

Tim leary



Timothy Leary, also known as Uncle Tim', 'The messiah of LSD', and 'The most dangerous man in America', was born on October 22, 1920, in Springfield, Massachusetts. He went to a public high school where he discovered girls and the ability to attract attention from those in authority. After high school he attended Jesuit College Holy Cross, but Tim wasn't satisfied with Holy Cross, so he took a test to get into West Point. He got very high marks and was accepted. Timothy was very enthused and proud to be at West Point. However, his enthusiasm faded when he realized that he was being trained not to think, but to follow. One day, on a return trip from a football game, Timothy was invited to drink with a few of the upper classmen who brought some bottles of whiskey. The illicit event was unfortunately discovered the next day, and the Cadet Honor Committee punished Tim by inflicting a kind of solitary confinement: everyone was forbidden to speak a word to him. A date was set for a court-martial. Timothy was acquitted in less than two minutes, which caused the disgruntled and unsatisfied Committee to maintain the silence punishment. Leary had to endure nine months of being ignored. When he became a sophomore, some of the cadet officers whom were not on the Honor Committee approached Tim to talk about the situation. They informed him that the whole business was causing morale problems. They wanted to make a deal for Tim's departure. He said that he would leave Westpoint if the honor committee would read a statement in the mess hall proclaiming his innocence. They returned two days later with an approval. Tim went back home and applied to more colleges. He was accepted to the University of Alabama where he became a psychology major. Shortly after, Tim was expelled for sleeping over at the girls' dormitory. He was an A student. When he was kicked out of college he was

sent to basic training in artillery at Fort Eustis Virginia. The army needed psychologists, and since Tim had already started the major they let him finish his degree in the service. He was going to be stationed on an infantry boat in the south pacific. Luckily, his old friend from the University of Alabama was now the chief psychologist at the army hospital in Pennsylvania. He managed to get Tim a transfer to his hospital.

In 1944, while training as a clinical psychologist in Pennsylvania, he met Marianne. They married, moved to Berkeley, and had two children Susan and Jack. There he earned a doctorate in psychology from the University of California Berkeley, and over the next few years conducted important research in psychotherapy. By the mid-50s he was teaching at Berkeley and had been appointed Director of Psychological Research at the Kaiser Foundation. His book " The Interpersonal Diagnosis of Personality" was enjoying much success. With extensive study, his team discovered that one third of the patients who received psychotherapy got better, one third got worse and one third stayed the same, meaning psychotherapy wasn't really working.

His personal life, unfortunately, took a turn for the worse. Marianne suffered from post partum depression after she had Susan and both her and Tim started to drink and fight regularly. On Tim's 35th birthday he awoke to find Marianne in a closed garage with the car running. She was already dead. Incredibly depressed and feeling that he was " practicing a profession that didn't seem to work," Tim quit his post at Berkeley and moved to Europe where he was living on a small research grant. In Europe Tim's old Berkeley

colleague Frank Barron visited. He told of his trip to Mexico where he ate sacred mushrooms and had a religious experience. Barron thought that these mushrooms might be the link to the psychological metamorphosis that they had been looking for. Tim was unimpressed at first and ironically warned Barron about losing his scientific credibility.

Shortly after, David McClelland, the director of the Harvard Center for Personality Research, was in Florence and interviewed Tim for a teaching post. During the interview Tim explained his theory on existential transaction, informing that the whole relationship between patient/therapist should be changed to a more egalitarian information exchange. McClelland was impressed saying that " There is no question that what your advocating is going to be the future of American psychology. You're spelling out front-line tactics. You're exactly what we need to shake things up at Harvard."

In the spring of 1960 Tim started teaching at Harvard. That summer he went on vacation to Cuernavaca Mexico. An anthropologist from the University of Mexico, who was a frequent visitor to the villa where Tim was staying, offered some of the religious mushrooms. Remembering Barron's stories, he tried them hoping they could be the key to psychological transformation. They had that effect. " I gave way to delight, as mystics have for centuries when they peeked through the curtains and discovered that this world-so manifestly real-was actually a tiny stage set constructed by the mind. We discover abruptly that everything we accept as reality is just social fabrication." He was so amazed by the experience that he persuaded Harvard to allow him to conduct research with psilocybin. Along with Barron, Tim conducted the first studies with grad students at Harvard. The test expanded into Concord state prison where Tim and some grad students were

allowed to administer psilocybin to selected prisoners. They formed support groups for the inmates when they got out and had a 90% success rate at helping these people stay out of prison. His experiments also included a group of divinity students on Good Friday. The aim was to see if chemical mind alteration could produce a more mystical experience. The results were clear. The students who took the drug experienced what they saw as true spiritual experiences, while the ones who took nothing did not. The results seemed terrific but Tim never got the response that was appropriate. The thought of people being able to directly communicate with God was very unappealing to the religious institutions of the country.

Also at Harvard Tim met Aldus Huxley and Allen Ginsburg where they started turning on notable intellectuals such as William Burroughs, Thelonious Monk and Jack Kerouac. Huxley suggested that the drugs should only be used by artists and the elite. Tim believed psychedelics should be shared with everyone and thought that the non-elite would benefit most from its use. Barron went back to Berkeley and Tim started working closer with an assistant professor named Richard Alpert. Then, a British philosophy student named Michael Hollingshead called Tim with revelations about LSD and showed up at Harvard with a mayonnaise jar of powdered sugar laced with it. This was an incredibly powerful hallucinogen discovered by Swiss Scientist Dr. Albert Hoffman in the 1940's. When Tim took LSD he said it " was something different. It was the most shattering experience of my life." Many of the other professors became uneasy with Tim administering drugs to students. So McClelland called a staff meeting early in 1962. It turned into

a scalding indictment of Tim's work and they insisted that the drugs be given back to the University's control and that there be more supervision of his research. More controversy erupted when the Narcotics Bureau got involved and Tim learned that the CIA was aware of their activities. Moreover, many of the undergraduates who couldn't get into the research program obtained the drugs through other means and started their own experiments. Many of the parents were becoming alarmed finding out that their children, who they had enrolled in school to become the power elite, were seeing God and going to India. This put pressure on the College and in 1963 Tim and Alpert were "relieved" from their positions at Harvard. Leary and Alpert didn't think much of their dismissal and in the spring of 1962, Leary and Alpert continued their research of psychedelics in a mansion not far from New York known as Millbrook. Baroque on the outside and Middle Eastern on the inside, this was a place for the hip and elite to get away for the weekend and test the boundaries of their own souls.

In 1964 Tim was married again for a short time and while he was away from Millbrook some changes occurred. Tim thought Alpert let the place get out of hand and they had a split in their relationships. Alpert changed his name to Baba Ram Dass and became a respected teacher of Eastern Disciplines. Needing to get away from the hectic pace of Millbrook, Tim took his two children and soon to be wife, Rosemary Woodruff, to vacation in Mexico. He was denied entrance to the country and as he came back marijuana was found on his 18-year-old daughter. Tim immediately took the blame, which the police were all too happy to accept. He was sentenced to 30 years and his daughter to five years for having ten dollars worth of marijuana. With the Texas conviction Tim's popularity increased. The government however,

started becoming more militant in its anti-drug policies; Richard Nixon called Tim the " most dangerous man in America". Fruitless raids and constant harassment by G. Gordon Liddy ended the Millbrook era.

With the cultural changes going on at the time, the government was becoming alarmed at the way the youth started to use LSD. The press was full of stories of young people having horrible experiences. Tim became discouraged with how the press focused on LSD but paid no mention to all the alcohol induced problems, which were far more severe. He started giving lectures, interviews and writing magazine articles that outlined the need for guidance and knowledge. America needed a responsible drug policy that should include education not criminalization. Few of these made the press however. What they needed was good press and positive association with LSD. A friend suggested that Tim meet with Marshall McLuhan to get ideas on how to win public support. Marshall said that " Dreary Senate hearings and courtrooms are not the platforms for your message. You must use the most current tactics for arousing consumer interest. Associate LSD with all the good things that the brain can produce-beauty, fun, philosophic wonder, religious revelation, increased intelligence and mystical romance. " Tim noted that the opposition had already beat them to the punch by stressing the negative which can be dangerous when the mind is re-imprinting under LSD. McLuhen reiterated, that is precisely why you need to use your public image. He encouraged Tim to smile when photographed, never appear angry and radiate courage. It was after this that he came up with the expression " Turn On" (activate your neural and genetic equipment) " Tune In" (interact harmoniously with the world around you) and " Drop Out" (suggesting an active, selective and graceful process of detachment from involuntary or

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unconscious commitments.) Unfortunately, the press took it to mean " get stoned and abandon all constructive activity". Tim and Rosemary moved to Laguna Beach, and attended the Human Be-In and became active with the war effort. He gave lectures and interviews. He recorded albums with Jimi Hendrix, Stephen Stills and Buddy Miles. He sang Give Peace a Chance with John and Yoko. He decided to run for governor of California and " Come Together" was written for it. Tim was fortunate when the Supreme Court overturned the Texas drug case. However, he was not so lucky with the California authorities. He pulled over by police and arrested for possession of two roaches. When Jack and Rosemary were searched they found some hash and acid tabs. He pled no contest to the roaches so they would be lighter on Jack and Rosemary. They would then fight the charges in the higher courts. Being tried in the most conservative county in California and home to Richard Nixon, Tim received 10 years and was sent to jail immediately for an offense that normally warranted six months probation. In an unheard of move, they sent him to jail while the appeal was being sought which could have taken two years. After answering a prison psychological test that was largely based on his research, Tim was sent to a minimum-security prison in San Luis Obispo. There he made an incredible escape dodging searchlights and shimmying on a cable over barbwire to freedom. Shortly after, he surfaced in Algiers where he had been offered Asylum with Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver's government in exile. Cleaver however viewed Tim as a security risk and responded by putting Tim and Rosemary under house arrest. They then fled to Switzerland where Tim tried to get sanctuary. In the process he met the man who discovered LSD, Dr. Albert Hoffman. At their meeting Tim asked Hoffman about the dangers of LSD. " Without hesitation



Hoffman replied that there was no evidence whatsoever that LSD damaged the brain."

Ultimately, the Nixon administration had filed extradition papers and the Swiss government refused to continue protecting him so he fled to Afghanistan where he was arrested at the airport and handed over to the DEA.

Starting in 1972, Tim spent time in several different prisons and was finally released in 1976. He parted with his girlfriend Joanna, who had been helping him while he was in prison, shortly after his release. Tim found himself at a strange point in life. " Once again my situation was precariously fluid. Fifty-six years old with no home, no job, no credit and little credibility. I felt quite alone. It was a great time to start a new career." He subsequently moved to Los Angeles and started socializing within Hollywood circles. He felt that Hollywood was a natural evolution for him. After all, moviemaking is altering perception.

In 1978 he married Barbara Chase who had a young son Zach. This was a perfect time for Tim to have the type of relationship with a child that he never got to have with his first two children. During the eighties, Tim went on college lecture tours and foretold of the future that computers would bring to the world. He started his own software company called Futique and helped design programs that would digitize thought-images. He believed the Internet was going to be like the LSD of the 90's empowering people on a mass level. Tim realized that computer driven electronic environments were the obvious descendants of the psychedelic movement. With the rise of affordable technologies Tim began reshaping his entire line of work. His lectures became multi-media extravaganzas with live video and music. His

books became graphic novels that were the products of desktop publishing and most profoundly his interests became focused towards the rise of the World Wide Web. Tim realized that this was what he was waiting for, a place where you can create and interact with your own worlds.

Soon, Tim devoted his entire efforts to making his web site, <http://leary.com>, his home for his archives, ideas and his fans. After he learned he had inoperable prostate cancer in January of 1995, he embraced the dying experience as one of the greatest journeys of all time. He refused to become morbid and depressed over his situation. He was often entertaining guests and could often be seen at a number of events in the city in his formula one wheel chair. A home in cyberspace that can live on forever was one of Tim's last wishes.

Timothy Leary was many things to many people, and he resisted most attempts to categorize himself. He often said at these times, " you get the Timothy Leary that you deserve." Overall it is accurate to call him a philosopher and a scientist, whose underlying motivations were human communication and understanding the mind.