*What’s a hippie?* What’s the difference between an old hippie and a new hippie? Once a hippie, always a hippie? These and similar questions are the source of much debate today. New subcategories like web-hippies, cyber-hippies, even zippies have become fashionable. But what is a hippie and are you one?
To answer this question, let’s see what defines a hippie. Some say it’s the way people dress, and behave, a lifestyle. Others classify drug users and rock 'n' roll fans or those with certain radical political views as hippies. The dictionary defines a hippie as one who doesn’t conform to society’s standards and advocates a liberal attitude and lifestyle. Can all these definitions be right?

It seems to me that these definitions miss the point. By focusing on the most visible behavioral traits these limited descriptions fail to reveal what lies in the hippie heart that motivates such behavior. To understand The Way of the Hippy, we must look at those circumstances that preceded the birth of the hippy movement, the important events that changed our lives, our resulting frustration with society, and the philosophy that developed from our spiritual maturation.

Being a hippie is a matter of accepting a universal belief system that transcends the social, political, and moral norms of any established structure, be it a class, church, or government. Each of these powerful institutions has it’s own agenda for controlling, even enslaving people. Each has to defend itself when threatened by real or imagined enemies. So we see though history a parade of endless conflicts with country vs. country, religion vs. religion, class vs. class. After millennia of war and strife, in which uncounted millions have suffered, we have yet to rise above our petty differences.

The way of the hippie is antithetical to all repressive hierarchical power structures since these are adverse to the hippie goals of peace, love and freedom. This is why the “Establishment” feared and suppressed the hippie movement of the ’60s, as it was a revolution against the established order. It is also the reason why the hippies were unable to unite and overthrow the system since they refused to build their own power base. Hippies don’t impose their beliefs on others. Instead, hippies seek to change the world through reason and by living what they believe.

To be a hippie you must believe in peace as the way to resolve differences among peoples, ideologies and religions. The way to peace is through love and tolerance. Loving means accepting others as they are, giving them freedom to express themselves and not judging them based on appearances. This is the core of the hippie philosophy.

The hippy movement erected signposts for all to see. Some warn us of impending danger, others direct us towards richer, more fulfilling lives, but most show us the road to freedom. Freedom is the paramount virtue in this system. Freedom to do as one pleases, go where the flow takes you, and to be open to new experiences. This engenders an attitude that allows for maximum personal growth.

**If you want to be free, be free, because there’s a million things to be.**
Cat Stevens (If You Want to Sing Out)

Our society only permits you one or two weeks a year of freedom to pursue your own agenda. The rest of the time we are slaves to the system. Hippies reject the 9 to 5 lifestyle and therefore are objects of ridicule by those whose lives run by the clock. Programmed people are jealous and resent the freedom we possess. The unmitigated freedom that hippies represent is the greatest threat to any system in which control equals power.

With all this freedom comes a lot of responsibility. The system does not make it easy for us to survive without sacrificing our values. Therefore we must discover alternative ways to make a living without being a drag on our planet’s resources and our fellow humans. Hippies have pioneered numerous lifestyles and alternative businesses including communes, cooperatives, holistic medicine and health food. We focused everyone’s concern on the environment to highlight our responsibilities to our planet and to future generations.

Other beliefs that spring from our core philosophy are: an earthy spirituality such as a belief in Gaia (the earth as an organism), the Greens movement (political activism), even shamanism and vegetarianism. These philosophical and political views reflect a respect for nature and the planet as a whole, something lacking in our capitalistic and materialistic societies. The world needs hippies to point out alternatives to the entrenched system and warn of the impending disasters that await us if we don’t change our lifestyles. The goal is not to make everyone a hippie (what would we have to protest?). Rather we can try to influence others by example, through tolerance and love and teaching the virtues of the hippie way.

In the 1960s the hippies, en masse, undertook the largest uncontrolled experiment with drug use in the history of mankind. In those days it wasn't unusual to be handed a pill, and swallow it with the only instruction "You'll dig it, it's groovy." You trusted your fellow hippy and you wanted to get high and have a new experience. This was freedom. This was rebellion. This was cool. We discovered that Pandora's stash box was full of drugs!

**Purple Haze all in my brain, lately things don't seem the same.**
**Actin' funny but I don't know why. 'Scuse me while I kiss the sky.**
Jimi Hendrix (Purple Haze)

From laboratories in pharmaceutical companies, on college campus and bathrooms around the country came a plethora of new drugs with names like LSD 25, DMT, purple haze, MDMA, orange sunshine, synthetic mescaline, psilocybin, STP and many more. The purity and action of these drugs got more dubious as time went on, as unscrupulous dealers sought to capitalize on the drug craze. Along with methamphetamine, cocaine, marijuana, even heroin, hippies tried whatever they could get their hands on.

**If you can remember the '60s, then you weren't there.**
Why did hippies use drugs so extensively without concern? Let's look at the history of drug use leading up to this situation. After World War II, the pharmaceutical industry exploded with research into new drugs. They produced drugs to prevent disease, to cure disease, to alleviate pain, to relieve upset stomachs, to keep you alert, to help you to sleep, to lessen worry, to reduce hyperactivity in children, to remove the symptoms of psychological disorders. Thanks to the industry's aggressive campaigns in the media and the doctor's office, every medicine cabinet filled up with drugs for every sort of ailment.

**One pill makes you larger, and one pill makes you small.**
**And the ones that mother gives you don't do anything at all.**
**Go ask Alice, when she's ten feet tall.**
Jefferson Airplane (White Rabbit)

**Not feeling right? - Take a Pill!**
Saturday Night Live

So in the early 60s, drugs were not seen as evil. Yes, heroin was that bad drug that junkies were addicted to. But all the rest were good and helped heal us, or at least made us feel better. It's taken a prolonged, decades long, anti-drug propaganda campaign to undo the pro-drug pharmaceutical company brainwash. Now kids are more confused than ever. Many eagerly spout the politically correct line "drugs are bad," while they wash down their Ritalin with caffeinated colas, then sneak a cigarette or a beer between classes.

**I get by with a little help from my friends,**
**get high with a little help from my friends.**
The Beatles (With a Little Help From My Friends)

So being a hippie is not a matter of dress, behavior, economic status, or social milieu. It is a philosophical approach to life that emphasizes freedom, peace, love and a respect for others and the earth. The way of the hippie never died. There have always been hippies from the first time society laid down rules, to Jesus, to Henry David Thoreau, to John Lennon. There’s a little hippy in all of us.

***Clothes.***

*Kip the wimp hippy, 16 years old:*

*i am a hippy my hair is long*

*i am a hippy i am never wrong*

*i am a hippy peace is my middle name*

*i am a hippy war is lame*

*i am a hippy covered in beads*

*i am a hippy but i don't smoke weeds*

***Fedotova Julie 11 “B”.***