

Spirit Communication 101

Lesson Two



How to Play 20 Questions

When you were a kid, did you ever play 20 Questions? Someone would pick something totally at random, a person, or a place or a book or whatever, and your job was to guess what it was in 20 questions or less. I Spy was the same kind of game, where you had to guess the thing that they saw: “I Spy, with my Little Eye, something round!” To which you’d ask if it was a tire, or a rock, and so on, depending on whatever your strategy was. The rule for both games was that the questions had to be answerable by yes, no, or maybe. Sounds familiar, right?

Using the Tellbones isn’t all that different; you’re just trying to get the message in this case, instead of cactus, more road, cars, or more cactuses that they saw as you drove to New Mexico. Because guessing a message is a little more complicated than guessing that it’s a bunny, strategy is really important. You don’t want to unfairly bias the questions right from the start (that’s one of those self-delusion things), but you also want to leave things open enough that you can get to the message no matter what it is. And you also have as many questions as you need - theoretically, anyway. I can definitely see, and have experienced, a Wight getting tired of questions and just refusing to play.

Here are some pretty obvious strategies that everyone uses:

- Start broad and narrow it down
- Move in halves to make triangulating easier and faster
- Do not throw out random guesses because they’re a waste of effort.

And so on. In terms of Tellbones and similar systems, there are some strategies to use that are definitely a good idea.

First, address the most likely answers first. That may include an answer you don’t like. Honesty and integrity go a long way towards getting the message right for just this reason. Do you want the real answer or what you want to hear? Asking if you will win the lottery in the next day, 2 days, 3 days, 4 days, and so on is a terrible way to ask the questions. It’s a great way to get the Wights to mess with you. Instead, ask if you will win at all in the next month. If yes, will you win less than \$10? \$50? And so on – these are the most likely results.

Ask about the most common answers first. This is not the same as likely answers. Likely is no, never. Common is yes, less than \$10. Don’t go off on a tangent asking about all the possible spirits involved if you haven’t asked if there even IS a Wight involved. The point here is to apply some logic and common sense, and start there.

You want to keep it fair too. Just like you shouldn’t ask if she will call in one hour, in two hours, in 3 hours, in 4 hours, and so on, you should not weigh the questioning down with 400 barely different

options that you'd like to get against the single answer you don't want to get. Will I win a million dollars? Will I win 1.5 million? Will I win 2 million? Will I not win at all?

Don't get trapped in the opposite road either. Don't think about how you're not worthy and focus on all the obvious "it's never going to happen!". Balance likelihood, possibility, and what you can get with help from your Wights. Don't short change yourself or the power your Wights have. In summary, be specific, but be fair and logical. Ask the most common and most likely questions first.

Be prepared to think outside the box. Just because Gramma cut the end of the roast off doesn't mean you have to. There are so many ways to fit the roast in the pan - including getting a bigger pan! Sometimes, the answers the Wights have for you are well outside your expectation. This is not a surprise, because if you'd expected it, you would have done it already, right? You just need to allow for other options besides the ones you know, early in the questioning. "Something else?" is always a good question, after the first few obvious answers.

So how do you start?

Well, let's pick a subject. Suppose we want to ask for some help with money. First, I'd ask if there are any Wights who want to help me with getting money. Once we have found one and identified (and verified!) who they are, and if we're willing to work with them, next is to figure out how they can help. Can you work without identifying them? Sure, but that's kind of like asking a random person on the street to watch your house. You don't know if they're trustworthy in any way.

The very first question I'd ask here is if there's work I should do. After all, that is the most common way of getting money nowadays. Narrow down by services rendered or products sold. If it's services, name your favorite or best skills, or run through the categories of products you have access too.

Maybe work is not it, they say. Time to try some other options. Sell your stuff? Do some spells? Ask for a loan? Beg at street corners? Don't be afraid to ask for help - "give me a hint, please!" That works for me sometimes and I'll suddenly see something that just clicks, or an answer will pop into my head out of the blue. That's a good sign your Wight said something.

For practice, try playing plain ol' 20 questions or I Spy with friends, using messages instead of objects as the secret to uncover. This will help you learn how to get to the answer faster. See if you can figure out ways to ask clearer questions. Play with it. Then take it to the Spirits and see what they say.

What's a Spirit, Anyway?

Speaking of Spirits... what are they anyway? That is the \$64 jillion dollar question. There are theories about them in every part of the globe, in every culture, in every tradition. Of course I've got my own, and I bet you have your own too, but it's a good idea to know what I mean when I say spirit or Wight. Then you'll know what my biases are, where to tread softly because you disagree, and where to dive in head first eyes closed, because you know we're on the same page.

I'm not sure there is one ultimate answer, to be honest, and that's fine by me. I am a huge fan of diversity - Spock's IDIC (Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations) is a fantastic idea for anyone who's on the fringes. Basically, it's the idea that the beauty and magnificence of reality comes from

the combination of infinite differences. It's great at explaining why everyone needs to be free to be who they are. So if you disagree with me, to a point, there's both IDIC and the idea of "Or Not" that I mentioned in lesson 1 to come to your support.

The best definition, as far as I'm concerned, is that a spirit is organized consciousness (Jason Miller came to the same conclusion). If you've ever seen a white blood cell hunt down a bacterium, there's no doubt that there's consciousness there. I've always said that $E=Mc^2$ is an explanation of this idea of consciousness everywhere. Energy and Matter are there, and Information Theory could be saying that the speed of light squared is the information (or consciousness) that informs the transformation. Energy depends on that awareness, and so does matter (after all, algebra says $M=E/c^2$). It's something to think about.

I take this idea and keep going, far past the places where most people stop. In the first lesson, I talked about Embodied Animism, where we compose, and are composed of, an infinite array of other Wights or beings, and how that applies to everything. The Wight of any given biome is composed of the Wights of all the components of the biome, including animals, plants, minerals, locations, folklore, the buildings there, and so on. And it goes the other direction too - that biome is only one part of ever greater organizations existing at an infinite number of precisions.

This is what I call Dividuality. We think of ourselves as individuals, but that illusion is really a consequence of the overlap of Wights. We're more like walking talking Venn diagrams and the "soul" is that center point where all those Wights overlap. Individual means "incapable of being divided", but in this view, we are all dividuals, capable of being divided into many different selves. This makes sense - I am a husband, lover, dad, sorcerer, wight doctor, scholar, polyglot, etc. These are some of the thousands of different center points / souls / selves that I have or am a part of.

There's way more to say about Dividuality (next lesson), but for now, it's important to know that those Venn intersections are Wights. As are all the other bits. Because this idea is central to how I see things, it's going to be how I'll discuss it all - this is my specific worldview / bias. It's also another of those places where you'll have to make up your own mind and apply Or Not.

What to Expect at Contact

All of the above will roll into and affect how I discuss conversations. There are two other bits I have to leave out, for obvious reasons - your expectations and worldview, and those of the Wights you're talking to. Those details will be necessary change how the conversation goes, of course. That said, there are some things you should (or should not!) expect or should address when you're talking to someone else.

We tend to talk about spirit communication as if it's a given: you just start talking and they'll answer. We also say that they're all wise, gentle, spiritually advanced beings. These beliefs will drastically influence the kinds of conversations you have, on all sides. This comes out of anti-materialism - I don't go there, which means there's a lot of Or Not about to be discussed.

First off is the common expectation that there will be an immediate response, that as soon as you ask a question of the spirits they'll respond. That's not always the case - sometimes, no one's available,

or the Wight you're asking for is busy. They have lives too, you know. Just because they're immaterial doesn't mean they will do or respond to anything and everything you ask. This is one of the reasons why it's a good idea to confirm you're connected and validate - no one was answering your call, so maybe Joe Wight walking down the metaphorical street responded.

A good check for this is if the communications are making sense, or just seem very random. If you get confirmation, and then the confirmation is negated, you may not be connected to whatever spirit you thought - take a moment to center (lesson 5), and ask your own spirit if that's the case.

Another reason they may not answer immediately is that they don't know either. Not having a material body is not the same as being omniscient. When you're asking the Tellbones, sometimes that Water Tellbone means that you need to investigate, and sometimes it means the Wight needs to investigate. We tend to make a LOT of assumptions like this about how the Spiritworld works, and just through asking, observation, and outright experience, I've learned that it's really not that different from how it works for us in the Material world. Prognostications coming from spirits that don't pan out are obvious examples of a lack of omniscience; like us humans, they don't have a 100% accuracy rate. They don't know MORE than we do, just DIFFERENTLY. When it comes to bodies and the physical plane, we clearly know a lot more than they do, for example

A lot of experts on spirit communication say that all spiritual being are positive and happy, because they are in spirit form and are thus more spiritually advanced than we are. This comes from specific religious traditions, and really does NOT hold up once you begin looking at spirits worldwide. Even within those traditions that inspired that worldview, you find contradictory information: Demons/ghosts/etc. are out to get us! So.... how is it that they're all gentle and spiritually advanced again?

Spiritualism is one of the main places where this approach manifests, and even within that tradition it's not consistent. Suffice to say that just because a Wight is talking to you does not mean it has your best interests in mind. It may not be outright malevolent - benevolent spirits have their dark sides too, deciding what we should / must do regardless of our own beliefs and inclinations. And don't forget that tricksters abound! You've always got to be conscious of who you're working with and what your relationship with them is like.

It's easy to get stuck in day and night dichotomies, and miss the subtleties of dawn and dusk. There's always something between the extremes. Rough and gentle is a less absolute and extremist way of talking about spirits and their attitudes towards us, but even those are not reliable measures. In Vodou, there are rough spirits (Petwo nasyon) and gentle (Rada) but some of those Petwo spirits are gentler than some of the Rada ones. The point here - don't assume that just because people have said a particular Wight is X, looks like X, is mean like X or gentle like X, none of that necessarily means it is any of those things. You need to remember that it all depends on your relationships too. I know someone who feels Live Oaks as thugs, oppressive and dangerous, but for me, they're very laid back and protective. Neither of us are wrong - those are our experiences and our relationships. This is no different than the relationships you have in the material world. I'm sure there are people who really dislike some of your friends, and vice versa. This is where you need to remember that adage about books and covers, because it's how you and the contents get along that matters.

On the same note, if you're blond-haired, blue-eyed, and have wings, you must be the what that means good guy, right? That's what all those angelic images suggest, because black anything (hair, skin, eyes)

is evil (and racist!). People forget that a lot of the oldest images of angels and prophets depict them with horns, as a symbol of power and divinity, and not the demonic. Image isn't everything. If they can appear however they want, as all those grimoires imply (where they demand that the spirit "Appear before me in comely fashion!"), then clearly there's no required appearance or distinction to be made based on how they show up. Pretty is not good, ugly is not dangerous. Books and covers. Don't judge based on looks.

Conversations

You've got in touch, and verified you've got the right Person, and they're willing to talk to you. You're also pretty clear on some basic Don't-do-thats and what expectations you should let go of. Great! Now what?

As with all conversations, there are many goals and purposes. Sometimes multiples of each at each end of the conversation. You should be conscious of what the other side of the conversation wants, because working with the Wights will generally (generally - it's not perfect in the physical, why would it be perfect anywhere else?) help you get your goals accomplished too.

There's information-sharing. That's one of the most common goals from our end - we want to know stuff. Sharing feelings, the social side of the conversation, is also important in both directions, to establish, maintain, and strengthen relationships (and sometimes the opposite). A common aspect to that information is how to accomplish a goal or get the prize.

Not only do we want to know stuff, we want to have stuff, and towards that end, we hope to persuade a Wight to do something for us in order to gain the prize. That's a very common goal, and it's the most common goal of the spirits too. Almost always, communication is about getting something we want, no matter who we are.

There are dangers in communication as well, which can interfere with achieving our goals. These dangers can also cause significant problems in other ways as well - hurt feelings and anger are common results of communication gone wrong. "Words will never hurt me" has never been true, and I highly doubt that it ever will be. Especially when working with Wights, we need to be conscious of how we can be taken advantage of or otherwise exposed to danger.

The most common, most dangerous thing to be alert for is self-delusion. So many problems are caused by delusions. Ignoring the Wights for the moment, how many times has something gone very sour in your life because you interpreted some phrase wrong, misunderstood someone, thought you were in better shape than you actually were? We delude ourselves at the drop of a hat and hold unrealistic expectations of what anyone could or would do. In extreme cases, death is possible - "I can totally walk out into the wilderness unprepared and survive forever!" Chris McCandless once said to himself. Deluded people have done some pretty dumb things.

Liars are so common. It's not a surprise, as there are plenty of lying humans too. Frauds abound no matter where you go, and there are as many snake oil salesmen amongst the disembodied as there are among us material folks. There are usually plenty of reasons behind the lying, often focused on making oneself feel better or more important, but really, the reason or intent is irrelevant (good intentions and roads to unhappy places come to mind). It doesn't matter what they (or we) intend. This is another danger to watch out for.

The flip side of liars is on us, being gullible and having no boundaries. Do NOT believe the reader who tells you they are the only one who can help you and it will take \$250,000 to remove the jinx that's been put on you by the Black Lodge. Seriously, don't. There are always options and nothing is set in stone. Well, unless it literally is, of course. But even then, that whatever can be removed from the stone and set elsewhere! Be a healthy and skeptical believer in your magic and experience.

Malevolence is a problem too. Sometimes, People just do NOT get along. Oil and water, cats and dogs. They don't like you, don't care about you, want something from you and don't care how they get it. Sometimes, they just want you hurt, gone, or dead. My experience has been that this is pretty uncommon - it takes a lot of effort to do this, and without extra offerings and attention, it's hard for many spirits to generate that much energy on their own. About the only common exception I can think of are some of the more aggressive disease spirits. It's always a possibility.

Then we have the cult of personality sort of thing. How is this a danger you ask? Well, it's kind of a combination of the previous items all at the same time. You're and gullible, they're lying and out to get you. By playing to your gullibility and expectations, you can be sucked into a relationship that will drain you, at best. If you're aware of and paying attention for all the other ways that your communications can be dangerous, you will most likely catch things before it goes this far.

Are Self-Care and Protection Overkill?

With all those potential dangers, you're wondering what you can do about them, I'm sure. This is a larger topic than you'd think, and touches on a lot of different aspects of spirit communication. Before we go there, we really should talk about the idea that maybe it's all just paranoid and over-kill.

Absolutely, it is not. Even if we buy the modern idea that the spirits are all in our heads and parts of our own psyches, that's some dangerously messed up psyche stuff in there! As I believe, the Wights are independent beings, and just like anywhere in the world, there are dangers. We absolutely should address them for our own safety and well-being. You can be cursed, possessed, or otherwise compromised.

But then, it absolutely is paranoid and really not that big a deal. How often have you been possessed, just walking down the street? Not very often, if at all, I imagine. Whether they're real, imagined, or something else entirely, the fact that we have material bodies (which ground negative energies in general) provides us with a good chunk of protection right off the bat. It's not that big a deal unless you make it a big deal, so don't, and you'll most likely be fine.

Okay, so maybe yes and maybe no to the whole paranoid question. It's a little of both. The question we should be asking here isn't whether we need to do self-care or have some protection, but this: "Why Not?" Self-care is a good idea no matter what you're doing or where you're headed. You'd put a band-aid on your finger if you cut it, so why not something similar with your aura, energy body, or spirit? And protection - we wear clothes for a reason, and it's not just to look pretty. Our cars aren't just open frames for a reason too. Protection is one of the most important things that we humans do, and as long as it's applied with some common sense, it can't hurt.

There will be discussion of self-care and protection, for those reasons. Keep in mind though, that most of the time, it really isn't as big a concern as some people make it. The Chicken Littles of the

occult communities would have you believe that just talking to a spirit is summoning them up and they'll eat your soul or something - Deadites and soul-destroying demons out to slaughter your whole family are really pretty thin on the ground. There are dangers, but they usually don't require fortresses to deal with.

Sovereignty

There is an easy way to protect yourself from most of those dangers. This has the added benefit of making you easier for the spirits to see, and also ensures that your relationships are strong and healthy. I call it Sovereignty, being the ruler in charge of yourself. It's the intersection of a lot of beliefs and behaviors, one of the main definers of your self, and comes with many, many benefits in any occult practice.

Sovereignty is the art of being who you actually are. Being centered in yourself and conscious of your talents, baggage, values, shadows, and so on. You are the only you, and recognizing yourself as a unique combination of Dividuals means that there's a strength you can use when you stand tall and recognize your power. This is the true sense of the word Ego, and most definitely something that you need if you're going to be successful at anything you do.

It's got an element of self-possession. Discipline and willpower are signs of a healthy self that is able to recognize when our limitations are valuable. Owning up to who you are makes you untouchable in a way. For example, as a gay man, there are lots of people who try to use that against me, as an insult "Hey faggot. another way to say it. If you say F word I think Fag, so why not say it To which is respond "Yeah, and your point is? Are you looking for a little sumptn-sumptn?" I know who I am, and who I am can never be used against me if I take hold of it and claim it for strength.

Quality is a sign of sovereignty. In the classical sense, sovereignty is the state of being royalty, and you know that comes with quality! "I am a powerful Queen, yasssss!" And what's quality but excellence in an essential and distinctive characteristic (to mash some definitions of quality together). That is, being your best and most quintessential self. Your uniqueness, when celebrated, becomes the mark of quality that defines your own power.

How you take these features of your self and put them into practice is integrity, another primary mark of sovereignty. Integrity is knowing who you are and acting in accordance with that. You don't try to hide the darker bits, you follow through with and think about the implications of your beliefs on your behaviors. You are honestly you, whole and a being of perfect condition, undiminished by doubt, incongruity, or limitation.

To be fair, we all have limitations. I'm not flying any time soon, and running a 3 minute mile is probably right out as well. Or even a 10 minute mile, to be honest. These are the conditions we have been given (or created for ourselves) with the bodies we have. In some ways, these could be Fated aspects of our being - we don't choose gender, orientation, our parents, where we were born, and so on. But these aren't the limitations that diminish our sovereignty - these limitations define it. As a late friend put it, these limitations give us "floor handles", a way to grip and anchor ourselves in our realities. Vitally important, and amazingly useful.

The limitations that sovereignty frees us from are the limitations we place on ourself. “I couldn’t possibly do that” or “I’m not pretty enough” or “No one likes me”. When you own yourself, when you stand in sovereignty, you are able to surpass these self-imposed limitations and accomplish your goals. You are safe and secure in the knowledge of who you are and what you can actually achieve. Even the idea of “Let’s try and see” is freedom from and testing of your limitations. This comes back around to self-care and protection — knowing who you are and what you’re capable is a protection in itself.

This state of Sovereignty is enhanced by behaviors that work in a feedback loop. As you set aside expectations for what you can be or do, you begin to find that there is very little that you can’t be or do. Once you accomplish the one impossible thing before breakfast, accomplishing 30 impossible things by lunch is nothing. Once you see and experience first-hand your own self-imposed limitations, it becomes easier and easier to claim yourself. Your natural state is Sovereignty, if you can just get the trick of not getting in your way.

Part of that is living right. I don’t mean this in some sort of deterministic, handed down in bullet points on a stone tablet sort of way. Living right is simply walking your path with integrity, being self-possessed (and not possessed by others’ ideas of who and what you are), recognizing your quality and your true limitations. It’s when you avoid gratification and shoot for your best instead of easiest. It’s got moments of sorting through the dark stuff too.

You can’t be a bright light for others, showing what’s possible and being a beacon of Sovereignty, if you can’t handle your own darkneses. They are as important and definitive as anything else about you. It’s possible your limitations are the darkness, but they’re still useful floor handles that allow you to anchor and position yourself in the World. It’s not all brightness and happy. How the light parts interact with the dark parts creates patterns that are uniquely you, and accepting them is one step towards recognizing and reclaiming the power they hold.

If you can do all of this, you cannot help but be powerful and safe, cared for, protected, and a light to all other Wights, human or not. It’s the best thing you can do for yourself to improve all of your skills and talents, and make the most powerful use of those limitations. Standing in Sovereignty increases your visibility, your ability to see and be seen. It doesn’t matter what your situation is, you can always be moving towards owning yourself fully, in all the ways, a step at a time.

Connecting to the World

One of the side effects of having sovereignty is being visible to the Wights. The more you own yourself, the easier it is for them to see you and hear you. Your spirit conversation skills will continually improve as well, because being yourself means it’s easier to recognize the Not-Self. As we’re working towards Sovereignty, there are still sometimes issues. Two Wights in full Sovereignty will have the best conversations, the clearest, most helpful, most focused and successful ones. But if both sides aren’t standing there in Sovereignty, there are bound to be issues.

Is anyone there? Sometimes, you can call and call and call and it still feels like the phone is broken. Sometimes, the phone absolutely is broken, the connection is gone, you’re out of range, and you just keep talking without realizing no one is there. It’s probably a good idea, then, to know when you’re connected, to recognize the signs for it being there, and for when it’s come apart. And heck, yeah, throw

your Tellbones to figure it out too.

What are the signs of a connection with the Wights? There are many, and the more you experience, the stronger the connection is. In my experience, most people don't get many, so if you feel like you're getting all of these, you're probably deluding yourself and you need to step back and take an honest assessment, or get someone else involved. As you become more and more practiced in spirit contact, you will eventually come to just "know" when you're connected. The further down the list, the less common I've experienced them myself or heard people experience them.

- feeling like someone is watching you, eerie feelings, seeing people or shadows in your peripheral vision that aren't there when you look
- sudden thoughts or memories with no obvious trigger
- pets or other animals acting up
- pressure or tingling at the back of your head: this spot, the bump on the back of your head and the shallow depression beneath it, are well known as the point where spirits connect and can enter your body
- ringing or buzzing in the ears, soft whispering or music just outside your hearing
- tightness in the chest, a feeling of anxiety for no reason
- light touches on your skin, muscle twitches, feeling like you stepped into a spider's web
- changes in room temperature, or breezes without reason
- fluttering objects appearing around you (butterflies, curtains, leaves, feathers, pieces of paper)
- candle flames flickering in closed rooms
- smells or fragrances with no explanation
- electronics acting up, flickering lights

If you still have doubts, there are two more things to consider. One is to turn to the Tellbones, of course - ask, throw, and get an answer.

"Am I connected to Fred of Floor Coverings?"

Throws Fire - yes!

Really? (for confirmation)

Throws Fire again - definitely.

The other option is to consider the idea that it might not matter whether you are or are not connected. Time works very differently in the Spiritworlds, for one. So, you could be leaving a message and getting an answer today that won't be truly provided until tomorrow. This is why you don't feel connected today or right now.

Lastly, sometimes you really aren't connected. Other times, you are, but you just won't know or can't tell, because you're blind in some way. Being head-blind is how it's described when people just aren't sensitive to these things. It's like people who are oblivious to flirting (raises hand) - unless you are practically shouting and maybe grabbing parts, I just don't get it. It could be a similar situation for you - you're head blind at the moment, or to that particular spirit, or something like that. There are lots of possible explanations.

And sometimes, it really is in all your head. The thing is, that doesn't necessarily mean it's wrong or delusional. If the spirit you're talking to is your own spirit, one of your many selves, or intimately connected to you in some other way, it might not feel at all like you're connected to someone else, because in a way, you aren't. That doesn't mean that the information is wrong though, and in the end, a case can be made that it's more important to find out if you can trust the message than it is to worry about if it's "real" spirit contact or not.

Whether the connection is there or not, whether you feel it or not, whether you have signs or not, there are things you can do to strengthen it. Well, to strengthen your ability to sense the connection, to strengthen the connection itself so that it doesn't matter whether you sense it or not, and to make sure your own message can be heard and received. The most powerful and important of these? Offerings. I'll be covering these in detail in later lessons (starting next week), but for now, if you put out a cup of cool clean water, a bowl of milk, a piece of bread with butter, or whatever feels right to you, you'll be set. Just put out the plate somewhere appropriate, wherever makes sense to you, and say out loud "I offer this water to the Wights of Floor Coverings". Simple, no?

These offerings should be made regularly - once a week, maybe, just put out some water. You'll see the benefits more from regular offerings than just a one time thing. Actually, general practices will always help more than one time things, with possibly the exception of certain entheogenics and other drugs (I'll leave those to you - they're too entwined with personal ethics). Definitely make sure to keep a regular schedule, clearing away plates and glasses weekly and replacing with new. Leaving an offering there until it's moldy is not the best offering.

Some of the other practices which have great benefits to spirit contact:

- Meditation is probably the most common tool to improving your signal strength. There are forms that don't involve sitting and thinking of nothing - taking time to listen clearly and intently is really the issue, in my opinion. Go for a walk, and be silent all the way, including keeping your mind from chattering. That's the important part. Stillness is often specified (as in sitting still), but I find that an internal stillness and focus is perfectly good, even if the body is moving.
- prayer or mantra: 100,000 repetitions of a Wight's name is generally going to get their attention. Kind like "I'm Henry the 8th I am" in Ghost, right? It could be annoying, I'm sure, and some spirits just really don't care for it (one of mine much prefers drumming), but in the right situation it can be a great tool. Many Wights enjoy the attention and focus, which is at least in part responsible for how common this is worldwide.
- Breathing or ritual are tools that can function like meditation too. They also

can help you attain that inner stillness where you are open and silent, so that any message has space to get in.

- Rhythm can do it too. This is where shamanic drumming can induce a trance state or that stillness. It doesn't work for everyone though. There are other sound-based tools you can use: binaural beats, rattles, humming, white noise, recordings of rain or ocean waves... Think about what works for you, and go from there.

There are other tools out there - go explore and investigate. The methods I give above have been proven time and again, across cultures and traditions, to be some of the best methods, but you might have great luck with something else. It can't hurt to try (well, unless what you're trying is pain, I suppose, which will both work and hurt).

Clarity

Connection and signal strength can be important, and it's usually the first thing that people worry about when speaking with spirits. But as I explained, there are so many possibilities that in the big picture, connection is probably one of the less critical items to examine. Clarity, on the other hand, is probably the single most important thing you can monitor in your communications. Check in every now and then and make sure you're understanding everything clearly.

Why? Because not having a clear understanding of the message (or a clear message in the first place) means you're not actually getting anything useful. It's a waste of time for everyone if it's not clear. You heard "light" in that message, but do you need to get more, have less, do something about it? It doesn't help you at all, and you're just spinning your wheels.

How do you get clarity, and how do you check on it? There are a couple things to start with. Getting clarity starts with clear communication, and that means learning how to communicate clearly in general. Stay on topic - don't try to hit every point at once, and don't follow up on every extra question immediately. You have time. If it helps, write down what you want to ask and keep notes as you go.

Make sure you give the spirits time to say what they want or need to say. Unless you're already good at hearing them, this means you need to include some extra work with your Tellbones to make sure you have all the details. Questions to ask:

- Have you told me everything you need to? If they haven't, continue.
- Is there something you want me to do for you?
- Is there something I just need to do in general?
- Is there something I need to know?
- Is there something you want as an offering?
- Is there an additional step needed to what I have so far?

And so on. Try to consider what else they might have to say, and give them a chance to say it. You don't need to ask outright for every thing you can imagine, though. Just ask if there's anything else they need to say, give them the opportunity to explain, then check in again for anything else. When you think you've got the whole message, repeat what you have, and make one last check that you've got it right.

Throughout the conversation, stay on point and avoid being vague. Because of the nature of the Tellbones, you really can't do open-ended or vague questions very well - just asking them will result in confusing and/or nonsensical answers. You need specific and practical questions, answerable in yes or no. Asking something like "Why does he think of me like that?" is hard to answer with yes or no, as are questions like "what is your favorite color?"

If that's your standard mode of conversation, leaving options open, you might do better working with a medium or channel, or even with possession, where open-ended questions will function more like they do in face-to-face conversations. It's best with Tellbones and other sortilege-based methods to be explicit. It's the strength of the method, after all.

Feedback is a great request too, as it accomplishes two things at the same time. It gives the Wights room for confirmation, and also helps you understand how to improve your conversations. Fred the Wight of Floor Coverings might say you should sit on the floor when you talk to him, and that will make your relationship tighter and your conversations clearer. Why wouldn't you, in that case?

Setting the Mood

All of these are great for during a session or at the end of the conversation, but there are a lot of things you can do at the beginning to set yourself up for success. There are the usual suggestions when it comes to ritual - lighting, incense, music, and other sensory stimuli. If a particular incense does it for you, go for it. In later lessons, I'll give my recipes for some great incenses and room sprays. If you love candles, light some, but if LED Christmas lights are more your speed, go for it.

Keep in mind that you're trying to set the mood for both yourself and the Wights / Ancestors / Gods / What have you. So if you like LEDs but you're intending to contact Hephaestus, maybe opt for the actual flame, or glowing embers, instead of LEDs. To that point, make sure that these tools help not hinder. Putting on music can sometimes make it hard to get the message, regardless of whether it's deafening metal or whispering chants.

You also need to consider your own needs and make sure you're in a good state for communication. You may not always be able to, depending on various needs. Sometimes, your community needs an answer now about whether Wight X likes the offering, regardless of how you feel. Apply these cautions with some common sense.

The obvious and first thing to consider: are you healthy? Have you eaten? Got enough sleep? How are your stress levels? Problems in any of these basics (a la Maslow's hierarchy of needs) will cause problems further up the chain. Being tired, sick, or in a compromised state of mind (depression is the most common, but there are many) will make it hard to hear clearly. Also, you need to be open to the messages that are given.

This doesn't mean you can't have these conversations if you need to know something. Being tired and cranky in your daily life doesn't mean you can't have conversations, and it's the same when you talk to Wights of all varieties. You're still able to talk, but you may be more likely to misunderstand or phrase something poorly. You have to try harder to be clear in both directions, and to prevent craziness from interfering. It's harder if you're not at the top of your game.

If you're anxious about the answer to whether you'll get the new apartment, or the new girlfriend/boyfriends, or the new job, or anything else, your hopes can interfere with the message. Your own Wights might push the answers you want, or you might misinterpret the messages given. This is the reason behind the idea that you can't read Tarot for yourself. Of course you can! But it can be difficult to prevent your own hopes from getting in the way. Openness is the way to counter this. Don't ask when you've got "I hope X!" running through your head and heart. Try to maintain "I wonder" as an attitude for best results.

Odds are good that if you're reading this, you probably have a sense of what works for you and what doesn't. Use that to figure out your ideal process, which may not agree with everything I've said here. As always, these are your relationships and your practices. I can suggest ways to do it, but you're the one that will put them into action, so they had better work for you.

Your Call Cannot Be Completed As Dialed

We talked above about checking your connection and how it may or may not be an issue, but if you know for a fact you're not connected, that can be a problem. There are a lot of things that can be behind the lack of connection - most of which I've already mentioned!

First of these is expectation, which can kill your conversation right from the start. If you're looking for Mr. Roarke, you're never going to connect to see Tattoo yelling about "ze plane!" Besides identifying and connecting with whichever Wight you intend to, there are also the problems that expectations create when it comes to the message itself - if you expect that someone is going to say no, you will probably miss all the signs that they're saying yes. The solution? Keep those expectations in check. I know, easier said than done.

What about when you actually have a connection, and then it just disappears in the middle? It happens, for any number of reasons. Sometimes your mind just jumps the track, or their does, and away it goes on another topic with someone else entirely. Sometimes you (or they) get interrupted but another person entirely. And so on - most of these, you don't have any control over, but you can feel it nonetheless. About the only one that I've experienced with any regularity and where I have any control at all is where I have some more of those strong emotions.

This is like the expectation issue, but where the hope is so strong that you just can't hear anything because of it. It's also more than a little needy - people tend to talk to the Wights as if they're all therapist-type folks interested in the complete development of every person. That's really not true, all those spiritualists to the contrary. Pushy and needy and wanting stuff from them in the worst way - these are just as off-putting to other Wights as they are to humans around you. Avoid it, and stand in Sovereignty.

Sometimes, the disconnect has nothing to do with you, per se. You're asking the wrong people, so they ignore you. Or they just don't like you, and they ignore you. Or some other reason, and they ignore you. In other words, your call is being screened. You might get voice mail, might not. If there's a way that you can be disconnected from physical people, the same can apply to immaterial folks too. Expecting an answer every time just because they're spirits - once you think about it, isn't that kind of narcissistic and misguided? If this proved to be the issue, then try asking someone else. That's a pretty simple solution.

It's not a bad idea to check, regardless of whether you feel the connection or not, because it may or may not be there. Especially if you're trying to contact a specific Wight, it's vital. Of course there are innumerable ways to do this, but with Tellbones, here's a sample script for checking. As long as you receive a no back, keep asking down the line of questioning.

Am I connected to <whoever it is you're trying to connect with>?

Am I connected to someone else?

If yes, you'll need to ask questions to determine who. Ancestors? My Own Spirit? Specific spirits from you court...

Is there a disconnect?

If yes, is it my expectation? my hopes? does <Wight> not want to talk?

If you identify a disconnect, then start asking about how you can reconnect or repair it. Taking a break (a.k.a. calling back later) might be all you need to do.

Exercise

The big points this lesson as far as communication goes are Clarity and Connection, so practice and experiment with checking those. Unless you have specific Wights you want to contact (in which case, contact them!), go to your Ancestors again, and see what you can get there. Another option is to contact the spirit of your home. As for topic, why not ask about protection?

Self-Care / Protection

- make sure you're feeling well, rested up, etc. for best results

Set Mood

- collect items, ask at an altar, set out offerings

Make the Call

- call their name, ring the bell

Connection Check

- Am I connected?
- What is the disconnect? My state? Their state?
- If it's my state, is it my expectations? Hopes? Mood? Energy?
- If it's theirs, are they busy? Ignoring me? Unhappy with me?
- Am I connected to <Wight>?
- Who am I connected to? Specific ancestors? Landwights? My own Spirit(s)? Allies?
- Validate connection (Am I really connected to Fred?)

Converse! Ask your questions

- on the topic of protection, ask:
 - are they or will they protect you from all dangers?
 - can they give you a sign when danger is near?
 - do you need a protective charm?
 - anything in particular you should avoid?
 - and any other questions that seem appropriate to you

Clarity Check

- I understand that you said X, is that correct?
- did I misunderstand? which part?
- did I forget something?
- Do they have something else to say?
- Something to do?
- for them? For me? For someone else?
- Something to know?
- Offering?

Say Thanks! Leave an Offering

Let us know how it went

Resources

Wikipedia - Jiaobei : <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiaobei>

This is a basic explanation of what the Jiao Bei are. This is not surprising - it's Wikipedia, after all. If you haven't explored the depths, there's actually a lot of information provided, to give you a basic foundation. Try reading about Animism, Ancestor veneration, shamanism, mediumship, and so on. Read the skeptical comments too, but don't get hung up on them. Follow links, and explore. There's a lot there to give you a thorough grounding in the ideas and history.

Ancestor Paths: Honoring our Ancestors and Guardian Spirits Through Prayers, Rituals, and Offerings by Aladokun

This book comes specifically from an African Tradition perspective, but a lot of the ideas and practices (aka technology) can be inspirations for your own work with your Ancestors. Besides the explanation it gives, it also provides examples of how a tradition might approach all sorts of specific topics. It may provide some great information for you to consider.

Hands of Fate: The Art of Divination with Playing Cards by Robin Artisson

Tarot can be helpful in spirit communication, but my experience has been that Tarot readers tend to go into deep psychology, while in spirit communication, you generally need practical and straightforward responses. It's nice to know that my mother issues are involved, but really, I just need to know if my Wight wants more water or not. Playing cards are sometimes preferred, definitely cheap, easy to find, and good for this kind of practical response, and this book provides one variety of a Traditional Witchcraft approach.

Coming Next Lesson

- Adapting the Tellbones to Your Path
- Support
- Dividuality in Depth
- Unclear and Confusing Messages
- It's Not All About You
- Ancestral Work
- Establishing Relationships
- Intermediary Spirits
- Grounding