

Spark Deck

The spark cards are designed to offer magicians inspiration that will effectively aid in creating an original effect or performance. The 46 cards each contain a main suggestion, with related ideas printed above and below for further inspiration.

How to use the deck

When you are working on an act you can utilise the cards in a few ways. You can shuffle the deck, select one card and give yourself one full hour to consider how that suggestion could be used as the basis of a new effect or in an existing one. Ask yourself, what the suggestions bring to mind?

If you are already at the midpoint of creating an act and begin to feel stuck, you can shuffle the deck, select a card and explore the suggestion on that card. Think of the suggestion in a variety of different ways. If the suggestion doesn't unstick your writer's block, try exploring its opposite.

As a writing exercises you can play with the ideas summoned by considering multiple cards at the same time.

This deck also includes two double facers, two duplicates, a blank card, and features a subtle one-way back design so you can use it in your magic. I have included an effect that can be done with these cards along with the script I use in my walkaround.

There are also two "open cards" designs so you can add a couple suggestions and make the deck truly your own.

Thank you so much for purchasing the Spark Deck.
I hope it will help to light your way.

- Carisa Hendrix

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Effect: One Way Out

Introduction

We all want to find that perfect card effect to feel absolutely impossible to your audience while being simple and easy to perform. Part of the ease comes from having a backup plan for when you get into a trouble with your method, good “outs” are at the heart of all relaxed want-around acts.

It was this goal that pushed me to build new effects around eighty-year-old impromptu magic. This trick is a fun opener and I use it in the following way. As I approach the table, I do a few fancy cuts to set up a certain expectation in the minds of the guest. After a quick and playful introduction I can slip gracefully into this effect and because it happens almost entirely out of my hands it subverts the expectation established casually with my earlier handling of the deck. The preliminary display of skill lets guests see that you know your stuff and gets them looking for the moves in your upcoming “move-heavy” tricks, but then you barely touch the deck, so there’s nothing for them to catch and it makes the effect even stronger.

This effect succeeds in taking the heat off of your hands for the rest of the set, while giving the audience a chance to get to get know you. If you follow up with something that does involve complex sleight of hand, people are more likely to look where you lead them because they have had a chance to grow more comfortable with you, and you can get away with so much more.

Effect

Ask the spectator to shuffle the deck and then cut it into three to six piles lined up in a row. Invite them to pick up one of the piles. Tell them to spread through the cards, select one, place the remaining cards back on the table and hold the selected card to their heart for just a moment before returning it to the pile, reassembling the deck, and shuffling the cards.

You then tell your participant that, of course, you already know their selected card. But you are going to do two tricks for the price of one: an amazing trick of the mind and an amazing feat of skill. You’re really going to earn that round of applause.

Ask them to call out any number between one and ten.

Pick up the deck for the first time and, as you fan through the cards, and ask your participant to focus on the selected card but to say nothing, you’re pretty sure you know what it is already, but you want to be sure. Pull out the selected card from the deck with your teeth without revealing it. Hold the card, look at it confidently and announce you’re going to show off a bit. Tell them that you work with cards so often that you can eyeball any exact number of cards. As you say this, attempt to slide the card into the exact right place.

Reveal that their chosen card is at their selected position in the deck.

Explanation

This effect uses a deck with a one-way back design and one-way faces, making the Spark Deck ideal. Before starting this effect, make sure the cards are all arranged in the same direction.

Have the spectator shuffle the deck, then cut it into several piles. It's important to watch how they shuffle. If they shuffle in a way that disrupts the one-way orientation of the cards, you are still set up to perform the classic Three Piles Effect with a few modern variation, as explained in the section "You're Out." Most people will do an overhand shuffle or a riffle shuffle, neither of which messes up the one-way orientation, so most of the time you will be fine.

Invite the participant to pick up a pile. Ask them to spread through the cards and choose one card. The participant will now have a card in one hand and rest of the pile in other (usually the hand that first picked up the pile).

Ask them to return the rest of the pile to the table. Tell the participant to hold the selected card to their heart for a moment before replacing it on top of the pile. In that simple set of actions, the spectator has now reversed the selected card in the deck, without you ever touching a single card. Because it is natural to replace cards onto a table with the smallest motion necessary, the hand with the pile will place it on the table sideways and, when the selected card is placed on top, the opposite hand will mirror the first motion, which naturally reverses the orientation of the chosen card.

Thanks to the one-way backs, you can confirm that the selected card has indeed been reversed before continuing the routine. If it has not been reversed, ask the remaining spectators if they saw the card, pick it up off the top and reverse it the action of showing it around and then placing it back on the pile.

Ask your participant to place all the other piles on top of their selected pile to re-assemble the pack and square up the deck. The back design will allow you to confirm that the deck is reassembled without disturbing the one-way orientation. If they have gathered the cards in a way that reverses one of the piles, simply move on to the final phase from here, without allowing the deck to be reshuffled. **If the deck has not been shuffled then looking through the cards, starting at the face of the pack, the selection will be the first reversed card.**

You then tell your participant that, of course, you already know their selected card. But you are going to do two tricks for the price of one: an amazing trick of the mind and an amazing feat of skill. You're really going to earn that round of applause.

Ask them to call out any number between one and ten

Pick up the deck for the first time and, thumb through the cards looking for their reversed selection. When you locate the reversed card, count to their selected number starting with the next card (the one after the chosen card), take out the card at the selected number with your teeth, then place the cards after it onto the bottom of the pack. You have thus stacked the deck in front of the audience. When counting down from the top of the deck, the chosen card is at the selected number.

(Note: As you thumb through the pack, if you discover that the chosen card has too few cards above it to fill out your stack, just casually move a few cards to the top while you're pretending to locate the card. If

you discover that the chosen card is already at the selected number — it happens! — you needn't remove a card from the deck. Just say "That's what I thought" and put the deck down on the table. You're all set for the big reveal.)

Act as if the card you removed from the deck is their card. Announce that you work with cards so often that you can eyeball an exact number of cards. As you say this, you attempt to slide the card into the exact right place in the deck, but you actually insert it somewhere below your stack.

Now for the big moment: Reveal that their chosen card is at their selected position in the deck.

Striper Deck VS One Way

Variations with alternative decks

You can do this same effect with a striper deck once you are more confident that you can follow the movements of the spectator to be certain that the cards have been reversed correctly.

You're Out: a Three Piles variation with a borrowed deck

This variation of the Three Piles trick is the perfect out if your participant messes up the one-way orientation of the deck or if you are asked to do the same trick with a borrowed deck.

This effect starts just as before: the deck is shuffled, split into three to six piles, a pile is selected and a card is visually selected.

Ask the spectator to now shuffle the pile with the selected card.

You then tell your participant that, of course, you already know their selected card. But you are going to do two tricks for the price of one: an amazing trick of the mind and an amazing feat of skill. You're really going to earn that round of applause.

Tell them that you could just ask them to call out any number between one and fifteen but, based on their demographic, you already know what that number would likely be, so that feels like cheating. Since they shuffled the pile, their card is now in a random position that you could not possibly know, so that will act as our random number.

Tell the spectator that you will count, out loud, each card face up onto the table, ask the spectator to remember the number associated with their card, that will be our random number. Caution them not to give it away by making any noise or shift in their seat when they see their card, do nothing to signal you as you go through the entire packet and to remember the number at which they see their card. Then add "and I'll even look away." Before you turn away, simply peek the top card during the explanation, or after it had been dealt on the table. That is your key card.

After your participant knows the number associated with the chosen card, you can turn around again. Ask the spectator to reassemble the deck and square it up. They can even make as many complete cuts as they like and you can give the deck a false shuffle or two.

"Ok now you have the name of a card and a random number in your mind"

Thumb through the cards, take out the card just above your key card with your teeth while replacing the cards after it onto the bottom of the deck. The deck is now stacked, with your key card on top and the chosen card at the selected number, whatever it may be.

Look confidently at the random card you pulled out and announce that you work with cards so often that you can eyeball an exact number of cards. As you say this, you attempt to slide the card into the exact right place in the deck, but you actually insert it somewhere below the total number of cards that your participant counted out loud.

Ask for the spectator to say the random number for the first time. Count that number of cards onto the table. Then ask the spectator to name the chosen card for the first time. Reveal that their chosen card is at their selected position in the deck.

Inspiration Cards - Spark Deck

This effect was first inspired by the cards **Draw a Connection + Eliminate a phase**.

Credits

Based on Paul Rosini's Three Piles card trick, as printed in the key card section of Jean Hugard & Frederick Braue's 1948 edition of the *The Royal Road to Card Magic*.

An effect first shown to me by Eric Leclerc.

First published in 1938 in the *The Jinx* 1-50 Winter Extra Issue 1937/38 by Martin Gardner.

A fantastic modernization of this effect, called Devastation, was published in *Miracles For Mortals, Vol. 2* by Geoff Williams.

This effect also incorporates ideas about using one-way decks from Glen G. Gravatt's *The Movie Cards*, first published in John Mulholland's *The Sphinx, Vol. 30, No. 4* (June 1931, page 183). The concept of "The Movie Cards" was showed to me by Ondrej Psenicka and published under The Bruce Lee Way in his book *The Secrets of the Butterflies*.

Script

"There are two types of card trick, the kind where I do a bunch of fancy moves and you think, wow, slick, and there's the kind where you do all the moves and make all the decisions and we all get to see a miracle. Which would you like?"

They almost always select the obvious second option. However, if they select the first option, I say *"Really? Not a fan of miracles. Okay then."*

I do a few fancy cuts, maybe a color change, maybe a Hot Shot, then I say *"And your line is...?"*
To which they reply *"Wow, slick."*

"Okay, now can we do a miracle?" They always say yes.

If they select the miracle option right away, I say *“Well, so much for all that practice”* as I do a single fancy cut.

“I know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking, You scoundrel! The cards must be marked! But of course the design is too simple for that, and these cards aren’t even playing cards. They are those creativity cards artists use for inspiration. Don’t you feel inspired just touching them?”

“These are great. I use them when I write my acts all the time. Each card has a simple inspiring idea on it, and we’re just going to focus on these main ideas.”

“Together we’re going to see if we can inspire a miracle.

Hand the deck to the spectator.

“Okay, now maybe you’re thinking, That scoundrel! That deck must be in some fancy order. So go ahead and shuffle. And calm down with all the name calling.”

After they finish shuffling, I continue.

“Satisfied? Well, good, you look like it’s been a while since you could say that.” (I can get away with this joke; you maybe can’t.)

“From this point forward inspiration will guide us.

“Between us, I want you to make a line of three, four, five, or six piles — however many you feel inspired to make.

“Perfect. Now, one of the piles inspires you, doesn’t it? Which one? Yes! Pick up that pile and hold it to your chest.

“Perfect. Now I want you to look through that bunch of cards and pick out one card that inspires you, one you can remember. Just put the rest on the table for now.

“Hold that card to your heart and let the inspiration flow through you. The main inspirational idea in the middle of the card, that is what you need to remember. Got it? It’s flowing through you? Are you sure? You don’t look very flowy.

“Okay, good, place it back on the pile. Reassemble the deck. And square it so there are no breaks.

“Perfect. Now you look inspired — you look inspired to shuffle. It’s up to you. Go ahead.

“Now, would you be amazed if I knew which card was yours, just like that?”

The audience responds *“Yes”*

And you respond *“No, you would only be mildly impressed.*

“I know this because before I was a magician, I was a street performer, and no one cares that you can juggle till you do it on a unicycle. I don’t want you to clap politely, but I’m looking for shock and awe.

“So I will find your card from a shuffled deck I never touch — amazing, I know! And, as a bonus, I will also offer you an amazing display of skill.

“You ready?”

“Okay, pick any number between one and ten.

“Perfect. I will find your card,

I search and find the card

‘this one, and I will slide it into that exact that position in the deck.

“Let’s see how I did. Might be off by one, I don’t know. What was your number again?”

Count the cards onto the table.

“And what was on your card?”

Reveal that their card is at their requested position in the deck.

