

TRICKS OF THE MIND

How's tricks with you? There are positive and negative tricks and the mind abounds in both. I have had my fill in 68 years.

Negative tricks have resulted in being sectioned 9 times in 15 years. I was on top of the world with hypomania, my delusions were marked. I could hear a judge describing a court case with me as the central character. The Queen and my Mother were on trial for mistreating me, to say that I could hear the voices was an understatement. My eardrums were vibrating with the sound but I sobered down the moment I got into hospital and spent 18 boring months repenting of my sins, this qualifying me for the title Old Lag. But it was all a long time ago – 1960 – and I haven't had any trouble since then, the lithium seems to be doing the trick.

Positive tricks are far more effective and I have learnt these over the years, tricks like obliterating a disagreeable thought before it has a chance to blossom in the mind. This really can be done and internal adjustment is easier than any change in your circumstances. Perhaps it is because I'm an actor that I can make these adjustments. Artificial? The mind obeys what you tell it to do. Here we discover the soul or yourself; they say it is the only part of you that survives death. Maybe. But there is a lot to be said for oblivion. To understand the relationship between soul, mind and body is one of the best tricks ; mind is no more or less than the working of the brain. Many would say it is out of control but it isn't by heaven it isn't.

You are in control or in the case of hypomania, deliciously out of control. Even then you make sense in a fantasy world. I made so much sense of my experiences that I managed to commit them to paper and then to the stage. "IS IT A CRIME TO BE HAPPY?" appeared at The Kings Head Islington to some great acclaim, the negative tricks turned to positive triumph!

A great trick of the mind is to calm down when the desire is to pull out all the stops. Calm is the seed bed of great growth. It can only be done deliberately with the actor's skill. Almost near death to the soul we achieve sanity. My life has focused on excitement but it is only lately that I have discovered the sanity of calm. Of course life is worth living and life is activity but enormously varied. As we ride the waves of life, we should vary our pace, it is struggling and fighting to argue and fuss which is often our undoing: the trick of deliberately calm is another internal adjustment which achieves more than a row.

The average man when told to "cheer up" doesn't know what to do but the actor soars readily into the heavens. This artificial move can achieve wonders because the soul is in control. The effect can last for hours on end ; show business people are large in soul, they understand the human frame completely and can pretend magnificently. It is a joy to do so leading to much merriment. Carry this through to everyday life and you have pleasure supreme – a trick of the mind which can almost become a way of life – and saddle us with hypomania again.

I don't think the mind can function without the artificial, it may seem a crime to the average man bent on honesty and dishonesty may seem the worst possible sin to the honest man, but I believe God has a sense of humour. Certainly the artificial elements in tricks of the mind do work. To adopt artificial tricks always indicates a superior brain so long as you know what you are doing, negative tricks played on the mind and positive tricks played by the mind are all part of a glorious whole. Why get depressed that you are or were mentally ill. Feel glad that your amazing brain can achieve personal happiness and influence others.

Richard Jameson