I have come to a point in my life where I smoke Salvia most days. I enjoy breakthrough experiences often, but I also burn it as incense when not interested in taking the plunge into the void.

Back in 2005 I gained the diagnosis of New Daily Persistent Headaches. Simply put, I have a constant headache that varies from a light thrumming to a full blown migraine. Over the years I have seen too many doctors and neurologists. I have tried a number of different pain killers, anti-depressants, marijuana, acid, meditation, hypnosis, acupuncture, relaxation therapy, sex, positive thinking, reflexology, naturopathy, and more to manage the chronic pain. It was only in 2013 I tried Salvia and discovered its potential for pain management.

Salvia brought me to a unique place that no other medication ever had. As such was the case, and given my extensive history with neurology, and my particular knowledge field as a student of chemical engineering, I decided to start a study of Salvia. I began microdosing with 50x Salvia in order to analyze the experience I had coming up to the breakthrough point. My first Salvia journal notes from Nov 13, 2013 are as follows:

$69.99 Sal 50 Salvia 500fx (for incense use only) Levels: (1) Slight high, maybe some visuals, maybe some gravity, feelings on skin, slight sweat, cold feeling, fuzzy feeling (2) Prickly feeling, feel sounds, talking difficulty (3) Feel people walking in room, tactile resonance, high light sensitivity, full body vibration (4) Body inflating & deflating with heartbeat; out of body + zero gravity; fear & anxiety (controlled this time); body twisting effect; both comfortable and uncomfortable alternating

Beyond level 4 would be the out of body full blown visual and tactile experience. My dosing chart from that time is written according to # of tweezer heads of 50x Salvia, however my further experience with Salvia has led me to believe that the magnitude of the dose is less significant than the set and setting. I can reach breakthrough experience on very small doses and a single gram of Salvia can easily last a month of daily use. I can also confirm witnessing others experiencing breakthrough experiences on a single tweezer head of only 10x Salvia.

The important factors relating to the nature of a Salvia experience are as follows: Lighting, Music, Relaxation, and Open Mind.

Lighting should be as low as possible. For lighting, the closer to complete darkness, the more relaxing of a breakthrough experience. My personal preference is either by moon and starlight, or in a closed off room with no light, or in a dark room with only my computer screen illuminating the room. The nature of Salvia induced visions is highly related in my experience to the lightning
present during the few minutes of the trip. For example, on April 19th, 2015 I tripped Salvia at an outdoor rave mid-afternoon. I saw a large disconnect in my mind between the ground and the sky. The upper right half of my sight was dominated by the power of the sun, whereas the ravers controlled the ground below and to the left. Contrarily, being at home in total darkness, my visions often enter a void which is then filled with thoughts and memories. My favourite however, would be taking Salvia while in the Eye of the Storm (WoW players might understand, lots of flashy purple lightning and activity going on) or flying a Mosquito (PlanetSide 2). In this more controlled setting, I have experienced hundreds of visions and flashbacks.

For music, it has to be loud. I acquired a pair of noise cancelling headphones and am certain that they definitely increase the likelihood and intensity of break through experiences. Given that Salvia is a very subjective experience largely based on set and setting, the choice of music will largely depend on the user. For anyone looking to explore Salvia, I would highly recommend getting your hands on some Bose technology (I currently use the Bose QuietComfort 25 headset). To explain I will provide examples from my journal; Dec 3rd, 2013 listening to Tchaikovsky’s 1812 Overture:

Took hit at 1 minute mark. Took 3 medium doses. Had a battle with letting ho. Left my body for a few minutes, didn’t go very far though. At highest intensity point I was scared to go further. The world gained the texture of hair curlers, but the form of folded cloth. Then as the music intensified the world exploded in on me, the terror began to rise and fall as I let go. At that moment I knew a cartoon elephant was blasting from the bottom right with a horn.

At 3:07 mark; Horns start, felt like fantasia, being overwhelmed by specters. Amazing and frightening at the same time. Less frightening than at 2:30 mark when scary hallucinations were breaking through. Later the world fractured up in a trigonal sort of way. Soon after reality resumed in time for the cannons. Lowered the volume, came down, grabbed for my journal and started to record. After Salvia I feel more in touch with my thoughts. Letting go is very hard. Will have to experiment with more music variety. Maybe get blinders. Reconnecting with my brain is the objective of all this. A large factor seems to be the out of body experience.

Another example, Dec 5th, 2013 listening to No Woman No Cry, Bob Marley:

On the Shores of Oblivion. Waves of hallucinations calmly going in and out. Not terribly exciting (although hallucinations tend to get scary when exciting). Super calming sensation. Amazing high, I think I am close to my discovery of the perfect salvia ritual. I was rising in the direction my eyes was pointing. Eyes were closed. If my eyes moved I fell back to the ground.

For a more intense experience, dubstep, metal, Tchaikovsky. For a more relaxing experience, reggae, country, Styx.

Relaxation is key. I am a fan of breathing exercises, auto-hypnosis, and meditation. I find it crucial to relax both in body and mind before taking a hit of Salvia. I also like to burn some Salvia as incense and smudge salvia for 5 minutes before smoking Salvia. I see this as similar to a pre-drink before a big party. Lastly there is what I would call an open mind. Salvia is not for everyone, and not everyone will break through regardless of dosage.
Following the intense out of body experience, I am removed of all prior stress and pain. The way Salvia grips my mind is like hitting a reset button. Most pain killers sought to alleviate the feeling of chronic pain. Many other pills were designed to lower intensity and consistency of headaches and migraines. Salvia however completely removed me from the experience of pain. I also find it much more affordable and pleasurable than popping painkillers constantly. The ancient shaman used Salvia for its healing properties. I believe that the brief and intense experience of smoking Salvia does two main things. One: it constricts the sense of vision that so normally dominates the human experience. Two: it disconnects the tactile sense, a feeling so foreign to the human experience, that the only parallel I could draw would be free-falling.

These two things allow for fulfilling meditation and relaxation before the breakthrough point. Beyond the breakthrough point is an entire dimension of experiences so unique that you would have to go there to really understand. Personally, I find Salvia to be one the best things I have ever found in life. It took me from a world of constant pain to one of spiritual exploration. I have approached a number of neurologists and psychiatrists with regards to Salvia’s potential as a healing medicine especially in regards to anxiety, trauma, and chronic pain, but none were interested. As such I venture to the internet in hopes that my experience can possible help those in need.

In summary, a few things: (1) I use a lot of Salvia. (2) Salvia does wonders for my chronic pain. (3) I have personally studied Salvia from a scientific point of view. (4) Lighting, Music, Relaxation, and Open Mind. (5) Salvia can act as a reset for the mind, bringing users to a calm space removed of all prior stress and pain. Salvia is not for everyone. That being said, I think that it is worth a try if done properly, as the potential benefits are great especially for those with chronic illness as a natural alternative to pills. I smoke Salvia most days, and do not intend to stop.