

## **The Elephant in the Room**

**July 20, 2014**

I cheated.

A client who'd been to see me in the past was coming for a second visit, and bringing her mother. For some reason that day I was questioning my mediumship abilities, so I did something I have never, ever done before.

I looked back at my notes from our earlier reading.

During message circles and individual readings I write down my impressions in a regular composition notebook like. Just names if they come to me, a symptom, what a tattoo or piece of jewelry might look like.

After the reading is over, I circle in red the items that the client was able to identify; put a question mark over those the client was unsure of; and an X over a client's rejection of something. Then I grade myself. It's just for me.

I have a number of repeat clients, but I have never looked back at these books when a client returns. Not once. I avoid it because in part I feel it's slightly unethical. Secondly, it's too easy. I never want to work from my memory, and I tell clients not to be surprised if I don't recognize them. I make it a point to forget every name, face, and reading so I can assure *myself* that I'm working mediumistically and not from memory. Clients have come to my door and I introduce myself and they say, "I've been here three times," so my efforts to forget clients and the details of their readings has been very effective.

But on this day, I looked back. I cannot tell you why I did, except that I woke up that morning with a bad case of imposter syndrome. So I told myself a little lie: I said, "I'll look back at my notes from Tanya's first reading and this will help me connect with her spirit people. This will be how I alert them that I want them to come through."

What a load of BS. On more than one level of my mind, I knew this was a lie.

I flipped back through the pages of the previous notebook until I found Tanya's first reading, and I saw when I got to it that she had come with a friend the first time. I didn't remember her, her reading, or what she looked like, but I saw that I'd graded their reading an A+. The page was filled with red circles. There were no Xs or ?s.

I studied the red circles, certain of the ones that applied to Tanya and not her friend. When Tanya and her mother came for their reading I launched into this recitation of who was here... and missed every one. I failed so badly, I offered to end the session and not charge, but Tanya wanted

to continue. I closed my eyes and threw myself at God's feet and I begged for mercy. "You take over," I pleaded. "I don't deserve it, but please take over this reading."

My mind cleared, my ego diminished and I was able to see which spirit people were actually present. I did all right after that, but I could tell her mother was rather underwhelmed. Tanya enjoyed herself, but I suspect it was largely because the first reading she'd had with me had impressed her.

What a lesson. I will never cheat again.

What made me do that? If thought my confidence was low before that reading, it was rock-bottom afterwards. I knew I'd cheated though, and looking honestly at that allowed me to turn around that negative experience into a genuine understanding of success.

You see, I had an idea of what success would be. My ego and conscious mind knows exactly what success looks like. But that was a lie. That wasn't real success and it didn't result in real success.

The most astonishing, A+ readings I have are when my ego is not at *all* involved. There are moments in my sessions during which I almost completely dissociate. These are perfect moments. I seem to be simply observing information as it comes into my mind and out of my mouth -- bypassing my conscious thought process entirely. These are moments when God is present and the smaller part of me is crowded out.

This is why I circle those successes in these notebooks. It's a testament to my ego's absence; it's a testament to being in God's service; to connection and to inspiration.

The term "inspiration" is found in the New Testament one time (2 Tim. 3:16).

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness."

The Greek word used in the Bible for "inspired" in this passage is "theopneustos," which is actually a compound term. Its two parts (theos and pneustos) literally mean "God-breathed."

When I surrender to God's version of success, I am inspired. God breathes into me, and I speak *His* success. Not my ridiculous version of it.

This is why years ago I stopped meditating before readings. I used to do so, but I wasn't actually clearing my mind, I was thinking a lot about the client and overanalyzing the experience and involving my ego expectations of how success might translate. For years now I do small tasks, read, wash the dishes, any small thing to do to keep myself from planning my "successful" appointment. When my chatterbox ego is not involved, *God's* success enters.

The lies we tell ourselves stand in the way of success, because they stand in the way of God. If I think I know the best thing for myself, I can't hear God's word or receive God's breath and I prevent genuine inspiration. But the ego hates to let go of control though, doesn't it? Our minds successfully use fear, envy, comparison, judgment, and self-esteem to trick us into creating a big lie, a big fantasy about success. The ego tricks us into believing that surrendering to God means losing control and risking failure. I fall for that trick too often.

Last night at my message circle one guest acknowledged a connection with his grandfather in spirit. He wanted answers, he wanted assurance he was on the right path to success. As spirit people often are, the grandfather was being a bit cagey and evasive. Yet the guest pressed me for instructions to get out of his current dilemma.

His grandfather said, "Deal with the elephant in the room. Look honestly at yourself. Bring everything up for examination that is deep in your own heart." He went on to ask, "*Why* are you on this path? Look at your calling; it may change, or the path may change. Be honest about this."

My guest replied that he didn't know what his grandfather was talking about, and this wasn't the answer to his question anyway. And he pressed him again: "What am I supposed to do? Tell me how to deal with this."

The grandfather in spirit said to him, "I've gone through this same struggles you're having, and over the course of my life I worked them out. Now you want a cheat sheet, you want crib notes. You can't have them. This is your work, I already did mine." The spirit said, "Slow down. Listen for inspiration. Don't try to figure it all out."

As you can imagine my guest wasn't much mollified by this answer. He responded to me, "My grandfather wouldn't have said that. That doesn't sound like the way he would talk," even though all of the other family members at the circle were nodding their heads enthusiastically.

But I got it.

There is so much guidance when we are open to God's word and inspiration. There is no failure when we listen to God. There's only failure when we believe the lies we tell ourselves. That elephant in the room is a gift from God. The ego says, *Ignore it*. But God says, *Look here*.

If you wonder why you're not getting any traction on your dreams or goals, the ego says "Ignore that big thing obstructing your view and blame the problem on something outside yourself." If you listen to God when faced with obstacles you understand the call to "Look here! Look right at this giant thing standing in front of you. Don't deny it!"

I lied to myself because I was listening to my ego so I couldn't hear God. As Flip Wilson used to say, "The Devil made me do it." Now, I don't really believe in the devil, but the ego is as real as

hell. My ego made me focus on fear, made me believe for a moment that I wasn't enough. And I fell for it, and fortunately the consequences were immediate and painfully clear.

I know when I feel that fear again, if I wake up with imposter syndrome again, I'm going to skip right to the part where I throw myself at God's feet and beg for mercy. Where I ask, "Please, You take over."

Amen.