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LCIII/ Mirtz

Who is this tricky fellow? The Long and Short of It

arry Wirtz is an educational specialist who has presented curriculum based convocations in over 10,000 elementary, middle and high schools across the United States and Canada.

As a lifelong learner, he is currently working on his dissertation for a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership while holding a M.A. in Ministry and Leadership as well as a B.S. in Biblical Studies from Indiana Wesleyan University. In addition to helping students learn, grow and develop, Larry works privately as a leadership consultant helping executives, educators and those in ministry grow in their leadership and organizational capacity through a Christian worldview.

Finally, Larry is a classically trained "sleight-of-hand" artist from the historic Chavez Studio of Magic, as well as a Stephen's Minister, Certified Lay Speaker

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and a full-time Inspirational Speaker, Humorist, and Entertainer. Described as intelligent, articulate, and dynamic, Larry delivers an eye-opening, jaw-dropping program that is genuine, dignified, funny, but most importantly, RELEVANT! His popular brand of educational entertainment has won the hearts of all generations, making him a nationally recognized leader in his field.

Now the Rest of the Story

It all began at the age of seven when I had asked Santa Clause for a unicycle – a one-wheeled bike – how cool - they would *never* catch me! Instead I received a magic kit. At the time, I never knew such things even existed. After playing with it for a while I was ready to present my very first "magic show" for a *very* receptive audience – mom and dad. I was forever hooked! Growing

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www.fcm.org MARCH - APRIL 2018 up in an area void of any magic shops or knowing of any other magicians, I learned as much as I could from library books, magic trading cards found in Wonder Bread (1974) and even magic tricks found on Dixie Cups (1976). By the time I was in middle school, parents started to pay me to go to parties. How awesome, as I knew kids that were paid to leave. (lol) I was paid to attend and eat pizza and cake! In the words of Harry Anderson, "I saw my future before me like a well-made suit!" My first school assembly program was part of a humanities project where I was to create a Say NO to Drugs program to present at a local elementary school. This single event turned into school presentations throughout Northwest Indiana. Looking back, this was foundational in the creation of a long career presenting in schools across the country.

After high school, I was presenting the Say NO to Drugs program throughout the state of Indiana and Illinois. However at that time, the market place became saturated with a multitude of programs with the same theme. This was largely due to Nancy Reagan's First Lady Initiative with a focus on substance abuse with a theme, Just Say No. Federal grant money was made available to schools to offset the cost for such programs, which in turn created an overabundance of school assembly programs with the same theme. In order to keep busy, I had to create a unique selling position (USP). This was an easy choice as all through school, I loved science, and there was a void in quality science assembly programs offered to schools, hence the creation of The Magical World of Science! - a perfect blend of scientific theory, sideshow stunts and "magic tricks" to serve as visual object lessons to help illustrate abstract concepts. In time, this program, lead the way to the creation of six other science programs.

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While still offering all of the science and character education programs, the current state of affairs is much like the days of Nancy Reagan's Just Say No, leaving the marketplace saturated with bully prevention programs.

Experience has revealed that schools are reactionary towards culture and current events. On Tuesday morning, September 11th, life as we all knew it, was forever changed when terrorists hijacked four commercial airline jets and proceeded with a suicide mission against the United States. School assemblies came to a complete stop. In reaction to the uncertainty, schools went so far as to cancel programs

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throughout the 2001-02 school year. Again, I had to find a USP. This time the direction was clouded as the markets I served froze. However, on a return trip from a benefit show in Nashville, Tennessee, that was to raise money for the children of first responders who lost their lives during the 911 terrorist attack, I recalled the reaction of schools during Desert Storm in 1990. The eight hour drive home yielded, Red, White, Blue & YOU! A mailing for this school assembly program (that dealt with character education, citizenship and patriotism) went out in November that year and the calendar was filled for 2001-02 school year by December. From there, schools started to request additional programs regarding character education, thus the creation of Follow the Leader - Bully Prevention & Character Education assembly program. While still offering all of

the science and character education programs, the current state of affairs is much like the days of Nancy Reagan's *Just Say No*, leaving the marketplace saturated with bully prevention programs. Once again, it is time to research and find that new USP!

Life Long Learning

As scripture reminds us "the heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, the ears of the wise seek it out" (Proverbs 18:15 – NIV) Lifelong learning is more than a good idea, as for me, it has been a way of life. In my early twenties I had the privilege of attending the Chavez College of Magic in a unique way. The Chavez course of study focuses on classic "sleight-

Lifelong learning is more than a good idea, as for me, it has been a way of life.



of-hand" skills and stage manipulation. At that time Neil Foster and Chris Jakway were conducting classes in small groups of four to six students. However, when I attended, it was a private situation. From there, I was one of three Chavez graduates who were invited into the advanced, "post-graduate" course of study. Throughout my Chavez studies, I maintained a full performing calendar, and upon completion, I assisted with personal instruction at the Michigan studio. Currently, I am the lead contact

God (in His remarkable way) removed all obstacles and objections and created the opportunity for me to pursue a higher education.

person and head instructor for the Chavez Studio of Magic.

Always wanting to go back to college, but leaning on the excuse of not having the time, I prayed to God that if it is in His plan, I would obey. That being said, God (in His remarkable way) removed all obstacles and objections and created the opportunity for me to pursue a higher education. I am not saying it was void of challenges or hard work, but He has created the opportunity for me to receive additional training for His purpose. That being said, I completed a B.S. in Biblical Studies from Indiana Weslevan, a M.A. in Ministry and Leadership from the Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan, and currently entering the dissertation phase of a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Indiana Wesleyan. Looking back, I can see how each step along the way has been used to better serve Him and advance His Kingdom.



Living an Unplugged Life

One of the greatest blessings of having an atypical career is the autonomy and diversity in which I can work and live my life while serving God. Presenting school assembly programs has been my "bread and butter" market. However the years have provided the opportunity to work in a multitude of venues and markets across the United States and Canada. The diversity crosses the spectrum from corporate social functions, working the trade show floor and national meetings to casinos, cruise ships and comedy clubs. As each experience reflects a various season in my life, God has taken my secular performing and speaking experience and works continuously to transform it for His purpose. In this chapter of my life I have found a home working with churches and faith-based organizations. Whether it is speaking, preaching or entertaining to consulting from a Christian perspective on leadership issues and church growth, it is humbling that God is using me to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in a needy world.



The Fellowship of Christian Magicians (FCM) is a wonderful organization for spiritual growth, skill development, and encouragement through fellowship. It has always been a privilege to be able to share and help others with their ministerial journey through this Christ-centered organization. I have had the honor of working with past-Presidents Steve Varro and Del Wilson, in addition to retired editor Mike Stenberg, on various projects for the FCM. I am excited to continue this relationship



I am humbled to share that I will be a part of the 2018 International FCM Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana

by working with the new generation of FCM leadership under the direction of President Joev Evans and The Voice editor, John Swomley. I am humbled to share that I will be a part of the 2018 International FCM Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana that will take place July 8th through July 13th. As of this writing, my involvement dates have not been finalized. That being said, I will be delivering the worship message at an Hour of Power service, lecturing on Leading Your Ministry in the 21st Century and performing on one of the evening shows during that week. Looking forward to meeting you there!

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