

# The difference between physical and spiritual

When working with spirit either on the platform, haunted house or generally out and about, it is very easy to misconstrue general physical feelings as being literally paranormal. We programme ourselves to think that when we are in a particular situation, that we should act and sense in a particular way. If you go to someone's house you had just had an argument on the telephone with, then automatically before you have even rang the doorbell, your body will have create adrenaline, your mind will be highly focused to sense violence or overtly angry postures. The same is when we approach a 'paranormal' situation.

Below is a rough guide to some of the more common sensations and experiences that are reported by witnesses and mediums. See them as pointers to help you become more focused in your mediumship, allowing you to remove sensations that are not connected with the spirit / ghost you are trying to connect with.

## **Autokinesis (autokinetic effect)**

Autokinesis is a phenomenon of sight in which a stationary, small point of light or object in the dark appears to move. Often witnesses report that an object in the dark (like a glow in the dark ball or fire alarm light) will be erratically moving up and down, left and right. If there are multiple witnesses the movement of the light or object will not corroborate. The cause to this effect is presumed to occur when there is little or no eye movement, this usually happens during darkness or a featureless environment where there are no reference points. Because of a lack of peripheral information, eye movements which correct the involuntary eye movements (autokinetically) are wrongly attributed in the brain as a movement of the perceived light or object.

## **Muscle Spasms**

Have you ever been tapped on the shoulder or prodded in the back by an invisible entity? A lot of people claim to have, not realising that the majority of the time the explanation could be down to spasms of the skeletal muscles. As a medium you must question how and why such phenomena occurs, and whether it can be explained away. Usually muscle spasms are caused by muscle fatigue (especially during late night ghost hunts), dehydration and electrolyte abnormalities. Spasms can occur abruptly, be painful and is usually short-lived. If the spasm (or prodding/tapping) continues ask the witness to stretch lightly and this should stop it.

## **Dizziness**

Your vision constantly affects not only your perceptions of an area or person but also can affect sensors in your brain and body. The effect of feeling dizzy has been reported countless times with many mediums and tutors prepared to claim that this is an affect of spirit interactivity. Once again we have to express caution to this theory.

Most causes of dizziness is due to visual influences, simple things such moving environments (a busy road), moving crowds or walking down a monotonous aisle of a supermarket can all cause visual vertigo.

In the case of ghost hunting, not having enough visual information i.e. walking through a corridor or tunnel and even open spaces can affect your balance. The reason why we are affected this way is that our eyes get their information about which way up we are from the environment around us. This information is taken from vertical structures such as buildings, these structures have to be quote close to us to be useful for our balance system. Most environments used during ghost hunts take place during the dark or at least low light, these do not provide enough visual information or inaccurate visual information, which again will result in feeling dizzy or unsteady.

## **Visual Stimulus**

There can be two types of visual stimuli that we can misinterpret as mediums, firstly in low-light conditions we might misidentify something as 'normal' as a coat on a chair as being a person sat down or a piece of graffiti in a cave as being a dark spirit. My point is that to be progressive mediums, we must investigate, investigate, investigate. Never take anything on face value!



# The difference between physical and spiritual

The second stimuli can come from how a location or person is observed. We cannot stop ourselves from judging or working out whether a location is threatening or friendly and the same can be said about people. Many sceptics will say that mediumship is built on 'cold reading' (see appendix) and that when working with a sitter (a person having a reading), then the medium either allows the visual stimulus to affect them subliminally or purposely.

In 2013, Helsinki based scientists (Riekki, Lindeman, Aleneff, Halme, and Nuortimo) tested how sceptics and believers to see how they perceived various shapes and symbols. While lying in a brain scanner simple animations of moving shapes were shown to the subject and they had to report their feelings and interpretations.

The scientists found that paranormal believers were more likely to see some kind of intention behind the movements – as if the shapes were playing a game of “tag”, and this was reflected in greater brain activity in the regions normally associated with “theory of mind” and understanding others' motives. Furthermore, people who believed in the supernatural are more likely to see hidden faces in everyday photos – a finding confirmed by another team at the University of Amsterdam. During experiments involving random light displays, paranormal believers rather than sceptics imagined seeing a walking figure that didn't exist.

As we know, the supernatural is not “bunkum”, but my point is that we must be aware of our surroundings and not be so quick to jump to false conclusions when we believe we are witnessing or sensing paranormal activity.

## **Corner of the eye..**

I suppose ghosts, or the notion that people see something out of the corner of their eye, particularly if they're in a “haunted” location. It's the power of suggestion, as well as fear. When we become afraid, blood flows from the fingertips from the major muscles of the body as you get ready to run or fight, and that can make you cold. You also become hyper-vigilant, so you start noticing footsteps or voices you wouldn't have noticed before, and start assuming this is some sort of weird paranormal activity.

## **Its in the Air**

One of the most common reported experiences by a witness is the sensation of a cold spot in their home or at a haunted location. Usually these are small areas (hence cold 'spots') and many people consider this to be the sign of a haunting. Sometimes cold spots are persistent or seemingly can disappear and appear at will. More confusingly, some people will feel this cold spot, while others cannot sense it at all. Again, as mentioned before, as mediums we must be reserved in our feelings about cold spots.

There are many natural explanations for cold spots, even with the doors and windows closed, there is natural air movement happening. The air flow is driven by cold air (dense, heavy air and usually low in height) and warm air (lighter and faster moving). When we walk into a room we have already disrupted the environment causing a chaotic scene of air convection. So how can a 'cold spot' happen?

The likelihood is that humidity has an effect. Humid air is lighter than dry air, so a draught created in a humid room will travel further and when hitting colder air, will act as a barrier, keeping the colder air in place. Not only that but the humid air will begin to cool, then this humid, cooling air is in contact with human skin, then it will feel cold and clammy – both alleged symptoms of encountering cold spots. Strangely this cooling effect will not appear on a thermometer, as the humid air is cooling, and the cold spot is actually a natural area temperature.

## **Tingles / Pins and Needles**

For more times than I can remember, people have reported feeling 'pins and needles' as some form of paranormal interaction. While a medium may feel empathatic symptoms of illness or emotion, 'pins and needles' are likely to be more of a natural physical effect rather than something supernatural.



# The difference between physical and spiritual

Now, Tingles which are slightly different from pins and needles in that the feeling seems to occur on the skin rather than internally. The likelihood is that any tingling felt could be caused by the changes in the biggest organ of our body – our skin. There is a myriad of reasons why changes to the skin occur such as a cold breeze will cause goosebumps, but also

## **Ideomotor Effect**

A little precaution should be taken here, for many years “ideomotor effect” has been the rollout explanation for ouija boards, glass divination and any other forms of paranormal experience that involves the body. The Ideomotor phenomenon is a psychological phenomenon that makes us move our body, hands, arms etc unconsciously. There is no doubt that in response to various scenerios such as pain or unusual circumstances such as using a ouija board, the body can involuntary move to give the impression to the witness that spiritual communication is taking place. Indeed, as a medium you should not be reliant on tools such as dowsing or ouija boards – cut out the middle man and communicate direct!

My argument against the Ideomotor effect is that over the last hundred and fifty years, there has been an incredible amount of evidence and information gained from automatic writing and dowsing. This in turn has been verified by academics, look at the cases of TC Lethbridge of Frederick Bligh-Bond who used these tools to help in their archaeological explorations.

One question, that hasn't been answered by sceptics, what if spirit is controlling the involuntary movements?