

Why I Insist on Reading With Your Eyes Open

Hello and welcome to Mediumship Matters, with me, Hannah Macintyre. Today's question comes from Cheryl, who joined Spirit Social after a spiritual assessment with me and has been working through the podcast. Cheryl struggles to read with her eyes open at all — she gets nothing, finds it overstimulating, knows it's not professional, and feels like she can't gauge her sitter's reactions. She's tried finding a soft focal point, tried asking spirit to repeat eyes-closed evidence with her eyes open — and still gets absolutely nothing. She feels, in her words, like an idiot.

Let me start backwards, because you've already named the real issue yourself: you know it's unprofessional to keep your eyes shut. I want to explain properly why this matters so much, because I meet plenty of mediums who work with their eyes closed, and I know it can be genuinely upsetting to be told you need to change that. Nobody's doing anything wrong by starting this way — I did exactly the same. My own journey began with spirit guide work, done privately, eyes shut, deeply meditative — so when I moved into evidential mediumship, I simply carried that habit over. When my mentor told me it was unacceptable and I had to learn with my eyes open, I genuinely felt like I'd lost every ounce of mediumistic ability I'd ever had — worse than starting from scratch. I promise you: you will get through it, and it takes far less time than it feels like it will while you're in it.

A soft gaze, not a blank stare

Finding a spot and softening your gaze is exactly the right instinct. If you've ever watched me demonstrate on Zoom or Spirit Social, you'll notice my eyes sit off to one side, gently unfocused — I'm not really looking at anything specific. When I demonstrate live, I look just over the audience, not directly at them; I've had friends in the crowd at my own events and genuinely not registered seeing them. There's a real difference between eyes open and softly unfocused, versus eyes open and actively scanning everything in the room.

Why this actually matters: speed

The first reason is speed. One of the biggest problems people have building a genuine blend with spirit is moving too slowly. Slow means the connection struggles to build momentum, and it leaves far more space for the voice in your head insisting you're a fraud, that you can't really do this. I recommend bullet-pointing your early evidence and delivering it quickly. With your eyes shut, you naturally soften, slow down, drift into something far more meditative — which is wonderful for connecting with your own spirit guides, but it's actually the thing that kills evidential mediumship. Your guides are a relationship you've built familiarity with over time. A sitter's loved one is a spirit you've never blended with before, and speed is genuinely your ally in that unfamiliar territory.

Why this matters: clairvoyance can work against you

The second reason is that clairvoyance, especially if it's your strongest clair, can actively work against you early in evidential mediumship — and this shows up a lot in people who came to mediumship through spirit guide work first, since that tends to build a strongly visual habit. I used to believe every image in my mind's eye was handed to me directly by spirit. I now understand that in gears one through three, that image is actually built by my own imagination, assembling itself out of the energy I'm sensing. With your eyes shut, that self-generated image becomes hypnotically vivid and convincing — which sounds like a good thing, but isn't.

If I told you all right now “I'm sending grandfather energy,” the image that pops into your mind is a hybrid — pieces of your own grandparents, other people's grandparents, ones you've seen on television, in books, in films, strangers on the street who simply looked like a grandparent. Your brain assembles all of that into a plausible composite. I think that's exactly what happens in clairvoyance: your energy reaches for the nearest available reference point. The same is true for clairsaudience — the words you “hear” aren't handed to you verbatim by spirit; your brain is generating its best-match words. That's exactly why understanding the gears matters.

With eyes shut, people tend not to simply say “I've got an older man here, feels like a grandad, maybe in his eighties” — they go further: he's wearing a shirt, it's ripped on the sleeve, six buttons, a minty sort of blue-green. And suddenly you're collecting no's, because none of that fine detail was actually given to you — it's your own imagination filling gaps. Notice that when I said “grandfather” just now, nobody's mind conjured a naked grandfather — I never specified clothing at all. But in that early, unpractised state, it's genuinely hard to tell what's you and what's spirit. My advice: stick to the overriding theme of an image, not the fine print.

Too many people treat their gear-one-and-two evidence as though it must already be the single most important thing spirit could possibly share. It won't be — you're simply building a blend at that stage, opening into what's already there. It would be like sitting down next to a stranger at a dinner party, saying “hi, lovely to meet you,” and having them immediately confess their darkest secret. It doesn't happen. It's an unfoldment. Treat gear-one-and-two evidence as exactly that: a quick highlight, keeping momentum, building power — nothing more.

You also don't need to worry about skipping past a detail you weren't fully sure of. Spirit is intelligent — if something matters, they'll bring it back around once your blend is stronger. You don't have to force every last detail out on the first pass.

Why this matters: including your sitter

The third reason is inclusivity, and this is genuinely the heart of it for me. I watch a great deal of mediumship, and there's a pattern I see often: with eyes shut, mediums will smile, laugh, visibly react to something the spirit's shared — without including the sitter in any of it. To the sitter, it can feel exactly like watching someone else have a private conversation with their own loved one, one they're not invited into. That is not the job. The job is to be the bridge — and the bridge needs to stay entirely out of the way.

I always think of the hardest possible case: a parent who's lost a child. That kind of loss is genuinely unnatural, against the order things are meant to follow. Nobody in that seat wants to watch a medium sitting with their eyes closed, quietly enjoying a private moment with their child that they themselves can't access. We can get so caught up in our own experience of the connection that we forget the actual job: reuniting someone with their loved one, not performing a private reunion in front of them.

Talking yourself through it

I've walked this exact path myself, and I know it can genuinely feel like your entire mediumship has collapsed the moment you're asked to work with your eyes open. Keep going anyway. When you feel like you're getting nothing, try saying inwardly: spirit, I want to work with my eyes open, and I know why this matters, so I trust you'll do your best to work with me here too. Your own doubt about whether you can do this with your eyes open is exactly what clouds your signal — much like the radio interference I've talked about before. The belief that you can't do it is what actually gets in the way. You genuinely can.

To summarise: it's a speed issue, a self-hypnosis issue, and an inclusivity issue — which is why we read with our eyes open, always, outside of trance or healing work, which are genuinely different, more surrendered states. It'll be genuinely interesting to see how that plays out as more people explore trance as evidential work, and what happens to this eyes-open principle in that space — because ultimately, people want to feel seen by their own loved ones, and being the bridge for that means spirit is using your whole physical presence, eyes included.

One last practical tip: if your power dips mid-reading — cruising along in fourth gear, then suddenly back in first — try looking directly at your sitter for ten seconds (it feels longer than it is) and silently ask spirit to use your eyes to see their loved one through you. That simple act of feeling how spirit feels about that person tends to boost your power significantly. The actual power in mediumship is love — that's why speed matters, because fear is what keeps us stuck in first, second, third gear, and the more trust you build, both in spirit and in your own ability, the more fully you move into that love frequency, and the higher through the gears you climb. If you need to jumpstart a stalled reading, let them use your eyes, and see what shifts.

Thank you for the question, Cheryl — this is something I care about deeply, and I'm glad to have had the chance to share it properly.