

Bob Cassidy  
The Art of Mentalism - 3



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## Before the Curtain Rises

Twenty years have passed since I wrote *The Art of Mentalism*. I was thirty-four years old at the time. (Those of you who are mathematically inclined will have correctly deduced that I am now around forty – give or take a year or two.) While I am pleased that the book has been well received over the years, much of what I wrote no longer accurately reflects my approach to the art.

In *The Art of Mentalism 2* (1995), I focused primarily on the presentation of a complete mental act. In the present volume, I give you effects and essays that focus on the theoretical basis of successful mentalism. Before you read on, however, it is important that you take the following test:

## The Test of the Ring

The following is a true/false test. Please read and reread the questions **carefully** before marking your answers. Since the result of this test will become part of your PERMANENT RECORD and follow you everywhere for the rest of your life and for twenty years after you are dead, it is important that you do NOT make impulsive guesses. As a mentalist, you are expected to use your intuition to arrive at the correct answers.

**[WARNING! You MAY NOT read the minds of other students to assist you in your decision-making.]**

### Question 1 of 1:

The “Ring on the Stick” is one of the classic effects of East Indian magic. For hundreds of years it has been passed down through generations of the street magicians known as jadoo wallahs. Henry Hay [ J. Barrows Mussey 1912-1985], author of the classic *The Amateur Magician’s Handbook*, called it a “small masterpiece”, and provided a description of the effect written by a Major L.H. Branson of the Indian Army. [Page 234, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1972 Thomas Y. Crowell]

Here is the effect based on Major Branson’s description:

The jadoo wallah either borrows or uses his own long thin cane, which he passes around for thorough examination. While it is being inspected, the performer requests

the loan of a wedding ring. He then carefully wraps the ring in a handkerchief, which he asks a spectator, whom we shall call *A*, to hold and feel the ring inside.

Two spectators, whom we shall call *B* and *C*, are asked to hold the ends of the stick each by one hand. The jadoo wallah now boldly announces that he will cause the borrowed ring to pass onto the center of the stick without spectators *B* or *C* letting go of either end. Since it is necessary to preserve the secret of the miracle, he states that it will be accomplished under cover of the handkerchief. Spectator *A* is asked to hold the handkerchief containing the ring over the center of the stick and to let go when the performer says, "Let Go!" or its Hindi equivalent.

Suddenly he shouts, "Let go please now gentlemen!" and whips the handkerchief out of *A*'s hand. The borrowed ring is seen spinning merrily on the center of the stick, much to the amazement of the wealthy tourists, who show their great appreciation of his artistry by tossing pocket change at the wallah's feet.

**Circle *T* if the answer is *True* and *F* if the answer is *False*.**

**T/F 1. The effect is not suitable for inclusion in a presentation of mentalism.**

**T/F 2. Major Branson is correct when he later states that the effect was accomplished as follows:**

The stick is an ordinary one; thin enough to pass easily through a wedding ring. The only prepared article is the handkerchief, in one corner of which is a duplicate wedding ring sewn into a small pocket.

When the performer takes the borrowed ring to fold into the handkerchief, he folds the one that is already sewn in it, and palms the borrowed ring.

He taps on the ring in the handkerchief with the stick. He uses this opportunity to secretly slide the borrowed ring over the middle of it. He hands the stick to *B* and *C* but keeps his hand over the ring now on it, thus concealing it until it is covered by the handkerchief. When the handkerchief is pulled away, it takes with it the ring sewn in its corner and as it brushes the stick, it makes the borrowed ring revolve merrily, as if it just arrived there.

**T/F 3. Major Branson's explanation indicates that he either has a very sharp eye or he is an accomplished magician himself.**

T/F 4. If the jadoo wallah claimed that the “miracle” was accomplished through his “spiritual powers” or a “psychic gift”, he would be acting unethically, thus justifying Branson’s “exposure” of the method.

T/F 5. It is impossible to learn the effect based only on Branson’s description.

**DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL OF THE QUESTIONS**

## ANSWERS

**Statements 1, 2, 3, and 4 are False**

**Statement 5 is True**

**The rest of this book explains why...**

## A Time to Define

In *The Art of Mentalism* I wrote:

*Mentalism is the art of presenting seemingly paranormal effects in an entertaining manner. Its essence lies in the performer's ability to successfully suspend the disbelief of his audience.*

As far as it goes I suppose that's still a workable description of what good mentalists attempt to do. The problem is that the same definition could be applied to the patently fraudulent "psychics" and "mediums" who regularly appear in today's electronic, television and print media. If they were not presenting their "apparently paranormal" abilities "in an entertaining manner", they would not have achieved the unprecedented popularity they enjoy today.

But there are those, particularly in the magic community, who feel that mentalists belong in the same category as the "telepsychics". (The religious right apparently doesn't like us either - just the other day I heard Pat Robertson explaining on his "700 Club" that reading minds and such is a demonically inspired activity that could screw up your immortal soul big time. I decided that it would be a waste of postage to send him a promo package.)

Even among mentalists there are growing differences, particularly between old school "Mind Readers" and those who publicly state, "It only looks like mind reading, but it's really all body language-intuition-heightened sensory skills- suggestion-and

anything else you want to call it except psychic because it's more like an illusion but I'm not a magician."

Many leading performers have adopted the latter approach, despite its indirect suggestion that the performer is unfamiliar with "magic tricks" and its misleading claims regarding human sensory skills, kinesics, suggestibility and intuition. Nonetheless, some feel that by claiming enhanced *normal* skills, as opposed to *paranormal* abilities, that they will appeal to a larger segment of the public and thus increase their commercial potential.

Unfortunately, this approach seems to work only for those who already possess strong skills as entertainers. Those who aren't as talented are not likely to improve their prospects by claiming mental abilities that could allegedly be learned by anyone of normal intelligence.

Regardless of the various positions mentalists and magicians have taken on the matter, the argument over what a mentalist should or shouldn't claim must always logically lead to the conclusion that misrepresentation lies at the core of all of the magical arts. The question, then, is not *whether* a performer should misrepresent the nature of his work, but rather to what extent he *must* do so in order to entertainingly create the illusion of mind reading.

I suggest that the answer lies in the question itself. If his goal is simply to *entertain* by creating the illusion of mind reading, very few, if any, claims are needed or ethically required. Most people, contrary to popular belief, are intelligent enough to know when a performance is presented solely as a form of entertainment.

If, on the other hand, a performer's primary goal is to promote the acceptance of false or pseudoscientific claims, which result in, or are likely to result in, financial or emotional detriment to members of his audience, the necessary misrepresentations will clearly cross an ethical borderline.

To put it another way - "Proving" the ability to communicate with the dead by actively pumping for information from grieving survivors, requires a lot more lying and misrepresentation than is needed to simply entertain an audience by pretending to read their minds.

An entertainer plays to his audience.  
A charlatan plays with them.

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## It's the Motive that Counts

**The answer to question number four is *false*** because the jadoo wallah's claims of psychic and spiritual gifts would have been plainly secondary to his desire to entertain and earn tips by magically passing a borrowed ring onto a stick. If he had attributed the magic to the effects of "woofle dust," I doubt that anyone would have objected even though the claim is equally false.

## Magic in Mentalism

**Here is why the answer to question number one is *false*.** By including what is obviously a magic trick in their performances either as an attention getter or as a change of pace, many of the top names in the history of mentalism subtly set themselves apart from those who claimed their demonstrations were manifestations of psychic ability.

Fake psychics are not likely to include tricks such as the Egg Bag in their demonstrations. But Joseph Dunninger, probably the greatest mentalist of the Twentieth Century, included both the Egg Bag and the Linking Rings in many of his performances.

While this did not stop jealous magicians from attempting to expose his mind reading, it did serve to reaffirm his really quite honest claim that his mind reading was based on "scientific principles" developed during his early years as a magician, and had nothing to do with the methods employed by fraudulent psychics and spirit mediums.

(These examples, however, should be accompanied by a word of caution. The Hippity Hop Rabbits, despite being a showstopper for the Legendary Kardor the Grate, is not recommended for use by the ordinary mentalist.)

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## The Essential Secret of Deception

Or, "The Devil is in the Details"

**Statement number two** was that Major Branson correctly explained how the effect was accomplished. The statement is *false* because Branson only explained the essential elements of the method. He makes no mention of the handling that must have been required in order warrant calling the effect a "small masterpiece".

If you have ever actually tried to do the effect as described, you will have discovered that the vaguest part of the method is the secret loading of the ring onto the stick. Branson merely states that the performer "takes the opportunity to slide the ring onto the stick" while using the stick to tap on the duplicate ring sewn into the handkerchief. Several recent descriptions of the effect, using a magic wand instead of a stick or cane, simply suggest that the performer put the wand under his left arm while wrapping and stealing the borrowed ring in the right hand. The performer is then instructed to slide the ring onto the wand while taking it out from under the arm with the right hand.

This is not the neat or precise maneuver that you may imagine it to be. If the ring is too small, it is very likely to make an audible scratch or click as it is slid onto the wand. If the wand slips slightly out of position, it is entirely possible that the performer will miss on his first attempt to load the ring, especially if he is keeping his eyes focused on the handkerchief that allegedly contains the ring.

Once the ring is in place on the end of the stick, it must be naturally slide to the middle. Again, this must be done silently and, if the trick were truly a masterpiece, there would be a logical cover for the slide to the middle.

Branson's description covers none of these details and therefore, while managing to describe the method, fails to explain how the effect is actually accomplished.

**This is also the reason that statement number five is *false*.**

Henry Hay, by the way, was correct in describing the effect as a masterpiece and I am sure that he was well aware of the little details that separate a masterful presentation from a clumsy "good enough" approach that fools no one except the magician himself. Unfortunately, he neglected to include them in his otherwise excellent book.

**Statement number three – that Branson either had a sharp eye or was a proficient magician himself – is false because if the effect were done masterfully, as it was described, a sharp eye would have seen nothing and a proficient magician would have paid more attention to the critical details of handling.**

(I guess I should confess to you that the “Ring on Stick” is an effect that I often use in my own act, generally as a lead in to my “Linking Finger Ring” routine. For those of you who are interested in my solutions to all of the handling difficulties, the complete routine is presented at the end of the book.)

Attention to the minor details of handling is what often transforms an otherwise standard “magic trick” into an effective mental or magical illusion. The following handling of the ubiquitous thumb tip provides a perfect example:

### Handling the Tip

Thumb tips are often used in mentalism to switch billets or to load them into envelopes or other small containers. Many of the handlings that have been developed, though, are not as natural in appearance as they could be. I think this has something to do with the fact that they are called “thumb” tips. This has effectively blocked many performers from discovering that the gimmick is easier to handle naturally if it is worn on any finger *except* the thumb.

The billet switch attributed to Al Baker and described in Annemann’s *Practical Mental Effects* provides a perfect example. A dummy billet is hidden in the thumbtip and the spectator’s billet is on the left hand as shown in the following photograph:



The right thumb is then placed directly on top of the visible billet and the fingers are closed loosely around the tip. The right thumb then draws the dummy from the tip as the left hand falls casually to the side.



(The completion of the Baker style thumb tip switch. Tip is exposed for

greater clarity – in actual performance the tip is hidden behind the curled left fingers.)

This, I suggest, is NOT the way the switch should be performed. It does not remotely resemble the way that a person would naturally pick up a slip of paper from his other hand. Just pick up a folded slip of paper and you will see what I mean. As you pick it up notice that your thumb is *under* the slip, not on top of it.

The switch is necessarily awkward because the performer has restricted himself to wearing the tip on his thumb. (I am sure that many of you are anxious to point out that there are *finger* tips available for use on other digits. The problem with finger tips, though, is that they are generally too small to comfortably hold a folded index card billet or piece of currency. They look more natural on the finger, true. But with proper handling it doesn't matter what they look like. What matters is that they are large enough to hold what you need them to hold!)

By wearing the tip on the middle finger instead of the thumb, the handling flows much more naturally, as seen in the following sequence. (Again, I have intentionally exposed the tip for the sake of clarity.)

Note how the curled right fingers naturally conceal the presence of the tip on the middle finger.

In the next step, the right fingers open, as the hand is turned inward until the palm faces the floor. The tip is placed directly on top of the billet, which is dragged from the closing left fingers as before, except this time the thumb is where it *should* be – under the billet.



(Photo shows the middle finger being placed *on top* of the spectator's billet preparatory to dragging the dummy billet from the tip. It will be grasped between the middle finger on top and the thumb underneath.)



The only potential problem that remains is the initial position of the spectator's billet on the left hand. In many routines, it is more natural to hold it at the tips of the fingers rather than on the open hand.

The photo to the left shows a much more natural opening position. As before, the thumb tip is worn on the middle finger of the right hand. As the hands approach each other, the right fingers extend. At the same time, the left fingers extend and cover the spectator's billet as show in the exposed view.



### Exposed View

- in practice, the hands are still held with their backs to the audience as shown in the previous picture.



**The Completion of the Switch** from the audiences' point of view.



When a thumb tip is used to secretly load a billet into a pay envelope or other container – such as a film canister – it is also much more natural to wear the tip on the middle or forefinger rather than on the thumb. Normal people don't use their thumb to pull something out of an envelope. While the move may not be visible, it is the unnatural action that is likely to ring subconscious alarm bells in the minds of the audience.



(While the finger tip – center – would seem to be preferable to a thumb tip, the truth is that the thumbtip offers greater versatility and ease of handling – regardless of the finger it is worn on. Notice that the tip is the exact size as a film canister, a fact originally exploited by myself in *Pseudomentially Yours* and Larry Becker in his *World of Super Mentalism*. Both of us independently came up with the same idea at almost the exact same time, proving once again that fact is stranger than fiction – or something like that.)

### The Farmer's Daughter and the Pebble

The primary difference between *major* and *minor* effects in mentalism is that the former involves, or potentially involves, the whole audience, while the latter refers to one-on-one effects or routines involving only a few audience participants. Question answering routines are the primary major effects in the art, but it also includes psychological forces, "Hurling the Headlines" type routines, and anything else that includes total audience participation.

In this section, I will describe an audience participation bit that I have used for several years. I have found that routines like this create excellent audience rapport. You will find this to be excellent to use when you are working for upscale or corporate audiences and will find that it fits perfectly into lecture style presentations as well as regular programs.

The script is based on a question posed by Edward de Bono in his book *Lateral Thinking*. What follows is pretty much a word for word transcription from my act. Change the wording to suit your own stage *persona*.

## The Script

People often ask me if I was born with a special gift or if I went to a special mind reading school or something to learn to do these things.

Actually, those who know me well will tell you that I went to school on the small bus. But other than that, I didn't receive any special training, nor was I born with any unusual gift. Probably the only unusual thing about me was that I didn't speak at all until I was eight years old. And then, one morning at breakfast I said, "This stuff stinks!" My mother said, "Bobby, you spoke! Why haven't you spoken before?" So I told her, "Up to now everything's been okay."

Well, okay, that didn't really happen, but it is true that I never spoke much as a child. I preferred to listen and watch and developed pretty good powers of observation. Eventually I learned that you could learn a lot about what a person was thinking if you not only paid attention to what they were saying, but by carefully observing their gestures and posture, and by paying attention to their eyes and tone of voice.

What I do today is really just a combination of the power of observation and a technique called "lateral thinking." Are any of you familiar with that type of thinking?

It is a technique that can be used to solve seemingly impossible problems. Let me show you how it works by telling you a little story.

Now, before I start I want to warn you that at the end of the story I am going to ask you a question, so it is very important that you pay close attention to all of the details. Remember what I said about the power of observation?

Okay, here's the story - There was this farmer who had a daughter... [pause and look at a male spectator] No, not *that* story, sir.

Anyway, the farmer has a beautiful daughter. The problem is that he also owes a lot of money to the bank and his farm is about to be foreclosed. Now the banker just happens to agree that the farmer's daughter is very beautiful, so he makes a proposition. [Pause and look at same male spectator] He makes the proposition to the farmer, sir. I told you, it's not *that* story.

[What you are trying to convey to the audience is that you are reading the mind of the spectator to whom you are making the asides. The humor arises not only out of the lines, but out of the way you look at the spectator before speaking to him.]

Here is the proposition – The banker says he is going to put two pebbles into his moneybag. A white pebble and a black pebble. He'll shake up the bag and let the farmer's daughter reach in and select one. If she selects the white pebble, the banker says he will tear up the mortgage. If she selects the black pebble, he says he will also tear up the mortgage, but he will win the daughter's hand in marriage.

[Pause and look at same spectator.] Now it's getting a little closer to the story you're thinking of, isn't it?

Now while he is making his offer to the farmer, the banker bends down and picks up two pebbles and tosses them into the bag. The farmer's sharp-eyed daughter notices that the sneaky banker is cheating. Instead of putting a black pebble and a white pebble into the bag, he puts in two black pebbles. But she realizes that she can't say anything because the cheating banker holds the deed to the farm.

The farmer, who has no idea that the game is fixed, and who has every reason to believe that he has a fifty-fifty chance of winning, says that he won't play – that he would rather give up the farm than give up his daughter.

But the daughter is not only sharp eyed, she is sharp-witted and a master of lateral thinking. She immediately sees how the banker's trick can be made to work against him, so she begs that her father let her select a pebble.

Reluctantly, the farmer agreed and the daughter, who now *knew* that there was no way she could lose, reached into the bag and withdrew a stone.

I will tell you right now that the daughter isn't hiding an extra pebble in her hand and that there are really two black pebbles in the bag. But in order to win, the daughter must select a white one.

Now I think you will agree that this appears to be an impossible situation – that there is no way that the daughter can possibly win. Simple logical thinking tells us that she *must* select a black pebble and lose. But like I said, she isn't using simply logical

thinking; she is using logical lateral thinking. But how could she possibly hope to win the game? How did she know that there was no way she could lose? If you think you know, keep your answer to yourself for just a second so that our logical thinkers here tonight can appreciate the difficulty of the situation.

[At this point just let the audience ponder the question. Ask a few people what they would do in the same situation. (Be sure to ask the ones who look puzzled.) Normally no one will offer the correct answer, unless they are familiar with lateral thinking or have heard a similar story. In my own experience the only ones who have heard the story are those who have seen my show before. I suppose I will eventually run into someone who has read DeBono's book, but that hasn't happened yet.]

It *is* a difficult situation and it *cannot* be solved by traditional logical thinking. Here's why – When you think about the problem logically, you immediately realize that she must, if she is not cheating herself, withdraw a black pebble and lose.

But the logical thinker, by focusing on the pebble that the daughter must take out of the bag, is paying attention to the wrong end of the problem!

The lateral thinker quickly realizes that the solution cannot have anything to do with what is taken from the bag. Instead, the lateral thinker looks at what must *remain* in the bag after the selection is made.

[The last line is spoken slowly, with emphasis on the word *remain*, and is followed by a three-second pause. You will see the light dawning in the eyes of some of your audience.]

Now you are starting to see it, aren't you? {Look toward the male spectator again, and say, "Except for him, he's still trying to figure out what happens after they go to the hay loft."} That's right. No matter which stone is removed from the bag, a black one *must* remain. If the game were being played fairly, there would be no way to know which stone would be left. But because the banker cheated, the daughter immediately realized that a black stone would be in the bag after she made her selection.

So what did she do? She simply reached into the bag, took out a pebble, and immediately let it slip from her hand and fall to the ground among the hundreds of other pebbles that were strewn all over the place. She said, "Oh, I'm sorry, I dropped it! I don't even know which one I picked. But that is okay. All we have to do is look at what is left in the bag and we will know that I took the pebble of the opposite color!"

The only way the banker could object, of course, would be by admitting that he had cheated. And since a black stone remains in the bag, the daughter must have picked the white one, so she therefore won the game.

So you see, the basis of lateral thinking is just getting in the habit of looking at things in a different way. When you are able to do that without really thinking about it, you'll know this - [pause]

Impossibility is just a point of view.

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## The Intuitive Approach

As you may have noticed from the preceding routine, the audience is led to believe that the mentalist's ability is based partially on observation and lateral thinking. When I use this approach (which is very often, lately because it plays excellently at corporate and university presentations) I point out early in my performance that there is nothing psychic or supernatural about what I do, but that I have simply developed a natural intuitive gift.

### **What is the difference between being intuitive and being psychic?**

I have two answers to this question:

**ANSWER 1. I have no idea. (My honest answer.)**

**ANSWER 2. The following monologue (The answer I give to my audiences)**

A few weeks ago I saw an ad for a new computer program that said, "It's easy to use and has an intuitive interface."

An intuitive interface? I've heard about a mother's intuition. But I didn't have any idea that it was something I could interface with. And besides, I thought that interfacing was something that could get you thrown in jail in most states and it's certainly not something I would every think of doing with my mother.

I'm only kidding, but if you think about it for a minute, doesn't it strike you as a little odd to hear the word "intuitive" being used to refer to a computer program? You think of computers, you immediately think of bits and bytes, Boolean algebra, electronics, equations and logic. Everything about a computer is based on logic, so how could it possibly interface intuitively with you?

Well, it's really not as confusing as it sounds. The problem is that many people think that "being intuitive," means the same thing as "being psychic". It doesn't. Being intuitive simply means being able to pay attention to the messages being sent to you by your own subconscious mind. The subconscious is where all of our life experiences are stored. It contains all of the information that influences the way we act and think. When we develop the power of careful observation, we improve the quality of information that is stored in our subconscious mind. And when we learn to listen to what it is telling us . . .that's what it means to be intuitive.

The "intuitive interface" in the ad simply means that the program is easy to figure out - that it works exactly the way you would expect it to work because it *makes sense*.

And that is basically what I do as a mentalist. I make sense out of things by simply listening to what my own mind is telling me.

And right now, it is telling me that . . . [here you *segue* into your next effect]

## Stage Hypnosis for Mentalists

If you have ever wanted to include a hypnotic demonstration in your program, the following contains an extremely easy way to quickly put a group of subjects under what appears to be a genuine hypnotic trance.

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Over the past thirty years, I have often included hypnosis in my shows and have worked closely with several top hypnotists in my days as a cruise ship performer and on tours of the Pacific Northwest. But, until now, I have never written a word about the subject because I always thought the field was pretty well covered in McGill's *Stage Hypnosis* and in another work which I will mention shortly.

But there has been an unfortunate trend in the past few years. The idea that "new is good, old isn't" has caught hold among many newcomers to the field. And a recent deluge of "courses" claiming to offer "THE REAL SECRETS OF THE LUCRATIVE BUSINESS OF STAGE HYPNOSIS" have apparently foisted a good deal of useless information upon them.

Those performing stage hypnosis professionally will be familiar with much of what follows, although I expect that many, for the sake of appearances, will argue that what I am describing is not *really* hypnosis at all. And they would be right.

Here's why:

1. Stage hypnosis has nothing to do with what hypnosis really is.
2. No one knows what hypnosis *really* is, and
3. Whether a stage hypnotist actually hypnotises anyone at all is completely irrelevant.

Years ago, Kreskin stirred up a good deal of controversy by stating that the so-called "hypnotic state" did not exist and offered a reward to anyone who could prove otherwise. I don't believe that he had anything against stage hypnosis, though, as he regularly included it as the second part of his full evening performances. After he issued his challenge, he didn't abandon half of his show - he simply said it was not hypnosis, but merely a demonstration of the power of suggestion. (!)

Some have cynically suggested that Kreskin may have simply been circumventing a Canadian ban on hypnosis shows, but his statement was still technically accurate because hypnosis is not a "state" which is subject to proof or disproof. And in the case of stage hypnotism, the only "state" that the performer needs to create in his subjects is a state of *compliance*. In other words, all he has to do is get his subjects to do what he tells them to do. That's all that matters.

I mentioned that there was another book, besides McGill's, that adequately covers the subject. It is *Dr. Q's Complete Hypnotic Act*, by William Larsen, Sr. It contains everything an aspiring stage hypnotist needs to know to construct an entertaining show. But rather than putting his subjects into a trance, the performer uses whispered instructions, applied psychology and physical coercion to turn his subjects into "instant stooges."

Few present day hypnotists use the Dr. Q technique, and those who do are not likely to admit to it. Most use progressive relaxation exercises, suggestibility tests and fairly standard induction scripts, which generally go something like this:

"... And now that your bodies are completely relaxed, I am going to count backwards from ten to one, and as I count, you are going to feel your eyelids grow heavy as you drift deeper and deeper into a state of hypnosis. Ten, nine, eight, that's right - you are becoming more and more relaxed, seven - six etc., etc."

But it doesn't really matter what the script is or what type of suggestibility techniques are employed, because true induction is not the performer's goal. The real purpose is simply to get them to act *as if* they are hypnotized, and then to do as they are told. To achieve this, a very powerful psychological technique is employed.

Before requesting potential subjects to come to the stage, it is important for the hypnotist to tell the audience some "facts" about hypnosis. This is not done for educational purposes, but to create a mind-set, which will help insure compliance among those who decide, they would like to volunteer. For example, many hypnotists state that **it is easier to hypnotise people who are highly intelligent and imaginative**. Whether this is true is irrelevant, because the real purpose of the statement is to plant the idea that those who do not respond to the performer's suggestions are unimaginative or stupid. The statement also eases fears potential subjects may have about being embarrassed while on stage, because it assures them that by doing what they are told, they will simply be proving that their minds are above average.

This, of course, is a principle that is as applicable to mentalism as it is to hypnosis. (Look at the boldfaced phrase in the preceding paragraph and substitute "read the minds of" for the word "hypnotise".) The responsibility for the success or failure of the performer's demonstration is thereby placed upon the spectators, thus eliminating many of the problems often caused by rowdy or skeptical volunteers.

The following "induction" script will serve to quickly put any group of spectators into a state of mind in which they will obey apparently hypnotic commands given to them. It isn't nearly as blatant as the Dr. Q technique but it is almost as coercive. (Those familiar with the Dr. Q act know that it involves a potentially dangerous physical technique used to intimidate troublesome subjects - that's why I can only say that my technique is only "*almost as coercive*".) I know it is effective because the percentage of unresponsive subjects is far lower than is usually encountered when a traditional induction is used. Note that the induction is best delivered using a hand-held, as opposed to a clip-on or lavalier style microphone.

**SCRIPT: [Delivered to the group of subjects who have come to the stage to be "hypnotized." The performer stands facing the seated subjects with his back to the audience. The letters MU mean "microphone up". In other words, the entire audience can hear the lines being said because the performer is speaking into his microphone. The letters MD mean "microphone down". This refers to lines that are spoken to the subjects while the mike is dropped to the performer's side. These lines are not whispered, nor is any other attempt made to prevent the audience from hearing what is being said.]**

MU “I want to thank you all for volunteering this evening. If you will all just sit straight up with your feet flat on the floor and your hands in your laps, I will now guide you into that unique state of mind that we refer to as hypnosis. Good.

“Now let’s relax a bit by taking a deep breath. Just take a deep breath and hold it as I count to five. Ready? Breath in. When I reach the count of five slowly breathe out. One, two, three, four, five. And again, breathe in and hold it. One, two, three, four, five, and breathe out slowly. As you do so, you will feel yourself becoming more and more relaxed.

**[You can expand on the previous paragraph as much as you like by taking the subjects through any numbers of breathing or progressive relaxation exercises. The main idea is to get the subjects to relax themselves and pay close attention to what you are saying.]**

“Now focus your minds on every word that I say. Just pretend that my voice is the voice of your own mind. Close your eyes and use your strong sense of imagination to pretend that my voice is yours. Imagine this as I count backward from ten to one. On each count, you will begin to feel yourself becoming more and more relaxed. Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.....that’s right, totally relaxed imagining that my voice is yours.

**[As I said earlier, you have prefaced your demonstration by giving some facts about hypnosis, including the fact that the more imaginative and intelligent a person is, the easier it is for them to enter a state of hypnosis. In the preceding paragraph, you are subtly reminding them of this as you tell them to use their *imagination* to pretend that your voice is their own inner voice.]**

“I am going to approach each one of you now and touch you on the forehead. When you feel my touch, you will become more and more relaxed as you imagine yourself entering a wonderfully peaceful and open state of mind...

**[Again, note the use of the word “imagine” and the subtle suggestion that they keep an “open mind.” The performer now approaches the first subject and touches him/her lightly on the forehead.]**

“I am speaking you now, and you alone as I touch you on the forehead.” MD

“Pretend there is a spot on your forehead exactly where I touched you. Keep your eyes shut but look upward as if you can see the spot from inside your head. Keep your eyes shut and fixed on the spot, Keep your eyes fixed on the spot at all times as you imagine that your eyelids are closing tighter and tighter together.

“The secret to entering a state of hypnosis is simply to use your powers of imagination to imagine that you are. Imagine the spot and keep looking at it as you continue to make yourself feel that your eyelids are becoming glued together. **MU** In a moment, I am going to ask you to open your eyes. But try as you might you will find that they will not open. Go ahead and try- try to open them!”

**[The entire induction has led up to this critical moment. If your subject has followed your instructions, she will not open her eyes. Not only is she imagining that she cannot do so, but as long as her eyeballs are looking upward, it is a physical impossibility to do so.]**

**There is nothing new about the eyes shut test or the idea of telling the subjects to use their imaginations. Nor is it unusual to imply that a spectator is unimaginative if he or she cannot follow your instructions. But combined as they are in this induction, they virtually guarantee that her eyes will remain shut - at least for two or three seconds, after which you say...]**

**MU** “Ok, relax, let your eyelids relax and imagine the spot on your head is slowly fading away. You have an excellent mind and fine powers of concentration.”

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The same procedure is followed with the rest of the subjects, all of whom will have heard the audience reaction to the first subject’s inability to open her eyes and the compliment you gave her about her “excellent mind” and “powers of concentration.” This offers them added encouragement to follow your instructions and also suggests that, if they don’t, they will be perceived as having less than excellent mental abilities. Of course, if you *should* encounter a non-responsive subject, you merely need to dismiss him or her saying, “That’s all right. I guess you just aren’t able to give enough concentration tonight. It doesn’t mean there is anything wrong with you, but it does suggest that you may be easily distracted. Please try again another night.”

That is why I call this a coercive technique.

After you have run the test on everyone, you will be able to easily perform any of the standard hypnotic routines.

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### “The Small Masterpiece of the East Indian Magician”

As promised, here is my handling for the East Indian version of the Ring on Stick. The effect and method are as described at the beginning of the book Here I will focus on the manner in which the stolen ring is artfully placed on the stick and maneuvered to the center.

I allow the stick (I use an ironwood wand, as seen in the photograph) to be examined as I borrow a ring and explain that I am about to exhibit a mystery whose true secret was discovered over a thousand years ago in India.

After the ring is wrapped in the handkerchief and being held by spectator C, I retrieve the wand and exhibit it to the audience as shown in this picture:



(The stolen ring is fingerpalmed in the right hand)

I explain to spectators A and B that they are to hold the stick by the ends, “like this.”



As I say the words "Like this," I turn my hands upward and inward as in the second picture. In this action the palmed ring is automatically loaded onto the end of the stick. Here is what the the situation would look like if you were peeping over my left shoulder:



If you look very closely, you can see the ring on the end of the stick near the base of my right ring finger.

But before handing the stick to A and B, I retrieve the handkerchief containing the duplicate ring and tap the wand upon it to show that the ring is really there:



I point out that the handkerchief itself prevents me from pushing the stick through the center of the ring and push the end of the stick against the ring to illustrate

This demonstration allows my right hand to slide naturally to the center of the stick, as seen in the final picture.



(The hand is shown over the center of the stick, hiding the borrowed ring.)

All that remains is to let A and B hold the ends of the stick and to then wrap the handkerchief around the center, hiding the stolen ring. The effect is concluded as in the original description and the borrowed ring is seen spinning "merrily" on the center of the stick.

Presented properly you will have created a "small masterpiece" and it is highly likely that you will find many coins on the ground surrounding your feet.

*Fini*