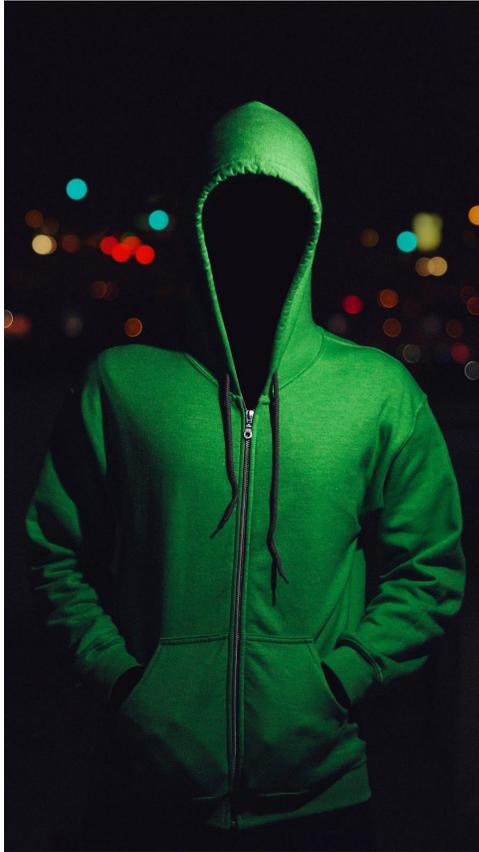




# Psychic Readings and Remote Viewing



Simply put, it is almost impossible to conclusively validate or debunk an individual who claims to be psychic outside of controlled scientific conditions. This is particularly true for psychics who have received fame or notoriety as psychics. From a psychological perspective, there are multiple ways for a stage psychic to create information that appears to be PSI (we cover general psychic experiences in another section).

- **Stereotyping:** A lot of information can be determined simply by age and gender. For instance, an older adult is likely to be worried about health issues, and younger females are likely to be concerned about relationships. Most psychics will derive information just by the appearance of the individual.
- **Fishing:** Fishing is a technique where the performer will provide a vague statement, and, as the recipient of the reading answers generally, will hone in on relevant material. If confirmed, the statement is used to make further claims based on stereotypes; if incorrect, the performer minimizes the statement.
- **Selective Recall:** For believers, there is a tendency to remember the accurate statements that support their belief in a psychic reading, while forgetting incorrect statements. This is a general tendency attributed in part to confirmation bias.

- **Population Stereotypes:** In many cases, people of a region have more things in common than most people realize. Blackmore (1997) demonstrated this by creating 10 general statements that a quarter to a third of 6,000 participants endorsed all ten statements.

As one can see, there are multiple opportunities for a performer to appear psychic, while simply being a good observer of human beings. Thus, psychic abilities are best determined in laboratory studies where sufficient controls can be put in place to determine if information gathered comes from anomalous sources.



## Remote Viewing



Remote viewing is a form of PSI where individuals at one location are able to describe or see places without actually being there. The most famous example of remote viewing is a government-funded intelligence project from the 1970s to 1995 called Project Stargate. Led by Physicist Edwin May, two different branches of research investigated the practicality of obtaining information and intelligence from remote viewing procedures.

The results from this government project have been controversial and reviewed multiple times. In 1995, the government sanctioned the American Institutes for Research to investigate the results of the Stargate Project. Their consensus was that, while information appeared to be retrieved with remote viewing, it was not detailed enough to provide actionable intelligence. Dr. May disputed this conclusion, citing prejudice toward the project by the members assigned to investigate it. This claim is not entirely unsubstantiated. An examination of the data by Jessica Utts, a well known statistician, and Ray Hyman demonstrated effects that were unlikely to be due to chance (statistically significant). In addition, a recent review by Baptista, Derakhshani, and Tressoldi (2015) reviewed several additional remote viewing studies (approximately 40) conducted by the PEAR lab and others. Their meta-analytic findings, with some debate, found results that were also generally significant. Thus, the bulk of remote viewing findings support that remote viewing is potentially a valid form of PSI.

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