

What's on your mind

Provoking vs Trigger Objects

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A common practice used by paranormal investigators is to conduct “an EVP session” during an investigation. An EVP session is where the investigator will ask questions out loud, while some type of recorder (audio or video) is recording, hoping to get a response from an entity present. We won't get into EVP sessions and their practices in this article, but we would like to focus on a few of the response techniques used during EVP sessions and/or investigations: provoking, triggers, trigger objects, role playing, and using props and/or signs.

Provoking

Provoking could mean many things to many people, but let's first start by defining the word “provoke”. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines provoke as: to arouse a feeling or action; to incite anger; and to stir up purposely¹. In the paranormal field provoking is a technique used where most commonly name calling, negative comments, or other argumentative statements are made to try and entice an entity to respond to the investigator. So basically using negativity to obtain a response.

Because provoking is an aggressive way to elicit a response from an entity, we do NOT recommend this as the first technique you try during an EVP session. For a client location we do NOT ever recommend this technique. Also, if you choose to provoke you are doing this at your own risk. Entities are energy and you don't want to challenge an energy that you cannot see.

If a location has reports of people being pushed or scratched, an example of provoking could be a question like “I heard you like to push and scratch people. How about you try this on me? Come on! Bring it on! I dare you!”. The investigator might even resort to name calling. We at TnT Paranormal feel that provoking is a disrespectful technique to use to communicate with entities.

The other thing to note is that provoking may indeed back fire on you. An entity may not want to communicate because of your aggressive nature. We use the rule of thumb, “It is easier to attract bees with honey than vinegar”.

Trigger Objects

An opposite and more positive technique is called a “trigger” or use of “trigger objects”. A trigger is defined as an act or event that serves as a stimulus and initiates or precipitates a reaction or series of reactions². In the paranormal field using trigger objects is a technique where you use normal everyday objects to try and obtain a response from an entity. Most generally these are objects that would be familiar to the entity you are trying to communicate with.

The use of trigger objects can do three things:

- Convey to the entity that you have nothing but the friendliest of intentions in mind
- Adds an item to the environment they may directly interact with
- Increases the chance of them being talkative

Here is an example of how to use a trigger object to try and communicate with an entity believed to be a child. You could start by placing a ball in the center of the room and then ask the entity if they would like to play with you. Going on to ask if they can push the ball towards you. You

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may get a physical response where the ball actually moves or the entity may provide an audio response to your request. In some cases you may wish to leave the room for a while and see if it will move without you present (maybe the entity is shy). If you do this make sure to mark where the ball is located and when you come back see if the ball has moved.

If you are communicating with an entity that died as an adult you can bring along one of their favorite food items or an item they had a close attachment to such as a family photo, book collection, or radio. If you are trying to communicate with a child entity, bring along games or toys. Some examples of positive triggers we have used are: laying out Oreos for someone who had a love of oreos; using candy or book reading for children; offering a cigar; put a book out written by the favorite author or even read to the entity; put out favorite flowers for someone who had/has a love of that particular flower; offering a beverage that was the favorite of the suspected entity; play music of either the time frame the suspected entity was from and/or their favorite songs; or turning on the TV to a favorite program of the suspected entity (if known).

Another response technique is the use of props. A prop is a trigger object or something that brought memories (good or bad) to an entity. For instance, if you are investigating a civil war battlefield you may want to dress in a civil war uniform, bring along a canteen of water or play a song on an audio device like the "Battle Hymn of the Republic". If you are investigating a client location when it's suspected a deceased family member is still lingering around, you can bring along something they liked in their past life like a cigar, radio, or deck of cards. Props are similar to role playing where you introduce something into the environment that will elicit a positive response from an entity. There was one investigation in particular where a ball was brought to a location and a child entity interacted with it by moving the ball around.

We will also use signs on an investigation to see if we can get a response. What we mean by a sign is literally a sheet of paper with instructions for the entity. If you are investigating a location where there are reports of lights being turned on and off you can post a sign near the light switch that states: "If you can read this please turn the light off". Entities that were once human can probably still read. Right? So a sign seems like a reasonable object to bring along when you have reports of something recurring over and over again at odd times.

On several investigations we have used trigger objects to see if a response can be documented. We have had some success with these techniques. You can go to our website to see some examples (www.tntparanormal.com).

Role Playing

Another response technique is that of role playing. Role playing has to do with acting out in a way that an entity can relate to and make them want to interact. For instance, if you are investigating a location where a child has passed and/or child entity is suspected, you may do something like simulating a game that they may have liked. TnT Paranormal has done this on a number of investigations with positive results. In two situations we were investigating locations where there were numerous reports of child entities. Both times we role played a situation where the team played a game of "Duck, Duck, Goose". In both situations we recorded EVPs of children giggling or directly responding to us when playing the game.

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We believe that role playing helps the entity feel at ease and puts them in a friendly situation that they enjoyed in their past life and is a great way to elicit a response. We also believe that you can win people over easily by gentle persuasion and flattery rather than by using hostility.

Technique used can change the outcome

At times we use different mechanisms or trigger objects. We may use an item that an entity loves or that could trigger other positive feelings. There are items that can be used to trigger negative feelings as well. People need to be cognizant to the potential outcome when choosing a trigger mechanism, because the mechanism used could alter the outcome (either positively or negatively). Another type of 'trigger mechanisms' is simply talking about the memories the entity may have.

For example, if we have a case where the entity is reported being the person who built the property, we will talk out loud about how proud they must have been with their build; Or how it must have been in the world at the time that they were alive. Again, one must keep in mind all possibilities of the outcome. Perhaps it was a very tough time and bringing up these 'memories' could be hurtful in some way. Same with speaking about their memories of their family and loved ones.

Should the location warrant which technique used?

We believe it does. If we have a location that has reports of children a good mechanism could be candy. Or investigators playing a childhood game such as Kick the Can or Duck Duck Goose. We choose mechanisms according to the locations history or from alleged sightings. We will never use an item that we feel could be harmful or hurtful in anyway.

For instance, if a person lived a lonely, sad, unfulfilling life after the passing of their spouse, we would NEVER use the clothing (or personal articles) to try and get a response. We use empathy, compassion, respect and common sense when choosing the proper trigger mechanism for each case. We do not provoke or intentionally try to get an entity to communicate with us by using what we know is a negative trigger.

Respect the dead

For us at TnT Paranormal we respect and honor the dead and that policy is mandatory whenever conducting paranormal investigations. Entities after all were once human and retain their humanlike qualities. They will respond positively if treated like human beings. We truly believe that you get back what you give out. Meaning, show respect and you will get respect back. When conducting EVP sessions it's important to address an entity in the most non-threatening way possible. Pretend like you are talking to a living person.

For instance, TnT Paranormal always starts EVP sessions with statements such as: "Hi. My name is Tom. I mean no harm to you. I don't want to change your environment or ask you to leave. I only want to talk to you and give you a voice you may not have had in a long time." In addition, during your EVP session ask friendly and helpful questions such as: "Is there something we can do for you? Is there a message we

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can give someone? Do you need help?" Never tell an entity you want it to leave. You can politely suggest they can cross over and be at peace. However, if they are sticking around it's probably because of unfinished business and they will leave when they feel the time is right. So try and ask questions in a tone where your motivations are clear that you want to help and assist. Lastly, when your EVP session is complete ALWAYS say "Thank You".

We have a policy to never provoke an entity especially at a client location because that is disrespectful. An example of provoking could be saying something like: "I heard you like to scare people. You want to scare or harm someone? Come on! I'm here! Let's see what you got!" The fact is we typically cannot see or hear entities. They can manifest when they want and have the power to do things we simply don't understand. Therefore, if you provoke, you never know what can happen. The entity can follow you home and cause havoc in your life. Or worse, if you do this at a client's home you can cause the paranormal activity to increase and make the situation even worse for your client. It's also important to make sure you never disturb or remove items from a location. This can stir up and make paranormal activity worse. For instance, if you are investigating a cemetery, don't sit on a gravestone, stand on a grave, take anything from the cemetery, or leave trash. Rather, watch where you walk, bring flowers for a grave, fix a fallen gravestone, or cleanup any trash you come across.

Lastly, don't ever trespass. Make sure you get permission from the property owners. Trespassing is not only disrespectful to the dead, but if you get caught in a location where you don't belong you can get hurt or arrested and give your paranormal team a bad reputation.

Remember your goals

Depending on the reason why you investigate the paranormal you might first want to consider if you wish to provoke a negative response or do you just want a response. If you go into an investigation looking for a fight, then you might find one. If you go into an investigation and are searching for answers and do it politely, you can also get a response.

If you are at a pay location then the manner used may not be important. However, if you investigation on the behalf of a client that thought should always be in the forefront in your mind. Ethically you have an obligation to them. You and your team would not want to do anything that would make the activity worse. Therefore, for our team we will only provoke at pay locations and never at a client location. However, we will use trigger objects to see if we can get a response. We do so in a polite and kind manner and never do anything negative or disrespectful.

Sources for the article:

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/provoke>

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/trigger>