

Two Person Telepathy: A Hidden Gem in Anneman's *Practical Mental Effects*

Doron Levy¹

About three decades ago I visited New York City for the first time. Living magic, doing magic, and thinking about magic, I could not have missed on the opportunity to walk into Tannen's magic store, New York City's oldest magic shop.

In these pre-internet days, visiting a magic shop was one of the only practical ways to buy magic items. Though dealers were always present in magic conventions, and the US mail still functioned, in these pre-internet days, the first-hand experience of visiting a magic store was the best way for amateurs and professionals alike to talk about magic.

Before stepping into the store, I expected to leave several hours later with a bag full of tricks. In reality, I did emerge after several hours, but without any new tricks. Instead, I walked out holding two books: Corinda's *13 Steps to Mentalism*, and Anneman's *Practical Mental Effects*. Not knowing anything about mentalism, the art of mind reading, but eager to learn – I chose the right path: reading books. Many years have passed, and my library includes hundreds of books on magic, but I always enjoy rereading my first two books. A Dover edition of Anneman's book sells for about \$10 on Amazon, while Corinda's book is about twice as expensive. Both of them were published over half a century ago. However, they are full of gems, which was acknowledged, for example, by the recent release of a 6 DVD set by Richard Osterlind, in which he systematically demonstrates material from Corinda's book.

Over the years, I have been using a lot of material from Anneman's book in my shows. In honor of the 12th Gathering for Gardner, I would like to revisit one effect: a two person's telepathy routine. This routine is called "A Practical Card Code". It is attributed to Orville Meyer, and it appears on Page 292 in the last chapter of the book, the chapter on Psychic Codes. Many manuscripts were written on two person telepathy, including Step #8 in Corinda's book. Examples of other resources include the book by Ron and Nancy Spencer, *Telepathy Personified*, and the manuscript by R.T. Stark, *Cipher Speak*.

Meyer's *Practical Card Code* is a very simple, yet quite clever, coding system, which allows two people to communicate information about a chosen card with minimal effort. The original layout of the code is shown in Figure 1. The idea is straightforward and can be played out in several ways. The code is known to the magician and the assistant. The assistant can be blindfolded and is seated in front of the audience. A volunteer picks a card, which can then be shown to the entire audience. Since the assistant is going to reveal the card, there is no need to hide the card from the magician. The magician then asks the assistant to reveal the card, and the assistant does so successfully.

The identity of the card is "transmitted" by the magician to the assistant through the secret code shown in Figure 1. For example, if the chosen card is the 3 of Hearts, the magician will say: "Tell me what is the chosen card". "Tell me" sets the suit of the chosen card as "hearts," and "what" tells the assistant that the card is between an Ace and 6. In reply, the assistant says: "The card is RED," at which point the magician says "Yes," which will then direct the card to be in the group A,2,3. The

¹Department of Mathematics and Center for Scientific Computation and Mathematical Modeling (CSCAMM), University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

LAYOUT OF CODE

"Tell us"—Diamonds.
 "Now tell us"—Clubs.
 "Tell me"—Hearts.
 "Now tell me"—Spades.

"What"			"the name"								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	J	Q
"Yes"			(Silence)				"Yes"			(Silence)	
1						2				3	
"Yes"						"That's right"				(Silence)	
"Right"						"You're right"					
						K					
						"The card"					

Figure 1: A Practical Card Code by Orville Meyer, as appears in Anneman's Practical Mental Effects.

assistant now knows that the card is $A\heartsuit$, $2\heartsuit$, or $3\heartsuit$, but the information is revealed gradually. The assistant will say: "The card is a HEART," to which the magician will reply by nodding his head, but saying nothing. This directs the assistant to the third option, and she can conclude with: "The card is a THREE OF HEARTS".

The code requires several clarifications: First, the deck is assumed to have no Jokers. It is easy to add a special code sentence for the joker, but that is not part of the original code. Also, there is a special code sentence for the King. For example, the King of Spades will be "transmitted" using the sentence: "Now tell me the card". The assistant knows that the card is the $K\spadesuit$ and can then chose either to immediately reveal this information or to gradually reveal it, similarly to the non-King cards.

I probably performed this effect hundreds of times. It is easy to master and leaves a very strong impression. I was never a big fan of the "silence" part of the code. This can always be replaced by a different word, such as "good."

Just like many other magic tricks, I would not recommend repeating this effect more than once, at least not in its original form. However, with some simple modifications, the trick can be repeated several times in front of the same audience without revealing the method. For example, starting from the second card, I would recommend modifying the code in a cyclic way. That is, once the first card was revealed, one can use this information to encode the difference between the known card and the next card. For example, one can assume an ordering of the suits, say $\diamondsuit, \clubsuit, \heartsuit, \spadesuit$. Then if the first card, e.g., was a heart, and the second card is a club, the magician has to encode the number 3, that is skipping 3 suits in the list (in a cyclic fashion). The first word in the communication to the assistant can encode this message: "Fine," "Good," "Let's," "OK." The face value of the card can be encoded in a similar way by encoding for the difference from the first card. I am not providing here exact rules, but the principle is straightforward. It is important to note though, that if the effect is to be repeated several times, some variations should be made in how the card is selected and also precisely what the magician sees. For example, while the first card is chosen by a spectator and is shown to everyone, including to the magician, the second card can be hidden from the magician (i.e., forced in your favorite way). Repeating effects makes sense only if the overall sense of mystery gradually increases. Enjoy!