Types of Hauntings

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One in three people claim to have experienced frightening supernatural events that cannot be explained using the current laws of science.  Reports of these paranormal events have ranged in severity from simply hearing unexplained sounds or witnessing the movement of small objects, to threatening growls that seems to come from everywhere, and physical attacks that even include pushing, shoving, hitting and scratching.

Five basic types of hauntings have been documented, with most events falling into one of these categories. Knowing the type of paranormal event that a person is experiencing can help to inform the individual as to the potential dangers--if any--that he or she may expect when facing it.

* **Intelligent Haunting**

In an intelligent haunting, the spirit directly interacts with the living. This activity can manifest itself in various ways. Voices, full-bodied apparitions, touches, objects being moved, smells, noises, orbs, cold spots, mists, or other light activity are all common means of interaction with an intelligent ghost.

It is believed that “intelligent” hauntings respond to direct actions from the living and are aware of their current surroundings. One theory is that these spirits have decided to stay in the physical world, either because they do not realize they have died, or because they have a connection to a certain place, object, or person. A ghost may be tied to the site or people because:

1. It died as a result of a traumatic event: murder, car accident, etc.
2. It has unfinished business.
3. It may have died suddenly and not realized he/she died.
4. Its living loved ones are so emotionally distraught they can’t let go.
5. It is emotionally connected to its loved ones.
6. It cannot rest due to an injustice done to him or her.
7. It has fear of the other side, or fear of judgment

Another theory suggests that sudden surges of paranormal activity in previously unaffected areas can be due to the remodeling of a home or office, a change in the occupants or ownership of the site, or a traumatic event in the life of the living person that the spirit is watching over.

* Residual Haunting

A residual haunt is believed to stem from historic, traumatic, or emotionally charged events from the past that leave an imprint in the place where the events occurred. This is the most common type of paranormal activity reported.  The ghosts that you see in this type of haunting are not earthbound spirits; they are just visual playbacks.

Since everything is made up of energy, the theory is that some of the energy from an event can be recorded by certain physical materials--stone, crystal, etc.--and played back when conditions are right, just like a record player playing over and over. There is also a theory that certain weather conditions can initiate the playback. The event imprinted on the area or building often plays at a set point in time, coinciding with the date or time of day that the original event occurred.

Because its characteristics are similar to the intelligent haunting, people often mistake the two. Some people experiencing a residual haunting may hear voices or other sounds and may even see an apparition.  But there is no entity present and the energy imprint will not respond or initiate contact. The "ghosts" seem to not notice you but simply go through the motions of the event that occurred in the past.

One famous example of a residual haunting is Gettysburg. People often see Civil War soldiers in full uniform engaged in battle or standing guard near the historic site. This type of haunting may be frightening when you see it, but you are in no danger from it.

* **Poltergeist Haunting**

The term poltergeist is from the German words, poltern (to knock), and geist (spirit).Physical movement of objects, banging on walls and floors, lights cutting on and off, and even the manifestation of physical phenomena such as scratches are all signs of a poltergeist haunting.

**One of the most popular theories regarding poltergeist activity is that it is not caused by ghosts, but is caused unintentionally by the person or persons experiencing the activity...**called an agent or a focus.A person who is under some sort of stress--whether it's psychological, emotional, a teenager going through puberty, or even a woman experiencing menopause--can cause poltergeist activity to occur. In an unconscious attempt to relieve emotional stress, the agent unknowingly triggers the physical disturbances by using mental energy. That mental mechanism is called “[psycho kinesis](http://paranormal.about.com/library/weekly/aa071601a.htm)."

Poltergeist hauntings tend to end as quickly as they begin. They are also the type of haunting that is most likely to be faked, usually by a young person seeking attention. Sounds such as rapping on walls can be reproduced by knuckle cracking, while flying dishes and other such phenomenon can be made to occur by the use of fishing line or thread.

* **Crisis Apparitions**

A Crisis Apparition is the appearance of a deceased love one or close friend. Some paranormal researchers believe that crisis apparitions are the most common of all hauntings. Unfortunately, these are the hardest type of hauntings to prove due to the fact that the apparitions only appear to one person and usually only appear once – generally when a person has just entered the spirit realm and has a warning or message to give a loved one left behind. There are two types of crisis apparitions:

Death Bed Apparitions

This category commonly involves one-time visits to someone with whom the apparition has close emotional ties. The crisis ghost appears one last time to say a final goodbye or to help ease the sadness of death for the living left behind. We have all heard stories about someone “seeing” or having a dream about a person they haven’t had contact with for a while only to find out shortly afterwards that the visit was that of a recently deceased relative or friend.

Message Apparitions

Though dying is the most common crisis, other situations can also trigger apparitional visits. These apparitions can manifest as a person hearing a voice from a departed friend or relative with some message or warning. An example is that of a driver sitting at a traffic light that changes from red to green, but something--or someone--tells the driver not to go through the intersection right away. The driver hesitates, and then a speeding car runs the red light from the other direction. The message apparition has just saved a life.

* **Demonic Haunting**

Paranormal theory suggests that demonic hauntings are caused by inhuman entities, commonly known as demons and devils.  Such haunting are considered to be the most dangerous and severe type. It is believed that the demonic entities are very strong, can interact physically with humans, and can even touch or possibly harm a person.  Another theory suggests that demonic entities can take on any form...animal, human, or both.  Typically, however, people report seeing these entities as black masses standing in doorways or hiding in the shadows.

During a demonic haunting, a person might experience growling or screaming sounds that appear to be coming from every direction.  Other events that some associate with a demonic haunting are a "heavy" feeling to the air, temperature that may become much warmer or much cooler, and a revolting stench similar to rotting flesh or sulfuric acid. Demonic spirits can take on the forms of former loved ones to try to gain someone's trust and will often seek out people who are under a great deal of stress.

One popular theory is that demonic spirits can be summoned by the use of Ouija boards, or by practicing black magic or dealing in satanic worship. Whether or not the use of these rites is innocent or intentional, they can open “doorways” to allow demonic entities to enter. For this reason, few legitimate paranormal investigators will ever use such techniques and always discourage their clients from doing the same.

Fortunately, demonic hauntings are a rare occurrence. If you feel you have a demonic entity haunting you, immediately seek help from a professional paranormal investigation team who has dealt with this issue before, or who can direct you to the appropriate clerical resources to help you.