

Why We Hand Our Power to the Loudest Voice in the Room

Hello and welcome to Mediumship Matters, with me, Hannah Macintyre. One of my rabbit holes today — let's see where it goes.

Something I find genuinely fascinating in mediumship development: people are often drawn to me precisely because I don't have all the answers. My whole ethos is that you find your own way — I can tell you what's worked for me, or what a certain approach might be doing to your energy, but ultimately this journey is about becoming the medium you always were, not the one I tell you to be. That resonates with people, and they come and work with me — and then sometimes get pulled in by someone who appears to have every answer instead. There's something seductive about total confidence, isn't there — “I have all the answers,” “I've never once doubted my own mediumship” — right up until you realise it isn't actually helping you.

A Netflix rabbit hole

I've been flying a lot lately, which means watching documentaries my husband won't sit through with me. I recently got through *The Programme*, about the Bikram yoga scandal, and one about a cult leader who declared himself a new prophet after the previous leader was imprisoned — and was believed so completely that followers handed their own children over to be trafficked by him. He was, by any measure, unhinged — at one point announcing he'd marry the Queen of England, who'd become one of his many wives — and people simply nodded along.

What strikes me isn't that people like this exist; humanity has never been short of that particular story. What's genuinely fascinating is how easily the rest of us defer to whoever sounds most certain in the room. Bikram's story follows a similar shape — building an entire sales structure around access to him, reportedly at real personal cost to the people drawn into his orbit.

Why does this happen in mediumship too? Why are we drawn to teachers who sound certain, rather than ones who genuinely support and build us up? I see the same instinct when I do card readings — plenty of people would rather be told exactly what to do, step by step, than face the far bigger, scarier expanse of free will and the possibility of getting it wrong themselves. I understand that pull completely. I'm not judging anyone for feeling it.

Sales tactics have crept into spirituality

Spirituality has become genuinely sales-driven — maybe it always was, but now we've got countdown timers on checkout pages, thirty-second flash offers, panic-buying built right into the structure. I regularly hear from people who've paid a fortune for a course that covered less than what I give away free on this podcast. My husband once sat up through the night for a Tony Robbins-style online event that turned out to be one long funnel toward the next paid tier — buy now, this price won't last, sell, sell, sell. Where does that energy belong in mediumship, and how responsible are teachers — and students — for it?

I'm not claiming to be above making mistakes here. I've written openly, in *Spiritual Slaps*, about hero-worshipping a teacher who treated me genuinely badly, and telling myself every single time that I must be the problem. So why is it so hard, once you're inside a situation like that, to actually listen to the quiet voice telling you it's wrong for you — to simply say, I don't want to be taught this way, spoken to this way, treated this way — or even just quietly leave? I think it comes back to wanting to be seen. I've watched teachers deliberately pit students against each other, creating exactly the kind of codependent dynamic where being singled out as “the special one” feels wonderful, and not being singled out feels like a personal failing rather than a sign the space itself isn't healthy. Bikram had devoted favourites who genuinely couldn't see fault in him, some of whom argued you should separate the man from the teacher. Maybe that logic holds for yoga, where you're only being taught to stretch. In spiritual development, where far more of you is exposed, I don't think it holds at all.

Even I fall for this

I'm not claiming immunity. I still get swept up by confident-sounding people myself — I can't count the number of guests I've had on this podcast expecting to learn something genuinely cutting-edge, only to realise partway through that I'd already known it for years. That's not a criticism of them; it's simply a fascinating reminder that even I default to assuming other people must know more than me.

Which brings me to something I've witnessed recently: genuinely troubling teaching practices, students set against each other under the guise of feedback. If a teacher asks you to critique another student's work, that's dangerous territory. I ask my students to support each other while they work, never to critique one another. Imagine going through the genuine vulnerability of mediumship while an entire room analyses you instead of cheering you on, everyone waiting to raise a hand and tell the teacher what you got wrong. That's not a healthy space to develop in — but it very effectively keeps people dependent, keeps them enrolled longer, keeps them trapped.

The same goes for arbitrary minimum development timelines — “you must wait three years before reading for the public.” I do believe in proper development, but I've had students who threw themselves into their mediumship with such focus that they did more readings in six months than some do in ten years. You can't apply a flat rule to that, though obviously pacing and integration still matter. We often offer up the softest, most vulnerable part of ourselves to people who only see it as something to build their own platform on. There's something very human in our willingness to be led astray, as long as the person doing the leading sounds sufficiently sure of themselves.

A cyclical approach to development

I genuinely believe mediumship development should move in seasons: a period of learning, then a period of integration — actually putting what you've learned into practice, since mediumship is a bit like driving, where information needs to become instinctive before you add more — and then a period of simply allowing. Working at whatever level you're currently at, without pushing, resting, listening to your own body and yourself, sitting with how recent teaching actually made you feel. That's part of why I stopped running an ongoing membership: it became too hard to hold space for people who genuinely needed time away from mediumship altogether, time to reconnect with themselves rather than keep pushing forward.

If you are the actual source code of your own mediumship, how much time are you spending simply being with yourself, rather than endlessly analysing or pushing further? Softening to yourself matters as much as sharpening your skill — ironic, given I only recently did an episode questioning whether we've all become too self-focused. That's the genuine balancing act.

My plea, simply: if something doesn't feel right, leave. If a teacher doesn't resonate, don't let them damage you regardless. Pay attention if you notice them being unkind to others than to you directly — if you're wincing on someone else's behalf, that's information too. Protect yourself, protect your energy, and let your own connection to yourself be the real guide.

I hope this made sense — it's a big topic, and I know I jumped around. I'd love your thoughts. Learn from my mistakes, and from everyone in those Netflix documentaries too — it's easy to watch and think, how could anyone fall for that, and then walk straight into the same pattern yourself. Having a large following doesn't make someone an expert. And if someone is genuinely unkind, ask yourself why you'd still offer them the softest, most vulnerable part of your own mediumship. Advocate for yourself first — it will teach you more than almost anything else. Thank you for listening. I'll catch up with you all again soon.