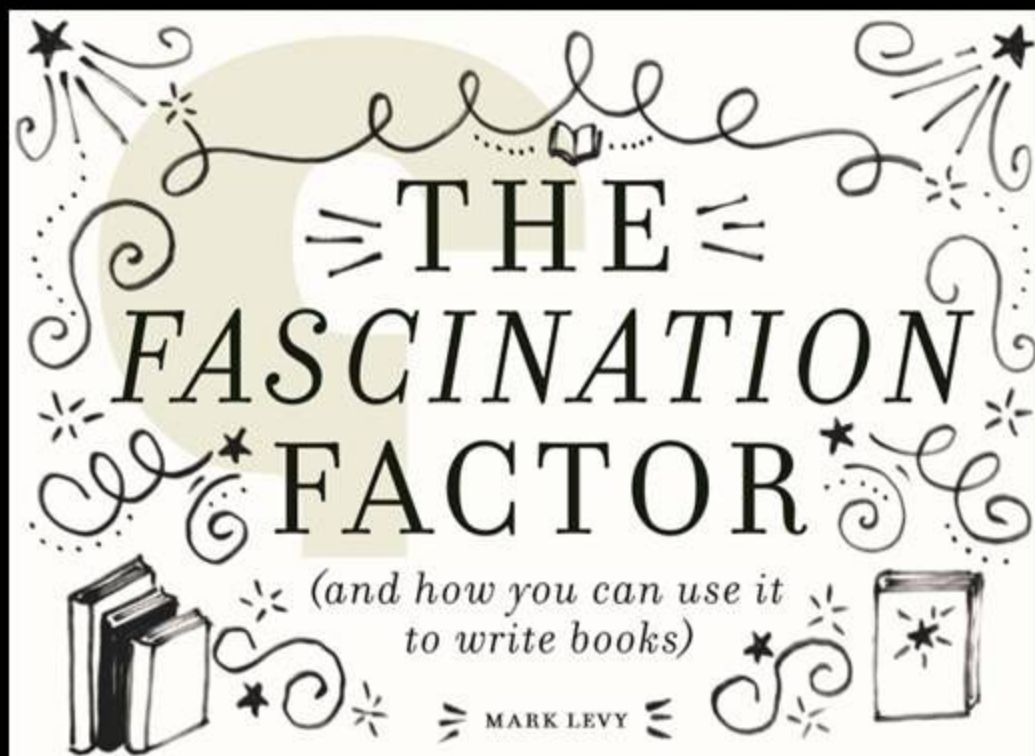


A Summary



How to use it to write & generate content

~ Mark Levy ~

Curated by

Sathyanand.S

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Don't become market's puppet

- Don't try reading minds;
- Don't try to please everyone,
- Don't try to please the market

Adopt a leadership position

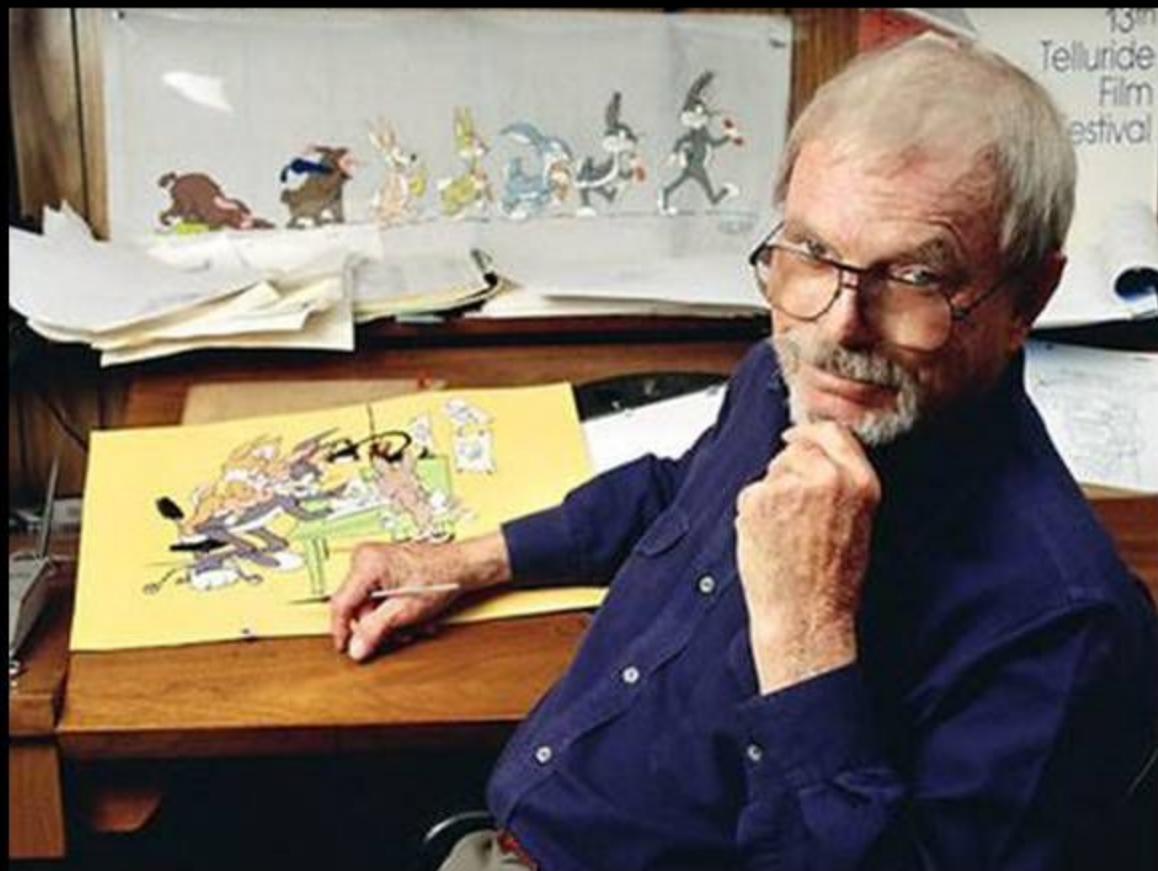
- Or else you would only come with...
 - Tame, uninspiring premises.
 - Me-too premises.
 - Ones easily dismissed.
- Temporarily put aside the considerations of others and of worldly success.
- Instead adopt a leadership position. Write content that is...
 - original,
 - valuable to the market,
 - you at your best

Look to yourselves before
Looking to the market



“We do no market research . . . We figure out what we want.”

—Steve Jobs



“We made them [cartoons] for ourselves, which was probably the most sensible way to do it anyway.”

—Chuck Jones, Director of Bugs Bunny and other Looney Tunes cartoons



“If you just design for yourself, someone will identify with it. The world is big enough, and you’ll find a group of people who want to dress like you.”

—Amy Smilovic, founder of the fashion line, Tibi

Meaning making

- *“Writing a book (or a blog) creates meaning. You’re bringing something into the world that doesn’t yet exist.”* – Eric Maisel
- From that storehouse of unshakeable organic meaning inside your head
- It will have your stamp on it.
- It will be unlike any other.
- That will be uniquely yours.

Play the fascination game

“You’re treating anything that appears in your mind as potentially valuable material.” – Mark Levy

Make a list

- *Take inventory of everything that fascinates or has fascinated you at any point in your life*

List	List
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• anecdotes • experiences• facts • figures • hypothesis• insights • pet philosophies• prejudices • controversies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• case studies • analogies• processes • methods • risks• surprises • memories• business models • role models
List	List
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• URLs • blogs • scenes• dreams • nightmares• screwy notions • poems• jokes • riddles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• myths • trips• conversations • art • plays• books • movies • TV shows

Anything that you think should make the list, makes the list

- The list needn't be in any particular order.
- Good or bad.
- Big or small.
- Important or trivial.
- Ordinary or weird.

Don't wonder, Don't worry

- Don't wonder why a particular item fascinates you.
- Don't worry if an item is “book-worthy” or has anything to do with your core business.
- Your task is to list things that, for whatever reason, have energy for you. Items that radiate.

Do it in conceptual sessions

- Devote a thinking session to all the best advice you've ever received.
- Do a session on worst advice you've ever received.
- Conduct a session on your brightest achievements.
- Henceforth... make up on the fly

Compose your list through
freewriting

Freewriting is a way of using writing,
not just to record thought, but to
generate it.

- Open a blank document in your computer (or grab pen and paper),
- Set a timer for ten minutes, and
- Start writing about what's fascinated you in life.

As you hit the keys...

- Don't worry if what you're writing is grammatically or syntactically correct.
- Don't worry if the prose itself is interesting or stays on point.
- Don't stop for any reason until the timer sounds.

Keep typing

- If you run out of things to say, just start talking about your day or a trip you plan on taking.
- As you type, start guiding yourself back to fascinations.
- After a few days, review your writing, cull out the important points, and consolidate them into a list (or lists).

What you're doing is using the screen to watch yourself think!

Points to remember

1. It should be **energizing and fun**
 2. Yes, a fascination can be...
 - **life-changing** (e.g., a strategy that changed your business)
 - or, **mundane** (e.g., your family trip when you were six).
 3. List as **many fascinations** as you can
 4. **Don't judge**
 5. Treat each thought as if it's **as good as the next**
- “Good or bad... one thought will help the next one come.”*
- William Stafford

Would-be readers

- Once you've made your list, only then should you start thinking about would-be readers and business goals.
 - Who might the audience be?
 - How are they different from the rest of the population?
 - What kinds of things does that audience need to hear?
 - What's the single most important thing they need to hear?
 - What are you qualified to tell them?
 - What kind of book stands the best chance of getting everyone exactly what they want?
 - What book demands to be written?

Find themes in your fascination list

'And, believe me, you'll find themes.'

– Mark Levy

Study your list

- Spread out the pages of the fascination list on a (metaphorical) table...
 - Study them,
 - Move items around,
 - Add to them,
 - Group them, and
 - Look for themes.

“The act of arranging information becomes an act of insight.” - Edward Tufte

Human beings are natural meaning-makers.

- We spot patterns, notice gaps, formulate questions, and hatch ideas without trying.
- Our minds race by recombining what's in front of us. Seeing what's interested us in life laid out in front of us acts as fuel.

Human beings are endlessly creative.

- We can make any two ideas relate, no matter how distant they seem from one another. Making random ideas relate is, in fact, a common writer's exercise.
- Look through your fascinations for patterns. Some will pop out at you. Others will require study and force-fitting.

Let the material lead you.

- From these places of energy, you can craft your content. This material comes from an honest place within you. It comes from a spot in your brain where you keep the things you can't forget.
- Understand, you're not trying to turn every item on your list into material.
 - You're using them as starting points.
 - You're playing with each item to see if it can be used as is,
 - Or using it as a kindling to get you to something better.

Further reading

- For further reading about meaning, be sure to check out the work of Eric Maisel and Rollo May, among others.
- For more on freewriting, read anything written by Peter Elbow or Ken Macrorie.

Brought to you by



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