

## A Case for “Delight” — Magical Commentary

Since “returning” to magic six or seven years ago, I’ve been playing catch up, and much to my delight, I have discovered a whole new community I had been ignoring (out of *ignorance*) more than forty years.

It’s not that I was really away all that time from magic, an enthusiasm that I can trace at least as far back as the 7th grade when I tried to levitate one of my father’s work handkerchiefs across the school yard of South Houston Junior High School. Quite early, apparently, I was really snookered by the magic bug—I kept checking out (over and over again) every book I could find in the library, and Dad and I made our annual pilgrimage down to Howard’s Fun Shop in Houston where I added to my growing collection of “tricky boxes” and other props. And I was delighted!

I kept my box of props for years, and when our kids came along, I dragged it out of the study, hooked up the linking rings, and “multiplied” the golf balls, but over the years, the kids got bored, and the box went back to the closet — it seems, they were just no longer delighted. The same cycle repeated itself when the grandkids came along, much to their initial curiosity, perhaps, but after a while, they stopped asking for the box, because, as before, granddad’s magic had lost its delight.

I have plumbed a lesson there — if anything else, what I used to find and what has rekindled my interest in my magic is that initial *delight*. As a student of magic (I have recently begun chucking my professional library for a *magic* one), I have “gone back to school” inside the margins of pages written by many fine and well-established magicians. While some aim to enhance expertise in technique, others promote the business of magic; still others have embraced the “theory and art” of magic as a function of the very foundation of the human psyche. Much of this overwhelms and challenges me as much as it delights me, I have to confess, although I am deeply drawn to the more recent attempts to examine the history, function, and practice of magic in *academia*.



So, I have been reading and reading, spending lots of money inside and outside the brick and mortar stores, and practicing, practicing, and practicing, because I really care about developing my skill sets in performance. But there’s the word — *performance!* It’s in the *performance of the magic* where that wonderful delight is rekindled for me. Every time I ring the bell at a home and that mom and expectant birthday child greet me at the front door, the bunnies in the pocket “start jumping,” and within an hour, the kids are laughing and screaming, eager to volunteer, and clamoring for the next “piece” of magic, and I am just delighted! More to the point, mamma and company are delighted! And the kids are just going nuts! It takes the better part of an hour just to pack up, because the youngsters are bunched up around me like a soccer ball in the middle of the field, clamoring for “just one more, Mr. Magic Man!” The tip the daddy slipped me on the way out “bunches up” in my pocket all the way home, and I am *really* delighted.

Ever since getting back into it, I have been doing some very serious reflecting on magic, the effect of the experience of magic, the relationship of that effect to the experiences we have in humor, the sensation of the bizarre, irony, and the transforming revelations of insight. But something tells me that, aside from all that, what keeps drawing me back — and what keeps the phone ringing — is the sheer *delight* of it all.

Just sayin’ . . .

Doc Grimes