

SvenPad Supreme: Group Psy-force for Stage Performance “Major Effect”

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This is an update of the Classic “37” psychological force, using Brett Barry’s wonderful SvenPad Supreme (forcing pad), and also inspired by Banachek, Bob Cassidy, and Andy Luttrell’s “Psychological Thought Projection” from his book, *Psychology for the Mentalist*.

Most mentalists are familiar with the classic “7” or “37” psychological force, which I’ve used frequently as an opener for larger stage audiences. This is in keeping with Bob Cassidy’s philosophy that in order to quickly connect with a larger audience at the start of a mentalism performance, you have to perform a “Major Effect” right at the beginning. What this means is, not a big stage illusion or large showy visual piece on stage, but rather, an effect that involves *every* person in that audience as a participant rather than just an onlooker:

“The major effects of the art are distinguished by the fact that they appear to involve the whole audience.”
from “Audience Reading – the Major Effect of Mentalism”, *The Art of Mentalism* by Bob Cassidy.

This forces total involvement of every person and hooks them on paying attention for the rest of the show.

In the past, my presentation of the 37 force would involve me telling the audience to clear their minds by doing a brief stretching/breathing exercise, and get ready to try to receive MY thought image. Then I tell them that I’m thinking of a two-digit number between 1 and 50, an odd number, where both digits are odd and are NOT the same digit. So, for example, 15 or 17 would be a valid choice, but not 11 (thereby eliminating the likelihood that they’ll pick a number in the teens). Of course, statistically, the largest number of people will now pick 37, with 39 and 35 not far behind (which is only “off by one”).

Recently, I received several of Brett Barry’s incredible Sven Pads, and had been thinking of the many ways I might use one.

Then I received, through Patrick Redford’s site, a copy of Andy Luttrell’s book, and one of the first things that I really was impressed with in it was right at the beginning, “Psychological Through Projection.” (By the way, I can’t say enough good things about this book, I think EVERY mentalist should get a copy of this, see more information below.)

This effect changed the nature of the simpler “7” force and took it to a new level for me, whereby a volunteer on stage picks a “random” number then that *volunteer* tries to project the number to the audience. The number 7 is forced on the volunteer out of an apparent random selection among 10 possible numbers, and the audience is told to think of the first number they can pick up on between 1 and 10. Of course, most people pick 7.

I’ve always loved effects where the audience members become the ones with the psychic powers, which I think is very exciting for people, so this angle on the classic really appealed to me. I thought immediately of using a similar angle for the 37 force, and at that moment the image of the Sven Pads exploded in my mind as an ideal to make this effect work perfectly. Here’s how it goes:

A volunteer is brought to the stage where there is a small table with a pad of paper. The pad is picked up and displayed to the audience and volunteer showing that each page has a random number between 1 and 100 written on it (actually, only two digit numbers and only about 25 of them, as there are only 25 non-gaffe pages in the pad).

The pad is placed on the table and the volunteer is asked to open it when the performer's back is turned, but to make sure to get a clear impression of only ONE number. Demonstrate that the volunteer should do this by leaving the pad on the table, then lifting it open at any spot and taking a good look at one number before closing the pad again.

Now that the volunteer has a number in mind, she's asked to concentrate on it and visualize it, and the mentalist now deduces that it's a number below 50, that it's an odd number, and that both digits are odd and not the same digit. The volunteer confirms this but is asked NOT to say what the number is.

Now the performer turns to the audience and says that the volunteer is really good and projecting her thoughts – so good that it might be fun to see if she can project the number to the entire audience. This would also let the performer know who in the rest of the audience might just have some latent psychic skills.

So the volunteer is asked to project her number to the whole audience, and the mentalist reminds the audience that based on what we know so far, the number could be 15 or 17, but not 11.

The mentalist waits a few moments, then asks if everyone in the audience has a number in mind now.

The mentalist now turns back to the volunteer, concentrates, then asks if the number she's thinking of is 37... she should give a surprised nod while gasps go up throughout the audience from everyone who's also thinking of 37.

The mentalist quickly turns to the audience and says "by a show of hands, how many of you are thinking of 37?" And another group gasp should follow as everyone looks around and sees a large number of hands in the air.

"Keep those hands up for a moment, and, if you were just one off and are thinking of 35 or 39, raise YOUR hands, too!"

The reaction at that point is hard to describe unless you've witnessed it. I've done this in a room of at least 130 people and the response was tremendous.

All that is left is to congratulate your volunteer for her amazing talent, and excuse her back to her seat. You may now wish to pick from some of the people who got the right answer as volunteers for your next effect, as they "obviously" have some talent of their own.

This is what Bob Cassidy means by a major effect, and why it makes a terrific opener; once the participants are this involved, you have their attention for the remainder of the show.

Credits

Brett Barry, SvenPad Supreme, www.phoenixmentalists.com/the-svenpad/

Andy Luttrell, "Psychological Thought Projection" from *Psychology for the Mentalist*, Copyright © 2015, Mind Tapped Productions, pp. 15-16 (www.PatrickRedford.com).

Bob Cassidy, *The Art of Mentalism*, Copyright © 2004, H&R Magic Books, p. 10.