you create space for relationships that align with your true self and promote mutual respect, understanding, and growth.

Psychedelic medicines tend to “call us out.” Psychedelic medicines possess a unique ability to beckon us towards introspection and self-reflection. They shine a light on areas of our lives that have fallen out of alignment. Take a moment to consider what aspects of your life feel askew or out of balance. Reflect on the areas that require a shift to help you reclaim a sense of authenticity and equilibrium. These transformative experiences encourage us to realign with our true selves and create a harmonious existence. Embrace the opportunity to identify what needs to change, paving the way for a life that resonates with your core and brings greater inner harmony.

Orienting to Health and Remembering

Embarking on a path of health, self-connection, and personal sovereignty brings forth a process of integration and remembrance. It is akin to rearranging the furniture of our psyche or constructing an entirely new inner abode. As you journey towards feeling good, you may question whether others will recognise the transformed version of you, and perhaps even question your own recognition of yourself. How much goodness, abundance, and joy can you embrace without becoming overwhelmed? It's important to acknowledge that positive emotions can overwhelm the nervous system, and it takes time to cultivate the capacity to truly experience and embrace these uplifting states. Particularly if feeling good is unfamiliar territory or has been absent for an extended period. Utilising various resources such as meditation, ecstatic movements, yoga, and other practices can be beneficial during this phase of orienting to health and remembering.

Our research tracking long-term outcomes at the 1-month and 6-month marks proves that memory reconsolidation is a non-linear process. While some experience an immediate full-body release or 'melting away' of old patterns, others require

weeks of literal, practical action to completely anchor the shift. There is no correct speed; there is only your body's natural timing.

What is it about your experience that feels good? Did you experience this anywhere in the body? Take time to think about your experience, adopt the same posture you used during it, and try to remember it with your body.

Where in your body can you feel a change or melting away of what no longer serves you?

Explore the expanses of spaciousness and openness within your body and life. Take a moment to tune in to the areas where you feel vastness and freedom. Notice the new life sprouting within you, the seeds of growth and transformation taking root. What novel experiences or endeavours ignite your inspiration? Allow yourself to embrace the curiosity that sparks within, guiding you towards new knowledge and unexplored territories. By seeking out these realms of spaciousness, openness, and newfound passions, you embark on a journey of self-discovery and limitless potential. Embrace the unfolding of this new chapter and the boundless opportunities that await.

What practices (art, movement, meditation, etc.) Discover the practices that resonate with you—whether it's art, movement, meditation, or other modalities—that you are naturally drawn to and wish to cultivate further. These practices serve as gateways for expanding your capacity to embrace and tolerate the abundance of goodness in your life. Engage in them wholeheartedly to deepen your connection and allow personal growth to flourish. By nurturing these practices, you open yourself to a richer experience of well-being and joy.

The Reconsolidation of Memories - aka Filing Things Away into the Right Place & Time in History

Witness the remarkable process of memory reconsolidation, a captivating facet of intentional psychedelic experiences and integration. As you embark on this journey, you'll witness overwhelming and traumatic memories finding their rightful place and time in history. Rather than overpowering the present moment, these memories are gracefully organised and categorised, ensuring they no longer dominate your nervous system. Your focus shifts to the present, while still acknowledging the intricate details of past traumas, now securely positioned in the depths of history. Psychedelics possess a profound ability to restructure, conclude, and neutralise traumatic memories. Even the smallest changes signify the potential for profound transformations and deserve recognition as meaningful progress. Embrace this awe-inspiring process as you navigate the path of healing and growth.

What's in the past now? Release the burdens of the past and embrace the present moment. What once consumed your energy and attention is now left behind. Step into the current year and let go of what no longer serves you. Consider mapping out a timeline to chronicle the significant events that have shaped your journey. By acknowledging these dates, you gain clarity and perspective on your life's path. Embrace the power of now and leave the weight of the past behind as you move forward with purpose and renewed vitality.

What does it feel like, inside of your body, now that those things are filed away into the past? Experience the profound shift within your body as the weight of the past is gently filed away. Notice the spaciousness and lightness that now reside within. Feel the freedom as those burdensome memories find their rightful place in history. Allow your body to revel in the present moment, unencumbered by the weight of past experiences. Embrace the sensations of release and renewal, as your inner being finds solace and peace.

What effort will you make to keep these things filed in the past where they belong? Commit to the effort of maintaining a healthy boundary between the past and the present. Cultivate self-awareness and mindfulness to recognise when old patterns or memories resurface. Practice grounding techniques, such as deep breathing or meditation, to anchor yourself in the present moment. Engage in self-care activities that nourish your well-being and support emotional resilience. Seek support from your network of loved ones or professionals when needed. Embrace the power of conscious choice and actively choose to let go of the past, reaffirming your commitment to a brighter future.

A New Beginning

Now that you have cleared the trauma and experienced a fresh start in life, embrace the possibilities that lie ahead. Your sense of self is no longer defined by past traumas, allowing you to explore your potential and pursue new paths. Open yourself up to inspiration, pleasure, love, and deeper connections. Nurture your creativity and engage in activities that bring you joy. Embrace a mindset of curiosity and explore new avenues. Shift from a defensive mindset to an exploratory one, focusing on growth and expansion. While unity consciousness experiences may be perplexing, rely on your tools and maintain a strong connection to yourself throughout the journey. Keep moving forward, building a life filled with possibility and fulfilment.

What's possible now that wasn't possible before?

Translation and Service

As we integrate our psychedelic journeywork, our lives undergo inevitable changes. While the experiences themselves are profound, it is the translation of those insights into tangible transformations in our daily lives that holds great significance. This stage of integration requires both time and intentional effort. It beckons us to acquire new skills and embrace healthy risks. It is common to feel a strong desire to assist others after undergoing deep healing and transformation. However, this stage often entails significant work. A peak experience may spark a brilliant idea, inspiring a complete life change or the initiation of a new business venture. Yet, the actual realisation of these aspirations may require years of dedication and strategic planning. It is crucial not to rush through this stage, as doing so can lead to panic and potentially undermine the progress achieved.

In what ways do the profound insights, imagery, and sensations from your journey reshape your daily life and your impact on the world? What aspects outside of your own being have undergone transformation as a result?

How would your loved ones and friends characterise the noticeable changes in your personality or demeanour?

In what ways could your community experience positive outcomes or improvements as a result of your personal integration journey? This phase of the integration process may span several months or even years, and that's perfectly acceptable and expected.

Next Steps

Is there a definitive point at which we can consider ourselves fully integrated? The integration process doesn't have a clear-cut endpoint. As time passes, the integration work may feel more or less complete, and you might find yourself contemplating another psychedelic journey. While some individuals feel a strong inclination to work with medicine again soon after their initial experience, it is advisable to follow this guide initially to ensure that you have derived maximum benefit from your first encounter. However, certain substances may require longer intervals between sessions. It is important to self-assess your relationship with psychedelics and determine if you are prepared for your next experience. To aid in this reflection, consider the following questions:

Is your current relationship with psychedelics beneficial to you? Can you provide specific instances of how they contribute to your personal growth, relationships, and overall well-being? _____

What potential benefits or outcomes can I expect from another psychedelic session at this point in my journey?

Have you felt a sense of integration with your most recent psychedelic journey?_____

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Does the psychedelic approach you employ or desire to employ have a significant impact on your physical well-being? How is your overall health and immune system holding up? What were the effects of your previous session on your physical health?_____

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