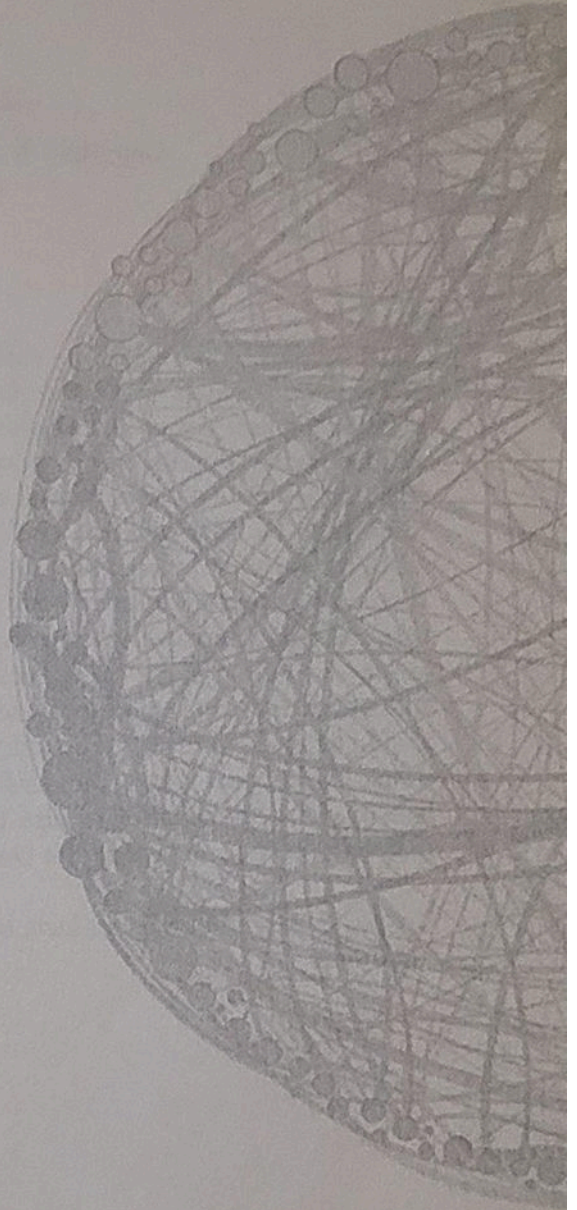


How to **CHANGE** Your Mind

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his curiosity about a dimension of his own experience—why did he feel compelled to drink coffee every day?—and turn it into a productive line of scientific inquiry. But he could see no way to do that with his deepening curiosity about the dimensions of consciousness that meditation had opened up to him. “It never occurred to me there was any way to study it scientifically.” Stymied and bored, Griffiths began to entertain thoughts of quitting science and going off to an ashram in India.

It was around this time that Bob Schuster, an old friend and colleague who had recently retired as head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, phoned Griffiths to suggest he talk to a young man he had recently met at Esalen named Bob Jesse. Jesse had organized a small gathering of researchers, therapists, and religious scholars at the legendary Big Sur retreat center to discuss the spiritual and therapeutic potential of psychedelic drugs and how they might be rehabilitated. Jesse himself was neither a medical professional nor a scientist; he was a computer engineer, a vice president of business development at Oracle, who had made it his mission to revive the science of psychedelics—but as a tool not so much of medicine as of spiritual development.

Griffiths had told Schuster a little about his spiritual practice and confided in him his growing discontent with conventional drug research.

“You should talk to this guy,” Schuster told him. “They have some interesting ideas about working with entheogens,” he said. “You might have something in common.”



WHEN THE HISTORY of second-wave psychedelic research is written, Bob Jesse will be seen as one of a pair of scientific outsiders in America—amateurs, really, and brilliant eccentrics—who worked