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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2009

# Break On Through to the Other Side: Journeys with Vine of the Soul



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Renowned ayahuasca researcher Stan Kripnner invited me to dinner with Jose Sulla at a restaurant named Tudo Bem. There he introduced me to his Brazilian friend Marguerite, who I interviewed about her dreams and remarkable coincidences that led her to move from Philadelphia to a dream home in Hawaii.

We then attended a traditional Hawaiian ceremony, where Jose, another Saybrook student, invited me to visit his special land on the Big Island, where he was leading a traditional Santo Daime ritual. I accepted the invite, sensing that my life was going to change forever.

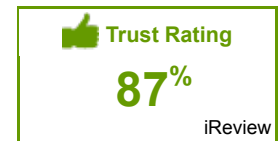
After the APA I then flew to Maui, where I stayed near Pa'ia, a beautiful town on the north shore with a generous co-op featuring daily new fresh avocados. Bruce Glenn was a Jungian Psychologist who built a stunning home on the elevated road with views of the north shore. He grew avocados and lemons fresh in his garden. He was a raw foodist and a patient of Dr. Gabriel Cousens. Dr. Cousen's vedic astrologer Davis Batson, who gave me several readings, referred me. I think this put me in the right state of mind.

Viola, my girlfriend from Australia, flew in from an internship at the Tree of Life to join me in Maui. Together I flew us to Kona. I rented us a Jeep and we drove up to Jose's land in the dark. A long winding road around the island, and then lush tall grassy unpaved roads led up to the hillside where Jose lived and had his center.

We stayed on a small bed on the floor of his cabin and fell deeply asleep. The feeling of the wild lush jungle that is Hawaii we woke up. We were asked to bring and wear white. I wore light colored hemp pants, and a white shirt.

After a nourishing avocado breakfast we were introduced to the group of participants who were assembling. The men and women separated, traditional in a Santo Daime ritual. One of the gentlemen, a real estate broker, asked me if I have ever worked with hallucinogens. I said "hardly". He cautioned me that it may feel as if I am aware of a new sensation, a new sense I was never aware of before. It could be compared to having a leg that was asleep, that I didn't even know was asleep, and then waking up and it was tingling. I took that under advisement.

There were about 2 dozen men and two dozen women, we all were asked to stand in a circle in the large circular temple. Men on one side women on the other. Those of us who were never married or never had





books and asked to sing along and follow.

The ceremony began in late morning. There was a table in the middle, where Jose led the invocations, consisting of about half an hour of intense prayers for protection: Hail Marys, Our Fathers, in both English and Portuguese.

And then the beautiful songs began. Several men sat in the middle playing the guitar, while we all sang along in accompaniment, following the words in the hinarios. Each song, or hinario, was "received" by divine inspiration. We were all standing, walking back in forth in two-step, in unison.

A few songs later, it was time for us to receive the sacrament, the Daime. We stood in line and were given a small drink each. To me it tasted like apple juice. To others it tasted like cat pee.

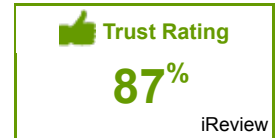
After drinking the daime we went back to stand in our spaces and continue singing. Almost immediately, and about 20 minutes later, I began to feel unusual. A tingly feeling, a vibration began to resonate through me. Then a sense of time dilation, dizziness...I started feeling something very strong engulf me, a beautiful sense of spirit.

I noticed some of the others staring up at the light filtering through the center of the building. They looked ecstatic.

Then I backed up and sat on a stool against the wall. I closed my eyes. The image that I saw dazzled me beyond description. Intense visions of spiritual light, the divine filtering through my third eye. And then a vision of jungle vines that appeared to be snakes, a beautiful castle or temple of gold, a temple that I was waiting for all my life, this was a mystery a secret buried deep within the jungle now being revealed to me. The image was in such intense technicolor I will always remember it. The colors were beyond the physical; intense greens that were almost flourescent, oranges, blues, yellows...so joyfully intense that I would surrender my entire human life for that divine sense of joy. And I almost did.

It was as if my whole life made sense. Or as if my whole life was waiting preparing for this moment. A deep moment of recognition. I felt myself dying, my personality slipping away, a momentary fear that I would be nothing without my ego, surpassed by a deeper sense that the "I" that I fear would be lost was an illusion already dissolved in a vast deep ocean of pure awareness and love.

This was beyond a hallucination, which would have been an image that really was not there. A vision was much deeper and much more real, emanating from deep within, from a divine source, and a sense of knowing and feeling that it was absolutely real. Unlike a hallucination, it was generated by a source much deeper than my mind.



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For me there was no time. So what happened next I perceived an instant or eternity later, it was all the same.

But the next thing I remember, and this was a shock to my system, is my eyes opening and seeing people peering over me, concerned. I was disoriented and confused.

The vision had been so immense and vast that I was lost and found in it, dissolved and absorbed. Almost a bit annoyed that I had to contend and deal with my predicament...

They were deciding what to do with me...someone pointed to my head, and I tried to touch my forehead but they stopped me. Apparently I had lost consciousness, and fallen face forward on the concrete floor. My titanium-rimmed glasses lacerated my forehead when I fell, and the braces on my upper teeth had punctured my lip.

One participant suggested she stitch up the wound on my forehead with a butterfly stitch. I immediately realized that would not be wise. For one thing, she may have been in an altered state and not so skillful, for another, I was concerned about scarring. So I composed myself and insisted that I be driven to the hospital for stitches.

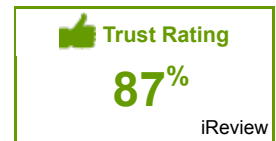
Viola, who accompanied me, peered over, very concerned. The other participants pulled her away to gather with the women.

A few minutes later my sponsor, the gentleman who was supposed to watch me to prevent such a mishap, agreed to drive me to the hospital. Viola accompanied me.

About half hour later we arrived. I was admitted immediately because of the severity of the scarring. The ER doctor arrived and prepped me for stitches by putting a huge sheet over my head only leaving the laceration exposed. I had about a dozen stitches on my forehead and half dozen on my lip. The vision was still in the background, close enough to me that I did not flinch when he began operating on me. I was so numb that I don't even recall him using anesthesia.

We drove back in time for me to return to the ceremony, where they had me sit down in the center with the musicians. After it finished, one of the participants remarked that I was a true warrior, a role model, that I could have been so wounded and still toughed it out to the end. Another participant noted that I could wear this scar with pride. Jose Sulla's father, an attorney, expressed concern. Perhaps I he was concerned about a potential lawsuit. But I had already signed a waiver document before the ceremony that would hold him harmless against any loss, etc.

The other thing I recall is Jose looking over at me when I was on the floor, after they transported me to another room, and I saw an image of





head and quickly disappeared. It was composed of geometric shapes, mainly triangles. Each a different fluorescent color. I asked him later what that snake signified. He said "protection."

I had different plans for the scar. After leaving the ceremony and saying my goodbyes, I resolved to heal this scar and completely prevent it. I started with noni which I placed on the scar. Viola and I returned to Maui where I spent a few days applying noni and preparing to return back to the mainland. In P'aia, the co-op recommended high doses of vitamin E and arnica tinctures, which I began applying relentlessly. I also made sure to completely cover my head and wound to prevent scarring caused by intense sun.

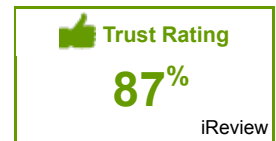
I scheduled an emergency appointment with my naturopath Dr. Cheryl Derooin in Scottsdale. Dr. Derooin is a gifted naturopath with a long waiting list. And she is a gifted medical clairvoyant. So when she looked at my energy field she perceived that suddenly my DNA was awakened, it had 12 strands that she could see. (Conventional modern medicine and science considers DNA to have 2 strands.) she also perceived my energy field and molecules as much more expansive and filled with light. Clearly, I was affected in a deep way as a result of this experience.

Then we began an intensive regimen to heal my wound. I began taking homeopathy religiously. I avoided the word "scar" like the plague. I began eating the most highly dense nutrition I could find: organic avocados, juicing, sprouts, vegetable juices. I applied the biophoton analyzer coil to the wound. I basically took an entire week off from work to rest and focus on healing this wound. I also purchased and had expressed mail to me multiple vials of various herb tinctures from the Amazonian Herb Co. These were authentic herb tinctures sourced directly from the Amazon jungles of Brazil, and grown and harvested sustainably with a percentage of the profits reinvested and given to the indigenous tribes.

I also bought an infrared laser pointer which was especially designed for treating scars and skin conditions. I would then apply it to various segments of the wound, for approximately 2 minutes at a time, with a small break in between.

Also to integrate this experience. Viola the angel that she was, supported me step by step and helped me. I did intense visualization on this wound being completely healed and perfect. I took before and after pictures.

Interestingly, the wound appeared to be the shape of a DNA helix; it was jagged and appeared to wind back and forth. During this week of rest, healing, and integration, the visions were still present but more faint. I had visions of St. Francis visiting me and sending his healing energy. I also felt the Amazonian secrets of the jungle closer and





When I closed my eyes, I also perceived my DNA somehow reconfiguring itself, waking up; I also visualized the DNA and cells being repaired molecule by molecule in my body.

It is said that ayahuasca, once activated and present in the body, continues to do its work unless otherwise deactivated. So I had put to life and set in motion another new spiritual force and influence in my life that would change me forever.

So, approximately 2 weeks later, when it was time to remove the stitches, it was a big day. Dr. Derooin peeled away the stitches carefully and she remarked on how thoroughly this had healed. It was basically pink with new skin tissue, and instead of a large bruised jagged scar, there was a red line where the new tissue was growing.

I continued to take care of the wound with the infrared light, arnica tinctures, homeopathy pellets, high quality nutrition. I resolved to heal the wound completely and religiously stuck with this plan for the next 12 months until the wound was all but completely dissolved.

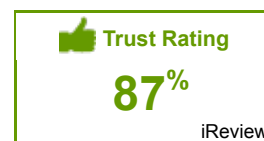
I reconnected with Jose a few months later after my ayahuasca journey, and he reconnected me with a community in Sedona, AZ (Cornville) who did regular Santo Diame rituals. I attended my first ritual with them around October 2004. Arthur and Cheryl Fanning ran the events.

I participated in about 7 Santo Diame rituals, including the one in Hawaii. The Santo Diame rituals were held around the 1st and the 15th of every month. I drove up from Scottsdale, the ride was about 2 hours. I would arrive around 7-8, the event would gear up. The dress code was wearing lots of white. The ceremonies would take around 6 hours, starting with half an hour of invocations and prayers, including Our Father and Hail Mary in both Portuguese and English.

About 4-8 participants usually joined us during the rituals. I started getting really into and absorbed by the hinarios, and began to understand the deep meaning behind the words, how each song is a step along a journey. Each ceremony involved a progression of sitting, standing and dancing, and silent meditation.

During one event in the meditation I started tasting intense blood and was concerned I was actually bleeding. I pulled Keith aside, and he took me to another room, where he told me I was probably tasting Christ's blood of the Crucifixion. This was one of the events Dr. Derooin joined me, she said I looked very pale and clammy.

Another event I asked to see my DNA, during a concentration-meditation. And moments later I saw beautiful multicolored spaghetti, very beautiful beyond description...beyond fluorescent, probably luminescent. And in this beautiful divine tangle of DNA strands, I could see various segments spread across the DNA and lighting up



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In that instant I realized that DNA can "communicate" with consciousness, and that our intent and consciousness can activate otherwise dormant parts of our divine code. It was that realization that spawned my book about how you can heal your DNA and communicate with it. That insight also inspired me to later make communicating and commanding my DNA to activate its highest expression and blueprint a regular part of my daily meditation ritual and affirmation.

During another extraordinary ritual, I had the experience of seeing realms and realms of angels beautiful beyond description. I think I saw Archangel Michael.

Often when I drank the Diame, I would eventually have the experience of losing my ego, of dissolving and dying, each time the grip my ego would want to have on life would be there...and it would feel as if I am on a top of a roller coaster ride and then I would need to surrender to the ride.

In another especially challenging journey, I was shown my flaws, one by one, and it felt so difficult and harsh I felt it was a lifetime of work for me. I didn't need or want to do it after such a challenging experience - I felt as if I had a lifetime of work to do after that "lecture". A tip to remember: if you hit a rough spot in your journey, pray for others. That selflessness is the most effective way to bring in the light than anything else.

The Diame is a powerful purgative, causing many people to vomit. Although I have been nauseated under its influence I have not once vomited. But its a common reaction and that of purging out one's impurities.

During one of my latest rituals, I had such a powerful meditation I had to sit down on the sofa, I was feeling nauseated. The vibrations were so strong that I was almost nervous about where I would journey to and what would happen next. I closed my eyes and felt myself journeying so far into the cosmos, to a place of beyond my soul's birth, into the vast expanse of starry beingness.

Arthur and Cheryl later confessed to me that watching me during this concentration turn such shades of grey and pallor and sweat, they were very concerned I might not return to my body! They did not know my next of kin or who to call if something were to happen to me. They also indicated they would rather I conform to the structure of the hinarios, dancing, and concentration instead of such a prolonged journey. It was then that I also realized that it may be time for me to complete my participation in this group. Out of respect for them and their protocol it would not make sense for me to journey in this manner if it causes them such concern.





at his center in North East Kona, Hawaii. Unfortunately, this was the same time when the Tsunami hit Indonesia, and I felt strangely unsettled being on the island. It was almost as if I could perceive the disruption and suffering caused to thousands of victims in neighboring islands. I felt so uncomfortable in fact that I declined participating and instead took the next earliest flight back out of the island and returned home over New Year's Eve. Although my reluctance to participate could simply be caused by fear, one is never supposed to push oneself beyond limits or force participation especially when there is any resistance or last minute anxiety. It is better to play it safe.

I realized that if I were to engage in ayahuasca again I would like to take it under the supervision of an indigenous trained shaman, probably in Peru or Brazil. My colleague Sheryl Attig took ayahuasca for weeks under a shaman by the name of Don Ignacio, in a small city called Inferno, Peru. This was near Macchu Picchu. Under such a shaman I could experience profound journeys without the need to conform or return from the journey in such a prescribed structure or time frame.

Visions are not guaranteed as a result from taking Ayahuasca. For some it happens occasionally, for others frequently, for some others not at all. These visions are a gift if and when they do arrive.

I took several friends up with me including my crazy tall raw food buddy Alden, massage therapist Rachel, and Dr. Deroin.

I played a surprise birthday party trick on Alden, when in October I told him I was taking him to an Ayahuasca journey but instead took him to Charlie's house, where we surprised him with a rawfood birthday party. I later took him to an event, but he claimed he did not have much of an experience.

I also took Rachel once to an event, which was held at someone else's house, not Arthur and Cheryl's but she mentioned she did not have much of an experience.

When I took Dr. Deroin, she mentioned she had a powerful experience. But she didn't like the feeling of being controlled by Cheryl who was trying to insist she maintain the two-step dance in time for hours, while being under the influence of this powerful sacrament.

After these ceremonies at Cheryl and Arthurs, we would all eat some wonderful home cooked meal, usually traditional Brazilian beans and rice, sometimes soup or meat. then we would depart around 3-4 AM to drive home. Strangely, the ride home was tolerable, and I would sometimes find the sunrise greeting me as I arrived home. I liked the comfort of my own bed. There were never any negative side effects after drinking the diame, so I would wake up a few hours later completely refreshed and joyfully eager to start the next day. This schedule is typical in Brazil as well, when many have to wake up for



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rituals and practices.

Ayahuasca is considered one of the world's most powerful herbal sacraments. It has been known to cause cures of drug and alcohol addictions, and there are even reported cases of spontaneous remission from cancer and other mental and physical afflictions.

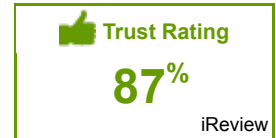
I have found Santo Diame giving me some of the most profound and beautiful living breathing experiences of the Divine in my life. I have received beautiful glimpses of what I consider to be the "other side", the astral world where our consciousness travels to upon the death of our physical body. Indeed, I don't fear death, as I know there is a much greater continuum ahead. At the same time the thought of death creates anxiety for my ego which is afraid of dying afraid of its own extinction and afraid of any change it cannot control. The experiences sights and visions are so beautifully intense they are indelibly impressed upon my memory and I can recall them with nearly the same living breathing technicolor that I had once with them.

Another vision was that of a beautiful church, with a zig zag design, probably the serpent. Another vision was that of the snake or serpent biting off my left arm. I then aggressively hopped and took control of another snake or serpent and chased the other down through many colorful tunnels and wrestled this thief for my arm back. It was a very real experience for me and very empowering. another vision I saw what I can most closely compare to Joseph's technicolor dream coat.

This sacrament is not to be ingested lightly. It is not recreational. It is very very powerful and requires an attitude of reverence and humility when you drink it. Otherwise you run the risk of becoming nauseated severely while the plant spirit works on purifying your intent. Under higher dosages some report major diahorea. Paris Hilton would not do well hosting a casual ayahuasca party!

Ayahuasca kept working on my DNA until it somehow completely transformed, according to Dr. Derooin's perception. there were times the ayahuasca seemed to be almost too intense and I asked Cheryl for advice on how to make it stop, and she suggested a remedy of rose water. Also, sometimes when ayahuasca is too intense, a good shaman can make the ayahuasca stop its influence, by making certain sounds or other practices.

In 2006, I underwent an emergency procedure to remove a hemangioma from my brain. It was partially obstructing my right lateral ventricle and causing intolerable headaches. The surgeons checked my DNA which did not have the gene for this condition, so it is not hereditary. Who knows what caused this. Perhaps it was the head on car collision in 2005 when I jarred myself. Or it could have been the impact of my fall during my first journey, or something that got triggered during my subsequent rituals. Or perhaps the rituals prevented the condition from being far



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consciousnes, something I have longed for all my life, and many intuitively gifted healers suspect that the brain surgery purpose was to open me up to higher consciousness, thus activating my wish.



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