

## Mediumship, Death, and Grief: A Personal Experiential Research Account

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Accepted 26 October, 2015.

### ABSTRACT

In this article, the personal experiential research method is used to describe the benefits of mediumship in the grieving process. In particular, the author describes his firsthand account of being involved in the grieving process of his "significant other" over the death of her mother. This kind of beneficial value is reinforced by the literature on the grieving process; however, this beneficial value is separate from the authenticity of whether or not there is life after death and if mediums truly are able to communicate with deceased spirits. Rather, this beneficial value is fully based upon the experience of the person who is grieving being able to "feel" a continued connection with the loss of his or her loved one. In the context of what the author has learned from his personal experiential research, the benefits of mediumship in the grieving process may be a part of a person's process of returning to a more positive state of mind, but may not be the central part of the process. Rather, the person doing deep psychological work on his/herself to assimilate the loss of his/her loved one may be the most important aspect of grieving to return to a more positive state of mind.

**Keywords:** personal experiential research, mediumship, death, grief.

### Introduction

It has been well-documented that aside from the question of the authenticity of mediumship in regard to making contact with deceased loved ones, mediumship may serve an important and effective function as grief counseling (Edward, 2001; Gauld, 1982; Lawton, 1932; Meintel, 2007; Schwartz, 2002; Van Praagh, 2002). In my previous work I have focused upon my own experiential explorations of the authenticity of mediumship (Benjamin, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b), in particular in terms of making contact with my deceased brother. The results of my personal experiential research were not favorable to the authenticity of mediumship in this context (see the references above). However, the grief counseling aspect of mediumship is not something I have explored in terms of my previous personal experiential research. Since I have recently gone through the mourning process for the death of my "significant other" Dorothy's mother who died about two months ago, I believe that it may now be timely and informative for me to engage in a personal experiential study of the beneficial effects of mediumship on myself as I go through the grieving process.

### Personal Experiential Research

To begin with, it is important to place personal experiential research in a legitimate research context. The term "personal experiential research" was coined by Macleod (2010), and it has a close relationship with heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990; Sela-Smith, 2002), and autoethnography (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004, 2009). The underlying theme of personal experiential research is that there is a unique and important place in the field of qualitative research (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Wertz, 2011) for research that includes the experiences of the researcher that are directly related to the research question. The appropriateness and value of including the researcher's experiences in this regard was emphasized by William James over a hundred years ago in the context of his research method of radical empiricism, as described in the following quote by James, as given in Braud & Anderson (1998):

Any and all sources of evidence, ways of knowing, and ways of working with and expressing knowledge,

findings, and conclusions can be brought to bear on the issues being researched—There is an epistemological stance of what William James (1912/1976) called *radical empiricism*—a stance that excludes anything that is not directly experienced but includes *everything* that is directly experienced, by anyone involved in the research effort. Thus, the research participants' subjective experiences and self-perceptions are treated as valid data, as are the experiences and perceptions of the investigator. There is an important place for intuitive, tacit, and direct knowing; for various arational ways of processing information; and for a variety of forms of creative expression in conducting and communicating research. (p. 241)

In recent years there has been much headway made in qualitative research being accepted as a legitimate form of research in psychology, in particular as evidenced by the reformulation and renaming of the measurement division (Division 5) of the American Psychological Association to include qualitative research as part of the discipline<sup>3</sup>. But it is undoubtedly quite challenging for a researcher to engage in personal exploration research, as criticism of this kind of research from mainstream psychology is severe and extensive (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2009). Of course there are some legitimate concerns that mainstream psychology have about the extent of subjectivity involved in personal experiential research. However, I believe that there are unique, important, and relevant insights that a researcher utilizing this research method may have access to, and that a well-trained researcher in this method can make a significant contribution to the research question being investigated (Benjamin, 2012). Therefore I will now utilize the personal experiential research method to explore the beneficial aspects of mediumship in regard to going through the grieving process, in the personal way that I described above. The way in which I will describe my personal experiential research involves my portrayals at different periods of time subsequent to the death of Dorothy's mother, and since these time periods of writing are significant, they will be noted.

### My Pre-Mediumship Grieving Process (8/25/15)

My "significant other"/fiancé Dorothy's mother Doris was 98 when she died about 2 weeks ago. Up until a few weeks before her death, she was able to function relatively effectively in a semi-independent living situation in her own apartment. I knew her for over 10 years, and I loved her. Doris was always so full of optimism and life, and possessed an uncanny sense of wisdom that never ceased to amaze me as she progressed through her middle and late 90's. I would periodically play the piano during Thanksgiving time in her senior apartment complex, and Doris would sing out with glee many of the old songs I would play, which even occasionally went along with her doing a bit of spontaneous dancing. When she was 96, I danced a waltz with her at her youngest daughter's wedding.

But what I valued most of all was the precious and genuine sense of comfort I would always feel when Dorothy and I were alone with her mom in her apartment. It was a place where I could just "be" the boy from Brooklyn who I feel I truly am, in a similar way to how I used to feel in my brother Freddy's apartment during the last few years of his life, before his physical condition seriously declined<sup>1</sup>. The comforting and genuine conversations that accompanied the frequently played past era popular music-Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Tony Bennet, etc. was so therapeutic to me as I would make myself comfortable on Doris' wonderful recliner, intermittently reading psychology or philosophy, grading mathematics homework assignments, and helping Dorothy and Doris in the kitchen with preparing meals or doing dishes. Words cannot do justice to the loss I feel at not having Doris become my official mother-in-law when Dorothy and I get married next year.

Dorothy and I got back to Maine a few days ago after a very difficult and emotionally challenging week in Buffalo, New York, attending her mom's memorial service, interacting with Dorothy's family, and cleaning out her mom's apartment. The night before we left Buffalo, after we had completed all the difficult tasks we needed to do, I meditated and felt a deep connection with Dorothy's mom. I had a strong feeling that Doris was telling me that she wanted me to take care of Dorothy and stay connected with Dorothy's family. Then Dorothy and I both did a tarot card reading. A tarot card reading is something Dorothy frequently engages in as a source of spiritual comfort.

I occasionally do these tarot card readings with Dorothy, but I always take them with quite the grain of salt as my logical mathematical mind cannot believe that anything "true" is being imparted by the random selection of the cards. However, long ago I understood how beneficial it is for Dorothy to do these tarot card readings, and her flexible way of interpreting the cards enables me to enjoy doing these readings with her and to find a way of obtaining both psychological and spiritual value in the process. Thus I encouraged Dorothy to do a tarot card reading the night before we left Buffalo. When she asked me what we should ask the cards, I responded that we should each ask the cards a question-and I knew what I would ask.

To begin with, Dorothy asked the cards how she would get through the grieving process for her mom. And what she got

from the cards was that she needed to continue her creative development and our plans of getting married next year, while coming to terms with the deep sadness and loss of her mom. I was glad to see Dorothy receive/interpret this information from the cards, especially the part about our marriage, and I would have been quite content to leave things there and not ask the cards my own question. But Dorothy would not let me off the hook and now it was my turn.

My question was: Is Doris still "out there"?

The response/interpretation that I received from the cards was that I too needed to continue to engage in my creative development while coming to terms with the deep sadness and loss of Dorothy's mom. And when Dorothy asked me how this answered my question, it did not take me long to realize that the cards were telling me that I could not get an answer to my question in the way that I was thinking of. For I was planning to take Dorothy to Temple Heights Spiritualist Camp, near where I live in Maine, U.S.A., to have a session with medium Steve Hermann, who was the source of much of my previous writing about my experiential exploration of the authenticity of mediumship (Benjamin, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b). But the cards were telling me that this would not be an effective way of answering my question, and would not be a source of comfort to Dorothy. And then Dorothy asked me to choose my "angel card." Randomly choosing an angel card is something that Dorothy always does after a tarot card reading, and the angel card she had chosen for herself this time was "healing." Choosing an angel card is generally meaningful and comforting for both of us, as we are able to readily assimilate the words of nearly all the angel cards to have personal and therapeutic value for us. Yes this healing angel card was exactly what Dorothy needed. And my angel card said something along the lines of "my personal angel is with me."

When I saw what my angel card said, Dorothy and I shared a profound moment as the tears welled up in each of us and I said that this was her mom, and Dorothy said "that's right" and we sank into each other's arms. It felt right to me. Dorothy's mom was my personal angel. Then Dorothy asked me how this could go along with my tarot card reading that told me I could not gain any information about if Dorothy's mom was still "out there." My genuine response was that the cards were telling me I could not get an answer through the kind of logistics I was thinking of-us having a mediumship session with Steve-but that in spite of this, Dorothy's mom was telling me that she truly was "there," and furthermore that she was "there for me." The way she was telling me this was by going past my mind, reaching my deepest spiritual self. Dorothy and I both felt satisfied and comforted with this explanation.

As I am writing this, it has now been nearly 2 weeks since Dorothy's mom died and 4 days since we have returned to Maine from Buffalo, and I don't know what to think of what I experienced with Dorothy. I "want" to believe. But my relentless intellectual mind "knows" that what happened was nothing more than an easily explained chance reading during a highly vulnerable and emotional grieving process. However, I think back to arch-skeptic Martin Gardner's description of his personal philosophy of Fideism. In regard to my openness

to continue to explore the possibility of a bona fide phenomenon of life after death, as I described at the conclusion of my Mediumship Mastery workshop last year (Benjamin, 2014b), I will say that much of my openness is not entirely unlike the openness to a belief in God that prolific and well-respected skeptic Martin Gardner surprisingly maintained, as described by well-known skeptic Michael Shermer (2002):

Fideism refers to believing something on the basis of faith, or emotional reasons rather than intellectual reasons. As a fideist I don't think there are any arguments that prove the existence of God or the immortality of the soul. More than that I think the better arguments are on the side of the atheists. So it is a case of quixotic emotional belief that really is against the evidence. If you have strong emotional reasons for metaphysical belief and it's not sharply contradicted by science or logical reasoning, you have a right to make a leap of faith if it provides sufficient satisfaction. (p. 276)

Now I would not go as far as Gardner in "believing" in something that is "against the evidence," but the emotional needs that Gardner refers to is something I completely understand. This is very much why I was open to Steve Hermann's advice that "I need to meditate and engage in healing energy work," because it "feels right" to my inner deeper self to engage in this kind of activity (Benjamin, 2014b). Yes I fully understand what Martin Gardner is describing above-both intellectually and emotionally. I too feel the emotional need to "believe." And this is why I will go back to Temple Heights Spiritualist Camp-not to gain "information" about if Doris is still "out there." The tarot cards were right-it would not be helpful for either me or Dorothy to go back to Temple Heights in this way. However, being in a comforting spiritual environment with people who believe they are making contact with their deceased loved ones has a very strong emotional appeal for me. And it is for this reason that I will go back to Temple Heights Spiritualist Camp.

### **Mediumship Sessions in Our Grieving Process (8/25/15)**

This is a difficult time for both of us, and Dorothy is trying her best to work through her grief constructively. She needs much time alone, to be in her own space and deal with her difficult feelings. I am making my best effort to be understanding and supportive of her, but it is also challenging for me as I feel lonely and miss the lighter and comfortable companionship we had previously enjoyed for most of the time during the past few months that we have been living together in our new house. I had found a mediumship workshop this weekend that seems like it may be helpful for both me and Dorothy that we are planning on attending, and it involves gaining access to our deeper selves. I wasn't planning on attending any additional mediumship sessions or workshops on my own. However, as I worked through my feelings of loneliness and depression being with Dorothy, as she is so low key during this time of profound sadness and loss for her, I remembered back to my recent insight of why I chose to have us both go back to Temple Heights Spiritualist Camp. And I realized that it may be helpful and comforting for me to go back to Temple

Heights myself first. Thus tonight I am planning on attending a mediumship session about channeling spirits.

### **Pennies from Heaven (8/26/15)**

Last night turned out to be an interesting mediumship event for me at Temple Heights. This was part of a weekly series of classes being given in the area of psychic development and spiritual development, all conducted by the same medium. The focus of last night's class was on "channeling," meaning the supposed infusion of a spiritual entity into one's being. The nature of the spiritual entity being infused is not at all clearly specified, and can range from a departed spirit who once had bodily form to a biblical angel to a mysterious undifferentiated spiritual entity. The medium conducting our class was lively, vivacious, extremely outgoing, and full of energy. After giving us a brief informational portrayal of some famous historical channelers, she proceeded to give us a demonstration of her own channeling of diverse spiritual entities. Although this was both interesting and calming to me, it did not have significant impact on helping me feel more energized to continue being supportive to Dorothy as she works through her grieving process.

However, toward the end of our session the medium asked if we would like to experience channeling for ourselves in this class. There were four people in the class, composed of myself and three women, and we all agreed to try this out. The medium took us on a standard kind of visualization-riding higher and higher on a multi-colored elevator representing our different chakras. When it was time to get off the elevator and meet our spiritual entity that we would be channeling, I found myself back in Dorothy's mom's apartment, with Dorothy and her mom there. It was a pleasant feeling for me, and Dorothy's mom was telling me that I should embrace music for me and Dorothy, and that we should get back to our ballroom dancing. I didn't want to leave Doris' apartment, but our medium was taking us back down the elevator to our session room in Temple Heights, and I followed the instructions.

Now let me once again emphasize that in this article I am not particularly concerned with the authenticity of what I experience, but rather with its effectiveness in helping me and Dorothy work through our grief process. I am especially interested in what I experience if it helps me to continue to be supportive to Dorothy as she works through grieving over the death of her mom. And I knew inside my self that my "visit" with Dorothy's mom was going to be very beneficial to me in this way. However, my experience last night went further, as the medium proceeded to go to each of us and convey the images and impressions she had gotten when we were "channeling" our spiritual entities.

When the medium got to me, she said that she had gotten a very strong image of "pennies." This did not click for me with anything about Dorothy's mom, and I told the medium that this did not have meaning for me. But the medium was persistent and she kept trying to get me to make an association with pennies. Finally she came out with the phrase "pennies from heaven," and I could feel the energy vibrate and course through my being. "Pennies from Heaven" was one of the old popular songs I would frequently play on the piano in

my nursing home gigs, and I often played this song during my Thanksgiving holiday piano performances in Dorothy's mom's senior apartment complex. Pennies from Heaven was also one of the eight songs that I maintained from memory for over half a century as my old standards piano repertoire. So yes, "pennies from heaven" certainly had much personal meaning for me as a connection to Dorothy's mom, and was directly related to what Doris had just conveyed to me in my "channeling," about embracing music for me and Dorothy. And to make things even more interesting, it turned out that the medium had never even heard of the song Pennies from Heaven!

So what did all this mean? If I were engaging in my previous mediumship authenticity research, I would offer a variety of interpretations-ranging from a skeptical chance association interpretation to a bona fide channeling the spirit of Dorothy's mom interpretation. But as I am now specifically concerned only with the question of how this experience affected my ability to be there for Dorothy during her grieving process, the meaning of this experience is very clear to me. It was an enormous boost for me, as I felt energized and in a much better frame of mind to be there for Dorothy when I got home. I conveyed what I experienced to Dorothy, and I can already see a significant shift and definite improvement in Dorothy's ability to work through her grieving process in a constructive way. It is also clear to me that it was the aspect of me actively experiencing something myself, rather than passively listening to what a medium is experiencing, that was the crucial factor that resulted in the shift for me, and consequently for Dorothy. The workshop I'll be taking Dorothy to this weekend is also one that focuses on the experiences of the participants, and hopefully this will have significant benefit to Dorothy as she continues to mourn the death of her mom. This workshop is entitled "Trust in Your Gifts" and the description of the workshop is as follows:

Learning to trust in yourself is one of the first things you must do to communicate with Spirit. Sandra has taught some of the most well known international mediums how to do just that. Come learn her unique techniques to challenge and teach you what your psychic gifts are. This class is interactive and you are sure to come away feeling as though you are at least one step closer to Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Trust in Your Gifts (8/29/15)**

This was a disappointing workshop for both me and Dorothy. The medium was interesting, humorous, and lively, and talked for much of the session, interspersed with using props such as colorful cards and feathers for us to gain insights about ourselves and practice "reading" others. I could go on and on to give much more specific descriptions about this workshop, but suffice it to say that for the purpose of this article the workshop was not helpful to Dorothy in her process of coming to terms with the death of her mom. Nothing in this workshop prompted Dorothy to tell anyone about her loss, and the props did not have much personal meaning for her. As my main purpose for attending this workshop was to bring Dorothy to a beneficial and supportive atmosphere for her to feel a connection to her mom, this workshop was disappointing to me as well.

However, the workshop was not violating to Dorothy and did not put her on the spot or make her feel uncomfortable, and it got her used to being back at Temple Heights. However, the lightness and humor of this workshop did not at all relate to her mood of deep heaviness over the loss of her mom. But when I suggested to Dorothy that perhaps attending a traditional mediumship group setting where everyone gets a reading may be what she now needs, I was somewhat surprised to see that she was open to my suggestion. I'm trying hard to remove my mediumship authenticity hat and just be there for Dorothy as she goes through her grief process, because I love her. I feel bad that I did not come through for Dorothy this morning. We both agree that Steve is not the medium we want to have a session with-individual or group-and there is just one more week for the Temple Heights season and two mediums to choose from, Steve being one of them. But let's see if something positive can still happen for Dorothy at Temple Heights this summer.

#### **Afterword (9/1/15).**

A few days ago Dorothy had us check out a local medium over the internet, saying that she wanted to "talk" to her mom, although it turned out this medium did not resonate with either of us. And last night Dorothy wanted to watch a video about the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and I could see that she wanted me to watch this with her. It was challenging for me to be watch the video without responding negatively to the extensive and graphic rituals regarding the Tibetan culture's belief in life after death and reincarnation.

But I understood how delicate this whole issue is for Dorothy, and we ended up being able to communicate about the movie in a caring and authentic way. I think this also helped set the stage for our final session at Temple Heights, which will be a Saturday night group mediumship session ("Spirit Message Circle")<sup>2</sup> with one of the mediums (not Steve) who is available during this last week at Temple Heights.

#### **The Night Before "Spirit Message Circle" (9/6/15)**

It is now Friday night and Dorothy and I are planning on attending the Spirit Message Circle at Temple Heights tomorrow night. It has been a difficult week for Dorothy, and consequently for me as well. The sadness and heaviness often overwhelm Dorothy, as she is very vulnerable right now and it is all that she can do to maintain her presence at her demanding professional job. I am trying my best to give her the space and privacy that she needs, and to be there for her when she needs me. But it is very difficult and challenging for me to see Dorothy so sad so much of the time, and to retain my good spirits to be there for her in the way that she needs me to be. I very much hope that our session at Temple Heights tomorrow night will be comforting to Dorothy, and that I will be able to accept whatever it is that she experiences without needing to get analytical and question whether or not it is "authentic." If there were ever a time for me to put into practice what I describe about truly being agnostic and open to spiritual matters, this is the time. I love Dorothy so much and I want to be there for her so much. I "pray" that our mediumship session at Temple Heights tomorrow night will be a source of comfort to her, and that I am able to share in this source of comfort and not diminish it for her in any way.

I am leaving it completely up to Dorothy if she decides to go through with our plans to attend this mediumship session at Temple Heights, but I believe that she does want to go through with our plans and that we will go.

### **Spirit Message Circle (9/17/15)**

It has been 11 days since Dorothy and I attended our Saturday night Spirit Message Circle at Temple Heights. It was successful, in regard to helping Dorothy feel better in her grieving process. Once again, leaving behind my mediumship authenticity hat, what happened is that the medium told Dorothy that she was seeing her mother and that Dorothy and her mother were similar in spirit. The medium said a number of other things to Dorothy, some of which resonated and some of which did not. But the bottom line is that what the medium said about she and her mother being similar in spirit had significant therapeutic value for Dorothy. The medium also said some interesting things about my brother, and a bit about my mother, but my focus was on Dorothy and this did not have a great deal of impact for me. However, I could see an immediate improvement in Dorothy's state of mind, and for this I was very thankful.

Dorothy "felt" that the medium made contact with her mother, and I was able to not say anything that took away from her feeling this. Dorothy's birthday was approaching, and I decided to give her three books on grieving as part of her birthday presents, one of which was about healing grief through mediumship by celebrated medium James Van Praagh (2001), which I had read soon after my brother died in 2005. Another book was about helping to go through the grief process through experiencing, directly by oneself, ostensible bona fide connections with one's deceased loved ones, by spiritual grief counselor Louis LeGrand (2006), and the third book was the well-known and acclaimed grief book by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler (2005). I spent an intensive three days before Dorothy's birthday re-reading the Van Praagh book and reading the other two books.

Dorothy's birthday was last weekend, and part of our weekend was pleasant and refreshing for both of us as we biked and hiked in Acadia National Park and had dinner in the restaurant where we first met. However, Dorothy had a difficult time spending her first birthday without her mother, as I expected she would. Kubler-Ross and Kessler (2005) describe in detail the sadness one often experiences spending a first birthday without one's loved one. But Dorothy has assimilated her birthday weekend in a good way and I believe she is now in a constructive process of getting back to enjoying life and our relationship. Dorothy frequently spends part of her evenings reading through the three books on grief that I gave her for her birthday, and I have no doubt that she is gaining value from the spiritual perspectives in the books, including the perspective on mediumship. She talked about being open to coming back to Temple Heights, but my sense right now is that she is able to constructively work through her grief process without needing more confirmation from a medium that her mother is still "out there." I think that Dorothy already believes this, and that our Temple Heights session with the medium helped reinforce this belief for Dorothy. And I have every intention of not interfering in what

Dorothy believes. Rather, I am very thankful that her mediumship session was helpful to her in this process.

### **Reflections on 9/24**

It is now a week later, and I can see that Dorothy is most definitely getting back to her generally positive and uplifting state of mind that she had during the first two months of her working part-time and us living together, before her mother died. She is continuing to read the three books on grieving I gave her for her birthday, as well as two additional books on grieving that she ordered herself. But the book that has by far the most comfort and meaning for her is the book by Kubler-Ross and Kessler (2005). And this makes me realize that the aspects of mediumship pertaining to grief is not what appears to be most beneficial in helping Dorothy to assimilate her mother's death and get back to her positive state of mind. Rather it is the deep psychological work that she has been doing on herself in regard to losing her mother, which I tremendously respect. This difficult work has been significantly reinforced and helped by her reading the Kubler-Ross & Kessler (2005) book. It appears to me now that our spirit message circle mediumship session helped Dorothy and was very important to her at the time, but that in itself was not nearly enough for her to make the kind of progress she now is making. Similarly, I think the focus of the two books on grieving that I gave to her that pertain to our loved ones continuing to exist after death (LaGrand, 2006; Van Praagh, 2001) were helpful to her but are not what is central to the kind of progress she is now making.

A few days ago Dorothy asked me if I thought that her mom and dad were now together in spirit, as her mom frequently would talk about looking forward to this, and I was careful to say that I was agnostic about these kind of things but that it was certainly possible. And then just last night Dorothy conveyed to me that she now realizes that what is important to her is that her mom and dad are together "in her heart." In other words, what is central to Dorothy is that she "feels" the presence of her mom and dad being together in spirit, aside from the authenticity question of whether this is true or not. Thus when I think about the value of mediumship in the significant progress Dorothy currently is making, its impact does not appear to me to be as far-reaching as I initially thought it would be. What I see as being much more far-reaching is the deep psychological work that Dorothy is doing on herself, and I am very glad that she now has the time and space to be able to do this kind of work on herself. But most important of all, I am very thankful to see this woman whom I love so much being able to once again get enjoyment out of life. Dorothy and I will be soon resuming our ballroom dancing as we will be taking a ballroom dancing class that begins in a few days, she is now going to exercise classes three times a week, and she has begun reading a light novel to accompany all her grief books. Whatever has contributed to Dorothy once again being able to get enjoyment out of life, I am thankful for.

### **Conclusion**

Through the personal experiential research that I have described in regard to my significant other and myself going through the grieving process over the death of my significant other's mother, I have experienced firsthand the beneficial

value of mediumship in this process. This kind of beneficial value is reinforced by the literature on the grieving process, which is consistent with what I have learned through my personal experiential research. However, this beneficial value is separate from the authenticity of whether or not there is life after death and if mediums truly are able to communicate with deceased spirits. Rather, this beneficial value is fully based upon the experience of the person who is grieving being able to "feel" a continued connection with the loss of his or her loved one. However, in the context of what I have learned from my personal experiential research, the benefits of mediumship in the grieving process may be a part of a person's process of returning to a more positive state of mind but may not be the most important part of the process. Rather, the person doing deep psychological work on his/herself to assimilate the loss of his/her loved one may be the most important aspect of grieving to return to a more positive state of mind.

### Notes

1. See the material about my brother and in particular my essay *The Treasurer* in my book *The Creative Artist, Mental Health and Mental Disturbance* (Benjamin, 2014c).
2. See all descriptions of the Temple Heights workshops and medium sessions that I am describing in this article in the 2015 Temple Heights Spiritualist Camp brochure (National Spiritualist Association of Churches, 2015).
3. Division 5 of the American Psychological Association is currently entitled "Quantitative and Qualitative Methods."

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