

● **BREAKING** WATCH LIVE: FAUCI, HEALTH OFFICIALS TESTIFY BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE

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Even taking on the supernatural needs brainstorming and a good business plan

By **Patti Woods** Globe Correspondent, Updated February 23, 2020, 2:47 p.m.



A monthly gathering of psychics, mediums, readers, and alternative healers focuses on the economics of the business. JOSH REYNOLDS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

It's after hours, but there's still a warm glow coming from an acupuncture clinic in the back lot of the Mill Village shopping center in Sudbury on a recent Thursday.

Inside, a monthly gathering, the "Mastermind Inspiration Night," is underway. The room is filled with like-minded entrepreneurs eager to network. But this is no ordinary group

of business owners. The people meeting this evening are all involved in a unique niche: supernatural, metaphysical, and New Age modalities. In other words, they're psychics, mediums, readers, and alternative healers.

Marisa Fanelli, the owner of [Healing Point Therapeutics](#), where the event was held, is the self-proclaimed "mistress of ceremonies" at these monthly meetings. Wearing a feathered headdress, she looks the part of a mystical leader, but she's actually an acupuncturist with a keen business sense.

"This evening is about enterprise," she says, inviting the participants to gather around a marble bar in the waiting room. They sip wine and nibble on cheese before Fanelli calls the session to order. "Here's how it works," she says. "I'm setting the timer. Everyone gets a chance to ask one question or share an issue they have in their business. Then we all brainstorm for five minutes."

Heather Maguire, an intuitive reader and medium asks the first question: What's the best way to get clients to book after an initial consultation? Having just hit the one year mark with her business, Heather Maguire Unconventional Intuitive, she's ready to take it to the next level. Members of the group begin sharing ideas, explaining what works for them.

Another relative newbie, Jess D'Angio, is a licensed attorney who stopped practicing so she could manage her household and start an astrology business, Ms Fortune Astrology in Waltham. "I feel like I'm a hydra with three million heads," she tells the group.

Between creating a website, marketing, leading groups, and working with clients, she feels pulled in many directions. "Honestly, I thought the stereotype [of astrology] would be the biggest obstacle to me going forward with this business," she says. "Was I really going to go from attorney to astrologer? But the stereotype seems really to be falling away."

In fact, the psychic/medium business is a \$2.2 billion a year industry nationwide.

According to the Pew Research Center, roughly 6 out of 10 American adults accept so-

called New Age conventions such as astrology, psychics, and reincarnation. The image of a bejeweled crone hunching over a crystal ball reading fortunes has given way to wellness centers and spiritual studios where the practitioners look more like doctors.

"We aren't just a bunch of fortune tellers who are trying to tell people what they want to hear," says Laurie McSwiggin, a medium and owner of Our Sight Your Light, in Tyngsborough. "We just use a unique set of tools to help people live a better, healthier, happier life."

So how did Fanelli, who admits she has no psychic abilities, come to create this group? "I was attracting a lot of psychic and medium patients," she says. "Many of them were so amazing at what they did, but were also struggling with running their business. They have these wonderful gifts, but they didn't have that business acumen. The business piece was missing."

According to Fanelli, the most common questions that come up focus on how to set pricing, where and when to advertise, how to use social media, and the best ways to handle scheduling.

Some of the more seasoned professionals are happy to offer their advice and experiences. Erica Lee, a psychic medium who lives in Brookline, has been practicing her craft full time since 2008. She was recently featured on "Trending Fear," a show about the paranormal on the Travel Channel. "What we do is often very divergent from running a business," she says. "It can be difficult managing your time and energy to benefit both the spiritual and the business aspects. I'm always eager and excited to connect with others in the holistic realm."

Another medium, Tiffany Rice, has operated her Bridgewater business full time since 2013. This is her first time joining the Mastermind group. "You see everyone at different levels in their journey, but you never stop learning," she says.

Fanelli's Mastermind group is open to any professionals working in holistic or

metaphysical fields. She says her goal is to empower people with talents outside of the mainstream. "I want them to be able to embrace their gifts and become accessible to the average person," she says.

She'd also like them to make money. "The healer mentality is that you're given a gift and you shouldn't charge people. That's a poverty mindset," she says. "A lot of these practitioners say, 'It's my gift, people will just find me.' We're here to say, 'You know what? People will find you if you have an amazing website.' You can't ignore the business component."

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