

Psychedelics pioneer Roland Griffiths learns how to die

As the founding director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Psychedelic and Consciousness Research, Dr. Roland Griffiths has been a pioneer in investigating the ways in which psychedelics can help treat depression, addiction and, in patients with a life-threatening cancer diagnosis, psychological distress. He has also looked at how the use of psychedelics can produce transformative and long-lasting feelings of human interconnectedness and unity. One could surely classify his achievements using various medical and scientific terms, but I'll just put it like this: Griffiths has expanded the knowledge of how we might better learn to live.

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Now he is learning to die. Griffiths, who is 76, has been diagnosed with Stage 4 metastatic colon cancer. It's a diagnosis, in all likelihood terminal, that for him has brought forth transcendently positive feelings about existence and what he calls the great mystery of consciousness. "We all know that we're terminal," says Griffiths, who since being diagnosed has established an endowment at Johns Hopkins to study psychedelics and their potential for increasing human flourishing. "So I believe that in principle we shouldn't need this Stage 4 cancer diagnosis to awaken. I'm excited to communicate, to shake the bars and tell people, 'Come on, let's wake up!' "

[**This is an excerpt. Read the full article here**](#)