

Top Hat E-Zine presents...



Chatter on Patter

Think before you open your mouth

A Treatise on Presentation from a Practical Point of View

A Supplement Dedicated to the Advancement of Good Presentation

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Foreword By Will Wood

Welcome to the first ever issue of the New "Chatter on Patter" Supplement.

Before we go any further I suppose it would be a good idea to explain exactly what Chatter on Patter is all about. The aim of this supplement will be to supply the Magic Bunny community with quality material that will provide a basis for the practise and perfection of good presentational skills. So far a small library of generous donations from the personal repertoires of many Magic Bunny Members has been established, and my personal thanks goes out to all those who have freely contributed. However, this Library will not sustain the supplement forever and it is hoped that in the future, readers will contribute their own material, ideas or articles in order to share and build good presentational skills amongst fellow readers.

Each issue will contain a short welcome from my self and then either an effect or an article focused primarily on presentation. So far the Chatter on Patter Library has a healthy range of differing styles and themes so you can expect to receive something new and different with every issue. I also think that is important for magicians to experiment with different styles and ideas in their performances, experimenting and sampling in order to create strong, quality and entertaining magic. Hopefully, Chatter on Patter will provide such material. Hopefully in future issues a feedback section will be able to be included in which readers can express their views on the preceding contents and provide each other with progress reports of how they are getting on.

I don't think there's much more to say at this point except to introduce this issue's feature article. To start us off we have a great essay from Craig Leonard on Equivoque or the Magician's Choice. It's an effective tool which is, sadly, often under used or misused. Craig goes through every aspect of this powerful technique and its applications. There is something here for everybody so get stuck in and let us know how you get on.

Until next time...

Will Wood

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Equivoque

By Craig Leonard

Introduction

Equivoque (or magician's choice) is the technique of forcing a selection onto a spectator using only verbal direction. Like most mentalism, if executed properly you have a miracle on your hands, if performed badly it is very transparent.

The typical equivoque script is normally "*Pick up an object*". If the participant does not pick up the force object, it is followed by "*And hand it to me*". This process is then repeated until the participant either picks up the force object, or has handed you all **but** the force object. In my opinion this is the most transparent way of using Equivoque. Think about it for a second. If you wanted somebody to hand you an object, you would say something like "*Please pass me one of the objects*" and wouldn't have the two-step process that appears in the typical equivoque script. It should be adapted to the situation and effect, and it must flow naturally and smoothly.

The end goal of any equivoque is to make it appear that the spectator has a truly free choice. In order to illustrate how to use equivoque effectively, I will briefly show some examples of using Equivoque to enhance existing effects, give some thoughts and touches that can be applied in general, and then finally give you an effect that relies solely on Equivoque as the modus operandi. Before that though, I will show you my typical Equivoque script.

Standard Equivoque Script for Five Objects

As stated above, any Equivoque Script should be adapted to the effect and scenario wherever possible. There is, however, a general pattern that may be followed for small numbers of objects. The one I use for up to five objects follows.

"I need you to eliminate 4 of these 5 objects and select just one. Please take your left index finger and position it over any one of the objects." If the finger is over the force object, I then proceed with "*Good, you have chosen to place your finger over this object, for some reason you are drawn to this one more than the others, so we will eliminate and remove the rest.*" I would then remove the other

objects and proceed with the revelation. In the other 4 out of 5 times when this doesn't happen and the finger is not placed over the force object, I continue with "Now, take your right index finger and place it over any one of the remaining objects". There are now two scenarios. Scenario No. 1 – Fingers held over two non-force objects. Scenario No. 2 – Fingers held over one non-force object and force object. Let's deal with each...

Scenario 1 – Fingers held over two non-force objects.

You already stated that the process would involve elimination, so it is natural to proceed in this manner "Good, now place them both to one side. We have so far eliminated two of the five objects, but we still need to eliminate two and rest on just one." Direct attention to the remaining three objects. "I want you now to choose two of these three". If the two non-force objects are chosen, remove them and proceed to the revelation, re-affirming the fact that they have eliminated four objects to be left with just one. If the force object is amongst the two, pick them up and say "Now, quickly, which one do you want back" If they choose the non-force object say "Good, you have now eliminated all but one object, and left me with the (insert force object here)" Proceed to the revelation. If they choose the force object, "Excellent, from a very fair process of elimination, you have chosen to keep the (insert force object here)". Proceed to the revelation.

Scenario 2 - Fingers held over one non-force object and force object.

Remove the other three objects stating "Good, you have chosen these two objects and eliminated the other three. Quickly, hand me one of them". Proceed as previously written, depending on whether or not you are handed the force object or not.

Using Equivoque within an effect

Many effects can be enhanced by the use of effective Equivoque. It is important to frame your verbal direction around the effect. For example, when performing Hoy's book test you may wish to give the spectator a choice of three books. From these three, you need to use two and force a particular book on the participant. A script for this would be as follows:

"We need to use two books for this experiment. Out of these three, which one stands out the most to you?" Now, the participant will either pick up the force book, or one of the remaining two. If they pick up the force book, you would say "You were drawn to that book from the three, now would you please hand me any one of the remaining two". The force is now completed, and you can continue with the effect. If the participant chooses a non-force book, simply say "This book stands out to you for some reason so we will get rid of it, leaving us with these

two books. From these two, which one do you want me to use?" If they point to the non-force book, pick it up and say *"Okay then, if you want me to use this book, you use the other"*. If they choose the force book then say *"Okay then, if you want me to use this book I will try to divine a word that you select from it. In order to ensure that the word is chosen by random and you're not influenced by me at all, please hand me the other book"*. You would then continue with the effect. In every case, it appears that the result was always the intended end goal. Please also note that at every step in the process, it is reaffirmed that the participant is making all the decisions, and has a completely free choice – but it is not done in a blatant way. This is extremely important in using Equivoque – the participant must feel it's a free choice, but if this point is over-emphasised it will start the alarm bells ringing.

There are many more effects that can be enhanced by using Equivoque. Any effect using the PATEO force can be enhanced by giving the spectator the choice of whether to go first or second. I won't go into the details of the PATEO force here (there is already a comprehensive write up in The Library, but if you require the spectator to choose the first two and you need to eliminate the first, it is simple to force this using Equivoque – ask *"Would you like to go first or second?"* If they say first, say *"Good, You choose the first two then and I will eliminate one"*. If they choose second, say *"Good, I'll eliminate the first one then. Pick two that I can choose from"*. This just adds another layer of deception to the effect.

Equivoque for two

If the situation allows it, an extremely deceptive way to use Equivoque is to use it on more than one spectator at a time. This may sound complicated at first, but it is in actual fact very simple – and is a great way to assist in forcing an object from a larger number. For example, let's say you had to force an object out of a total of ten. If you have two spectators, they can be used as follows: The two spectators (A and B) are both informed that they will assist you in the experiment. Spectator A is asked to hand any 5 objects to Spectator B. We will assume that the force object has been passed over to Spectator B. Follow a standard Equivoque script for Spectator B until you are left with the force object. Follow the exact same process with Spectator A. It really does not matter what object you are left with, but it is important that the script is exactly the same as the one for Spectator B. You will now be left with the force object and one non-force object. Simply ask them to decide between them which object they would like to take from you. If they choose the force object, reveal your prediction was correct as they have eliminated all but that one object. If they choose the non-force object, reveal your prediction as correct as they have eliminated all but that one object. Simple and effective.

The One to Five Ruse

Equivoque is great to use as a backup to psychological forcing. I won't go into details here about how to utilise psychological forces, but refer you to Banachek's excellent "Psychological Subtleties" and also Luke Jermy's "Building Blocks". A few of these techniques can be combined to create an extremely simple bit of Equivoque. Lay five objects out on a table. Stand at one end of the table, and have a spectator at the other. Put the force object in the second-left position from the spectators point of view. Highlight there are five objects on the table, counting them 1 through 5. I again refer you to Banachek's work for details on how to increase the chances of the force object being selected through this process. Ask the spectator to call out a number between 1-5. As you have stated "*between 1-5*", the numbers 1 and 5 will not be selected. If they choose 2, ask them to pick up the second object and proceed to the revelation. If they choose 3, ask them to pick up any three objects and follow the appropriate Equivoque script. If they choose 4, count to the fourth object and pick it up (it will obviously be the one in second-left position from the spectators point of view). Again, very simple and effective.

Using Equivoque as an effect

In order to highlight how Equivoque can be used in an extremely deceptive manner to create a great effect, I present to you:

Leonardism

It's the poor man's Kentonism! The advertising blurb would state:

- A spectator falls into an altered state while looking at your business card!
- When in this state, the spectator makes some free choices which correctly match your prediction!
- As the spectator is brought back from their state, you can prove that they were receiving your subliminal suggestions!

No beard required!

The following was inspired by an idea by Joshua Quinn, who was in turn inspired by Lewis Jones' "Hasterix". The premise and revelation you see here are completely different from that of Joshua Quinn's effect, and I urge you to look out for this (I believe it may appear in a well known performer's forthcoming book), his revelation

is quite brilliant. I first came across the idea of using Equivoque in an effective way to force a card from Dan Harlan and Greg Arce. The idea of forcing 1 out of 52 possibilities is a daunting one, but bear with me – it does work. The script is my own, which has been created specifically for this effect.

It is, in fact, nothing like Kentonism – which does actually live up to the advertising blurb. Except you do need a beard.

Effect

This is a “typical example” of what would happen, but of course with Equivoque every performance would not take exactly the same route.

The performer displays one of his business cards to a spectator. On the back of the business card are the cryptic words “Ewe chews Tree, Dies Monday”

“Have you ever heard about subliminal messaging? How advertisers put hidden messages in posters and TV ads that we can only pick up with our subconscious? How some bands have apparently placed satanic messages in records that we don't realise we're hearing, but somehow we pick up on them? I'm going to try an experiment of a similar nature- but nothing satanic, honest! In order for this to work, I need you to do exactly as I say, but also I need you to relax as much as possible. Please, look at the words written. 'Ewe chews Tree, Dies Monday'. This may not mean anything to you, and is on the face of it very cryptic but just try to absorb the words. Concentrate and repeat the phrase over and over in your head, all the time focussing your gaze on the sentence. As you look at this, I want you to clear your mind of everything except those words and my voice. Now, I want you to imagine in your minds eye that you are stood in front of an old, wooden door. In your mind, I want you to open the door and walk into the room behind it. Once you have done that, tell me what you see in the room. The spectator replies something like “there's a chair and a bed” (or something similar. The performer continues “There's a shelf on the wall – can you see it?” They will now visualise the shelf. “Walk towards it. On the shelf there are two piles of cards – one red and one black. Pick up one of them and hand them to me. Which ones do you want to give me?” the performer asks. “The Red ones” is the response. “Good, now I have all the red cards – the hearts and the diamonds. Which ones would you like me to keep, the hearts or diamonds?” The spectator replies “Diamonds”. The performer continues. “Excellent, you are doing very well – imagine now that I am in the room with you. I spread the cards in front of you and ask you to choose either the odd or the even cards. Which ones do you choose?” The response is “Odds”. “Good. Now you have the Ace, Three, Five, Seven and Nine of Diamonds. I want two cards back, which two will you give me?” The reply is “The Ace and the Three.” “Very well. I now have only the Ace and the

Three of Diamonds. I want to replace just one of these cards back on the shelf – which one will it be?” “The Three”. “The Three of Diamonds is now on the shelf. You have chosen that card alone to be displayed on the shelf in the room in your mind’s eye. When I snap my fingers, I want you to leave this imaginary room and remove your gaze from the card”. The performer snaps his fingers and the spectator looks away from the card. “You stepped into a room that you were imagining in your mind. Using only your imagination, you chose one card – The Three of Diamonds to be left on display. Have you any idea why you chose that card, out of the 52 possibilities?” The response will be negative. “You see, as you were concentrating on my voice and the words on the card, you were picking up the subliminal suggestions that I was trying to send you. Look – I’ll show you.” The performer then decrypts the sentence – Ewe chews = You choose. Tree = Three. Dies Monday = remove the last syllable and it becomes Diamonds. “You choose Three Diamonds”.

Method

You will already know that the spectator is led to the 3 of diamonds by way of Equivoque. The full script covering all possibilities for this follows. The apparent ‘altered state’ is pure theatre – as is asking the spectator what they see in the room – often, they will actually see a shelf, and you continue from there – apparently the spectator is imagining all of this without any prompting from the performer at all! In any event, regardless of what they imagine, tell them there is a shelf and they will visualise it. Always re-affirm that the spectator is to concentrate on the sentence – if you stare at anything long enough strange things start happening – even if the spectator does not believe they are in an altered state, onlookers will! The revelation of the three of diamonds by deciphering the message is just to enforce the idea of subliminal suggestion. This could obviously be substituted for a normal revelation of the card. The chart below may appear to be quite complicated, but is very simple in practice. The key to it all is to make it appear completely natural. I perform this in a very soft tone, as if I was trying to induce a hypnotic state. It won’t actually produce a hypnotic state, but it will help your presentation greatly. Note that I very rarely even acknowledge the choices that they **didn’t** make – for instance I don’t say “*you chose the diamonds so we will eliminate the hearts*”. I just progress as if it was always the correct choice – “*good, I’ll keep the hearts and give you the diamonds*”. It all seems logical. Also, with the last choices I ask which card they want to put on the shelf, but reaffirm it if necessary as the card they chose to display on the shelf.

Craig Leonard

Equivoque Script

