

# GET INTO THE SPIRIT WITH JAMES VAN PRAAGH

BY HEIDI TRAVIS



## What happens when we die? Is there life after death? If there is, where do we go?

These mysteries have plagued humankind since the beginning of time and while theories abound, no one can offer definitive answers or definitive proof. We look to nature, lean on faith and wing it the best that we can but still, the question remains.

Every so often a person comes along who has the ability to pull back the veil of mystery just a bit and offer us a teensy little peek into that burning, existential conundrum that is the great beyond. Today, that person is the world-renown evidential psychic medium James Van Praagh. Van Praagh, who has been a practicing medium for over 30 years, has also written a number of best selling books such as, *Talking to Heaven*, *Ghosts Among Us* and *Healing Grief*. Additionally, he co-executive produced NBC's "The

### First of all, what exactly does it mean to be a medium? What do you do?

Let me put it this way. Every single person on Earth is psychic, but not everybody is a medium—but every medium is a psychic. Not every psychic is a medium which means that everybody is born with intuition, but a medium is someone who has keen intuition and also is able to turn up their mind's energetic level to a higher level of vibration—a frequency—and enter into a bridge between a higher dimension which is the spirit world and a lower dimension which is the physical world. That bridge is kind of a mental vibration that the medium is then able to receive evidential

messages—the many detailed events that only the person in the physical world would know and the person in the spiritual world would know. So the medium is someone who is in the in-between. That's why it's called "medium"—in the middle—between the spirit world and the earth world. The messenger, if you will.

### When you receive these messages, you don't hear words, or do you?

No. You receive impressions and what the spirit is actually doing is communicating from their mind because the brain dies a physical death, but our minds continue on. The mind is part of the soul. So the spirit person will lower their vibrations down to the physical

Ghost Whisperer" and has made a number of television appearances on programs like 20/20, A&E Biography, and Oprah.

Next month locals will have two opportunities to meet Van Praagh at special events held in the area: "An Evening of Spirit with World Renowned Psychic James Van Praagh" at Skopelos at New World Landing, and at the New Horizon's Navarre Annual Psychic and Healing Arts Fair where he will offer a Psychic and Mediumship Intensive Workshop.

I was lucky enough to catch a break in Van Praagh's incredibly busy schedule and had a phone chat with him before the festivities. He was very kind and generous with his time which was a very good thing considering that I had an inordinate amount of questions to ask him. Van Praagh did not disappoint.

level around the medium and then telepathically send these thoughts to the medium's mind. So then, thoughts, impressions, emotions, memories come through and I'm able to receive those impressions.

### When you receive these communications, is this something that you have to tune into or can it interrupt your day? Is it something that is always on?

It's something that if you are a properly trained medium, which I am, you have to tune into. You have to open yourself up and tune into that higher level, if you will, of awareness. For me, I turn on like a radio. I tune into the station and that is how a well-trained medium works.

And when you are not working, you close off. You turn off that awareness. If someone doesn't do that and they're open all the time, you can imagine that their adrenal system would get messed up after a while.

### Is there a "shelf life" for the people that you could communicate with? Would they have to have been recently deceased or can you commune with spirits of bygone eras?

That's interesting because there is no time in the spirit world. Time is only relative in the three dimensional world. So the medium should not be limited by time, although, I will say the spirit person might find it a little harder in some respects the longer it

is because their mindset is not close to the Earth as it was when they first crossed over. It's just like asking you if you could tell me who the person sitting in front of you in homeroom in eighth grade was. You'd have a hard time because that was a long time ago. So it's kind of like that. It's easier the closer they are to Earth, and it's harder the longer they've been away although it can happen.

### **Have you ever had an experience like that?**

Yes. Ben Franklin came through to me. Abraham Lincoln's come through to me. I've had some old entertainers in the 1800s come through to me.

### **What kind of communications do they offer?**

More philosophical communications about community, about using love instead of fear. Letting people believe in themselves instead of looking to other people—More philosophical or inspired types of things.

### **Do you have a sense that the spirits are trying to communicate with the physical world all the time?**

No, no honey it's more like that love that connects us. Do you remember the movie "Ghost?" It's just like that. They have this longing to tell someone who is still alive that they love them. They'll do anything possible to get that message across that they love them. That they're still alive. That's really the motivation. It's not just haphazardly. It's a direct line. And also they want to let their loved ones know that they're okay. That they're not dead.

### **So it is overwhelmingly positive.**

Oh gosh, yeah! It's a mostly positive feeling. I would say "healing" is the word.

### **A lot of people have this belief that dreams are a blurred space between the corporeal and ethereal worlds. Do you find that to be true? And if so, what is it about the dream state in particular that facilitates that state?**

The number one way to communicate is the dream state. At night, our souls leave our bodies to go to the spirit world and we see our loved ones and our guides and become aware of events in the future that we are going to go through.

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**“IF SOMEONE IS WILLING TO CHANGE THEIR PARADIGM, THEIR WAY OF THINKING, AND HAVE AN OPEN MIND THEN THEY CAN REALLY LIVE LIFE FULLY. THEY CAN GO THROUGH ALL THE CHANGES OF LIFE AND ALL THE EXPERIENCES OF LIFE.”**

Everyone has crossovers. You're out of your conscious mind so there's no way to control it. You're at another level of consciousness where you are closer to them. It's a little bit easier. When you get back down to the level of the Earth it becomes harder because, again, you're trying to get back into that control in the physical world. It's a very different vibration.

### **It's very interesting because people do have this idea that only a select few have this ability, but like with anything, you can have more of an aptitude towards it or an openness to it?**

Ding ding ding ding ding! Exactly right. Everyone has the ability to play piano but not everybody is a concert pianist. And there are some who definitely have more of an aptitude towards it.

### **From what I understand, you started having these experiences quite young.**

Oh yes, I was six years old when I had my first experience. I told my teacher that her son was hit by a car but that he was going to be alright. She freaked out and said, "Get back to your seat." A couple of minutes later the principal came to get her and told her the same thing. The lady brought me up to the room and asked, "How did you know that?" and I just started crying because I thought I created it because of the thought. Then she said something like, "God gives people different gifts that they can use to help people."

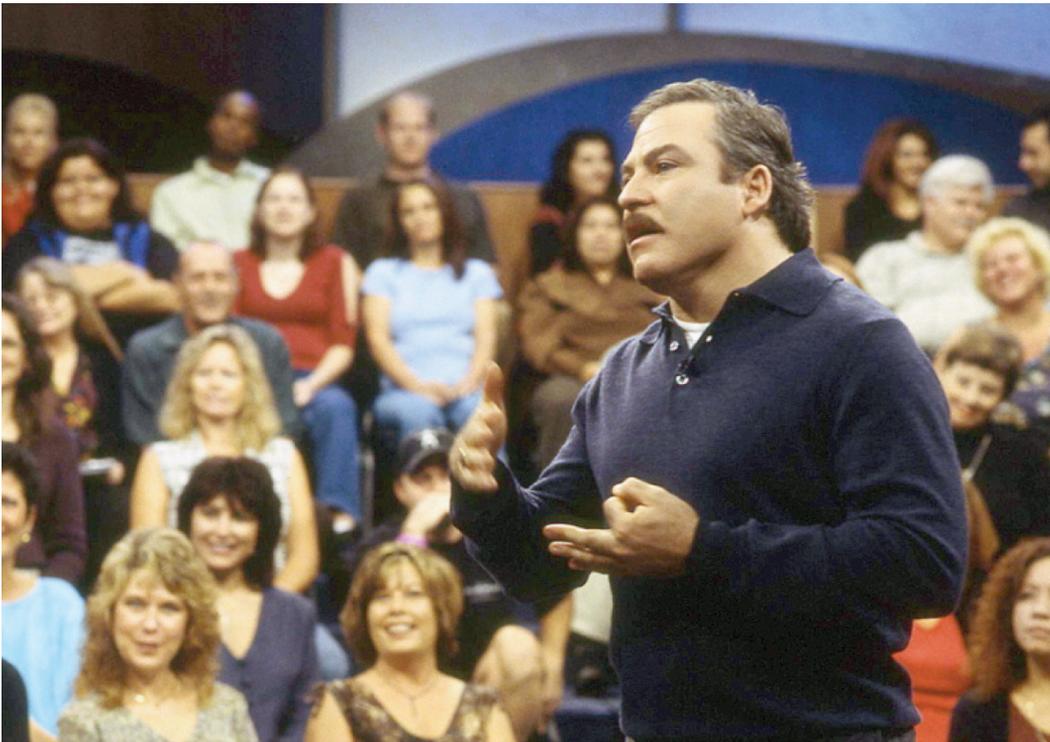
### **You were raised Roman Catholic, right? How did these experiences you had growing up inform your perspective on organized religion?**

I was someone who believed that all religions are true and no religions are all true. I think if we lived our lives based on the tenants of the religion and not the manpower and not bring the bias into man's belief or bring fear into it, that'd be great. That they

have to instill fear into it in order to follow a religion, that to me is not correct. So my religion is love, that's it. I found that my time in a Catholic background was probably a past life. I probably spent some time in the church. I'm sure I've been in the religious world many lifetimes. It helped me to get a sense, definitely, of my spirituality without a doubt. But it was that pureness of religion. It wasn't that man-made religion. It was the pureness of love. I never believed in the devil. I just only ever believed in, I guess you'd say, energy.

### **From your experiences, what have you been able to learn about what happens when we cross over?**

You know, the cool thing is that the people in the spirit world tell the people in the human world don't take it all so seriously, because it's not the real world. The spirit world is the real world. This whole school here—and this is one of millions of schools—there are planets and star



James' nationally syndicated daily talk show called "Beyond with James Van Praagh" 2002-2003

systems—and a lot more, really, than just our satellite. There are thousands and hundreds of thousands of spaces and places, but I do believe the spirit world is home. No one ever dies alone. Everyone—our families and friends come to greet you to help you to the other side. Think of it as a homecoming. They're looking so forward to seeing you that they're preparing and waiting for you. No one ever dies alone.

**Reincarnation?**

That's so interesting. I believe, sweetheart, that the body is kind of like the big toe to the soul. Only 20% of the soul is in the body. Let's say 80%—And I'm using these proportions though they may not be correct but you get the idea—the other 80% is outside of the body so there's more going on in those higher realms and dimensions than we really know about. So our physical traits of the three dimensional world might not be the same in a fourth or fifth or sixth dimension. So we could be living several lives at one time, doing all sorts of different things at the same time. They're on planets and spaces and places all at the same time that our human self is living on this world.

**That's interesting because you did mention that time is only really relevant here.**

Right, so you could be living your past and your future lives all at the same time that you're living this life. I don't know enough about quantum physics but I would say that the thought that you create here can affect your past and your future.

**People really want to believe but there's a danger in that. People who are hurting and vulnerable may look to the wrong people for support. So, tell me, how do you spot a fake?**

Sure! I have on my website different things you should look for when meeting a medium. Number one, always go by a reference. Don't just go by somebody's shingle hanging in a window. Be very mindful of what they are charging for the cause. Is it in balance with the energy they are giving you or is it outrageous? If it is outrageous leave the room. And thirdly, ask for five pieces of evidential information that you know that it's them, that no one else would know this. That they give you at least five pieces of information in the beginning so that you know it's them. If they don't give you that, you get up and you leave the room. I

mean, if it's generalities like, "There's a lady behind you and she loves you" then you leave the room. Anyone could say that. But they have to take responsibility about acquiring someone with a reputation.

**Okay, so what would you say to skeptics?**

If someone is willing to change their paradigm, their way of thinking, and have an open mind then they can really live life fully. They can go through all the changes of life and all the experiences of life. But if somebody has a closed mind, and then becomes a cynic then their minds are already made up and then there isn't any growth whatsoever. I mean, I was a skeptical person before I started to grow as an open-minded skeptic. I think that's the best way to be. I think with those are the best type to be—be an open-minded skeptic. Those make the best audiences too. I'd rather have them than people who sit on every freaking word I give out. That's like, "Um, no."

**Your work is already incredibly special, but tell me, have there been any specific encounters or moments that stand out as being**

**particularly special to you?**

Yes, several of them. But one I keep remembering—It happened about two years ago in Maui in Hawaii and I was on stage and a three-year-old spirit girl was jumping up and down next to me and she said, "I wanna talk to my mommy and daddy in the back." So I said, "I've got a little girl here, mommy and daddy are in the back." And this couple stood up and I said, "She said it's her birthday today." They said, "Yes, it's her birthday." And she screamed out at them saying thank you for being there for her birthday. And I said, "Daddy, she said thank you for her birthday present. She loves her angel wings." And I swear to God this guy—big dude—turns around, takes off his T-shirt and on his back he had tattooed two big angel wings. So that's the kind of stuff that comes in. Heavy duty, emotional, loving information comes through and the whole audience was crying. Everyone was. I think I had to stop the show after that. It was too much! Man it was a lot.

**Okay! One last question. After all of these years, are you still surprised by anything?**

Oh every day! Every moment! Every time I do this it's a miracle. And the day I stop seeing the miracle, I stop doing the work. I'm so amazed every time I do it. Every time I step on stage. I talk about it after the show all the time. It's incredible!

**Evening of Spirit Messages with James Van Praagh**  
Skopelos at New World Landing  
Friday, July 20, 7:30 pm

**James Van Praagh Psychic & Mediumship Development Intensive Workshop**  
New Horizon's Navarre's Annual Psychic and Healing Arts Fair  
Saturday, July 21, 10 am to 6 pm