

Ah, Come On Baby, Stop Teasing, Show Me, Show Me, Show Me (Show, Don't Tell)

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By Jeff Colburn

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It's been a hard day. You settle into your most comfortable chair with the book you just bought. All you want to do is get lost in a good story for awhile. You open the book and begin to read. Which of the following would let you know that you're really holding a book that you can get lost in?

"Jack was nervous as he entered the boardroom."

Or

"Jack entered the boardroom. He felt the knot in his stomach tighten as thirty five sets of eyes stared at him. A downpour of sweat soaked his armpits, and shirt. Trickle of sweat even rolled down his back. He was glad to have on his heavy dark jacket. The chairman cleared his throat disapprovingly. Jack's mouth went so dry it felt like he hadn't swallowed in years. When he glanced at the chairman, his stomach rumbled. Jack prayed he wouldn't need to make a mad dash to the bathroom.

In the first example, the author expects the reader to do all the work, while in the second, he has done his job as a writer. He has described the scene with enough detail so that the reader can feel the man's discomfort, in all of its nasty aspects.

Telling a scene in a story instead of showing is one of the most common mistakes that new, and not so new, writers make.

There are two techniques I use to insure that I show and don't tell. First, I imagine that I am explaining something to someone from Mars, who has not experienced anything on Earth. The next thing I do is ask myself what senses are involved. If the reader were in the scene, what would he or she see, hear, smell, taste and feel?

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Would they smell bad breath or an orange tree in bloom?

Would they feel the baking heat of the Sahara summer, or an ice cube being drawn down their neck?

Would they taste their own blood during a fight, or a slice of chocolate cheesecake from a five star restaurant?

Would they hear the deafening roar of a jet engine just yards away, or the soft whisper of their lover's voice in bed next to them?

Would they see the ghastly carnage of war, or the face of their newborn child?

I think you get the picture. Don't assume that the reader will, or can, fill in the gaps. It's your job to describe the scene in enough detail so that your reader sees and feels in their mind what you saw and felt in yours, as you wrote the scene. But be careful not to go overboard on detail. This is where the skill of a writer really shows.

So study the world around you, the magnificent and mundane, and convey this in your writing.

Jeff Colburn is a freelance business writer, and can be reached at his site, The Creative Cauldron (www.CreativeCauldron.com) or JeffColburn@CreativeCauldron.com

Magic Show Tips

By Preston Houer

For magic enthusiasts, what could be more fun than being able to organize a magic show of their own, right? However, it might not be an easy task to prepare for one magic show that will bewilder your friends and other speculators. Don't fret. Here are some tips and suggestions that might help one in prepping for one fun magic show that will make all the audience spellbound:

Prepare the Stage

A magic show will not be as exciting if it is done in a place where there's no stage. One must set up a stage that could consist of either a piano bench or a small table with a blanket or table cloth.

Drapes help a lot in seeing to it that the audience don't get a glimpse of your activities before performing a trick. Have a certain spot where all your tricks can be done.

Prepare the Props

A magician will have a hard time amazing his or her audience without the help of various magic props. Gather all the paraphernalias that will make the magic show successful beforehand to avoid scrambling around at the eleventh hour.

The usual props used by magicians include playing cards, hats, animals, a handkerchief, etc.

Prepare for the Tricks

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What's a magic show without magic tricks? Practicing the tricks well before the magic show will make one magician less doubtful on whether his or her magic show will be a hit or not. Here are some rules that a magician should follow when doing a magic show:

1. Don't kiss and tell a trick.

Magic is made to amaze the audience. Telling how to do a trick will spoil that purpose. A trick that is told how to do will lose its mystery.

2. Trick only once.

When a trick is done for the first time, the audience will be very amazed. Doing it twice will make the audience predict what will happen and the risk of figuring the trick out is not impossible.

3. Practice like there's no tomorrow.

When one is not that comfortable with a certain trick, it is not advisable to perform it. Practicing in front of friends or other people before the show in front of an audience will help a lot in making the magic show successful.

4. Be or look confident.

Acting nervous will make you a laughingstock. When you are going to be the man of the show, it won't help to be stammering and trembling while performing the magic tricks. Practicing will help you in this arena.

Preston Hauer has been involved with the art of illusion and sleight of hand for over 30 years. Let Preston show you how to Have Fun With Magic. Visit His Site Today!

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