

## THE ACCELERATED EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS – Part 1

by Joseph T. McMahon

### *The Relationship between “Panic and Anxiety Disorders” and “Dark Night of the Soul”*

According to Wikipedia, life on earth began about 3.7 billion years ago and our human ancestors began appearing between 5 million and 7 million years ago.

However, the discovery (and harnessing) of electricity, development of complex modern plumbing, the refinement of fossil fuels (and the development of the combustion engine), the advent of computer technology, artificial intelligence (AI), and the evolution of modern medicine, have only appeared in the last two hundred years or so. In fact, the ***accelerated pace of human evolution in just the last two hundred years*** set the stage for our successfully walking on another planet – something that would have certainly been called insanity, heresy, or witchcraft just a few hundred years ago. This is a very profound recognition.

One way to visualize this accelerated evolution of Consciousness is to divide 7 million (years since ancestors first appeared) by 200 (the last 200 hundred since the first appearance of our ancestors 7 million years ago) = 35,000. That means if you typed 35,000 periods, only the very last period typed would represent the last two hundred years. It is quite obvious that there is an “accelerated evolution of Consciousness” in these times.

And what is interesting and surprising to notice is that there is a correlation between the rise of anxiety and panic attacks in the same period of this accelerated evolution of Consciousness. This is a correlation that needs to be acknowledged. To this end, I use a brief point about my own personal story of the witnessing of this accelerated evolution of Consciousness within the direct experience of my own being.

Although my first experience with witnessing Consciousness expanding and evolving within my own being began 5 years ago, it was exactly just one year ago that I experienced what is known in spiritual communities as a “dark night of the soul”. I was sitting at my computer in my home and looked out the window and then returned my attention back to my computer monitor and realized that I couldn’t tell the difference between what was happening inside the computer screen and what was happening outside the window I was looking through. Both seemed to be unreal. Both appeared to be an illusion. And while it is understandable that the images on the computer screen could be understood to be unreal, it was seen and experienced that the outside world was likewise, equally unreal. An illusion. With this recognition arose a sense of ‘disappearing’ – a sense of dying; a terror of existential death; a momentary open-eyed ‘blackout’ after which I lived the next several weeks in a state of terror. Psychologists would diagnose this as ‘derealization’ and ‘depersonalization’.

Much could be written here about the unfolding of that experience, but that is not the purpose of this writing. However, there were some revelations with respect to this experience which inspired this writing and which I feel are relevant for these times.

Here is a list of some generalized symptoms of 'panic and anxiety' attacks followed by a list of symptoms of 'dark night of the soul' experiences taken from the internet (randomly gathered from various websites):

**Panic and Anxiety attack symptoms:**

- Derealization (feelings of unreality)
- Depersonalization (being detached from oneself)
- Suicidal ideation (fear of loss of control)
- Racing heart.
- Feeling weak, faint, or dizzy.
- Tingling or numbness in the hands and fingers.
- Sense of terror, or impending doom or death.
- Feeling sweaty or having chills.
- Chest pains.
- Breathing difficulties.
- Feeling a loss of control.
- Palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate
- Sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Sensations of shortness of breath or smothering
- Feelings of choking
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or abdominal distress
- Feeling dizzy, unsteady, light-headed, or faint
- Chills or heat sensations
- Paresthesia (numbness or tingling sensations)
- Fear of losing control or "going crazy"
- Fear of dying
- A feeling of overwhelming fear
- Feeling like you are going crazy or losing control
- Fear that you are going crazy, going to die, or pass out
- Feeling like you are in grave danger
- Feeling like you are dying
- Feeling you might pass out
- A surge of doom and gloom
- An overpowering sense of dread
- Feeling like things are surreal
- Feeling like you are losing touch with reality
- Feeling like you need to urgently escape
- Dizziness

- Heart Palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pressure or pain
- Turning pale
- Weak in the knees
- Burning skin
- Pins and needles
- Hot and cold flashes
- Numbness and tingling sensations

**Dark Night symptoms:**

- Depersonalization (feels like 'you' are disappearing)
- Derealization (feels as if everything is unreal or an illusion)
- Sudden deeply felt-sense of mortality
- Terror
- Aloneness
- Meaninglessness
- Depression
- Fear of loss of control (like you could jump out a window or jump on a train track)
- Fear in the body
- Despair
- Anxiety
- Panic
- Racing heart
- Grief
- Excess energy
- Sleeplessness
- Loss of meaning
- Loss of will
- Loneliness
- Disconnection
- Separation
- Unusual sensitivity
- Sadness, which often verges on despair
- You feel an acute sense of unworthiness
- You have the constant feeling of being lost or "condemned" to a life of suffering or emptiness
- You possess a painful feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness
- Your will and self-control is weakened, making it difficult for you to act
- You lack interest and find no joy in things that once excited you
- You crave for the loss of something intangible; a longing for a distant place or to "return home" again
- You have frightening, irrational thoughts, sometimes even along the lines of "I'm dying."
- Unable to leave the house yet not wanting to be left alone

- Sleeping habits are irregular
- Loss of appetite
- So overwhelmed by emotion that you feel like you can't function
- Thoughts of death, such as 'death alone will free me from this pain' or 'I long to die and be finished with life in this world'
- A new-found appreciation of your mortality
- Experiencing, or have experienced, ego death

As can be seen, panic and anxiety 'disorders' are really none other than the manifested symptoms of the 'forced' accelerated evolution of Consciousness in these times. Anyone who has gone through a 'dark night' experience will recognize the symptomology associated with what psychiatry terms panic and anxiety disorder (and visa-versa). And while the rigid bounds of the arena of psychiatry deems this symptomology a mental 'disorder', a more open and curious approach reveals the true nature and origin of panic and anxiety disorders to be directly related to the accelerated evolution of Consciousness.

Interestingly, the diagnosis of panic and anxiety 'disorders' and the appearance of psychotropic medications (pharmaceuticals) has been in parallel with the accelerated evolution of Consciousness over these last 200 years. But what psychiatrists have been misdiagnosing and terming 'anxiety and panic disorders' are not mental disorders. They are the tension and angst of mental and emotional contractions created by the intelligent movement of Consciousness expanding and evolving, which needs to be relaxed. Staying in a heightened state of tension for too long can actually have a negative effect and cause a new 'groove' to be laid into the human mental/emotional nervous system which then becomes part of the new cellular memory of that organism. The evolution of Consciousness is about the releasing of these contractions – not in creating new ones. The impulse of Consciousness is always towards homeostasis, equanimity and balance. This is where the limited use of pharmaceuticals have their value.

## **The Role of Pharmaceuticals**

Humans did not 'invent' pharmaceuticals. Everything that man claims to have invented or 'created' was already here. We are merely shuffling around the ingredients. Inherent in what is already here, are the ingredients to assist with tempering and softening the rough edges that we encounter as evolution pushes the human nervous system to its limits. How amazing is that? And what does this tell us? It tells us two things.

Firstly, inherent in our environment are the ingredients that may help to make the accelerated evolution of Consciousness keep pace with its intention and trajectory (only Consciousness knows what its intention and trajectory is). But the way these symptoms are being misinterpreted and misdiagnosed, as if there is something 'wrong' or that they are the result of a 'disease' or a 'disorder' needs to be revisited. There is a role for pharmaceuticals, but it is not through the current paradigm of modern psychiatry. Psychotropic medications can be helpful on an 'as needed' basis for limited periods of time.

These limited periods of time are dictated by each individual's ability to be with, and meet, the challenge of their body/mind and nervous system expanding to meet the needs of evolution.

When used exclusively on an 'as needed' basis only during an overwhelming experience, pharmaceuticals can allow the body/mind/nervous system to relax intermittently and 'catch-up' with this opening and expansion without being overwhelmed or unnecessarily traumatized. 'Unnecessary' traumatization should always be avoided and this is truly the sole purpose of pharmaceuticals. Unfortunately, the practice of prescribing 30 day supply's of 'addictive' psychotropic drugs and then refilling them automatically because of a presumed disease or disorder is creating a whole new set of problems.

The misdiagnosing and over-medicating of a misunderstood phenomena has proved to be counter-productive, and is creating a drug-dependent society. In fact, drug abuse and addictions to substances (both legal and illegal) are just another kind of innocently misguided response to those experiencing these symptoms, and the conclusion that they are 'disorders' and 'diseases' hopelessly labels the person they are placed upon.

Second, there needs to be those who have already experienced this evolution of Consciousness to step forward and assist those who are being challenged by this phenomena and guide them and inform them with a new language that will bring us in alignment with the movement of an evolving Consciousness. There needs to be a new context in which the above symptoms of panic and anxiety disorder and dark night of the soul are understood and spoken about. It needs to be languaged for these times.

I remember as a child of about 10 years of age, waking up one morning and my knees hurt me so much I could hardly walk. My knees were swollen and painful to the touch. My father took me to the doctor and the doctor declared that it was all very normal – I was having a growth spurt and I was simply in the process of "growing into my new knees". THIS is the context in which we need to look at the pandemic of panic and anxiety disorder in relation to the accelerated evolution of Consciousness. The 'growing pains' of an evolving and expanding Consciousness is not a disease or disorder.

## **The Role of Plant Medicines**

The voluntary exploration and use of natural plant medicines (entheogens) such as ayahuasca, peyote, mushrooms, etc, is another indication that Consciousness is accelerating its evolution. The 'voluntary' use of these entheogens have been on the rise and is curious from the standpoint that they can give one symptoms similar to panic and anxiety attacks and dark night experiences. Yet people are 'voluntarily' (perhaps unwittingly) willing to risk very negative experiences (repressed memories, reliving traumas, ego death, etc) in order to experience higher levels of Consciousness. This is an indication that Consciousness will use all means available to help bridge the great expanse of such an enormous leap in Consciousness.

These 'non-addictive' plant medicines may act as a way to intermittently immerse oneself in uncomfortable mental and emotional experiences by mimicking the symptoms of the arduous journey of an evolving Consciousness. This acts as a kind of spiritual 'muscle building' and 'Consciousness expanding' practice. A training ground for the inevitable.

## **SUMMARY**

'Panic and anxiety' symptoms and 'Dark night of the soul' symptoms are not diseases or disorders. They are none other than the accelerated evolution of Consciousness expanding and challenging our body/mind/nervous system to evolve. This is an evolution where the emphasis is no longer on individuality, but on realizing our True nature as Consciousness itSelf; as the single Source and common denominator of all existence...

*The Consciousness written about here is not the personal consciousness of 'thoughts' in the human brain. It is the all-pervading and infinite Consciousness which seamlessly pervades personal consciousness itself, as well as ALL phenomena. The context in which this all-pervading Consciousness is meant in this writing can be summed up as follows:*

*"Our eyes are the mechanism with which a tree can see itself and know of its existence".*

*~ Adyashanti*