

When Spirit Feels Scary

Understanding Frightening Spiritual Experiences Without Feeding the Fear

HEALING HEARTS MEDIUM

Grounding • Boundaries • Discernment • Self-Care

Spiritual development is not always butterflies and rainbows. Sometimes an experience can feel confusing, uncomfortable, or frightening. You are allowed to stop, ground, set a boundary, and take care of yourself first.

A Grounded Note Before We Begin

This guide is not intended to convince you that every shadow, sound, touch, dream, or uncomfortable feeling is spiritual. Frightening experiences can have many possible explanations, including sleep phenomena, stress, grief, anxiety, environmental factors, physical health concerns, medications or substances, and other causes.

The personal stories in this guide describe experiences as I remember and interpreted them. They are not proof that the same explanation applies to someone else's experience.

What matters most is that you do not have to investigate or engage with something simply because it frightens you. You can stop spiritual practices, return to ordinary surroundings, talk with someone you trust, and seek appropriate professional support when needed.

Take care of the human before trying to understand the spiritual.

If an experience involves commands to harm yourself or someone else, severe confusion, inability to function, or an immediate safety concern, seek urgent professional help.

Not Every Uncomfortable Experience Means Something Dark

When we are developing intuition, it can be tempting to give every unusual experience a spiritual label. I do not believe that is helpful. Sometimes we are tired. Sometimes we are grieving. Sometimes a sound has an ordinary source. Sometimes a vivid experience occurs while falling asleep or waking up.

You can respect your spiritual beliefs and still ask practical questions: Was I fully awake? How much sleep have I had? Am I under unusual stress? Is there a physical or environmental explanation? Has this happened repeatedly? Is it affecting my ability to function?

Discernment is not about talking yourself out of your experiences. It is about staying curious without allowing fear to decide the explanation for you.

The Experience That Taught Me About Spiritual Boundaries

One of my earliest experiences with something that felt genuinely dark happened when my daughter was sixteen.

One night, I suddenly heard her scream from down the hallway. She came out of her bedroom terrified and told me that something underneath her bed had grabbed her leg.

She refused to go back into the room and was adamant that she was sleeping with me that night. This was not typical behavior for her. She had experienced Spirit when she was younger and had sensed things before, but she had never told me that something had physically touched her.

At the time, I was a very new medium. I was only beginning to explore and understand my own abilities.

The following day, while my daughter was at work, I asked her boyfriend to come over and help me clear the house. He was spiritually sensitive as well, and I did not want to do it alone.

I opened the doors and windows, and we began going through the house with sage. We saved my daughter's bedroom for last.

I opened the window above her bed. I saged beneath the bed, inside the closet, and around the corners of the room. I was very deliberate with my intention: **anything that did not belong in our home was not welcome to remain.**

The atmosphere in that room felt incredibly strong to both of us. The hair on my arms and neck stood up. Her boyfriend became visibly uncomfortable and wanted to leave. I asked him to stay with me long enough to finish, and he agreed.

I stepped toward the bed again, saged underneath it, and became much firmer about my intention. Whatever my daughter had experienced, I wanted it out of her room and away from my family.

Then something happened that neither of us expected.

Both of us saw what appeared to be dark smoke rising through the mattress. From where we were standing, it appeared to come through the mattress itself and spiral above the bed.

Her boyfriend wanted to run. Strangely, I was not overcome with fear. **I was angry.**

My daughter had been terrified in her own bedroom, and something inside me shifted immediately into the determination of a mother protecting her child.

I stepped toward the bed, pointed toward the open window, and demanded that whatever I believed we were experiencing leave my home, leave my daughter alone, and leave my family alone.

I watched the dark shape circle once more. Then, from my perspective, I saw it move through the open window and disappear outside. The room felt different afterward.

That experience changed something in me. At the time, I interpreted what happened through the spiritual understanding I had available to me. Years later, I still do not believe we need a perfect explanation for every frightening experience in order to learn something from it.

What I learned was that fear does not have to decide what happens next.

I also learned that spiritual boundaries mattered to me.

What I Know Now That I Didn't Know Then

I would not tell a beginner to confront, provoke, challenge, or investigate something frightening. My response that day came from the circumstances and my instinct to protect my daughter.

Today, I would begin with safety and grounding. I would stop the spiritual exercise, get everyone somewhere they feel secure, calm the body, consider practical explanations, and decide what additional support is appropriate.

If prayer, cleansing, visualization, or another spiritual practice is meaningful within your beliefs, it can be part of how you create a sense of calm and intention. I do not present any of those practices as guaranteed methods for removing a supernatural entity.

You never have to prove that you are spiritually strong by staying in a frightening situation.

A Later Experience - And a Different Lesson

Years later, I had another experience that frightened me in a very different way.

I was in my own bed when I became aware of what felt like a presence. I felt what seemed like a touch on my lower back. Then I heard what I can only describe as a deep, guttural growl close to my ear.

This time, however, my reaction was completely different from what I might have expected. I was not afraid. My immediate instinct was to face whatever I believed I was experiencing and firmly state that it needed to leave my home. I felt completely in control of myself.

But afterward, I began thinking about what had been happening in my life leading up to that night.

My family was going through an incredibly stressful time. My daughter was hospitalized for five weeks while doctors tried to prevent my grandson from being born prematurely. I was terrified that she might lose another child.

My attention was completely focused on my daughter and grandson. I was not grounding myself. I was not keeping up with the spiritual practices that normally helped me feel centered. I was not taking particularly good care of my body, mind, or spirit.

Fear had begun taking up a tremendous amount of space in my life.

I cannot say with certainty what caused the experience I had that night, and I do not believe it is responsible to tell someone that fear automatically attracts something dark.

What I can say is that the experience made me recognize how far away from myself I had become. I had stopped doing the things that helped me feel grounded. I had stopped caring for myself because I was so focused on protecting the people I loved.

That realization became another important lesson in my spiritual development.

Grounding Isn't Only for Spiritual Work

Today, I think about grounding very differently. Grounding is not something I only do before a reading or when I am trying to connect with Spirit. It is something I need when life itself becomes overwhelming.

Sometimes grounding means meditation or visualization. Sometimes it means going outside. Sometimes it means eating, sleeping, resting, breathing, praying, moving my body, talking with someone I trust, or simply stepping away from spiritual work for a while.

And sometimes the healthiest spiritual decision you can make is:

Don't open yourself up to anything today. Take care of yourself first.

If I am exhausted, frightened, overwhelmed, grieving, or emotionally depleted, I do not need to push harder spiritually. I need to come back to myself.

If Something Frightens You

1. Stop

You do not have to continue a meditation, reading, investigation, or spiritual exercise.

2. Return to the present

Turn on the lights. Put your feet on the floor. Name what you see around you. Take slow breaths. Drink water. Move into a familiar space.

3. Do not escalate

You do not need to challenge, provoke, summon, question, or demand proof from whatever you think you experienced.

4. Set a simple boundary

If it fits your beliefs, calmly state that you are not engaging and that your personal space is private. Then direct your attention back to ordinary life.

5. Consider practical explanations

Check sleep, stress, medications or substances, sounds, shadows, electrical or environmental issues, and other possibilities.

6. Tell someone you trust

Fear grows when we feel isolated. Talk with a grounded person who will listen without sensationalizing the experience.

7. Take a break from spiritual practice

There is no prize for pushing through when you feel depleted or frightened.

8. Get appropriate help when needed

Repeated distress, severe sleep disruption, confusion, unsafe behavior, or difficulty functioning deserves professional attention.

Your Personal Boundary Plan

You can fill this out before you ever have a frightening experience. A plan makes it easier to remember what helps you feel safe and grounded.

When I feel overwhelmed, I will...	
Three things that ground me	
People I can call	
Spiritual practices that feel calming to me	
Signs that I need to stop practicing for the day	
Practical things I will check first	
When I will seek professional support	
My boundary statement	

When to Reach Beyond Spiritual Explanations

Spiritual beliefs and practical care do not have to compete. If experiences are recurring, becoming more intense, interfering with sleep or daily life, or making you feel unsafe, it is appropriate to involve a qualified healthcare or mental-health professional.

It is especially important to seek prompt help if you or someone else is severely confused, unable to function normally, unable to sleep for extended periods, or experiencing commands or urges to harm themselves or another person.

Asking for help does not invalidate your spiritual beliefs. It means you are taking care of the whole person.

The Lesson I Want to Leave With You

Spiritual development should not be a competition to see who can tolerate the most frightening experience. You do not become stronger by ignoring your body's signals or forcing yourself to engage with something that feels wrong.

You can be curious and discerning. You can have spiritual beliefs and still look for ordinary explanations. You can set boundaries. You can stop. You can rest. You can ask for help.

Being spiritually strong doesn't mean never feeling fear. Sometimes strength is recognizing when you need to close the door, come back to yourself, and take care of the human being having the experience.

- Theresa
Healing Hearts Medium