

Facilitator's Guide to the **PSYCHOMANTEUM** ©1994 Dianne Arcangel

This guide presents basic methods for facilitating the psychomanteum or reunion experience; therefore, “facilitator” is the standard phraseology indicating the health care professional (therapist, analyst, psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor, clergy, and so on) conducting the session, and “participant” or “seeker” refers to the person attending the psychomanteum session.

To simplify linguistic form and readability, the pronoun “he” is used androgynously to identify a person, individual or human being.

INTRODUCTION

Reunions with deceased loved ones can be an important part of the grief process. Whether the experience is spontaneous or under controlled circumstances of observation, a visit is only the first step toward healing; the second step is having that experience validated. Ancient people sensed that transcending loss was fostered by such events, thus they developed methods of inviting spirits of the deceased.

During times of antiquity, before written word, oracles of the dead were used to petition spirits of the deceased. Oracles, meaning the seat of prophecy, a place for acquiring wisdom, began as lakes, ponds, springs, pools, rivers and other natural reflective surfaces. Eventually, visionaries from all parts of the world began inventing man made forms for inviting discarnate (after death) spirits. Homer recorded oracle experiences, and by the seventh century oracular shrines, called psychomanteums, had become a common method for divine consultation. In his extraordinary research Doctor Raymond Moody recreated a psychomanteum in his Alabama gristmill. As a result, it is clear that an oracle can be built in most any quiet space in order to facilitate healing.

DISTINCTIVE ADVANTAGE OF THE PSYCHOMANTEUM

The mirrored vision is a unique and effective therapeutic intervention because it is the individual's private experience, without hypnosis or mediumship being involved.

PURPOSE OF THE PSYCHOMANTEUM

The purpose of the reunion experience is personal transformation. Universal unity, peace and love begin with internal unity, peace and love.

PURPOSE FOR THIS GUIDE

The basic text for a reunion experience facilitator is Raymond Moody's REUNIONS. Having read that, this guide provides additional information for health care professionals with suggestions in building a psychomanteum and facilitating participants.

CREATING A PSYCHOMANTEUM

Building a psychomanteum is not a laborious task. Being a sacred space, much like a cathedral or temple, it is created from one's soul. With spontaneity, enthusiasm, respect and appreciation, the chamber is placed together step by step. This general guide has proven to be successful when followed as suggestions, rather than as a precise process analysis

FINDING THE SPACE

The preparations begin by finding a place for the sacred room. Although the usual psychomanteum itself will measure only three feet wide by six feet long, there is another consideration. A quiet place for the facilitator and participant to interview is required, and this is outside the booth. Therefore, decide whether one room will hold the chamber only and a different room will be used for the interview, or if one room will house both the psychomanteum and discussion area as well.

The psychomanteum can be built in most any place – an empty closet, storage room, bedroom, office space, mobile home or boat. However certain criteria must be considered. Importantly, assure the space is quiet, away from telephones and other intruding noises of everyday living. Moreover, anything, which would interrupt the process, such as visitors, pets or insects, will need to be avoided. Proper ventilation, where the odor is neutral is imperative. Beyond that, three sides of the psychomanteum may be free standing, that is, curtain only; however, the front of the booth needs to be a supporting wall for the mirror. Once a location has been chosen the next step is gathering supplies.

SUPPLIES

Before beginning to create a psychomanteum, the following supplies are needed:

Black velvet or velveteen material.

Frame tools (wood and nails, or plastic pvc pipe painted black)

- One mirror measuring approximately 3' x 2', may be rectangular or oval with beveled edges (may be framed as long as the frame is not brightly colored or visually distracting)
- One short comfortable chair approximately 30" wide x 30" deep and 30" tall with 14" from floor to top of cushion; the backrest will lean backward slightly (avoid recliners)
- One coverlet/throw
- One 7 to 10 watt light bulb (clear or white only)
- One small lamp
- Two comfortable chairs
- Two boxes of tissues
- Numerous art objects
- Several small pillows
- One footstool/rest

BUILDING THE ORACLE

Building the booth begins by hanging the mirror horizontally on the facing wall (loosely tighten screws or mounts in order for the velvet to be placed behind the mirror later). Secondly, place a 15' cord or string on the floor, forming a rectangular shape of 6' length and 3' width; this cord represents the hem of the black velvet curtain, which will touch the floor on three sides. In doing this, it is assured that adequate room will be inside the booth before the curtain is actually hung.

The third step is to place the psychomanteum chair inside the perimeters. The chair is placed facing the mirror, with the front legs three feet from the mirrored wall. If you use a chair larger than 34" wide or 30" deep, increase the size of the chamber correspondingly with the size of the chair.

With the cord placed on the floor and the chair positioned inside, the fourth step is to measure clearance around the chair. Between the sides of the chair and the string, there needs to be one inch or more. If your chair is larger than 34" wide, you will need to move the string away from the chair in order to make allowance for clearance. After the side clearance is fixed, measure the back of the booth/curtain. Again move the string if more space is necessary, or the chair may be moved forward an inch or two. The fifth step is to walk around the string, visualizing it as the walls of the booth. You are double-checking for proper spacing of the chair and the imaginary curtained walls.

At this midpoint of creating your oracle, sit in the chair to get the feel for the sacred space. Visually check around the chair, then look at the mirror to make certain there is no self-reflection. Sitting tall, hold your arms 8" or more above your head, making allowance for extra free space. If you see no reflection of yourself or arms, relax and imagine that the plush black velvet walls are up. Are you comfortable in the chair? Does the space foster gentleness and peace?

At this point, measure the four sides; this width and length measurement will be the size of your booth (usual measurement is 6' x 3' totaling 18' of black velvet curtained walls).

If you are using an enclosed area such as a closet or small storage room, the main factor is to place the mirror and chair inside the room and measure three feet from one to the other. The velvet material may be used to cover shelves or walls, instead of hanging from the ceiling. Now progress toward buying the black velvet. Step eight is measuring the space from the floor to the ceiling, which is usually 8'. Then measure the ceiling space inside the chamber, which is usually 3' wide by 6' long. Assuming your booth has standard measurement of 3' wide by 6' long and 8' tall, you will need to purchase 16 yards of velveteen.

Notice there is a difference in velvet and velveteen. Velvet is a rayon material, measuring 40" in width. Not only is it more expensive, but it filters only part of the outside light. On the other hand, velveteen measures 45 " in width and being made of cotton, it is heavier and does filter out 100% of light rays. Whereas velvet is priced between thirteen and 20 dollars per yard, velveteen costs ten dollars per yard in most states. Thus, velveteen will five panels, approximately 8' 2" for the side walls and one 6' 2" panel for the ceiling, totaling 16 yards of material at slightly more that one hundred and sixty dollars.

After buying the material, the tenth step is forming the walls of the oracle by carefully measuring and marking the ceiling. Once marked, the material may be hung by nailing 1" by 2" boards to the ceiling. Raymond Moody's psychomanteum curtain is sewn together; therefore, he simply raises part of the curtain and then lowers it once the participant is inside. Another chamber has overlapping material, allowing the person to enter and exit, similar to a theater curtain. A third booth is framed with wood and has Velcro attached to one corner post.

While hanging the curtain, place a lamp inside the booth for light. If you want to use the lamp that will actually be kept inside the booth, simply use a 100-watt light bulb during construction, then change it to a 7 to 10 watt light bulb later.

After the curtain has been hung, place the lamp with a 7 to 10 light bulb behind the chair. Along with the regular light, an automatic night light on the floor beside the lamp is suggested in case the main bulb burns out, the second light will automatically provide light.

A footstool inside the booth is useful. A number of pillows, a small coverlet, and one small box of tissue are helpful as well. At this point, you are ready to experiment with your booth for comfort and effectiveness.

Outside the booth, in the area of conducting your interviews, place as many art objects as possible. There are several purposes for this. As Raymond Moody states in REUNIONS, art objects foster an altered state of consciousness. One loses the concept of time and space. Beyond that, floor-to-ceiling art provides maximum stimulus before entering the sensory deprivation of the oracle. Some theorists believe that humans are not able to see common phenomena because the sensory system is filtering out more than three million pieces of information per second. Under these conditions, the sensitivity of one's optic lens is minute. Accordingly, by over stimulation, then entering sensory deprivation, one's lenses becomes hypersensitive. Some people report that after their eyes become adjusted to the dark, they seem to be bathed in loving, brilliant sunshine within the booth.

FACILITATOR'S ROLE

Webster defines oracle as a place where hidden knowledge is revealed; a place for revelation; where divine utterance is heard or the wisdom of prophets is experienced for the guidance of humankind.

Some health care professionals may want to offer the oracle as a means of psychotherapeutic exploration of issues other than grief. Whereas alternative clinical approaches to the psychomanteum may be the next development step, this guide focuses on grief resolution. Hence a facilitator's purpose is to offer the psychomanteum/oracle as a therapeutic modality for the transcendence of grief.

As a facilitator, your first role is making certain the individual senses this process as safe and healing. From the initial contact, we create a genuinely loving, accepting and safe space by being totally present for him and assuring him that it is indeed his experience. For optimum healing to occur, it is not the facilitator's journey, but the seeker's, and we only accompany him. By explaining the facilitator's role, the individual usually feels in control and responsible, which can be tremendously relaxing and safe, yet empowering.

Once the process begins on location, your purpose shifts from safety to validating his experience, remembering that half of the healing comes from the reunion, while the other half comes when the participant feels validated. Then during closure, your purpose refocuses on safety once again.

COMMON NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS

Typically, the most common need of a participant is transcendence of grief. Based on grief therapists hearing, "If only I could have one more last time... if only..." there are six spoken phases necessary in order for a human being to overcome grief and let go. They are as follows: "I forgive you. Will you forgive me? I forgive myself. Thank you. I love you. Good-bye." Although grief is said to come in only one size, extra-large, the psychomanteum especially benefits those who did not view the body of their departed loved ones. One study conducted by the National Funeral Directors Association indicates that the survivors fixate during the first year of mourning when the loved ones' bodies had not been viewed.

Beyond that at some level, many who have suffered a loss are faced with an existential issue or crisis. Finally, the seeker has the opportunity to resolve a current issue or problem, which may or may not be related to loss.

HOW THE ORACLE BENEFITS THOSE NEEDS

Having a reunion, an individual is able to work through unresolved relationship issues and feel closure with the past. For a participant who was not able to view the loved one's body, he is given the opportunity to visit with the deceased. Moreover, a reunion resolves one's fear of death. Beyond that, the oracle is an effective self-intervention in which an individual may process and resolve his current issue. Furthermore, approaching the psychomanteum experience is empowering because one is taking an active role in his health.

PARTICIPANT'S ELIGIBILITY

The research facilities are programmed for mature individuals who are emotionally stable and are ready to take an active, responsible role in transcending their loss or current issue. Having read REUNIONS, the participant is more understanding of the process.

Because this is considered a spiritual process, before an individual can open spiritually, he must be physically comfortable, emotionally clear and intellectually centered. Therefore, the facilitator begins to gather evidence for this during the initial telephone conversation.

(Telephone Interview – see Assessment Form)

PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before working through any spiritual issue, an individual must be physically comfortable. Beginning with physical status, ask if the participant has any physical discomforts or special requirements. If the psychomanteum is on another floor, do the stairs present a problem? Can he sit for an hour or more (bladder or back problems)? Is he taking medication? At this point, discuss the need for him to remain free of caffeine, nicotine, recreational drugs, and so on. Finally, address the purpose of the work by disclosing that only the goodness of nature enter the booth, therefore, it is necessary that the space, and all who approach it, are in their most natural state. In order for this process to be the participant's highest and best good, it is important that he honors these guidelines.

EMOTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Once physical comfort is made clear, shift focus to emotional status. Are there any pathologies standing in the way of the process? Has there been a diagnosis of a disorder, such as multiple personality, schizophrenia, dementia, post-traumatic stress or other disorders? Is he currently in therapy? Will the participant have at least one support person after he returns home?

Discuss how long it has been since the death and listen for evidence that the person has worked through his emotional issues. Listen for the six phases of transcending loss, "I forgive you. Will you forgive me? I forgive myself. Thank you. I love you. Good-bye." If the seeker does not offer these spontaneously, ask "Are you ready to say good-bye?" Someone who has processed the loss and wants to move forward, as opposed to someone who only wants to reunite with the loved one out of dependency and attachment, will benefit most from this program. To honestly disclose our purpose, that reunions are about letting go, and transcending loss, fosters a person taking action in order to work through unresolved issues. At the very least, explaining how any intense afflictive emotion (from anger to desire) acts as a barrier that blocks a reunion, will demonstrate your integrity.

Fear is an issue, which needs to be addressed. Reportedly, an individual who fears this process, evil spirits, dark rooms, or holds generalized fear is not an appropriate subject. Whether apparitions are manifested via internal projections or are external realities, fear prohibits a reunion. In this respect, three points of view regarding fear of apparitions are often presented. First, Dr. William Roll's studies indicate that no apparition has ever caused harm to an earthling. Secondly, during Dr. Raymond Moody's research, only positive and healing experience occurred resulting from the psychomanteum. Lastly, my (Dianne Arcangel) near-death experience gives me the belief that evil is of this world and is taught after a child is born.

Accordingly, when an individual dies, all negativity is left behind with the body. The spirit rises above it all. As long as a spirit is able to notice earth below and not feel any negativity, the energy stays uncontaminated and the being remains in the higher realm. However, as soon as any afflictive emotion is experienced, the energy becomes contaminated and the spirit is pulled to an earthly incarnation with magnetic force. Therefore, spirits enter only loving, peaceful and positive energy fields. As a result, if a human being has negative thoughts, feelings or energy, spirits avoid him. Based on that information, an atmosphere of love, peace, sincerity and light heartedness, is imperative.

Many times a seeker's fear can be worked through before or after he arrives. Although some people will insist they hold no fear, the body tells the truth. You may decide to allow him to experience the booth, even though a fearful individual will probably not have an apparitional experience. In this event, you will honor his individual journey, and rather than grief resolution, you will process the issue of fear.

On the other hand, If an individual is inappropriate because of intense fear or other emotional issues, suggest counseling, inviting him to call again at a later date, keeps the door open for future contact. Safety is always our top priority.

INTELLECTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

After a participant is physically and emotionally stable and will to take an active, responsible role in his growth, continue by exploring his intellectual needs. Will he be able to focus his attention, rather than jumping from one thought to another? Has he used altered states of consciousness or meditation, and if so, how? As a spiritually centered program, a participant enters right brain activity. While being playful, spontaneous and creative, one still holds reverence for the work.

When the seeker understands and accepts the physical, emotional and intellectual requirements, he takes responsibility for his active role during his unique process. For most people in bereavement, initiating the telephone call, then following it through, is tremendously empowering and a catalyst for change. Likewise, if he does nothing else but make the telephone call, this alone is an important step toward healing and deserves to be acknowledged.

PARTICIPANT'S PREPARATIONS

At the point of accepting the participant, discussing other suggestions are as follows:

- Guidelines
- Nutrition
- Clothing
- Watch and Jewelry
- Perfume
- Rest the night/week before
- Pleasant drive over
- Bring photographs and memorabilia.

GUIDELINES

Having a reunion, individuals are able to work through unresolved relationship issues and feel closure with the deceased. Moreover, the oracle is an effective self-intervention for processing and resolving current issues. As mentioned, one advantage of the psychomanteum in contacting the other realm is that the mirrored vision is the individual's unique and private experience, without hypnosis or mediums.

The chamber is considered a sacred space, thus, keep it natural. If possible, use cotton, wool and wood, avoiding synthetic materials. A facilitator is often heard saying; "Only the goodness of nature goes inside the booth." (See Appendix for an example of participant's letter of acceptance.)

OVERVIEW OF NUTRITION, CLOTHING, PERFUME, REST

- **DO:** Drink spring water. Eat easily digested fruit and vegetables that are high in potassium and low in calcium. Rest as much as possible during the days prior to the session and the morning of. Sleep on your right side to induce dreams. Wear loose cotton clothing, such as sweatshirt and pants. Bring photographs and memorabilia. Allow extra time for the drive or flight to the session in order to remain unhurried. Stay in a nearby hotel if the flight or drive is long. Be prepared to have an entertaining, enjoyable and enlightening experience.
- **AVOID:** Wearing perfume, perfumed anti-perspirants, hair spray, headband, hair clips, and make-up. Do not wear a watch, jewelry, tight clothing, and/or synthetic material. No caffeine, alcoholic beverages, difficult to digest foods and/or recreational drugs. No wild parties, final exams or unpleasant circumstances/persons the day before or morning of the session.

PRIVATE SESSION

GREETING

When participant arrives, take a few moments to ask how he is and about his drive (or flight). Ask him to remove his watch and shoes. Show him around, noticing his change in state of consciousness. Discuss some of your experiences, setting up trust and open communication. The purpose is to create a relaxed, safe, trusting and accepting atmosphere in order to move toward showing him the chamber and preparing for the interview.

INTRODUCE THE PSYCHOMANTEUM

Briefly show him the psychomanteum. Explain that he can exit any time – it is just a curtain! Also assure him that it is his safe healing journey and that you do no hypnosis and you will be in the next room.

A seeker has questions, “how will this happen? What will I do? Do I ask my relative to come visit? Do I keep my eyes open?” Therefore, at this point, it is advisable to address questions and concerns. In this way, his mental chatter can be resolved as the seeker’s focus shifts to the reunion.

In regard to asking a specific person to visit, I remind the individual of Raymond Moody’s story about his paternal grandmother visiting instead of his maternal. Ultimately, one received what one needs rather than what one wants. When one asks for something or someone specific, he is limiting his resources. For instance a man died and went to heaven where he saw a Porsche, a stretch limousine, a collector’s edition Corvette and a Mercedes, all with his name on them. He asked God, “Why do these cars have my name on them?” God answered, “They were all meant for you, but all you ever asked for were Chevrolets.”

Therefore, invite a participant to ask for what ever is in his highest and best good. Beyond that, a few general stories about other experiences, accompanied by your commitment of confidentiality is reassuring. In most cases, this is an opportunity to introduce a tape recorder and explain the purpose of documentation along with a release form. (Examples of release forms are provided in the Appendix.)

INTERVIEW

The interview is an important aspect. The purpose of the interview is to accompany the participant on his journey into healing by validating his *positive* experiences and feelings. With photos and memorabilia, he will begin to re-associate into the relationship. Discuss how the person most affected his life. “ What did you learn from _____? What are some of your fondest memories? Do you have a favorite? Did you travel? Where was your favorite place to be with _____? What are some aspects of _____ that you never wanted to be without?”

SENSORY EXPERIENCES

Ask how the loved one looked, “What was _____ wearing? What color was _____ eyes? How old was _____ then?” Tap into auditory memories by asking, “What was _____ voice like? How did _____ laugh? Do you recall what _____ said then? Especially ask about the feelings? “How did that feel to be there with _____? How did you feel when _____ smiled at you like that?” Validate these experiences by questioning, “So your grandma’s hugs felt warm and reassuring?” Many times olfactory and gustatory senses come into play and may be emphasized by validating or questioning, “The smell of _____ apple pies still linger in your memory? _____ pipe assured you he was home?” Some individuals store and retrieve information other than visually, thus, their reunions may be auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory or gustatory. Importantly, only a sense of the presence of a departed loved one, without anything else, can be especially healing. According to William Roll, a visual experience is one that is considered apparitional and a reunion is any experience that makes the person feel connected with the deceased.

FOLLOW THE FEELING LINE

Both of you will hold the photographs and memorabilia. Ask for details about them. Your focus will be on the participant and his feelings, rather than the items. In other words, follow his feeling line instead of his story or objects.

ENTERING THE PSYCHOMANTEUM

Holding this time and space to be sacred, you will know when he is ready to enter the booth. Ask if he needs to empty his bladder, as he will be sitting for some time. After he returns, invite him to sit down for a moment (allowing him to become still again). Remind him, "You will be able to leave the safety of the booth at any time you desire." Moreover, remind him of the pillows, throws and tissues in which he can use as wanted. You may ask him how much time he feels will be about right to him, or you may want to judge that alone. In any event, inform him that you will return asking him, "_____, are you ready to come out now?" If he is "busy" you will return in fifteen minutes, giving him time for completion. At this point, allow him to enter the oracle.

Kneel down with him as he sits in the chair. Check his breathing for comfort, assuring, "Only the goodness of nature enters this safe, sacred space." (In rare cases, he may appear something less than relaxed and comfortable. Questioning how he feels physically, emotionally and intellectually will invite him to become aware and make adjustments.) Continuing, suggest that he takes a few minutes to close his eyes, check his body, and loosen any tight clothing or adjust what ever he need in order to feel comfortable. As you close the curtain, allow a moment of silence. Lastly, simply say. "Focus on the mirror, gaze out into the distance, out on the horizon, have a good time, and I will return in just a little while."

HONOR HIS PROCESS

Remain as quiet and still as possible in order that your energy does not disturb his. This is an excellent time for you to reflect, rest, eat a light snack or write a few notes. After one hour to one hour and fifteen minutes, enter the room and ask if he is ready. If no answer, return in fifteen minutes.

EXITING THE BOOTH

Again, kneel down outside the curtain before offering to help him out. A facilitator towering over a participant during an altered state of consciousness, particularly while sitting in a dark place, can be frightening, thus, any time you approach the booth, make sure you are at eye level or below.

INTERVIEW

Seekers usually do not need to be questioned into the interview; they will immediately begin to disclose the most important aspects of the experience. Remember, your role is to validate his experience and feelings, which requires your listening, silence and unconditional presence. Allow him moments of silent processing between his sharing. When he has covered what he believes is everything, ask him if there is anything else. Asking for further details often results in his “suddenly remembering” something pertinent.

Often a participant arrives for his session with an agenda and/or expectations, which can block a reunion. Emphasize to a seeker who did not have a reunion that an apparition may appear after he goes home or at a future date. Apparently, for those who are not open at the time of the session, when they are in familiar surroundings, at ease and without expectations, a reunion may take place. In the case of one who did have a reunion, he too may have another visit by the same apparition or be contacted by a different spirit.

Do not under estimate the value of processing after the reunion. This experience takes time to digest. Invite him to appreciate the work he has done today.

ASSUME YOUR ROLE

From validator, your purpose now returns to focusing on the safety of all. A participant usually remains in an altered state of consciousness, well into closure; therefore, be cautious and responsible about allowing him to leave the premises. Spend time grounding. Urge him to eat something sweet, especially chocolate candy and a cola with caffeine. Open and give him a caffeinated drink as he walks out the door. Ground, ground, ground as you walk outside with him. Ask him to call you when he arrives inside his home (prophesying that he will arrive home safely).

CLOSURE

The purpose of closure is to ground the participant by bringing him back to the reality of here and now. One way to begin is to ask what the seeker learned from this experience. Another is to ask what he will share with others. Regardless of how you begin closure, there are a number of important reminders before he leaves. Deep spiritual work will cause change all the way down to the cellular level. Therefore, eight glasses of water per day will naturally and effortlessly continue to remove any impurities. Unexpected physical changes may occur, such as sleeplessness or sleepiness. Likewise, a person may experience mood swings or other emotional reactions. Intellectually, some individuals have difficulty concentrating, especially on complicated data. These are temporary manifestations of spiritual work that can best be integrated by accepting them and allowing oneself nurturance and rest. Avoid any major decisions. If driving afterward, use caution.

FUTURE ASSIMILATION

Remind him that this process does not end here. In the hours, days, weeks, months and even years ahead he will keep integrating and growing as a result of what he learned today. This experience will be a deep, refreshing and rich well that he can dip into time to time.

DOCUMENTING

It is best to document a participant's interview by using a portable tape recorder. In this way, you will have on record his experience along with his approval for how, when and with whom you may share it. Promptly document other data while the event is still fresh.

FOLLOW-UP

Inviting a participant to call you demonstrates your availability, interest and support. Likewise, a follow-up telephone call to the participant several weeks after the reunion is advised as a way of obtaining further affirmation and/or documentation.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are apparitions really just mind projections or wishful thinking?

At first we believed they were projections and some still may be. However, many things have occurred during the research that cannot be accounted for in one's mind. For some clinicians, this question alone is motivation for continuing the research.

Can the apparition be one's shadow, protector or one's problem solver?

There is meaning and information in all reunion experiences. The more a participant can be open to his experience, the more enlightened, educated and entertained the person will be. Certainly, the mirror will be a mirror for an individual.

When is a reunion most common?

Spontaneous visits usually occur within the first year and decrease after that. However, whether spontaneous or in controlled circumstances, reunions occur when the individual is in an alpha, theta or delta state of consciousness. Accessing memories are the key to psychic experiences. Because we will always remain connected to everyone we have ever known, a reunion is possible when a person taps into that energy channel.

Why is there fear of death and how can the psychomanteum resolve that?

Some theorists report that one fears what one does not know. Others tell us that at the core of all our issues is the fear of not existing any more, that our unconscious minds can not imagine not being. From another perspective, some say all fear is based on the fear of loss of control. Another view reports death is the ultimate separation anxiety. A reunion experience addresses each theory.

Why are some people critical of the psychomanteum?

It depends on the individual, but society in general is fearful of things it cannot accept. As a result, fear blocks out the truth and keeps the system going. Moreover, there is a social contract that only the living have our world while the dead have theirs. Some ask what would the purpose of life be if we had all the answers. On the contrary, it is only when we understand, accept and integrate the questions about death into life (which the psychomanteum experience provides) that we begin to live fully.

What do apparitions look like – ghosts?

Again this depends on the individual. For some people they appear in ethereal form. Some say they looked misty or like formed clouds. Others say apparitions are “more real than real” that they are whole again and look as they at their best. It is not unusual for a loved one to say, “she looked like a young lady, younger than the day I was born.”

Since the dead no longer need bodies, why do they appear dressed in the clothes they wore when alive?

Apparitions appear dressed for social acceptance. As a result, infants usually appear unclothed. More over, children who see deceased loved ones they never met in life and have not seen in photographs, describe the apparition wearing the clothes in which they were most comfortable. One mother was confused when her adult son visited her in the psychomanteum without his shirt. She expected him to appear in his tuxedo, like in her favorite photographs; or in his favorite shirt that she brought to the reunion; however he was unclothed from his waist up. Sharing that apparitions usually appear as they were most comfortable and in their peak condition, the mother recalled that he was most comfortable and at his physical and emotional healthiest during the times he was lounging around the house dressed only in shorts.

Since burning incense are used in some spiritual temples, will they benefit the psychomanteum?

While incense may cause a physical allergic reaction in some people, others may have an emotional reaction. Neutral odors are most effective. If a room deodorant is necessary, a light scent of violet of Ocean (Wicks and Sticks, Inc.) is recommended.

Where are the main areas/locations to avoid in building a psychomanteum?

Avoid any locations that will interrupt the process with strong odors, mosquitoes and other insects, livestock, conversations (animal or human), construction, traffic and other distracting noises, outdoors as well as inside. In other words, make sure the booth offers sensory deprivation.

During your research, have you found a common ground for why some people have reunions while others do not?

Yes, there are several factors, which will certainly prevent a reunion. The most common factor is the lack of rest. To arrive rested and in one's peak physical state cannot be over emphasized. For example, one immature participant arrived after an all night party. Another individual announced that after the session he had to take a final exam. In such circumstances, a facilitator may choose to cancel the session and advise the individual to return on a day when the ground rules have been followed. A facilitator cannot over emphasize the importance of the seeker abiding by the ground rules, which are the basis for a successful reunion.

There are other circumstances, which can inhibit a reunion. Caffeine withdrawal can block the experience. If an individual drinks coffee daily, it may be advisable to drink a small amount to avoid a withdrawal headache or to take Tylenol. Headaches, as well as other physical discomforts, are usual signs for an unsuccessful reunion. Enlightenment requires a sense of humor; thus it may be the facilitator's task to inject some lightness into the situation. Beyond these specific factors, there is a host of other signals, as discussed in the guide and REUNIONS.

Does the lack of an apparitional experience always depend on the participant?

No, a reunion does not depend on the participant alone. Reportedly, apparitions visit when they have a purpose. Like us, they want to give or receive and hereby contribute to the growth of their living loved one and to their growth. In REUNIONS, Raymond Moody wrote of wanting to visit his maternal grandmother, who gave him unconditional love. Instead his paternal grandmother appeared and this helped to improve his relationship with her.

Beyond that, the concept of time and space is different in the spiritual realm; thus, when and where the spirit visits may be other than during the psychomanteum experience.

Do apparitions mind being called? How do they feel about it?

It is clear that they come to serve in our highest and best good, when they are willing and available. Every aspect of this process is an invitation; absolutely nothing can be forced. Imperative for the facilitator to keep in mind is that spirits avoid negativity, except when they come to dissolve it.

How do apparitions communicate, auditorily like we do?

First let us examine when they communicate. It has become apparent that spirits do not impose themselves on the world; thus even when invited, they may appear but not speak until spoken to. Therefore advising participants to initiate conversations when they see or feel their loved ones is an important key to communication. After initiating the conversation, how they communicate may be telepathic (as in a near-death experience), rather than with the auditory senses. On the other hand, most individuals who hear their dearly departed speak auditorily, find that the voices are as real or earthly as before their deaths.

I would like to sit in the psychomanteum even though I never lost a loved one. How can the psychomanteum/oracle be used for interventions other than grief?

What would the world be like without the wheel that is without tricycles, bicycles, cars, buses, airplanes, jumbo jets and moon rovers? Each vehicle in its own way has made a profound contribution to humanity. Similarly, Raymond Moody has created a spiritual wheel, resulting in numerous vehicles for journeying toward a healthy personality.

Beyond transcendence of grief, the oracle is a effective modality for cognitive restructuring and desensitizing as in cognitive behavioral therapy, eliciting catharsis as in psychoanalysis, or integrating the different aspects of one's self/life into one whole as in Gestalt therapy. Biofeedback, regression therapy, personality integration, problem resolution, writer's block and past life regression are some examples of the psychomanteum' s unlimited potential.

Can I bring a tape recorder or video camera into the oracle?

Past experience indicates that electronic equipment may obstruct an apparitional experience. While taping a documentary for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, five people entered the booth to have a curtain or shield appear between them and the mirror. At the beginning of one interview just outside the psychomanteum, the camera lights turned off and continued to black out every time the photographer plugged in the cord. After entering the booth, the participant heard, "Invasion, invasion, invasion". The entire crew and equipment left town for the day and at that point, the individual commenced to have a phenomenal experience. Similarly, there was no reunion while trying to tape a segment for the Oprah Winfrey Show at Raymond Moody's grist mill, until after the film crew and equipment left the premises.

Then how do you document your research using a tape recorder? Is recording really necessary for documentation?

The tape recorder is kept in a different room and used after the experience. It is clear that the tape recorder is an important tool in documenting a session. In the beginning, when people used to exit the booth, look at the recorder and state, "No need for a recorder because nothing really happened." I would turn the recorder off. However, the last time I did that, the participant began talking about someone standing by the chair, "He was dressed in black and for some reason I thought of Abraham Lincoln. Then I dismissed it as my mind creating something."

Believing everything (especially apparitions) in the booth is a symbol; I asked her what she felt he was. A symbol for during the time he was there. She replied, "I thought of trust and truth." The following week, another person saw the same dark clothed figure standing in the identical spot, although he had no prior knowledge of the last person's vision. When this participant spoke to the image, whom he felt was Lincoln, the figure moved into the mirror, full faced, and in color, thus, there was no doubt as to Lincoln's identity. Unfortunately, I did not have the first person's experience with Lincoln documented on a tape record.

One never knows what the mind has recorded and will retrieve after a psychomanteum experience, thus, it is best to record the entire interview. With events being recorded on individual tapes, a researcher can be precise in documenting and comparing the experiences.

How does a facilitator decide his fees?

It depends on the individual and how the facilitator conducts the session. For instance, if a psychomanteum session were incorporated into a client's grief therapy, the fee for the mirror gazing session would be the same amount as his usual session. In other words, if a therapist charges the client eighty dollars for one fifty minute session in the psychomanteum of grief therapy, then one fifty minute session in the psychomanteum would be eighty dollars as well. One half day or full days session is priced on an individual basis, and a group session usually costs one half the amount of an individual session, for each group member.

APPENDIX

PARTICIPANT'S RELEASE

This instrument is executed this _____ day of _____, 2006

By _____

(Hereinafter referred to as "PARTICIPANT")

I, the participant, understand my participation in this program is voluntary and is considered research rather than therapy. It may involve my emotions in a manner, which might subject me to emotional distress. I agree to accept such risks and assume the responsibility for emotional distress and/or effects thereof. Further, I release [facilitator] from all claims made by me or on my behalf (or my estate) by reason of any illness or damages arising from attendance or participation in this and/or other related activities. This release includes the waiver of any responsibility by the above named individuals and/or groups also in case of negligence.

FOR AND IN CONSIDERATION of the acceptance of Participant to attend, observe and/or participate in the programs, events, workshops, lectures, seminars, productions, sessions, meetings, discussions, and environments (hereafter collectively referred to as "Programs") of, sponsored by, or located at facilities and premises of [facilitator], and for other valuable consideration, the receipt, adequacy and sufficiency of which has been duly acknowledged, the undersigned Participant, individually and on behalf of the Participant's heirs, executors, administrators, successors, assigns, agents, associates, partners, and employees hereby releases, waives, acquits, and forever discharges [facilitator/s] and their employees, officers, directors, associates, designees, partners, and all others acting upon information furnished by them, (hereinafter referred to collectively as "Releasees"), jointly and severally of and from any and all liability, claim, or demand, and any and all manner of actions, causes of action, suits, debts, sums of money, covenants, demands, agreements, promises, reckonings, bonds, bills, specialties, controversies, trespasses, injuries and damages of any kind whatsoever (whether grounded in tort, contract, quasi-contract, equity, or any local, state or federal statute, rule, regulation, or otherwise), known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, patent or latent, of whatever kind or nature, from the beginning of the world to the date hereof, which the Participant has or may have whatsoever in law or in equity, against

Releasees, including but not limited to as a result of or arising out of Participants participation in or traveling to the Programs of [facilitator's].

In addition, Participant specifically releases, waives, and discharges Releasees for all injuries, damages, claims, liabilities, trespasses, suits arising out of, in connection with, or contributed to by a physical and/or mental impairment, defect, or condition Participant may have, whether latent or patent, and agrees and acknowledges that Releasees are under no obligation to provide a physical or mental examination or evaluation or to otherwise discover any evidence of Participant's fitness to participate in any of the Programs staged or sponsored by the Releasees, the same being Participant's responsibility.

This Release is freely and voluntarily executed by Participant, who states that (s)he is not relying on any inducements, promises, or representations made by Releasees. Upon execution, Participant states that (s)he has read and understands this Release.

Participant:

(Print name) (Signature)

Address:

Telephone:

(____) _____

WAVIER

Participant's Release For The Psychomanteum Experience

This instrument is executed this ____ day of _____, 2006,

By: _____.

I, the participant, understand my participation in this program is voluntary and is considered research rather than therapy. It involves sitting in a dark 3' by 6' enclosure. This session, program, environment or meeting may involve my emotions in a manner, which might subject me to emotional distress. I agree to accept such risks and assume the responsibility for emotional distress and/or other effects thereof. Further, I release (facilitator's name) from all claims made by me or on my behalf (or my estate) by reason of any illness or damages arising from attendance or participation in this and/or other related activities. This release includes the waiver of any responsibility by the above named individuals and/or groups also in the case of negligence.

Participant:

(Signature)

(Print name)

Address:

Telephone:

(____) _____

PARTICIPANT INTRO LETTER

(following example may be personalized and expanded)

(Date)

Dear _____,

Although there is no guarantee of a reunion, there are some things that can increase the possibility. On the days prior and especially the day of your reunion, on (date), high potassium and low calcium meals are best (bananas, dates, potatoes, sweet potatoes and mixed fruit are excellent). The morning of your session, please avoid caffeine and nicotine. I will provide a light lunch and snacks. The focus throughout our day will be naturalness and this begins by eating easily digested foods.

In order for the chamber to be most effective, your need for rest and relaxation the day before your visit cannot be over emphasized. If there is a specific person with whom you want a reunion, reminiscing about him/her, your relationship, the aspects of the relationship you never wanted to be without, and so on, will foster your process. Reliving memories as you drift off to sleep can be very connecting.

The day of your visit, please do not wear perfume or perfumed antiperspirant, but do wear loose fitting clothing (made of cotton if possible). When you enter my home I will ask that you remove your watch and anything that may restrict your circulation. Remember to bring photos if there is someone in particular you want to visit. Any mementos, such as clothing, eye glasses, watch, jewelry, and so on are welcomed. Moreover, some people have enjoyed sharing gifts given to them from their loved ones.

Please let me know if I can be of further service to you. I am looking forward to our enlightening, educational and enjoyable time together.

Love and Blessings,

BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL DIAGNOSTIC SUMMARY

(Suggested form for telephone interview)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Work number: _____

Occupation: _____ How long: _____

Age: _____ Sex: _____

How did you hear about us? _____

PHYSICAL assessment: (handicaps, disorders, illnesses, accidents or issues)

Have you any long-term physical disorders, illness or accident? _____

Are you under a physicians care for any physical problems? _____

Are you able to climb stairs? _____

EMOTIONAL / SOCIAL assessment:

Purpose in visit? _____

How long since the death? _____ Relationship to participant? _____

How will you feel if you do not have a reunion? _____

And how will you feel if you do? _____

Any family / relationship dysfunction? _____

Client's sexual history: (Has there been sexual abuse?) _____

Socialization? (What effect has the death had on his/her socialization?)

Do you have support throughout this process? Who? _____

Are you currently in therapy or receiving and psychotherapeutic treatment? _____

Is your therapist aware and supportive of this process? _____

Any previous treatment or diagnosis? _____

MMPI or Myers-Briggs taken? _____ Results? _____

Hospitalizations within the past five years for psychiatric reasons? _____

Is there a dependence/addiction/chemical use? Prescribed or recreational? Last use?

(Note: Caffeine withdrawal important to address)

Any emotional issues that could prevent a reunion? (Fear, Anger, Intense grief, etc.)

INTELLECTUAL assessment:

Are there legal/financial problems resulting from this relationship? _____

Is the death still affecting work/school performance? _____

Do you meditate or use some form of mental centering? _____

SPIRITUAL assessment:

Previous reunions: _____

Any troublesome beliefs that could prevent a reunion? _____

What are you personal experiences and beliefs about dying, death and after-life?

In case of emergency, notify: _____

(name)

(telephone number)

Recommendations and Conclusions:

Justification for accepting or not accepting a participant: _____

Key issues to be addressed: _____
