



-1 PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

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

Ideas for teaching Performance Guidelines:

Locally available Books, Videos, DVD's, about Performance Guidelines:

Local Magicians and Other Experts to help in teaching Performance Guidelines:

Resources:



THOUGHTS ON THE ART OF MAGIC

By T. J. Staab

STYLE:

The difference between a good magician and a mediocre one is the individual expression of their style. Style is merely your presentation plus the way you project your personality across to the audience.

PATTER:

Patter can be summed up with four components: Individual expression, directness, clarity, and briefness. Put some freshness and sparkle into your patter, and you can be sure to please your audience. The best way to put sparkle into your patter is by the use of simple but well-spoken phrases, and by avoiding clichés that have lost their glitter through over-use.

SHOWMANSHIP:

Showmanship is hard to define. It is comprised of many things, the sum of which equals your personality. When you perform, your personality must shine through a harmonious blending of patter, presentation, and style. In short, you must acquire the ability to make friends and influence people during the short time you are presenting your program. Howard Thurston once said, "Big beautiful illusions and pretty scenery are certainly pleasing to the eye, but a trick is just so much brass, paint, chrome, and wood. It can only live through a personality."

IMITATION:

Never set out to copy another magician's style. Imitation will not only suppress your own personality, but it will inevitably create a feeling of insecurity that will be reflected in your performance.

UNNATURALNESS:

If you are unnatural on stage, it will look to the audience to be forced and strained. When you perform in an unnatural manner, the audience will see you attempting to be something you are not. This will only give you a reputation of a fake and phony.

PRACTICE:

That is really the tough one. You must practice until the mechanics of the act can be carried out almost unconsciously. You will do well to remember that practice is the price of skill in any art.



STRENGTHENING YOUR PERFORMANCE SKILLS

By T. J. Staab

- ☞ Learn one trick at a time.
- ☞ Learn the trick thoroughly so that you are absolutely confident how to present it.
- ☞ Imagine what the trick will be like from the audience's point of view. Will it be interesting? Will they spot something they are not meant to see? How can you distract them so they will not notice what you are doing? How can you finish the trick in a dramatic way?
- ☞ Continue working on a trick, and making adjustments, until you are completely happy with it. This may mean the trick is slightly different from the way it is described in a book, but you will have made the trick your own.
- ☞ Adjust your finger positions if you find a particular move difficult or awkward - not everyone's hands are the same.
- ☞ Track down the weak spots in a trick and work out ways to get around them, using misdirection if necessary.
- ☞ Practice frequently but in small doses. You are more likely to overcome a problem when you come to it afresh.
- ☞ Practice in front of a mirror. It helps "fine-tune" your performance and allows you to see how it looks from the audience's point of view. It also encourages you to look away from your hands and at the audience.
- ☞ Try a new trick on friends or family and listen to their comments
- ☞ Make the props yourself or buy them from a reputable magic dealer. You can then be sure you are buying reliable equipment that looks good, does the job, and will last.
- ☞ Remember, first and foremost, you are an entertainer. You must make your performance interesting and lively.

There is a saying among magicians: "Practice, practice again, practice until you can do it perfectly. Then practice some more."



WELCOME TO NEVER NEVER LAND

By T. J. Staab

1. **Never** tell your audience beforehand what you intend to do. This will only increase the chances of them detecting the weak points, as well as diminishing the impact of the effect. Always keep them guessing.
2. **Never** try to entertain an audience for any length of time without having variety. Do not spend your time doing a bevy of card or coin tricks. Select two or three card and coin tricks that you can perform masterfully. Add some rope, silks, bags, dice, and maybe an illusion or two. Now you have an opportunity to be exceptional. "Variety is the spice of life."
3. **Never** perform the same trick twice before the same audience. No matter how much your friends try to persuade you, remain unwavering on this point. The enchantment of a trick relies entirely on its novelty. "Familiarity breeds contempt."
4. **Never** look at your hands while performing a trick. By practicing in front of a mirror, you will become accustomed to looking at your audience and not at your hands. In Michael Ammer's book *SUCCESS AND MAGIC* he suggests, you paste pictures of eyes from a magazine to your mirror at about the height of an audience, and work to them.
5. **Never** let your audience get to familiar with you. There is always someone in the audience who knows something about magic. They will be eager to tell everyone how a trick is done. Select a few effects which are truly magical for your opening, this will subdue any person from getting too zealous. Some good-natured banter is all right and may even be encouraged. However, discourage any attempt to crowd you out of the limelight. You have the stage for the moment, so be firm but pleasant in defending your right to occupy it.
6. **Never** position yourself with the light behind you (unless it is for affect.) In a kamikaze show, (a show where you have little choice of the conditions in which you perform) select a place where the lights are in front of you. If possible, try to have a place that will put you slightly above your audience's floor level.



WHAT KIND OF PERSON AM I?

By T. J. Staab

You need to decide what kind of a Magician, Mentalist or Presenter you will be. You can choose to be funny, serious, mysterious, clown or whatever and that will be the “Person” or performer you become in presenting magic.

All of us have seen a magician at one time or another, either on TV or in person. Some magicians perform for large audiences and some perform for just a few people. Some are funny and some are serious. Most mentalists are serious performers; this gives more intensity to their show. Quite often, you will see clowns performing magic. Perhaps you have seen a presenter at your school or church using magic to help emphasize their message. When all of these magicians perform, they have certain characteristics that make them unique. You as an individual are unique. You need to build on that remarkableness to become the “Person” that you will perform as.

Every person has his or her own personality, and you need to know what kind of personality you have. If you are naturally funny, then you might want to be a funny magician or clown. If you are a very serious person, you might want to become a mysterious magician or a mentalist. However, on stage you can become a character playing the part of a magician. You can become someone opposite of what you are in life. On stage, you can become a different person.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A...

SERIOUS MAGICIAN - Formal dress, set patter, straightforward tricks

COMIC MAGICIAN - Formal or funny dress, comic and or ad-libbed patter, magician in trouble tricks, sight gags, sucker gags

MENTALIST - Formal or nice dress, serious or funny presentation, tricks with a specific purpose or theme

CLOWN - Costume, makeup, funny stunts, sight gags, funny tricks