

## The Story Machine

The Story Machine is a technique that juxtaposes two unrelated things, a person and an action, and forces you to create a connection between them. This causes you to think outside the box and allows your subconscious to dominate your creative efforts.

Because of time constraints, I have limited tonight's lists to only 6 items. But you can make the lists as long as you want. To do this on your own, start with two columns down the paper, side-by-side. Column A is a listing of occupations from, for example, 1-20. Column B is a listing of quirky things people do, also from 1-20. These are not ordinary things like mowing the lawn, or extreme things like breaking people out of prison. Just slightly quirky things, like collecting angels with broken wings.

Now turn your paper over. Again list the numbers 1-20 down the left side of the page. Beside it, put the numbers 1-20 in random order. Then circle one set of numbers (for example, one set might be #18 in column A and #4 in column B). Turn your page over and find what occupation is in the #18 spot in Column A (ex, a cab driver) and what action is in the #4 spot in Column B (ex, collecting candy bar wrappers).

Now, write a story about why, for example, this cab driver collects candy bar wrappers. Remember, what you start with is the end of the story. You must then work backward to discover why this person does this particular thing. What is his/her motivation? What effect does it have on his/her life and/or relationships? What does he/she get out of doing this action?

If you make a list of 20 occupations and actions, you will have the potential for 400 stories. Occupation #1 can be paired in turn with all 20 actions, each leading to a different story. This is a great exercise to do especially when you are stuck for something to write. It really gets the creative juices flowing.

Now, circle one set on numbers:

Column A	Column B
1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	1.
4.	3.
5.	2.
6.	4.

Write your number set here:

Column A: # \_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

Column B: # \_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_