

The Instantly Repeatable Impromptu Which Hand Routine

Finally, a which hand routine that is 100% impromptu and instantly repeatable for the same audience without giving away the method.

No Electronics • No Logic Puzzles •
Easy-To-Follow for Both the Performer and the Volunteer

“Every parent quickly learns two things about their children. The first is that they will lie from time to time, and the second is that it’s invaluable to know when they’re doing so.”

Thus begins the performer as he sets up *The Instantly Repeatable Impromptu Which Hand* routine.

The performer continues: “Thanks to Pamela Meyer’s book *Liespotting* and her wildly popular TED Talk *How To Spot A Liar* (with over 33 million views) help is available.



I’ve been practicing some of her recommended techniques. Would you allow me to practice with you with you playing the role of the child with myself playing the role of the parent?” This role play scenario has much room for humor if that fits your persona.

After bringing a volunteer up from the audience, the performer instructs the volunteer that in the next few moments s/he will pretend to be either an obedient child – doing what the performer acting the role of the parent tells him/her to do and always tell the truth to any question asked or they will be a disobedient child doing the opposite of what the performer tells them to do and lying when asked a question. The volunteer is given time to decide which role they’ll play – keeping their decided upon role to himself/herself.

Upon ascertaining that the volunteer has decided which type of child they will play, the performer takes an obviously valuable (financially or sentimentally) ring off his/her finger and gives it to the volunteer to put in one hand before hiding both hands behind their back.

Phase One

“Now in a moment,” the performer reminds the volunteer, “if I ask you to put the ring into your right hand, you’ll obey me if you’ve chosen to be an obedient child or you’ll do the opposite – putting it into your left hand.” After checking for understanding, the performer does say in a parental tone, “Put that ring into your right hand.” The volunteer makes sure the ring is in their right hand (or not) depending on the role they have chosen to play.

Phase Two

“Now if I ask you to move the ring to the other hand, you would do so if you’ve chosen to be an obedient child or keep it in its current hand if you’ve chosen to be disobedient.” After checking for understanding, the performer sternly says, “Switch the ring to your other hand now.”

Unknown to the audience at this stage of the routine whether the person has chosen to be obedient or not, the ring will be in the left hand (opposite of the original hand requested by the performer).

Phase Three

While clutching the ring, the volunteer brings both hands out in front of them – getting ready to lie or tell the truth to the performer’s next question – depending on the type of child they have chosen to play.

“Tell me. Is the ring in this hand?” the performer asks in a characterization of a parental tone of voice - pointing to the left hand.

Of course, the performer knows that the ring is in the left hand so immediately upon hearing the volunteer’s answer to that question s/he knows whether the volunteer chose to be an obedient or disobedient child by whether they lie or tell the truth in response to the question.

The performer then makes his/her guess both about the location of the ring and whether the volunteer has chosen to be an obedient or disobedient child.

Of course, the performer could also guess incorrectly in the first round very possibly adding increased believability to the experience or even going on to select another volunteer who might hopefully be more easily read.

Mix and Match

The repeatability of this trick lies in the number of variations possible within each phase of the routine and the capacity of the trick to have the performer mix and match each of the phase options, so the routine sounds different with each performance.

Phase One: “Put the ring in your right hand.” or “Put the ring in your left hand.”

Phase Two: “Switch the ring to your other hand.” or “Don’t you dare switch the ring to your other hand.” or “You must keep the ring in its current hand.”

Phase Three: “Tell me now. Does your right hand hold the ring?” or “Tell me now. Does your left hand hold the ring?” However, it is strongly suggested that the performer not use the words “right” or “left” in this question, so the audience has less of a tendency to link it back to the performer’s first direction where the words “right” and “left” were used. Rather it’s encouraged that the performer only points to one of the hands with the question “Is the ring in this hand?”

TIP: If the performer holds his/her own hands behind their back while giving instructions, then s/he can move an imaginary ring between his/her hands in keeping with the instructions being given and responded to as an obedient child – helping keep track of the ring and also then non-verbally bringing their own hands out from behind their back at the appropriate time to indicate to the volunteer that now is the time for them to do the same without to necessarily needing to verbally request it.

BONUS: In the above phase options, if you insert a “don’t switch” instruction between two “switch” instructions OR a “switch” instruction between two “don’t switch” instructions, you will also finish with the ring in the same hand as the obedient child would have – creating a five-phase routine. This would create the appearance of even greater variance in the case of a repeat situation.

Remember . . . if the above instructions are followed, in whichever hand the obedient child would have the ring at the conclusion of the exchanges, the disobedient child will also.

If you choose the above framing of this effect, please watch Pamela Meyer’s eighteen-minute TED talk at: https://www.ted.com/talks/pamela_meyer_how_to_spot_a_liar

Then you’ll be able to speak with a greater sense of authority about the indications you’re apparently using to determine whether the person is playing the role of an obedient or that of a disobedient child.