

Ron Jaxon's "New to magic" posts in themagiccafe.com message board

Over the past 5 years or so I've spent quite a bit of time sharing some of the lessons I've learned in my experiences as a magician and some of the thoughts I have on performing. I spent a lot of time sharing these things in the "new to magic" section of theMagiccafe message board. I was very fortunate to live in an area with quite a few magicians to guide me when I first started out. Not to mention the fact that I live a short 30 minute drive from Colon Michigan where the Abbott's magic get together takes place once a year and allowed me to meet thousands of magicians from around the world. So I was able to learn by not only my own mistakes but by meeting others and learning from them. The Internet allows us to really share with many people at once so I felt it would be a waist not to use that to share the things I've learned.

So what I've done is I gathered all the posts I've made on theMagiccafe.com message board in the "new to magic" section all in one E-book. I only included the beginning post of each discussion here but under the title of each topic you'll find a link to that discussion on themagiccafe's message board so you can visit and contribute to that discussion. I felt this would allow them to be found more easily instead spending hours searching for them all.

I'm very honored that some members of the board at theMagiccafe.com have quoted some of these posts as "Must reads". I hope you find some of them helpful.

- Ron Jaxon
www.magicjax.com

Your first ten seconds

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=118697&forum=41>

In my experience the first ten seconds (or so) of a show is the most important part of a performance. It's in these few moments that they are processing an opinion of you.

I see so many performers come out with a long dialog or a trick that takes a few minutes before the audience actually experiences anything. The trick may end up successful and get a good reaction but if they had already liked you before that moment then the reactions would have probably been even stronger.

Establishing yourself is the key. A known performer can get away with just walking out and not giving the audience much to react to right away because the audience already has an opinion of the performer. Most of us aren't like that though. We usually perform for people who have never seen us before so they'll be examining you right away to see if you're worthy of their attention.

You don't have to do a trick in the beginning. It can be a site gag, a funny line or falling on your face. What you do is up to you but just keep in mind that the sooner you establish yourself the sooner your spectators will expect you as entertaining. You'll find that once you've done that they'll react to things you don't even plan on getting a reaction to.

So my advice is to give them something to laugh or wow at right from the beginning. Then you'll have their attention and acceptance for the rest of your show.

If you're ever stumped on something to do the moment you walk out there. Here's a simple one and you don't need any props to do it. You don't even need words. All you need is a table.

I do this quite often. As soon as I'm introduced I walk up to the table and do an old mime bit I saw Dick Van Dyke do when he was impersonating Stan Laurel. You sit down on an invisible chair.



Your body looks just like you are sitting on a chair but the bulk of your weight is held up on your elbow. I just walk up. I do this as I wave to the audience with a silly smirk on my face. It gets a few giggles. They don't see me as just a guy who does a few tricks but as someone who is entertaining. Then I move on with my act.

There are many other options but I think this demonstrates just how much you can do in that first few seconds to get a laugh.

This particular bit requires not props or words.

The Shakes

Overcoming Nervousness

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=162162&forum=41>

I'm waiting in a hallway of a town hall for them to be finished with their presentation of the corporate dinner party. As soon as they are done handing out the awards and giving their speeches they'll be introducing me to do a short parlor act. I've been rehearsing for this show for a few months now. I've ran through the entire acts so many times I know it like the back of my hand. Just earlier today I went through the entire act a few times for some of my friends and family members. Each time I did the act I was flawless. Not one thing went wrong so I knew I was ready for this show.

Because of this I can't understand why I feel so strange. My hands, forehead and even my shirt are soaked in sweat. I take a peak around the corner and see the hall full of about 100 people listening intently to the speaker on the stage. I notice the table that was full of trophies and plaques a few minutes ago is almost empty. I'll be introduced any minute now. I hide my head back behind the wall I'm leaning against and I suddenly feel a hot flash. I feel like I might even get sick. I see a drinking fountain a few yards away from me and walk over to take a drink. Just then someone pokes their head around the corner and waves me over. This is it. It's time for me to go up there in front of all these strangers. I grab a ball from my pocket and try to palm it in my right hand because this is where it needs to be for my opening trick. This isn't an easy task because my hands are so sweaty. I wipe my palms on the pants and try again. I can hold it now but it's not a very secure palm. I just hope I don't drop it on the way to the stage.

I make it to the stage and the music begins to play. My first routine is a multiplying balls routine. I do a little manipulation to the one single ball then steal the shell. I'm ready to make the ball multiply for the first time. I just barely pull it off without the ball dropping. As I do the next move where I load another ball into the shell I drop the first ball I produced. Luckily it wasn't the one with in the shell. During the course of the multiplying balls routine I drop two balls on the floor but luckily the shell wasn't exposed.

I drop all of the eight balls into my hat except the last one. I turn this one into a white silk then produce a candle from it. I reach under my lapel and pull the match out of the gimmick. It lights as it's suppose to but when I reach up to light the candle my hands are shaking so bad it takes me a few seconds to get it lit. I produce a second candle and when I try to light it off the first one my hands are shaking again. I try with all my might but for some reason my muscles just won't allow me to touch the tips of the candles together. I give up on it and move on to vanishing the candles. After they are gone I turn the silk into a cane. Produce a hat and take a little bow as the music does down. My audience gives a round of

applause but I don't feel I've really earned it. With the manipulation portion of my act finished I go onto the rest of my show.

The rest of the show is a series of routines that involve audience members to come up and assist me. By the time I got my first volunteer to come up and join me I started to feel a little better. My hands didn't seem to be shaking as much and I started to feel a little more confident. When this act was over and my volunteer was heading back to his seat while the audience gave us there applaud. I felt completely at ease. The rest of the show went on just as I had hoped it would for the last few months. It ended with a very generous applaud and I received many compliments after the show. They even booked me again for the following year.

Sound familiar to you? Maybe you've had a similar experience to the above true story that happened to me years ago. Yours might not have been as drastic as that but most performers get the shakes from time to time. I still get them but I've been performing long enough to have a little more confidence in myself now.

That's the key to overcoming nervousness. Notice I say "overcome" and not "get rid of" it. Even the most advanced performers can get a little nervous. If you don't believe that then ask your favorite magician if they've ever been nervous during or before a show. Most of them will smile at their own embarrassment as they tell the story of their horrifying memory. They smile because looking back we realize how funny some of the things were and how far we've come since then. The point is just about everyone goes through this at some point and most of us deal with it a number of times. We now have the confidence in ourselves because we've been up in front of an audience and succeeded. We know we can do it because we've already proven to ourselves that we can. It's not about proving it to others. It's about proving it to your self. But how can someone get that kind of confidence? The simple answer to that question is you have to keep trying until you find what works for you.

If you reread my story above you'll notice that the moment I started to do what I felt more comfortable doing I stopped feeling nervous. In my case it was the manipulation portion of the show that gave me trouble. I now know better than to open with a manipulation act because it isn't my strong point. I don't have the confidence in myself when doing that kind of act. If I really wanted to I could go out and try to build my confidence in that area but I come to realize that it's not my style. In a way I have done that because I have performed manipulation acts since then without getting too nervous. But I've found what works for me so I no longer do manipulation acts. It just doesn't fit me anymore. Someone else might feel more comfortable doing that manipulation act than an interactive act. It all depends on the individual.

I'm the best (Your name) performer in the world!

The above statement is what my mind says about myself when I feel the

nervousness build up inside of me. It doesn't state that I think I'm better than anyone else. I'm not even comparing myself to anyone else. I just need to feel that no one in the world can do what I do better than I can. No one can do the "Ron Jaxon" show but me. And I'm *** good at it!

This is the kind of mindset that will help you overcome that nervousness. Thinking about this isn't really enough. You have to really believe it's true. Some people have a hard time thinking of themselves this way because they feel they're putting others down in the process. They feel it's wrong to think that highly of themselves. But there's nothing wrong with having this kind of self-confidence. In fact it's actually quite healthy. If you can honestly feel this about yourself then you can literally accomplish anything.

Think of a performer you admire. Someone well known in the magic worlds that you've seen perform a number of times (live or on TV). As you watch them perform do you get the feeling that they have every bit of confidence in themselves? Can you even picture them nervous? Chances are it would be hard to imagine that because they never show nervousness. All they show is what they do best. Which is, of course, their act. They know they can do their act and they also know that no one can do their act better than they can. Some audience members might like someone else's act better than theirs but that someone else could never do their act better than they can. Know without a doubt that you have the ability to give your spectators the experience you've planned for them.

This all sounds too easy doesn't it? In truth it's not easy at all. It'll take some people, such as myself, years to reach this kind of self-confidence and I still struggle with it from time to time. I've performed on stage for a few hundred people and had no trouble at all. Yet I recently performed for a group of about 50 fourth grade kids and got the shakes. It's a constant struggle for some of us but it can be overcome. Don't let one experience hold you back. Use them to improve.

If you're really having a hard time with this then here are a few other suggestions.

Do what you know you can do.

Always start your show with something you've done many times before. Something you know you can do well and have succeeded with before.

Keep it simple

Don't start your show with things that require a lot of skill to pull off. I know that might seem like a short cut but if you try to open a show with something that's very hard to pull off then it'll add to the nervousness. My story above is a perfect example. As an inexperienced performer at the time I should have never opened a show with something so involved as the multiplying ball. If I had started the show with something that was a little easier for me then I might have been able to find my rhythm and timing and more importantly my confidence during that opening sequence and overcame my nervousness. You need to give yourself

time to do that.

- Move on from mistakes

The fear of making a mistake is what usually brings on the nervousness. Even when we aren't nervous a mistake can bring the nervousness on in full force. The best thing to do when a mistake occurs is to move on to something you know you are confident enough not to make another mistake on. Quite often audience members will forget about the mistake and maybe even think it was a planned one.

An extreme solution

This is a possible thing to try for those who have a very serious problem with nervousness. Why not build on your nervousness? Believe it or not this can actually help you overcome your nervousness. Just flat out tell your audience that you are nervous. Maybe even do an act based on it. I even know one guy who made a little gimmick that makes it look like he pee'd his pants. The simple fact that you tell them you're nervous will make them wonder if it's just part of the act. By the time they stop wondering you might not even be nervous anymore. Why not, we magicians are known for being "honest liars".

Observe you're arena

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=159104&forum=41>

When ever possible try to observe the arena you'll be performing in before a show. I'm not just talking about lighting conditions and angles. Those things should be examined and altered if needed but I'm more talking about the area you're performing in and the objects near by. With a little imagination you'll be surprised at the tricks you can come up with.

Let me give you some examples. Let's say your 'e performing in a room with a window near by and the window has curtains or blinds. What could you do with this? I've found myself in this situation and used the window for a sort of impromptu card through window. A had already planned on performing the card on ceiling in this show so before hand I stuck a card to the outside of the window. Now all I had to do was tell them I'll do the card on ceiling again but this time I change my mind at the last moment ands toss the deck at the window. They expected a card to be stuck to the curtain but instead I pulled it back and they see the card stuck to the outside of the window.

If you're in a restaurant look at the tables and see if there's anything there you can use. Will a playing card or bill fit inside that saltshaker? Could I use that paper place mat for a trick? Is this a smoking or non-smoking section (making it somewhat appropriate to do a trick with a cigarette)? How large are the ice cubes the restaurant uses? Can a card fit in them?

One time I was performing at someone's house for a super bowl party. They obviously have a lot of party's in this house or they where big poker players because they had a card table set up for me and there where a number of decks of cards on different shelf's in the room. So before the show I kind of hid all but one of them but one was in easy reach and visible to everyone in the room. I reversed one card and left that deck out to be easily found. During my show I forced a duplicate then I acted like I couldn't find my other deck of cards I needed. Someone saw the deck in the room and handed it to me. So it seemed like an impromptu trick.

I think it was in Mike Ammars where he talks about doing an outside show and there was a lemon tree near by with one lemon hanging lower then the others. So he was able to do a bill in lemon from a lemon just plucked off the tree by a spectator.

So examine your surroundings and see if it offers new possibilities.

Intentional Clumsiness

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=150281&forum=41>

Let me share an example of the point I want to make in this post. This example is from a movie many of you might have seen. The movie is the 1998 version of Houdini starring Johnathon Schaech.

There was a scene in the movie where he's performing magic in a bar and asks Bess to dance. When they start dancing Houdini was very clumsy. He was stepping on her feet and even fell on his butt. Then he got up to try again and all of the sudden he was a good dancer. This shocked Bess and I'd imagine the change was almost like magic to her.

That demonstrates what I mean by "Intentional Clumsiness." This can be a powerful tool in magic. Imagine seeing a magician who is so clumsy with a deck of cards they can barely shuffle them. All of the sudden he's able to make the four aces appear in a very visual way. This would be a lot more surprising then if the performer did a lot of fancy cuts and shuffles before producing the aces.

I'm not suggesting you should be clumsy all the time or to over do it. But I do suggest you keep it in mind that sometimes it's best to not do those fancy moves that demonstrate your skill and dexterity before certain tricks. It might actually be suppressing the strength of the effect you are performing. It might cause them to think, "After seeing what he can do I'm sot surprise he can do that too." On the other hand if the performer was a little clumsy they might think, "He can barely hold it. How the heck did he make that happen"?

So keep in mind that a clumsy moment isn't always a bad thing. Quite often you can use it to your advantage.

Did they really catch you? (Don't jump the gun)

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=149622&forum=41>

Let me share an example of the point I hope to make here. This example doesn't have much to do with magic but it illustrates the point pretty well.

I have a few other hobbies besides magic and one of them is playing pool (billiards). Brian is another regular at the place I play pool at quite often. I ran into Brian at a gas station not long ago and said hi to him. This happened to be on the day that we usually play pool so I asked him if he was going to be there that night. He looked at me kind of strangely and said, "Oh, I'm not Brian. I'm his brother Jon." I was amazed because they looked exactly alike. I found out they aren't twins because Jon is one year older but they look so much alike you'd think they were identical twins.

That night I went to play pool and Brian showed up and told me that his brother told him about me thinking he was Brian. That gave us an idea. We called Jon and asked him to come and play a joke on our friends. Brian went outside. They switched shirts and Jon came back in as if he was Brian. About 15 minutes went by then someone said Hi to Jon.

Here's where the point I want to make about magic comes in. Jon instantly thought he was caught. In other words he thought the person that said Hi to him knew he wasn't Brian so he called him back in. The truth of the matter is no one knew it wasn't Brian yet. They didn't realize a switch had taken place until they saw the two of them together. If he would have held out for a few more minutes who knows what would have happened.

This happens a lot in magic. Sometimes you'll think someone discovered your secret but they really didn't. This lesson really hit me when I did a watch steal. I saw the lady look down at her wrist and by the look on her face I thought she knew that I took her watch. In reality she was looking at her hand where the coin trick was supposed to be taking place. So I felt like I was caught and gave her the watch. She had no idea I took it.

Be careful not to jump the gun. Our minds can play tricks on us too. Sometimes people get a look on their face and we interpret it as if they saw what we didn't want them to see. This isn't always the case though. They might be responding to something else entirely.

I'm sure many of you experienced this kind of thing when you first started using a

thumb tip. You feel like they can see it but after a while you realize that they rarely do. So if you ever get this feeling I suggest you just keep going. If you feel like they saw the thumb tip then just keep performing until you know for sure. Don't anticipate that they will or your actions will probably display what you fear.

I hope I was able to explain this thought well enough. You'd be surprised how often you feel something went wrong but you're the only one who knew that.

Building false recollections (an important tool for magic)

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=143415&forum=41>

I'm sure this issue has been mentioned in many books but I feel it's such an important concept in magic that we should discuss it further.

To better explain this concept let me first share an example.

Let's say you run into someone who has seen you perform before. They introduce you to their friends and describe to them what they've seen you do. Let's say they are describing you performing the card on ceiling trick. Their description might go something like this.

He had me shuffle the cards and pick one. I signed the card, lost it in the deck and then shuffle them. Then he pointed up to the ceiling and my card was there.

Now compare that to what really happened.

He asked me to shuffle the cards. Then he took the deck from me and had me pick one. I signed the card then put it in the middle of the deck. He shuffled the cards some more then put a rubber band around the deck. Then he threw the deck up and when it hit the ceiling my card stayed on the ceiling. Then he caught the deck.

I hope you can see how different their recollection of the trick is from what really happened. In this example there are a couple of things that can cause them to mentally alter their memory of how the trick went. For example if the magician hadn't asked them to shuffle the cards prior to the trick then they wouldn't have remembered that they did. When they think back to that moment they'll remember that **they** shuffled the cards and because that was an actual physical action on their part there more likely to remember that they shuffled them but might not remember that the magician did too. There's a good chance that they will cancel that part out.

In the above example the person also forgot the part about the magician actually throwing the deck up. I'm not suggesting that everyone will forget that part but the

memory of seeing their card (with their name written on it) on the ceiling is a very unexpected and powerful memory. For some people it might be powerful enough to cancel out other parts of what really happened. So their memory basically boils down to this. I picked a card. Signed it and lost it in the deck. It appeared on the ceiling and it's still there! The rest of the event isn't always important enough for them to remember.

This concept can be very powerful. It quite often happens when we aren't even trying to give them a false recollection. I'm sure many of you have experienced someone describing something they saw you do and you know that it wasn't quite like they describe. But it is something you can keep in mind and use in a subtle way. For example you can give a very open display of your hands. Such an exaggerated display that they'll remember it. Do this **BEFORE YOU VANISH SOMETHING!**. What will this do to make the effect better? Well, maybe nothing at that moment but their recollection of that moment might include that open display and their mind might register that as happening after the vanish instead of before like it really was.

Another example just came to mind. I've had someone describe my performance of Kevin James's floating rose as making a real rose appear in mid air from a ball of fire and the real rose is what I made float. If you know the trick you know that it's actually a flash paper rose that floats and turned into a real rose. The real one never floats.

So this is a very powerful concept and it's worth putting some thought into. In most cases your spectators won't even notice them until they think back. And I feel the memory of what they witness is just as important as the moment it actually happens. In some cases it's even more important. The better their memory of you the better your chances of being invited back.

DON'T BECOME A CLONE

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=110820&forum=41>

One of the hardest things to be is an original. Especially when you are learning or inspired by another performer. In the beginning of your studies in magic it's impossible to know exactly what performing style you'll end up with. You'll be too busy learning how to do the sleights and tricks. But during this process of learning from others it's very easy to become a clone of the performers you learn from. This doesn't just happen when learning magic. It happens in any area of life where you are adapting to something new. If you suddenly moved to a new area and made new friends, chances are you'll end up listening to the style of music your new friends listen to. You might start dressing like them and even start to talk like them. So the point is it's kind of natural to adjust to your new surroundings. But eventually you'll have to develop yourself and an individual

and set yourself apart from your new surroundings.

This will also happen in magic and the sooner you realize this the better your chances of being original. In the beginning you're just "learning to crawl" so to speak. Learning all the tricks you see that you don't know how to do. You'll learn that trick or move and without realizing it you'll not only duplicate the moves as it was taught to you. You'll also duplicate the patten they used. The style they performed and you might even talk and move like that other performer who you learned it from. You won't realize you are doing this. You'll feel you are doing it exactly how it's suppose to be done because the person who taught you did it this way. You might not yet have the experience or knowledge to understand what makes the trick work and what is just part of the performing style. When you've gained more experience you'll have a better understanding of what is right for you and how you can bring a little more of your personal style of performing to whatever you do.

THE DAVID CLONES (Street magic and Copperfield)

I'm not knocking Blaine or Copperfield at all by that comment. In fact I think it's great that their specials have shown many people a different side of magic. Many people still saw magic as the guy pulling rabbits out of the hat for kids before David Blaine, David Copperfield, Mark Wilson and other publicly known magicians showed a different side on TV. But there are far to many Blaine Clones out there today.

Search the web and you'll discover that site that use to have sections on "close up" magic now call that section "Street Magic". You'll see a guy wearing a black t-shirt squatting down with a deck of cards in his hand posing very similar to Blaine. The truth is modern street magic is not street magic at all. It's more like a fad. Every trick Blaine did on his TV specials would have been called Close up magic before he did it on TV and titled the show "Street Magic".

I know this might make a few people mad because they are so proud to call themselves street magicians. First let me say that there's nothing wrong with being a street magician. In fact it's one of the hardest arenas to present magic in because you really have to know how to not only attract and audience of people who are probably on their way to get somewhere as they walk down the street. You also have to hold them there long enough to see the show.

Now I ask you. If you call yourself a street magician, are you really working the streets? Or are you just calling yourself that because you are performing the style that Blaine and other similar performers did on those TV specials?

Why do I seem to be putting Blaine and Street magic down? Really, I'm not trying to. I did enjoy his specials on TV so I'm not putting anyone down here. I'm just trying to show just how far this clone epidemic has gone. Blaine has his style of performing and now there are many others out there performing the same style. They aren't being original. They are being like someone else. Or you could say

they are a “clone” of him.

There are far too many David Copperfield clones out there in stage magic too. I can name a few who seem to be carbon copies of him. I'm sure you've seen them. When I see these acts I can just picture Copperfield sitting there watching it saying, “He looks, moves, dresses and talks just like me”. It's easy to want to be like him because he is a great performer. But there's a huge difference between being inspired by someone and wanting to **be** like them. It's okay to want to be like them in a way that's successful but to be exactly like him is impossible no matter how much some people try. Plus, he's a known performer. If someone else is acting, moving, talking, dressing and performing like him then their audiences will know who he's copying.

It's very hard to be original when you don't know enough to be your “performing” self yet. I know quite a few magicians in my area who are learning from Tony Gerard (The owner of the local magic shop) who are performing exactly like he does because he's the one who taught them quite a bit. I use to do be the same way. I use to talk like him, act like him and perform like him. But eventually I broke free of that and I now perform my own thing. Luckily Tony understood this and once I was advanced enough to find things that fit me a little better. He encouraged me to do those things. Whenever he saw, thought of or learned of a trick that he felt I might enjoy he'd point it out to me and this was a big help.

So make sure you aren't a clone of someone else. Don't worry about it too much if you haven't yet learned enough of the basics. You should learn the basic first because without it there's no way you'll know what will work for you or not. But really put some thought into it. If you were performing like someone else then why would anyone want you to perform for him or her when they could just get that other performer instead? Look at some of the most known magicians today. They all have something unique about them. Some of them admit that they aren't that advanced in magic in the technical aspect but they are still successful because they are unique. They won't call themselves a “Street magician” or a “Stage Magician”. Their shows will be titled “The (Name) show”. And that's a goal you should have for yourself. Perform things that fit your personality and if you don't yet have an original performing style then one of your goals will be to obtain one. Don't worry if nothing strikes you just yet. It took years for me to develop one but it eventually evolved into me.

That's the key to being original is to just get out there and perform. It doesn't matter if all the tricks you do are your own creation. How you perform is much more important than what you perform. You'll never know what works for you until you give things a try and let it evolve. It'll eventually happen so don't push it. Just entertain people and learn what works and what doesn't. Just don't try to be like anyone else in the process.

The importance of learning the basics

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=142166&forum=41>

The absolute worst thing you could do to yourself if you hope for any chance of success in magic is to skip the basics. Learning the basics of anything you're interested in doing is important because unless you know the basics you're unlikely to understand the more advanced aspects of that interest. A mechanic wouldn't be any good if he didn't know how to use the tools required to do the job. The same thing applies in magic yet there are so many out there who don't have the patience to learn the essential basics before moving onto the more interesting things.

Now I realize that what I consider basics might not be the same as what you'll need in your style of performing. But until you've developed your own performing style there's no way you can possibly know what you'll need to know later in your magic studies. So it might be a good idea to listen to those who are more experienced and consider giving their suggestions a try. So if it's card magic that seems to most interest you. Look up some card magicians and ask them what they feel are essential basic things you should know in that category of magic. For instance you might look for things written by a famous card magician. There's plenty of knowledge out there to be purchased and you must be willing to give a little to those who have shared their knowledge with the rest of us.

Now why is it so important to learn the basics when you can buy a trick and learn everything you need to know right from those instructions?

First of all, without knowing the basics you might not even understand the instructions to the trick you picked up. Most of them won't even explain how to do moves that are basic moves that every magician probably knows anyway. At least they all should know them. For example if a card trick requires you to do a top change. The instructions to that trick will probably just say, "Do a top change". It wouldn't describe how to do that move because if you've purchased that trick you should be advanced enough to know that move already. If you don't then you should probably go back and learn more of the basics before you purchase that trick. This doesn't mean you should return that trick or anything. It just means you should now purchase something that will teach you the required move. So you just put that trick away. Pick up the book that teaches how to do the move required (Top change in this example). Then once you've mastered that pull the trick back out and master it too. This is the one going process in magic that will never end and it's one of the aspects of magic I most enjoy. I'll always have something to learn and practice.

What if most magicians consider a move a basic move but I never have a use for it?

How do you know you'll never have a use for it? You never know what will happen during the course of a performance. If you're doing a card trick you could accidentally lose a break and you really have no idea where their card is. Someone could bump into you and knock the cards out of your hand. You could find the right card and the person could lie to you and say it's wrong even though you know they're lying. Just about anything is possible and your only chance to get out of that situation is to have options to choose from. The truth is it's usually a basic magic concept that will give you the most options.

As for the example of accidentally losing the break and you really have no idea what card they selected or where it is in the deck. What could you do if this ever happened to you? I'll share a few examples on this later but it's the kind of think mode you need to put yourself in. When something goes wrong figure out what you'd do if that happened again and the next time you'll be prepared for it.

A true story:

I watched a magician performing a show in a local mall. He was doing a silk routine where silks kept magically changing colors. Although the act was pretty much like most silk acts I've ever seen he was doing all the moves pretty well. No major mistakes happened until he accidentally dropped his dye tube on the floor. What did he do when this happened? He picked the dye tube up off the floor. Held it up so everyone got a good look at it and said, "Well, now you know how that's done don't you".

That was absolutely the worse thing he could have done in this situation. I understand that at the time he had to think quick but if he had more knowledge of the basics he would have been able to think of many other things he could have done at that moment.

After the show I talked to the guy. I was nice to him of course and told him that he did a good job because he really did except this one mistake. When I gave him a few suggestions of what to do in case that ever happened again he replied that he didn't know anything else other than what was in that act.

I felt this was ridiculous. Here's a guy doing silk magic but he doesn't know how to vanish anything (Which is something he could have done to the dye tube). He didn't know how to do any other tricks with a silk unless he had that dye tube (He could have just kicked the dye tube away and did something else with the silk).

So as you can see, if he had learned the basics he would have had many options to choose from when that unexpected thing happened. But because he skipped the basics and only learned the one routine with those objects he was stuck and couldn't think of anything better to do at that moment.

Some Basic moves to learn

As I said before, there's no way I can give you a list of all the basic things you should learn because I have no idea what your interests are. But the big question is. Do you know what they are yet? I'll tell you that I've been doing magic for years and I still learn things that other magicians felt were basic tricks to them. So what I'm going to do is make a list of moves and tricks that I feel are essential for anyone who is fairly new to magic and plans to perform on a regular basis. I'll try to break them down into categories but you'll find that most of these that I consider basics mainly apply to close up or parlor magic. Also note that there are many variations of some of these moves. I'll only make mention of the basic move here. Which version of the move you learn will depend on the source you learn it from.

CARD MAGIC

- Top Change
- Double Lift (Or turn over)
- Second Deal
- Elmsley count
- Bottom Deal
- Tilt move
- Alignment Move
- Classic Palm
- Top Palm
- Bottom Palm
- Side Steal
- One handed Cut
(Needed for some locator card methods)
- A Pass (Quite a variety)
- Half Pass
(Single card or Packet of cards)
- Two card Push off
- A variety of forces including a classic force

COIN MAGIC

- Finger Palm
- Classic Palm
- Thumb Palm

- Back Palm
- Goshman Pinch
- Downs Palm
- French Drop
- Visual Retention Vanish
- Shuttle Pass
- Classic Palm Pass/vanish
- Thumb palm pass/vanish
- Inertia pass
- Spell bound moves
- Gallo Pitch

Above list is incomplete. They are just the moves that came to mind as I was writing.

Don't be afraid to turn down shows if they don't fit you.

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=141750&forum=41>

There is a lot of discussion among magician about how to get magic shows/gigs. Where to perform and what venues are good for magic. But there's a flip side to that topic that I rarely see discussed and I think it's just as important. That's when not to perform and when to turn down shows.

Why would you want to turn down a show? Well, there are the obvious reasons of schedule and location. But there also other reasons you might turn down a gig when it's offered to you. Let me share a few of them but I'm sure there are many others.

Your show doesn't fit the venue

No matter how good of a performer you are there will be certain venues that won't fit your performing style. For example a magician that uses a lot of fire probably shouldn't take a gig if it's in a school for kids. If kids shows are your specialty then you should probably turn down that corporate dinner unless they are hiring you to perform for kids there.

An example I saw some years ago was at a local mall. They had a show in the mall with jugglers, puppet shows and a magician. The magician started out with a little manipulation act and I thought he did a pretty good job. There was a pretty good-sized crowd watching him. Then when he started talking it was obvious that he was a gospel magician. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that but the crowd quickly started to shrink as people walked away. The point being that he was performing a show that didn't fit the venue. It's too bad because he was doing a good job.

Age groups

Similar to the last one, you should consider the age group you'll be performing for. If you do a lot of magic that kids won't understand or isn't appropriate for kids then it would probably be best to turn that show down. It's the same for adults. If the group that wants to hire you is a group of adults who happen to enjoy adult humor then they won't be to entertained by your stratosphere and balloon animals.

There are many other reasons and I'll share more that come to mind. I hope some of you might share your thoughts on this as well for we've all had different experiences.

Now it's not a matter of you not being able to work in a variety of venues. For example I can do a pretty good kids show but it's not my best arena. If I'm asked to do a kids show and I don't think I'd be the best magician for the job I'd usually refer them to another magician I know in my area who does a much better kids show than I do.

The reason I think this is so important to think about is that if you perform in a situation that isn't right for you then your show will less likely be received as your best performance. You can perform what fits you for the right audience in the right venue and they'll enjoy your show much more than one that doesn't fit you. This can be harmful to your reputation on the long run. Someone might have seen your show for an audience that wasn't quite right for you and give a bad review to others who might ask about your work. On the other hand the right situation will probably bring you a much better review.

So if you're ever asked to perform in a situation you're not accustomed to then think about if you should take that job or not.

A no sleight/no gimmick vanish (many lessons to learn from it)

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=138122&forum=41>

Before I get into a method of vanishing a small object that uses no sleight of hand and no gimmicks. Let me first explain why I'm writing about this.

First of all I don't expect anyone to use this trick on a regular basis. One could if they wished to but that's not the reason I'm writing about it. I'm going to go over this method because it helps teach a valuable lesson that I learned a long time ago in my magic studies. The point is this:

The methods you use to create your magic is really the least important thing. Magic wouldn't exist without the methods but without the skill this "no sleight/no

gimmick" method employs your magic won't be very successful. No matter how many sleights you know. No matter how many gimmicks you use. Unless you know how to present what you are doing then your reaction will be limited.

Let's go over the no sleight/no gimmick vanish of a small object.

EFFECT

A small object such as a coin vanishes. The coin can then be produced from anywhere the magician desires.

METHOD

Display a coin in your right hand. Then you must talk to your spectator about something that has nothing to do with the coin in your hand. As you talk to them casually lower your right hand to your side as you address some other issue. Let me give you an example of something else to call their attention to. Ask them if they are right or left handed. Now all attention is on them and not on you or your hands. Whatever their answer is have them hold that hand out. Now lift your left hand up in front of them as if it's holding the coin (The coin is really palmed in your right hand). As long as you "act" like the coin is in your left hand then no one will question if it's really there or not. Close your left hand around the "coin" (There's really nothing there) and have them hold your fist with the hand they are holding up (Now they understand why you asked what handed they are). Tell them to hold your fist so there is no way you can do anything to the coin in that hand. If you wish you can go to your pocket for a magic wand at this point and ditch the coin in your pocket.

You tell them that the coin is now gone. They let go and you slowly open your hand to show there's nothing there. If you used the wand you can put it back in your pocket, steal back the coin and produce it from anywhere you wish.

I know. Kind of boring huh? But it demonstrates the point I want to make perfectly. Your sleights and gimmicks are only other methods of doing what I just described. The method of the trick I just described is simply acting. It's

presentation and it makes use of the fact that your spectators only know what you "show" them to be true. Your actions speak much louder than your words. If I were to do the above trick but say, "There's a coin in my hand" then they would probably want to see it. But I never said there was a coin in my hand. Instead, my actions suggested there was. The only time I made any mention of a coin being in my hand was after the coin was already gone and they were holding my hand closed. Now their concentration is on not letting me do anything to the coin in my hand (The coin that is already not there).

This trick is nothing new. The principle of distracting their attention so they don't remember the location of an object is used in many tricks. I know of a few card forces and deck switches that use this kind of method.

One very common mistake magicians make is that they try so hard to prove things are genuine that in the process they actually feed their spectators a possible method. For example one might state that they are using a normal deck of cards. That statement alone tells the spectators that there is such a thing as an abnormal deck of cards. They might not even think of that possibility if you hadn't brought it up.

So remember that your actions speak more clearly than your words or even your hands. Continue to master the tricks you decide to do but just remember that the method of that trick is only a tool. You have to be able to present it as if it was magic or it'll continue to be just a trick. You won't believe how much this will cut down on spectators treating your magic as a challenge and be more willing to just enjoy it.

When in doubt the above no sleight/no gimmick vanish can be used as a reminder of how effective acting and presentation can be on a spectator.

Feed me (See more) feed me

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=134998&forum=41>

Yea, I stole the line from the play "Little Shop of Horrors" but notice I spelled it (See more) instead of (Seymour). I'm talking about those spectators we sometimes get in close up magic that keeps asking you to do more and more magic for them. Get it? **Feed me more!**, I want to **See more!**

OK enough of the cute title. I'm just glad I thought of it.. lol

Anyway, when should you draw the line? If you've done a 5 or 10 minute set for a group at a table and your ready to move onto another group. Hopefully you see one that's waiting for you to join them. How long should you spend with this group that keeps asking for more? An even more important question is why do they want more?

It would seem that they want more because they are enjoying what you are doing. Quite often this will indeed be their reason but not always. Sometimes they want another chance to "catch" you at something. Their request to see more will be more like, "Wait a minute. I didn't catch that one but do another one and I'll bet I can catch you."

One could argue, and I'm sure someone will in this discussion, that if you are entertaining then they won't worry about the method and just enjoy your show. That you have to be in more control of your spectators and if they feel it's a challenge then you must not be presenting yourself well. Reading a statement like that makes a lot of sense. If we truly entertain then them they should be worrying about if you "fooled" them or not. Unfortunately I live in the real world where statements like that doesn't always apply. Especially in close up where the spectator's personality is a big part of the equation.

So in the real world we have to deal with different personalities and atmospheres. Some people see magic as a challenge and we try our best to get past that state of mind. But it's not always possible. So we have to be able to recognize what I see as a "lost cause" and know when to leave them. I wish I had one solid piece of advice on this matter. Of knowing when someone is truly enjoying what you are doing and want to see more or when they just want another change to "catch you." The truth is there is no solid way of dealing with it. You have to develop an instinct and you can only do that with experience.

I urge you to leave a group when you feel it's time to leave. With experience you'll know when it's time. Just because they want more doesn't mean you should give them more. Quite often we tend to start doing our less impressive or entertaining routines if we stay too long. Some say to always leave them wanting more. I agree with this but not entirely. I feel you should leave them happy and satisfied. Leave them wanting to see you again but not always wanting to see more right now. Leaving them wanting to talk about you and what you did. Leave them wanting to come back next time and bring more friends with them.

When I have a group that really seems to be enjoying it and when I feel it's time to leave they ask for more. I might say something like this.

"You guys have been great. I have one more thing I usually only do for special occasions. You guys have been so great I'll do it for you before I go."

Phases of Magic Study

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=129171&forum=41>

I'm sure all of us magicians go through different phases as we learn the art. I don't mean phases as far as how well you perform. I mean phases at how we think about magic. Let me share some examples of some of the phases I went through. I hope others will share some of theirs too. What I hope to gain from this is to let others who may be going through some of these phases to know that they can move forward. Some phases are good and some aren't so good but most of them are natural.

The new to magic phase

This is the very beginning and sometimes I wish I could go back to this phase. It's when everything was new and the simplest tricks were amazing to me.

Learning phase

This is when you'd make as many trips you can to the magic shop if you have one in your area. During this phase I started doing tricks for friends and family and getting great reactions from them.

Feel like a Pro

Because I was getting such good reactions from the tricks I knew I started to feel like I was a pro. People I performed for told me they felt I was too. I felt like I knew it all and no magician would be able to fool me. I felt that if I saw any magician do a trick I would know how it's done right away.

The wake up call

This is the phase when I realized just how little I really knew. I'd go to magic conventions or club meetings and see these other magicians, especially the old timers, do things that just blew me away. I felt like a beginner again.

The really amazing thing was that they were even blowing me away with things I already knew. This is when I learned that all these people who were giving me approval and telling me I'm the best they've ever seen weren't really reacting to me. They were reacting to the tricks but not to me. In other words I knew how to do some tricks but I didn't know Jack about being an entertainer. So I learned that I have to learn how to not let the tricks do all the work. I want them to remember me not just what I did.

Life changes

I went through a phase for about 2 years where I hardly practice, performed or even thought about magic. Other parts of my life needed more attention than so it just kind of got put aside. The lesson I learned from this phase is that although I love magic. It's not the only part of my life. I have plenty of time to do magic. What I needed to do was set my life up so I'd have time to put into magic without sacrificing the rest of my life (such as family).

Re-inspired (That may not be a word. 😊)

This is just when I was inspired to start performing again. For me it was just a gathering of friends and I did a few tricks. This inspired me to pull out some of the props I haven't used in a long time. The next thing I know I have the magic bug again.

Getting some recognition

I started performing again but now I didn't really worry about things as much. I performed for the enjoyment of it. Where before I was too scared to perform for strangers or other magicians. Now I didn't worry about if they felt I was "good enough." I was enjoying the performing for the point of performing.

As a result I started to enter magic contests just to have fun. I ended up winning a few and some other magicians noticed me. It was about this time that I also happened to come up with a few original tricks of my own. After magicians saw me perform them they asked if it was mine. It was and I eventually ended up marketing them. Suddenly I have a name for myself and even though I don't feel like it. I'm one of the big boys that use to make me so nervous to perform for.

This is kind of shocking to me because sometimes I see some magicians point toward me and I catch a little of what they say. Things like, "That's the guy I was telling you about" or "He's the one who invented that trick." A lot of the times the magicians who are saying these things are magicians I've seen perform and admire. So it's a strange thing.

Almost like a newbie again

Above I said I kind of wish I could stay a newbie so I can have that feeling again. In a way I'm at that phase again now because I'm still learning. I'm learning how to be a better performer. I don't buy magic as much anymore because I have a better idea of what will work for me. So I spend more of my effort in thinking up or discovering different things that'll improve my acts. New tricks aren't what I crave anymore. New ways to entertain people is what I now look for. It's like an entirely different study and I get that feeling back again every time I find a new line to fit into one of the routines or a comedy bit that fits me.

There are more phases I can mention but this is a long post already. I'd love to hear the descriptions of some of your phases.

Keep the Newbie state of mind

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=127916&forum=41>

No matter how advanced you get in magic. No matter how far you go with it. You'll find that you'll have a big advantage if you remember what it was like in the beginning when you first started learning magic.

The first couple of years I started in magic my best tricks were vanishing a silk in a t-tip, a hot rod type effect, wonder blocks (royal magic) and a pull vanisher. I use to blow people away with these simple tricks and people who saw me do them thought of me as a professional magician. We magicians who are a little more advanced see these kinds of tricks as "beginner tricks." We sometimes even feel we shouldn't do them anymore because we'd feel like we're not doing our best material. Those old tricks we learned when we first started are so boring to us now that we start to feel that people will see us as beginners or unprofessional if we do them.

The truth is these old simple tricks will blow peoples minds now just like it did when we first started. They are new and original to those who aren't magicians. That's why I still carry those old tricks in my case and I still perform them from time to time.

It's easy to get caught up in the latest and hottest tricks that are available. Our spectators wouldn't know an old trick from a new one unless it's one of the few that are commonly known such as pulling a rabbit out of a hat.

In this section of the board there are a lot of people who are new to magic. I'm sure you feel that thrill when you see a trick you've never seen before and find out you can learn to do it yourself by simply purchasing it. After you pick it up and learn it you'll go out and perform it for people. I'm sure you'll get a great reaction from it if you present it well and have truly mastered it. But I'd bet you can get the same reaction from a simple trick too.

My point is that when you see something new you get excited. You want to be able to do it and give other people that feeling. After a while that trick that you were so successful with ends up collecting dust because you feel you've moved past that trick. Try not to think like that though. If it works and gets a great reaction then keep it. Go back to it from time to time. With this you'll learn that the tricks you perform aren't as important as how well you perform it. If you keep performing a trick for a long time you'll only get better at that trick.

So hang on to those things that work. You may not use them all the time but keep them in mind. Go back to them and remember what it was like when everything was new to you. After all, it's all new to your spectators too.

It's an Attitude not an Action

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=123492&forum=41>

This is just something that I thought about not long ago during a discussion with some other magicians. I thought I'd share my thoughts on the topic. I'm sure not everyone will agree with everything I say here but here it goes.

Many magicians have different points of view on the matter of the "right and wrong" way to present different types of effects. Some argue that you shouldn't do flourish moves because they are showing off. Some argue that we should mislead people to believe that our magic is real (as in supernatural powers).

Most of the things I've discussed or read have their points but I think it all boils down to this.

It's an Attitude not an Action.

For example I could do a bunch of fancy flourish moves with a deck of cards with the attitude that I'm showing how much better I am than my spectators are. Then this would be rude and what I'd consider "showing off." However, those fancy moves can also be presented in ways that doesn't insult anyone in anyway. It could be a display of skill or just a neat looking display. It's the attitude of the performer that makes the difference.

Now we come to another popular argument among magicians. Is it right to let people believe we really did what they saw us do? Is it okay to let them believe we really did magic? I believe it is okay to let them think that. We can even try to get them to believe that. But it would be wrong in my opinion to take advantage of that belief. To use that to make them laugh or feel amazed is something I feel we all hope to give people. To give them a little taste of their childhood when Santa existed and magic was real. I don't feel this is wrong. Do we want them to believe that object really did defy gravity or do we want them to know we used some trick to make it look like we did? Do we want them to believe it really appeared or disappeared from thin air or do we want them to know that we used sleight of hand? Of course we want them to believe it's real.

The only time this is a problem is if the performer has an "attitude" about it and uses it to either make them believe we can make them do things against their will or to use it to take something from them (physical object or otherwise).

So I think most of these "Do's and Don'ts" are a matter of the attitude of the performer over the actual actions.

Your Ultimate goal (Be remembered)

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=120483&forum=41>

Like all the advice I try to share here on the Café. I do so in hopes that all of you who are new to magic will consider these things as you strive to be an entertainer. I know I had some magician friends who let me in on things they've learned from their experiences. Sometimes I listened to them. Other times I disagreed and later found out they were right the hard way. When I first started

the "Internet" was a word hardly anyone knew about. It would seem a waist to not use it to pass on the advice I've learned (The easy and hard way) when it can reach so many people at once. I'm not preaching here. 😊 I'm only hoping that other more experienced magicians here on the Café can use this tool to pass on some of things they've learned as well.

Anyway, back to the real topic of this post. This isn't something you need to learn. It's something you need to realize. Here it is.

If you truly entertain someone they will remember you forever!

Do you think that is going a little overboard? It might seem that way but I believe it's the absolute truth. I'm not saying that people will think of you ever day, but they will remember you if you managed to affected them in some way.

I think understanding this is very important as an entertainer. The fact is that what you do lasts a lot longer then the time period of your performance. Your show may have lasted for 20 minutes but the audience members will remember you for 50 years if you do a good job. Not only will the memory of you hold in time. It can also be shared with others.

See if you can image the following happening. You performed a good show. Let's say it's close up magic and you performed the coin in bottle. Could you imagine one of your spectators telling someone else about what you did with that coin and that bottle 50 years from now if the topic of "A magician" came up? Let me tell you that it most definitely can happen if you truly amazed and entertained them. They'll say, "I once saw a magician _____!".

All this came to mind today because last night I was out with some friends and the waitress (Who knew me) told me that there where some people there from Germany and wondered if I'd show them a few things. I did so and it was a blast. When things like this happen it makes you realize that now there are going to be some people in Germany talking about me. They had pictures of me to prove to their friends back home what they saw me do and they got my card to visit my website.

Now, there are a lot of other reasons this is so important to realize. Because you should consider what you want to be remembered for. Understanding that what you do now will effect a memory or story about you later is a very important thing and it forces you to think about it ahead of time. As a result you'll be more likely to polish everything you perform.

So think about what will give people a memory of you and what that memory will be like. This alone can be a good guide and goal in your magic.

Get the most out of each trick.

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=115450&forum=41>

If you're like me you perform some tricks that require you to stock up on certain props in order to perform them. For example if you perform the floating rose you'll need some flash paper. You might lose your sponge balls so you need to pick some up from time to time to replace what you lost.

I was recently booked to do a show at the last minute. They contacted me the day before the event they wanted me to perform in. They knew it was short notice so they doubted I would do it but they were very nice when they asked and I didn't have any plans. So I took the job.

I had some problems getting the props I needed for this show. No place in the area had flash paper, I do an act with balloons and the area was dry of them as well. I basically couldn't do some of my strongest acts because I didn't have the props to do them. So I had to work out an act with what I had to fill a half hour platform show.

I figured I'd share the solution to this kind of problem because some of you might find yourself in a similar situation someday. Not only that, this lesson will help with every show you do.

The solution is actually pretty simple. What you need to do is get the most out of every routine you perform. Stretch it by making it more entertaining and interactive. Every trick or routine can have more flesh added to it. Your attitude and presentation alone can turn a 5-minute trick into a 10-minute one by interacting with your audience and adding a few "Bits of business" here and there.

Let me share an example of what I mean by getting the most out each trick. I'll use a commonly known trick to help explain.

EFFECT:

The magician pulls out a deck of cards and announces that in this deck he made a prediction by reversing one card. A spectator is asked to name any card in the deck. They name the 3 of hearts. So the magician removes the deck from the box and looks for the reversed card. It's found to be the 3 of hearts.

I'm sure you all this is describing the Invisible Pack. The trick as described above is actually a very strong trick as it is. But it can be stretched into so much more with a different presentation and a few bits of entertainment thrown in.

Here's another way to present that same trick. Many magicians use this presentation and some of these lines.

EFFECT:

The magician displays an invisible deck in his hand (Hand is actually empty but mimes holding a deck of cards). A spectator is asked to catch the invisible deck. The spectator mimes this action.

The spectator is asked to shuffle the deck. When he starts to shuffle the magicians says, "Wait, you forgot to remove them from the box." The spectator mimes removing the deck from the box and starts to shuffle. He's then asked to have another audience member select a card from the invisible deck. When the card is selected the magician says, "Don't let me see the card."

The spectator is asked to put their card back in the deck upside down. Then they are asked to put the deck back in the box and toss them back to the magician. When the magician catches the deck they become visible (He produced a deck of cards).

A few more jokes can be made then the name of the selected card is announced. The magician removes the deck from the box. Finds the reversed card and it matches the one the spectator announced.

I know that effect is nothing new to most of you but it really demonstrates how a trick can be stretched. Instead of doing 10 tricks in a half hour show you can now fill that time with 3 or 4 good and entertaining routines.

Remember it's not the number of tricks you do that'll entertain your audiences. It's the entertainment value of the entire show that's more important.

There's another benefit of having fewer tricks in a show. If you think about any magic act you've seen. It doesn't matter if it's live or on TV. Only a hand full of the tricks they do really stick out in your memory of that act. They might have done 10 tricks but people will only talk about a few of them later. So if you only do 4 or 5 tricks in your act then they'll be more likely to remember your entire act and that's saying something.

Your goal on Special occasion shows.

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=115925&forum=41>

Last weekend I did a show for a Mother's day party. It was for a 72-year-old mother of 13 kids. A couple of the sons saw me perform somewhere and told their family about me. It turns out there mother loves magic so I was to be a "special gift" to her on mother's day. A couple of the daughters contacted me via Email and told me a lot about their mother and the family. Having read all these stories I realized that I have to put a special effort forward to make this as fun as "They hope it will be."

I'm going to show you the Email they sent me the day after I did the show. I'm not sharing this to get any approval from anyone here. I'm only sharing this in hopes that it'll inspire any of you who are fairly new to magic to do your best to give them what they are booking you to do. Sometimes they want a magician to just be another form of entertainment to pass the time of an event. Other times you are there as a sort of gift to the guest of honor. When you are a gift it's very important to give that person the best time you can give them. So let me show you this Email and then I want to point out a few things in it.

Quote:

Ron Jaxon, "YOU ARE AMAZING!!" I want to "Thank You"
so much for such a thrilling magic show that you
Performed for my family on Mother's Day! EVERYONE
had
such a wonderful time and the kids are now performing
Magic in their own homes! I had so many phone calls
from different members of the gang telling how much
Fun they had and I totally agree. You are not only
blessed with such amazing talent but you are also so
"Funny!" I kept looking through the crowd and watching
Everyone's faces and they were always laughing. My
Mom
cannot stop thanking me for getting a hold of you and
Scheduling the show for yesterday. She was so
exhausted from the thrill of the show that she went
home with such a big smile and went to bed early. You
made her so happy and that's what I wanted. "Thank
You
"for doing the special "fire" flower trick for her at

the end. When I asked my Mom what her favorite trick was she said, "I loved them ALL, he was so unbelievable!" Thank you for letting us tape your performance so we could show it to our oldest son who could not come until later. We are giving the tape to my Mom because she wants to "Show the World" how talented you are! You did yourself proud Ron and I thank you from the bottom of my Mother's day heart! I'm so proud of you and so glad that we finally got to meet. I can't "Thank You" enough for giving my Mom such a thrilling show and a new story for her to tell. "Thanks You" Ron Jaxon...You are Magic! Much appreciation. Paula Smith...the one who would NOT stop hugging you* Take Care*

Now the points I wanted to make are the fact that it was known why I was there. This was a party for there mother so that was the focus of my attention. As a mother of this large family I knew that if her kids and grand kids where having a good time then she would enjoy that too. So my show was for everyone at the party.

Then at the end of the party I did something "Special for their mother," in this case it was Kevin James Floating Rose. Now, I could have just included that trick in the show I did earlier but I saved that and presented it, "Special for the guest of honor." That's a simple technique you can do when you are performing in an even that has a guest of honor.

So I hope this illustrates how much you can affect a group or a person. You're not just there to do tricks for people. You're there to help make the event something to enjoy and remember.

Be ready for almost anything

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=112044&forum=41>

I feel this is something important to know when you are just starting to perform in public places. Especially if you're just starting to get paying gigs such as strolling a party or public event. In these performing arenas you really never know what's going to happen so you need to be as prepared as you can.

Imagine you're performing walk around magic at a bar, restaurant or maybe a public festival of some kind. You're just there to do close up magic for small

groups. All of the sudden a crowd gathers around when they see the reactions of the people you are performing for. The next thing you know the crowd is so big that if you continued to do the small close up tricks then many of the people wouldn't be able to see what you are doing. You now need to start doing a parlor type show.

Another thing that might happen someone in charge of the event comes up and asks if you'd like to do a show on the small platform stage they have there. Maybe there's a band and they ask if you can do something during the bands break. This has happened to me on many occasions.

What I'm getting at is the fact that you don't have to have large props to do magic on a stage. Small everyday objects that you probably use in your close up routines can also be used on stage. So it's a good idea to know some tricks with those props that can be seen by a larger audience. That way you'll be ready to perform for a larger group any time you are out performing.

I'm not suggesting that you should be ready to perform 24 hours a day. I'm only saying that when you are out to perform it's a good idea to be prepared for a large group as well as a small one.

Let me share a few examples of tricks I've done on stage at a moments notice to point out that you really don't need big props.

- Card on forehead
- Card in mouth
- Traveling cards
- Napkins over the head
- T&R napkin (Spectator to magician)
- Floating rose/cigarette/bill
- Balloon swallowing
- vanishing salt (T-tip)
- Bill in Lemon (Common object in bar)
- Change for a Dollar (With a bill)
- Sponge ball magic
- Rope magic

There are many more tricks that can be added to that list but I'll stop here. If you look at that list you'll see that all I'd need to do all those tricks is a deck of cards, a T-tip, a balloon, some rope and some sponge balls. The rest of the props can usually be found in a place where there are many people. All these tricks can be seen by a larger crowd so I'm always ready to do a parlor type show when I'm performing.

I also want to point out that I'm just suggesting that you go through with every

request you get. There's nothing wrong with saying that you don't want to perform up there on that stage. That should be your decision. If they paid you to do walk around magic then that's all you're obligated to do. However, I found it beneficial to be flexible because it looks more professional.

Just wanted to mention this to give you something to think about. There's no way you can be ready for anything but putting some thought into the "What if" can put the odds on your favor.

You've knocked them out. Give them time to recover.

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=108084&forum=41>

This is something that took me a long time to learn. So I thought I'd pass it along.

Let's say you perform a trick that almost always gets a great reaction. I'm talking about the super strong effects that just blows them away and they usually express just that.

Now, every once in a while you'll do that same effect for someone and they hardly react at all. No laugh, no surprised look on their face. They just sit there and act like nothing unusual happened at all.

Why would they do this? Well, there are many possibly reasons. Maybe your performance was a little off that day. Or maybe it's just the mindset of the spectator. But there's one reason that might happen more often than you think.

You might have shocked them so bad that they are still trying to work out their thoughts. They may not know what to think and they are trying to figure out who to react to what they just witnessed. You've just knocked them out and it might take them a few seconds to recover. Then they'll finally react to it.

Even when people do react right away they'll often react even more if they are given time to come to terms with what happened. So it's important to give them that pause. What's even more important is knowing when to give that pause. This is a hard thing to do sometimes because when we get a good reaction we tend to move onto the next phase of the trick to get that reaction again. But if you have a routine like this where each phase is a little stronger than the other. Try not to rush into the next phases too quickly. Allow them to react to one thing before moving to the next.

Sometimes when you give a pause you'll find that after a few seconds they'll start laughing or even applauding. I wish I could tell you how long to pause or when to do it but only experience will tell you that. All I can suggest is to keep it in mind when you perform. If there's a moment in an act that doesn't get the reaction you

think it should then try it there. See if it'll help. Eventually you'll be able to understand how to make better use of these little pauses in an act.

How long have you really been into magic?

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=95005&forum=41>

This is just something I thought about recently. More like a let peeve of mine. Let me see what you think of it.

It's just kind of funny to me that when someone asks another magician how long they've been practicing magic. They often add many years onto how long they've actually been practicing. For example I know one guy who has been practicing magic for a few years but he doesn't like to admit that. When someone asks he always says something like, "Since I was a kid" or "For about 12 years".

I know of many that are fairly new to magicians who do this. It's just strikes me as funny.

Let me explain why this annoys me a little. Imagine you saw someone do a classic of magic. One you know to be fairly difficult. For sake of discussion let's say they did a cups and balls routine. They did a good job and you where impressed. Maybe it wasn't the best you've ever seen but it was done very well.

Now, later you're in a conversation with that magician and you ask how long they've been into magic.

If there answer was something like 10 years. You might start to think, "He didn't do bad at all, but it could have been better. It seems like after 10 years he might be a little better at it then that. Well, maybe he's just kind of new to cups and balls".

On the other hand, if he said he's only been into magic for a couple of years, 6 months or some fairly short period of time. You might think, "Wow, only that long and he's already doing this good. I'm very impressed. Imagine how good he'll be in a few years. I'm going to keep an eye on this guy and I look forward to seeing how far he goes".

See the difference? I can understand a little about being around other magicians at a magic convention and wanting to feel like they're part of the crowd. I don't find the length of time they've been studying to have much of an effect on this though. When I'm hanging around at a magic gathering I want friendly people who share the same interest as I do. It doesn't matter how good or advanced they are.

I admit I fell into it too for a time while I was a teenager. Then I picked up a trick that takes a lot of practice. Went to my first magic club meeting a few weeks later

and they were impressed that I could do it already. So that made me realize that how long I've been a magician really isn't going to impress anyone.

When you get stuck. Take a break.

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=102186&forum=41>

This is just something I've learned from my years of practicing magic sleights. Maybe it'll help some of you when you get stuck on a move. It will happen a lot. Especially in the beginning.

Let me share a recent example that happened to me. There's a move in Paul Harris's Art of Astonishment books with two aces. Forgive me for not remembering the name of the move. I'm sure many of you know it so please fill us in if you read this.

Anyway, in the move you're holding the deck in one hand with a face up ace on top. And the other hand is holding a single ace face up. The move is that the two aces flip up and change places with each other. Like I said I'm sure many of you know this move and know it's not the easiest thing to master.

I tried for months and months to get it down when I first learned it from a Paul Harris video (Before the books came out). I just couldn't get it down. Every once in a while it would work but the move was far from mastered. The strange thing is this move isn't very useful. It's just a kind of neat looking flourish. That's not really my style but I still liked the move. Over the years since then I attempted it from time to time but never really pushed at it.

Then one day. Out of the blue. I tried it and I could do it! Not just once or twice. I can really do the move now. It's a shock when that happens too. "How in the heck can I do it so easily now?" That's what I felt like saying. Actually, I think I did say that out loud even though I was alone at the time and that really sucked. 😊

So if you're ever stuck on a move. Don't get discouraged. Push yourself but don't get discouraged. When you are getting mad you'll only make more mistakes and you'll never master it that way. Take a 5-minute break then try again. Take a day, week or even years away from it then come back from time to time. Most hard moves like this aren't very useful anyway so it won't change your life, but I understand the desire to master things.

Well, Maybe that little thought will be helpful to someone. It's sure helped me over the years. It doesn't just apply to magic of course.

Be aware of Bars. You could get sucked in
<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=96974&forum=41>

If you're at the age where you can start going to bars (21 here in the states). You might discover that some bars, clubs and restaurants are great to perform in. You might even get booked to do strolling in them. Not only that. They can be a great way to practice and get use to performing in different situations for all kinds of people.

I'd like to share a couple of warnings on this though. First of all, you can really get hooked on having that drink while you perform. It could even get to the point where you'll need that drink in order to get yourself psyched up to perform. In other words, you can in fact become an alcoholic. After all you are an addict when you "need" it.

How do I know this? I know because I got hooked into it. For me it was only in a bar though. If I was performing in a bar I needed that drink to get in the mood to perform. I didn't need it every time I performed. Only when I was in an atmosphere where everyone is drinking. This included private parties too. I'm not saying you can't have a drink and have a good time in casual performances. It's not a good idea to drink while you're being paid to perform though.

I still have a drink from time to time but I don't need it to perform and I'm more responsible about how much I drink. A perfect example is New Year's Eve that's coming up. I'll be performing at a big party. After this party I'll be going to another party at my friends house. This is the house I'll be sleeping in that night and I won't have a drink at all until I get there.

So be careful not to get hooked in the bar scene. The desire to perform in front of people is the drive in this case. After all, there are people in bars every night so you know you'll be able to find an audience.

Another warning about bars is something that's a little more obvious. That is that people can get pretty mean when they're drunk. An entertainer who is getting a lot of attention could unknowingly push the wrong buttons with a drunk and become a target of there anger. Especially if you barrow an object from such a person and the trick goes wrong. Borrow a ring from someone and accidentally drop it (perhaps because you yourself has had a few drinks) could really get rowdy.

So enjoy it but be careful and stay in control.

Multiple shows in one day (Be careful)

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=96028&forum=41>

This year at Halloween time I was booked for a gig at a theme (Scream) park. This was the kind of establishment that had many attractions going on and guests purchased tickets to each attraction.

My shows were only 10 to 15 minutes each depending on how full the audience was. That means that toward the end of the night when many of them have already left to go home and only a few people went to my show at the last minute I might spend a little more time with them.

Anyway, doing these many shows may seem exciting and at first it was. This run lasted for 2 weeks but after about the 10th show of the first day all the excitement was gone. I learned a few lessons doing this gig and I thought I'd share some of them here with you all.

You've got to do a good show of course but as strange as this may seem. It can't be too good. What I mean is that when I normally perform I put my all into it. I get into that zone and I don't always know what to expect. I often don't even know exactly what I'm going to do because my act relies mainly on audience participation. You never know what situation is going to arise so outside of knowing what tricks and routines you plan to do the rest is your relationship with your spectators.

When doing this many shows you lose that. You would literally exhaust yourself. You have to come up with an act that you can do over and over again. You have to be able to just run through it and you do this over and over and over again. So you have to be good but you can't be so good that you need to be in that zone. Unfortunately that "zone" is what usually brings on the best moments in a show.

You may ask why I wouldn't want to do my best show. Well, I did. I just had to regulate myself for the situation. What makes it work is that to each audience it is a new experience. It's just nothing new to me.

Your entire act must reset very quickly. I was learning as I went along at first but by the end of the first day my entire act was reset about 2 minutes after I was done with my last show.

If you're ever in this situation, don't do tricks that are physically demanding. Even something like the Zombie ball. If you performed that trick 10 to 15 times a night for 2 weeks believe me. Your forearm, fingers and hand will be hurting. I did my levitation and my legs and back were killing me.

Well, I just thought I'd share the lessons I learned from this experience.

When a beginner meets an Advanced Magician

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=95787&forum=41>

I remember what it's like. When I was fairly new to magic I would go to magic gatherings and feel so intimidated by these magicians who have been practicing for years. Especially those who I knew there work and maybe even owned a trick or book of theirs.

If they we're to ask me if I'd perform something for them. My reply was usually "Uh ah". 😊

When I finally got enough courage to do something for them I discovered something. I found out that if I did the trick well. It didn't matter if it was an original trick. It didn't matter if they knew how I did it and it didn't matter if it needed a little work.

Actually, the best moments I can remember of this kind of thing happening is when I did something that needed a little work and they nicely told me what I'd need to work on. They often showed me the right way. Even going as far as sitting there with me and walking me through it.

The last time I felt this feeling was at Abbott's Get together. Someone asked if I could do my coin routine for some people. I said sure so I followed him. There are the table was BlackStone, Jr. Jay Marshall, Bret Daniels, Abb Dickinson and Karrel Fox. I was like, "Why didn't you tell me?!!!" 😊 It went over great thought and we ended up talking for about a half hour about the routine.

If you are fairly new to magic and you are in a situation where you are performing for magicians. Have fun and do your best. Just don't worry about fooling them. They'll be impressed at your effort. You might even do something they've never seen before. We all learn from different sources so you just never know.

I just thought I'd bring this up. Try not to be intimidated. Admiring someone for a reason is great but remember, they still like magic too or they wouldn't be doing it.

“Hey, I’m good at Magic!”

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=94757&forum=41>

Have you said or thought that of yourself yet? Have you had a moment where you really felt, "Hey, I'm a good magician".

I'm sure you are and I hope you much success in it. It doesn't matter if you want to do this for a living or just as a hobby. Just remember to work hard yet keep it fun.

Now I must ask this. Why do you feel you're good at magic?

Is it because of the reactions you get?

If it is then that's a good thing. Be happy when you put a smile on some ones face or gave them a memorable moment.

Here's a little warning though. Don't let it get to your head. What I mean is just because they are amazed and liked what you showed them that doesn't mean actually ready for everything. It doesn't mean you now know it all and don't need to keep improving.

Remember, you may have been the best magician they ever saw. You also might have been the only magician they ever saw. Especially live and up close.

Is it because you worked hard to master a move? Went out and did it for someone and it worked perfectly?

Be proud of this accomplishment too. But why did they give it such a good reaction? Was it because of all the hard work you put into the move? I'm sure that does matter but they have no idea how hard you worked on it and they shouldn't know. The effect they experienced only lasted a moment. They are only reacting to the moment the object vanished, appeared, changed, levitated or moved.

Keep in mind that if you did the easiest trick out there. If you only vanished a silk with a T tip or something simple like that. That simple trick might be the greatest trick they've ever seen.

I'm not trying to discourage anyone here. I just remember a time when I kind of stopped going to magic conventions. Stopped looking for more information and stopped studying because I honestly felt I pretty much knew it all. Then I meet some other magicians who kept going and they showed me just how much I didn't know or haven't learned yet. I'm hoping you'll be able to avoid that. So be proud of your accomplishments but understand what it is you accomplished and keep improving.

An amazing thing will happen some day though. You'll suddenly feel you're very good at what you do. Not because of what anyone does or says. You won't be comparing yourself to anyone else. You'll just realize, "Hey, I'm good at this". You won't have much of a desire to tell anyone this when it really hits you. You just feel it and it's a great feeling. I cannot explain it though. It's a kind of self-realization. From then on you just want to improve. No matter what anyone else says.

The strange thing is this moment can also bring a feeling of fear. This I can't explain either. Not fear of anyone else. It's kind of a fear that you're not sure what to do next.

So you want to make a living doing magic huh?

<http://themagiccafe.com/forums/viewtopic.php?topic=91970&forum=41>

So, you've been a magician for quite some time. Or you haven't been doing magic all that long but you're getting great reactions and you're confident this is what you want to do with your life.

I'm very, very happy for you and I'm sure you're as good as your reputation with your spectators convey. I'm sure you're an excellent performer and I'm sure you have a mind to come up with great magic tricks that you can put on the market for other magicians to take advantage of.

I'm only writing this to warn you. I'm sure you'll reach your goals. No matter what they are. If you put your all into it I know you'll succeed. The warning I'm speaking of is this. Magic is a very, very hard thing to make a living at. The desire, or even the ability to succeed isn't really enough. Oh sure, there are a few out there who have hit the right buttons and had the good breaks to make a living at it, but those are exceptions.

Stardom is a very rare thing and it almost always has an element of luck involved. I remember watching the TV show "Inside the actors studio" (I love that show and I learn a lot from it). Whoopee Goldberg talked about the fact that if she happened to be at the laundry mat during the time she got the call to try out for the part in the movie "The color Purple". She wouldn't be known today as the Oscar winning actress she is. It was a moment of luck.

Why am I writing this now? I simply hope to warn others of making the same mistake I made. You see, I'm now 33 years old. When I was a teen-ager I had this dream and as it turned out, many people felt this dream of mine was something I had the tools to accomplish. I dreamed of being a professional magician. Not only making it locally but also I could be one of the greatest magicians in the world.

So I stopped caring about school. Who needs it? Schools don't have classes on sleight of hand. Or presentation skills or any skill I'd need to make it in the profession I so dreamed of making it in. I can learn these things out there in front of real people more than I could in a classroom. As a result of this line of thinking I dropped out of high school in the 11th grade. Can you believe that? Only one year to go and I quit.

Like I said. I'm now 33 years old. I have 3 tricks on the market now and magicians from all over the world are buying them from me. I'm a known magician now. I've done a few lectures and I'd love to do more of them. I've performed on TV, in front of audiences with a couple thousand people. Had people wait in line to get my autograph.

Guess what. I'm still struggling. The moments I mentioned above that seem like stardom are very rare moments. I still regret not having a high school diploma and almost everyday I find something I would have been better at if I would have finished my education.

I'm sharing all this in hopes that someone out there will read this who is in the same situation or the state of mind I was in those years ago when I stopped out of school. If I could talk to you in person right now I would break your arm if that's what it took to convince you to go as far as you can in school as you can get. There are no excuses.

The greatest thing is that magic is really the art of knowledge. The more you know about anything and everything the more options you have. I honestly can't think of anything. Knowledge or material, that can't be incorporated in magic. So know as much as you can about anything you can.

Make magic the icing on the cake. Go for it. Do the best you can. Take some chances. Just remember that even if you don't have kids or a spouse. You just might someday. They'll need to be taken care of and magic won't be a regular income for most of us. You just might hit it big, but that might not last forever. You also might want to retire someday. That's another issue that has to be faced early in life. So plan ahead.

I'm not trying to turn anyone from succeeding or from trying his or her best to succeed. Just be sure you think it out before trying to make a living at something very few are able to do.

And also remember to keep it fun.

I sincerely hope the advice and thoughts I've shared is helpful to someone. As always feel free to contact me with any question or comments.

Of course all this information is free to you. All one would have to do is do a search in themagiccafe.com message board and they can find all this information. Under the advice of some friends who encouraged me to put this E-book together, below you'll find a link to make a donation if you wish to do so. Of course all the thanks I really need is for you to think about the thoughts and advice found in this book and improve your own performances. I don't expect everyone to agree with all my thoughts and advices for we all have different ways of doing things. Either way I hope you found this entertaining and informative.

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