## A Response to Laura's Comments

Written by Jeff Wagg Saturday, 21 February 2009 00:00

A few days ago, I published <u>this article</u>, which was as much rant as commentary. I was upset at the seemingly endless stream of psychics offering their "gifts" to the world, while actually just getting in the way.

A *Swift* reader by the name of Laura took issue with my article. I shall address her comments after each paragraph break.

She said:

Where do I start.....oh yeah, looks like YOUR site "James" takes donations. Trying to make money off of bullying people and their beliefs? I guess so. Well, anyhow, the way you seemed to "cut and paste" certain excerpts from their site to read the way YOU want it to sound is so "media like"...good job, heh. Here is a great idea...IF YOU DON'T LIKE or BELIEVE IN WHAT SOMEONE HAS ON THE INTERNET, THEN DON'T READ IT! Or, if you just happen to read it and don't like it.....SHUT UP! (those were your words right? Hope I don't get in trouble for plagiarism).

Bullying people and their beliefs? Do you really think that would be a successful strategy to raise funds for a non-profit organization? Keep in mind, that the psychic site I mentioned, which has now been taken down, was a for-profit venture. Though the "readings" were free, the site sold many different woo-woo products. As for my cut and paste, those comments were two of four on one page. I omitted the other two because they were irrelevant. I posted the "psychics" comments in their entirety.

For respect of families and people that requested help on that site I won't mention names but I do know that the site was there to help people that understand certain people have "gifts" and even may have been let down by law enforcement or needed that extra puzzle piece. Their services were offered for FREE and I respect that. These psychics didn't wake up one day and say "lets just make some crap up". They have been HELPING people for years and not asking for anything in return. There are many people like myself that have been helped with no strings attatched plus not every detail (for the respect of family/friends) is or was posted on that site so you were only reading the tip of the iceburg.

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It's a shame that you didn't give an example of anyone being "helped." I invite you to tell your story, as it may convince me. If psychics are real, I want to know about it.

They truly are amazing people/psychics because I know first hand they had immediate information (not "vague" info like you accused them of) that no one could know. So if you are a non-believer.....thats fine, just don't be a dream crusher to those who never did anything to hurt you. Maybe more people need to think outside of the box.....many people in this world are.

What they said on their site was vague. If they have the ability to not be vague, I don't know why they didn't take the chance to display that on their site. As for dream crushing, the JREF is an educational resource. We have no interest in crushing dreams, but we do have an interest in establish the truth of a matter. If doing so crushes dreams, I suggest that the wrong dreams are being cherished.

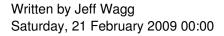
You are wrong when you say these people haven't hurt me. In my opinion, they're getting in the way of police work and in a case where the victim is deceased, they are interfering with the normal grieving process. This is harm, and though it has not happened to me personally, I will use my position here to make the facts known.

Thinking "outside the box" is a valuable skill, and one we use here at the JREF. Believing what psychics say is an example of thinking inside the box.

So, what's next for you.....attacking different religions you don't believe in? There are PLENTY of horribly cruel and dangerous websites out there that you could attack. Also, maybe a little research before making accusations and hurting others would help. I thought that would be taught in "media 101" (guess you were sick on that day). Well, congratulate yourself for ruining a good thing and for hurting the innocent.

Attacking religions is outside our purview, but we will examine religious claims with a skeptical eye. As for research, I dare say that Randi and the JREF have done more research into so-called psychics than any other organization. What you call a "good thing" I consider to be dishonest and cruel. But you're right about one thing... there are PLENTY of horribly cruel and dangerous websites out there that promote belief in psychics, alternative medicine, and other unproven things that people stake their lives on. We're a small organization, but we'll do what

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we can.

Say what you want....No one will change MY opinion and your words will never hurt me so I will just sit back and laugh at your ignorance.

And that's the end of the discussion as far as I'm concerned. Laura has just informed us that she has a closed mind. Not only that, she's claiming that she's the sole possessor of truth, and that anyone who disagrees with her is ignorant. That's a shame, but I'm hopeful that she'll consider evidence some day. Unlike Laura, I will change my mind in the light of enough evidence, and that includes belief in psychics. I simply haven't seen enough evidence yet.

So Laura, I do thank you for your comments, but you miss some key points.

First, the JREF offers \$1,000,000 for any psychic who can simply demonstrate their ability. What more can you ask from us? We have the money waiting, and yet no one has taken it yet. As I administer the challenge personally, I know for a fact that it's legit. You can know that too if you or one of your friends applies. Why wouldn't they win the money, if only for the chance to donate the money to charity or a victim's family?

Second, you said in another comment that the site was taken down due to the media. Most websites *welcome* media attention, as it broadens their audience and impact. Why would that be a reason to take the site down? Think about that. They drew my attention, and if they were legit, that should have been a positive for them.

If Laura chooses to respond to me (jeff@randi.org) I'll be sure to publish her response here.