

WEEKEND STANDARD



Karma mechanics

I'M LYING on the floor wearing a healing gem on my solar plexus while trying to tune into a ley line. Ley lines are like a cosmic grid across Britain carrying spiritual power and tend to cross at ancient centres like Stonehenge. But I can see no reason why there shouldn't be one in a South Kensington basement. Naturally, I've just dangled a key on a pendulum string, asking it questions.

This is the College of Psychic Studies; a place of noble portraits, inner unfoldment and spiritual advice. I'm doing a weekend course to develop my psychic abilities for £22. The college holds sittings with mediums, healing sessions, workshops and lectures. And for this festive season, Earth Rays and Radiation talks and The Christmas Child Workshop—meditation on the meaning of Christmas.

I started with a Meeting Ground—a sort of paid-up and wannabe psychics' bash—on a Friday evening. "Have you had any psychic experiences?" asked Arthur, a medium with a mouthful of sausage roll, by way of introduction. "You can heal pot plants by thinking healing thoughts and transferring energies," explained fizzy and nice Mrs Spiritual Healer.

I talk to the president, a neat woman with the Queen's bearing and a turquoise suit. "What do you think about free will and determinism?" she wants to know—before warning me off becoming a "psychic dustbin". Sorry? "Don't," she warns, "pick up the psychic backwash in the room."

I confide about premonitions and high frequency whining—akin to tuning into the World Service in Tibet—that I hear in my ears. And heebie-jeebie spirit presences. "Clairaudient," she mutters with some satisfaction. Mrs President refers me to a sensitive to see whether I am ready for psychic development.

"Can I ask you to uncross your legs while I link with you?" We're sitting some

Being careful to avoid any psychic backwash, CAROLINE PHILLIPS spends the weekend relating to the universe, the cosmos and everything

days later in a white-painted, minimally-furnished room upstairs in the college. I'm wearing a navy suit and soft pink haze. "To me this is your aura and represents peace and spirituality."

The psychic says she's getting a very clear image of my lace-making. "Hold that information," she says, as she does every time she's way off beam. The psychic faculty fluctuates, one understands.

"I'm being told you have a natural gift of the pen." (Hands extended, eyes closed.) "You've a great sensitivity. With your inner balance and emanations, you're absolutely ready for psychic development and do you have a boyfriend at the moment?" She tells me to go and feel which psychic course I'm drawn towards.

The weekend workshop

“The messages she gives me fit like a pair of Marigold gloves on a hippopotamus”

into which I felt my way a few months ago was entitled Uncover Your Spiritual Energies. So there I was, lying on the floor in a candle-lit subterranean room, keeping a third (psychic) eye on the proceedings and thinking about the universe, the cosmos and everything while waiting for the healing energy of an amethyst to work.

The course is run by one Robin—genus out-of-work actor cum accountant. Striped polo neck, silver identity bracelet, chunky ring—a member of the crystal owning classes, he.

He once did a public clairvoyance demonstration when a spirit undid his flies. He also knows a man who went astral travelling and checked out the rival builder's paperwork. (Sort of spiritual espionage, this). These psychic potentiality explorers like to move off the physical and travel along astral, etheric and causal motorways. Robin

asks us to walk round the room, eyes closed, passing each other psychic messages—mentally, natch.

We sound like a herd of stampeding spirits in MFL. Every so often, we have to stop still; guess where we're standing, and who next to. "Caroline," says an attractive Portuguese man from way across the room. I wish. But I'm opposite a lady with boyish looks, compassionate air and aura to match.

Whirr whirr, buzz buzz, I tune into, my psychic faculty—or vivid imagination. "I see a lady wearing a man's mac," I tell her. "Oooh, that fits," she says excitedly. "Yes, yes, I know who it is." Bluff or psychic leakage? The messages she gives me fit like a pair of Marigold gloves on a hippopotamus. Robin teaches us to

protect ourselves from marauding spirits or alien energy; a sort of creative visualisation exercise which involves filling ourselves with white light. "Give me protection from negative energies. Put a ring of fire around me. Singe and burn anything that is trying to come in," he wails.

Thus filled with pure light, we make pendulums out of doorkeys on string and dangle them. "Dominate your pendulum. Be strong and firm. Talk to it like a child," exhorts Robin.

"Show me your energies." I limply beseech my errant Banhams. I consciously keep my hand and wrist as still as a dead duck. Yet the key starts to circle clockwise. "Stop!" I say to my front door friend. "And how do you say 'No'?" Anti-clockwise movement follows. "Yes?" And it goes back and forth diagonally. Eek. "Do I live in a house number above 10?" Anti-clockwise. Correct—and very useful for dowsing, or when you've forgotten where you live.

He asks us to sit in a circle, holding hands, linking energy. "Move," he booms. The three male trainee psychics can't sit together "because of



Hand of fate: Caroline Phillips ponders the future with the aid of the tarot

the balance of energy". Mary the assistant, statuesque in purple robe, lime mohair, orange hair and theatrically deep-voiced, can feel The Energy getting blocked in her left hand. Yes, yes, quite a few people can feel it too.

I'm holding hands with a stockbroker who has taken three years off to learn about massage, loving relationships and spiritual healing. He gets a headache; it's because his third eye is developing. In these circles, if you yawn it's because you're "tuned into the physical".

Robin then shows us how to open our chakras, or spiritual energy centres. His "spiritual guide" takes over as he proceeds in his extraordinary demonstration. Trance-like, his voice becomes higher and higher and more guttural.

We take a spiritual break. Chat is about higher and inner self and whether there is injustice on an ethereal level. "Pass the custard creams" (trainee reflexologist from Esher). Gossip is about the lady in the healing workshop who hyperventilated and "went into spontaneous rebirthing". The karmic convertee who left British Telecom because of "pre-cognitive problems" eats water chestnuts out of a tin and asks me out to the theatre.

Anything Goes, perhaps?
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