



Why do smart women see PSYCHICS?

Who's on your support team: an accountant, therapist... personal trainer? Now the latest must-have life help, says Chrissy Iley, is a psychic, and it might be your short-cut to happiness

Illustrations Red's artist-in-residence Nina Fuga



would have been impossible to know,' she tells me. 'I met Alison Chan Lung at a talk where she was discussing male and female energy and I immediately felt I learnt something. I met Eve Peacock by chance as a friend of a friend.

'Eve told me that an important letter I was waiting for would not bring me the news I was hoping for. This helped me a great deal because I was prepared for the disappointment. Both Eve and Alison get to the core of issues very quickly. I was deciding whether to end a relationship, and they both helped me work out what I was getting - and not getting - from it.'

High-powered, high-functioning: Lisa represents the new-style client of the new, modern psychic. So, is her behaviour about needing a regular hit of certainty? Or is she a woman who's found a way to tap into the wisdom of the universe and increase her own powers of intuition?

In LA, where I live part of the time, women I meet often have a psychic on their personal team, along with their lawyer, decorator, waxer and so on. Back in London, friends are as likely to give out the name of their 'incredible' psychic as the colourist who did their balayage.

Yet other women I know don't even bother to read their horoscope. Professor Christopher French is a psychologist and professional skeptic who writes for a magazine called *The Skeptic* (the editorial board includes Professor Brian

Cox, Derren Brown and Stephen Fry). He is head of the Anomalistic Psychology Research Unit at Goldsmiths College, University of London, and part of his job is to perform tests on so-called paranormal experiences and psychics' claims. As a scientist, he thinks it's bunkum.

He is well aware of the popularity surge of psychics or, as he calls them, 'cut-price counsellors'. People, he says, are often 'leaving themselves open to be exploited. People get hooked on telephone psychics and end up not being able to make decisions without guidance. Psychics do not have special insights that can only be explained in paranormal terms'.

That's the theme of the new Woody Allen film, *Magic In The Moonlight*. It's about a magician (Colin Firth) trying to debunk a psychic clairvoyant (Emma Stone), who happens to be beautiful. In the process he transforms from miserable and cynical to being hooked on hope. I won't give away the rest of the plot but, basically, that is what psychics offer: hope. It's the talking equivalent of the talisman jewellery - Astley Clarke's Hamsa and Lotus charms, Dana Levy's Evil Eye bracelets - that's so popular.

French agrees: 'People consult psychics in times of uncertainty when they think things are out of control. There is a basic urge to see round the next corner, be as prepared as you can. A time of political and economic uncertainty is a good time for psychics.'

I can see the logic in what he says, but the women I know who see psychics are successful, independent and self-sufficient. Laura, a British film producer working in LA, is dedicated to her psychic. 'The first time I went to see a psychic was on holiday, and it seemed like fun,' she says. 'What she said was >>

