



MagicBunny.co.uk

TopHat

October 2005 - Edition 43

Welcome ('at last' I hear you cry) to the October edition of TopHat. Yes, it's almost a month overdue but here it is, the 43rd edition of MagicBunny.co.uk's exclusive ezine. 43 months, yes. It seems like an awfully long time ago that I decided to begin this monthly publication. Back when we had no more than a couple hundred members and a few hundred posts... those were the days, huh?! I've talked about how successful the forums and this ezine are in too many of these little introductory sections. But the reason is that I am truly astonished by it all. There have been countless similar monthly, web-based ezines appearing on the net, yet few get beyond the first 2-3 issues. TopHat is one of them. I never thought that we'd still be going, almost 4 years later.

These years haven't been without their ups and downs. There have been times where we've struggled to gather the minimum amount of articles to make the month's ezine go ahead. I've always gone by the minimum number of four. It's a low target but it is often hard to reach. Other months would see submissions flow in, causing me to have to put some on file for the following months. But the file has never overflowed. Getting articles is, for TopHat, the main struggle in producing the publication. But let's not get into that now.

Well, the point: I'm taking this moment to officially announce that this will be the last year of the monthly periodical known as TopHat. This'll probably come as a shock to many of you. Now, it's not to say that this is the end of TopHat. Moreover, it's going to change into a solid resource as opposed to continuing as an ongoing publication. The archives will remain free and accessible to read and use. The indices will continue to be updated and improved upon. And we may even, at a later time, decide to transform TopHat into something else entirely... a bi-yearly update maybe, a quarterly ezine in a similar form to as it is now, or even an annual collaboration of top postings on the forums. The future of TopHat is unknown to all, but what I'm trying to say is that we're now a half-way through the last year of TopHat as we know it.

Truth is: I, personally, cannot continue for much longer with the ezine for a couple of reasons I won't go into here. So 'get someone else,' I'm sure you're thinking. I know that there are many who would jump at the offer of the position. Now, it's not an undemanding task but requires much tact and dedication, as I'm sure you can imagine. Don't get me wrong, if there were someone with the commitment, vision and necessary skills to continue with this task, I would willingly pass it onto them. It ain't easy I will say that. Unfortunately however, although there are many I'm sure who would seize upon the opportunity and be willing to provide the time and work it entails, they may not have the technical skills to pull it off. And there are those who can do all this design hoo-ha but may not have the right approach towards it. Sadly, this is all we have to play with.

Don't be upset though, please! I can't deal with people crying and tears and all. Yes, it's a shame but MagicBunny goes on. So many have contributed to the ezine over the years. What we have now, known as TopHat, is the result of hundreds of hours of work from a great number of people. I'm always saying it, but I'd like to thank once again all of these people who've made TopHat the success that it is. There are far too many to name. And I wouldn't like to risk missing people out by attempting to list them. You know who you all are. Thanks to these guys, TopHat will remain, as I said before, as a solid-standing, *free* resource that we can all use in the future. So here's to the last few months; let's make the most of them. And without further ado, let's get on with this month's ezine, which we all hope you will enjoy.

Oh, and happy Halloween.

Take care,
Jon

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Unexpected

Unexpected

Daley's Last Trick?

By Daniel de Urquiza



Hello to everyone again.
Today, I'll be sharing with you a finale. A Climax. An ending.

It's an effect on its own right, but I use it as the climax of a multi-phased routine. You know me.
Well, first of all...

EFFECT

There are, on the table, a four of a kind and 2 selections. They transpose in a killer way.

METHOD

So, you've been making audience heads explode several times. You have two selections on the table, recently revealed in a magical way. Any four of kind, let's say the Jacks, have been used to help the magician in the revelation.

In my routine, one of the jacks has been emphasised, named before, and used to find the two selections. But you don't need to do this, if you don't want to. That's a line I recall saying to my wife very often.

So, discard the deck. Let's say the JS was selected.

Arrange the setup face up, bottom to face: JS, red J, red J, JC, two selections.

Openly extend between your hands the 6 cards saying that this time you are going to use no deck, only the selections and the four jacks. Close spread, taking a pinkie break below the four top (face) cards. Square, and lift four cards as two from above the break. Using the four cards flip face down the remaining cards, apparently 4 jacks. Peel a selection and turn it face down on top of the two jacks. Flip the face down 3 cards as one on top of the left hand packet. Immediately place the top 2 cards (apparently selections) face down on the table. Let the spectators see clearly that there are 2 cards and 2 cards only, then square those 2 cards.

Now, my handling of "Dr. Jacob Daley's Last Trick." Elmsley Count showing 4 cards as 4 and injogging the second to last card. You are not hiding nor false displaying anything. Nope, you are using it for another purpose: displacing cards while apparently only reversing their order. Soooo...

Unexpected (cont.)

Double lift the top two cards (easier because of the jogged card) to show a jack, and leave selection on table. Do the last part of the Gemini Count, known also as Ascanio's bottom double, and show jack, leaving selection on table on top of the other. Show next jack (same one), then show last jack imitating previous handling. If you did things right, you ended up with the previously named jack on top, face down.

Now, and just now, explain to spectators: "I'm going to cause the Jack of Spades to travel from between the Jacks to between the selections."

Take the four card packet on your hand, patter about the supposed selections, have a spectator touch the card and instruct her to spread them a little, not peeking the faces, only seeing that there are only 2 cards. While this happens, you simple turn the top jack face up with a peeling motion of you thumb, and send it second from the bottom. This a classical reversal of a card, from Expert Card Technique, depending on strong misdirection, and the fact that if it's done smoothly, the face up card is visible for less than half a second. It's like the pass, the top change, etc.

While squaring your packet, top palm the top card, and change the grip of the packet to Biddle, holding it in the hand that has the card palmed.

Wave the packet above the supposed 2 selections, but very far one packet from the other. It's a magical gesture, justifying the palm, the biddle grip and the following move... not a transfer, or a load. Make that clear in your body language. You are just doing nothing, only kidding.

Take the "jacks" packet again into your other hand in dealing position. Place square the other hand on top of the 2 cards, and rub fast, like "making heat". The rubbing is more than just a silly thing; a) It flattens the palmed card b) It's a magical gesture c) It makes the impression that a card appears IN THE MIDDLE of the 2 selections, not on top. Trust me, when I say rub, you should rub.

Before the climax, the recapitulation: "I placed the 2 selections here, the jacks in this hand. I said I will not use the deck. I said I was going to make the JS travel to between the selections... and a card appeared between those 2 cards (point to tabled packet). Which card do you think it is?" They answer JS. You nod, while leaving the other packet on the opposite side of the table, and reach to turn face up the recently produced card. It's another Jack. The other 2 jacks remain face down, audience suppose they are the 2 selections. Act as if you have made a mistake for a second. Let the "mistake" sink...

Then smile. Say: "I promised the JS between the selections. But I never said in WHICH packet". Turn to the other packet, show the face up JS, and show the selections. "Of course, to make the miracle complete, the other jacks all traveled... over here". Turn the jacks face up.

Let them die.

CREDITS

This is AMDG, which, besides "Ad Maiorem Dei Gloria", means "All Mr. Duffie Genius". I read "Packet Switch" in "Virtual Miracles". The plot is the same. The method, specially the switch, is completely mine, and I must say I like mine better, for it's much more direct. Ok, It's me who's saying it, but hey, if I don't love myself, then I can't pretend others do. The presentation is also mine. This is very important, because the transposition is only comprehensible and meaningful after the restructuring of the narrative that I have made. Again, it's only my opinion. Producing the JS face up it's also my idea, as is making spectator check there are only 2 cards before the transposition. Finally, my starting point is much clearer than the original, and let's you use it as I suggested, as a climax for other effects.

I must say that Mr. Duffie is very keen on this type of plot. He has several routines where not only the identities of the cards transpose, but the quantity also, like "Elvis has left the building". My everlasting gratitude goes to Mr. Duffie for his work on card magic, of which I'm an old fan.

By Daniel de Urquiza

Cut Here...

Cut Here...

TV Magic

By Damion Corbett



There has been a fair amount of discussion, not just recently but pretty much since the emergence of David Blaine, regarding the use of editing in magic TV specials.

It is an issue that a lot of magicians feel strongly about for certain reasons but the argument against the use of editing is one that seems to attract a great deal of supporters who have clearly not given the matter sufficient thought.

Richard Osterlind out-and-out condemns the use of creative editing (and even pre-show work for that matter) in magic programming. However, whether or not you agree with his conclusions, Osterlind has clearly given the matter a great deal of thought and has sat decidedly on one side of the fence. It is something that he feels passionately about, being one that performs mentalism for a living and also one that performs on TV on occasion.

Richard does put forward some well thought out and intelligent reasons as to why creative editing is unacceptable (which tend to point towards the "where do you draw the line" argument) and the reader may wish to further study his views on the matter by checking his posts at the Magic Café.

However, this article is not intended to rebut Mr Osterlind's argument but more to offer a little food for thought from the other side of the fence. I have no problem at all with Osterlind drawing these conclusions and articulating them as he has done; what does antagonise me though is when magicians jump to conclusions without giving the matter sufficient thought. A lot of the time magicians will blindly accept the arguments of others and repeat them without actually giving a great deal of thought to the subject.

My contention is that in most cases a little creative editing is acceptable and in some cases it is downright essential.

Magic (and close-up magic in particular) is a performance art which strangely, doesn't particularly lend itself to the televisual format. Sure there are effects which are absolutely perfect for TV performances but 99% are unsuitable for the real world. Conversely, the same can be said for many real world performance pieces being unsuitable for TV. In most cases there must be some sort of compromise and that compromise can sometimes take the form of creative editing.

For example: if I were in a real world situation, performing a card routine that required a Top Change, the spectator would be completely unaware of the change. The misdirection required to perform a Top Change in a one on one situation is easily achievable as there are many factors working in the performers favour. The overriding factor of this misdirection though, is the performer's ability to control where the spectator is looking. However, this is simply impossible to achieve with a camera burning the hands of the performer. To edit out the Top Change allows the viewers at home to experience the effect as they would have experienced it had they actually been there and seen the effect performed live.

Similarly a mentalism act which requires pre-show work could be viewed in the same way. In most cases, the audience will be completely unaware of the pre-show work and as such a TV audience should also be unaware.

Far too often, our audiences are not credited with the level of intelligence that they deserve. Modern day audiences are a lot less naive about sleight of hand and other such techniques than they perhaps once were. Technology has also made rapid advances in the last 20 years and magic performances broadcast on television are now the possible subjects of intense scrutiny. Frame by frame replay, pause buttons, and zoom features all allow for anybody so inclined to analyse magic performances in minute detail in the hunt for secrets.

Cut Here... (cont.)

David Blaine's performance of the Balducci levitation at the climax of his Street Magic special created a great deal of controversy amongst magicians and I strongly believe that the condemnation of Blaine was wholly unjustified. The Balducci levitation would never hold up under the intense scrutiny made available by technology nor would it hold up to repeated viewings. Again, a little creative editing and a small amount of camera trickery were used to allow the TV audience to witness the effect as the spectators that actually saw it live would have.

With this in mind, it becomes a little more suspicious as to why some magicians are so against the editing. Would it possibly be that it renders them unable to figure out the actual methods used in the effect?

One of the most ludicrous arguments I have heard against the use of creative editing in performances of magic on television is that if a member of the public asked you (the performer) to recreate an effect from a TV special that utilised creative editing – you would be unable to do so.

The retort that immediately springs to mind when presented with this particular argument is: *why the hell are you letting your spectators dictate your act to you?!*

And the second counterargument in this case would be: *why would you want to recreate another performer's effects?*

In order to illustrate the point further, let us assume that the performer making the above argument does wish to be able to emulate the acts of other performers when it is demanded by a spectator. Could the same not also be said if the spectator asks to see a particular effect and you simply do not know the requested trick? What about if the effect requested is Coin in Bottle and you do not have the desired coin with you? You are still unable to perform the effect! Does this mean that magicians on television should only perform self-working effects that require no preparation or gimmicks in order for other magicians to be able to recreate the effects if requested? Surely not!

It seems to me that it is a no win situation for the performer. The performer can either allow the camera to pick up on sleights and parts of the method that would be otherwise invisible to a live audience and have to endure the backlash of a TV audience being able to see the workings of the effect or he can edit these particular shots out of the broadcast performance and have to endure a bunch of magicians labelling him a cheater.

The point is that performing for live spectators in the real world is a totally different ball-game to performing in front of cameras for the benefit of a television audience. Cameras do not blink, they are not misdirected nor do they get "caught up in the moment." Creative editing is just another tool in the arsenal of the magician which allows for the gap between watching the performance on TV and actually being there to be bridged.

I think that pretty much wraps it up for this month but before I go I'd just like to end on this note: the purpose of this article was not really to intended to promote my own views on the subject nor was it to put down the views of others; more it was to urge the reader to give consideration to both sides of the argument and not to jump to conclusions especially when condemning another performer.

'Til next time,

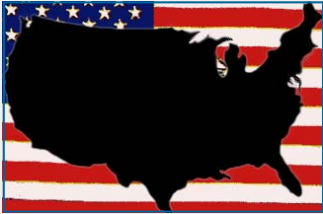
Daymo

Halloween

Halloween

Thoughts From Mid-West America

By Michael L.



It's late September as I write. We never saw the sun in my town today; although it was uncomfortably warm just 36 hours ago, autumn made itself known today with cold, foggy drizzle that would flare into fits of lightning and hard, slicing rain. Everywhere around me people ran from awning to awning or to their dry SUVs, but not me. I love this time of year. I love this weather. It is sit on the front porch and smoke a cigar-weather. It means Halloween is coming and I couldn't be happier.

I make my girls' costumes every year. This year Song has decided to be Wonder Woman, but not the leotarded crime fighter we know today. She wants to be the old-fashioned skirt wearing Wonder Woman and furthermore she wants to not really be Wonder Woman as Wonder Woman but as Diana, princess of the Amazons, in all her regal splendor with an extra large Wonder Woman tiara and a cape/robe. Even though no-one will get it, I'll do it for her. Song is four years old, with all the willfulness that brings and smart enough to know that Wonder Woman is also a princess. You can't really argue with a woman like that, neither at four nor at one hundred and four. Besides, she was originally toying with the idea of being Black Canary. For those of you not familiar enough with the universe of DC Comics (who own the trademarks to all these characters), Black Canary is the super-powered daughter of a non-super-powered heroine of World War II, also known as Black Canary, and former lover of Green Arrow. I think she caught Song's attention because she is blonde (like Song) but truth be told Song loves all the girl super heroes and even some of the bad girls, too. I have no problem with Black Canary. I actually think she is an interesting character as she straddles between the super heroes of yesterday and today, but her current costume is a low cut black leotard with gloves, knee high boots and fishnets. I can't exactly have my daughter walking the streets like that at any age, can I? I mean, it's pretty much my main job in life to make sure that doesn't happen! Luckily my younger daughter just wants to be a kitty.

And this year Halloween will bring even more fun because our church has decided to do a Halloween party instead of church picnic and asked me to do a Halloween magic show. Of course I initially burst out laughing because the idea of doing a *REAL* Halloween show like the old traveling spook shows of yesteryear in a church is priceless. I agreed to do a toned down, family friendly show. Besides, I have this hands-free Zombie effect that I have been wanting to do that could easily float a decorative skull....

But we are not here to talk about building magic or designing a routine (enough of that!). We are here to discuss, possibly for the final time, Wilson's *Complete Course* and that is, of course, the first place I headed.

I won't get into what I am planning for my Halloween show, but there are several good ideas for spooky Halloween magic in the ol' *Complete Course*. Although I am not a personal fan of the Genie Card section, you could easily design a set on the old computer with a spooky Halloween theme. Substituting a witch's cauldron with a misty ghost rising from it seems like a good way to go. Another quick and easy option is using Tarot cards and an appropriately scary line of patter with any of the card tricks.

Although we haven't gotten into it before, there is a section of illusions in the *Complete Course*. If you have a decent size stage, an assistant or two and the time to build them then there are a couple of decent ones listed. Alright, I wouldn't exactly be trying them out in your multi-million dollar Vegas spectacular but then again they are pretty cheap and easy. A couple are even tailor made for Halloween. The Mummy's Casket and The Haunted House illusions could make you the toast of that school Halloween party, though, and besides, do you really want to go work in a city that puts slot machines in the bathrooms? It's true, I've seen it. I was even going to play it, you know, just so I could say that I did it and then the prospect of touching the handle kind of made me shy away... in hindsight I have to say that I think I have made worse decisions than not playing the men's room slot machine.

Halloween (cont.)

Speaking of decisions, you may have noticed that I have decided (that's what we call a *segue* in the industry!) to go by Michael L. instead of Michael Saint Louis. Michael Saint Louis was really meant to be Michael From Saint Louis (on a now defunct MSN group) but that was taken so I became Michael Saint Louis. I'll admit that it has a nice ring to it (outside of Saint Louis, where it just makes you look like you have a dumb name) and I have toyed with adopting it as a stage name but I just couldn't. Maybe it sounds too French or maybe it just sounds too stupid when I am in Saint Louis... I really don't know. But I am dropping it in favor of Michael L., short for Lauck, my real last name, because it will play better (at least locally).

Back to the magic. I have a favorite Wilson trick for Halloween and it is one that many, many of you have written off. But it is something I would put in a Vegas multi-million dollar show (and if any of you reading this has a multi-million dollar show, please e-mail me). This is the kind of trick that seems like it should take about 45 seconds to learn. And it is; 45 seconds after trying it you will have the basics down and understand the trick but, I guarantee, you will absolutely suck at it. And that's when most people write it off. But it is a fine trick that just needs a little showmanship and a bit of spookiness. Of course, by now you have realized I am speaking of the Hypnotized Hankie. Ooooh! Six time zones away and I could still hear the groan. Mark my words, if you commit to rehearsing the Hypnotized Hankie for 15 minutes a day for the next seven days you will be able to tell a marked difference in the effect.

I wish I had tips for you, but I don't. This trick can only be perfected through trial and error. You need to develop a feel for it that you can not simply read in an article or even in a book or see on a DVD. But it is worth it! This could be your ghost detector, a simple mechanism for ghosts to answer your questions or even a captured spirit! The storyline is up to you. More importantly, the time you put in out it is up to you as well. It is worth it! Once you have the Hypnotized Hankie down you will be able to use it all the time and at a moment's notice. Better yet, it packs small and plays big. What more could you possibly want?

By Michael L.

By Appointment to the Queen

By Appointment to the Queen

Stage Mentalism

By Anthony Rose

EFFECT

Everyone in the audience holds one of their own ten pence pieces in their hands. A spectator is chosen to volunteer. With the magician's back turned the spectator freely chooses a coin from a choice of 7 ten pences placed on top a close up mat. The spectator then marks the coin right across the queen's face and replaces it with the mark face down on the table and mixes the coins up. The magician then turns back round and immediately selects the spectator's chosen coin. Then for a kicker the magician turns the close up mat over to reveal the year printed on the coin written in big letters on the other side of the mat.



For a further effect the year also matches the year on the coins which the audience members are holding.

REQUIREMENTS

- 7 ten pences from different years you can of course use any coins that are all the same denomination but if you do the coins the audience are holding won't match.
- A permanent marker
- A dry wipe marker.

By Appointment to the Queen (cont.)

WORKING AND PRESENTATION

Before hand you will need to find the coin with the year 1992. You will find this extremely easy and in fact you may struggle to find 7 coins of different years. Don't worry as long as you only use one from 1992 then that's okay.

This is because there have so far only been 2 major mints of the 10p coin. The most recent being 2002 and the first (and by far the largest) was 1992. What this means is the majority of 10p's in circulation have the year 1992 on them. This is the basis for the part of the trick where the chosen coin matches those held by the audience.

Of your seven coins take the one with 1992 on it and mark it with a cross from the permanent marker on the heads up side. Then learn this coin, look at it and see what makes it different from the others. If there is nothing you will need to make sure you are subtle. You will need to recognize this coin later in the trick when it is face down.

You will also need to stick a big piece of paper to the underneath of your close up mat with 1992 written on it.

Place all the coins face down in a row with the marked coin on either one of the ends of the row. The reason for this is people never choose the one on the end. (In the unlikely chance that they do I provide an out later on but I'm sure your one step ahead of me already.)

You are now ready to perform.

"Ladies and gentlemen I am going to show you an effect that has been allowed to me by permission of the Queen. As many of you know all the currency in this country belongs to the Queen and it is considered treason to deface the Queen's property. What many of you will not know is that the offence of treason is the only one that still holds the death penalty. (this isn't true but who cares we are entertainers) It is for this reason that when I personally had the opportunity to show a trick to the Queen I showed her this one. She was so impressed she gave me the only license in the UK that allows someone to deface her image.

I would like you all to enter your pockets and get a ten pence coin. If you haven't got one try to find an empty coffee cup and go and sit on the pavement outside till you have."

I then use this line you will have to modify it to change the name to where ever the rich area is near you.

"If there is anyone in from Bramhall then you may be surprised to hear that there is a form of money that doesn't fold and isn't made of plastic"

This should get a few laughs and give people a bit of time to get a coin.

Now get your volunteer.

"This young lady here has very quickly found a 10p. She is very bright and has managed to learn which coins are which. Well done, can you hold it up for me so the people from Bramhall know what a 10p looks like."

"No, some of the people at the back can't see. Would you stand up for me."

To imaginary person at the back. *"What you still can't see"*

"I'm sorry would you come and stand up here on the stage"

Always get a round of applause for your assistant.

You now have a choice you can add her coin to the table or just put it to one side. I would put it to one side as it is quite likely it from 1992.

You can no explain to here what she has to do.

"You will notice here we have seven coins. In a moment I am going to turn my back and I want you to choose one of those coins and turn it face up." Emphasize the free choice her because it really is.

You now turn your back. (An important tip. Never turn your back on the audience, what you should do is walk to the front of the stage or just turn you back to the volunteer or look direct at the spectators if it is close up.)

By Appointment to the Queen (cont.)

"Do you immediately notice anything about the coin you have chosen?"

2 things can happen here. We will deal with the worst case scenario first.

She has chosen the coin you marked. No problem but your trick is finished. Ask her to turn the other coins over and confirm to the audience it was the only one that was marked. Then have her turn over the mat and reveal the year on it. Now you milk the audience.

You now ask your volunteer to confirm that none of the other coins are from that year.

Then you milk the audience for all you can.

"Will everyone have a look at the year on their coin. After 3 I would like you all to shout out the year that is on the coin that you freely decided to choose out of your own purse or handbag. The coin that could have had any year on it. That could even be the first time you have seen a ten pence if you are from Bramhall. One, two, three- [overwhelming shout of 1992.]

The other and more likely turn up is she will pick one that isn't marked. You can then either direct her to the dry wipe marker in your pocket (lots of opportunity for byplay here) or to one that is sat on a table nearby.

Get her to mark the coin with a cross then turn the coin face down back on the table. Now get her to mix them up. This is why you are using a close mat the mark will be wiped clean off the coin and it's time for you to clean up the trick.

All the time stressing the freeness of choice you push the other 6 coins back to her saying "I believe this coin is yours" holding back the others. This gives you opportunity ensure her mark has been wiped. Have her read off the years finally you reveal that the only one left is her coin. Then have her read the year off that one then reveal the year beneath the mat.

"I said earlier that I have permission to deface the Queens image. You however don't. If you would like to return to your seat the police will be waiting for you after the show."

Off to one side "will you lock the doors please?"

Again big round of applause for your volunteer. You can now go back to milking the audience.

Who knows if you play it well enough you may get to show the queen at the Royal Albert Hall.

By Anthony Rose

Learning Your Craft

Learning Your Craft

By Tony Spallino



One of the hottest topics that's come up in magic is the way an individual learns new effects. Which is better? The hands on approach? Watching a DVD? Reading a book? Lecture, possibly with notes? Listening to an explanation? There are so many ways to learn new material, how is someone supposed to know what's best?

The idea of learning styles has been a topic in education for many years.

It's become a particularly hot topic recently, especially since education in America has become such an important discussion. Teachers have known for years that not all students learn the same way. This is something that has to always be taken into account when teaching people.

With the advancement of technology, magic and illusion now has the ability to help people learn magic through a variety of different ways. The big question is, what's the best way for *you* to learn? One type of learning style may work great for one person but won't work for another person.

There's no simple right or wrong answer. It's more a question of what's right or wrong for you.

Learning Your Craft (cont.)

It's possible for a person to figure out their learning style through a variety of quizzes that are available. Basically, it involves asking you about the things you like and then it ties that into how you would learn best.

Let's see if we can help you to figure out your own learning style and how it can relate to magic. (What follows isn't as good as taking an evaluation to figure out your learning style, but it should help you to get started.)

If you love rhythms or rhyming, can easily pick up on patterns, focus on noises, can play an instrument, love poetry and different types of music, enjoy musicals, can remember song lyrics, enjoy singing and listening to stories, and have trouble concentrating while listening to TV or the radio then you are a Musical/Auditory learner. This means you learn best from listening to instructions. For learning magic, you'll do great by listening to the instructions on a DVD or audio tape. A mentor who could explain things to you would also be good. You could also read the instructions for an effect into a tape recorder and play them back to yourself. You'll get more out of it from listening to it.

If you find that you are neat & orderly, need step by step instructions for things, love solving problems such as cryptograms and sudoku, find disorganization frustrating, love doing puzzles and can easily work with spreadsheets and databases then you are a Logical/Mathematical learner. You look for patterns and need things to be in a particular order for you to learn best. This means you could probably learn well from both books and DVDs since both forms of instruction will allow you to follow each step individually. You should be more concerned with how well the instructions are. Look for ones that teach step by step instead of making a lot of assumptions about the learning steps.

If you like making things with your hands, have trouble sitting still, active in fitness, dancing and arts & crafts, enjoy taking things apart to see how they work, love hands on activities, and like doing sports & dancing then you are a Body/Kinesthetic learner. You learn by doing. You could learn from a mentor, book, and DVD but the important thing is for you to try the moves while following the directions. Just reading the book or watching the DVD will do you no good, you have to get your hands on it and work along with the instructions.

If you enjoy reading and taking notes, writing letters (or email), keeping a journal or blog, writing stories, doing crosswords, word finds, or jumbles, good at debating, and are a good speller then you are most likely a Verbal/Linguistic learner. Books are definitely the best way for you to learn. You have a great command of language and use that ability to help you learn new things. The printed page is your friend.

If you love museums, use graphic organizers, use charts or spreadsheets often, like 3D puzzles and music videos, are not good at following directions if someone says them to you, make To Do lists, use color to make things stand out for you, love movies & art galleries, and dislike cluttered places then you are a Visual/Spatial learner. Both DVDs and books will work for you. It's the visual aspect that's important for you. A book will work better for you if there are lots of colorful diagrams and not just lots of paragraphs of instructions. The DVD has to be active and colorful, not just a repetition of the same instructions you've seen over and over.

It's important to understand that most people share traits of several categories. People rarely fall into one category over another. There are gray areas in between these categories. If you're in doubt as to whether one particular method will work for you, I'd suggest giving it a try and see if you like it. You should be able to tell right away whether a way of learning will be right for you.

By Tony Spallino

Well thanks for reading, folks. We hope you enjoyed this month's offerings. We'll be back next month (which isn't so long now!) so watch this space.

If you have an article for us, it'd be very welcome for publication. Send all correspondence to TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

Jon Snoops
MagicBunny.co.uk