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The Principles of Remote Viewing

12 Key Factors to Identify Remote Viewing

ABSTRACT

Remote viewing is a disciplined method that trains individuals to obtain information about distant or concealed objects, events, locations, or people beyond normal sensory capabilities. Developed and utilized by both scientific research and military intelligence, it involves structured protocols to enhance and control psychic functioning, distinct from other psychic practices. Remote viewing is based on the human ability of Extrasensory Perception (ESP), and includes some mechanism or procedure for controlling mental noise.

We can identify 12 principles to distinguish remote viewing (in general) from other psychic disciplines. The following article discusses these 12 principles of remote viewing.

Remote viewing is a technique used to obtain information that is not available otherwise through normal senses or information sources, separated from us by space, time, or shielding.

Remote viewing is not clairvoyance, channeling, out-of-body or other mediumistic work, but it is related to such techniques in that it utilizes the natural human capacity for extrasensory perception. Therefore, remote viewing does not refer to the ability to psychically perceive things itself, but is a technique to develop, strengthen and make controlled use of psychic functioning.

WHERE DOES REMOTE VIEWING COME FROM?

The term “remote viewing” was coined by artist and psychic Ingo Swann in the early 1970s. He participated in scientific studies of Extrasensory Perception (ESP) at the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR), the City College in New York, and Stanford Research Institute (SRI).



It was subsequently adopted by US military intelligence for a secret psychic espionage program that ran until 1995, involving various US government agencies including the CIA and DIA. After it was declassified and publicly revealed in 1995, the program became famous as the “Star Gate” Program, referring to one of its code names.

Based on an extended research program led by physicists Hal Puthoff and Russell Targ at SRI, and after about a decade of studies with both natural psychics and individuals without reported psychic abilities or prior psychic claims, it became evident that non-local perception—the ability to describe distant places, objects, people or events not accessible through regular sensory means—was potentially an inherent human ability that could be developed and trained like any other human capacity.

Similar to the working method applied for scientific studies, the US government and military used a generic remote viewing approach in different programs from 1975 onward. But beginning from 1981, a formalized and structured working method called Coordinate Remote Viewing (CRV, later known as Controlled Remote Viewing) was developed at SRI by Ingo Swann and Hal Puthoff. This method was trained and used by a small group of military remote viewers in the secret psychic spy unit, based at Ft. Meade, Maryland. After the program was terminated and publicly disclosed in 1995, some of the former military personnel began teaching the method in the civilian world. Through these instructors and subsequently their students, a variety of adaptations to remote viewing are available today as training for individuals, ranging from „free form“ approaches to structured, method-based written formats.

Although there are now many different approaches that share the name “remote viewing,” there are clear indications that distinguish remote viewing from other psychic practices, such as clairvoyance, channeling, astral projection, or out-of-body experiences.

Definition of Remote Viewing (DIA)

Remote Viewing is the acquisition and description, by mental means, of information blocked from ordinary perception by distance, shielding or time.

(Coordinate Remote Viewing, Defense Intelligence Agency, 1 May 1986)

Definition of Remote Viewing (IRVA)

RV is a novel perceptual discipline for gaining information not available to the ordinary physical senses. Used extensively by so-called “psychic spies” during the Cold War for classified military projects, it has a long history both as an intelligence gathering tool and as the subject of research and applications in the civilian world.

(International Remote Viewing Association, IRVA.org)



About Remote Viewing (Ingo Swann)

[The term remote viewing] was coined to identify a particular kind of experiment—not a particular kind of psi ability. To simplify all this, we can resort to a easy-to-understand formula. Remote-viewing consists of five absolutely necessary ingredients: (1) subject, [with] (2) active ESP abilities, [directed at] (3) distant target [including shielded or distant in time] (4) subject’s recorded responses and (5) confirmatory positive feedback, all of which equals (6) the remote-viewing model. Nothing less is remote viewing. [...] Remote-viewing is neither a novel psi ability, nor a convenient replacement term for psi, clairvoyance, or ESP.

(Ingo Swann, in Fate Magazine, Sept 1993)

REMOTE VIEWING “IN THE WILD”

Over the past three decades, the term “remote viewing” has become a catch-all phrase for many psychic practices, largely because the scientific framework of the method appeals to those seeking greater public acceptance of psychic abilities and the paranormal. Additionally, the term “viewing” is misleading, further contributing to misconceptions about what remote viewing actually entails (which is discussed below in this article). As a result, today the majority of people using this terminology have a flawed understanding of its true meaning and principles.

AN EASY GUIDE TO REMOTE VIEWING PRINCIPLES

In the following, twelve main characteristics (principles) of remote viewing vs. other psychic work are discussed in a short form.

1 *RV is a trainable skill, based on an innate human ability.*

The ability to perform remote viewing is acquired through practice and experience in the method—in short, anyone can become a remote viewer. Remote viewing does not require that one have a “gift” or talent as in other “psychic” or mediumistic approaches. As with any human skill set, an innate talent may give a person some advantage. But quality training and consistent practise is more important for developing a professional skill level. Proper training and experience can augment talent and compensate for a lesser amount of natural talent.



2 *RV is always an intentional (deliberate) process.*

Remote viewing does not occur spontaneously or without intention. It is performed for a specific pre-defined purpose, in the form of “sessions” with a start and end point defined and recorded by the viewer and always involves intentional directed awareness.

3 *Control of the process of mentally accessing a RV target belongs to the viewer.*

The viewer chooses whether to remote view an assigned target, as well as when to do so. Even though always blinded to the target (see Principle 5, below), it is the viewer who decides whether to work on this specific target, and when to start and end the process. During their sessions, viewers may freely change their perspective around and about the target both in time and space as they feel necessary to accomplish the purpose of the assignment.

In essence, the viewer is in charge. If present, a monitor may only offer guidance as a suggestion, not a requirement.

4 *Bilocation (balanced perception) is essential.*

According to the original definition of bilocation, a remote viewer maintains a balance between being “here” and “there” during a session. We can think of this as the viewer’s awareness being in two places at once—at the target, to perceive data; and simultaneously at the viewer’s physical location (viewing room) to report data. The viewer does not fully “go to the target” as in the out-of-body state (OBE) or astral projection (AP), since that would prevent the gathering and recording of data in real time as it is being experienced. (In OBE or AP, any information or experiential data can only be reported after the experiencer has “returned back” to a “normal state” of awareness. This risks loss of important information due to memory limitations.)

5 *The viewer is blind to the target, protected from any awareness of the identity or nature of the target or of the tasking used to point the viewer there.*

A key principle in remote viewing is that the viewer must have no knowledge of the nature of the target until after the session is completed (single-blind protocol). In most cases, especially in scientific settings, everyone associated with the viewer, such as the session monitor or observers present during the session, must also be unaware of the target (double-blind protocol).

Blinding requires a way to assign the target, which usually involves another person kept separate both from the viewer and from others who might be



present during the remote viewing session. This person is responsible for defining the target and creating a way of “pointing” the viewer to the desired target without revealing any information about it. This could involve sealing a reference picture in an envelope and/or defining a verbal tasking cue. Common practice is to assign a code, coordinate, or arbitrary number that functions as a “tasking number,” standing in for the target and preventing the viewer from inferring or deducing information about the nature or identity of the target. In remote viewing, the person responsible for making this target assignment is called the “tasker.”

6 Remote viewers are aware of and manage the negative effect of mental noise on the remote viewing process.

Due to the fragmentary nature of normal everyday perception, our minds are trained to interpolate available and often disjointed pieces of data to form a “full picture.” This function is an important evolutionary survival mechanism, but it can lead to issues in our attempts to perceive information non-locally. Our interpolations are based on previous knowledge and memory. Under normal circumstances, when they interact with newly-perceived data they give us a useful interpretation of what we experience.

But in low-information situations (as remote viewing often is) interpolations may unintentionally result in false interpretations. The viewer’s mind attempts to draw conclusions from initially inadequate data, yielding false conclusions. The more limited and fragmentary the available perceptions, the more inaccurate these interpolations become. Because remote viewing is an inexact process, this interpolation mechanism can get in the way of obtaining and recording reliable data during remote viewing sessions.

Remote viewing is the first, and perhaps *only*, psychic discipline that acknowledges the concept of mental noise and has developed ways to address it. The original term for this concept is “Analytical Overlay (AOL).” In some offshoots of the remote viewing methodology, alternative terminology may be used to describe the same concept. Conversely, original CRV terminology (such as ideogram or bilocation) has been imported into other methods, and their original meanings are often altered to represent different concepts. This adds to the confusion about the nature of remote viewing.

7 RV is a process of description, and not an attempt to “name” or identify the target.

A basic requirement in remote viewing is to “describe, don’t name” target perceptions. In other words, the most successful viewers use descriptive terms



and graphic representations, such as sketches to convey how a target looks, smells, feels, is shaped, sounds, and so on. They avoid labeling or identifying (“naming”) the target. This approach helps reduce the analytical processes (“mental noise”—see Principle 6) of the remote viewer.

In reporting remote viewing perceptions, a viewer should describe what he/she perceives, and not try to label it. (For example, instead of “fire truck,” a competent viewer will use concepts such as “red, metallic, large, rumbling sounds,” and so on. Yet, the target might be something that is red, metallic, large and makes rumbling sounds, but is not actually a firetruck).

Remote viewers are trained to avoid constructing logical “complete stories,” and instead focus on collecting descriptive information, including both sensory and conceptual impressions. The task of evaluating a given session and putting the data it contains into context is left to an analyst.

RV involves a defined process, requiring specific protocols.

In this context, “protocols” refers to the conditions under which remote viewing is done, not the method that is used. Among the protocols are several listed in this document, such as blinding conditions (Principle 5); verifiable targets; the requirement for feedback (Principle 11, below); etc. “Defined process,” means that the process unfolds within a certain set of boundaries, defined by the protocols.

Remote viewing sessions can be conducted either by the viewer on their own, or with a second person, known as an “interviewer” or “monitor”, who assists the viewer with session guidance.

The role of the monitor includes guiding the viewer’s focus if necessary, as well as observing the viewer during the session to help them avoid naming and guessing, thereby reducing analytical interference.

In method-based remote viewing, the role of the monitor is augmented by the working structure, which includes a strict placement protocol (often referred to as the “RV method” or “RV protocol”) for recording perceptions on paper. This protocol helps to separate raw impressions from analytically processed data, it also differentiates between categories of data, and captures the chronological order in which the perceptions were received.

Similar to how the blinding protocols or the use of a defined written structure for objectification helps the viewer stay on track, when a viewer works solo (that is, without a monitor present to assist) a combination of the aforementioned elements helps in reducing the logical interference or guessing. This



at least partially substitutes for the lack of a monitor. In principle, a viewer can work solo and without a written method (e.g., solo-ERV) if they apply other methods of real time data objectification, e.g., using audio or video recordings.

Still, the use of a monitor in RV sessions can be helpful beyond the training process, especially in operational settings where the monitor can help guide the viewer's awareness towards specific perspectives or questions. To maintain the monitor's neutrality and avoid influencing the viewer, there are rules for monitoring, such as monitors being blind (except in a training setting), limited verbal response patterns or a non-intrusion policy. This is to preserve the integrity of the remote viewing session and to ensure that the results are not distorted by external influences.

The task of evaluating remote viewing sessions and putting the data into context is a completely separate process to remote viewing, and is best performed by a different person, in the role of the analyst.

9 RV results must be “objectified” (that is, recorded in real-time) in a form objectively accessible to others.

A remote viewer must record all perceptions as they occur, in real time. This is typically done with pen on paper in the form of words and sketches, and/or as an audio recording that is sometimes supplemented by subsequent drawings after the verbal part of the session. 3D modeling can also be part of the objectification process. Kinesthetic interaction with the target, such as sketching and modeling are not just for recording data, but also function to reinforce target contact.

Real time objectification serves many purposes, with a focus on externalizing as much of the viewer's “thinking process” as possible. This not only helps avoid “internal editing” (failing to externalize thoughts and perceptions) but also allows the analyst to track mental noise.

Additionally, the amount of data that can be stored in human short-term memory is too minimal to enable the viewer to transport the full range of perceptions from the remote viewing experience back to the viewing room by memory alone, leading to a potential for massive loss of data and subsequent interpolation—a phenomenon well-known from, for example, the interrogation of witnesses.



10 Procedural and administrative details accompanying the RV process are recorded and tracked.

A remote viewing session transcript will often provide not only the target-relevant perceptual data, but also clues to process-related information concerning the viewer and the session environment, which can aid analysis. This particularly applies to CRV (and its offshoots), which has specific terminology to identify and record this kind of information. But the principle is relevant to any kind of remote viewing, whenever the process is recorded. (Despite obvious benefits, some remote viewing methods do not emphasize this.)

11 Post-session feedback is key to the remote viewing process.

As per Ingo Swann's original definition (see above), the availability of feedback is a key element of remote viewing. In this sense, sessions conducted against targets with no verifiable feedback or "ground truth" available are considered speculative psychic work, using some elements of remote viewing protocols but not constituting "full" remote viewing.

Feedback in this context does not mean that every detail about the target is known beforehand (which would render RV useless as an intelligence gathering tool). There can certainly be unknowns. However, the "unknowns" must be embedded within known material to allow for verifiable feedback—for example, to clearly determine through other specific target elements whether the viewer is "on target" or not.

12 Multiple viewers and consensus analysis are essential when applying RV to real-world problems.

Like most other human information collection systems, remote viewing is typically not 100% accurate. In fact, the goal in remote viewing is not to achieve perfection, but rather to maximize the reliability and usefulness of the information gathered. Recognizing sources of interference, such as mental noise, leads to standard practices that help mitigate the effects of inherent inaccuracies in the process. One important technique is to assign multiple viewers to the same task and, after completion of all viewing activities, comparing the results.

This redundant approach serves as an error-correction mechanism, helping to overcome inaccuracies caused and compounded by each individual viewer's encounter with mental noise. Overall reliability of the collected data improves when analysts evaluate each viewer's session data in relation to what the other viewers produced, look for correlations where their data over-



lap, then placing it into a context where more trustworthy conclusions can be drawn. This work is performed after sessions are complete. It is essential that analysts avoid interfering with the viewing process during sessions.

These principles and practices work together to create a structured approach to remote viewing that aims to maximize the validity and usefulness of the data obtained, while acknowledging and managing the inherent challenges posed by mental noise and the limitations of human perception.

Principles of Remote Viewing
 Comparison to different modes of psychic work

	Remote Viewing	OBE / Astral Projection	Clairvoyance	Channeling	Precognition, Visions	Automatic Writing	Constellation Work
Trainable skill (1)	●	☑	⊘	⊘	⊘	●	☑
Always intentional (2)	●	☑	●	☑	⊘	●	●
Controlled target access (3)	●	☑	●	☑	⊘	●	●
Bilocation balance (4)	●	⊘	☑	⊘	⊘	⊘	●
Blinding protocols (5)	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	☑	☑	☑
Concept of mental noise (6)	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Descriptive reporting (7)	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Defined working structure (8)	●	☑	⊘	●	⊘	●	●
Recording in real time (9)	●	⊘	☑	●	⊘	●	●
Process-related data (10)	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	☑
Feedback (11)	●	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Redundancy (12)	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	☑	⊘

Chart key: ● yes ⊘ no ☑ partially applied / different versions / not mandatory



The principles described here apply to remote viewing in general, regardless of the form and method. Controlled Remote Viewing (CRV) has additional features like its structure that distinguish it from other, less disciplined forms of remote viewing. To get a better understanding, we recommend reading the article about the origins of CRV.

*“Any sufficiently advanced technology
is indistinguishable from magic.”*

—Arthur C. Clarke—

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