

Where Does Spirit End and Human Effort Begin?

Hello and welcome to Mediumship Matters, with me, Hannah Macintyre. This is actually my second attempt at recording this one — the first version was too spicy even for me. I've been sitting with this question a lot lately: why are we so comfortable crediting spirit, and so uncomfortable crediting ourselves? Where's the actual balance?

It's something we throw around constantly in this industry, myself included — “spirit brought this into being” — while quietly skipping over the sheer effort behind it. It's a genuinely fascinating paradox in an industry built on vibes and good intentions, and it feels a bit like dumping on my own community to even raise it. I'm not trying to. I just find it endlessly interesting, and I don't think I have a tidy answer.

How Spirit Social actually came into being

Spirit inspires an idea, nudges you, drops in a little spark. You've heard me talk before about my friend Emily recommending *Big Magic* by Elizabeth Gilbert to me — one of the most transformative books I've listened to on my own spiritual journey, even though it isn't really a mediumship book. Did spirit guide Emily to recommend it to me, or did she just decide to herself? We don't know. But listening to it, I encountered Gilbert's idea that inspiration behaves almost like a living thing — it visits you, and if you don't act on it, it moves on to someone else. That seed got planted roughly two years before Spirit Social existed.

Here's the genuinely spicy part: Emily herself had had an idea very like Spirit Social years earlier, and it never came to fruition for her. When I later invited her to be part of what I was building, it initially felt to her like her own idea had drifted away and landed with me instead — exactly as Gilbert describes. It's a lovely, slightly wild full-circle story, and I love it.

But where did the actual idea come from? It came from me asking spirit what we were going to do about social media — watching mediums I admire lose their integrity chasing an algorithm instead of speaking what actually mattered to them, worrying about my own students taking their first public steps in an industry where, unlike when I started, your own followers don't even see your posts anymore. It's genuinely a form of daylight robbery, and we're all trapped in it because none of us know how to run a business without these platforms now. So I asked spirit about it, sent that question out like a signal — and the idea for Spirit Social came back.

But spirit didn't build it. I took the money I'd earned from *You Are a Medium* — money I genuinely believe came from spirit's teaching, learned through taking action and getting things wrong — and instead of putting it toward household bills (my husband may never fully recover from that decision), I put every penny into Spirit Social. Spirit didn't take that risk. I did. I spent hours on design, on copywriting, working out user flows, getting them wrong, paying to fix them. I write the emails. I pay for the adverts. I still believe it was spirit-inspired — but it's a collaboration between us, not something delivered fully formed.

Even now, I'm still covering the monthly running costs myself, and it's genuinely hard to acquire users — currently around £3.60 per free sign-up and roughly £15 per paying member. Spirit isn't bringing those people to me. I am, through advertising I'm paying for out of pocket.

Was it spirit, or was it the algorithm?

I ran a fairly large ad campaign for this very podcast, hoping to build the top of the funnel — get people to discover me, then eventually become clients, because that felt long-term aligned. Not a hugely profitable move, if I'm honest — podcasting itself barely earns anything; the ads on this show brought in £130 last month. But it did mean people started telling me “I don't know how I found you, spirit must have led me to you” — and while that might be true, I also now understand, as an app developer myself, exactly how algorithms work. If you've been searching spiritually-adjacent topics on Facebook or Google, the algorithm already knows, and quietly starts showing you more of it. So: was that spirit, or the algorithm? I've put an enormous number of hours into SEO on my website — pages built purely to be found by search engines, ones you'd never see in my actual menu — and my Google traffic is up 800% as a direct result. Was spirit inspiring me to do that work? Perhaps. But it was still me who did it, 15 hours a day for two months.

Why do we treat acknowledging our own effort as somehow unspiritual? We preach trust and surrender, tell people the right clients will simply find them — while simultaneously running ads, studying marketing, crafting hooks designed to interrupt a two-second attention span. Can strategy and spiritual alignment genuinely coexist? When I run an event with twenty spiritual people in the room and offer a workshop, and some of them sign up — spirit didn't bring them to me. I did, through the advertising I paid for. If you're a guest on my retreat and sell your own book to that room, that wasn't spirit bringing you those sales either — that was my Meta ad spend, my years of building an audience, handed to you in that room. Is everyone who ends up in front of us in a spiritual setting there purely because of spirit — or because of visibility, someone else's built platform, someone else's hard graft? Can spirit align a person with an opportunity a human being actually built? I genuinely don't know where that line sits.

Why we won't credit each other, either

I do value my own part in this — I recognise it was spirit, or some energy, that gave me the gift of being able to speak and connect the way I do on this podcast; my soul chose that. But I'm also simply good at careful, considered speaking, and I know it. I'm aware spirit inspires certain topics for this show — the same way, doing a run of card readings in a single week, you'll notice the same message surfacing again and again across different sitters, part of some collective energy playing out through individuals. If spirit inspires a podcast episode, wonderful, I'm genuinely grateful. And if that episode then inspires someone else's content — why wouldn't they simply say so? “This is something Hannah talked about on Mediumship Matters.” I can see, clearly, when people I know have listened to this podcast and gone on to build something from it — but they don't credit it. I understand the impulse: crediting a specific person makes you sound less like an original expert than crediting “spirit,” in the abstract.

I notice this tension in myself too — genuinely trying to keep my ego in check while also just wanting to be acknowledged, watching whole concepts I've put out here lifted within twenty-four hours of an episode

airing, with no credit given, then immediately second-guessing whether I should even want that credit in the first place. There was a woman on Instagram this week — I've tried and failed to find her again, and will credit her properly if I do — who runs silent sound baths. She posted about it, the reel did well, and her inbox filled with people demanding she teach them exactly how she did it. She said no, this is mine. People got furious, called her egotistical, called her unspiritual. As she pointed out herself: this took months of research, trial and error, real money, before she finally got it right. It didn't arrive from spirit fully formed. So why does anyone feel entitled to the finished product of someone else's years of labour, and why get angry when she says no?

Communities and safe spaces don't simply appear. If you've been on one of my retreats and felt an instant, magical sense of belonging — what you don't see is the years of learning behind how I shape that room: how I read energy, arrange seating, decide who to pair with whom, choose which conversations to have and when. Fifteen years of working with energy, spirit, and people have taught me how to make all of that look effortless. That's not magic. That's me. Why do we so readily say “spirit did a brilliant job on that retreat” rather than “Hannah did a brilliant job”? I've likely done exactly the same thing myself, earlier in my own journey — taking teachers' invisible labour for granted without realising it.

Ambition, boundaries, and resilience

This raises real questions worth sitting with: does “non-attachment” mean giving everything away for free? Are boundaries somehow unspiritual? Can you be generous and still protect your own work? Can you support others without handing over everything you've built? Have we, across spiritual communities, quietly confused humility with invisibility — become uncomfortable with plain ambition? How do genuinely ambitious, business-minded people hold that alongside spirituality, alongside trusting spirit to bring the right people, alongside the discipline, sacrifice, and persistence none of that manifesting actually happens without?

I don't think being a medium makes you special, or specifically chosen. But I do think certain traits are required — resilience chief among them. Without it, the voice telling you it's too hard will win, every time. The only reason I'm still here, doing this, is that voice hasn't beaten me yet, even though it's never gone quiet either.

If, touch wood, Spirit Social becomes a genuine success — and I do believe it will — heaven help anyone who tells me how lucky I was that spirit simply handed it to me. I've spent eighteen months crying, working seventy-hour weeks, earning nothing from my own business while pouring the money into this instead. It's cost me in my marriage, my health, my energy. There was a stretch where I was so worn down that friends clearly didn't enjoy my company anymore — I could feel it, like my whole personality had gone missing under the weight of it. That's real cost: energetic, emotional, financial, all at once.

So yes — I believe the idea came from spirit, from that collective source, in direct answer to a question I asked. But someone still had to build it. It didn't arrive finished, and it hasn't come without real difficulty. Spirit didn't build the app. Developers did, and I paid them. I think both things can be true at once. A spiritual business is still, at its core, a business — and I'd love to understand why we're so at ease crediting spirit for our success, and so uneasy crediting our own work for it.

Let me know your thoughts. I hope this made sense. Thank you for listening, and I'll catch up with you all again soon.