

INTERVIEW

With...



Rita Berkowitz is an Ordained Minister and a Pastor of the Spiritualist Church of Quincy. She is a Certified Medium, Commissioned Healer, Reiki Master, author and holds a Master's of Science in Psychological Counseling. She is an accomplished artist who has shown her work throughout New England and New York. Rita has the rare gift of combining her talents as an artist and a medium by drawing our spirit guides and loved ones and imparting a gift of peace to her clients.

For many years, I had heard of Rita's work through the holistic and spiritual community, though I hadn't had the opportunity to meet her. As I walked into her office and was greeted by Rita on the day of our interview, I was immediately filled with a sense of love and peace. One can't help but feel the pureness of energy she emits. I immediately felt at home with her.

Aspire: How did your journey as 'The Spirit Artist' begin?

Rita: I am from Brooklyn, New York and was raised in an Orthodox Jewish household. Even as a young child I would draw faces, thinking I was drawing imaginary people. Little did I know that I was drawing what I could actually see! I pursued my art education and studied at the Pratt Institute and the School at The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. For many years, I showed my work throughout the New England and New York.

I had a gallery in New York and also taught college art for fifteen years. In the early eighties, a friend convinced me into taking a spiritual development class. Around that same time, I went to listen to a rabbi speak about healing and the journey began.

One of my first readings, in the late eighties, was for a gentleman I had never met. As I did his reading, I drew a picture of a young teenager. Upon showing the finished drawing to the man, he took a photograph from his wallet and compared the likeness of the portrait to that of the photo – his thirteen year old son that he lost in a drunk driving accident. After that and many other experiences, I knew there was no turning back.

Aspire: I'm sure that you must have gone through periods of denial and acceptance after that experience. What led you to continue your work and accept your gift with such peace and grace?

Rita: When I had that first experience, I was quite frightened, but also very moved that I could give a sense of peace to those I'm

reading and a voice to those in the spirit world. Proving with tangible evidence that their loved one is alive and well has helped many of my clients to heal and move on from their grief. It is always about healing for all involved.

Aspire: You are the Pastor of the Spiritualist Church of Quincy. Can you explain to us what Spiritualism is and what the mission of the Spiritualist Church is?

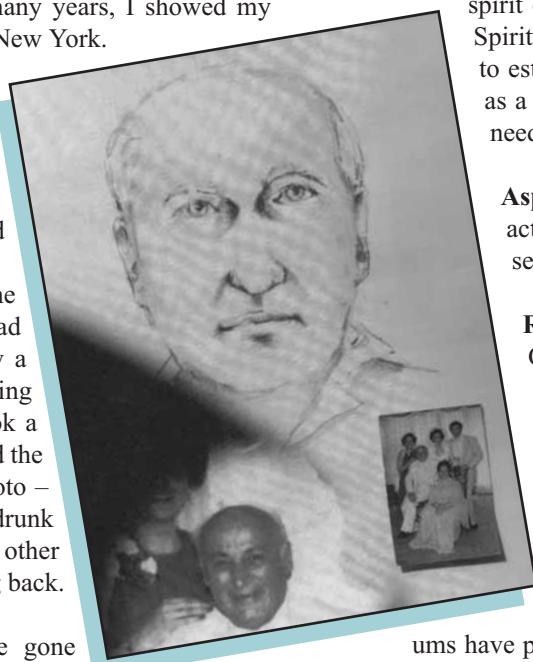
Rita: Spiritualism is founded on the concept that spirit communication is a natural and common occurrence in the physical world, and mediumship is an integral part of it. We believe that humans consist of the body, mind and spirit. This spirit, or energy, is what links spirits to the physical world and makes spirit communication possible. The key is that we believe that this energy is Light, representing the power of the Divine, and that the primary purpose of spirit communication is for help and healing. For the Spiritualist medium, the core of Spiritualist beliefs are to establish "proof" of the continuity of life. My gift as a Spirit Artist gives many the tangible proof they need to move on.

Aspire: I understand that Spiritualist Mediums actually undergo extensive training and must pass a series of qualifying exams. Is this correct?

Rita: Yes, we must pass the Morris Pratt Institute Course of Study and be tested on the material before a board of mediums. The core mission of our church is to prove the continuity of life. Our certified mediums must be able to meet that mission. Spiritualism believes that everyone has at least limited capabilities to communicate with spirits. Though, just like any other gift or ability, some are more skilled than others. As I mention in my first book, all medi-

ums have psychic abilities, but not all psychics have mediumistic abilities. It takes a lot of time, focus and training to develop as a medium.

Aspire: Since 2002, you have co-authored two books: "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Communicating with Spirits" and "Empowering Your Life with Angels." In the first book, there are



Rita

Berkowitz

THE SPIRIT ARTIST

samples of some of your spirit drawings. When the drawings are compared to actual photographs (like those shown here), the similarities are amazing! How did the books come about?

Rita: It was as much a shock to me as to anyone. I never considered myself a writer, although many mediums and astrologers told me there would be books. One day, I received an e-mail from the holistic "Idiot's Guide" producer asking if I would be interested in writing a book on spirit communication. After corresponding with her, we really hit it off. I had met my co-author (via the phone) and went to work. I was selected as the expert to work on the book.

Aspire: I noticed you offer three types of readings. What is the difference between them? Can you explain these further?

Rita: Yes, depending on the needs and desires of my clients, I offer three types of readings, usually lasting an hour. Phone readings are also available.

Spirit Artist – Spirit guides allow me to draw a portrait of a spirit guide or loved one that is around you. I also give verbal messages from the loved ones. Portraits are available in black and white or color.

Spirit Communicator – As a clairvoyant, I can see and communicate with those on the higher side of life. This session is for those who have lost a loved one and are trying to communicate with them. Bring a photo or piece of jewelry of the loved one to strengthen the link if you like, but it is not necessary.

Life Reading – Collaborating between your guides and mine, I use the tarot to format a reading about your current life. These Readings have a psychological orientation. I inform you of where life's speed bumps are getting in your way and how to avoid or get around them. I also allot time for connecting with spirit loved ones or questions about people and situations in your current life.

Aspire: Is there anything that the client can do to assist in the reading and what can a client expect in a session?

Rita: I feel it is very important that my client is relaxed and open-minded. I ask that they do not feed me any information. Just yes and no answers are all I need. Depending on the type of reading my client requests, I start with centering myself and quietly saying my opening prayers. During this time is usually when a spirit will

come through and I am given details of his/her life and personality. If a drawing was requested, this is when I start drawing what is coming through.

Aspire: You teach various classes such as 'Beginner Mediumship Classes' throughout the area. An upcoming one on June 10th at

Inner Wisdom in Norton, MA is an all day

event. What can one expect at a class such as this? Are special skills needed to take such a class?

Rita: The first thing one would need is a real interest. We all have gifts of mediumship – being able to connect, feel and sense our loved ones. That day we will be learning how to open to the Spirit World, to recognize their presence, to identify who they are and what message they are here to give.

Aspire: Is there anything you would like to share with our readers that would help them understand

further about mediumship, Spiritualism and the other side?

Rita: That's a huge question! I guess that the most important thing is that our loved ones are still with us and that they do not die. When they come through, they come with love and blessings. They never come through to hurt and unlike what some may believe, they can't control us. They guide and help, but we have to accept that help.

The love coming from the Spirit World is amazing and the potential to continue the relationships with our loved one is truly there. Trust is the most important thing.

Spiritualism is a religion that is not only about talking to the deceased, but is also about healing. Every mediumistic session should be about healing. Spiritualists also work with the laying on of hands to send Universal Healing Energy to those who are in need.

The joy in connecting with the other side/Higher Side can be overwhelming. I feel so blessed to be able to do this for my work as well as practice it religiously.

