



It's a Kind OF MAGIC

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, MAGICIANS HAVE AMAZED AUDIENCES BY DEVELOPING AND APPLYING INTUITION ABOUT THE MIND. SKILLED MAGICIANS CAN MANIPULATE MEMORIES, CONTROL ATTENTION AND INFLUENCE CHOICES. MOST OF US HAVE WATCHED THEM PERFORM SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE TRICKS AT BIRTHDAY PARTIES, CIRCUSES, SHOWS AND, NOWADAYS, EVEN ONLINE, ALWAYS ASKING OURSELVES THE SAME QUESTION: "HOW DID THEY DO THAT?!" HERE, LEGAL BUSINESS STRATEGIST, AUTHOR AND SPEAKER PHILIPPOS ARISTOTELOUS TELLS GOLD HOW HE BECAME "BEWITCHED" BY MAGIC AND ILLUSIONS AND HOW WHAT BEGAN AS A HOBBY CHANGED HIS LIFE. **By Pan Charalambous | Photos by TASPHO**

As 9-year-old Philippos Aristotelous watched a TV magician pulling a long string of

colourful silk handkerchiefs out of his mouth, he was, he recalls, "enchanted for the first time in my life!" He smiles as he recalls the incident from his childhood. "With no clue as to how the magician did the trick, I had my mother prepare a string of kitchen towels which I tucked into my shirt, leaving the edge exposed, having decided to replicate the effect during my primary school's end-of-year

talent show. Although what I was doing was fairly obvious to most of the audience, my enthusiasm and passion were so great that I received a standing ovation from the parents! I can safely say that I had been bitten by the 'magician bug!'. It never left him. Fast forward more than a decade to 2003, when Aristotelous was studying law in the UK. "I began visiting two of London's historic magic

shops (Davenport's and International Magic), where I discovered books and DVDs containing the principles of magic, methods, techniques and some amazing effects," he remembers. "I decided to delve more deeply into the fascinating world of magic and illusion, and soon I was practising on my colleagues at university and then my new hobby spread to the streets of London. I began performing card tricks for strangers in Oxford Street, in shopping malls, in the local pub and even on the trains moving between London's busy tube stations." Reaching this stage required a lot of hard, consistent work and continuous practice. "Card magic has been described as 'the poetry of magic'," he says. "You cannot imagine how many tricks and illusions can be performed with a simple, portable and convenient

SO MANY TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS CAN BE PERFORMED WITH A SIMPLE, PORTABLE AND CONVENIENT DECK OF PLAYING CARDS

deck of playing cards. The very same principles employed in elaborate stage magic productions, where elephants or jets disappear into thin air, can be effectively applied using nothing more than a deck of cards!”

His main audience nowadays is made up of his three children, whom which he loves to entertain and impress. However, inevitably, magic is also used in his work presentations and, occasionally, tried out on friends. “Some of the tricks I’ve managed to master have taken me

many years and countless hours of practice to perfect and they really hit hard,” he says, adding, “That said, sometimes I’m more amazed by how hard the simplest of tricks hit, compared to more elaborate ones involving series of steps and techniques.”

As regards the use of magic in his presentations, Philippos Aristotelous has created his flagship “Abracadabra” series of lectures which include what he calls a “hint” of magic.

“I incorporate elements of illusion into my keynote speeches so as to entertain and engage the audience as well as to add thematic tex-



ture to the storytelling fabric. The addition of a few magic touches and effects also helps emphasise some of the key concepts and principles being explored. The lectures are aimed at professionals, managers and leaders and tend to revolve around challenging organisational topics such as employee engagement, leadership and managing human workers in the digital age.”

Last year, his *Abracadabra: The 5 Keys to Enchantment* event was a complete sell-out and received praise and accolades from the representatives of some of the country’s most prominent professional organisations and businesses. He

admits that he is already excited about the next *Abracadabra* lecture, due in the autumn, and has already started working both the content and the magic.

Aristotelous’ advice to anyone wishing to learn this unusual hobby is that you need patience, persistence and passion. “You don’t really need a mentor, although it could help,” he says, adding that “in large cities abroad, you have the opportunity to practice magic on strangers and develop your dexterities by repeating the same tricks on different people. This ‘luxury’ is not available in Cyprus, where you’re more likely to see the same people.

For an amateur magician who is hungry to perfect and polish his technique and skill, living here is a relative disadvantage. You need to keep learning new tricks, so as to avoid boring friends and colleagues with the same ones and, as a result, they are not practiced extensively on enough people, so the risk of mediocrity looms. You have to be good at this.”

Nonetheless, he recommends his hobby to everyone. “Magic is a great way of tap-

ping into your creative side and, in a way, reliving your adolescence,” he says. “In today’s fast-paced world,” he continues, “our innocence and imagination have been corroded by stressful deadlines and by the trials and tribulations of everyday life. The opportunity to experience magic tricks is one of the few things that can reignite people’s sense of wonder. This alone makes it all worthwhile!”

So, just be willing to suspend your disbelief for a moment and allow yourself to be fooled! As Philippos Aristotelous says, “Don’t resist magic. Try to embrace it instead!” 