

The Burden of Being a Medium

Hello and welcome to Mediumship Matters, with me, Hannah Macintyre. We're going deep today. I don't want this to sound like whinging — I wouldn't change this job for anything — but I recently had a proper spiritual slap, where the sheer weight of what I've been carrying in mediumship hit me all at once.

I had an interesting conversation about this recently with one of my students, a paramedic — you know who you are. Mediumship isn't the only job where this happens, but here's the thing about it: working as a professional medium, you're mostly on your own. There's rarely anyone to talk to about any of this. I was lucky, when it really hit me, to have my students around — though that's exactly the kind of community I'm losing as the Gateway closes in a couple of months. So genuinely — get yourself onto Spirit Social. Join the gang. We need each other for this.

Carrying the weight

I've been doing regular one-on-one evidential readings since the start of the year, several a week, and I'll say it again: nobody should be attempting eight evidential readings in a day. It's too much, energetically, and it's too much to carry. When you're doing evidential work, you're sitting inside somebody's grief. That's hard. You're sitting inside their expectation too, and that's real pressure.

Underneath all of that, for me, there's something else. Aside from my aunt, the people I've lost were people who were, in some sense, “meant” to go — my grandfather died what I'd call young, but grandfathers are still expected to die eventually; older generations are expected to go before us. So I came into mediumship bouncing along like Tigger — choose happiness, seize the day, carpe diem, all of it. And it's all true — if there's one message spirit gives me in nearly every single connection, it's that life goes far too quickly, so make the choices that support your happiness.

Recently, something happened in my family — nobody in my immediate family passed, but the event resulted in someone's death, and it was genuinely shocking. It pushed me over the edge. Looking back, I can see why: I'd been doing reading after reading, doing them well, loving them, thinking, this is exactly why I do this. And then you do a spirit link for a baby who's died, and the next day, a link for a teenager killed walking home after being hit by a car — and your own kids are teenagers, and something in you thinks, I don't know how to be that mother, and I hope I never have to learn.

Then that thing happened in my family, and it landed differently — the realisation that life really can change in a single second, and how little control we actually have over that. I can't tell the story, because it isn't mine to tell, but I can say this: looking back at the circumstances, there were ten or fifteen separate moments where things could have gone differently — like a marble run picking one path out of many possible ones — and yet, here we are.

The fear underneath

I think I came to mediumship assuming, without ever consciously thinking it, that loss would mostly happen to the older generation, in its proper order. I don't think I ever considered what it would actually cost me to be reminded, every single day, that everything could be gone in an instant. I didn't think about what that would take from me. Not until that event happened, and it hit me all at once, what I'd quietly been carrying.

It's frightening. I'm not scared of dying — honestly, I think the people who've passed are the lucky ones. I'm scared of being the one left behind. I've never been a mushy person — my love language is acts of service; to me, romance is my husband emptying the bin. I'm the cynical, tough one in this marriage. But I don't know how I'd rebuild without him, even though I've sat across from enough people to know it's survivable. What would be the point of any of the work I'm doing, all of it built toward a future life together, if that future simply vanished?

It's an odd thing that I've never really heard mediums talk about. We talk endlessly about the continued existence of the human spirit — wonderful, yes, and genuinely comforting; I know that, because I sit with people who tell me it is. But it's also just really hard. This whole situation — grief, loss, love, the not knowing — can be genuinely crushing, and I think as a medium you have to reckon with that honestly.

Extra grief, extra awareness

What this work has brought me is more grief to actually process, because you grieve for the people you meet. You can't help falling a little in love with your sitters — part of doing this work is starting to feel for them the way spirit feels for them, which means their grief becomes something you carry too. There's a difference between knowing, in the abstract, that everyone you love is in danger, and actually living inside that awareness every day. My son's heading off to university soon, and I've already got that low hum of anxiety about him being outside my safety net — will I know where he is, will I know he's safe.

Mediumship, at its core, is about feeling — we train ourselves to feel more, to sit inside that energy, to be a conduit for it. That changes you. I never expected quite so many middle-aged men to come through having died mowing the lawn — it's gotten so bad that I've started mowing our own lawn myself, so I don't feel that cold finger of fear every time I hear the mower start and know my husband's the one doing it. (He loves this development, for the record.)

It's a genuinely mixed bag. You know there's more beyond this life — you've experienced it, you're not interested in convincing anyone who doesn't believe you, and that knowledge changes how you move through the world, your gratitude, your sense of what matters. But you also now know, intimately, what it is to lose people. You know how fast it can all change. You know people don't always get to say goodbye, and carry the weight of the words left unsaid. You know people build entire lives they never chose, and do remarkable things within them. All of that sits alongside the wonder of it — isn't spirit incredible, aren't we lucky not to be alone, isn't this whole existence an opportunity. Both things are true at once, and I think that's a real, tangible weight to carry — heavy and wonderful together.

Reading for grief you can't fully soothe

A few weeks ago I read for a woman whose daughter had been hit by a car and killed. I could feel she was disappointed with the reading — not rude about it, just quietly disappointed — and I've kept turning it over since, wondering why I couldn't give her what she needed. It wasn't a bad reading. It wasn't a brilliant one either. That's the job. It's simply unavoidable sometimes.

And then, funnily, I had a wonderful, uplifting reading days later for someone whose husband came through to tell them it was okay to keep moving forward — pure magic. But they'd booked that reading once they were already through the worst of it, out the other side of the heaviest grief, so it was a genuinely lovely space to sit in — a blessing on choices already made.

As mediums, we're asked to sit with people at their rawest, hold space for them, without being consumed by that energy or losing our own connection to spirit. Students often ask how I don't let it beat me. Sometimes it does — sometimes you cry when you wish you hadn't. Mostly you hold it together until the reading ends, then you process it and let yourself feel it afterwards. It's a genuine journey, and it costs something real.

The gift inside the fragility

The flip side is that all of this makes you more present with the people you love — treating them as the precious, finite things they are. It genuinely helps. I catch myself sometimes, mid-scroll on my phone, and think, why are you doing this when you could be with your child — and I pull myself back to what actually matters. The very fragility of it is the gift.

But sometimes, as a medium, I find it a lot. I'm a sensitive soul, and it's a great deal to carry. It's the best job in the world, and it's a genuinely hard one. Sometimes it simply lands on you and pulls.

I wanted to talk about this today, and I hope it resonates rather than just sounding bleak. If you're becoming a medium, or already are one — your job, at its core, is to feel: the presence, the love, the loss. That's exactly what makes it transformational. But it would be naive to think that doesn't cost you something, and I think we rarely talk about it, because it can sound like complaining. There's a lot of quiet spiritual gaslighting we do to ourselves — “it's fine, they're still around, I'm still getting signs” — which is true, and also not the whole truth.

I hope this hasn't sent you back to bed for the day. I wanted to talk about it because we genuinely need connection with other mediums — this isn't work you can do entirely alone. You need people who can hold space for you too. It's easy to forget the parts of us that get touched and moved by this work, in both good ways and hard ones — and it's entirely possible to believe this is the best job in the world while also feeling the real weight of it.

Let me know your thoughts. I'd love to hear them, and thanks, as always, for listening.