



Riding the waves, both high and low

It was a wild ride, those high school and college years! Many lessons were learned about relationships and related to that the use of mind altering drugs. Alcohol, tobacco, soft drugs and hard drugs brought me into a wide range of experiences.

Influenced by my environment, I started early trying out those substances. My parents smoked cigarettes, so I copied them and smoked from a very early age. In the 80's many magazines in our bookstore displayed pictures of brave and attractive cowboys galloping on their horses and smoking or sexy confident women looking up into the sky with a long cigarette in their hand. Of course who would not like to relate to those pictures! It is part of growing up I concluded, so why not start early? Next to our cash register was a display with a nice collection of cigarettes, a reminder while buying your daily newspaper and magazines, not to forget your pack of cigarettes on the way out.

Many of my friends experimented with marijuana, speed, LSD, Cocaine, Ecstasy and hallucinogenic mushrooms. I tried it out for myself and participated in some of my peer's drug related activities.

There was no official drinking age as we have here at age 21 in the USA. Going out to the pubs and parties from age 14 on, gave me easy access to ordering my own alcoholic drinks. This resulted many times in getting intoxicated as intended.

Going out I certainly did, and a lot of it! My parents allowed me, their first born, to explore my freedom. It also helped that my mom was too busy at the store and didn't have time tracking all my adventures. My dad was either helping my mom at the store or doing household tasks at home. His impaired eye sight created for him a different reality in itself.

He was the one I communicated with the most. He had a way of listening and was patient enough to deal with my emotional discomforts. My mom didn't have that same focus. My dad did a great job setting firm boundaries for me when needed. I was able to ask them for what I wanted and they supported me most of the time according to what they felt was reasonable. I didn't have to rebel too much to gain my freedom.

But still, I sometimes needed to create some extra adventures and once in a while sneaked out of the home late at night or did something I was told I couldn't do. I

think that is part of a teenager's quest for freedom and adventure in our culture. The teen part in me had a little rebellious streak that was testing it's boundaries.

It appeared to me that many of my friends had much more fun using drugs than I did. I wasn't conscious about it at the time but now I realize that there were some personal reasons why I wasn't responding the same way as most of my friends did. A part of me always wanted to stay on guard and stay consciously aware of everything that was going on around in my surroundings. I didn't want my mind to be totally altered and let go of it's control. I didn't feel the inner freedom to do so. Because of that, using those substances didn't give me as much pleasure, relief or fun as I saw my friends experiencing. Some of those fearful early experiences in my life had influenced me to a point I didn't feel safe. Whether I wanted it or not this kept me on alert 24/7. Using drugs to completely let go of the grip of my mind didn't fit that safety requirement.

For me, the use of drugs brought more stress into my life and relationships than allowing me to relax or tap into mind altering states of consciousness that I knew we as human beings are capable of experiencing.

It did happen once while using LSD. The physical wall structures became fluid and very colorful, the wall moved and started looking like a beautiful waterfall of ever changing colors. Those colors were flowing into the room. A fascinating and amusing spectacle! An experience beyond what I was used to perceive with my normal five

senses.

A second time I was able to completely let go of the control and the limitations of my mind was when using Ecstasy in a dance club. I felt so open and expressive. I danced all by myself, in my own space, on one of the many higher stages present there. I had a total blast! I was feeling total joy and complete freedom and was expressing that through my dance. For the first time I did not care if anyone was watching or what they thought about me. Then someone walked up into my space and wanted to dance with me and this broke my bubble of joy. I wasn't able to include this person in my dance. It frustrated me and I walked out of the club being mad. I noticed how those drugs magnified the emotions I was feeling. A dangerous substance I thought while I could feel how it switched my mood completely from one second to the next.

Instead of creating long lasting bonding experiences and a feeling of oneness with myself and others, for me, the use of those substances created more separation and fear. I instinctively became aware that most likely I was damaging my psyche and consciousness.

I was a super-sensitive person living in a dysfunctional society. A society that doesn't value and promote love and harmony as a priority. The most dominant focus is on tension, conflict and fear. The belief in separation overrides the truth of the oneness of all life.

I also understood the reason why it is so easy to take refuge in alcohol, drugs, medication and other addictive behaviors such as sex, gambling, shopping, TV, our cell phones and computers. They can easily become a heavy and unshakable prison of the mind.

Those habits could give me a temporary relief from the inner tension, pain, fears, stress and demanding expectations of society but those didn't go away, they were just temporarily pushed aside. A vicious circle that is not easy to break without addressing the deeper causes.

I am becoming more and more aware that many of those uncomfortable feelings are not personal but have deeper roots in the past and history of humanity. They are rooted in our collective consciousness we are all part of. Mistakenly I often think I am the only one experiencing those feelings and then blame myself, which is not supportive at all.

As a teenager I saw many older adults sitting in the bars day in and day out drinking their pain and loneliness away. I saw many peoples lives being destroyed or entrapped by those substances and I made a decision right then that this is not how I wanted to spend and end my life. This is not the example I wanted to give my future kids.

I was very much aware of the suffering and the limitations we as humans can experience. My dad and other disabled family members were very limited in so many ways physically and also emotionally because of that. I saw

many examples of limitations around me.

All of this intrigued me! My grandfather was the first one I noticed expressing this same eagerness to live and look for answers inside of himself and outside the box of society. It inspired me to do the same.

I became interested in alternative healing, natural healing methods and ways to connect with the great mystery of life.

There was so much more! I knew It! I had tasted it! I wanted to move beyond what I was told was probable, which is connected to the past. I was interested in my limitless possibilities, and in learning to look towards a future of infinite possibilities. But where could I find these?

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(Sharing permitted with my name and email included)
(With a simple email let me know if you like
to be added or removed from this list).

Mieke's Voice - Part 1

Week 1 - Introduction part 1
Week 2 - A Rough Start
Week 3 - Vision
Week 4 - History Lesson
Week 5 - Bookstore Caecilia

Week 6 - Invisible Hand

Week 7 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 1 - My parents Anny & Hugo

Week 8 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 2 - My brother Jeroen

Week 9 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 3 - My sister Kathleen

Week 10 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 4 - Something about myself, Mieke

Week 11 - Encounters with extraterrestrials

Week 12 - The Movie E.T. - The Extra -Terrestrial

Week 13 - What happens after the body dies?

Mieke's Voice - Part 2

Week 14 - Introduction part 2

Week 15 - Expressing my authentic nature

Week 16 - Sexuality - part 1 - Unity

Week 17 - Sexuality - part 2 - Separation

Week 18 - Mieke's Voice - Part 1

Week 18 - Sexuality - part 3 - Menstruation

Week 19 - Intimate Relationships

Week 20 - America - part 1 - Newspaper Article

Week 21 - America - part 2 - Stepping into a movie

Week 22 - Another taste of freedom as a college student

Week 23 - Riding the waves, both high and low