

What I think

Joaquin Ayala

introduction

A long time ago, I wanted to start putting in writing my concepts
in case in the future
I needed to re-read them.
What I'm going to talk about I experienced myself
these experiences are attached to my brain,
these experiences are attached to my heart.

Many times I paid attention to people who took the time to give me advice. Someone
that said something extremely important
and I stored it in my "brain file".
Most of these concepts I suffered, tried
and experienced myself.

In the end, it doesn't matter where your philosophy came from.
What matters is to understand, learn and practice
what is the right thing to do, for just one reason...
to be better.

In these concepts you are not going to find new magic tricks, gimmicks or special
effects, instead,
you will find the systems, those tools and advice to present *much better*
the effects that you already have.

I will try to motivate you to create your own effects, your own routines with your own
presentation and your own style. In a few words...
create your own magic.

Keep these notes, these concepts will help you along your wonderful journey into the
world of magic and the complex world of show business.

I also believe that these concepts will
help you in your personal life even if you are an
artist or not...you will see.

As I told you before, I will try to motivate you to think different.
A few people inspired me and showed me the way through life.
And they helped me with my career.
I learned from my mistakes and always no
matter what... they were there for me and for that...

I will be always grateful
From you.... dear reader
I don't expect you to be grateful to me,
I just expect that someday I will have the honor
to see your work live
and feel the
emotion of a great artist performing on stage.

As a piece of information...
the first time that some of these concepts were published was in The Excelsior
Newspaper in 1983 in Mexico City, then in 1998 I incorporated them as
"my thoughts" in my web-site ayalamagic.com.
And in the fall of 2002 I lectured in Vitoria-Spain under the title
"lo que pienso".

I would like to express my sincere thanks to you for spending a few minutes of
your precious time to read, to discern and to think about what
I'm going to tell you.

In these notes, you will find that I **highlighted** the basic concepts for their fastest
location.

Also, at the left side of every
page you will find a complete empty space for you to write
your own comments, notes, sketches or ideas,
feel free to draw, paint or rip-off the page if you want.

By now, maybe you noticed that
this write-up is framed to the right side of the page
instead of the left side like normal books are usually read.

Sorry but,
I always try to do something different !

are you ready to start?

the time is now !

Joaquin Ayala
Las Vegas, Nevada
November 2003

acknowledgements

My most sincere thanks and love to my daughter
Nadia Ayala who gave me her precious time to help me
in putting in order this lecture and designed the front page and photos.

And to Tanya Garofalo who put in "proper English"
these lecture notes
on those days she was extremely tired and sick
gracias mi amor !

A warm thank you to all those who always were there for me in the ups and downs of my career
and personal life:

My parents Maria Angelina Godoleva Aldave Perez de Ayala
and Joaquin Ayala Granados
my brothers
Hugo
Gody
Gustavo
y Arturo
Lilia Patricia López Álvarez
Baldomero López Galindo
James Randi
Julio Cesar Jimenez Trujilo
Bob Little
Louie Berkie
Luis Chiquini Durán
Fernando Anaya
José Luis Mazoy Kuri
Miguel Gómez Ortiz
Carlos Calderon
Pascual Hernandez Becerril
Coronel Humberto Merlos Suarez
Manuel Duarte Ferreira
Fernando Ramírez
Leonardo Trebole
Franklin Cedillo de la Borbolla
Carlos Meraz
Gloria Meraz
Ricardo Mejía
Armando Vera
Sonny Fontana
Iris Calatayud
Don Felipito "Mi carpintero"
Lucy Rodríguez
y Oscar Ricci

SUCCESS

Success is different to every person,
it means something different from one person to another.

Success is synonymous with triumph, reached goals a victory at the end of the journey that has a positive satisfaction either individual or as a team in the professional, financial or personal area.

You'll agree with me that success is a reflection of "positive satisfaction and joy of human nature".

You can not get complete success if you didn't know or experience failure before.

From failure we learn more than success, from failure we learn what didn't work, what went wrong, what plan failed and helps us to re-think, to reflect, and to meditate.

Those people who had goals are successful and their success is permanent just by simply knowing where they are going. Those goals push you to obtain results.

Victor Frank in his book "in search for the human sense" says:
"goals made people reach for success in their life..."

How can you be successful if you do not know where to go?
if you don't know what you want?

Just for being human we were made to achieve perfection and for being creative.

Our human nature tells us when everything is going well or when everything is going wrong.

A successful person plans, thinks and organizes.

Organization

Through organization your life and career develop a coherent unity of

functioning whole,
A harmony of functional structure leads to a
positive end result.

In my personal experience I tested this concept
many, many times.

Disorganization means no control...
not having control reflects ignorance of the facts.
Knowledge organizes you intellectually,
socially, financially, spiritual and professionally.

That's why studying and professional training is very important.

You can reach as high as you want, you can make those dreams come true
just by **taking action!**

how?

studying, working and training yourself.

Anthony Robbins in one of his lectures said:
*"in the deep inside of every human heart
we want to be the best, the most creative, successful, precise and clever...
we just need to take action"*

If you don't get what you want...it is because you didn't pay the price yet.

There's no excuses for not growing
we have all the elements to achieve success.
Your best effort towards it will be your best satisfaction.

To succeed we need 2 elements:

"Sense of urgency and previous preparation"

Sense of Urgency

Is not to let one single day go without doing the things you
are supposed to do.
You need to take advantage of time by utilizing it to create,
study, organize and prepare yourself for the
opportunities to come.

I always believed that the great opportunities
knock on our door once in a lifetime...so?

We need to be prepared!

But what happens when we are not ready?
What happens when we are not prepared?

Our sense of urgency is off and the great opportunities
of life disappear like a puff of smoke.

Previous Preparation

You can not reach to the top if you do not pay the price...

Lance Burton one day told me:
people need to pay "their right to be on stage"

In a few words, what he meant was to pay your right to be on stage by working hard in
all aspects.

In my personal experience I proved over and over this next concept:
"in life everything has a price and one day... you will pay!..."

Carlos Cuauhtemoc Sanchez in his book "The price of success" says:
*there's ant hunters and elephant hunters, takes the same effort, energy and time to get
that big project or the small one..."*

but, are you ready for the big up-coming project?

How do we know that we are getting a certain degree of success?

There are 2 simple answers:

**When the phone doesn't stop to ring
and, when jealousy starts to happen around you.**

In fact, jealousy is very common in our magic circles.

When people spend time in criticizing they are showing 2 things:

insecurity and envy

but, it's normal and like any mathematic rule...it always happens.

Also, it is up to you on how those "negative vibes" will affect you
Those negative vibes are like walls in front of you that if you want just by pushing **with one finger, you can make them fall.**

Remember...poison doesn't kill you if you don't drink it !

Destructive criticism, envy and negative attitude, traps you in a vicious circle that's very difficult to escape, this makes your way to success very, very slow and in some cases stops your way to the top.

And as simple as I say it:
the doors your knocked before start to open like magic
when the phone doesn't stop to ring
that means that your hard work finally is giving birth to positive results...

Experience gives you a certain degree of success in aspects of your life
professional and personal...
After gained experience you've learned, you went through odd times,
you've paid the price
you know what works and what doesn't
you have proved it many times...

One day a student asked to the famous writer Clark Lewis this question:
*I want to be the best writer,
what's your secret for success...?*
Lewis answered: *tell all the students to come to the university theater
at 8 pm and I will reveal the secret on how to be
the best writer in the all world ..."*

Around 300 beginning writers attended that reunion at 8 pm.
Lewis arrived, stood in front of the stage and told them:

"go home and start writing..."

I think just a few understood those intelligent words from the old famous writer
he meant: *go home and start writing so you can get **experience.***

In 1981 I performed for the first time at the Magic Castle in Hollywood
that experience was unforgettable.
Back then Peter Pit was in charge of directing the best acts in the business
and one day I asked him

"What do I need to do to be the best magician..?"

and he told me:

*"Go back to Mexico and perform 2 shows a day for 5 years and then come back to me
and we can talk..."*

Back then his remark sounded harsh and rude...
Now I understand what he wanted me to understand:

just go back home and...
get experience!

personality & style

In magic, everything is about personality and style.

**The way we interact with the audience
with this elements in harmony
that's the real magic.**

The tricks, the big illusions, the special effects and the props,
are just tools that
we need to create that interactive atmosphere and communication with the
audience.

For example:

**A painter's tools are the canvas, the paint and brushes.
The special way he use them,
is his style.**

A Picasso, a Dali or a Monet are very different from one to the other
because they have their own style, their own technique.

Sometimes we as (magicians) forget to perform
with our personality.
Our mistake is to focus too much attention to the props, the tools or just in the technical
effect.
Forgetting that we are artists.

For example:

When a pianist finishes his concert, he stands up and takes his bow.
He doesn't stand up and point to the piano
for the audience to applaud it.
The applause is for the artist not to the prop.

If we are on stage we need to understand that we are the ones making miracles
possible...
not the props!

"We are actors representing the role of miracle makers..."

We really need to believe our character on stage.

In theater, an actor can play different characters
entertaining us by using drama, comedy, dance or any other
performing art form.

Magicians need to learn different kinds of theatrical
expressions like
comedy, drama, dance, etc.
for enhancement of their knowledge
but, at least, they need to learn the most important role on stage...
themselves.

When we start in magic, other performers always influence us.

We admire them so much that we want to be like them,
just like them.
Their personality and style amaze us.

That's why magic at the beginning is like our first love...so passionate.

We saw an artist that made us feel the wonder.

We want to be like these other person
and we start
to get a different personality other than ours, a personality and style that doesn't
belong to us.

Unfortunately, the audience can sense that right away
feeling that something is wrong,
feeling that something is out of place.

For some people like me, it took a lot of time to find that character
that was comfortable on stage.

The **only way to find the personality and style that fits you
is through experience and maturing.**

**The experience through time gives us
the maturity process necessary to find ourselves.**

I remember that Fernando Anaya once told me:

*“When you get to the point that your act starts to get boring,
this is when the audience starts to love you...”*

When you get to that point of “comfort” it is because you have been doing it for a long time.

You are playing yourself on stage the way you are,
you are authentic and sincere with the audience with no masks or false
personality.

In the first 45 seconds you are on stage, the audience already has analyzed your
character, personality and that first impression (good or bad),
they'll never forget.

My father always told me:

*“In life you will never have more than 2 opportunities with the same person,
the first impression is the one they will never forget...”*

In conclusion, the corporal expression,
the way you look, the way you smile, the way you walk, the way you talk, the way you
dress, the way you move,
**are the complex of characteristics that distinguishes the personality
of an individual.**

**The technique on how you use all of these attributes on stage...
is you style.**

presentation

The look of your props, your originality, the kind of music and the atmosphere you create on stage with your personality and style is the presentation of your magic.

In magic, our presentation should be clear and easy to understand.

If the script of the presentation it is not defined, the audience will be confused.
If the music does not fit the style of act or movements
everything will feel messy.

If you don't believe in your character, there's no personality, there's no style.

If we are getting laughs from the audience while trying to be serious, not performing comedy, something is wrong.

This kind of confusion on stage is very common in magic conventions around the world, the stage turns into chaos and the performer loses control over the audience reaction.

If the presentation is coherent, shows your personality and style the way you want, they create an interesting atmosphere on stage.

The presentation of your act is that kind of aura the audience feels by sensing the music, with your style, with your looks, with the colors you use, the look of your props, etc.

music

Music tells you the rhythm and pacing of the act.

When each sound and melody fits with the movements and character the **harmony of the act is perfect.**

To create this harmony, the type of music should be the same as the kind of feeling we like to portray in the act. This could be dramatic, mysterious, suspenseful, rhythmic, comedic, suave, sophisticated, etc.

To understand more these points, just think what you feel when you watch a movie. The director manipulates your emotions by creating suspense, drama, romantic situations, etc.

A combination of music and visuals moves your feelings.

Not all the music needs to fit the movements on stage but needs to fit the atmosphere and theme of the act.

For example:

In the movie "Halloween" the director creates terror and suspense just by matching the scenes with action and great music. When you hear the classic "killer music" you know that Michael Myers is close to killing someone.

In presenting magic, we can apply the same principle. I always thought: **if Mozart was born a talented genius** and I wasn't, **why not just fit my movements and effects to his music.** The end result will be very emotional.

In 1985, I competed at F.I.S.M. in Madrid Spain. Using a Mozart overture and finalizing with another composer's big crescendo. Back then, my magic wasn't great but the audience was moved emotionally and those crescendos at the end of my act gave me a great audience response.

In fact,
I didn't get the Grand Prix.

When you experience a great magic act,
just study a little bit about it and
you will find it has a perfect harmony between
music and magic.

**Magic with impact is a perfect visual effect but
in combination
with a great performance, the result will be shocking and exciting.**

Perfect examples are:

Romantic or suave:

Mirko

Juan Mayoral
Lance Burton

Shocking:

Penn & Teller
Amazing Jonathan
David Blaine

Fast pacing & exciting

Siegfried and Roy
Ayala and Tanya (yeahhhh!)
Hans Klock

Suspense:

Yunke
Hans Moretti

Comedy:

Otto Wesseley
Johnny Thompson
Dana Daniels

motivation

Experiencing live magic shows is great motivation for
the magic lover.

The great masters of magic move our feelings and
motivate us to continue and stay in this art.

Motivation is that internal power that gives us energy to continue...
to keep going on and on, it' s like having
"charged batteries " all the time.

Motivation is something that is born out of personal necessity and desire.
It helps us
to finish projects, pushing us to take action.

From good experiences we learn what we should do.

Sometimes, you can get motivation from bad experiences.
Watching a bad show or a bad performer,
teaches us what we shouldn't do.

In general, motivation has positive results.

On the other hand it is very easy to fall in the bad habit of copying somebody we
admire,
by taking concepts, routines, looks or even the entire act .

How can we be motivated on the positive side?

Just by respecting limits, work and material of other performers.

inspiration

"Inspiration comes from everywhere, the sky, earth, a piece of paper, a spider web, etc ..." (Pablo Picasso).

Magic is an art form and the only way to respect this principle is to perform with the only purpose to entertain.

To maintain interest from the audience we need to show them something new and different, something truly original, something never seen before, something well done, artistically beautiful, something sublime that comes from great inspiration.

Inspiration is the power that encourage us, is the engine of **our senses for the creation of something original.**

Is the starter to our creativity to take action.

Most of the time I got inspiration just by listen to music, a melody, a tune, the words of a song, reminded me past situations, places, colors, people, etc.

other times, when I'm sleeping I have "freedom of thoughts". I had dreams and sometimes nightmares that were great ideas for stage illusions.

My illusion "Blades of Doom" was created after I had a nightmare of dying after lots of nights of tension and stress for an up-coming project.

Another form of inspiration I used a lot is to visit to museums. ideas of designs, forms, colors, furniture, paints are great sources for scenery and stage props.

Occasionally I got inspiration from reading a book, a poem, a love letter or simply attending a concert, movies, TV show or theatre.

Remember Picasso's words: "*inspiration comes from everywhere...*"

When we get inspiration from a different source than magic, the result will be something original.

originality

Something is original when a new idea comes from your imagination.

Originality makes us unique and different.

*"If you want to be different and eliminate competition
just think, meditate and imagine..." (Marvin Roy)*

In magic all effects are based on the 7 basic principles:
appearances, disappearances, transpositions, levitations, suspensions, transformations and
penetrations.

It helps grandly for an effect to be different with original presentation

by modifying a classic effect with an
innovation or new twist.

For example:

Karson, a long time ago, was the inventor of the Zombie Ball.
Years later, Norm Nielsen came up with the idea
of combining the Zombie Ball effect with a musical instrument
creating his famous piece "The Floating violin"

Cantu was the first magician to appear birds out of his hands
by using methods of loading birds into his attire. Years later Channing Pollock introduced the
Western style of a bird act in tails.

Siegfried and Roy were the first
to perform exciting illusions by incorporating wild animals into their act.

Like any professional, were committed to be different and original.
This is called the "creative instinct".
By nature humans are creative,
we are the only ones that can express ourselves in the performing arts.

"Being an artist and not being original is a contradiction..."

Art express creativity
and magic is a performing art.
We as magic performers should be committed to be innovative and creative.

los escapes fueron su característica distintiva, así como también sus habilidades magistrales de publicista.

Otro ejemplo:

Siegfried & Roy fueron los primeros en realizar una magia excitante dentro del escenario incorporando animales exóticos dentro de su repertorio.

Como cualquier profesional dentro de su campo,
debemos tratar de ser originales, estamos llamados a la originalidad...

El instinto creativo es algo que no solamente sentimos, sino algo que deseamos y que deberíamos tratar de lograr.

El ser humano es creativo por naturaleza,
el ser humano es el único ser capaz de expresarse dentro del campo de las artes,
las artes expresan la libertad de la creatividad,
y si la magia es un arte expresada por humanos...

¿Por qué no tendemos a ser creativos?

“ser artista y no ser original es una contradicción...”

knowledge

“Knowledge is important because it gives you ambition...” (Maria Felix)

Like I mentioned before, knowledge, studying and preparing intellectually and physically are very important to portray the artist we want to be.

Besides ambition, knowledge gives you the ability to know the answers and information of why and how of certain concepts and systems.

By attending conventions, seminars, lectures and classes, your view will be wider.

Expanding your public relations with magicians, actors, artists and professionals in this field, helps you to enhance your capacity of knowledge.

My mother always says:

“If you know more, your value as a professional is higher...”

If you have a higher knowledge you will have more opportunities of get a better position and sometimes ...to charge more.

practice and rehearsal

Without practice and rehearsal there's no perfection in our art.

Practice is an individual task.

**When you are talking on the phone and you are rotating
the coin between your fingers** or playing with the cards in your hands,
that's practice.

When you start to perfect your movements, your body expression,
your ability with your card manipulation,
your bird loads etc.
by yourself in your studio or **at home** in front of the mirror for long hours...
that's a result of practice.

**Practice is the process that allows you
to control and to develop your personal technique.**

Practice is the first step to transform an act into something really magical.

Rehearsal is a little bit more elaborate.

Rehearsal is an exercise preparatory to a public performance
by incorporating all the necessary elements
together to perform an
act or a stage shows.

Rehearsal is practicing all at the same time,
scenery changes, costume changes, staging positions, placing props,
music cues, lighting cues,
curtain calls,
using stage crew, dancers, assistants, actors,
wardrobe department, etc.

By rehearsing, you will gain confidence for your performance.

Later, when the act is already playing in front of an audience,
you can polish, mold and change it
according to your audience reactions.

Once Siegfried told me:

*"In a long run, you have the time to listen to the heartbeat
of the audience, and when
you are listening, when you hearing that,
the audience will tell you what to do..."*

To make it perfect, the act needs to mature.
It needs time to fit you.

Compare it with your most comfortable shoes...

I bet those are the old ones you have?

Just remember...

without practice and rehearsal the show will be
a guaranteed fiasco...!"

Would you like to take a chance?

final thought

To be an artist you have to have a born talent to entertain.

You can't buy talent in the pharmacy.
It lives in your blood
like those born a matador or a prophet.

To enjoy life you need to find your true vocation.

If you are like me, a born artist,
you know how it feels standing in front of the audience,

if you are like me, a born artist,
you are egocentric, maybe you more than me,

if you are like me, a born artist,
you feel uncomfortable sitting in the audience,
because you want to be on stage

if you are like me, a born artist,
you are not a normal person

if you are like me, a born artist,
you have a child spirit

if you are like me, a born artist,
you will die happy...

because we early found our vocation.

dedicatory

to all those who have given me
the best gift that someone can give you...
their time...

Joaquin Ayala 2016