

Teri signs on as medium

THE EDITOR'S E-MAIL INTERVIEW WITH A SERVING MEDIUM

Medium and spiritual counsellor Teri Spain may be unique in the UK in that she is able to offer sittings to those who are Deaf using British Sign Language (BSL). Below, Teri answers a series of questions about her life and gifts, which also includes being a sound therapist. The first point she answers is "Why did you decide to learn BSL?"

Please note that within the Deaf community, Deaf is written with a capital letter. Out of courtesy, we have adopted this practice in the interview rather than our usual style of a lower case d.

I HAD a Deaf friend and wanted to be able to communicate with her in her own language, which is British Sign Language.

I am happy to say since 2003 BSL has been recognised by the UK government as an official minority language, sharing similar status to that of Gaelic and Welsh.

BSL has its own grammar and syntax, and like any language the more you learn and practise the better you get. There are regional signs in BSL, as you would have regional accents and colloquialisms in spoken languages.

Whilst I sign, I am always learning more regional signs as and when I communicate with Deaf people around the country. I find it to be a very beautiful and expressive language.

On TV, someone using BSL also mouths the words as well as using sign language. Do you do so when demonstrating or do you sign and speak normally at the same time?

When you are using BSL, you mouth

only certain words, not all of them. If you were talking English and putting signs to English, then you would be using Sign Supported English, not BSL.

Is there much interest amongst the Deaf community in mediumship and Spiritualism?

It is similar to most communities - there are those who are interested and others who are not. Obviously, I am working more with Deaf people who are interested in mediumship and Spiritualism.

What was your first encounter with Spiritualism?

I first encountered Spirit as a young girl of eight years old when my paternal grandfather, who died before I was born, visited me.

It was quite a shocking experience, as I did not come from a spiritual family and they did not wish to entertain the idea of Spirit.

Where do you live?

I am lucky to live in Brighton, East Sussex, on the south coast. The city is

very open and receptive, and has three Spiritualist churches.

What psychic gifts do you have?

I am clairvoyant, clairaudient and clairsentient.

Where did you develop your gifts?

I developed my mediumship at Tony Stockwell's studios in Essex. I have also participated in many wonderful courses at the Arthur Findlay College, Essex, with some amazing mediums as well as sitting in the past in a development group locally with medium Gail Moffat.

How long have you been serving Spiritualist churches?

I have now been serving Spiritualist churches and centres for three years.

How many churches do you serve a month and in which parts of the country?

At the moment, I serve nine Spiritualist churches along the south coast.

What can a congregation do to assist the medium on the platform?

A congregation can help assist a medium on the platform by having an open mind and heart, and sending their energetic support to the medium. This could be as simple as a smile.

What's the most satisfying aspect about being a medium?

One of the most satisfying aspects of being a medium is having that most wonderful connection to Spirit and facilitating their messages of love and support to loved ones in the physical realm, which can be both healing and rewarding.

What advice would you give to fledgling mediums?

The advice I would give a fledgling medium is to sit in the power as much as possible, connecting to Spirit and to "release and let go" to allow Spirit to blend more fully.

Are you a full-time medium?

I am not a full-time medium, as my profession is that of a holistic therapist. This includes my counselling and psychotherapeutic background, which now comes under the title of spiritual counsellor.

I am also a sound therapist, working with the body's energies, using the power of the voice, crystal bowls and Tibetan bowls, as well as having trained to be a Pilates and Zenga instructor, working with the movement of the body.

I also run meditation groups using the transformative power of creative visualisations.

I find this work very rewarding. All my training and experiences over the years has enabled me to work to meet the needs of the individual, so I can truly say that I work with the whole person if needed - mind, body and spirit.

Where was sound therapy discovered? What kind of conditions can it help?

Sound has been used for thousands of years to help improve health and wellbeing. The ancient Greeks believed music had the power to heal body and soul. Pythagoras used certain songs to cure diseases of the body and mind.

The body can become "out of tune." The therapeutic use of sound and its corresponding frequencies helps to restore equilibrium within the individual, initiating more health and harmony.

It can also help to reduce heart rate, calm brainwave frequencies, lower blood pressure and help support the immune system, therefore reducing stress and helping to improve stress-related illnesses.

After a sound healing treatment most people have a sense of deep relaxation and an improvement in the function of mind and body.

Can you tell me something about the spiritual counselling you offer? What are the most common problems for which people seek help?

Spiritual counselling, sometimes with the help of a loved one in Spirit, allows for a broader perspective to be initiated within the person. This is that we are not just our physical body, but so much more.

The understanding of this and working towards the connection to our spiritual self allows for more clarity and an awareness of the bigger picture. This can enable people to work through their worries and anxieties quicker.

The reasons people come for spiritual counselling are varied. They range from needing to come to terms with the death of a loved one to wanting to access their spiritual self for further spiritual development.

What is your philosophy of life in no more than two or three sentences?

I believe that in life we should treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves - with love, humanity and respect.

I also feel we are not taught to trust ourselves, and that this is so important in leading an authentic life. Lastly, laughter is the best medicine!

Do you have any hobbies or special interests away from the psychic scene?

I enjoy walking in nature and am so lucky to be near the water and the South Downs.

I also love creating abstract pictures with encaustic painting, also known as hot wax painting. This involves placing molten wax colour, using a small painting iron, onto various surfaces.

How do you relax at the end of the day?

I like to relax with a good film or book. I also love listening to an eclectic mix of music, some of which is extremely relaxing.

If you knew you had just one more day on earth, how would you spend it?

I would spend it with my loved ones, enjoying each others' company, laughing and knowing that we will all meet again.

■ Teri Spain is available for spiritual counselling and British Sign Language sittings on various dates at the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain. Teri also gives sittings and counselling for hearing clients.