

You're Not Alone: A Letter From a Former Student, and Why “Everything Happens for a Reason” Can Be Gaslighting

Hello and welcome to Mediumship Matters, with me, Hannah Macintyre. Two things today.

A letter from someone who wants to stay anonymous

I recently received an email from someone who listened to both “What If They're Right Too” and “When Someone Tries to Dim Your Light.” She wanted to remain anonymous, but asked me to share her words, because she felt they might help someone else the way my episodes helped her.

She wrote that so much of what I'd described felt painfully familiar. She'd recently left a mentorship that had, over time, left her questioning her own abilities, her intuition, even whether she belonged in this work at all. Sincere questions, a different perspective, or simply wanting to do mediumship her own way could leave her feeling shut down, told she was wrong, made to feel that no matter how hard she worked, it wasn't enough. Constructive criticism curdled into something genuinely hurtful. There was room for only one “right” way of doing things, and comparisons between students became routine — leaving people questioning their worth rather than feeling inspired by one another.

The hardest part, she said, was that this wasn't just a teacher. It was someone she'd trusted completely, someone she genuinely loved as a friend — which made leaving feel like losing a friendship, not simply changing teachers. When she finally left, she didn't know if she wanted to do mediumship again at all. It took real time to rebuild her confidence and trust in herself, and to understand there isn't only one correct way to do this work. What saddened her most was realising she wasn't alone — she'd watched other genuinely gifted students quietly step away from their own mediumship after losing confidence in themselves the same way. She's still grateful to have been introduced to this world in the first place, and says some of her greatest growth came directly out of that difficult experience — learning to trust her own intuition, and that doing mediumship her own way is genuinely allowed. For the longest time, she thought it was just her. She thanked me for speaking up, since so few former students ever find the courage to, in a community this small and interconnected.

Thank you for that email. I want to say plainly: you can come out the other side of this. You might be bruised, but you haven't let it stop you — I can see that in every line you wrote. If you're listening and you've been through something similar with a teacher, please know it doesn't have to be your defining moment.

I was genuinely torn about releasing the original “dim your light” episode at all. I actually tried re-recording it to soften it — and it came out almost word for word the same. I think I simply needed to say it exactly as it was. The part I most wanted to soften wasn't even my own words — it was the specific thing another medium said to me in front of an audience. Facts are facts; that's simply what was said, and even though it happened to me, I found it desperately uncomfortable to leave in. I'm not glad any of this

happened to either of us, or to the others who've since come forward — but I'm genuinely glad this particular story was shared, because it needed to be heard.

A funny little aside: the Little Red Hen

Small tangent to lighten the mood. Early on, before I had any sense of how big this podcast might become, I reached out to a fairly well-known person about being a guest. I messaged them across several platforms and got nothing back — entirely fair enough, I told myself, bigger name, smaller podcast, no hard feelings. Fast forward, and that exact same person has just emailed asking to come on the show. If I were a properly evolved spiritual person, that probably wouldn't feel quite as satisfying as it does.

Spirit keeps showing me the same story on repeat — the Little Red Hen, which I used to read to my own kids. She grows the wheat, grinds it, bakes the bread, asking every animal on the farm along the way, “will you help me?” — and every single one says no, too busy. When the bread's finally baked and smells wonderful, she tells them plainly: none of you helped, so none of you get to eat it — and eats it herself, with oodles of creamy butter. Not the most conventionally spiritual message, maybe, but it's exactly the energy I keep receiving about Spirit Social: the people who show up, contribute, and give their time are the ones who'll be rewarded when it eventually takes off — which I know it will — and everyone who didn't put in that energy simply won't get a slice.

While I'm here — a quick bit of maths. This same person's application mentioned eighteen years as a medium and forty thousand readings in that time. That works out to roughly 2.22 readings every single day, every day, with no days off, for eighteen straight years — while, from what I recall following her on Instagram, she also took a fairly enviable amount of holiday. So: please don't exaggerate your numbers on an application. It doesn't add up, and someone will eventually do the maths.

When “everything happens for a reason” becomes gaslighting

The second thing I wanted to talk about: I recently saw someone share a genuinely raw personal experience online — clearly not asking for advice, simply saying, here's what happened to me. Several well-meaning people responded with some version of “everything happens for a reason, spirit's teaching you something, your soul chose this for your highest good.” Is that actually helpful? Or is it a little gaslighting?

I think we're deeply uncomfortable sitting in someone else's pain without trying to explain it away — if I can hand you a tidy reason, I don't have to sit in the discomfort alongside you. But not every difficult experience needs an immediate lesson, meaning, or silver lining attached. Sometimes life is simply hard. Difficult people do difficult things. Yes, I believe spirit eventually uses everything to teach us something — but that doesn't mean the person still reeling from it needs that lesson handed to them mid-impact. If their own guides genuinely wanted them to understand the “why” right now, they'd already have shown them. They're clearly not ready for it yet. The actual lesson, in that moment, is simply the processing itself — the wound, and however long healing honestly takes.

So why is it so hard to just say, thank you for sharing this so honestly, and leave it there? Why do we feel the need to add “I think this happened because,” or “you should try this next time”? Nobody asked. And

ethically, in a space built on spiritual authority, did that person actually consent to your interpretation of their pain? They didn't. This connects to everything we've discussed about why people hand their power to confident-sounding teachers, or end up swept into unhealthy dynamics — it comes from the same discomfort with simply not knowing. “That's genuinely awful, I'm sorry” is allowed to be the whole response.

We also need to be careful, especially on open platforms, about the tone this sets for someone newly grieving, or newly opening up to spirit, trying to make sense of something enormous — being met with a breezy “well, your soul chose this.” It might be true. It doesn't mean it needs saying, or that it's yours to say. I think we're missing the actual gift here, which was never our interpretation. It's our presence — holding space for someone to make their own sense of things, in their own time.

Somewhere in this, I think we're back to “me, me, me” again — an unconscious reach to make someone else's pain somehow about us. I don't think anyone does this with unkind intent, or consciously. But isn't that exactly the edge of real mastery — understanding that in this work, you bring remarkably little of your own self to it, and the real skill is getting out of the way entirely? We resist that, because if we bring nothing, what's our purpose? I'll say it again: your purpose was never mediumship itself. It's a wonderful thing to do, a choice you get to make — it doesn't hand you special authority to interfere in other people's meaning-making. You haven't been ordained by spirit as somehow wiser than the people you're trying to help. You're a person, not a prophet. Sometimes the most spiritual response available is simply: I don't know. Not every wound needs a full explanation attached to it.

Which brings me back to that first email. Isn't it the perfect model of exactly this? I see your pain. I'm sorry that happened. This happened to me too, and here's the impact it had, because you asked. I've found my way through it, and I hope sharing helps you too. Nowhere in that message was “here's the lesson spirit wants you to take from this.” That's precisely why I wanted to share it — it's a genuine example of acknowledging someone's experience, letting them know they're not carrying it alone, without making it about your own interpretation of their life. My own guides keep telling me: I don't know why this happened to you, but you don't have to face it alone. That, I think, might be the most spiritual thing any of us can actually offer.

I'd love to hear your thoughts, as always. I don't say any of this from some place of having it perfectly figured out myself — every so often spirit shines a light on something and I think, oh, I've absolutely done that, now I have to talk about it. That's rather the job, isn't it. I hope you've enjoyed this one. I'll catch up with you all again soon. Take care.