

# WILLIAMS

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The British medium doesn't come across as spooky or mysterious or eerie; she's warm and bubbly and completely accessible. For someone who deals daily with the spirit world, she's very down-to-earth. With her spiky hair dyed in multiple colors, she looks more like a punk rocker, or a mischievous friend with whom you'd never stop laughing.

And when she communicates for the dead, she seems equally as delighted as those receiving the messages. (She says that sometimes those she communicates with are great fun, someone she would've befriended had she'd known them when they were alive.)

Williams is currently on tour and will appear at the Barbara B. Mann Performing Art Hall Sept. 24.

She'll spend approximately three hours giving readings from the stage, but the spirits show up even earlier, she says.

"What happens is that before I actually do the reading, I meditate in my dressing room, and if I don't get anybody through in that meditation, then I panic," she says. "But most of the time, I get eight or nine spirits that come through straight away. In my dressing room."

Once the show starts, she stands on stage and gives readings.

"We have a lot of fun," she says. "It's not always morbid. People think, 'Ohh, it's going to be really sad.' It's not, it can be a lot of fun. I just take random people from the audience that I'm going to pull out. I find these people purely because of the spirits that come forward. And they'll say, 'Oh, my great-uncle is sitting in the audience and he looks like this,' so of course I'll just find this person. It's all very random."

"You never know what's going to happen. It's always different, every night it's completely different. And I never know what's going to happen. So it is a bit improv, but I'm not worried about it, because there's probably a thousand people sitting in the audience, and I can guarantee there's going to be at least five spirits who are eager to get a message across. And as soon as one spirit comes through, it just opens the floodgates: one spirit comes through, and then everybody else comes through."

"It's always the first one I worry about. I worry about connections; am I really connecting?"

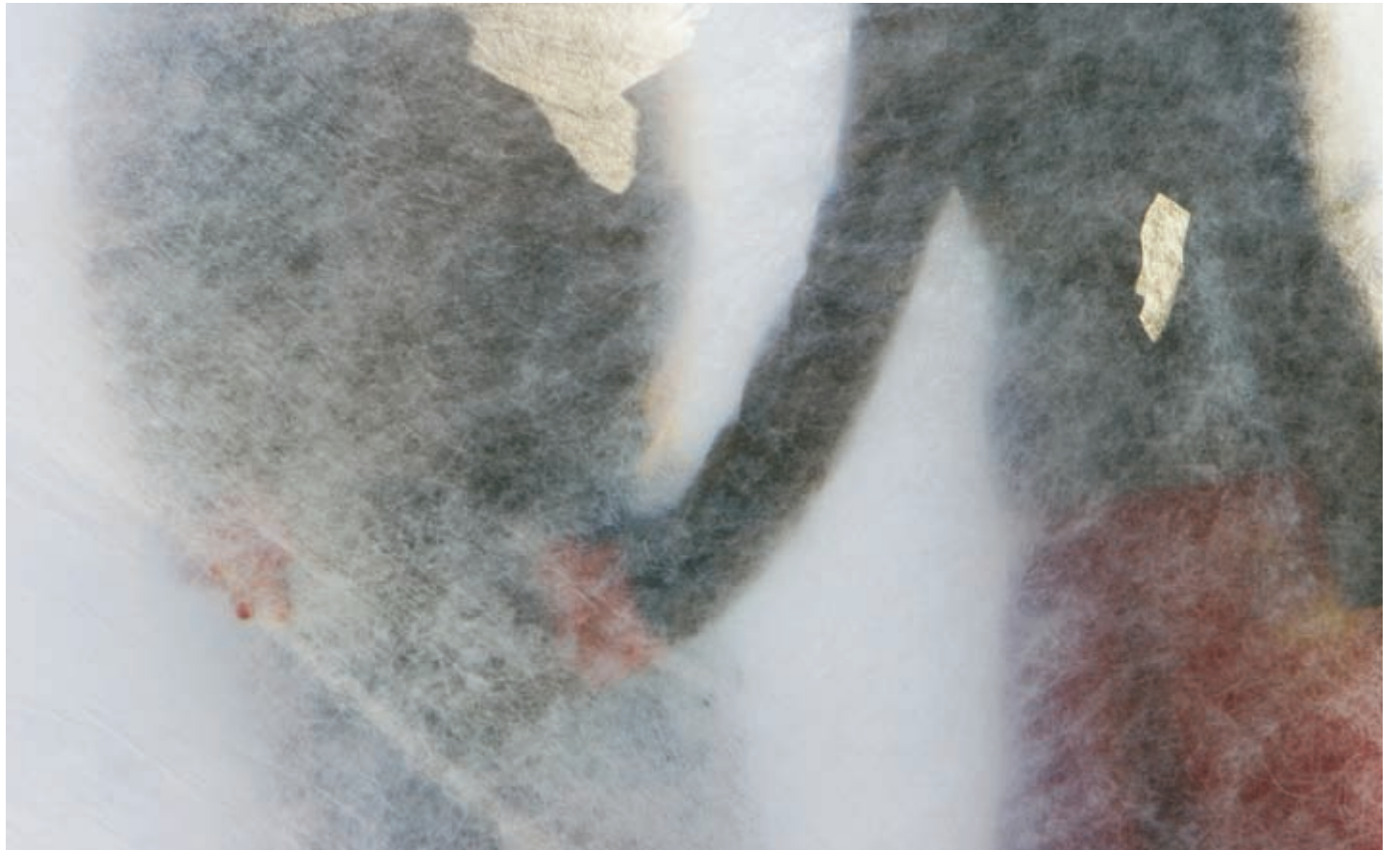
And as for the skeptics in her audience?

"Skeptics never frustrate me," Williams says. "And in my live performances, I will guarantee that I will read for at least one skeptic. I don't purposefully do that. It just happens. It's almost like: 'OK, right, I'm going to show you now.' And they come through. It's crazy how it happens. And it's a lot of fun, actually. I find it very funny. But I'm not out to change people's minds. If they want to be open, then that's up to them."

Her own father, she says, is highly skeptical. Despite her success, he'd never attended one of her live shows until this spring.

"Every time I've done a live show, certainly in England, he's said, 'No, I can't come to that. I'd be a hypocrite,'" Williams says. "Because he's very much an atheist, and he doesn't believe in anything. He doesn't believe in God, he doesn't believe that we go to a different place. He believes that when you're dead, you're dead."

"And recently, I actually had a go at him. I said, 'Dad, I'm your girl, I'm your daughter. I really would just like you to appreciate what I do. Whether or not you believe it is a different matter. I don't care whether you believe it. I just



want you to come and see it."

He finally did, in April.

"And he walked away, scratching his head. He said, 'I don't know how you do it, I don't know what you do. All I know is that you're damn good at it. And you help so many people. But because I can't quantify it and touch it and feel it, and have maybe a quadratic equation to put to it, I can't deal with it.' And I said, 'Fine, not a problem.'"

"I deal with skeptics every day. And I understand that that's their mentality, and that's the reason why they can't understand it, is because they can't see it for themselves. They can't do it."

Many people come up to him and say "Oh, I've seen your daughter on TV. You must be really proud."

And he'll deliberately change the subject, Williams says.

"He says, 'You know what, I respect what you're saying. I thank you for the comments, but personally, I can't deal with it.'"

Her mother, however, has a different reaction.

"My mum will talk forever about it!" Williams says.

She was only 4 years old when she saw dead people. She didn't realize that it was an uncommon occurrence. The family reaction to her gift wasn't positive.

"Actually, it was a bit freaky for everybody concerned," Williams says. "It was quite funny, because my father went, 'Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.' My mother branded me with a whole overactive imagination. So I really pushed it away."

But when her grandmother became a medium, she told Williams's parents that their daughter was very gifted and was going to be a medium too.

Williams began doing off-the-cuff readings, but a friend encouraged her to charge for them and booked her for a professional reading.

"She booked me, gave me number out, and said, 'You need to see this woman. She's amazing.' So the next thing I know, my phone is ringing constantly with people wanting readings," Williams says. She kept her day job, though, doing readings at night.

"Something really had to give," she says, "because I was booking my appointments six months in advance, because I had so many."

Then, fortuitously, she lost her job. And though she initially doubted it, she learned that people would come to see her for readings during the day.

When she did a reading in Los Angeles for one of Merv Griffin's producers, she

was offered a TV show of her own. After doing "Lisa Williams: Voices From the Dead" for two seasons for the Lifetime channel, she's experimenting with a different format.

Instead of an office environment, the show is now set in a studio, like a talk show. But she'll keep her man-on-the-street episodes, where she does readings for strangers she chances upon on the sidewalk.

"At the moment, the structure is not set in stone, but I'm hoping we're going to format it so that each day will deal with something very similar," she says. "Maybe one day we'll deal with the loss of a child, how to cope. The next day we'll deal with the loss from a suicide. I'm not sure how it's going to be formatted."

Williams just finished filming a week's worth of shows, which will work as a pilot for what she hopes will be a new, daily series.

"It's been kept top-secret," she says. "We've changed it up now. It's got a new title. It's going to be called 'Lisa Williams: Voices From the Other Side.'"

Lifetime has scheduled the show to begin on Monday, Oct. 27 at 11 a.m. The new series will run daily for one week in that time slot.

"This is a view to see, obviously, what people like about it, what people don't like about it," she says. "Then, if it does get picked up, we'll be looking at a daily show for next year."

The dead, she says, communicate to her through a variety of ways: they'll talk to her, but she also receives impressions, or images. She also sees them.

"They do talk to me," Williams says. "I get voices that come through. Sometimes I can't determine whether the voices are male or female. That's why I want them to come forward and show me. Or give me their energy...I feel this very male energy coming forward. Then I'll see an outline of the person. Then, for instance, if there was a situation, they'll show me how they passed. So they'll often take me to things that I can recognize."

"Or they'll take me to names that I know. For instance, I said to this lady, 'You know, for some reason, my spirit guide is talking to your spirit, and wants me to acknowledge a friend of mine called Laura Blake. But I have no idea why I'm saying this because I know the person you want to speak to, and it's a man.' And she said, 'His first name is Blake.' So they say things I can relate to, but I don't know why I'm seeing this. So now I understand. It's so wild."

if you go

>> **Lisa Williams:** Messages From Beyond

>>**When:** 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 24

>>**Where:** the Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall, 8099 College Parkway

>>**Cost:** \$75, \$48.50 and \$35

>>**Information:** Call (239) 481-4849 or go to [www.bbmnpah.com](http://www.bbmnpah.com)

Giving a reading is very energizing, Williams says.

"Sometimes it's very hard, because you never know what spirit's coming through," she says. "But most of the time it's a lot of fun, it's energizing for me, it's very good. If you saw me today, nigh six days of shooting and doing four readings a day, I'm knackered. I'm exhausted. And this is what happens. Once you stop, you become very exhausted. Because suddenly you've used all this energy up, and now you have to recoup the energy."

Williams has a visual signal to tell the spirits she's off the clock: she wears a hat.

"It just signified how I've blocked the spirits off, because I pretend I've got this lead door across the top of my head," she says. "But there are times when I do stick a hat on just to shut everything away, and sort of hide underneath my hat. It's really strange. It doesn't block the spirits as such, but what it does, it just reaffirms, 'Hey leave me alone and let me hide.'"

What does she think about how mediums are portrayed in movies?

She generally doesn't watch them, she says, but admits to loving "Ghost."

"That's the closest to my life, really," she says. "I love the character that Whoopi plays. I think she really captured the essence of how a medium really, truly is."

She also wants to see "Ghost Town, a new movie starring Ricky Gervais."

But watching movies about mediums is like a busman's holiday for her, she says. And she'll grow frustrated because they "Hollywood-ize" the character, and "that's not exactly how it is."

Williams says she gets random messages for people and posts them on her Web site, [www.lisawilliamsmedium.com](http://www.lisawilliamsmedium.com). And she stays after her shows to meet everyone and shake hands.

"It seems as though we have a lot of unfinished business [with the dead], but those who have passed on don't," Williams says. "But we often seek communication with those who have passed