

# Grief, Separation and the Use of Mediums

By Merle Meyers

***Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God. - Leviticus 19:31 NASB***

Between 1450 to 1410 B.C. God, for the benefit of Israel warns His people not to get involved with those who say they can contact the dead, and be a communicator or even a ventriloquist for a familiar spirit (e.g. a deceased loved one or a friend). Psychics, who predict a client's future, as well as mediums, who claim to be in contact with the dead have been around for at least 3500 years.

Skilled psychics and mediums are effective at "mining" information of one seeking a psychic. Often, the medium gets information about the bereaved person from a well-intending friend or family member. All the medium needs is a name and he or she can get a wealth of information from internet and social media sources in advance of the first meeting.

Much of the activity today is done through *psychic readings* using high-probability guesses where they will eventually make a "hit." "I see a little girl and her father (now deceased) playing in a stream." "Oh my goodness, my dad and I played in a stream when I was little!" But what if the psychic was wrong? "No, my dad was not around when I was a little girl." This is not a problem for a skilled psychic. Without admitting he was wrong, he can walk it back and say "That must have been another spirit in the vicinity." Or equivalent. This could benefit his deception in two ways – he would get more information about the woman's past, and she will likely not lose confidence in his psychic ability.

Psychics don't go door to door seeking prospective clients. Prospective clients seek out psychics because they tend to *want to be sold*. They are looking for relief from their emotional pain.

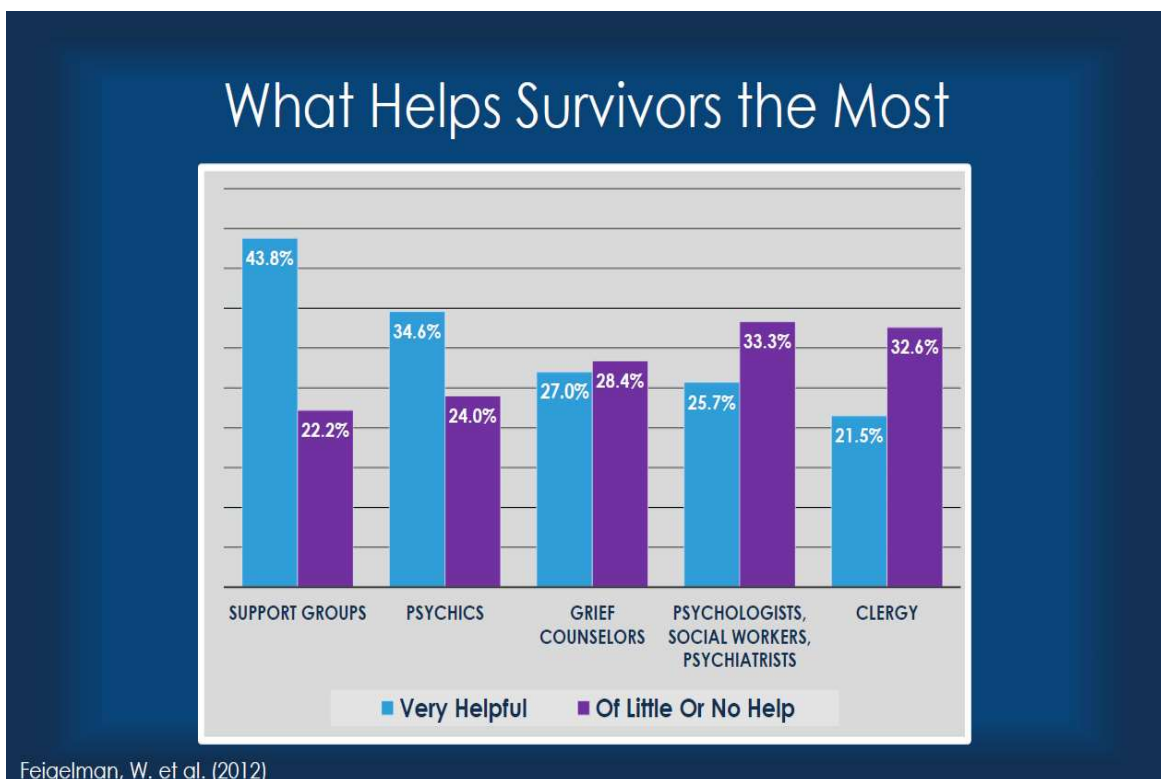
In 2019 while attending the *Restorative Reconnections with the Deceased* conference in Seattle hosted by prominent trauma psychiatrists, there was a distinguished panel of psychologists, psychiatrists, and therapists discussing a wide range of topics, one being, are psychics and mediums effective in supporting their clients?

One of the panelists brought several clients up from Oregon to discuss their experience with their psychic or medium. All of the clients, mostly, women in their 20's, heard several panelists citing studies that debunked psychic methods and results.

Before sharing their personal experiences, these clients heard quite a "dressing-down" by the panel regarding this industry which provides, at best, a fraudulent service. However, none of

this changed any of the views of the clients. All were survivors of sudden and violent death of spouses and partners. "S/he made me feel better." These were young adult clients with most of their lives, child-rearing and careers ahead of them.

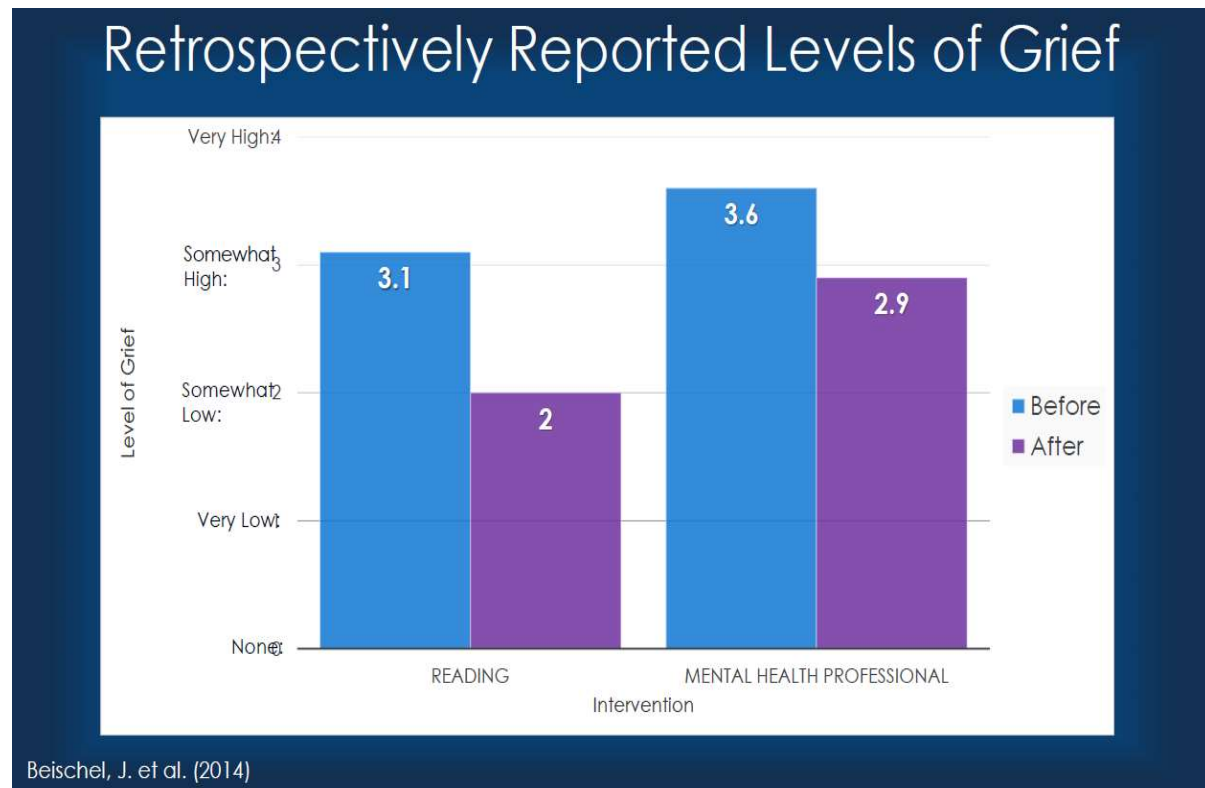
The Feigelman, W. et al (2012) research below shows the consulting of Psychics by the bereaved to be more effective than consulting the Clergy (the local church). Of the five categories listed, the clergy/church was the *least effective*, and the *second most ineffective*. The consulting of psychics were shown to be the *second most effective*, and the *fourth most ineffective*.



Of the five categories, *the most effective and least ineffective* was the Support Groups. Support groups are often facilitated but not led. This means there is *Companionship* happening there, a genuine process of coming alongside to accompany the Griever in their own process.

On our own Grief and Trauma Chaplaincy website we have educational materials on Companionship in the RESOURCES tab, which can be carried out with one client or a group of two or more.

The Beischal, J. et al (2014) research below shows the level of relief of grief symptoms experienced by the bereaved after having a psychic reading, versus a visit to a mental health care professional, which could be a therapist, coach or grief counselor.



The relief from emotional pain after a visit to both is significant, with the psychic reading providing equal or greater relief.

**My first major area of concern** is that psychics (mediums) are neither trained nor experienced in critical areas of trauma, grief work, brain physiology, or subsequent emotional healing.

**My second major area of concern** is that psychics unscrupulously mine information to formulate a confidence game, with the result of selling a "happy ending" to what is so often a tragic story involving the death of a loved one e.g. "*Her spirit is in the room with us right now. She says that she loves you!*" This kind of happy ending makes the emotionally vulnerable feel better...for a while. In a pathological way, the psychic is making the griever part of the death story that they were not involved in (suicide, homicide, car crash) by saying that the departed one's spirit is talking to you right now. There are healthy and bona-fide ways of becoming part of those stories through reframing techniques. However, denying clients their grief for a season with the motive of profiting from their loss is taking advantage, and is not ultimately

helpful. The psychic has inserted their own perspective into the story and the story no longer belongs to the client.

**My third concern** is that by avoiding the pain by means of repression, or “stuffing down” the pain, the griever, a) “Buries alive” this emotional energy only to have it “resurrect” later in a form that is not recognizable, and is subject to misdiagnosis. The emotional energy of grief and the symptoms do not go away, but are repressed and go unprocessed, and b) the griever does not acquire the tools/experiences necessary to integrate these significant life losses into their life and move forward with their loved one firmly committed to memory. They don’t become resilient to current and future significant life losses. We see this happen when careers are over, spouses and friends (the support networks) die, financial resources are significantly limited, and isolation contributing to lack of emotional resources, as seen during the COVID lockdown.

*A message to Pastors and church leaders:* A healthy church functioning in The Scriptures, is by default going to be prepared to go alongside members to go through the wilderness journey of loss and separation, which protects the flock from being fleeced by charlatans.



We encourage clients to work with health providers or trusted listeners that are genuinely concerned for the client’s ability to cope and adapt to the impacts and changes since their loss. The psychic/medium is specifically retelling the client’s story for them and inviting them to agree, rather than facilitating each client telling their own story first to a trustworthy listener, and then perhaps to the world. The psychic is intellectually gathering information and forming a narrative, but does not feel what the client feels. The client does feel better for a time, as long as they agree with the provided narrative, but I believe it is important to honor each person’s story as they tell it themselves, exposing their wounds to light and fresh air so they can fully heal and then create their unique and authentic new life.