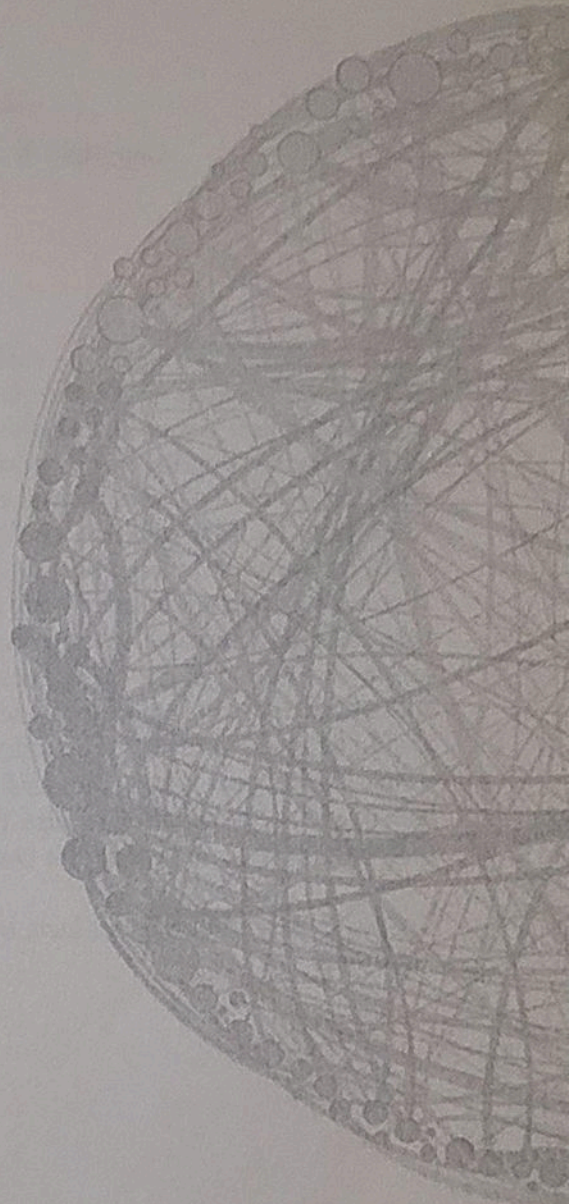


# How to **CHANGE** Your Mind

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serious psychedelic science. (Heffter has since helped fund many of the modern trials of psilocybin.) So there were scattered hopeful signs in the early 1990s that conditions were ripening for a revival of psychedelic research. The tiny community that had sustained such a dream through the dark ages began, tentatively, quietly, to organize.

Even though Jesse was new to this community, and neither a scientist nor a therapist, he asked if he could attend the Esalen meeting and offered to make himself useful, refilling water glasses if that's what it took. Most of the gathering was taken up with discussions of the potential medical applications of psychedelics, as well as the need for basic research on the neuroscience. Jesse was struck by the fact that so little attention was paid to the spiritual potential of these compounds. He left the meeting convinced that "okay, there is room to maneuver here. I was hoping one of these people would pick up the ball and run with it, but they were busy with the other ball. So I made a decision to seek a leave of absence from Oracle." Within a year, Jesse would launch the Council on Spiritual Practices, and within two the council would convene its own meeting at Esalen, in January 1996, with the aim of opening a second front in the campaign to resurrect psychedelics.

Fittingly, the gathering took place in the Maslow Room at Esalen, named for the psychologist whose writings on the hierarchy of human needs underscored the importance of "peak experiences" in self-actualization. Most of the fifteen in attendance were "psychedelic elders," therapists and researchers like James Fadiman and Willis Harman, Mark Kleiman, then a drug-policy expert at the Kennedy School (and Rick Doblin's thesis tutor there), and religious figures like Huston Smith, Brother David Steindl-Rast, and Jeffrey Bronfman, the head of the UDV church in America (and heir to the Seagram's liquor fortune). But Jesse wisely decided to invite an outsider as well: Charles "Bob" Schuster, who had served both Ronald Reagan