

# Contact Muscle Reading or Ideomotor Response.

**The Subtle use of Suggestion**

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Contact Muscle Reading or Ideomotor Response as it is also known, is the act of reading a person's thoughts or intentions through contact with their muscles. Much has been written on the subject of contact muscle reading by the American mentalist Banachek. In his book *Psychophysiological Thought Reading or Muscle Reading and the Idemotor Response Revealed*, Banachek describes not only how to locate hidden objects, as is the standard fare for contact muscle reading, but also how to write or draw numbers and even letters that a spectator is merely thinking of. When turned over and examined from the opposite side you will also find that H. J. Burlingame's *How to read People's Minds or, The Mystery of Mind Reading Revealed*, a work published over a hundred years ago, is also incorporated into the book.

As much has already been written on the subject in this definitive work I see no point

in reiterating any of it. What I would like to share with you, however, is something that is not included that I was taught by an NLP Master Trainer and linguistic wizard one afternoon before a speaking engagement of his and how suggestion maybe used to enhance the effect. The version of contact muscle reading I was shown that afternoon is the method that I find the easiest to perform.

The way I like to present this is to first select a willing volunteer, then to assemble a group of people, between 10 and 30 is best, and arrange them standing in a line or a semicircle in front of both me and the volunteer; alternatively you can use the front row of your audience.

Next, I instruct the volunteer to think of one of the people in front of them, when he or she does this I am of course looking in the opposite direction with my eyes closed so as to get no visual clue as to which person is chosen; this is not only because I need no visual help but also so that the audience is assured that I am not merely following the volunteer's gaze.

Once I am happy that my volunteer has made their selection I turn round and open my eyes. Before I proceed to the next stage I request permission from the volunteer to place my hands upon their shoulders (although some performers are naturally

more tactile I still feel in this day and age it is appropriate to gain consent before placing your hands upon another person's body.) See picture:



I then position myself so that I am facing the audience and the row of people in front of me, (The row of people need not be standing, as I have already stated this could in fact be the front row of your audience) with the volunteer facing me with his or her back to the audience. At this point I supply further instructions, namely that in a moment I intend to walk the person backwards and that I will not push them over or into anything, but simply that I am going to guide their movement by gently pushing them backwards. I further instruct the volunteer that I wish to have them focus on the person

they were thinking of. As I am walking the volunteer backwards, toward the row of people, it is important to direct his or her mind so that it is continually focused on the person they were thinking of. I generally use the phrase:

*"I want you to imagine standing next to that person right now, that's right just imagine going and standing next to that person right now."*

At this you will feel a resistance in your volunteer's willingness to go in a direction that is contrary to the direction of the mentally selected person. It will almost feel as though he or she is walking towards the person thought of and as you walk past the mentally selected person the muscles become stiffer and a greater resistance will be noted.

This, I find, is much more evident than when you hold a volunteers wrist above a line of objects and have them imagine putting their hand on top of a mentally selected object; for in this instance I have noted that sometimes you encounter a resistance on the object they are thinking of and free movement across the ones they are not and sometimes the opposite is true. With this method, of walking a person backwards, I have rarely encountered a situation where you do not get resistance when moving away

from the selected person. By using the phrase:

*"Really imagine just walking up and standing next to the person now"*

You will focus the person's attention on doing exactly that. This is, to my mind, the simplest and easiest form of contact muscle reading to succeed at as you are not attempting to gain insight to their thoughts from just a gentle touch of their wrist but instead they have given you control of their whole body! Having a person walk backwards is, of course, more unnatural for them and, therefore, gives you more control over their actions.

There is one last and slightly sneaky manoeuvre you can use. Obviously the quicker you achieve this, the more miraculous it seems, so when you have got the idea as to whom the volunteer is thinking of it is useful to employ the phrase:

*"...and just imagine, you're standing next to the person you're thinking of, right?"*

With a subtle upward inflection in your voice on the word 'right' and the close observation of your volunteer this statement will be answered nonverbally with a head nod or verbally with a yes to which you reiterate:

*"You are standing right next to the person you're thinking of, right yes."*

Whilst supplying instructions you have suggested a question and received an answer to it non-verbally. Contact muscle reading *is* real mind reading. You are indeed doing what you say, reading a person's mind (their thoughts) through the medium of touch. Although a relatively unexplored art form at present, contact muscle reading is used to form the basis for entire theatre shows and just like stage hypnotism can be 'routined' to build and build. Indeed several ideas for effects and routines are given in the aforementioned book.

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