

What to do when shadow work for someone else goes wrong.

I've had it go wrong many a time, when a client is so triggered a switch is flipped, and without warning the situation is changed.

I've had clients storm out of a reading because I said something that was true, but they didn't want to admit. (They've always come back to talk it though!)

I've had men lean over my table to threaten me, shouting in my face that I am wrong. (They have always been shocked and upset by this afterwards, and I am not easily phased)

I've had people collapse in tears as they lose the words to express how they feel. (I see this as a positive thing, a genuine release).

Each reading is unique, each situation is unique, there is no one size fits all formula. But here are some thoughts.

Don't lose focus on your client.

It is easy to become so caught in the reading, so fascinated in the narrative, that you forget this is a real person's life.

Look up at your client, if on a phone call ask "are you OK with this?" or "is this helpful?" If it's an email reading and it feels deep and emotionally confrontational- consider sending a couple of emails and checking that your client is processing the information.

Read their body language, connect with them as a person, tune into if they are managing to process this.

It's not an exercise- this is someone's life, and they must leave your reading and reconnect with their life. So, ensure they are happy with the depth you are going to.

Respect your clients' boundaries.

I will have clients ask me not to look at health, or their relationship, or perhaps not too far into the future. It is my job to respect my client's point of view even if I think it would be helpful to go there. I may suggest gently why I think it's a good idea; I may try to negotiate a safe way of doing it. But I will respect their choice.

Keep calm.

The last thing you do is lose your cool.

Even if they admit something shocking, historic abuse, living in a life-threatening situation, they have committed a crime, they are suicidal.

Keep calm, breath slowly, listen.

At this point I usually put the cards down. Slow my breathing, calm my mind, and validate without judgement whatever they are experiencing.

At this point you might need to;

- Simply validate and support your client.
- Signpost them to professional help.
- Consider what duty of care you have if they are unsafe.

An emotional breakdown can have physical symptoms, a panic attack, hyper ventilating, vomiting. (I have a client who often vomits during a deep session- luckily its via zoom but he now brings a bucket).

This is rare, but it can happen. Think back to Maslow's pyramid- if your client is having physical symptoms (which could include rage or blaming you) then this is your prime concern.

If you are reading for others its worth having investigated-

- Signs of a panic attack, and how to manage this.
- A plan in place if someone is threatening towards you.
- Being aware of emergency numbers for suicide, domestic abuse, debt, pregnancy support etc. It can be helpful to sit with a client and find the right support for their situation.

It is very rare this will happen to you, but being aware it could makes all the difference.

The first piece of advice is the key- tune into how your querent is processing the reading, as well as the cards, and be ready to slow down or change direction if you need to.

Changing direction.

Shadow work is a journey, it takes time. Maybe your querent will come back. Maybe they will decide they aren't ready to do it. Maybe they will work with a book or therapist.

You are not here to fix someone, simply support their journey.

If you feel you have reached a place of resistant and the client has reached capacity move to practical support, reflection spreads, or ask if there is another area of their life they would like to look at.

