

**The Jordan Harbinger Show: 413: Mark Edward
True Confessions of a Fake Psychic**

1. Jordan Harbinger: Now, here we go with Mark Edward.

So I, I read the book, which I thought was very interesting. I thought, okay. I've always wanted to kind of get the low down on – I, I mean, what do you call it? A fake psychic network, psychic hotlines? I don't know.

Mark Edward: No, they're, they're all fake.

JH: Right.

ME: There is no such thing as a psychic. So why [when] you say fake psychic, it's redundant.

JH: I guess that's true.

ME: Yeah.

JH: It'd be like saying milky, very milky milk.

ME: Yeah.

2. JH: The fake psychic thing is fascinating. I, I want to get a little bit of background on this, because now you're an outspoken skeptic. So it's like, you make a point to say, "Hey, psychics are fake. This is fake." But before that, that was what paid the bills. So I'm wondering, you know, how you, how'd you get into this?

ME: I was a skeptic all along. My idea was to scam the scammers. So the book is leaning towards a believer, but the idea was that I wanted to learn and understand all the methods they were using. And you can't just get the methods by saying, "Hey, how did you do that?" They'll just say, "I have psychic powers," you know?

3. So, I had to learn how to, uh, manipulate people, just like they did. So I n-, was never a believer. And even though, yeah, I did take some money from people for a while, it was the ends justified the means. And I stand by that, because if you read the book, you'll drift pretty strong.

JH: I did. And I got the drift, yeah.

4. ME: All psychics are actors portraying the part of a voodoo priest – or what, whatever you decide you want to work on to get your character together. But it's just like a magician that works on a character, and it's all fake.

JH: And I wonder – I'm naïve, Mark, what can I say? – are some of these people, did they believe that they're that, but they're just really good at reading other people using conventional techniques, or are they all...is it such a skill that you can't do it by accident and everyone who does it is just a scammer?

5. ME: Oh, you can do it by accident. Many people who thought they were psychic, and were going around giving people advice and readings, realized that all they were doing was cold reading, but they didn't know it. And in our work that we do, we recently had a woman who, uh – I won't mention any names – but, she's completely deluded that she is real. And yet, you know, we get readings and there's nothing there. It's all just – she's deluded.

6. ME: I like to say that 95 percent of the people out there – in my opinion, again, this is my opinion. It may not be anybody else's. Through my experience, 95 percent of the people who are out there doing business and getting paid to be psychic are outright charlatans and know what they're doing is fake. The other five percent can kind of be divided into two areas.

7. 2.5 percent are deluded like this woman that we've been talking to. She just doesn't know any better. She is naïve. She thinks that just common sense or intuition is some sort of special power that she has. Then the other 2.5 percent are really strongly intuitive compassionate people who really believe they're helping people. And they do. But when you balance 2.5 percent against 97.5 percent, the odds are not in your favor.

8. JH: (Uh heh) Yeah.

ME: So, buyer beware. That's all. I mean, if you can find somebody you can talk to – it doesn't have to be a psychic. It could be a bartender or a coach, or I don't care, you know. But be careful because the whole point is, they get their hooks in you, they try and find – we call them grief vampires. They're the ones that say they talk to the dead and all that. Once they get their claws into you and they find your weakness, they will never let go.

9. JH: I've experienced some of this. I think we talked about this months ago when I was first chatting with you.

ME: Mm-hm.

JH: My wife's side of the family, family friends, something, something, something, she is very superstitious, but also she was loaded. She inherited the money, as one does.

ME: Not a good combination.

JH: Not a good combination, no. And uh, the psychic, we-, or the, you know – when I say psychic, I'm now talking officially about – uh, eh, since we all know all psychics are fake, I don't have to say "fake psychic". It's just easier. I'll just say "psychic".

ME: Right.

JH: The psychic that she'd hired, coincidentally would want to come over after a while.

10. JH: ...and started c-, you know, that she was giving her money and money and money and money and giving her probably like a hundred thousand dollars or something like that by this time.

ME: Ugh!

JH: And then the woman's coming over and saying, "Uh, you know, I think that there are objects in your house that actually have, in Chinese, it's called like, xié qì, like 'bad energy' or something like that.

ME: Yeah, yeah.

JH: Like bad, evil spirits basically is what that sort of translates to.

11. JH: So she came over and she managed to spot family heirlooms and expensive things that of...just coincidentally –

ME: "We'll take care of those for you. We'll take care of those."

JH: "But that's a family heirloom." "Don't worry. I'm just going to take it and put it in my, uh, s-s-sacred —"

ME: Vault.

JH: "— chamber or vault or whatever. And, you know, I'm going to cleanse it for you for 20 grand."

ME: I'm sorry I'm laughing, but I mean –

JH: It's laughable. It's sad, but it's laughable.

ME: It is, it is. But, you know, people are superstitious and, uh (sighs), it's very sad.

12. ME: That woman in...that I'm talking about, she lost \$780,000.

JH: Wow. Ugh, uh, it makes my head hurt hearing about that.

ME: And she kept going back and going back and going – 'cause it's an addiction. You know, they're like psychic junkies. They believe that that object is cursed. And they'll pay to have that psychic or that medium, plate it in gold, but it's going to cost \$30,000 to do that. And that will keep the evil spirits inside the object. I mean, it goes on and on and on and on.

JH: Ugh.

13. JH: Eh, there's technique here. And I would love to get into the technique, because the technique that you discuss in the book is called cold – uh, one of the techniques, anyway – is called "cold reading". Can you explain what this is? This is a really fascinating thing that a lot of people can do and everyone has seen, but they just didn't know what it was called.

ME: I know, but I want to make a very important point that you just covered. Everyone wants to know the technique. And the last thing I want to do is inculcate a whole new crop of, uh...

JH: Phonies.

ME: Scam artists...

JH: Yeah.

ME: ...you know?

14. ME: So, I'm happy to reveal the secrets that I know, but (sigh) I don't feel good about it, because...

JH: Mm-hm.

ME: ...once you understand – if you understand it and you're a skeptical, rational person, that's one thing. If you hear this and you understand it as a way to get a leg up on everybody else...I'm aware of that (laughs)...

JH: Yeah.

ME: ...OK, so – but I'll tell you the, the difference. There's cold readings and there's hot readings.

15. ME: Cold reading is when you, you meet somebody you've never met before, and you convince them that you know everything about them – past, present, and future. And, it is a technique. It can be learned, and the more you do it – it's like juggling or magic or anything else – the more you learn it and practice it, the better you get at it.

And, I personally, I love it, because my background is in magic. So, if I can weave some of the techniques of cold reading into my mentalism or my magic, when I'm performing in the midst of that, it adds another layer of believability.

16. ME: So, as an actor, again, it helps get inside somebody's head. And sometimes it's really powerful, because you're working with suggestions and coincidence, and...But all it is, is you're just giving somebody the once-over. For me, it's visually, you know. As soon as I meet somebody, or I see them...if I'm sitting in a little table, reading tarot cards, I see somebody walk in the door, I immediately give 'em the once-over.

17. I look at their shoes, their hair, their clothes, the way they're walking, their general attitude...and generally, before they even sit down at the table, I know everything I need to know about them. I know what they want to know. I know where they want to go and there's nothing psychic about it. It's just profiling, basically. And it's called – in the, uh, FBI and CIA, it's called "situational awareness".

JH: Mm-hm.