

Contained herein are my Wonders which I have seldom shared before. A few have been seen by extremely close friends. Most have remained hidden until they made their way to stage or screen.

Here you will find truly unusual pieces standards in my performances and those of others. There are close-up items, magic, mentalism, weird and stage effects. Some may change older classics forever, according to certain folks. We shall see what history determines.

I do know that these items are thrilling to perform, offer a wide variety of skill level and presentation, contain unique methods and effects, and have already had an impact on some very well-known performers.

My bet is that you too will find ways to perform these tricks and ideas in your own manner, be it casual or formal.

Whatever you do, don't expect the same old thing! That is the one thing you will not get.

Kenton Knepper / August 2003

Insta-Pop

Over 15 years ago, I was doing an effect in which I popped popcorn in my hand. It was a close-up trick, and while a little messy, very unique at the time. In that version, a few kernels of unpopped popcorn and a little "cooking oil" were poured into my empty hand. I would hold my hand up to the ears of nearby spectators, and they heard the sizzle of the oil, and the popcorn beginning to pop. Ultimately, a few pieces of popped popcorn would fall out of my otherwise empty hands.

In my original version (many have played with different ideas since) the secret was a thumbtip and a candy called "Pop Rocks". The candy when placed in the mouth began to make a sizzling sound and "exploded" or popped into a tart candy. A few of these Pop Rocks placed in a thumbtip was the primary secret. The "cooking oil" was mere water poured into the tip hidden in the hand. This made the amazing sizzle and popping sounds. While all attention was on this hand being held up to the ears for spectators to hear, my other hand stole a few popped pieces of popcorn from my pocket. All that remained was to bring the hands together, secretly place the tip back on, and allow the pieces of popcorn to fall from both hands. My hands were seen as empty otherwise, and that was that.

This was a very novel effect and the look on spectator's faces as they heard the sound was priceless. The main drawback was the mess left in the tip each time, and the reset was not exactly easy or clean. Also, "Pop Rocks" would come in and out of favor in various places, and at times were difficult to obtain. For that reason, I never put the routine into any major publication. Finally, I developed a version that fixed all of these issues.

You will still need a thumbtip, a few popped kernels of corn in your pocket and a few unpopped pieces of corn too. Instead of Pop Rocks, a neater solution is used. Get a wrapper from a piece of candy, or better still, one of those plastic sheets of polypropylene gift-wrap. This gift-wrap is a clear or colored, thin, plastic, wrapping paper. It is now common in gift stores. The very best type of plastic wrapping paper to use is the older style REAL CELLOPHANE. True cellophane crinkles easily and holds the wrinkles in the paper. Tear or cut a small piece of this plastic wrapping. Squeeze it into a ball, and then open the ball up again. Place the wrap into the thumbtip. The tip acts as an amplifier.

The thumbtip is a type of sound cone or megaphone that enhances the sound of the plastic wrap crinkling inside.

Get the tip off of your thumb and secretly into your fist, just as if you were going to vanish a small silk. Squeeze the thumbtip a little, then release the pressure. This sort of pumping action needs to be made slowly enough that the movement is not noticeable. Squeeze and roll the tip in your hand secretly, and the wrap or cellophane will sound like sizzling and cracking of oil and popcorn. It will sound like this completely when you tell them that is what it is! The build up of the effect - the putting two kernels in your hand (thumbtip), spattering a drop or two of oil (water or nearby drink), perhaps even holding your hand by a lighter (not over it!) or heat source, all sets the mind to the notion of popping popcorn.

Once the stage and the minds of the audience are set, hold the hand near a spectator's ear and say, "Listen carefully. You can almost hear the popcorn sizzling in the oil and begin to pop". Be sure to hold the top opening of your hand near the ear, so the amplification of the tip and hand is best.

All that is left to do is to steal a few pieces of popped corn out of your pocket as spectators listen to the sounds. You will have plenty of

curiosity and enough misdirection to steal a small elephant. If you wish, you could steal an entire handful of popped corn, or a basket, etc. I like the quaint few kernels, as it seems almost believable this way. In fact, I suppose some types of mentalistic performers could make these few kernels appear to be a genuine demonstration of energy.

The main thing to practice is how to squeeze the tip slightly, roll it in your fingers to get the best sounds. Experiment too with different types of plastic wrapping paper and cellophane. Soon you will find the best technique and wrapping paper for you.

You could always carry a salt shaker in your pocket as well. This is a funny bit when salting the few pieces of popcorn, and leads perfectly into any treasured salt effect or salt pour. It's also a nice way to ditch the thumbtip in the end.

Readings A-Hoy

Perhaps this will be
too subtle to be
counted by many,
and I am thankful for
that. Some of us rely
on this presentation
to open our various
acts of mentalism.

Here is a combination of Hoy's "Tossed Out Deck" and "Hurling the Headlines" with my own use of linguistics and indirection.

I have performed this many times with great success and would not do any version of "Tossed Out Deck" without this addition. Hoy's original work can be found in "The Bold and Subtle Miracles of Dr. Faust" by David Hoy. Hoy says of his original version "Egotistically speaking, here is the greatest mentalism miracle ever presented". Now we take his bold work one step beyond.

A deck of cards is secured with rubber bands so that it cannot be tampered with in any way. The banded deck is tossed out and three different audience members each peek at a single card only and keep it firmly in mind. They must peek at one card only. They should see not even a split-second flash of another card riffling off their finger. If any other card image flashes into a spectator's mind, the experiment would be ruined. There would be more than one image lodged into the subconscious, where telepathic communication is shared. Three different spectators stick a finger into the banded deck and then peek at the card near their finger. Each spectator keeps the image in their mind and says nothing. The deck is tossed back to the performer, but the deck hits the floor with a thud, as the spectator misses the performer.

Under these strict conditions, the performer never touching the deck or knowing where the spectators peeked, mentalism occurs. The performer begins describing events in each spectator's life. He tells of where a ring was lost and where it may be found. He tells of heartbreak and healing, of a happy future and explicit details. He claims that all of these aspects of a person's life tend to encourage them to be drawn to certain playing cards. Thus, the performer names both life details and each spectator's peeked at card. All agree the performer is correct.

The original Hoy effect was a naming of the cards only. I have added the dimension of readings and such to make this a very personal experiment, and not what some might otherwise view as a card trick.

Hoy's method was a one-way forcing deck. A stranger card was on the face of the deck to hide this fact. The deck is banded for security, because the deck is being tossed out to the audience, from spectator to spectator, and then back to the stage. Hoy was brilliant in these details. There seemed to be good reason for the deck to be banded.

The work of course was that a force deck banded tightly kept spectators from realizing the deck was all one card. I have added the subconscious aspect of telepathy to be sure spectators do not riffle to a card, or through the deck, and see the deck is all the same. Hoy would demonstrate how the spectators should look at a card. He would pick up the deck, lift up an edge and say "So, I look at the King of Clubs, say nothing and close the deck without looking at another card". He mis-called where he looked as any card other than the force card. This is a very ingenious ploy, which most performers miss today. Hoy would do this several times, though I am not sure that is required. Hoy would then proceed to toss the deck out into the audience.

You should be familiar with Hoy's work anyway, but those are the basics. Spectators look at cards (force cards) in the deck. They are of course all the same card. The worst that can happen is a spectator thinks of the face card of the deck. Your instructions however tend to eliminate that as an option. Still, only two cards at most can be peeked.

Each spectator who gets the deck is asked to stand. They remain standing throughout the effect. After three spectators are standing, have the third person toss the deck back up to you once they have a card in mind.

Now we get to my work on Hoy's deck:

The deck is tossed to you, but the spectator misses, and the deck flies past you. "That's fine. I don't need to touch the deck at all anyway. I guess you have made certain of that", you say with a smile.

This is an important touch, and requires only that you do not attempt to catch the deck when it is tossed at you. Most spectators miss, or throw with so much force, a subtle step or lean aside makes the deck miss by a large distance. The image of the deck smacking against the floor or wall leaves an indelible impression on the audience that you have never touched the deck at all. A subtle point, but valuable.

The revelation of the cards will become far more than card revelations. We know that each spectator is concentrating upon one card only . Let's say this is the King of Diamonds. Let us also assume that the indifferent card on the face of the deck is the Queen of Clubs. If one of the spectators is not thinking of the King, they must be thinking of the Queen. The spectators are unaware of this of course, and presume each to be thinking of different selections.

Here are the basic linguistic deceptions and in directions I use for the revelation sequence.

"This is a true test of my abilities. As such, it is vital that you do not do what skeptics claim people do. To make this test legitimate, you must not nod, shake your head, speak, look around, mumble, smile or do or say anything at all in the least to tell me if I am right or wrong. In the end, I will ask you to verify everything. For now, don't even flinch, don't move a muscle, do not speak. Give me no help at all. We want to prove to the skeptics out there that you did not help clue me in, until the very end".

You will certainly realize that we have set the stage so that no one will protest anything. If they were to look around, ask if what you said were true of another spectator and such, all of this would prove the skeptics correct and may invalidate the entire affair. You have, with the heavy hand of scientific procedure, told them to shut up and not protest, should they wish to do so.

With the rules sneakily implanted, the actual revelations begin.

"I see a black card. A Club. Clubs have to do with the intellect. This person is intelligent, but that can also be part of their trouble. They have a very high intellect, which is why they chose a high Club card. I see you have also lost your ring and you are wondering if I am a mind reader if I can tell you where your ring is. As Clubs have to do with the head, and you are thinking of a Club, I can indeed tell you where your lost ring is. It is where you keep the HATS. So look in and around where you keep your hats - yes, in the upper bedroom closet - and you will find your ring there. Now, that is where your ring is, your card is a Club, it is a high Club card, but I am not sure yet which one. Let me come back to you".

"Ah, this person is also thinking of a black card but it is not a Club, it is a Spade card. Not a high Spade card, as that would be unbalanced and perhaps far too egotistical. You are not unbalanced. You do have much ambition, much drive, which may explain also the new car. Red is it? Fine then. But a new car is not all. A new way of life perhaps? One might say that, I suppose..."

"More important is to keep your morals in check. You know what I mean and I am not going to get into it. You know what is right, and what is not. I suggest you do the right thing. As a person who would choose a Spade, it is only natural you have much energy and wish to use it. Your card seems to be a mid-range number, so don't waste your energy on foolishness. Straighten things out now. Refuse to speak of this to anyone else, except the parties involved. Get things evened out. I think that would indicate your Spade card is a Five - but don't tell me yet. Not even a hint!"

"Now I see a red card - finally! Not a Heart card - a Diamond. Someone with class. A person who, well, they may not see it, but all things are working for the good for them, whether they understand that yet or not, I am unsure... Still, things are going very well for this person in the long run. No hint or even the slightest help now. I can tell this as they chose a King. Say nothing yet".

"Let me go back. Listen very carefully. I perceive a Club, a high Club, the QUEEN OF CLUBS. No help now. I also have envisioned the FIVE of SPADES. Last, I get - finally! - the KING of DIAMONDS. If I have indeed

named your card, say nothing, but DO SIT DOWN". If needed, I repeat the last part "If I NAMED YOUR CARD, SIT DOWN NOW".

Everyone of course sits down, and the applause and gasps literally erupt.

Please note that I do not say at the end "If my readings and your card were correct please sit down". While the linking word "and" is tempting to use here, it is not needed. In fact in this case, saying directly "...my readings... were correct" might make some people balk or be confused. Instead, the idea that your small readings were entirely correct is accepted as fact the moment all the helpers sit down.

This method makes for exciting "hurling" type of readings, without the hurry or fear. You can say almost anything about the people who hold the non-force cards, as no one has these cards! Allow the card that is not in the deck at all to be the most outrageous reading you do.

You may want to play it entirely safe and make the reading of the indifferent card on the face less dramatic and caustic, in case someone chooses it. It is rare, but a spectator may think of the indifferent card on the face of the deck. You do not want to make that reading so severe in case a person thinks of that card. Or risk it a little, as I often do.

Try putting this concept to work for you next time you do "Tossed Out Deck". I think you will find that you can instantly establish yourself as a legitimate psychic in short order. Imagine doing that, like Hoy, with a deck of playing cards. I guess they are not as taboo for mentalists as some modern experts insist.

I have been known at times to use the moment when the people sit down as a way to induce or deepen a seeming "trance" state as follows:

"If I have named your card, sit down in amazement and relax ever more deeply still".

Or

"Now that you are seated and wondering about that, as you feel your energy pulsating through you, we will deepen the altered state you find yourself in".

The latter version allows for their feeling elated, excited, or nervous, OR feeling shocked, relaxed, and not so alert. The two extremes are covered in this last statement, and both are said to indicate an "altered state". I also like very much (if I do say so myself) the phrasing of "...deeper state you FIND YOURSELF in". I like this a great deal as an awareness ploy, marked out deeper meaning, and as a means to self-induction.

The phrase "deeper state you find yourself in" could mean that the spectators are in a deeper state already, which allows them to discover something about themselves. "Find themselves" also suggests to some spectators that they are in a deeper state, but they have not realized it yet, and now that I point this out, they will "find themselves" to be in that deeper state.

There is a tendency for listeners to hear this and think they should put themselves into an altered state of some kind. This is not so much a conscious, determined, thought, but a nearly subconscious reaction.

At worst, it sounds to the rest of the audience that perhaps you have put the participants in an altered state, which either explains how you could read their mind, or proves that you did not read their mind at all - they were really "hypnotized" into believing that you did.

You still get credit even if nothing else occurs. Stay alert and watch for any odd look or reaction from the participants or other audience members. Sometimes, these words can cause others to put themselves into a light altered state that you may expand upon - but only if you are observing carefully. Do so to the level of which you are appropriately trained and qualified of course. This is entertainment, not therapy.

Enjoy if you dare a little. This is the safest readings system you may ever do, after all.

Coin Etheric

The performer claims there was a time in his life (or a relative's) which was very important. The event made such an impression, that the performer commissioned a special coin, a reminder of that year.

"It is not a real coin, just as my memory of that event, while quite clear, is not completely real either. Memories are pictures, with a little something more added in" says the performer as he displays an entirely clear plastic half-dollar coin.

"As you can see, obviously this clear coin shows the tails side only. It's half of a picture, a half-truth, perhaps that is why they made it out of a half-dollar..."

"Like our memories, it is crystal clear, and seems to be whole, yet one side only can be seen. It represents my own point of view of that moment in time".

"I complained to the maker that while this coin piece was intriguing and unique, it did not have the year on it as I had commissioned. But he insisted the year was showing on the heads side of the coin. I pointed out there was no heads side to the coin at all. I held it up to the light, so he could see straight through it - TAILS. I turned it around - TAILS. It was clearly tails, as even an idiot could see, and I was suspecting that this man might indeed be one. But he insisted. 'It's a memory. The coin represents only a magical piece. The heads side, and that year for you, that is a memory. You will find the heads side - the year - on the etheric side of the coin' - that is what he insisted".

"I knew this man had lost it, or was trying to pull a fast one on me to excuse his mistake. But the man said that memory related to silver, and if I were to fold a silver foil around the coin, I would see both sides. The foil, he claimed, would show the mundane and the etheric planes on the coin. This, I took as a challenge, and asked for some silver foil".

The performer has a participant examine a piece of foil. The foil and coin is pinched between their thumb and pointer (1st) finger. The helper smoothes the foil tightly against the sides of the coin. The tails side shows as an impression of a coin tails side up on the foil. But when the foil and the coin are turned over, the other side of the foil shows the coins as HEADS side up - complete with the year. The foil may be opened by the spectator halfway to check, and while the coin is clearly tails on both sides, the foil shows heads on this side.

"The etheric and the physical, two sides of the same coin" exclaims the performer, as he removes the coin from the helper's hand. The performer holds the coin up to the light again to show the coin clearly tails through and through.

"Keep the silver foil you hold to impress upon you what made an impression on me: There are always at least two sides to any memory or event - and often more than meets the eye".

The explanation is incredibly simple, though it is more than a little devious. The coin, is a trick coin. This trick coin is sold in magic shops, but not at all for this purpose. You can get these clear half-dollar coins as part of the trick known as "Silver Extraction". Currently, Vemet of Argentina is making these again. The trick Silver Extraction has been an oft-forgotten commercial gem of close-up magic. We think that because the method is simple, it won't impress spectators. Not at all the case, but this is the prejudice that caused Silver Extraction to fall off most magicians' radar. Now you have a new reason to get this effect, and perhaps you will find that both routines are of value in different situations.

Here is the oddity I discovered which makes the routine possible. For decades, it has been a problem seeing the "heads" side of the clear plastic coin in Silver Extraction. The tails side shows through clearly, due to its detail. But the heads side is mostly a silhouette, and this outline is not easily distinguished. Instead of fighting this, one year I decided to take advantage of the problem.

Get the clear coin from Silver Extraction and look at it closely. On the heads side, you must catch the light at a perfect angle for the heads side to be clearly visible. All you need to do is avoid that minute angle. One way to do this is to flip the coin around between your fingers. This way, even a flash will not register consciously to the audience. Your words of course constantly label the coin as tails only. This seems to match up with what the spectators see. Another help is to let the spectators see the heads side only briefly as you speak, turning the coin around so the tails side faces them for most of your talk. If you hold the heads side for but an instant or two towards the spectators, the light shining through the coin will still make it appear to be tails.

Finally, the convincer is holding the coin up to any light source at all. A light bulb, a candle, a ceiling light, light from a window - any light source - and the tails side obliterates the outline of the heads side. Remember to try and keep the actual tails side to the spectators for longer periods. You may know that the heads side is there, and you might even see it faintly, but the audience will not. They have not seen such a coin before, and being able to see through it suggests that whatever spectators see clearly is all that must be on the coin. As is my usual, psychology and suggestion plays its part in my work.

Having conditioned the spectators that the coin is clearly tails the rest is easy. A piece of aluminum foil is folded in half, and the coin is placed into it. The participant holding the foil and coin can see the coin from above inside the foil. Allow them to press the foil around the coin. Have the helper rub their fingers and thumb over the foil as they press against the coin. The impression of the tails side will become clear through the foil. Endeavor to keep the tails side towards the helper, and the heads side away from them. This allows the participant to have a moment of real shock when they turn the foil over. The heads side will show, and with more rubbing will become ever more defined.

It is a weird feeling to the helper to see the heads side as a foil impression, then open the foil a little ways and peek inside. They will see the coin is tails as they peek inside the foil, yet it is heads as they rub the foil against this side. It is a very strange moment.

Take the coin out and hold it tails side towards the audience, and up to the light. The audience sees the coin is tails still - clearly. Pocket the coin as you tell the helper to keep the foil, as you make your final remarks.

No doubt you will realize that the words I use are also metaphors and suggestions meant to link the effect to the spectator's beliefs and/or daily life experiences. Next time they have an argument, question a motive, wonder if life is fair - they may recall the "two sides", that things are "not just what is seen", and that even "clear events may be different". I began doing this effect not with foil, but as a rubbing with a pencil and paper. The coin was placed under the paper and rubbed ala old gravestone rubbings. In time, I changed this to a quicker and surer impression of the foil. Do as you will.

The Increasing Bill

"Can you make my bill into a HUNDRED"?
If you do magic at all, you have heard that question a hundred times.

I have several very effective answers to that spectator query, and here are a few of them. Even for well-versed magicians, the initial reaction is incredible. A couple of my ideas have since been "adopted" by others and put into print. I thought now would be a good time to give you these with what I did not share with others previously.

Here is one of my favorites. Have the spectator sign a bill and wad it up into a crumpled ball. Promise that if they will do that, you will indeed make their bill increase. Hold the bill at your fingertips and say it will increase.

Spectators jump, scream, and laugh as the bill suddenly begins to slowly expand. It grows to three times its original size! Suddenly, the bill elongates itself and becomes thin and limp.

It is now like a silk material ("There are silk threads in U.S. bills, they say").

The material is unfolded and it is very large. Printed on this silk material is A ONE HUNDRED dollar bill!

"I told you it would increase, and even change into a hundred, and it did. That's not what you really wanted? You must be more careful when you ask for things! You would settle for your old bill back, but as you can see I do not have it".

Naturally the signed bill appears inside a locked box, aspirin tin or any load or production you choose.

Perhaps you will not grasp how commercial this is until you try it yourself. All you need do is get an 18" REAL SILK with a hundred dollar bill printed on it.

I keep this silk in a jacket or pant pocket. As I ask for a bill, I casually place my hand into my pocket and wad up the bill silk. Nothing fancy. All I care about

is that I can easily finger palm and hide the bill silk. With real silk, this is a simple matter. The bill silk is held in finger palm.

Ask the spectator to sign their bill, and then wad it up into a ball. Take the borrowed bill between thumb and first finger. Now do any one-hand bill or billet switch that you already know. As I gesture, I execute a standard one-handed change as follows:

The bill is held at the fingertips, the silk in finger palm position. As I speak and gesture, the first and second fingers curl in and push the real bill into the crotch of my thumb. The real bill can now be thumb clipped. Once the bill is clipped, the pad of the thumb pushes part of the silk up to the fingertips. This happens in an instant. The bill is clipped as my hand moves to about level with my waist. On the upswing from my waist, the silk is brought into view as my hand reaches eye level again. That will give you a sense of timing during the switch, although you may move your hand and arm sideways or in some other direction instead. Do what works naturally for you.

The difference between paper and silk make these types of moves easier to do than ever.

The bill silk is now held as a small wad near the fingertips. It looks like the borrowed bill. The illusion is staggering. Keep any excess silk material behind your fingers.

Now for that most magical moment: SLOWLY release the pressure you have on the bill silk. It will begin to expand. Continue to let more and more open s-l-o-w-l-y. Finally, take all of the pressure off the bill silk and it will jump as it unfolds, springing into view.

Spectators often jump at this point too. It is a simple matter to show the bill silk as you finger palm the real bill. I often will allow the bill to hide under the silk as I display the silk at my fingertips. Put the silk away, and secretly wad up the real bill with the silk. The bill is surely gone.

Again, due to the vast difference in the feel of silk and paper, it is easy to remove the real bill from the folds of the silk as the silk springs open in your pocket. Palm the real bill back out and produce it as you desire.

I have performed this close-up and in stand-up. It's a surprising and interesting way to vanish a borrowed bill, as well as answer that age-old spectator question. Oh yes, and this is one time wrinkled silk looks like it should be wrinkled (because many bills are!)

I hope you will become as thrilled performing my routine as spectators have become watching it. The growth as the bill silk expands is stunning.

Another Favorite

I have used another answer effect as a reply to the spectator's "Make my bill into a hundred":

"You wish me to take your bill, and make it a hundred dollar bill? I can do that. I'll prove it".

Note how the words "you wish me to take your bill" are hidden in this phrasing. This helps eliminate any trouble borrowing the bill from the spectator. Of course, if he will not give you the bill, you can hardly help him turn it into a hundred. Now that you have the proper words and binds to make him give you his bill, you do just as you say.

become a BILL. That's right. Not a dollar bill, but a bill to be paid. The amount owed on the bill is \$100.00!

You have done just as you have stated. You have taken the spectator's bill and turned it into a one hundred dollar bill.

One hundred-dollar bill versus one, hundred dollar bill. The words do it again. I began this bit nearly twenty years ago now. Little wonder others have "hit upon the same idea".

Naturally, you need to do a one-handed bill switch as previously discussed or any of the now popular bill switches using thumbtips, no tips, etc. It's the same as turning a dollar bill into a five or a twenty, but the words make all the difference!

Use a paper that has a greenish tint to it to match the dollar bill somewhat. It need not be actually the proper color, but a hint of that color is needed. Don't try and switch the bill to a white paper for instance. I have played with making a special paper. It is simply a quarter or less of a bill copied on to a quarter of the paper statement. I found out this was not necessary, but you might like to do it anyway. Having a portion of the hand written bill look to be an actual bill allows for you to hold it up after the switch for an extra moment or two. As I say, it is not needed.

Simply write on the paper "My BILL for my services to you is: \$100.00 You now owe \$100.00 Please pay up now. This is your official \$100 BILL". Then sign the bill at the bottom. Toss the bill towards the spectator after explaining what it is, and look towards him as if you are waiting to be paid. Don't laugh if you can help it. Look serious, or puzzled that he isn't paying his tab. Meantime, the audience will laugh, make remarks, as they are feeling uncomfortable, and will generally entertain themselves. All of this leaves ample time to pocket the actual bill and load it into your favorite device for later production.

You may also appear to produce their bill from your mouth (yuck!) as you say "Put your money where your mouth is... I did"! Pause after making the statement and then produce the bill apparently out of your mouth. I say apparently, as bills have more germs on them than a card from a well-shuffled deck at Uncle Harry's last drinking, I mean poker, party. Just a tip, for the wise.

Yet More Entertaining Responses

Just in case all of this is not enough, here are others wonders I have used. Glue the hand written bill to the bottom quarter or less of your own dollar bill. Fold up the written bill into a nice, neat packet.

This is the equivalent of the torn and restored "Chinese Ticket" or "Fresh Fish". Keep the bill prepared in your wallet. When a spectator says, "make my bill into a hundred" remark:

"I used to do that, but people became upset with me. I can indeed make any bill into a hundred. I will show you". Take your own bill out and do the ticket moves to make the switch from real bill to handwritten bill. "That's what happens. In magic, you must be very careful what you ask for! Now, if you wish, give me your bill and I will do the same for you"! This entertaining, magical answer is what they want - without borrowing a bill or embarrassing the spectator in this case. You will get a hearty laugh, and these people will never ask you again to "make them a hundred".

I use two other lines to answer this question without actually doing anything. One is, "I can make you a hundred. There. Do you feel any older yet? Give it time..." The other line I have used for decades is "I can turn it into a hundred, but sometimes it goes in reverse. You don't mind that, do you?" which usually shuts them right down. If they say, "No, that's fine by me", then a simple bill vanish of any kind suffices as I say "Better luck next time".

Do give the bill back in the end, of course. If you keep it, this makes you look like you need it, so even if you do, give it back.

Perhaps some will feel there is little wonder in all of this. Such people who know better are those that work wonders by actually going out to perform. People who perform magic know the power in these ideas - for they deal with this question often. Finally, you can also do what I have done. Do the bill switch with a real hundred-dollar bill and let the spectator keep it. It's the cheapest advertising you will ever do.

Many of us have paid much more dearly than this to become legendary. It is not asking anywhere near as much as you might imagine. You will get far more than what you have paid for with this last notion. Only if you apply it, of course. I am aware not everyone can afford to do this, but more could, if they considered it as part of their promotional funds.

This Never Happened...

The performer takes out a box of Altoids, Velamints or similar breath mint box. "I collect magical things from everyone I meet, and keep them safe inside. You can imagine what is in here. For instance..." The performer removes a small item and performs a magical effect. He removes another item from the box, and performs a little more.

After a short performance, the magical one places all the items slowly and openly back into the metal mint box. He asks a spectator to sign a coin or some other small object they are truly willing to give up. The given object goes into the box with the other magical items. The performer closes the box as he says, "Of course, I asked you to imagine all of the magical events... In reality, they never happened".

Instantly the box is seen to be sealed with different types of tape, stamps, and such across the opening of the box. "This box is so very

magical, I keep it
closed unless I
am in truly
exceptional
company. All
the objects inside
are so powerful,
they may
overwhelm the
mind. These are
no mere trinkets.
The objects are
blessed items
from my travels,

which serve as both memory and magic".

Slowly - for this takes a little while - the magical one undoes all the strips of tape and so forth in order to open the box.

There is no doubt that the box has been completely sealed.

Finally, the box is opened. The performer holds the box by the lid and extends the box for all to see what is inside. Along with all the items he has used to perform, there is also the coin the spectator signed. "Does this look familiar to you? It does? Yes! I thought I had met you before... On an alternate plane. Great to see you tonight, and thanks for adding to my magic here too. I hope I have added a little something to your night as well".

I wish I could explain the "moment", as it is actually experienced. It is an instant, but the meaning dawns on the mind slowly. Yes it is magic - a little weird too. Yet it could be as mundane as an ending to a close-up trick if that is all one desired. The working is remarkably simple, albeit psychologically diabolical.

Get an Altoid tin or any tin box that has a lid that hinges open from the back. Upon careful observation, you will note that the hinges are not as solid as they appear. Bend the hinges back a little, and take the lid of the box off. I do this by simply bending the lid on the box backwards farther than one usually would. This bends the prong hinges evenly and easily.

The lid will have two little holes, and the bottom of the box will have two prongs that fit into these holes.

Do not put the hinge back together yet. Rather, snap the lid back on to the top of the box. From the back, you will see the hinge is not engaged, and the prongs stick out a little. From the front, the box looks closed.

Although the lid is not in the hinges currently, open the lid as if it were still hinged. Eureka! The holes line up with the prongs, and the lid can be flipped open. The prongs naturally go back through the holes as you open the lid, and the hinge acts as a hinge again.

Flip the lid forward as if to close the box. The lid will not close entirely, due to the hinge.

This reinforces that the lid really is hinged to the box. In truth, it is now hinged to the box. That is the basic work. Now let's set the box for the routine as described.

Take the lid off the hinge and snap it back on top of the box - unhinged. Get black, clear, white and red electrical tape and tape all over the front of the box and the box bottom. Don't get tape on top of the box. Just tape the bottom and the lid closed on the front side.

Now open the box from the hinge side. The tape acts as a new hinge on the other end. The front, taped side becomes the back "hinged" side, and the unhinged hinge becomes the "front" side. The writing on top of the box is upside down from the way the box is hinged, but no one uses their attention well enough to notice that! Psychology comes to our aid once more. Also, common experience tells us that such a metal box opens by a hinge at the back. If the box is seen to hinge open, then we imagine in our minds that the box is standard. As long as you act as if it is normal, so will everyone else.

To add more psychological reinforcement to the deception, the performer talks about what is inside the box. The box seems not to be all that important at the beginning.

It is a place where the performer "collects" things and removes props for his tricks. The mental focus of the spectators is what is inside the box. The heat is not on the box itself.

To perform, keep the taped side towards the back, hidden from the spectators. This you can do casually as you speak and remove items from the box. The back side is hidden naturally as you open the lid of the box which rests on your palm up hand. If you are a nervous type, you can position your hands so that your thumb rests against the two prongs on the supposed front of the box.

The box will appear to be ordinary in every way visually. Psychologically, people generalize about objects and ignore minor things such as the two prongs. If it acts like a box, or looks like a box - it's a box. That is why shells on billiard balls work, after all. Our minds make up for the incongruent pieces.

Play with taking items out of the box a few times. Soon, the box will seem natural to you, and you will handle it likewise. It simply is a box in which you keep your little props and stories.

For the big finale, borrow a coin and place it into the box as if it were a treasured object. Snap the lid closed as you make your remarks.

All you need do now is turn the box over, back to front. You'll find countless ways to do that. You can secretly turn the box around as you set it down on the table. The box rests on your palm up hand with fingers pointing towards the spectators. Snap the lid closed with the thumb of the same hand. Turn your wrist so the fingers of your hand point towards you as you set the box down. You have turned the box around secretly.

You can turn the box over by flipping it ala Okito Box style as you close your fingers and open them again. The curling of your fingers flips the box over. A little shaking motion of the hand and arm covers the flip as it takes place. It appears the box was shaken and suddenly, visibly, became stuck with massive amounts of tape. As I said, you'll find your own moves you like best for you. Undo the tape slowly, but don't overact. Try and pull each piece off individually to make the point as to how sealed the box is - indirectly. When all the tape is off, slowly open the lid. The holes will fit the prongs, and the lid will actually be hinged back on the box again. I like to extend the box to the spectator by holding the lid only.

This is another indirection that the lid is hinged to the box. If the lid were not solidly hinged to the box, one would not dare to hold the box out by the lid alone! It is all very convincing as you direct the spectator's attention to her marked coin or other item, and to how you two had met previously "on another plane".

If such a strong magical moment makes you uneasy, then you can always run away from it with comedy and say, "I think the plane was American Airlines. But it was first class, right?" It is a funny line to use - if powerful magic frightens or upsets you or your audiences.

After your closing lines, close the box. Try and stick some of the tape back on it.

If you have other tape handy, you might tape the box closed again in full view of everyone. "I don't want anyone to touch that magical item from YOU".

When possible I suggest using different colors of tape. You can use less tape and make it seem like much more this way. The more varied, the more tape there appears to be. I sometimes stick postage stamps across the opening, or stickers, hologram "authorized" security labels, all that sort of thing. Just keep the stuff off the very top of the box where it can be seen. You can mess the bottom up ferociously.

The box opens as would be expected, with the writing on top of the lid right side up at the moment all scrutiny is on the box. This solidifies that what is now sealed was what was opened just a split second ago. Psychology, psychology, psychology.

While the idea of the unhinged and reattaching lid is novel and original, what is most important are the magical moments and dreams of astonishment that run as a subtle stream throughout. Still, I know that this type of principle will lead to many other "versions". With that in mind, allow me to mention the following as well.

Okito-Kenton

THE O.K. BOX

I admit I have long been a fan of the Bambergs, and Okito. I link my name to his only after much consideration, and with due respect. In this case, you will need the smaller tin mint boxes. They make these smaller tins for "coffee mints", "mini-Altoid", designer purse and department store mints, and so on. These are smaller than a standard Altoid box, larger than an aspirin tin.

Forget the tape in this application. Do the preparation on the box's hinge, but no tape is used at all.

Put the lid on the box as would be normal. The box has the lid hinged to the top, and may be opened and held by the lid -just as in the end of the previous routine. Now, coins, a bill, or such may be placed into the box. Flip the lid closed, but do not snap it closed yet. I let the box rest on my palm up left hand.

My right hand holds the edge of the lid. By a very slight lift of the left hand, or lowering of the right, the lid becomes secretly unhinged. In the illustration this is exaggerated. It takes a little playing with, but in short order you will find the touch that works best for you.

It may be that with your box, the lid needs be opened a little more to unhinge it, and that's fine. You can unhinge the box while you apparently show again what is inside. The hands keep the lid and box together once they are unhinged, so that all appears normal.

Once the lid is secretly unhinged, a standard "Okito" move can be done to turn the box part upside down under the lid. This is similar to any Okito Box move. In actual performance the right hand blocks the turnover from view of the audience, of course.

The box may even be displayed openly at the fingertips in this version, as long as no one is behind you.

The coin may now vanish, penetrate and all the standard Okito Box effects may be performed. Personally, I like using a small box of mints to make the mints vanish, penetrate, and such. It makes good sense, and is a novel effect. You might say they are very strong, powerful breath mints, which explains their dissolving through things.

When your routine has concluded, reverse the moves to show the box is empty. Do the identical moves as when you reversed the box, but now you will right it.

As you open the lid
slowly, the open holes
will go over the two prongs, and the lid can be
shown on the box as
(before.

Try and let the lid "flop" open as it is positioned over the prongs. This is a nice, subtle way to indirectly remind people the lid is attached to the box.

Even wise ones can't grasp how you could do an Okito Box with a hinged lid.

That concept alone should keep some people very, very busy for awhile. Finally, the ol' psychic die peek might be able to be maneuvered with this new hinge/unhinge box. Instead of having to tip the front of the box as it is banded closed, you can have the skeptics stare at the front of the box - and tip open the hinged side! If you don't know to what I am referring, don't sweat it. If you don't know you shouldn't be doing it yet anyway. To make this work would take some redoing. I pass along the notion to you only. I can tell you that the sealed version of this unhinged box makes for a decent prediction box one which can be easily loaded.

No matter how you use the principle, I hope you find a way to become pleasantly unhinged yourself. I am rather used to it. I suspect this is one of my items that will make the rounds in magic for some years to come.

Never Break The Chain

Now for a different type of effect. The magical performer has a small LED flashlight on his keychain. He claims that, at times, people with a lot of personal power or special energy have caused the light to flicker on and off. The magical one suggests that the spectator may have such intensity, and asks her to hold out her hand.

The magical one steadies the LED light over the spectator's palm up hand - as if it were a pendulum. "Sometimes the light will begin to move, sometimes not. Sometimes it will feel warm, or suddenly cool above your hand. In fact, some people say that it dulls pain and that they feel better - if not right away - then later. I don't know why that happens, when it does, but I do know that I feel a lot of energy coming from you now, I feel your hand warming up too... Maybe you can even feel it yourself? Yes? Maybe enough energy the light will flicker"?

Nothing happens. No light flashes at all.

"Is your arm feeling slight tingles in any way, or is it becoming more like stone? What does your hand and arm feel like to you now? Really. That is not at all the usual thing..."

Suddenly, the light falls off the key ring and into the spectator's palm up hand. The chain, it would seem, has broken off.

"Whoa. That's a lot of energy. Never had that happen before. Hold on to both pieces and close your hand. Feel the warmth in your hand, the energy, going into the light. Let's see if you can make it light even when it is broken. Open your hand. Nothing. Close your hand. Keep trying. I am sorry if I am so insistent, but I am rarely wrong about a person's personal energy. I feel these sorts of things, and I bet you do at times too".

"Have you ever walked down a street at night, and had a streetlight suddenly go out? Have you had that happen more than once? Some people do - because of their personal energy. They knock lights out, or start them up suddenly. Feel the energy and warmth in your hand. Once you feel it raise or cool off, open your hand and look. Nothing. Wait! What on earth? Did you bum yourself? Feel the chain. Feel the connection... Pick it up. See? It's as if you soldered it back together. Are you sure your hands are okay? They are not too hot? Holy... Well. I don't know what to say. I'm stunned. You're okay? May I keep this? I never had anyone do that before. Do you teach classes or anything? No"?

"But you do use your personal energy to achieve good things, do you not? You should, you know. It would be a shame to waste that. I'll show you what I mean, what I do. May I have your spoon there"?

The wonder worker goes into his favorite metal bending routine - as long as it doesn't look like a magic trick.

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There are of course two real methods here. One is the physical work, the other the mental work. The words create a great deal of the wonder, in effect, in meaning and in memory. If you know Wonder Words, then you'll understand how the script helps spectators feel things, and even if they do not, how that seems to be part of the effect too. Carefully study the words as an example. Then say things that are like that, but which are natural to you.

The main idea is that the effect is not about the keychain, the light, or the performer. In fact, it doesn't really look like the performer is actually performing. The effect is all about the spectator and what the spectator causes to happen. That's a big deal. The focus on the spectator as the actual magical person is an interesting shift, and a memorable one. If nothing else, keep this notion in mind.

Physically, you'll need two matching key chains with little lights on the end. These are very common now - an LED light to help you see your keys and keyhole at night. Break one key chain about in half. You can do this by prying open a link in the chain or cutting the flimsy chains carefully with a wire cutter. Keep the bottom half of the chain with the LED light attached. Toss away the top half of this same chain, as it is not used.

Get some "metal putty" at a hardware store. This plastic putty looks like metal once it is cured. Near the top third of the full keychain, mold a small amount of the putty. You want to make the putty look like it is a small glob of melted chain. This putty should be distinct when it is pointed out, but not big and obvious otherwise. This glob will be partially hidden between the thumb and first finger. Besides, all eyes naturally focus on the light as you mention the light.

Finger palm the half chain (and light) in the left hand. The right hand holds the full keychain up, between thumb and first finger to show it. Palm is turned out to the spectators as you begin to show the keychain.

The glob hides partially behind the first finger and thumb. Talk about the spectator's personal energy and your keychain light.

Move the light over to the spectator's palm up hand. As you do so, appear to steady the keychain and the light at the bottom of the chain with your left hand. The big motion of moving forward towards the spectator hides the small move you will do. Turn your right hand palm in towards you. As you do, allow the right second finger to catch the chain. Simply curling the fingers inward naturally brings the keychain and light into the right palm, as the palm turns towards you. It would be obvious that the light has disappeared, except for what you have in your left hand. As the right hand pulls the real light and chain in, the thumb and first finger also grasp the top of the half-chain in the left hand.

This sounds complicated, but in truth it is not even really a move at all. In the action of apparently steadying the light at the bottom of the keychain, the switch has taken place.

Move the left hand away entirely.

You may want to talk about pendulums and how they react over people's hands. When enough real suspense and near-boredom has kicked in, let the bottom part of the chain drop into the spectator's palm up hand. It will look as if you are holding the top half of the chain only in your right hand. Do not make any sort of move when you drop the chain. Merely allow the bottom, broken, chain to slip through your thumb and finger by slightly and slowly releasing pressure.

It's important that you be as shocked and surprised as the spectators are. BE shocked and surprised, not "over act" shock and surprise.

After a brief pause as if you are still recovering from the wonder, with your left hand pick up the light and chain in your spectator's hand. Your right hand still holds the supposed top half of the chain.

Per the effect, have the spectator apparently hold the two pieces. As you move forward, naturally bring your hands together. Don't make a move out of this either. Drop the entire light and chain from your right hand into the spectator's palm. Your left hand finger palms it's half-chain and light secretly. It should appear that you have dropped both halves from each hand into the spectator's hand. Instruct the spectator to close their hand and "see if they can still make it light up anyway".

Note that the focus is placed on the spectator lighting the keychain - not fixing it! Do not act as if this is the "big finale" to a "trick".

This is more about moving on after an odd experience has taken place. Keep this tone in mind.

Such focus also gives you ample time to drop your left hand to your side casually, and ditch the half-chain whenever you comfortably can.

Use the language as described and you may have the spectator say they feel things happening: Their hand gets warmer (or cooler), their arm is tingling (or feels like a solid iron bar) and such. If they say they feel nothing, make that part of the effect too. Finally, have them open their hand. It is best if the spectator is the one who notices the chain is "welded" back together.

Telling the spectator to open her hand to see if anything has happened yet is devious. The first time she opens her hand, you say, "Nothing yet. Close your hand". Of course, the chain is already fixed, but when you say nothing has happened, she will close her hand and think nothing has happened. She is looking for the light to go on, remember. When she opens her hand and sees the light is not on yet, she'll think nothing has happened anyway. Later, when you have her open her hand again and pick up the chain - only then does the effect take place. This is the indirection I use to suggest that the effect took place in her hand and that I never touched anything at all. I could not have done anything - as she had checked her own hands, and nothing had happened. No one had touched the chain but she since that time.

This is a very strong principle. Many spectators will take this whole affair as real. What if they don't? At worst, it is a very strong magical effect as a metaphor and symbol of the spectator's talents, power, and ability. How can they not like the idea that they are powerful, talented and have strong abilities? You really cannot lose with this approach.

If you perform this like a coin switch trick, it will be taken in that light. Presented as a weird thing you have observed from time to time, this can be very intense and memorable. Spectators often tell their own stories about streetlights or lights at home blinking on or off. Has it ever happened to you? Have you had any unusual occurrence at all in your life ever? Sure, I thought you did. Either that, or it upset you so much, you decided to forget it. See? You can't really be wrong. More often than not, they will tell you all sorts of wild stories about them. That's fine rapport to get from one silly trick. Using this as an introduction into "metal bending" or other such mentalistic effects helps insure this effect, and vice versa.

There are too many details to go into about the patter lines as they are written. Trust us - those who know Wonder Words can tell you all about what these lines do for you. Performing them will teach you a great deal as well.

Spoon Smooshing

This is a very wild, weird, unusual effect. You can't just do it without a little psychological set-up. It is not a trick, or a bit to be used as a throwaway. You will need a Sanada gimmick. It must be one like Goshman makes, as you want the fingers to look realistic, even up close. In a bar, or at a distance, it will not matter. Paint the inside (non-finger looking side) with silver paint. Be sure and tape off the edges so the silver doesn't get sprayed over the flesh fingers on the other side. NOW we can have some real fun!

Put the Sanada in place in the right hand. Your right hand now looks like an oddly cupped right hand. To make this look natural, pick up a

spoon and
hold it as
you talk.
Now your
hand looks
perfectly
normal.
Imagine
that.

Now imagine this: Hold the spoon with the bowl pointed towards the ceiling. Pressure from your right thumb keeps the spoon in place against your fingers and gaff.

As you talk about spoons. Un, or bad vibes,
allow the bowl of the spoon to slip behind your
hand (and gimmick).

From the audience's view, the spoon is slowly
slipping behind your hand, as your thumb
perhaps rubs the bowl. Bringing both hands
together, the audience notices you are applying
a little

pressure on
the bowl. In
truth, the bowl
is now hidden
behind the
gimmick and
the silver side
of the gaff is
beginning to
be seen by the
audience.

Reveal the silver side of the gaff more and more, as you slowly slide your fingertips back away from the gimmick. This looks really weird. It appears that you have flattened and stretched the bowl of the spoon at your fingertips. Pull on the gimmick a bit to aid in the illusion of stretching the bowl more.

To flatten the bowl of the spoon to normal:

The backs of both hands are still toward the audience as the bowl is dramatically messed up. The hands lower to waist level and rotate casually so that the cupped hands are palms up (fingers toward the ceiling). As this happens, the gimmick is slipped right back into place along the fingers. The bowl of the spoon covers most of the gimmick now. The right thumb still holds the bowl of the spoon against the fingers and gaff.

"Now we're back to normal - whatever normal means after THAT!"

The audience sees that the bowl has been squished back to normal and they react immediately. This gives you ample time to toss the spoon on to the table and gesture, then ditch the odd little prosthetic device. The moves may be done entirely one-handed, by the way. A little play and you'll see how easy that is too.

In my opinion, this is not a slow-motion dramatic spoon bending psychic effect. Rather, it is a complete shock, and creates wonder and awe - and not a few nervous laughs and conversations. Performed in an off-handed, fast-paced but unhurried manner, this is a mind twister. It's also a great visual image for people to try and describe later to friends. The effect sounds continually better in the telling, believe me. But it is dam good in actual performance too. If you dare try it out.

It isn't so daring, as you are covered all of the time. But we tend to get nervous about bold and easy ideas for some reason.

Get over that, and you will find what many of us have found. Strange as it seems, miracles can still be created these days with mere plastic.

One thing I know for certain. This is too amazing and too weird to do on its own. It is so radical it does not register on spectator's minds without some explanation or set-up. I find it best to do some regular metal bending first. This prepares people that you are capable of such strange things. After some very real (not trick looking) bending of metal, it is time to pick up one last spoon and "ground out the energy". That's the time to do this friends, in my experience. You may find other times and set-ups for yourself.

I wish for you the joy of practicing and performing these wonders, beyond the now rarity of actually reading them in print.

It has come to pass that subtle secrets shall now often be lost. There is a creative process in reading, demanding imagination and individualized thought process.

Reading, unlike passively watching video, is demanding. It takes time and passion.

To be more than a clone, one must think and feel, not merely duplicate. Reading used to force this upon magical enthusiasts. Those days are now nearly gone.

I have no wish to be stuck forever in days of old with no willingness to embrace change. I love the ancient, but I also love the modern. Still it is with trepidation that I make the transition from manuscripts and booklets to new ways of video recording of my ideas and work. It is pointless to create Kenton clones, when all I wish is to inspire others to be better at their own expressions.

Yet, such is the danger of learning by watching only, sans the mystical passageway of reading between the lines.

I fear far less written work to do these days. In one sense, a relief perhaps. But for the ART, who can say?

My bet is I will flow with the change as do we all, or suffer from stagnation. Until a visual release then, I thank you for your continuing support through the years.

Visit all of Kenton's Wonders at:

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