Critical Analysis: A Quick Lesson On How to Become a Supposed Psychic Fraud (Then There are Those Who Know About the Phony Supposed Psychic Methods, but Still Pay A Psychic)

(Up Front Disclaimer - - This material is referring only to those people who claim extraordinary/psychic powers). (as of July 2006)

by

Students of Jerry Mertens (A large number of Jerry Mertens' students, over a number of years, have contributed to the development of this material by adding their personal contribution to the various lists.)

I. Outline for This Presentation: Below is a short outline of what is to follow:

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- Samples of Gimmick Psychic Statements of Common Areas of Concern
- Samples of Gimmick Psychic Type Expressions or Terms
- Samples of Gimmick Psychic High Probability Words

II. Authorship:

The authorship of this article may appear a bit unusual- perhaps weird, but with a high degree of truth. I (Jerry Mertens), as the teacher of these students, have tried to function more as a passive editor on this specific set of materials. Students have been major contributors to the categories.

III. Pay to be Duped:

A number of different sources have presented various data showing the poor track record of supposed psychic predictions, yet these supposed psychic predictions remain very popular (See Marty, 1984, Minneapolis Tribune, 1978, and Frazier, 1984). In this article, we will discuss some techniques that have been referred to by a number of terms, such as: psychic readings, fortune telling, things you see or hear on the psychic hotline and/or its various television infomercials featuring supposed psychics, psychic cold readings, and just plain "reading." This handout is written as a tool for critical analysis of false claims by self proclaimed psychics. What we will attempt first is a general introduction of the techniques, and following this introduction, some specifics will be presented.
pertaining to how these fake psychic techniques might be utilized. Hopefully, as you learn these techniques, you will "vaccinate" yourself against people who may use these practices for their own advantage on you.

Even with this poor track record, as the title of this segment suggests, I believe many people are aware of the gimmicks and methods of the psychic hotline, crystal ball gazer, store front psychic, traveling psychic fair booth performer, tea leaf reader, fortune teller, palm reader, astrology column in the newspaper, tarot card reader, psychic reader, etc. However, possessing knowledge of this type may not prevent these people from paying money for such a technique.

IV. A List of Possible Supposed Psychic Gimmicks:

IV - A - Supposed Psychic Learns To Be A Good Observer:

IV - A - 1 - Supposed Psychic's Keep Their Eyes, Ears and Nose Open For Clues: Even a crude cue based on clothes, nails, jewelry, necklace, chains, watch quality, rings, texture of hands (e.g. rough), handshake (e.g. Was it spontaneous?), gestures, mannerisms, clean versus dirty continuum in all aspects of their presence (e.g. finger nails, hands, shoes etc.), odor, piercings, tattoos, perfume, facial expression, name, hair style and condition, companions, gait, way the person sits, smile, tan, wrinkles, breath, if person wears glasses (style, frames, price, quality, nature of lens etc.), home area, first impression, introduction (e.g. Does the person get closer to you physically than most?), initial contact, body language and specific speech can provide sufficient information for the start of a good reading. Consider how each of these could be broken down and manipulated by a supposed psychic. Commenting on any of these may open conversation.

IV - A - 2 - Supposed Psychics Need to Learn to be Good Listeners: Many people are reinforced by someone simply listening to their verbal behavior. At times you may not need to say much, and you will be assessed as a very good psychic by simply using the information they told you.

IV - A - 3 - Tell Them What They Want to Hear: Listen to find out what they want to hear, and then tell them what they want to hear. Also, discover what their prejudices, world outlooks, political orientation, and so on are in order to cast your “Psychic” revelations into something that they can accept.

IV - A - 4 - Wait for Audience/Client Response: Always allow your audience/client to propose supposed psychic notions and to fill in the gaps. Ask them for their keen psychic insights and always act as if you are impressed by their psychic power.

IV - A - 5 - This is Not a Challenge Game. Their Cooperation Is What Makes It Work: Emphasize that the success of your psychic reading depends more on
his/her sincere cooperation than upon your efforts: "My reading is only as good as your psychic effort. I serve only as a listener to your psychic communication." (Sort of like you, the fake psychic, will be wrong only if they give you the wrong psychic vibes. They have a vested interest in the reading to be accurate and will be more likely to agree with your readings.) "Talk to me." "Share your psychic side."

IV - A - 6 - Employ Psychic Gimmicks that are User Friendly For Many Clients: Using gimmicks such as a crystal ball, tarot cards, stones, sand, palm readings, tea leaves or any creative gimmick (e.g. the gravel in the road or the ashes in the ash tray). Gimmicks lend an air of novelty and mystery to the psychic reading or event. It gives you more of an opportunity to be a good listener, and "playing" with the gimmick can give you time to think. For example, "This crystal was given to me when I was traveling in the orient by a very elderly village wizard in an ancient small town in China, and it helps cloud people's minds so they can see or feel real a psychic presence."

IV - A - 7 - Flatter Your Subject Every Chance You Get: For many people, compliments can help them become better listeners, talkers, and increase your assessment of their supposed psychics skills.

IV - A - 8 - If Your Claim Was Not True for the Person's Past, It Can Perhaps be Used as a Prediction for the Future: Emphasize the importance of a forthcoming life decision which is coming up in the short or long term. If he/she doesn't have one coming up, convince them that they will, but they just don't know about it yet. Get them to start talking about plans, if you can. "Psychically" you realize part of the plan may be deep in the partial "subunconscious" - deeper then the subconscious. It is in the far deep back part of their brain. Tell them about the psychic energy source they put forth and if your statement is not true for their past, then state that it feels right for their future, perhaps even long term future (Yes, there is always a tomorrow, somewhere!!).


IV - A - 9 - a - State that you know why they are here, or why they did something.

IV - A - 9 - b - Be ready to be "in the know." The psychic's contributions to the conversation can many times be, "Yes, I know that."

IV - A - 10 - As A Psychic I Never Seek Publicity: This statement made up front (even if completely false) allows one to avoid many problem situations. It gives you that extra pure look.

IV - A - 11 - Individualize the Nature of Your Reading:

IV - A - 11 - a - Important Person/Client: Make the person you are doing the
reading for the sole focus of your attention, or at least lead them to believe that they are the entire focus of your attention at that moment.

**IV - A - 11 - b - Be Ready**: Always be alert to what you can pick up from the person, that you can later play back to them.

**IV - A - 11 - c - Break Any Tension**: Humor the individual client, "You were born on a certain day of the year." (This may break the ice, put the person at ease, reduce stress, and open up the person.)

**IV - A - 11 - d - Anxiety Relief Humor**: Humor for the Individual may provide stress relief, "The day of the month you were born is either a one or two digit number."

**IV - A - 11 - e - Work At It**: By asking the person the month of their birth, to some people, you make your telling the person the exact date more feasible as "mind reading." Simply outright telling them the date of their birth may cause them to suspect you had prior knowledge. Struggling may have merit.

**IV - A - 11 - f - Mystique**: Look at lines in palms, use astrological signs, or Tarot cards, for supposed "individualized respectability."

**IV - A - 11 - g - Build and Expand On Reading**: Continue to embellish what is known about or stated by the person.

**IV - A - 11 - h - Be Interested**: People will volunteer information if you play it right, so let them talk.

**IV - B - The Fishing Technique**: As we are using the term in this material, "fishing," is a verbal device for getting the client to talk about herself/himself, so the supposed psychic can rephrase and change what was said by the client and feed it back to the same client later. Invite the client into the verbal exchange, and then try to get them to add things to your initial statements or "bait." What the client adds then possibly can be used in a "psychic" way. If changed enough, and in the proper form, the fraud may get some credit as though the material was real "psychically" derived material.

**IV - C - Probability Uses**:

**V - C - 1 - Luck**: Use probability, coincidence, or luck to your advantage when it happens.

**IV - C - 2 - Demonstrations**: See the magical literature on what is called
"psychological forces," this kind of playing with probability looks powerful to audience members.

V - C - 3 - Take Credit: Be sure to take credit for any luck circumstances or any other possibility which might arise in the situation, but turn it around to make it sound psychic.

IV - C - 4 - Your Contacts Have Certain Question's: Most people you meet will have some short term and long term decisions and questions confronting them - pretend you are very much "in the know" about answers to these questions. The more confident you are, the more believable you are--just like most things in life.

IV - C - 5 Pick A Day, Any Day: An event that occurs during any time in an individuals life can be interpreted as an important event of, "all time," the client's life, or today's life, etc. Often we are confronted with the statement, " A major event - a major tragedy to some will occur soon which will influence lives." If this is said right, just about any day's events will have something that qualifies as a psychic event.

On a regular basis, the first author of this article has students coming to him to discuss some apparent strange event(s) that have happened in their lives. The student will seek some understanding of "synchronicity vs. coincidence -- psychic significance vs. probability / chance." One of the techniques used by the first author in these situations, is to invite the student back with the next day's newspaper. During the first session with the student, the effort is made to cover a variety of expressions about what we will find in the next day's newspaper. At different times in this conversation with the student, it might be stated that the next day's paper will contain write-ups of things like:

"...a major event or a happening will take place today,"

"...a certain happening will develop in the future into an important event...,"

"...a significant event of some major sort will take place and it will be reported on in the next days paper,"

"...a tragedy or a bad mishap will happen today,"

"...someone will be murdered, injured, or meet something like their Waterloo today," etc.

Enough is covered so we can hopefully find probability at work in the next day’s newspaper, i.e., something to match up in the newspaper the next day. An attempt is made in the conversation with the student to relate the success to probability.
IV- C - 5 - a. The first author "predicted" the Oklahoma City bombing! A student, with a question of the validity of a psychic relationship in her dreams, came in to talk to me. It happened to be the day before the Oklahoma City bombing. (The student is still impressed!!!!) What happened was that the day before the Oklahoma City bombing, this student came to discuss a dream she had which hadn’t completely come true. The dream involved her mother, among other things. What the dream basically told her was that her mother was going to die. After she had the dream, her mother became “only” ill. The student instantly related the two items, the dream being a warning to “a little bit” of reality.

I told the student of low probability events and how it can be easy to tie two things together that are not related to one another in a cause/effect relationship. To clearly illustrate my point, I told the student that she should bring the next day’s newspaper when she came to talk to me again. I added that there will be an important event, a tragic event that will effect many people and it will happen tomorrow. The student obliged and the meeting ended. The next day there was the bombing in Oklahoma City. I thought I would find coverage of an accident, a death, a murder etc. to use.

Let’s look at a few other things in my life that look like low probability:

IV - C -5 - b. Hurricane - Dennis the Menace (Written by Dan Hennsey):

“Jerry Mertens and his wife were watching an evening national news broadcast about a hurricane on the East Coast of the United States. The television reporter interviewed a man shortly after the storm had left the coast and headed back to sea. This man boasted arrogantly of his macho nature and stubborn insistence to stay in the very dangerous evacuated area. He set aside any humility to flounder his bold victory which was, in reality, a matter of luck made possible by intense stupidity.

“If that hurricane had a mind of its own, and it heard that conceited schmuck, it would go back and get that jerk,” commented Jerry.

The next day, an astonishing natural phenomena started to happen, something almost unheard of within the history of recorded hurricane weather reporting. The hurricane stopped going out to the Atlantic Ocean, and days later returned to the same area that it hit before with an even more violent force. Could it be that Jerry and all the people who witnessed the televised event of the ignorant man tapped into and influenced nature with their subconscious psychic power?

IV - C - 5 - c The Accidental Finding Of A Grade School Friend After 50 Years of No Contact:
This is a letter from me to grade school companion 50 years after no contact:
Hi Richard,

This letter will require a jog to your memory! About 50 years recall is needed to be more exact. This is one of those low probability things. Some 50 years ago we actually did spend considerable time walking and talking our way almost daily between grade school and your home on Reschke St. (I continued further South to get home - through Lincoln Field to Spring St.) If you recall just about all the other kids in our grade went the other way, we were the only one’s going South. Now, the story of why 50 years later I’m sending you this letter. I have taught here at St. Cloud State University for 35 years. One of my better students and I were talking and in some way I happened to make some reference to Racine. She mentioned that her mom was from Racine. I inquired about where in Racine she lived, and where she went to school. Well, when our grade school got mentioned, it generated some more interest in me. I inquired about her mom’s maiden name. Well, Erin had to go back to her grandparents, in Racine for some of the details & an address, and here we are! (snip)

IV - C - 5 - d- Finding Old Friends: A letter to Marty describing a low probability event:

Hi Marty,
I enjoyed the visit with you on Friday, Sept. 2nd. A lot of good behavioral things going on at your plant: the plant suggestion token economy, the plant scoreboard, the radar scope of critical components, the internalization of these programs in the general company structure, the emphasis on data collection (and use of data) in the whole company, etc. Thanks for taking the time to show me around. Besides that, the lunch was great!

After leaving Green Bay I had one of those low probability events related to my one disappointment of my visit with you. My first objective was to see the great things you’ve shown me, but a second goal was, I thought you would put me back in contact with Susan. Over 15 + years ago, you were the one that originally had put me in contact with her Behavioral Management Program with the house-keeping segment of the hotel she managed in Rochester, Minnesota. You mentioned Friday you also had lost contact with her. I had hoped to locate her, first to see if she also is still doing any behavioral things. Secondly, 15+ years ago, when I had visited Sue O’Brien, then an undergraduate student here at St. Cloud, wanted to go on to graduate school in behavioral industrial / OBM. O’Brien went along to Rochester and she also was impressed by Susan’s work. Susan was a major role model for Sue O’Brien, a female running some good behavioral programs. Sue O’Brien went on and got her doctorate in the behavioral industrial / OBM area at Western Michigan U., and currently is President of a research and development company. O’Brien did well, she emulated her role model with gusto. (For Susan it is only a 15 + years delayed reinforcer!!!)
That night, Friday, September 2, I was at a magic convention in Appleton, Wisconsin chatting in the aisle of the dealer's room with Jerry Johnson, a magician friend from Minnesota. Jerry was part of a public magic show we did at Susan’s hotel back in the 1980’s, and we got to talking about that show from my telling Jerry about Sponsel’s friend I had visited that morning in Green Bay. At that moment down the aisle comes Don C., a retired surgeon from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, who also happens to be a magician. I did not remember Don being at Sponsel’s magic show in Rochester, but I asked him if he had been at Susan’s show. “No,” he had not been there. Then comes the very low probability event, “But I know Susan S. She is now Susan K. and she currently is our neighbor.” The odds of this happening are low!! Marty, thanks again for the information and a great visit.
Peace, Jerry

Date: Sun, 28 Nov 1999 21:25:08-0600
From: Donald C
Subject: Susan
To: Jerry Mertens
I am embarrassed to tell you that after you sent that letter to me (in September!) to pass along to Susan, it never made it. My wife has authorized me to place the blame on her, since she was going to see Susan shortly after the letter arrived and took the letter. Somehow she misplaced it, and it has not resurfaced and it never made it to Susan. If it is possible for you to produce another copy, I know Susan would love to see it. Her address, phone and e-mail: snip I apologize for this screw up; I'll look for you at some of the upcoming magic activities in the Twin Cities.
Don

Hi Don,
No problem. This delay just adds another chapter to the story. I actually wrote out an envelope to Susan K., when you sent me her address long time ago. I just dug it out of the “to do” folder now. I was going to send her the story, but every time I just about got around to doing it, I would say to myself she has the story so I do not need to send it. I kept the envelope cause I was going to send the story along with a note, but I never quite got around to it. Now I do not need the envelope because I have an email address. I will not send this to you until I e-mail the story to Susan. It is funny because I thought Susan might respond. The story certainly is not earth shaking etc., but I did send it to the other parties in the story and I got back a polite “cute story”, “low probability” etc. Thanks for getting me the address, and letting me know I need to send Susan the story.
Peace,
Jerry Mertens

Hi Susan,
I am a name out of the past, and you may have to jog your memory some 15
years to remember. It is another one of those low probability stories. I think it might be fun to develop the story line through a series of e-mails. I will pick up on this note to you at the end of this e-mail. The story involves two people you know, Marty W. and Don C. The current story dates to a September 2, 1999 visit with Marty, who again is back in Green Bay. (He said on Sept. 2nd he went back to Green Bay from California because he likes the weather in Green Bay!!)

Peace,
Jerry Mertens

IV - C - 6 - Most People Get Sick: "Later in the year you will experience some sickness ("mental," "soul," physical, etc.). Nothing serious, you will come out of it stronger than ever." Certain statements (like illness or not feeling well sometime in the future) are fairly safe.

IV - C - 7 - Change a Routine Normal Human Happening Into a Psychic Event:

IV - C - 7 - a - Turn a Story of a Certain Event Into a Psychic Event: For example, a defective phone line. (e.g. a person is on line when you pick up the phone before it rings, etc., turn it into a psychic event.)

V - C - 7 - b - Natural to Beyond: Even waking up just before the alarm goes off can be built in to the mystical. This can be caused by a small click or other house or street noise before the alarm goes off, normal sleep cycle, etc.

V - C - 7 - c - Missing the Cause: Someone humming a song, and then turning on the radio and there it is on the radio, could be used. (You could have heard the song as you walked down the hall or street from another radio, you frequently sing or hum songs heard on the radio, e.g., top ten, popular oldies, etc.) Make all low probability occurrences into "Psychic" events.

IV - C - 7 - d - Projective Technique: Make it seem as though part of a dream turned real. Use projective techniques where ambiguous stimuli can be seen as relevant to many events.

V - C - 7 - e - Take Credits: Self proclaim any stimulus significant to the current situation, e.g., a person's utterance, dream, water flowing, flying bird or object, air, clouds, life, nature, etc., and you just proclaim, "That of course is most significant, as you know (you name it) has a strong spiritual (psychic - if you prefer) significance." (Your choice of what is significant).

IV - C - 8 - The Fortune Cookie Technique: These are predictions that are often true the instant they are made. The profound sounding truism, Jo(e) Blow (and all people) is/are sometimes sad, happy, depressed, jealous; the list of already true possible "predictions" goes on and on. (As an activity, write out as long a list as you can of these kinds of descriptions).
IV - C - 9 - Be Ready to Be “In the Know”: As in the situation just cited, be ready to have access to more information than your client in some subtle area he/she hints at.

IV - C - 10 - Probable Assumption Based on Things Already Known: A study by Gary Fine (1979) showed non-psychics have the same predictive capabilities as those claiming "special powers," but psychics had better story telling techniques to go with their right or wrong prediction.

IV - D - Set the Event - The Reading - The Performance:

IV - D - 1 - Set the Stage for the Reading: You are not challenging the person to a battle of wits (or even 1/2 wit!!!). Give the impression you can read his/her mind or character, whether he/she believes you are or not.

IV - D - 2 - Give the Impression That You Know More Than You Are Saying: Once you persuade the clients that you know one item of information about them, they will (in most cases) assume that you know it all, or at least more information.

IV - D - 3 - Powers: Explain that you don't really understand how you do what you do, and that you're not sure where your powers come from. This adds an extra element of mystery. It also gives you room for error.

IV - D - 4 - Experiments: State that you will try an experiment. Do not refer to your feats as "tricks." This is asking for trouble. By calling what you do "an experiment," you are allowing for a failure. This way, if you miss you can say: "The vibes are not with me today." This lovely ploy has gotten many a supposed psychic out of a tight squeeze.

IV - D - 5 - Involve the Audience: At times act as if you are not sure of the experiment's outcome. Then when you fail, explain: "It was only an experiment." Under these conditions you can involve the audience. Explain that some participants most likely were not concentrating hard enough. Substantiate this by adding the common psychic claim, which may sound good even if it has no merit: "We all have psychic powers; they just need to be developed. I want you to concentrate even harder. I psychically know you can do it."

IV - D - 6 - Use of Humor: Humor may be used as a source to get people on your side. Humor lends itself to togetherness.

IV - D - 7 - Don't Ask - Challenge: If someone is watching you closely and they may be on to you, call off the experiment. "There are too many negative vibrations. I cannot feel the power coming through." Ask if anyone else feels it. (You're being ambiguous here, but someone will probably say "yes" no matter
what and you'll be off the hook).

**IV - D - 8 - Use Science Jargon Often**: Sprinkle your words with scientific sounding jargon. This gives the impression that someone, somewhere is taking the whole thing seriously. You will often hear that we use only 10% of our brain’s power. The “Psychic” can imply the other 90% must be used for psychic ability.

**IV - D - 9 - Claim Nobody In The Audience Will Own Up To It**: "This concern is being thought of by someone who would never raise their hand or own up to this thought. I don't intend to embarrass you. Keep your hand down." (Say the worst or best thing appropriate for the audience).

**IV - D - 10 - Get Investment of Time, Money, and Effort**: It is good to have a client make a big investment in their own success, i.e., a personal time and/or a monetary investment. Phony self-improvement programs, in many cases, get high investment in both personal and monetary areas. In Transcendental Meditation (TM), to complain you can’t fly without an airplane after an investment of thousands of dollars, and previously telling people how great TM works, is not too cool.

The more they invest personally, the less effort the person makes to find fault in his or her investment. Ben Franklin is given credit for some level of explanation of this behavior, "There are no bigger liars than quacks, except for their patients." Once committed, many people have trouble reversing their way. There is a proverb "Don't throw good money after bad." Once people start paying to fly without an airplane, give donations to "weird" causes, etc., it is aversive to admit such an error. Many find it easier to continue with the current statements of their "holding on" behavior.

**IV - D - 11 - Yesterday's News Today**: Supposed psychics have been known to get favorable comments on their ratings when they tell all the clients the same things.

Likewise, saying the same details back to clients, (just saying it a little differently), has the audience seeing it as news!

**IV - D - 12 - The Key to Successful Psychic Readings or Presentations is to Reek Of Confidence**: If you look and act as if you have the real scoop on what you are doing, be it true or false, you will be able to sell even a bad reading to some people.

**IV - D - 13 - Dramatize your Reading or Presentation**: Make it seem more than what it is. Build it up; ham it up. Remember, you are an actor/actress playing the role of a psychic - make hits dramatic. Build it up. Play it up. Showmanship is the name of the game. Set up the importance of your forthcoming psychic
prediction or happening.

IV - E - Set the Event - Public Relations / Marketing: Work to get good press.

IV - E - 1 - Burn Your Psychic Candle at Both Ends (and the middle also): Make many predictions of the same event. Say one thing in St. Cloud and the opposite in Kokomo, Indiana. Or, closer to home, tell Mary Jones and John Doe different predictions, then emphasize the positives and minimize the losers. (Save the clippings of the successes).

IV - E - 2 - Have a Good Press Agent: Have someone to introduce you as 100% accurate in Kokomo, Ind., with Mary Jones (even if it is 50%) and completely forget St. Cloud and John Doe. Make sure the M.C. tells them those biggies.

IV - E - 3 - Hits (Not Misses) Make the Press: Most people forget the errors and remember the hits. Papers are not sold telling the failures of the psychics. The story is told here at St. Cloud State University of the professor who got a psychic feeling in his campus office about a fire at his house. He then called home, and the house was NOT on fire! You did not read that story in your newspapers. This story did not make any of the newspapers.

IV - F - Be the Skeptic to the Skeptical Position:

IV - F - 1 - Share Skepticism of Audience Member: "I was very skeptical at first, but something happened in my life." Claiming to be skeptic until the psychic world changed their life. Example: I was skeptical until a psychic told me things about my life that they would never have known.

V - F - 2 - Disclaimers Like "Some don't agree with me." "There are many out there, so be careful, but..." "You must be skeptical, but..."

V - The Verbal Jargon Game:

V - A - Play the Psychic Jargon for More than It Is Worth:

Below are some general hints for the making of fake psychic statements.

V - A - 1 - Give Negative Answer First To Protect Yourself: "You don't have a child by an earlier marriage, do you?" (Yes or No) "I thought so, we are on a roll." The psychic can claim to be correct whatever is said, and the client may furnish more information in order to straighten out your ambiguous question.

V - A - 2 - Only Part of a Statement: Don't make the first statement regarding the prediction too strong, rather, make it possible, e.g. "I feel an R-as in Roger, and I am not sure of the vibes for the second name." Although both the first
and second names are known, it looks more believable when you somewhat struggle with the "psychic world" rather than come up with instant answers. Later, you can add the rest if useful. Stopping in mid sentence may also be effective.

**V - A - 3 - Limit Your Claim of Paranormal: Make a very limited E.S.P. claim:**

**V - A - 3 - a -** "This is power that we all have. Test your own frequently. Perhaps try it now."

**V - A - 3 - b -** "Visualization, sensitivity, and intuition are abilities not fully developed. You should work to develop yours even more. There is no time like the present to start."

**V - A - 3 - c -** "I just use intuition; it is part of a 6th sense. You have it also; try using it now."

**V - A - 3 - d -** "I am using a common, little known, human ability to converse beyond the known world."

**V - A - 4 - Be Vague:** Put the prediction in an ambiguous, poetic double talk meaning, psychic babble, metaphoric or multiple interpretative language where you can take credit for the future no matter how future event(s) turns out. Read some of Nostradamus or Edgar Cayce as examples. See James Randi's material on these topics to see some of their "great" guesses. (For example, Randi, 1993, the book: *The Mask of Nostradamus*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY., or see Randi, 1979.) The quotes are so bad, it would be easier to read a novel in Rorschach inkblots. For example, it may be better to say: "An important person will die within the year." Even better "An important person will meet their Waterloo." These both are better than "President X will be shot." If you don't pinpoint your predictions, you will be right more often. If you state, "Somebody great will die in year X," then you can make a case for that dead person as, "an important person." However, even if you are specific and wrong, most people (even skeptics) will forget and forgive you!

The paying client will determine how the vague statement relates to them. Whatever rules exist for clarity probably could be violated in order to be vague. Example: Your life is like a free flowing waterfall in the beautiful great beyond (You say you have not been there!!!!!!).

**V - A - 5 - Avoid Blatant Positive Declaration:** Use instead: "I feel that it may..." "Perhaps..." "Have you yourself felt..." "I might think one could interpret the cards..." "I get those vibes from you..."

**V - A - 6 - Speak Metaphorically:** "You are blinded (in some ways) but you will soon be healed and see a lighted way." This line could be interpreted in
numerous ways in different life situations. It could apply to nearly any
endeavor. This allows the client to interpret which aspect of their life it applies
to. Example: "You feel down in some ways. Yet you will soon be picked up
and given the chance to really live again."

V - A - 7 - Traditional Babbling Jargon: Bring up things that people have heard
of. e.g., "Only 10.1% of the brain is used." (Not so, but who cares?) "33% is
technique, 33% intuitive and the rest is..." Numbers, percentages, statistics,
etc., always make for a more convincing case.

V - A - 8 - Convince the Audience: "There is a lot of psychic energy in this
room. Yes, I feel a surge, a thrust, of energy here." Now, a psychic case can
be made. When something occurs it will be attributed to the high level of
"psychic" energy.

V - A - 9 - The Switcheroo - I Made It Change: "My prediction changed how
things happened. My prediction was the causal agent. Thus I am not wrong. I
cause the change that caused it to look like I am wrong -- which I am not. Had
I not told anyone about my prediction, it most certainly would have occurred." One might say, "I have a casual oneness with the universe."

V - A - 10 - We are More Alike/Similar Than Different: Many of the same things
can be said of almost all people even if you don't know them. People share
many similar characteristics. One of the books on "The Peter Principle" has a
speech for all occasions, and there are comments, stock spiels, or a psychic
reading for all occasions.

V - A - 11 - Your Problems Are Also Their Problems: Problems and concerns
in life are generated by many common areas, e.g., sex, puberty, age, marriage,
love, guilt, children, death, money (nobody ever has enough), security, one's
job, etc. Any statement about a person having, or once having had, concerns in
any of these areas is fairly safe.

V - A - 12 - Use Poetic Ambiguity: For example: "I see you coming to a fork in
the road..." "Your life is like a blade of grass, a wing of a bird, a cloud in the
sky, a blue wonder, like a breath of air in utopia, etc." Tell them with a straight
face and they will do the work of fitting your statement within their life.

V - A - 13 - Deliberately Confuse: Use double or triple negatives, e.g., "No this
person wouldn't be a non-relative, wouldn't it? No, I don't disbelieve that "Oh
no, I thought you wouldn't say that!" When wrong on only a small part, or partly
correct say something like, "I am on a roll now." And quickly move on to
something else so they do not have time to figure out that you may be wrong. If
they question you, you may be able to reword what you said in order to appear
correct. They will have a difficult time remembering exactly what you said. This
allows them to misinterpret or forget what you are saying. Confusion is the key.
V - A - 14 - Good. I am Wrong: "You are a dancer, a singer? (Wrong): Nuts, I had hoped you would perform, I guess I will have to work myself." "You are separated from your mother?" (Yes or No) "Good, I hoped it was not that way." This technique serves as a cover for you to stall and formulate your next statement.

V - A - 15 - Don't Wait - Debunk Magic Possibility: "Just because some people do the same thing as magic or illusion, it does not mean or prove that I do it as magic."

V - A - 16 - Have Stock Technical Psychic Phrases At The Tip of Your Tongue: The sprinkling of stock phrases amidst your regular reading will seem to add much to the reading and will fill in time as you try to formulate more impressive verbiage.

Over the years a lot has been said about the "Infamous Dr. Fox." He spoke in total nonsense, but it was done in such an impressive manner he was well received. The first author and Sue O'Brien did the following demonstration. The following nonsense about time was created. O'Brien was formally introduced in the first author's psychology class and dramatically presented this material. Students in the class evaluated the talk as a useful way to look at time. This was the script used:

"To all of us, time is an important issue, an issue which we all take for granted at times. Time can hold a number of meanings to each and every individual. Time can be every moment there ever was or ever will be. It can be the happenings of events in chronological order, or the order of events, such as the fifth time the event occurred in time. Time deserves time. This is commonly referred to as ordinal measurement of time. Time as we all know, can be seen as the period during which something exists or happens, or the space an event occupied. This meaning of time is frequently referred to as "time spatial" orientations. Time is history, and age, or an era. Philosophers have referred to this concept of time as realism. Time is only time. Time can be prevailing, times can be good, time can be wasted, time can be never ending, or it could go without saying. Time can be arranged to be suitable, opportune, adjusted, or to coincide with something. The many faces of time can be seen in that, things can be done on time, ahead of time, or in due time. Now I could go on for a greater length 'of time' on this topic of ultimate concern to all of us."

V - A - 17 - Like an End of the World Celebration: One might get good mileage out of predicting "the end of the world" or any other catastrophe. Consider the possibilities of such a prediction. Some people have offered the following as a joke, but it may be true. When one is predicting the end of the world, the people who were to be destroyed or injured will generally be happy when the prediction does not come true, so they will not hold your bad prediction against
you!

**V - A - 18 - Common Problems Could be Made into the Client's Problems:**
Think about what are common worries because chances are that they worry about the same things. Example: Will you ever feel secure financially?

**V - A - 19 - Don't Give a Correct Answer First:** This leaves you a chance to correct their reply. Example: You haven't previously been married have you? If answer is yes or no say, "I thought so."

**V - A - 20 - Blame/Include the Psychic World:** Telling the client that the vibrations are not strong enough. Example: I'm sorry, but I'm not getting clear vibes. Can you help me?

**V - A - 21 - Do Not Give too Much Information:** Giving information at the most general level will ensure that your psychic predictions will most likely be accurate. Example: A well known political figure will run into trouble in office. This is a given!

**V - A - 22 - Don't Give Instant Answers:** Struggle with the words of your psychic prediction. Example: I see an older woman with the letter T or L or M in her name. Eventually the client may extrapolate to this slow pace to someone, something, or just say something to help you build your response.

**V - A - 23 - Give a Very General Statement if Unsure:** This can be made almost open ended for the client to interpret. Example: I see a man named John. It's very foggy, but he could be someone you know. Possibly a person from a previous life.

**V - A - 24 - Not Me. The Cards, the Leaves, etc. Are Saying It:** "The cards tell me...," put it in an open ended way. Example: “I feel the tea leaves are telling me...”

**V - A - 25 - What is Bad Isn't Always Really Bad:** This will appear to the client to be a psychic prediction yet it is only a ploy to put the client to work, trying to align the prediction with real life. Example: You will receive an important letter. Though it may appear to be bad news it will turn out to be good news.

**V - A - 26 - The Client's Responsibility:** If it does not work, place some subtle blame on the involvement of the client. Example, "If we are to make contact with the other side you must show more concentration." Suggest the client concentrate harder or suggest he or she is not believing enough. Claim they can project their thoughts or that the psychic vibes are weak and readings cannot be given today. "Come back tomorrow and we will try again with more concentration. We will see if we can get rid of the cloud I see here today."
V - A - 27 - The Importance of Future Decisions: Let them know they have important future decisions, whether they know it or not. They may agree and begin to tell you about an upcoming decision or event. For Example: You have an important decision to make in the next (year, month, etc.) and you will make the right decision.

V - B - Develop the Repertoire to "Back off." (The Need to Adjust to the Client's Reactions to Your Reading or The Art of Being Sly and Sneaky

A good fake psychic needs to develop the verbal repertoire to gracefully step aside, to back off, or to down grade the intensity level of the prediction when the situation warrants. In this game one must develop the skill in order to deal with a miss (or when a client states you missed) and still appear to be in control, to appear as psychic-like.

For Example:

V - B - 1 - Use the Careful Approach When In Doubt: When your information (say an address) is or could be wrong state that it may not be their current address but perhaps an address related to them somehow, e.g. it could be an old address. "I envision you coming out of a house, could be an apartment, the last number of the address is 9" (look for nod or some form of approval). If you are wrong, suggest it was, ---- friend's house, former address, house visited, or a house they walked by perhaps in another life, etc. It is foggy, and at night, a dark night. I can not make it out very well. Certainly pause frequently in anticipation of their verbal supplements.

V - B - 2 - Use "The Vibes Are A Bit Weak" Approach: "The Psychic vibrations are very faint, but I feel this object (using psychometry format of feeling an object of the client) belongs to someone who is not at their peak at times." Since vibes are weak, an incorrect statement on the psychic's part will be seen as a result of the weak vibes. Whereas a correct statement will be seen as a feat done by a skilled "psychic" who can work wonders with even very weak vibes. One should not be dropped for a loss on this one. If the situation is structured right, many clients will verbally burst forth and add material to make it a strong psychic-like response.

V - B - 3 - That's Right. You're Wrong and I am Right (Even when I am Wrong): "The signs were right in the stars, tea leaves, crystal ball, tarot cards, palm, grains of sand, etc. I just read them in a different way when I told you. However, it was a correct prediction. I just interpreted the signs in an alternate frame."

V - B - 4 - Need More: "You didn't have enough _________."

V - B - 4 - a - ....faith in psychic vibes. You need to believe.
V - B - 4 - b - ....high power vibes. I believe you have them.

V - B - 4 - c - ....oneness with the universe, let's try again. I am sure we will make it.

V - B - 4 - d - ....feeling for this. I just don't feel for this now. Let's try this later.

V - B - 5 - Psychic Vibes are Fickle: "They cannot be turned on and off like a faucet. They are difficult to work with at times, so let's do our best and see what we come up with."

V - B - 6 - You are the one to Do It: "Concentrate more, your mind powers have to do it." This implies if they do not concentrate hard enough it is their lack of effort that produced the poor psychic performance, not your lack of psychic powers.

V - B - 7 - The Supposed Psychic Standards are Flexible: There is tremendous variation amongst what psychics are supposed to be like. Your own personal repertoire can be added as psychic repertoire.

V - B - 8 - Bad News Equals Really Good News: "In a short time you will receive a phone call. The phone call will contain good news even though it first appears like very bad news."

V - B - 9 - Get An Active Jargon Filled Repertoire, Some Standard "Outs" For When Things Go Wrong:

V - B - 9 - a - "I don't mean you are really gung ho about X. I mean you have been that way only when necessary......"

V - B - 9 - b - "I mean, the situation. In certain situations, when you see the need, then you are able to draw on you inner strength to ."

V - B - 9 - c - For example if you use the words "aggressiveness or assertiveness" you, as the supposed psychic, can direct it towards either a very non-aggressive/non-assertive person or an extremely aggressive/assertive individual, if you preface it correctly. The supposed psychic may make a statement such as "The level of aggression/assertiveness you use on tasks in life will allow you to achieve a high level of success." This statement can be taken as pertaining to a person who is normally of high or low aggressive behavior.

V - B - 9 - d - "Are you sure I am wrong in this reference to this life? Perhaps I am seeing you in a past life, or I am seeing a glimpse of the future, of your reincarnated aura stage."
"You are not aware of this unconscious need. It is still in the back of the mind. Once you are able to see in your conscious mind, your life will be changed for the better forever."

Keep clever short stories on reserve so as to relate to the persons reading if you receive any negative feedback, for example, "I had this same situation with a young lady last fall. I told her she was moving, and here a few days ago, she comes back, a year later, and she is moving."

Avoid a difficult question by asking a question yourself - change the subject.

"It has happened deep within your psychic side, you are just unaware of it happening."

"It has not yet happened, it will happen in the future."

"It is cloudy, is it, it is, a relative of yours this pertains to."

"I am moving forward in your life, beyond this life." "Yes, I know that was wrong, I was just making sure that you were going to call me on my error. I want you to be honest with me, throughout my reading."

"Don't worry yourself over minor details, you can see the big psychic picture."

"It is something not about you, but family, a friend, etc., or about the past. I am seeing the whole shadowed picture. This family member could be unknown to you (adoption? step family? long lost family? a long time family secret?)"

"Being psychic isn't an exact science." If something goes wrong while doing your thing.

"You're not listening carefully." Then rearrange words to mean something different.

"Try to reserve judgment. You may not believe me but..."