



**mind over
mentalism**

course notes

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fork bending

I have always found that, to perform many of the fork bends on the market, I have never had the strength to pull them off. Especially the one handed bend. I explored the works of Banachek, Morgan Strebler, Marc Spelmann and Menny Lindenfeld and compiled some of my favourite visual bends. When constructing my routine, I noticed, there are three main parts to achieving a good fork bending routine.

1) The bend (action) - this is the secret action taken by the performer to make the bend. This is the part most performers have put most information forward when teaching their bends. But, because of points 2 and 3, I don't believe we need to be as sneaky and worried about this process as we might first think.

2) The bend (perceived) - this is the bend the spectators actually see. The most important part is that they see the bend happening without your input. That way, even if they see you pre-bend it, their questioning their eyes will cancel out the pre-bend.

3) Cancellation of method - it's widely accepted that by mixing methods, it allows the routine to cancel out methods without you needing to do anything. My approach relies heavily on open misdirection, covert misdirection and visual bends.

So let us start by talking about the bend (action). This is the 'trick' part. The part the spectator doesn't see. Most mentalists and performers rely on covert misdirection (*asking the spectator to place their hand out*) and then bending the fork with one hand. For me, my hands aren't strong enough due to a mild arthritis. I can however, easily bend most fork with two hands. So I know, for me, this is the only approach. But how do you covertly bend a fork with both hands in front of the spectator? The answer is, I use an open misdirection.

Let's run through my routine. First, I hand the fork out for inspection and often, I give several out and allow them to choose one for me. This later cancels out the idea that a certain fork was special in some way.

I then take the fork back and ask them to confirm it is indeed a solid fork and they feel it. They confirm. But in this moment, I have achieved the first bend, openly in front of everyone. As I ask them to confirm that it was indeed strong, I put all of the attention on their answer. The audience at this point are more interested in the spectator confirmation than what I am doing. I place one hand on each side of the fork and almost as if I am miming what the specific actor did when trying to bend it, I place a bend in it. I use the example of them trying to bend the fork to actually bend it. I do this twice in performance.

I then place the fork face down on my hand ready for a visual bend. Now, they see the fork bending on its own and at this point the reactions begin and they realise what is going on.

Then I break up proceedings, by handing the fork back to the spectator and ask others to check my hands for magnets or chemicals. Since these are the two main solutions people have for the routine, by overtly bringing them up as possibilities, it cancels

them out as well. Then I take the fork back and ask the spectator to place their first finger out and gesture how to do it. At that moment, once again, the enthuses is all on the spectator and not me. So, I increase the bend in the fork. Then, using a Banachek bend but using their finger as the 'method' for the bend, I leave it dangling on their finger.

Now, I want to begin to finish and present an open bend for everyone. So I hold the fork up to the height of my face and cause it to bend twice more.

It's time to build to the conclusion. If I am combining this with a coin bend, I will ask the spectator who is holding the coin if it is getting hot. As this happens, I openly bend one of the tines and then hold the fork covering that end.

If not, I will ask someone at the table to stand up and hold out their hand because I want everyone to see it. This is more than enough misdirection to place a bend in the tine and then cover that end.

Finally, I tell them I am going to go nowhere near the end which at this point, actually doesn't mean much to them but it will in a second. I hold the handle end of the fork whilst waving so they don't notice the fork tine is already bent. I do this above the palm of their hand because when I slow down, it will look as though the tine is being attracted to their hand. I then leave it on their outstretched palm to take away as a souvenir.

Again, this cancels out the idea is it a trick fork. I wouldn't be letting them keep it otherwise!



So in regards to the second point, bend (the perception), it is the visual illustration which they attribute to making it bend. Even if I had pre-bent the fork, how is it bending on its own?

When you work this routine, you will get the occasional sceptic but generally, there is an overwhelming pressure for that individual to comply with everyone else because of the belief of the rest of the group. Often, they will answer the questions he has for you. For example, "It was already bent"... The response would be, "But it's bending on its own, he's to even touching it!"

The final point to talk about is the cancelation of methods. Using Menny Lindenfeld's handling of Banachek's in the palm optical bend, you can create a very free and fair bend that looks as hands off as possible. The interesting thing is, you only need to convince them within the first bend that it is happening itself, for them to buy into everything after that.

Typically, I perform the bend completely silent and as slow to begin with as possible. Really build up the moment. It is a rare time doing close up table magic in restaurants which the whole table is dead quiet and their concentration is 100% in the moment.

Just be brave, be bold and rely on misdirection to achieve the dirty work!

who? where? wow!

I love one ahead effects but rarely have a seen a routine which takes the weakest moment and turns it into the strongest. For me, it is the subtleties in the routine which make it believable and there are things within the routine you can do to silently reiterate when things were written. Finally, making sure nothing is forced is also a big way to make the routine feel fairer. There are many ways to not force one item and i'll discuss a few here.

The first thing I do is introduce a glass. I think having some kind of "safe" place redirects their attention from one potential method to another. If I mention the pieces of paper might be switched, that it the method I am bringing to their attention and therefore, that it the thing they will most concrete on. I tell them I will place them inside the glass and I place the glass on a deck of cards so it is easier for everyone to see.

I then divert my gaze to the first spectator and ask her to think of someone she hasn't seen in a while. Once she confirms this, I ask her if this is a woman. Often, in my experience anyway, women seem to be thought of more than men. If it hits, it instantly feels like this is a hit. If it misses, I just say, "okay" inquisitively and then move on. The next thing I mention is if it is a shortened or nick-name. Quite often, if they are thinking of mum or dad, you can turn this into a hit later or they might shorten a name. Again, more often than not, this will also hit. If not, I once again agree inquisitively and continue.

Now, we are going to include a subtle convincer that will make everything feel as though it has been written real time... I apologise for my poor spelling. I understand you might be asking why this helps, but all will become apparent in a moment.

What I really write down is: "Check under the glass".

I fold up the paper and place it in the glass. I then get someone near the glass to confirm it went in there and I didn't do anything fishy. I find this confirmation is quite an important moment for people to feel comfortable saying their thing out loud. If you say it's fair... it might be. If a random friend of theirs confirms things are fair... it must be.

Then I ask them the name. Let's assume they say Carol. At this moment, I will pretend lie I don't know how the name is spelt, even if there is only one way to spell it. Here I would say something like, "Now I did say forgive my spelling, is it spelt Carol or Carole?" At this point, you'll get a reaction almost like you have already got it right! Delivered with confidence, it will feel like this is what you meant as you were writing. I wait for the confirmation of the spelling and I move on.

The next person, I ask them to think of a place in the world they have no visited for a while. This can be as specific as the name of their favourite restaurant, I their favourite village or town in their favourite country, somewhere in the world. Structuring the instruction this way, subtly reinforces the impossibility of what you are about to do and the vast amount of choices they have. This also helps with part of the duel reality we are adding into the mix.

Once they are thinking of a place, I take another card or slip of paper, and write CAROLE on it but I scribble out the E. This is part of the convincer for later on.



I fold it up, put it into the glass and once again, have someone confirm it is in the glass and I am where near it. I then ask for the place. Let us assume they said, “America”. I look confused and continue with, “be honest, did you think of two places?”. If they say yes, I ask what the other place was called. If they say no, I say, “what part of American would you normally visit?”, and I wait for the answer.

I act like it makes sense and I write down BOTH of the places he has just mentioned but put a line through one of them. And now we get onto the final section. Normally, this is the weakest part of the routine but with an invisible deck and some clever scripting, it feels as though it is the most impressive part.

I continue, “Sarah, I am going to ask you to think of a playing card. Now, I understand that is not as impressive as any name or any place. But, you get an advantage no one else has had. I am going to give you the chance to change your mind as many times as you want. In fact, even though I am going to write down my prediction, even though it will be in the glass before you say anything, you can still change your mind because I think I can accurately predict the card you will land on.”

This is a really powerful piece of scripting because you are addressing the elephant in the room... it is not as impressive. But then, you are making it feel as though they have more freedom than the other people. Then for the reveal, I ask them to make sure I do nothing strange and gather everything up. Open the billets and get them into order. I am now going to recap what I said but as I reveal everything. I say to spectator one, “I asked you to think of the name of someone you hadn’t seen in a while. I did say forgive me spelling, but I went for Carol but crossed out that E.”



The subtlety of the spelling, really makes it feel as though it was written at the same time. The second reveal, I say, “This one went a bit strangely, but it will make sense in a moment. I was actually picking up on two ideas. I wasn’t sure which one it was so I wrote down...” I then reveal I wrote down two places. Again, this makes it feel like that specific moment was linked to the confusion of two places.

Finally, I reiterate, even though we are at this point and even though my predication has been written down, she can still change her mind. I ask her to name the card she landed on and turn the paper around. I continue, “The paper says check under the glass. Because one in 52 is not as impressive as any name or any place (subtly reinforcing how impossible everything has been) but before I ever came here this evening, I had a feeling you might do something, you might land on a specific card. So I placed one card face down to all the other cards in this deck, under the glass that has been in full view the entire time.” I then reveal the card using the invisible deck.

You of course don’t have to use the invisible deck! Liam Montier has a brilliant effect out with Alakazam which uses cards with star signs on. You could then reveal you knew their starting before the show began. You could also use a peek from a booktest. There are any number of things you can do for the ending but hopefully the subtitles herein will give you many great reactions!

pk touches

Many magicians mention they have a workhorse. Mine is Pk Touches. I have performed it hundreds, if not thousands of times. Everything that could go wrong, has gone wrong. Everything I can do to excel the moment, I do. Every bit of scripting, every movement and nuance, is there for a reason.

The scripting I use at the beginning is as follows:

“In a moment, I am going to ask you to close your eyes. When your eyes are closed you are not allowed to laugh or speak, give nothing away. If I ask you a question, you are allowed to answer it but please keep your eyes closed no matter what. These guys will be reacting to things which is a good sign but if at any point you open your eyes, the connection will be lost and this will not work. I promise you, if this goes as I expect it will, this will be something you remember forever...”

Everything in this piece of scripting is designed to reduce issues and problems going wrong. I also utilise many different methods from the likes of Banachek, Derren Brown, Lior Manor, Rafael D'Angelo and my own handlings.

pinology

Here is the system for pinology.

The four possible reveals are:

2302

4524

6746

8968

And the formula is:

? + 1 - 3 + 2

I have also provided you with a double envelope template on the next page to print and assemble!

