

## Why Magic?

By Norman Beck

One time I was asked the question, "Why do you do magic?" and I gave a four-word response that was flip. In reflecting on a craft that I have been working on now for over 50 years (I am a slow learner), I think it comes down to "spider webs."

I saw my first magic show at a "Blue and Gold" banquet and got to go up and help the magician. I remember to this day the two tricks he did with me. My mother soon bought me a book, *The Cub Scout Book of Magic*, and I was on my way. The problem was I didn't know where I was going. I now am crystal clear not only on my destination but why I am going.

Often, I will never mention that I am a magician or have any knowledge or interest in the art. I do this on purpose much like a card cheat: I don't want people to know I have an "ace up my sleeve." I often see young magicians do magic at the drop of a hat and provide the hat. The reason is simple: magic is all they got, and after 10 minutes, they've done said all they know.

I think of magic as a key that lets me open doors that without it would remain locked. Magic lets me make a door where there was a solid wall. It lets me slip in the through the back alley and get out by the side door. Magic is a tool. It is no different than a saw or a hammer.

Just like a spider web that traps the unsuspecting, magic works the same way. I often start with an innocent question to suck them into the web and get them engaged before they even suspect. I want them to like me, and more importantly, I want them to remember me.

In the "French Quarter," you will often hear the word "lagniappe." It is Louisiana French, and Mark Twain said, "It is a word worth traveling to New Orleans to get." The word means "a small gift given to a customer at the time of the purchase."

I think of every person I meet as a customer, and I look at my magic as a gift in the form of a memory. I work very hard at making it not only fun, but memorable.

I spoke to people the other day that had seen a young magician in Las Vegas do card tricks. I asked, "What did he do?" They could not remember a single trick this man did. I would rather do one trick they will never forget than six they can't remember.

I sometimes get paid in the form of cash. I have learned, however, that cash is overrated and much prefer leaving them with a great memory and a smile.