



-1MAGICAL HAPPENINGS

The following pages contain Idea Sheets about Magical Happenings. Use the space below to write down your ideas and resources for accomplishing these miracles with your students.

Ideas for teaching Magical Happenings:

Locally available Books, Videos, DVD's, about Magical Happenings:

Local Magicians and Other Experts to help in teaching Magical Happenings:

Resources:



WHAT ABOUT PATTER

From the files of T. J. Staab

Magicians generally accept the fact that except for performances done in pure pantomime, some patter should accompany their tricks. Whether the performance is close-up or stage, *good* patter is necessary. A great magician should have specific patter for their club and stage magic. Magicians must have entertaining patter to accompany their close-up magic. If not the impact of the magic suffers, and the performances appear to be unpolished. Without *good* patter the performance is indeed unpolished.

One or two close-up tricks might get by without patter because of their novelty, but as such, they are little more than puzzles and certainly do not entertain as fully as they might. As the number of tricks performed increases, patter becomes even more necessary. What is required is patter which will dramatize the trick. A mere verbal description by the performer will not suffice.

Memorization of patter can be used to great advantage. Any performer who says he doesn't memorize because he doesn't want his patter to become mechanical and stale, probably does a lousy job of presenting his magic. There are very few magicians today who do nearly enough performances to worry about their patter being stale. Those who do perform many shows, have very definite patter for each trick they do. Memorization is a big aid in giving a smooth and entertaining performance.

Assuming that a performer feels patter is necessary, where does he get it? The ideas for patter included in the instructions of some tricks will, in some cases, be useful. Just as the patter contained in patter books or in magic publications can be useful. On the whole however, they provide only a guideline for the individual magician. This is because the patter developed by one performer will only rarely be of use to another performer. If a magician wants to have *good* patter for their tricks, they will have to work it up and tailor it to their own style.

Considerable time and effort will be needed to arrive at a finished patter story for a trick, but it is time and effort well spent. A performer will find that several hours spent at that specific task of preparing patter will result in a story which will probably be better than one which might evolve over several years of performing a given trick or routine. Certainly the patter story developed by several hours work might change with use, but the basic story will likely be stronger and more coherent than one which just evolves.



Where to get ideas for patter? Newspaper, books and magazines are all excellent sources of facts, information and stories which can be used in patter stories. Your local public library will have many books which can serve as the basis for patter stories. Books of humorous anecdotes, Mother Goose stories, etc., might provide good background material. Books on witchcraft, ancient or oriental religions, and books on ESP, can provide great material to accompany mental tricks. For tricks with cards presented as gambling demonstrations, try reading information on western history. Use information which people feel are related to western gamblers. Some books are written to educate on spiritualism and psychic phenomena are good sources of information which can be applied to many uncanny stories to accompany the weird type of magic trick. The daily newspaper contains many facts applicable to patter stories. These items of a current event can be adapted to many tricks. You might also want to investigate books on geography, primitive tribal customs, and collections of fables.

Gather facts from all the sources and then determine how the facts can be applied to patter for some specific tricks. At times some short story article from a book or magazine might be applicable almost intact. Arrange your facts into a patter outline which you feel will fit the trick for which you're preparing it. Then try to do the effect at the same time using the patter. Some parts won't fit, others will require modification. New ideas will come to mind. Revise your patter scheme time and again until it fits both you and the trick.

Try to keep your patter so that it will be easily understood and easily believed. Believability can be achieved when your props, patter and actions are consistent. Avoid using a modern prop with a patter about an ancient wizard's trick. Use props and patter which seem to match. Writing patter takes time and requires real concentration. However, once prepared, and committed to memory, it will make performances more effective and entertaining.



THE ART OF MISDIRECTION

From the files of T. J. Staab

Every trick has a secret that makes it work. To keep the audience from seeing the secret or finding the weak point in the trick, you must use the art of misdirection.

The key to misdirection is in learning to control the audiences attention.

The audience will pay attention to what moves, and what makes noise.
What doesn't move or make noise will not attract attention.

The audience will always look where the magician looks.
The magician must never look at what he wishes to conceal.

The audience will treat something important if the magician treats it as important.
The magician should always treat what is important as if it were unimportant.
Likewise, the magician should treat what is unimportant as if it were important.

The methods of misdirection are accomplished by psychological control of "Faulty Perception." People cannot observe everything. They watch for what they consider to be important. By using distraction, disguise, concealment, and pretense the audience will pay attention to what is unimportant.

DISTRACTION

The method of creating new interests or surprises to lead the audiences attention away from seeing the secret or weak points.

DISGUISE

The method of making an apparatus or move appear ordinary so as not to attract the attention of the audience.

CONCEALMENT

The method of covering a particular move or the placement of an object from the view of the audience.

PRETENSE

The method of deceiving the audience as to accepting what you say and do as being important or unimportant.



IMPROVISATIONAL MAGIC

From the files of Ed Shuman

Improvisational Magic is using something that belongs to the person you are performing for. People don't care if you vanish and reproduce your own coin. However, if you vanish something that belongs to them, they do care about you being able to bring it back! They also know it could not have been gimmicked in some way to make it easier for you. When you can perform without warning using objects found in the environment, the image created is that you really can perform magic without relying on props that do the magic for you. You can create a presentation perfectly suited to that unique situation.

So how do you develop the ability to perform improvisational magic? Preparation, Practice, and Play!

You need to make the commitment to develop the skill required to do this type of performance. You can't do it on the spur of the moment. You need to learn how to improvise. A good place to start is by joining a group that does improvisational exercises, also known as theater games. If there isn't a group near you, find books on theater games to help you.

You also need to start incorporating moments of improvisation into your performances. Ultimately, you learn to perform improvisation by performing improvisation. Your audiences will help you find what works. Do not become too "artsy", connect to a real audience.

As you develop improve skills, you also need to develop your skill at basic sleight of hand. That means you must practice a sleight enough times so that you can do it automatically without thinking. Practice a sleight while watching TV, this will develop "muscle memory" so your hands do the right thing while your attention is someplace else.

Practice fun stuff! You need to be playful during your practice. Look around the house and find funny things to vanish or do a magic trick with. Every place you go, look at the drink cup, napkin, table salt, cat, Hotwheels or whatever you could find in any environment you might perform. See what you can do magical with that item, at that time. Make it fun and playful. The more you practice magic with impromptu items, the more you will find items to do improvisational magic with.

You must develop a playful attitude during performance. Your job is to create a playful atmosphere and invite the audience to play along. Interact with the people in the audience and with things in the environment. Take advantage of what is there. Stay in control and keep safety in mind. Don't attempt anything with objects that could be hazardous or fragile.

Develop a good skills foundation based on preparation and playful practice and then build on that with improvisation during performance.



WORDS USED BY MAGICIANS

Act: The group of magic effects performed in a special order for an audience.

Apparatus: The equipment used in an act.

Back of the card: The pattern side of a card.

Clean: When the magic is over and the apparatus or prop can be examined without giving away the secrets.

Close-Up: Magic performed with small groups where much of it happens in other people's hands.

Confederate: A member of the audience who secretly helps the magician.

Court Card: Picture cards in the deck. (Jacks, Queens, Kings)

Cut the deck: To remove a top portion of cards and place them next to the bottom portion of the deck. (To **Complete the Cut** is to place the bottom portion onto the top portion which had been "**Cut off**".)

Ditch: Secretly getting rid of an object.

Effect: What the audience member "sees" to happen in a trick.

Face: The front of the card where its value is printed.

False Shuffle: The action of a shuffle that looks to the audience as real, but does not change the order of the deck.

Feke: Usually a black colored piece of cardboard or cloth which hides an object to be produced later.

Force: To cause an audience member to do what you want them to do without their realizing you have made their choice for them.

Glimpse: To secretly look at an object or card without letting the audience realize you have seen it.

Gimmick: A device that is hidden from the audience that helps make the effect work.

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Indices: The numbers, letters, or pips in the corners on the faces of playing cards.

Kicker: An extra surprise at the end of an effect or routine.



Misdirection: The action of directing an audiences attention away from how or where the trickery is happening and where the moves are made.

Move: The secret action which achieves the final effect.

Out: The path a magician takes that diverts audience awareness that something has gone wrong.

Pack: A deck of playing cards or putting equipment back into the carrying case after the show.

Packet: A small group of cards. (3 to 15)

Parlor Magic: A magic show using props for a small to medium size audience.

Pasteboard: A term some magicians use in describing a card.

Patter: The words used to accompany the presentation of a magic effect.

Presentation: The actual performance of a magical effect.

Props: The items or materials used in presenting magic.

Self-Working Trick: An effect that needs little skill or sleight of hand.

Sleight: The secret move which achieves a magic effect.

Sleeve: The act of throwing an object secretly into your sleeve.

Stage Magic: Magical effects that use props big enough to be seen by a large audience.

Sucker Effect: A routine where the audience believes they know how an effect is accomplished and then it is revealed to them that it was not.

Vanish: When an object is caused to disappear.

Volunteer: A member of the audience who assists the magician with an effect.