

Nic Whitham, director of the highly respected Banyan Retreat spiritual centre, is passionate about true trance mediumship, but therein lies his sadness. . . Much of what passes for trance mediumship in today's world is, quite frankly, an insult to the intelligence. So what makes a true trance medium? Can trance be taught? In short . . .

# WHAT IS TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP?

In my opinion good deep-trance mediumship is very rare these days. Sadly, acceptance of poor to mediocre trance has become the norm.

So what do I mean by deep-trance mediumship? Altered states of consciousness are often referred to as 'trance'. When the term is used in connection with mediumship it can vary from a very light altered state to a much deeper state. When we talk about 'deep-trance mediumship' we refer to the deepest possible level of altered states.

## DISPELLING A MYTH

There are still people who believe that when a medium enters an altered or deep-trance state the spirit communicator enters the medium's body. Although people could be excused for believing this, nothing could be further from the truth.

The spirit communicator is normally at the back of the medium and only cloaks the medium's mind with his or her mind and thoughts, to the point where that communicator can gain and retain control of the medium's body and mind for short periods of time. I've heard some spirit communicators liken this to trying to keep a balloon under water. Once the communicator has cloaked the mind of the medium they are able to impress their thought upon that mind and create channels through it to allow them to touch, speak and feel what the medium would normally sense.

## HOW TO IDENTIFY GOOD TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP

Always remember that trance mediumship uses channels through the mind of the medium and even with many years of experience it's still possible for the medium's mind to override the spirit communication. This does not mean they are bad mediums – it's just a characteristic of this form of mediumship that we have to accept.

As development of the mediumship progresses, the medium allows their communicator to gain greater control. Over time the waters flow more clearly and the true essence of the communicator is present in the communication. When the spirit world communicates in this way you can feel yourself being drawn into the experience, sensing the spirit and a level of philosophical communication that the medium him or herself would not normally be able to impart.

The response time to any questions you may ask of the communicator is almost instantaneous – the communicator doesn't need time to think about the response they are going to give. It is only with experience and dedication that the medium relinquishes greater degrees of control of their own mind. So if you are not sensing the spirit and not hearing good philosophical communication, question what it is that you are experiencing.

*You should never be afraid to voice your concerns if you feel doubtful about what you are experiencing. Speak up and allow your questions or doubts to be addressed by the spirit world. Gauging their response will help you make your decision regarding the ability of the medium. The spirit world likes to be challenged and will always try to win your reason. They will never put you down, nor will they disparage you in any way. Communication should be examined consistently, questioned, and never taken at face value, so please remember this.*

It is also quite possible that different spirit communicators may have differing points of view. If you ask several people here on earth the same question, it's likely you will get several different answers. It's just the same in the spirit world, as each communicator will give their answer or explanation based on their experience and

level of understanding.

I'm deeply saddened by the poor quality of trance communication presented today, and find it disrespectful to the spirit world. Many developing mediums find it acceptable to sit, close their eyes and say whatever comes into their minds. I have even witnessed situations when the medium simply closes their eyes and within a minute they believe they are speaking

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words from spirit communicators. It takes a good ten to fifteen minutes to achieve an altered state in which the spirit world has a reasonable level of control. From a light trance state where the medium is fully aware of what is taking place, to deep trance where the medium's mind has been almost completely cloaked and suppressed, there are many levels of entrancement in between. Of course the lighter the trance state, the greater the opportunity for the mind of the medium to influence any communication

taking place.

As I mentioned earlier, in my opinion deep-trance mediumship is rare. Being fortunate enough to witness deep-trance mediumship today on a fairly regular basis, and having been brought up with access to deep trance mediumship, I can honestly say this form of mediumship is hard to find. It's almost as rare as good physical mediumship – but that's a story for another day. . .

## HOW TO FIND A GOOD TRANCE TUTOR

I recall attending what I considered to be a reputable teaching establishment back in 2002-2003. The class started with everyone introducing themselves, then a very short meditation. The tutor said: “When I tap you on the knee you are going to let your spirit communicator talk through you.” Oh dear – if only it were that easy!

We spent the next hour listening to shrieks and wailing that would never have come from the spirit world. If any of the students were anywhere close to entering an altered state, this would surely have brought them back immediately. Others in the group spoke a few words which were not particularly profound or interesting to the rest of the group, and by this time entering an altered state was the last thing on my mind.

So when I was tapped on the knee I had to say that I was not ready for this at the moment. Surprisingly, my partner and I were the only people in the group to mention this. At the end of the day we were invited to proceed with our development and obtain a certificate, which I found truly unbelievable.

I would suggest that when looking for a tutor to help you develop your trance mediumship, you don't look for mediums with qualifications, letters after their names, or those accredited by a particular organisation for their work in this field. Instead go and experience the medium's own trance communication for yourself. Make sure you feel the essence of the spirit and that you hear good philosophical communication from the spirit communicator.

It's also my opinion that trance mediumship cannot be taught, it can only be encouraged. The bulk of the work will have to be done for yourself by sitting

with your circle or group and practising. Developing this form of mediumship takes time. When you've sat for a year, look back and calculate exactly how long you've been sitting. If you sit for one hour per week – with a couple of weeks off for holidays, etc – you will only have been sitting for two full days throughout the year.

When choosing circle members, first of all find a sitter who is experienced in high quality trance mediumship and nominate them as circle leader. You must have trust in this person to vet all other sitters in order to ensure that ego is not going to be a problem and that you have complete harmony within your group. When this is achieved, everyone present will enjoy the most divine, peaceful and tranquil energy throughout the sitting. This will allow you to quieten your mind, allow your soul to surface, and the spirit world to begin their work with you.

It can take many years to develop properly and you must wait until the communicators say they are ready for you to work outside of your circle or group.

## A MISSION TO IMPROVE STANDARDS

A large number of people pass through our doors at Banyan Retreat. Many come to attend workshops and development courses, and I have listened to stories from all over the world in recent years. I am now so motivated to write this article on behalf of all those who have been verbally attacked and berated by tutors who are not themselves experienced enough to take classes of this nature.

One major problem concerns huge classes of anywhere from fifty to a hundred people. Anyone who pretends to sit large numbers of students in trance is conning the participants, as it just cannot be done and is disrespectful to students and spirit alike.

I have also been told that some tutors sit people in pairs and ask the pairs to bring through each other's loved ones, as though they can be conjured up on the spot. This is highly inappropriate for a development and training class and could only happen with very experienced trance mediums with years of development behind them. Even then, a particular communicator could never be summoned at will.

However, when communication is received through a developed trance medium the evidence appears to be of greater depth and far more evidential. A good teacher of trance is vigilant and can observe and track the level or depth of the altered state. But all of that demands small groups and a trusting teacher/student partnership.

The purpose of writing this article is not to insult, name and shame or hurt anybody's feelings, but to support the spirit world and those trance mediums and communicators

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of the past who set the high standards with communication and philosophy. My intention is to help educate and be respectful to the spirit world by setting and improving the standards of trance mediumship which people deem acceptable. As with clairvoyance and most other forms of mediumship, everyone wants

and expects immediate results, and people often enter the public arena far too early in their development.

Join me on this quest, and together we can make strides to improve the level of trance communication available today by accepting nothing but the best. Please remember that there are just a small number of good deep-trance mediums in our world today, and even fewer who are good tutors. Choose wisely.



Nic Whitham has been a spiritual healer for the past 40 years and holds qualifications in anatomy and physiology, reflexology and Indian head massage. He also practises Thai massage, is a reiki master and a qualified teacher and practitioner of electro-crystal therapy and polycontrast interference photography. He teaches spiritual and reiki healing courses which are affiliated to the British Alliance of Healing Associations. He is co-owner and director of Banyan Retreat, a spiritual development sanctuary and natural healing centre in Ashford, Kent.