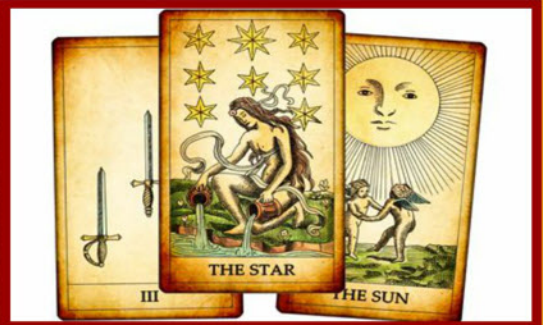


Free



A Simple Introduction To Cold Reading

A brief guide to one of the most
fascinating subjects in the world

Ian Rowland

A Simple Introduction To Cold Reading

**by
Ian Rowland**



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— Ian



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by Ian Rowland

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A Quick Note About Me

I do three things so I have three websites.

www.ianrowland.com

This is about my work as a professional writer. In simple terms, I offer a complete 'start-to-finish' writing and publishing service. Technical writing, business, sales, marketing, creative... you name it, I've done it! I offer 35+ years experience across all media. In my career, I've helped more companies to sell a greater range of goods and services than anyone else you're likely to meet. I'm also a 'ghostwriter'! If you've got a book inside you, I can write it for you or guide you through the self-publishing process.

www.coldreadingsuccess.com

My website devoted to the art, science and joy of cold reading and what I call 'cold reading for business'. As well as providing free information and downloads, the site tells you about my three books on cold reading and the training I offer.

www.ianrowlandtraining.com

All about my talks and training for conferences, corporate groups and private clients. Main subjects include:

- The Practical Persuasion Method.
- Creative Problem-Solving.
- Leadership, Presence And Charisma.
- Unlock Your Mind.
- Be A Genius!
- Cold Reading For Business.

I also offer bespoke training packages to suit *your* needs. Clients to date include the FBI, Google, Coca-Cola, Unilever, the Ministry Of Defence, the British Olympics Team, the Crown Estate and many more. Full details on the site.

About My Cold Reading Books

Three Books For Three Reasons

I've written three books on different aspects of cold reading.

My first book, 'The Full Facts Book Of Cold Reading', describes how cold reading works in the psychic industry. In other words, how to talk to people so you sound psychic. It's a *descriptive* book, not an instructional one. It doesn't *teach* a cold reading system and isn't meant to. I published the first edition in 1999 and I'm now on the 7th edition!

'Super Psychic Readings', teaches my own system for giving what I call 'personal' readings. It enables you to give *any* type of reading (tarot, astrology, graphology and so on) but there's very little to learn or memorise. (Just for the record, my readings are always free.)

My third book, 'Cold Reading For Business', is about how to use cold reading techniques in *other* contexts that have nothing to do with the psychic industry. It's about establishing rapid rapport, building trust and being persuasive. I've taught CRFB to people from all walks of life and they seem to find it useful, particularly with regard to sales, 'people handling' and building or growing your own business.

Where Your Friends Can Get Them

I put my books on Amazon because I have to. These days, if a book isn't on Amazon people think it doesn't exist!

However, all my books are *also* available from my own website, which contains a lot of extra information and free downloads like this one:
www.coldreadingsuccess.com

If you want to tell other people about me and my work, which I hope you will, it helps me if you send them to my website rather than the lovely people at Amazon. Thank you.

An Enduring Fascination

Welcome to what I believe is one of the most fascinating subjects in the world!

Cold reading has been part of my life for over thirty years. It has proved to be an enduring passion as well as an endless source of fascination and fun. More importantly, my interest in this beautifully curious subject has enabled me to meet countless wonderful and interesting people from around the world, many of whom I'm lucky enough to count as friends. They come from many walks of life, but share my interest in cold reading and related arts.

Cold reading is one of those areas where the more I know, the more I'm aware how little I know and how much there is still to learn! I look at this in a positive way. It would be a shame to ever reach the stage where there was nothing left to learn or share.

In this short introduction to cold reading, I want to tell you a little bit about the subject and clear up a few common misunderstandings. I also hope I can convey some of my own enthusiasm for the subject, and help you to appreciate how cold reading (in its many different forms) may touch on many different aspects of your personal, social and professional life.

Perhaps you will find that cold reading becomes for you, as it has for me, an enduring fascination!

So, let's get started...

The Joy Of Cold Reading

If there's one point I ought to make crystal clear, it's that cold reading is *fun*. I love cold reading and what it can achieve, and I have had a great time sharing this passion with people all over world.

I know that I've given countless readings to people that have really helped them in one way or another (though I have never charged any money). I have given readings in more different places and contexts than I can remember, from a busy nightclub in London's West End to the streets of Rio de Janeiro; from a quiet café just outside Venice to a sleepy airport terminal in Indonesia.

I have seen the way that simply giving someone a reading can transform doubt into hope, and "I can't" into "Maybe I can". With my own eyes, I have seen readings bring people together, and create connections and even friendships that wouldn't have happened otherwise. What's more, I have seen them provide fascination, entertainment and fun in many situations where these elements were in rather short supply.

Over the years, countless people have told me how a reading helped them to see things in a positive way, or deal with difficult times — including some of the most rational people you could ever meet. You don't have to believe in psychic powers to benefit from a reading.

I know from experience how the simple act of giving a reading to someone can instil a sense of light, hope, confidence and self-belief that wasn't there before — or at least was in need of a little boost.

Even if you just stop to give someone a free, short reading, you are giving them some time and attention, showing them that they matter and are worth taking an interest in. This might be the most attention that anyone has given them for a long time, a small spark of human connection that makes a huge difference. It could be the best thing that has happened to them that day, that week or that year.

I have seen the fun that cold reading can create — the smiles, the happiness, the laughter. In some ways, cold reading is a gift you can give to more or less anyone, more or less anywhere.

Cold reading, like music, can cross cultural barriers and provide an international language of communication and positive expression. I must have given readings to people of forty or fifty different nationalities by now, and while the cultural background may shift and change the results tend to stay the same: intrigue, fascination, hope, smiles, confidence and a sense of delight. These are all good things to bring into the world.

The joy of cold reading is the joy of connecting with people, and promoting feelings of self-belief and hope for tomorrow. It's the joy of helping people to feel relaxed and confident about themselves, their potential, their relationships and their future. It's the joy of fun, shared laughter, good times and good spirits.

Perhaps that's why people have been giving readings to one another since forever.

Perhaps that's why they always will.

What Is Cold Reading?

Because cold reading is a rich and complex subject, we could define it in many different ways. Here's the short version:

How to talk to people so you sound psychic.

Here's a slightly longer definition:

Cold reading is the art of providing a personal reading, of a psychic, psychological or mentalist nature, without prior information about the client.

At the heart of cold reading is a surprising and intriguing phenomenon: the fact that it's possible to meet a complete stranger and make accurate statements about her life, character and future. This gives rise to the, "How could she possibly have known that?" reaction. This reaction is what has fuelled the psychic industry for centuries and will continue to do so for as long as there are people.

By the way, I tend to use the female pronoun when I refer to either readers or their clients. This is purely because the great majority of people who give readings, and most clients, happen to be female. There are of course male readers and clients, but they just aren't as numerous.

Cold reading is most commonly associated with the psychic industry. Some 'psychics' use tarot cards, runes or a crystal ball. Others give readings based on the palm of your hand, a sample of your handwriting or your astrological chart. In fact, readings can be based on just about anything. Many historical types of divination sound weird, to say the least. For example, 'ophiomancy' is divination based on serpents while 'tiromancy' is based on cheese! I've never seen anyone give a reading based on cheese, but I expect I'd find it fascinating and hilarious.

The field of psychic readings is certainly wide and varied. Most readings are given personally, one-on-one, but readings can also be given remotely, via phone, mail or internet. I get the impression that as soon as any form of communication is invented, someone, somewhere figures out a way to use it for cold reading purposes.

Personally, I think that cold reading in the most accurate sense of the term involves real-time interaction between the reader and client, either in person or via phone or internet. Where this sense of live interaction is missing, such as when a reader sends a written astrological profile through the mail, I personally don't think of this as cold reading in its truest sense. However, others would take a different view.

The alternative to cold reading is, unsurprisingly, known as ‘hot reading’. This refers to cases where the reader (the person giving the reading) *does* have some prior information about the client (the person she is giving the reading to). The reader might obtain this information either openly or covertly. There are many ways to secretly obtain information about someone before a reading — ranging from the very simple to the impressively devious and ingenious!

Non-psychic Flavours

Although cold reading is typically associated with the ‘psychic’ industry, it’s important to note that the two terms don’t always go together:

- Some people who give readings don’t claim to be psychic.
- Some people who claim to be psychic don’t give readings.

I have never claimed to have any type of psychic talent whatsoever. In fact, I never even mention the word ‘psychic’ when I give readings to people. I call them personal readings instead.

There are many readers who present their readings in a non-psychic way. For example, some say their readings are psychological in nature, or spiritual. You may or may not feel this makes much of a difference — some would say it’s a case of same bread, different wrapper. It’s very much a matter of personal opinion.

Cold reading also sometimes crops up in mentalism, which is a branch of magic and conjuring. Some magicians specialise in card tricks or big stage illusions. Others specialise in magic of the mind and imagination, and this is what is known among magicians as mentalism. It often involves routines with a psychic or psychological *flavour* — such as pretending to demonstrate telepathy or predict the future. Many mentalists incorporate elements of cold reading into their work, or give readings in informal situations. Just for the record, I’m a magician myself. I’m a member of the Inner Magic Circle, I love the worldwide magic community and mentalism happens to be the area I specialise in.

So now you know what cold reading is.

Why Is Cold Reading Popular?

It's not hard to account for the enduring appeal of readings. They are popular for two principal reasons:

- People find them *intriguing*. How can the reader make accurate statements about the life of a complete stranger?
- They provide the emotional rewards of magical thinking.

Intrigue

The intrigue and fascination comes down to the distinction between asking *questions* and making *statements*. What do you do when you go to a social event and meet someone for the first time? You try to be the most likeable version of yourself that you can be, observe social etiquette, make small talk and ask questions: "How do you know so-and-so?" / "Do you live locally?" / "What do you do for a living?" / "Have you been here before?".

This is the pattern you've become used to ever since you developed adult social skills. It therefore seems very odd, and counter-intuitive, to think of meeting someone you don't know and making *statements* about his or her life. This is what makes cold reading seem intriguing and also, in some contexts, spooky.

How is this possible? How can readers make accurate statements to complete strangers? See the next main section.

Emotional Rewards

The fact that people find readings emotionally useful should be obvious. In the natural world, there are limits to what you can know and what you can do. You can't know the future and you can't always make things go the way you want them to. These limitations are sometimes frustrating and annoying. For this reason, there has always been a market for people who say they can *transcend natural limits*, helping you to know what you can't normally know and do what you can't normally do.

This is the fuel of all superstition and services based on wishful thinking. It gives rise to horse racing 'tipsters', people who sell 'infallible' systems for winning at roulette (one of whom I once had lunch with in Las Vegas) and, if we want to venture into even less credible areas, financial forecasting and investment companies. In emotional terms, 'can know

/ can do' is always more seductively appealing than 'can't know / can't do'. (If you want a brilliantly comprehensive book on this subject, I recommend 'Stolen Lightning: The Social Theory Of Magic' by Daniel O'Keefe).

Traditional psychic readings have always included a small amount of this kind of magical thinking. They offer a small amount of magical knowledge of the future — not enough to produce winning lottery numbers or next year's stock prices, but enough to know your new relationship will work out, or your relative's operation will go well, or your new project will be mostly successful. They also offer a little bit of magical power. Not enough so you can fly or conquer the world, but enough to understand that if you just do this and that then you will probably get the positive outcome you want.

As well as smatterings of magical knowledge and power, readings usually offer a touch of personal validation and some ego strokes. It's easy, though not advisable, to be sneering and dismissive about this. If you live such a perfectly content and fulfilled life that you never need this kind of support, I'm happy for you. However, there are a lot of walking wounded and in many cases a kind word, plus a touch of personal validation, can be tremendously important. We live in times and in societies where these things can be in desperately short supply. If a reading helps someone make it through the day, then good. You can, of course, argue that there are better ways to help people. This is true. But there are worse ones as well. People make choices and where's there's a demand for readings, there will be a supply.

When I teach cold reading, I tend to veer away from magical and superstitious thinking. My 'Super Psychic Readings' system does *not* hinge on the dubious lure of knowledge and power beyond natural limits, as all my students know.

How Does ‘Statements To A Stranger’ Work?

As we’ve seen, the essence of cold reading is the apparent ability to make accurate statements about the life of a complete stranger. This is a large part of the intrigue and fascination surrounding readings, and gives rise to the “She told me things she couldn’t possibly have known!” response that has echoed down through the centuries from Babylonian astrologers to today’s internet psychics.

So, how’s the trick done? How does ‘statements to a stranger’ work? I can’t provide a comprehensive answer here, given that this booklet is only a short, simple introduction to the subject. However, there are basically three bits of psychology involved.

(1) Subjective Significance

In cold reading, the reader provides the *statement* but the client provides the *meaning*. I can give you a reading and say something like, “The cards suggest there has been a significant development in the workplace, maybe one that has concerned you.” This could mean scores of different things, ranging from a terrible new co-worker to a computer meltdown or having lost your job.

Your brain is wired to find and recognise patterns. Identifying patterns and connections feels good; failing to do so doesn’t. Hence, if you can find *any* way to match the statement to your own experience, you will respond appropriately. For example, you might say, “Yes, they recently changed my shifts and it’s going to cause me some problems”.

In the re-telling, it is the more specific and significant version that gets talked about: “It was amazing! He somehow knew they’d recently changed my shifts at work!” That isn’t actually what I *said*, but it’s what you found *significant* and *remembered*.

The essence of cold reading is the vast chasm of creative potential that lies between *statement* (supplied by the reader) and *meaning* (supplied by the client).

(2) Selectivity

The people who choose to go for readings are, for the most part, believers (or at least *inclined* to believe). They *want* it to be possible for someone using tarot cards, astrological insight (or whatever) to be able to give them helpful guidance and some reassuring advice. This being

the case, when they have a reading, they note and remember anything that supports this belief and forget or ignore anything that doesn't. If the reader offers three statements and one is correct, the correct one gets talked about and the others are never mentioned again. If the reader mentions three names and one happens to be the name of your partner, best friend or favourite relative, that's the name you remember as being magically pulled out of the psychic ether (while the others are forgotten). The hits gets celebrated while the misses are ignored.

(3) The Lure Of Enchantment

Let's say you're due to meet up with some friends. Here are two scenarios to consider.

You meet up and say, "I went to have my cards read. It wasn't very good. Nothing much happened. There were a few vague things that were sort of right but, to be honest, I didn't get much out of it."

Second option. "I went to have my cards read and the whole thing was just *amazing!* She told me all sorts of things she couldn't *possibly* have known! Wow... I thought I was pretty sceptical but it's just blown me away! She knew about my operation last year, the fact that my sister's moving house, the trip to New York... I mean, she knew *everything!* It's like my life was an open book! How *do* they do it? Also, you know that new job I'm going for? She said the signs were very good and I'll probably get it, which would be *fantastic!*"

Obviously, the second scenarios sounds a lot more appealing. The point is that if you have a dull, mundane experience, it scarcely seems worth mentioning. On the other hand, if you have a intriguing, magical, amazing experience, it seems worth talking about and *also* suggests that you lead a pretty amazing and interesting life. People like to be part of amazing, remarkable experiences. Readings give them this opportunity.

Those are the three basic psychological building blocks of cold reading.

If you want a lot more detail about how cold reading works, and all the different types of statements involved, I recommend my 'Full Facts Book of Cold Reading'.

If you actually want to learn my system for giving perfect readings, I offer my 'Super Psychic Readings' book.

Yes, I'm promoting my own books. What's wrong with that?

What is Cold Reading For Business(CRFB)?

Part of my fascination with cold reading stems from the fact that it can teach us a lot about successful communication. This is another of my passions, as well as being a large part of how I earn a living.

I have been a professional freelance writer for most of my life. When I tell people this, they tend to ask me what sort of things I write. The answer is: whatever the person paying me wants them to write. It really is as broad as that.

I've worked in creative media, sales and marketing, the software industry and many other fields. I've helped companies to sell everything from shoes to engineering services, and I've written plenty of those 'User Manuals' that no-one ever reads. I've even ghosted complete books for people, which I rather enjoy doing!

A long time ago, when I was working mainly in sales and marketing, I started applying some cold reading techniques to the business world. For example, I found ways to use cold reading when meeting sales prospects, or handling negotiations. I called this 'Cold Reading For Business' or CRFB for short.

CRFB gives you new, highly productive ways to approach all of your business communications. It's a great way to build rapport, establish trust and create persuasive messages.

When I started teaching CRFB in 2008, I was pleasantly surprised by the sheer range of people that applied to study with me — sales professionals, therapists, students, entrepreneurs, business development managers, teachers, doctors, political advisors, charity workers... the list goes on and on! I've even had two professional poker players and a jet-setting international diplomat! Quite a few students said they just wanted to improve their 'people skills'.

(Historical note. I used to call this 'Applied Cold Reading' or ACR. I later changed the name to 'Cold Reading For Business' as I felt it was a slight improvement.)

Historical Perspective

Whatever else you can say about cold reading, it certainly isn't new. It's been around as long as cows.

You can look at every era in history, and every part of the world, and you'll find examples of 'divination' of one kind or another. The specifics vary, because there are fashions and trends in cold reading as in anything else, but the underlying fascination does not. In one part of the world it might be palmistry that is madly popular while elsewhere it could be runes that draw the crowds. The 'I-Ching' is much loved in many parts of Asia but more or less unknown in most of Europe, where tarot readings have proved to be enduringly popular since at least the 18th century. Phrenology was all the rage in Victorian England but then fell out of favour. Maybe it's due to make a comeback?

(Old mentalist joke: I specialise in 'feline phreno-meteorology': forecasting the weather by feeling the bumps on your cat's head.)

In every part of the world I've visited, I've found cold reading thriving in one form or another. From America, Australia and Argentina to Sweden, Slovenia and Singapore, I've seen people offering readings of many different kinds, both formally and informally — and always with plenty of interested and satisfied customers. This shouldn't come as a surprise. A fundamental component of human psychology is the desire to know what lies beyond the normal scope of our knowledge.

It's also true to say that cold reading and various aspects of divination have played their part in various historical events. More than a few of history's tyrants, monarchs, emperors, leaders and warriors have felt the need to consult psychics, prophets, mystics, wizards and witches. There has always been a job for someone willing to tell powerful people that they will enjoy glorious victory while savouring the downfall of their enemies. However, it can be very hazardous work if one's predictions fail to come true.

There's a lot we don't know about the future. However, one thing is certain. For as long as there are people, there will be people giving readings to one another.

Who Learns Cold Reading And Why?

I always enjoy sharing what I know about cold reading as well as learning from other people. I'm lucky enough to have made many friends around the world with similar interests, and the internet makes it easier than ever to chat, exchange ideas and keep in touch.

One thing I have found is that people learn cold reading, or CRFB, for many different reasons. Here are just a few common ones:

- They share my enthusiasm for being able to give short, informal readings to people wherever they go. They see the potential for fun and positive feelings.
- They work in sales or management, and learn CRFB to improve their communication skills.
- They perform mentalism routines and want to incorporate a bit of cold reading into their act.
- They are full-time therapists and appreciate that CRFB can help them to build instant rapport with their clients.
- They have a background in counselling, and want to give personal readings as an adjunct to their other work.
- They just have an interest in the psychology of human communication, and want to study cold reading even though they don't have any immediate way to apply it.

In other words, there are probably as many different reasons for learning about cold reading as there are people.

How Do People Learn About Cold Reading?

There are four different ways that people learn about cold reading.

Formal Study

One common way to learn about cold reading is via a formal course of study. You can choose a discipline, such as tarot, and then study it either by attending a class or buying a course of some kind. There are many such courses on offer, as you will see if you do a quick search online.

This approach suits those who invest some degree of belief in whichever discipline they choose to study, and feel they are genuinely gaining some sort of insightful knowledge.

On a personal note, I think a fascinating aspect of this approach is what happens when you start to experiment with it and ‘test’ whatever you are taught. For example, suppose you have formally studied the tarot, and then give a reading in which you deliberately say the cards mean the *opposite* of whatever they are officially supposed to mean. Some demonstrations suggest that the reading will be just as successful as it would be if you read the cards ‘correctly’. The same goes for any other type of personal readings.

I’m not saying this proves that formal study is a waste of time. Some people get something from it and enjoy it, and that’s fine. I’m just saying that it doesn’t seem to be essential in order to give very good and successful readings.

Stock Lines

Some cold readers rely on stock lines, known as ‘stocks’ for short. They can get these lines from many sources as well as from their own experience. These stock lines can be categorised in many different ways, e.g. demographic group, context, theme, age of the client and so on.

Some readers find they can get by with quite a small set of stocks, whereas others make it their business to build up truly vast lists of stocks that they carry around in their head.

This approach is versatile, since you can apply the same stock lines to just about any form of personal reading: astrology, tarot, palm or whatever. People who use a lot of stock lines like the confidence it gives them that they will always have something to say, and never ‘run dry’.

I know that using a lot of stock lines can work very well — I've met more than a few readers who love their set of stock lines, which they have painstakingly acquired over many years, and use them very successfully.

My only reservation with stocks is that, since you are recycling the same lines over and over, you need to be a good actor to make the reading sound fresh and spontaneous. My other reservation is that you can spend a long time learning stock lines without ever understanding why they actually work. I'll come back to this point later.

Association Systems

An association system is a refined version of the stock lines approach to cold reading. Here's a simple example. Suppose that you learn 26 stock lines and associate each one with a letter of the alphabet. When you ask the client her name, you mentally note her initials and then deliver whichever lines correspond to those letters.

This is a very simplified example and real-life association systems are more sophisticated. However, the basic idea is the same: associate preset lines with common variables. The benefits of an association system are that you will never be short of something to say and each reading will be different (or at least as different as the system allows).

There are association systems for just about every type of reading under the sun. If you just want a relatively simple to give, for example, palm readings at parties, an association system might be a good option. There's usually not much to learn.

Association systems are also known as 'link' and 'trigger' systems.

My System: Super Psychic Readings

The system I teach is my own Super Psychic Readings system (SPR). You can read about it on the Cold Reading Success website if you want.

I think it's the best way to give readings but then again I would, wouldn't I? It's certainly the most *versatile* system, because it allows you to give any type of reading you want. There are no stock lines, no associations and no scripts to learn.

Just to repeat a point worth repeating: I call it 'Super Psychic Readings' so that people will know what it's about. However, in real life I refer to the readings I give as *personal* readings and never even mention the word 'psychic'.

The Great 'Psychic' Debate

As I have explained, not everyone who uses cold reading is necessarily claiming any psychic ability. Nonetheless, since there is often an association with the psychic industry, people often ask me whether I think psychic powers are real.

I've been around long enough to have met many different people with strong views on the subject. I've chatted with psychics, scientists, believers, sceptics, researchers and people with interesting tales to tell all over the world.

Some people say, 'Psychic powers definitely exist'. The problem with this view is that there is very little credible, peer-reviewed scientific evidence to support it. Some people say there's none at all.

Some people say, 'Psychic powers definitely do *not* exist'. The problem with this view is that, as I mentioned earlier, in every era in human history, and in every part of the world, you find people reporting 'psychic' experiences of one kind or another. That's an awful lot of human experience and testimony to simply ignore or dismiss as meaningless.

My view is that it's a mistake to say that psychic ability is a thing, like the chair you're sitting on, that either exists or doesn't exist. In my opinion, psychic ability is a construct of emotion, experience and perception. I say the truth is best expressed in eleven words:

Psychic powers are as real as you want them to be.

The good thing about this view is that I'm not asking you to take my word for it. All the available evidence supports this view, and none of the available evidence contradicts it.

Related Subjects

I have mentioned that I am fascinated by the subject of communication. As a professional writer-for-hire, I have had to learn a great deal about the difference between successful and unsuccessful communication.

For this reason, I never see cold reading in isolation. I see it as one fascinating area of study among many others, and I believe readers can tell the rest of us a great deal about good, clear and successful communication.

Here are some of the other areas that I have explored.

Non-verbal communication (NVC)

This includes, but is not limited to, body language and what are referred to as ‘tells’: subtle, involuntary clues about what someone is thinking and feeling. If you are in the communication business, and we all are to some extent, you cannot spend too much time learning about NVC and how to use it to your advantage.

Clear Communication

A professional writer’s job often comes down to one ability: to say what you mean, mean what you say and get rid of everything else. This sounds deceptively simple but it can be very difficult to achieve in practice. However, it’s always worth the effort. Clarity is effective and gets results. Anything that detracts from clarity takes you one step further *away* from your goal or purpose.

Voice Training

We tend to take speech for granted but it is in fact a rather remarkable and impressive human faculty. The sad thing is that very few people ever learn how to speak clearly or use their voice to their full advantage. This is a shame because learning to use your voice to its full potential can reap big rewards.

Vocal coaches don’t just work with singers. They can help anyone learn to use their voice to its full, rich potential. You will never know what a difference this can make, to virtually every aspect of your life, until you try it. It helps you to be more confident, persuasive, sensitive, likeable and creative.

Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP)

I'm not a huge fan of NLP, because I think some practitioners make rather exaggerated claims on its behalf, or make claim that have been checked out scientifically and found to be less than well substantiated. However, I don't see it as my role to get very sceptical about these things. If you study NLP or anything else and get a few good insights out of it, and if it helps you to communicate more successfully, then all to the good. I take the view that good ideas are always welcome, regardless of their source.

Incidentally, if you want to know more about any aspect of NLP, I suggest you contact my friend Gemma Bailey, who runs 'NLP For Kids' and 'People Building'. She's just wonderful.

Hypnosis

I am interested in hypnosis but have never practised it or used it. It's quite a controversial subject, especially within the magic world. I've heard some people say that hypnosis is the ultimate magic trick, in that it even fools the practitioner/performer! I'm not quite that cynical. What particularly fascinates me is the role that hypnosis can play in unlocking the power of the placebo effect. This seems to be one of those areas where the more we discover, the more we find out how little we know.

I don't claim to know much about hypnosis but if you want to study with experts, I recommend my friends Igor Ledochowsky or Anthony Jacquin, both of whom are experts and very gifted teachers.

Persuasion

When I was in my early teens, I read two remarkable books. One was 'The Hidden Persuaders' by Vance Packard. The other was 'Ogilvy On Advertising' by the legendary David Ogilvy. These two brilliant, remarkable books kindled an interest in all forms of persuasion that has stayed with me to this day.

I love the fact that there are so many different facets of persuasion, ranging from Aristotle's theories of motivation to meme theory; from Gestalt psychology to sales techniques such as SPIN selling and the technique of building 'yes sets'. I've read modern classics such as Cialdini's 'Persuasion and Influence' and David Maurer's 'The Big Con', and talked to everyone from shamen to professional con artists and a woman who made a nice living selling 'authentic' Egyptian relics that were nothing of the sort.

In addition, I've learned a little about persuasion from the point of view of mentalists and other stage performers. Our work often depends on being able to make people do what we want them to do, while seemingly exerting no control whatsoever!

These days I even teach a two-hour course on Practical Persuasion. This does what it says on the tin: it's practical, not theoretical, and it works in real life.

The Ethics Of Cold Reading

Cold reading necessarily invokes some ethical issues. This is why, on the Cold Reading Success website, there is a separate page about ethics. You'll find it under the 'Info' tab. It summarises pretty much everything I want to say on the subject.

The fundamental point is simply that cold reading is ethically neutral. Some people use it for bad reasons, such as extorting large sums of money out of particularly gullible clients. This is bad and wrong and people shouldn't do it. However, the majority of people use cold reading for good reasons, such as helping people, offering some reassurance or providing entertainment. I use it to give short, informal readings that cheer people up and brighten their day (as described in my Super Psychic Readings book). The intention is what matters.

Over the past two or three decades, I've encountered every possible shade of opinion about cold reading. Some people start to snarl and foam at the mouth at the very *mention* of cold reading, as if it's a plague on humanity. Others give readings all the time and think it's a wonderful, highly effective and harmless way to lift someone's spirits.

I am quite sure that discussions and disputes about the ethics of cold reading will rumble on until the end of time, and there will never be complete consensus. I try to treat everyone in a friendly, kind and respectful way, even if we disagree about things. One thing I do know is this: friends can disagree, and people who disagree can be friends. In my opinion, this is far more important than getting snared and tangled in arguments and debates that never go anywhere.

My Story: How I Got Into This

From time to time people ask how I got into cold reading. Here's the short version.

I got into magic when I was a youngster and in my teens I started to specialise in mentalism (mindreading magic). Having stumbled across a few booklets on cold reading, which struck me as fascinating, I started to give readings to friends. Fairly quickly, I discovered that I both enjoyed it and was fascinated by how and why it works.

When I started working, initially in the world of creative media and marketing, I started using some cold reading techniques in my business life. This is what I eventually named Cold Reading For Business.

That's really all there is to it: I've been studying, using and practicing cold reading ever since!

On a few occasions, I've been asked by TV and other media people to give 'test conditions' demonstrations of how effective cold reading can be. Among other things, they've asked me to pretend to be an astrologer, tarot card reader, clairvoyant and spirit medium. However, after every demonstration, I have always come clean and *tactfully* admitted to everyone involved that I was just using cold reading.

Cold Reading Success

The purpose of my Cold Reading Success website is to provide information, free stuff, books and training about cold reading.

I want to help the world to learn about cold reading and use it in all sorts of positive, productive ways. It's about spreading the joy of what cold reading can achieve, whether you want to use it for business purposes or to give a reading that puts a smile on someone's face and gives their day a lift.

Full details of the classes and training I offer are on the website.

This is a living document. I hope it will grow, develop and evolve over time. Your comments, criticisms and contributions are welcome. If there are other things you think I should include, or if you have notes or corrections for me, I would love to hear from you.

I wish you health, wealth, love, smiles and magic,

— Ian Rowland



End Note 1: An Invitation

Let's work together!

Would you like me to work with you and help you to learn the art of cold reading?

You can hire me! I help people all the time via Skype or Zoom. For details see www.coldreadingsuccess.com .

I'd love to work with you.

— Ian Rowland

www.ianrowland.com

www.coldreadingsuccess.com

www.ianrowlandtraining.com

End Note 2: Three Requests

Please Help Me If You Can

If you'd like to support me and my work, please tell all your friends about this book and my various websites. I'm self-employed and promote my work as best I can, but a little help is always welcome. If you can help me to 'spread the word', I would be very grateful.

For example, you can mention me to your friends in real life or on social media. Wherever people are discussing cold reading, communication psychology or related subjects, please give me and my books a mention and pass on the link:

www.coldreadingsuccess.com

Got contacts in broadcast or online media? Tell them about me or about my books. They might get a good story, article or feature out of it — if you've got an audience, I've got content! Maybe you can help me to get media appearances or to get booked to give a talk or presentation. I'd appreciate whatever help you want to offer. Thank you for any assistance you can give me.

Improvements, Fixes And Flubs

If you have notes or ideas about how I can improve this book, or if you've noticed errors I should fix, I'd love to hear from you. If there are factual errors, things I should explain more clearly or typos, I'd love to correct them.

Please Send Me Your Review

Reviews are really helpful. If you can, please send me a review of any of my books you've read that I can add to the product pages on my websites. My email address is ian@ianrowland.com. Your review can be published under your own name or can be anonymous.

Your review doesn't have to be very long or a literary masterpiece. Short reviews can be great although if you *want* to write a detailed review then you're welcome to do so! Also, don't worry if your writing needs a little help or tidying up. I can take care of that for you.

You can also submit reviews to Amazon if you obtained any of my books from there.

What Can I Do For You?

Personal Coaching And Training

I work with private clients all over the world, either in person or via the internet. Some people contact me for help with weight loss and fitness. Others want a little help with areas such as self-fulfilment and personal success, building their business, creating a passive income or related subjects. Let's work together and see what value I can provide for you!

See any of my websites for details.

Talks, Keynotes And Corporate Training

I love taking part in live events! I offer excellent talks, training and keynotes on subjects such as persuasion and communication skills, working for yourself, creating digital products and building a passive income. I often add touches of magic and mindreading, just to make my sessions a little bit different!

To date, I've worked for the FBI, Google, Coca-Cola, Marks & Spencer, The British Olympics Team, The Ministry of Defence, Hewlett-Packard, The Philadelphia 76ers, CapGemini, BBC, Kier Construction, NBC, The Crown Estate, Iceland, Medtronic, Unilever, The Sunday Times Oxford Literary Festival, The Prince's Charities, McKinsey & Company, Eurostar Software Testing Conference, Ogilvy & Mather, Rabobank, London Business School, ABC Television, Channel 4, Cambridge Technology Partners, Synon, Valtech and many other companies.

I've also lectured at Oxford University, Cambridge University, the California Institute of Technology and Monash University.

Writing

A friend once described me as 'a book midwife'. If you have a book in you, I'll help you to write it, publish it yourself, market it and make some money from it. I've been a professional writer for over 35 years and I offer a complete, end-to-end service.

I particularly like helping people to create a passive income for themselves: create a product, set up a website, make money while you sleep. This is what I've been doing for about twenty years. I can guide you through the entire process! It's a challenging road to travel, to be sure, but at the same time highly satisfying and rewarding.

Social Media

I'd love to stay in touch via social media!

For each of my main websites, there is a corresponding Facebook page:

- www.ianrowland.com
- www.coldreadingsuccess.com
- www.ianrowlandtraining.com

You can also find me on:
Twitter (@IanRowland1)
Linked In
Instagram



Some Kind Words...

“My FBI Behavioural Analysis Program hired Ian to work with and train our team for a full day. He demonstrated and taught us a lot about cold reading and how we could apply it to our work as behavioural analysts. Additionally, he also covered advanced communication skills, persuasive language and relevant insights into the art of ‘misdirection’. At the conclusion of his comprehensive seminar, he entertained our entire team and families with a mindreading show at an evening social. Not only was it great fun, but even today my team is still talking about it. I’d highly recommend Ian to anyone who’s interested in these subjects and wants a first-class speaker and trainer.”

— *Robin Dreeke, former Special Agent and Head of **FBI Behavioural Analysis Program***

“I regard Ian as a first-rate trainer and consultant. He has amazing material, he always delivers and he’s great to work with.”

— *A. Sanghi, Lead Economist, **World Bank Group***

“Ian has a very engaging and energising style and he was thought-provoking and entertaining throughout. Most importantly, everyone said it was a great use of their time. Ian gave us plenty of ways to work smarter and be more effective both professionally and personally.”

— *A. Mellor, **Marks & Spencer***

“Ian is the best speaker and trainer I’ve ever seen, and he hosted our day perfectly. We learned a lot, he was entertaining and I know we’ll be more successful this year thanks to what he shared with us.”

— *D. Holmes, Financial Director, **Healthcare Learning***

“We had some of the top experts around the globe in their field, but when we looked at how people were registering for the conference and what the attendees wanted, overwhelmingly we saw very large numbers signing up for Ian’s course, so much so that his class was the largest in the whole session that we had for those three days.”

— *Chris Hadnagy, **Organiser, Human Hacking Conference***

“Of the hundred plus lectures and shows we have hosted at Caltech none have brought more enthusiastic praise than your performance. I have now heard from dozens of people in the audience, all of whom said this was one of the most entertaining, informative, and above all funny shows they had ever seen. You are to be congratulated for breathing so much life and class into the science and skeptics community.”

— *Michael Shermer, **Executive Director, Skeptics Society***

“Ian's special talent lies in his ability to communicate useful information about self-improvement, business, psychology and, yes, magic to diverse audiences around the world. His books are essential reading and if you get the opportunity to hear him speak, don't miss him! For those outside the world of magic and mindreading, let me tell you that Ian is very highly regarded in the trade. He even gets hired to go to major conventions and teach other magicians! When I was Editor of the Magic Circle's magazine, I asked Ian to write a column on mindreading, which he did for 12 years to great acclaim.”

— *Matthew Field, **Member of the Inner Magic Circle***

“I've been an Independent Financial Advisor for 20 years and have learned from people like Dale Carnegie, Anthony Robbins, Jim Rohn and Brian Tracy. I now include Ian Rowland on that list. Having attended his courses and invested in some personal coaching with him, I cannot recommend him highly enough. His unique insights regarding positive persuasion and what makes people tick will prove invaluable in your personal and business life. He's funny, engaging and a leader in his field.”

— *Mike LeGassick, **Leading Independent Financial Advisor, UK***

“I make it my business to learn from experts. I spent four days with Ian and we covered a range of skills that I know will help me both personally and professionally — particularly inter-personal skills and ways to establish instant rapport with people. I think he's terrific.”

— *Sam Q., **Entrepreneur, Saudi Arabia***

“I'm a sales guy. I've studied all the big names and been trained by some of the best in the business. I trained with Ian via Skype and he just blew my mind with techniques and perspectives I never knew before. It's all practical. I use what Ian taught me almost every day. He opened my eyes to aspects of communication that truly deserve the term 'magic'.”

— *Michael Martin, **Sales professional, USA***

“I studied CRFB with Ian via Skype and without doubt it's my best investment this year! Ian is an excellent teacher and working with him is very enjoyable. In addition, Ian is incredibly generous with his knowledge in many adjacent fields.

— *Patrick Ehrich, **Teacher and Educational Trainer, Germany***



Training day for Coca-Cola Europe in Lisbon; lecturing at Masters of Magic in Italy; management training event at The Atomium, Brussels



Training FBI field agents; teaching persuasion skills at The STTAR Summit at the Philly 76ers HQ; training a private client in London



Cold reading training for the Human Hacking Conference in Orlando; the Human Hacking audience; management training for Cap Gemini



A demonstration in New York for ABC 'Prime Time'; lecturing in Gothenburg; training for the Alternative Investors Institute, Paris



A couple of stage shots; teaching a public 'Cold Reading For Business' class in London