

**YOUR MIND
IS STILL
MY PLAYGROUND**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	9
FATEFUL ENCOUNTER.....	15
MENTAL CLUEDO	31
VINTAGE.....	41
INTACTO	51
PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY	65
CHILDREN ARE WONDERFUL.....	75
YOUR WIFE IS YOUR WORST ENEMY	83
ASTROBOY	89
ASTROALPHABET.....	97
A DISCREET WOMAN	111
THE PATH OF THE BOOK TEST.....	121
COUPLE CONFLICT	133
A BETTER STORY	139

INTRODUCTION

When I finished writing *Your mind is my playground*, I realized that I still had a multitude of ideas for this kind of format. Routines with original themes inspired by literature and cinema, that could be done with simple and direct methods, with few props, and that could be performed on stage or in close-up. It took me some time to choose the ideas that I wanted to collect in this second volume; as with the first one, I often provide the script that I use, followed by a detailed explanation of crucial points to which you have to pay special attention in order for the demonstration to function properly.

«Fateful encounter» is the result of my reflection on the famous chair test effect. It is an opportunity for me to discuss this classic and I describe a simple, direct, surefire and completely self-working method that you will be able to perform in all kinds of situations.

In «Mental Cluedo», the basic idea with standard playing cards became a visual and entertaining routine using the famous board game. The method is self-working and you can adapt it to other universes, depending on your audience.

«Vintage» is a demonstration of the spectator's luck, and proves that his lucky coin allows him to create an impossible coincidence. Thanks to a principle already

used in the first volume of this series, this effect is really easy to do.

«Intacto» is about the same theme and can be performed alongside «Vintage.» The spectator's luck continues to guide him, despite the fact that his choice is free and kept a secret.

With «Photographic memory,» the spectator handles your memories in the form of photographs, creating a strong visual element representing the mechanisms of our memory. The final prediction arrives as a surprise and takes an unexpected form.

«Children are wonderful» is an impossible demonstration using a toy known by everyone, an original method that can be adapted to other effects, and a reflection on ESP symbols in mentalism.

The playful title of «Your wife is your worst enemy» (the first theoretical essay in this new tome) actually is an opportunity to have a serious discussion about our relationship with the audience. By better understanding this interaction, we can easily improve the way we do our shows.

«Astroboy» has no connection to the famous hero by mangaka Osamu Tezuka. In this effect, you explain that you have trained your intuition to find, like a sonar, the person to which you should give the envelope that belongs to her.

«Astroalphabet» also talks about star signs, but its explanation unveils a versatile and terribly efficient method to divine a thought-of word, all the while making additional revelations on the word and the spectator.

Designed as an opening trick, «A discreet woman» can also be presented when you need an audience member to join you on stage and you want to use this moment to present a quick and impossible effect.

«The path of the book test» is a demonstration with several phases in which you divine thought-of words from a regular, borrowed book. In addition, you guess the spectators' questions and end up providing correct answers that will encourage them in their projects.

«Couple conflict» is an amusing effect involving a couple. First based on reciprocity, this money game quickly sees a winner emerging. But you still get the last word, with a prediction that the couple can keep as a souvenir.

«A better story» is the second theoretical essay in this book. In it, we rediscover an old psychological concept and we try to imagine a new approach to better control the audience's memories of your performance.

The props remain simple and easy to find. In some cases, I even provide you with a link to a website distributing the mentioned prop. These links are shortened to make it easier for you, you just need to copy them in your Internet browser (sometimes adding `http://` in front of the link).

This book is a collection of effects that you can easily adapt and integrate to your arsenal, with interesting situations and themes that will engage your audience. The spirit of the first volume remains unchanged. Respect your audience, treat each audience member as a new friend and know how to create a relationship that will serve the experience you are sharing with the people around you.

Vincent Hedan

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FATEFUL ENCOUNTER

Effect

«When I take the bus or the train and there is nobody sitting next to me, I observe the people looking for a seat and, in my head, I try to imagine who will come and sit next to me. Of course, when I see certain people I really hope that they will come and sit next to me, and for others I pray that they will sit somewhere else. Do you also do this?

The spot where you sit is a choice to which most of us do not pay attention, but it can be very important. During an accident, your position can literally be a question of life or death. Or you could seat unknowingly next to your soul mate, or your future employer.

In a moment, I will ask a couple to help me but, before that, I must trust this sealed envelope to someone who will play the part of destiny.»

The mentalist gives the envelope to a spectator in the first row, and a couple from the audience is chosen (let's call them Christian and Katalina). For the moment, they all remain in their seat.

«As you can see, there are five chairs on stage, numbered from 1 to 5. I also have five small envelopes. Sir, since you are our destiny tonight, you will decide where our couple seats. On the envelope of your choice, we will write «Woman»; on another,

we will write «Man»; then we will write «empty» on the remaining three. These choices are entirely up to you.»

The mentalist mixes his five small envelopes and the spectator chooses one freely.

«Perfect. What do you want to write on this envelope? Woman, Man, or empty?»

The spectator announces his choice and the mentalist writes it down on the envelope which is then put aside where everybody can see it. The mentalist mixes his four remaining envelopes and the spectator chooses one; he announces if he wants to write «Woman,» «Man» or «empty» on it, the mentalist writes down his choice and put it aside on the first envelope. This process continues until «Woman» has been written on an envelope, «Man» on another, and «empty» on the remaining envelopes.

«You had a free choice of the envelopes and a free choice as to what you wanted to write on each of them. Destiny has made its choices. Christian, Katalina, could you please join me on stage? Christian, here are the five envelopes, please find the one that says «Woman» and give it to Katalina. Then find the one that says «Man» and keep it for yourself. You can drop the three «empty» envelopes on the floor.

In each envelope, there is a number from 1 to 5. Christian, Katalina, open your envelope and look at your number. Then, when I clap my hands, please go sit on the chair on which is your number.»

Once Christian and Katalina have looked at their number, the mentalist claps his hands. The audience then sees Christian and Katalina both moving toward the row of five chairs; Christian seats on chair 4 and Katalina seats on chair 3, next to him!



«It looks like destiny sorted things out in a nice way! Among all the possibilities, you ended up sitting next to each other! Let's have a look at the envelope held by our destiny spectator since the beginning...»

The spectator opens the envelope and pulls a paper out of it then reads it out loud: *«The three «empty» envelopes are actually really empty...»*

The mentalist opens the three envelopes on which is written the word «empty»: they are actually really empty. They can be left with the audience.

The spectator continues reading the prediction: «... *He will be seated on chair number 4...*»

The mentalist invites Christian to show his number to everyone: indeed, he found the number 4 in his envelope!

The spectator continues reading the prediction: «... *She will be seated next to him, on chair number 3.*»

The mentalist invites Katalina to show her number to everyone: indeed, she found the number 3 in her envelope!

The spectator finishes reading the prediction: «*Together, Christian and Katalina make a lovely couple.*» Even the couple's first names are included in the prediction!

No stooge, no preshow, no switch, no force, and everything can be examined because everything is normal. You can perform this effect anywhere, anytime because the preparation is very quick and simple.

Method

If you really think about the extremely free conditions under which the effect is performed, you will realize it is impossible. Still, it is completely self-working and it does not require any expensive or secret prop. Finally, it will never fail.

[...]

VINTAGE

Effect

«Imagine if luck allowed you to find the right lottery numbers! The probabilities are extremely low, but if you are the luckiest person here tonight, then maybe...»

To be as lucky as you can, you will need the help of a lucky coin. Do you have some pocket change on you? That is already lucky!

Choose one of your coins and put away the others. You chose a one-euro coin? Perfect, this will be your lucky coin. Please join me on stage.

We will play a very easy lottery. In order to play, I will write down digits from zero to nine on this sheet of paper. Please hold it behind your back, numbers facing down. Here, take this pen and be careful not to stain your fingers. Behind your back, try to trace a small line on the numbers side and we will take the two numbers that are the closest to your line.

Are you done? I'll take the pen back, thank you. If you were a normal person, the result would be due to chance. But since you have a lucky coin, the result will be influenced by your luck and your lucky coin. Let's see what you have.

A zero and a two. Out of all the possible combinations, you got a zero and a two. We could write them down in the order two zero, or zero two. Two zero, zero two. Like 2002.

Do you remember your lucky coin? The chances of such a coincidence are extremely low, but with some luck, who knows... What is the year engraved on your lucky coin? 2002!»

[...]

INTACTO

Effect

The mentalist holds a transparent plastic bag containing about fifty folded papers.

«One day, while walking around my neighborhood, a woman walked past me from behind, walking much faster than me. She was almost running and she slightly brushed me on the way. At the very moment she walked past me, I saw a white envelope fall from her pocket. This was a window envelope and I saw bank notes through the little transparent window. By the time the envelope hit the floor, I had kept on walking and I went past it. The woman did not notice anything and she was still far away ahead of me.

I then turned my head around to pick up the envelope and give it back to its owner. I was not trying to be a good little Samaritan, I just thought that this was probably a sum of money that she needed. Before I could reach the envelope, a man walking behind me had taken it. He looked at me and made a sign so I would not say anything.

As I continued to walk toward the owner of the envelope (I was going in this direction anyway), the man caught up with me and offered to share the money. I told him that I was not interested and this money would surely be missed by its owner.

The man walked away and I saw him catching up with the woman, giving her the money back and point his finger at me.

The woman walked toward me and thanked me. The man had explained to her that we had both found her money and that we caught up with her to give it back to her.

Was this woman unlucky for losing this money, or lucky for getting it back? Was the man lucky to have found the money before me, or unlucky that I convinced him to give it back? Is this story true? (It is.)

Luck is capricious and we don't always draw a good number.»

A spectator is chosen at random.

«I would like to put your luck to the test, this time without risking any money. Can you please think of any number between one and fifty, without telling anyone? You can change your mind if you want. When you are certain of your choice, join me.»

Once the spectator is standing next to him, the mentalist mixes the papers in the bag.

«Put your hand in the bag and remove two papers at random please. Perfect. Now unfold them and show us the numbers. They are different and none of them is yours, correct?

Now focus on your number, let it be the only thing that you see in your head, as if it was carved in stone, high as a building. Put your hand in the bag again. This time, take only one paper. Perfect, keep it in your hands, I don't want to touch it.

For the first time, can you please tell us your number? Unfold the paper you are holding. It is exactly the same number!»

Method

No stooge, no paper switch, no preshow, no sleight of hand, and the spectator really has a free choice at every step.

This effect can be performed alongside «Vintage» (described earlier in the book) because both demonstrations talk about luck. Actually, the Spanish movie *Intacto* inspired the title of this routine. Released in 2001, it focuses on a secret group of people who use luck as a tool of power. I strongly recommend that you watch it, the theme is beautifully treated and, of course, many scenes lend themselves very well to a magic adaptation.

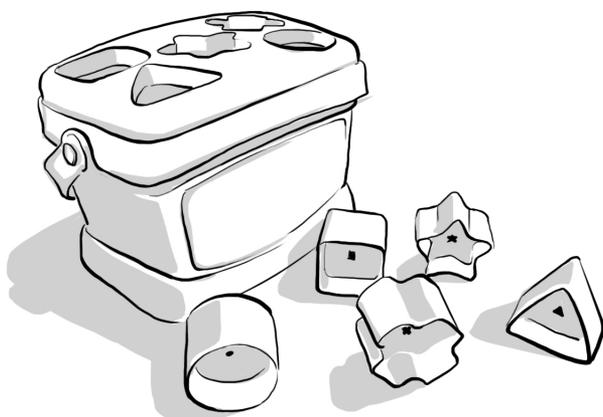
[...]

CHILDREN ARE WONDERFUL

Effect

«Do you remember this toy for children where you had to put the right shape in the corresponding hole cut out in the lid of the box? Like many other toys for children, this is also an opportunity to learn something, for example to recognize three-dimensional shapes corresponding to a two-dimensional hole, or to memorize colors' names. Once you have learned what was to be learned, you move on to something else. Can you imagine being stuck with the same toys for our entire life?»

Upon saying this, the mentalist puts this very toy on the table.



«I have been stuck with this toy for my entire life. The good thing is that I became really good at it. I can even play it with my back turned and my eyes closed. Let me show you.

Miss, can you please help me with this? I will leave the box and the elements with you: there is a blue cylinder, an orange cross, a red triangle, a green square and purple star.

As I was saying, I can play this game blind so I will turn my back in order not to be able to see anything. Take one of the shapes, whichever one you want. Got one? Perfect, put it on your lap please. Now take the other colored shapes and put them away in the box then close the lid.

Take the shape that you have chosen and focus on it. First on the shape, then on the color. Perfect, that is a very clear image. Now focus on the corresponding hole in the lid of the box and think about its position. You are doing a great job.

If I understood what you send me mentally, you chose the purple star. Is this correct? Awesome. You can put it in the box, it goes through the hole in the middle of the lid.»

Method

This effect was born from a reflection on ESP symbols. I did not feel comfortable with these cards because the majority of the general public does not really know where they are coming from. If you use these cards without explaining what they are, they seem strange and maybe gaffed. If you explain their origins, you must go into a short historical lecture about Karl Zener and Joseph Banks Rhine's experiments at Duke University, in the United States.

To solve this, I started to look for a different origin for these symbols, or for other symbols. My search for other symbols became *Danger*, one of my creations, now permanently out of stock.

In my search for a different origin for the classic ESP symbols, my first finding was to notice that the circle, the cross, the triangle and the square can all be found on the controller of consoles such as the PS2, PS3 and PS4. In addition, each of these symbols has a precise color on the controller. I would bet that Sony's consoles are more famous than ESP symbols, in popular culture.

The second finding in my search for origins became the effect described here, using a classic toy from our childhood. Even people who never played with it will have seen it or will instantly understand how to use it.

[...]

YOUR WIFE IS YOUR WORST ENEMY

Surely you have heard that comment several times: «*I have shown this new effect to my wife, she was not impressed.*» Or: «*My wife understood how I had done it.*» Although I do understand that a performer would want to show a new effect to the people close to him (I did this in the past too), I really think that this is a bad idea, for several reasons that I will discuss here. I will then try to suggest solutions to this plague.

[...]

ASTROBOY

Effect

«An important part of what I do is based on intuition and people imagine that intuition is this kind of sixth sense, very magical and impossible to explain. I am not sure I agree. For example, if I ask you to raise your hand if you were born during Spring like me, you know the season during which you were born by thinking logically then you raise your hand or not. If I ask you what the weather is like right now, you observe your surroundings and you can give me an answer based on your experience and your observation. Each time, you were able to answer my question by actively and consciously thinking.

For me, intuition is the same type of thinking, except this time your intellectual process is passive and unconscious. For example, I am sure you already had a feeling that someone was lying to you or was hiding something from you. This is because you are capable of analyzing a multitude of factors unconsciously: the tone of the voice of this person, his or her body language, the movements of his or her eyes, the breathing rhythm. All these elements are perceived by your brain without you paying attention to it. When this unconscious analysis is done, your brain sends you an «intuition,» meaning the result of its process, without you actively participating in this process.

Unfortunately for us, two things are responsible for intuition not being always accurate. First, our brain can make a mistake; it forgets details, or rushes the thinking process, etc. Second, we sometimes decide not to follow our intuition, even when it is correct.»

The mentalist starts to walk around the audience while talking.

«The good news is that this intuition can be enhanced. If you consciously train your brain to make fewer mistakes, it will be less wrong when it is on autopilot. And if you learn to better trust your intuition, you will benefit from this unconscious thinking process.»

The mentalist keeps walking among the spectators.

«Right now, I have the intuition that this envelope is for someone special in this room...»

The mentalist stops next to a person in the audience.

«... and I think this person is you. What is your star sign please?»

The spectator replies that she is a Gemini. The mentalist opens the envelope. Inside is a piece of paper on which is written: *«She will be a Gemini.»*

The mentalist concludes: *«Here is the result of a good intuition. I feel you will be perfect for the next experience, come and join me!»*

Method

No stooge, no nail writer, no preshow, no sleight of hand.

This effect is an interesting way to choose a member of the audience to do an experiment on stage with her. Instead of just picking someone at random, an effect occurs during the selection process.

[...]

ASTROALPHABET

Effect

A spectator is chosen at random in the audience and she joins the mentalist. He asks her to focus and think of a word that has a connection with her. The spectator writes down her word and keeps the paper for future verification.

Now the mentalist focuses on her.

«Think of your word... There is an N in your word, correct?

Without telling me anything, please think of the position of N in your word. That is surprising, you are not thinking of the fact that N is in the third position or the seventh position, you are thinking of the fact that N is at the end of your word. The N is at the end of your word, correct?

Now please think of a vowel in the middle of your word. Do you have one? Don't tell me. You hesitated a little bit then you changed your mind and ended up thinking of ... an I. There is an I in the middle of your word, correct?

It is almost over. I am making you work a lot and you are doing great.

Please, think of the second letter of your word. Without telling me anything, try to think of an insect starting with this letter. Do you have one? I don't know about you, but I get the image

of an ant, does it make sense? A is the second letter of your word, correct?

To wrap this up, think of all the letters in your word at the same time. Think about the connection of this word to you.

Ah, now I understand, this is not just any word, correct? This is your star sign. You are thinking of Capricorn, you are a Capricorn, correct? Thank you very much for your help!»

Method

No stooge, no force, no preshow. You are able to divine the word of the spectator and, during this process, you also able to guess various things she is thinking of, creating a demonstration of mind reading that is very convincing.

[...]

THE PATH OF THE BOOK TEST

Effect

A book is borrowed and three spectators join the mentalist.

«We are all looking for answers, sometimes even outside of ourselves. A game as simple as heads or tails can reveal our inclinations and our fears. If the coin lands on tails, our reaction can be happy or disappointed in anticipation of the actions that we promised to do; this is a good indicator of your opinion on the matter. This is the same thing with horoscopes: even if we do not believe in them, we read the banalities written for our star sign and we interpret them in order to help ourselves and to guide us toward a decision. In the end, it is not the coin or the horoscope that makes our decisions; we just needed a trigger, a small nudge.

This also works with books. Sometimes, a sentence read at random can give us the impulse or the inspiration that we needed to act and find our answers. This is what we will try now.»

Each spectator thinks of a word in the borrowed book. When this is done, the book is given back to its owner.

«Let's see if we can mentally share all these words. I will also ask each of you to take your word and to connect it to a

question that you may have in your life. A simple question triggered by this word, a question about your future in the next few months.»

The mentalist focuses on the three spectators.

«Don't try to help by giving me clues, don't give anything away and we will try to share these words mentally.»

The mentalist turns to the first spectator and tells him that he can see an R in his word. The first spectator confirms that this is correct. The mentalist turns to the second spectator and tells him that he can see a short word for him, maybe five or six letters. The second spectator confirms that this is correct. The mentalist turns to the third spectator and tells him that he is not thinking of an object. The third spectator confirms that this is correct.

The mentalist invites the three spectators to sit on the chair behind them, then he faces the audience.

«I think that one of them is thinking of the word Hour. If you think of the word Hour, that is a good thing. You could interpret this by saying that it will soon be a good time for you, a moment where your situation will be solved and when you will make the most out of your potential.

I think someone else is thinking of the word Stress. This person is surprised to have landed on a word that describes their situation with such accuracy. I feel something about a personal project that was not fully realized, because you kept it to yourself and you did not think of reaching out for the support

of those around you. Know that they are ready to help, that this project will be a success and that it will make you travel overseas.

Finally, I think that the third person thinks of the verb Return. Again, this is a strong coincidence for this person, or maybe the right word knew how to find you. You don't want to go back to a certain person who hurt you recently. Last month. She is a friend ... no, sorry, she is a member of your family. She regrets that she accidentally vexed you and she does not dare making the first step toward you in order to rebuild your relationship. You will both gain from it if you return to her and make peace.

The word Hour, and the promise of a successful potential. The word Stress, and the support from your close ones. The word Return, and a relationship to build from new, healthier foundations.»

The mentalist turns toward the first spectator and says: «If I guessed your word correctly and that you understood the answer, please stand up and go back to the audience while they applaud you.» The first spectator stands up, smiles and joins the audience, confirming that the mentalist had correctly guessed his word and answered his question.

The mentalist turns toward the second spectator and tells him the same thing. The second spectator goes back to the audience as well, confirming that the mentalist had correctly guessed his word and answered his question. The same happens with the third spectator. The three words have been guessed correctly and the three answers have been given.

Method

No stooge, no preshow, almost no sleight of hand, the book is really normal and borrowed, making this effect virtually impromptu.

[...]

COUPLE CONFLICT

Effect

The mentalist is standing behind a table. He invites a couple to sit at the table, in front of each other. After asking about the circumstances of their first meeting and about the length of their relationship, the mentalist takes a strange object that he places on the table. The object is a wooden model of a hand, and it is holding a small envelope.



The mentalist explains that this envelope contains a certain amount of money that will be won by one of the members of this couple. The hand is placed in front of the husband and the mentalist tells him that he has to slide the hand (and therefore the envelope) toward his wife. She will then have to do the same thing toward her husband. Both of them keep repeating this exchange. After a few seconds, the mentalist adds the last rule: any one of them can decide, at any moment, to keep the hand and the envelope, therefore winning the amount of money that is inside.

After another few seconds, finally the husband decides to keep the wooden hand for himself. The envelope is opened: it contains a single bank note that goes to the husband. When he unfolds the bank note, he realizes that it is actually a fake bill with an amount of zero euro!

But not everything is lost. At the back of the bank note, the husband can read the following message: *«The bank note will be won by the husband.»*

Method

No stooge, no sleight of hand, no force, no nail writer, and the bank note can be kept as a souvenir.

This is a strange effect for me, because I first imagined the image, not the presentation or the method: two people sitting across from each other, passing an object to each other until one of them decides to keep it; this choice is predicted. First it was an envelope on its own, then a box (to make the object more three-dimensional and intriguing, like a mysterious gift), then it became the current version: a wooden model of a hand, holding an envelope. It allows me to preserve the simplicity of the original method, all the while creating a strong visual. A couple sitting across from each other and passing around a wooden hand holding an envelope, that is a striking situation and one that lends itself easily to a memorable photo.

[...]