



MAGIC YOUTH INTERNATIONAL

I.B.M. Ring #199, Raleigh, NC



MAGIC APPRENTICE COURSE

LESSON PLAN 1

January 5, 2007

ETHICS IN MAGIC: The Magicians Oath (5 minutes)

For our purposes, a magic trick is used to entertain and create a feeling of wonder. While the audience is generally aware that the magic is performed using trickery they derive enjoyment from the magician's skill and cunning. Keeping the secrets of magic is important for several reasons:

- Exposing how a trick is done can ruin the effect and harm magic as an artform.
- The focus on the "How" of magic transforms it into meaningless intellectual puzzles and riddles.
- Once the secret of a trick is revealed to a person, he or she can no longer fully enjoy subsequent performances of that magic; the amazement is gone.
- If the the secret is a simple one, the spectator may feel let down or disappointed that he or she was fooled so easily.
- Keeping the secrets preserves the professional mystery of magicians who perform for money.

The Magician's Oath: Membership in the International Brotherhood of Magicians and Magic Youth International requires a solemn commitment to the "Magician's Oath" never to reveal the secrets of magic to non-magicians. Once sworn to The Oath, you are considered a magician and are expected to live up to this promise. A magician who reveals a secret, either purposely or through insufficient practice, may typically find himself without any magicians willing to teach him any more secrets.

Does this mean that we should never share a magical secret with anyone else? Of course not! It is permissible to reveal secrets to individuals who are determined to learn magic and become magicians. Effects that are very well known and in the public domain may be shared openly with to promote an interest in magic. We know that the secrets of almost all magical effects are available to the public through numerous books and magazines devoted to magic; that there are web sites which offer videos, DVDs and instructional materials. There are very few classical illusions left unrevealed, however, magic is a living art and new illusions are devised with surprising regularity.

Our main goal should be to protect the secrets that make magic special and entertaining. Respect the hard work and creative effort of your magical peers by never revealing the secrets to their perfected effects. Avoid discussions on how this effect or that trick was performed on TV or in another setting with non-magician friends. Help us to keep the fun and mystery of magic alive.

Please stand and join me in reciting the magician's oath:

"As a magician I promise never to reveal the secret of any illusion to a non-magician, unless that one swears to uphold the Magician's Oath in turn. I promise never to perform any illusion for any non-magician without first practicing the effect until I can perform it well enough to maintain the illusion of magic."

HISTORY OF MAGIC: The Beginning (5 minutes)

[Source: The Illustrated History of Magic [(Updated Version), Milbourne & Maurine Christopher, 1976]

The word "magic" stems from an old Persian word for priests or wise men, Magi. The earliest known representation of a magical effect is believed to be a drawing found on the wall of an Egyptian tomb in Beni Hasan. The drawing dates back to around 2500 B.C. and depicts two men facing each other with four round cups, mouths down, between them. The hieroglyph inscription "Up from under" appears above the cups.

A papyrus scroll dating back to 1700 B.C. describes the earliest recorded magic performance presented before Egyptian Pharaoh Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid, by a priest named Dedi. The scroll details how the priest decapitated a goose, an ox and a pelican then restored the heads to the living bodies.

Feats of magic were commonplace on the streets of Rome, Athens and Madrid as early as 3 B.C.. The people of this era believed openly in the power of magic. They believed that their destinies were controlled by super powered gods. If the gods were pleased, crops would prosper and communities would live in harmony. Famine, natural disasters and wars were brought on by angry gods. These people turned to priests with powers that reached beyond those of normal men to guide them in dealing with the gods.

The Greek conqueror, Alexander the Great, is said to have sealed his position as a favored among the gods with a bit of "magic." He appeared on the proposed site for a new temple and announced that a god would appear to him. He dug into the mud at the site and pulled out a white goose's egg. Upon opening the egg, a snake was pulled from within. Within three days in Alexander's private chambers, the serpent had grown and developed the head of a man. The snake answered questions and convinced all who visited that Alexander was chosen to rule.

Of course, Alexander had placed the snake in the egg and buried it the night before. The rest was showmanship that firmly established Alexander's god-given right to rule an empire.

THE THEORIES OF MAGIC: Vanishing

Beliefs differ, however, it is generally accepted that there are seven basic illusions in magic. These are Vanishes, Productions, Transformations, Restorations, Teleportations, Levitations and Penetrations. Tonight we'll cover the first: Vanishes.

Vanishing: The magician makes something disappear—a coin, a cage of doves, milk from a newspaper, an assistant from a cabinet or even the Statue of Liberty. As the vanish is the reverse of a production, both may use the same principle or technique in reverse.

Tonight, we'll focus on one of the more common means of vanishing, producing and switching objects in the hand: The Thumb Tip. The thumb tip is one of the oldest pieces of magic apparatus still in use today. Its recorded origins, in the probable form of flesh-colored metal and wooden thimbles, date back to fourteenth century Europe.

Thumb tips have been used to vanish liquids, lit cigarettes, salt & sand, silks, bits of paper, cards, insects...basically, anything that can easily be concealed within the tip.

While the tip is designed to blend in with the hand, a true pro can use one painted a fluorescent orange without being caught. A few tips for properly using your thumb:

Demonstrate the proper use of the tip

Demonstrate loading the tip

Demonstrate stealing the tip

Demonstrate showing both hands empty with a tip

Demonstrate various uses for a tip

Vanishing larger objects: Some items may fit snugly into the tip leaving little room the thumb. Just because it looks like a thumb doesn't mean it can only be used on the thumb.

Let's pair up and practice with one another. Ask or help if you need it. Try vanishing other things besides the silk.