

This excerpt is from Jeff Tarrant, PhD, BCN's new book, "Becoming Psychic: Lessons from the Minds of Mediums, Healers, and Psychics." Reprinted with permission from Health Communications, Inc.

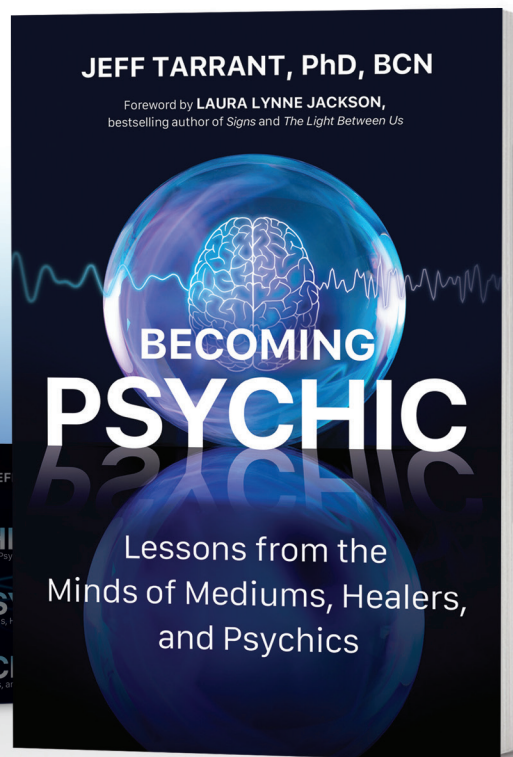
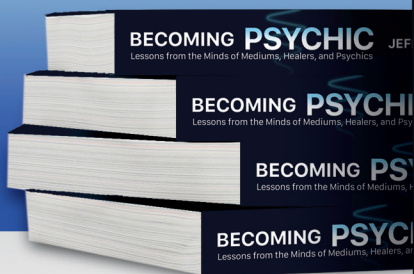
## THE PSYCHOMANTEUM

ONLY A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE EXPERIENCE with Greg, I was scheduled to spend a few days in Long Island, New York, conducting some more EEG experiments with psychics and mediums. I was staying at the home of Bob and Phran Ginsberg who run the Forever Family Foundation. They told me they had constructed a psychomanteum in their basement that was built to the identical specifications used by Arthur Hastings in his research (2002).

When I first heard they had a psychomanteum, I had to look it up—I had no idea what this thing was. Basically, it is a small room, covered entirely in black. In this case, it was constructed out of sturdy PVC pipe with thick black cloth hung on all sides and a black rug on the ground. Inside this black box is a black office chair that can recline. Accompanying the chair was a small black footrest. This allowed the person inside to sit in the chair, lean back, and put their feet up. Directly across from the chair, hanging toward the top of the wall was a mirror. The mirror was positioned in such a way that the person sitting in the chair could not see themselves. There was only one small night light on the back floor of this compartment. All of the lights outside the psychomanteum were turned off. The instructions given to me were to relax in the chair and simply gaze at the mirror, allowing any experiences to naturally emerge. footnote: In formal psychomanteum research studies, the instructions are a bit more elaborate and involve identifying a particular deceased person that the sitter wishes to contact. The sitter is encouraged to talk about the deceased in great detail and then clear the mind of everything except the deceased individual (Moody and Perry, 1994).

Because I tend to experiment on myself and was interested, I found an opportunity during the early morning to hook myself up with an EEG cap and place myself in the small, dark chamber. I kept the computer outside of the contraption to eliminate any additional light.

Almost immediately, I had this very strange bodily sensation that lasted for nearly the entire forty-five-minute session. It felt as though the atoms in my body were buzzing, like they were kicking into a higher rate of vibration. This was a very unusual sensation and caused me a little anxiety at the beginning. Not because it was unpleasant, but because I wanted to move my body in response to the energy and because the way these types of sensations are typically experienced is related to nervousness or panic. There was also something about the situation that felt "creepy," for lack of a better term. It was not that anything bad or scary was happening, it was more of a feeling associated with the unknown. It reminded me of times when I was a kid and would play with a Ouija board and felt that I was touching something beyond this world.



As the session progressed, I found my mind entering a kind of trance state. My body felt energized and fast, but my mind felt quiet. I started to see images. It was odd, because it was the kind of imagery you might have when you are sitting with your eyes closed, but in this case my eyes were open, gazing at the mirror. At one point I saw a few faces. It was not scary, but it was unexpected. The images were vague, and I could not necessarily make out distinct features to tell who they were. While still in the experience, I focused on one face that had a distinct shape. As soon as I did that, I recognized the face as my Great-Grandpa Berg. It was not that I saw his face clearly, I just knew that this is who it was. This sense of knowing was strong and clear. It also did not feel like I was trying to create meaning—it was just obvious. Nothing else happened with these faces. They were there and then they were not. Throughout the session I would see things in my mind's eye, and often it was difficult to hold on to the image in a conscious way. It was almost like a dream state where you wake up and then must remember what just happened. Some of the images that moved through my mind included a horse's head and a large ball of light. There was also one point during the session where I mentally "asked" if any entities present could identify themselves. Almost as soon as I sent out the question to the spirit world, I forgot about it. (Remember I was in a fairly heavy trance state, making it hard to hold on to normal mental functions.) A few minutes later, I very clearly heard the name "Lucy." This was odd for me as I do not know anyone named Lucy and have no way to connect this information to anything, however, the name was crystal clear.

Probably the most impactful moment of the session occurred near the beginning. I was not thinking or intending anything, and I heard in my mind someone say, "Just because I am no longer with you, doesn't mean I stopped loving you." It was a female voice that I heard in my head, but again it did not seem to be coming from me. It was a very comforting thing to hear and felt like it was more of a general message for everyone rather than something specific for me. It gave me the feeling that the deceased are somehow still connected to us when they die. They are looking over us and working with us in ways we don't perceive. It was an understanding that love is what it is all about. I actually did not share this experience with anyone after I left the psychomanteum. I felt a little embarrassed by it, like it sounded contrived in some way, so I just kept it to myself.

As I left the psychomanteum I felt dazed. I did not want to talk and was in an altered state. It took me a solid hour of walking around, eating some food, and processing my experience (except for the love message) with the rest of the group before I felt more normal. As I think about it, I am not sure I felt "normal" at all for the rest of the day.

