

ABOUT THIS INTERVIEW:

John Lennon was selected as one of only three people to be featured and interviewed as Man Of The Decade. The interview was filmed by ATV on December 2nd as John and Yoko walked the grounds of their Tittenhurst estate in Ascot, Berkshire. The footage was broadcast in Britain on December 30th 1969.

The interview begins with John drawing an analogy between the effects of LSD and the events of the sixties.

- Jay Spangler, Beatles Ultimate Experience

JOHN: "You start off with, say, rock & roll in just the late fifties and sixties when all the kids including me were on James Dean and Elvis and early paranoican violence. And then that part of the trip... That's what happens on acid, folks! Then from there you start, I don't know, maturing or thinking about the trip. The first effects of the drug wear off, and you start coasting along a bit. And you have time to look at the trees, and that developed into the actual acid scene. The psychedelic bit, you know. And everybody was grooving around with flowers, and that. And then of course, like any drug, it wears off and you're back to so-called reality."

"Speaking as somebody who's been in the drug scene, it's not something you can go on and on doing, you know. It's like drink, or anything, you've got to come to terms with it. You know, like too much food, or too much anything. You've got to get out of it. You're left with yourself all the time, whatever you do-- you know, meditation, drugs or anything. But you've got to get down to your own god and 'your own temple in your head,' like Donovan says. Etcetera. And it's all down to yourself, you know."

"It's like the thing I was saying about 'It starts with us.' When it started with me, George, Paul and Ringo, and we said, 'Listen man, here's another field of professionalism that doesn't need any qualifications except that you gotta get down to it, and want to do it. And you can make it in the terms of the world-- the terms of reference they're talking about. You can make it without that pressure. And everybody at the same time was finding that out, you know. I mean, I had my guitar, Mick Jagger had his in London, and Eric Burdon was up in Newcastle, and we were all going through the same changes at once. And we all discovered that the values didn't mean a thing, you know, and you could make it without college and education and all those things. It's nice to be able to read and write, but apart from that I never learned anything worth a damn, you know."

"Some people have sort of discovered a new reality, and uhh, some people are still sort of confident about the future. But uhh, we two are, you know. Everybody is talking about the way it's going, and the decadence, and the rest of it. But nobody is really... Not many people are noticing all the good that came out of the last ten years, which is the moratorium, and the vast gathering of people in Woodstock-- which is the biggest mass of people ever gathered together for anything other than war! Nobody had that big of an army that didn't kill somebody or have some kind of violent scene, like the Romans or whatever. And even a Beatle concert was more violent than that, you know, and that was just fifty-thousand. And so, the good things that came out were all this vast peaceful movement, you know."

"The bully-- that's the establishment-- they know how to beat people up. They know how to gas them, and they have the arms and the equipment. And the mistake was made that, the kids ended up playing their game of violence. And they know how to be violent. They've been running it on violence for the last two-thousand years, or a million or whatever it is. And nobody can tell me that violence is the way after all that time, you know. There must be another way, but alot of people fell for it. And it's understandable in a way, 'cuz when the bully is actually RIGHT THERE it's pretty hard to say 'Turn the other cheek, baby.'"

"When we were in touch with the Berkeley kids, during whatever was going on, we were peacefully doing our peace demonstration in a Montreal bed, and then we suddenly were connected by phone directly to them, you know. And they were saying, 'Help us,' or 'What are we gonna do? It's gonna go wrong,' and this was some of the people who were organizing it. But they were saying, 'It's out of our control,' and 'What can we say?' you know. And of course I haven't got any solution."

"It's like, for peace or anything, it's all down to this relationship. To work on this relationship with Yoko is very hard, and we've got the gift of love. But love is like a precious plant. You can't just accept it and leave it in the cupboard, or just think it's gonna get on with itself. You gotta keep watering it. You've got to really look after it, and be careful of it, and keep the flies off and see that it's alright, and nurture it. And to get a relationship between two people is a start. And then if we two can make it, maybe we can make it with you. And from maybe us four-- you and yours-- we can make it with the next four. It's only that. There's no sort of ANSWER."

"I'm full of optimism because of the contacts I've made personally throughout the world... knowing that there's other people around that I can agree with, you know, I'm not insane and I'm not alone. That's just on a personal level. And of course, the Woodstock, Isle of Wight, all the mass meetings of the youth is completely positive for me. Now we're all getting to know it. We're all showing our flags, you know. And when you show your flag, you're not alone. It's like, we've no need to be a few christian martyrs because there's lots of us. And don't be afraid because they do look after ya, whoever's up there, if you get on with it. And I'm completely positive. And when I'm negative, I've got Yoko-- who is just as strong as me. And it helps, you know."

"And this is only the beginning. This sixties bit was just a sniff. The sixties was just waking up in the morning, and we haven't even got to dinner time yet. And I can't wait, you know, I just can't wait. I'm so glad to be around. And it's just gonna be great and there's gonna be more and more of us. (humorously, to the camera) And whatever you're thinking there, Mrs. Grundy of Birmingham on toast, you know, (laughs) you don't stand a chance! A, You're not gonna be there when we're running it, and B, You're gonna like it when you get less frightened of it. And it's gonna be wonderful, and I believe it. Of course we all get depressed and down about it, but when I'm down, or when John and Yoko is down, somebody else will be up. There's always somebody else carrying the flag or beating the drum, you know."

"So THEY, whoever they are, don't stand a chance because they can't beat love. Because all those old bits from religion about love being all-powerful is true, you know. And that's the bit they can't do. They can't handle it."

Source: Transcribed by the Beatles Ultimate Experience website from video copy of archived film footage