



REAL WORLD INSPIRATION FOR CONTENT-MAKERS & STORYTELLERS

Every edition we bring you news & insight from outside the world of TV & the mainstream media, delivered in the same easy-to-digest package to inspire the conversations that lead to great ideas and maximise your creative output. And for that bit extra, we also explore a typical & enduring narrative type, and include some off-the-shelf 5 minute brainstorm techniques.

## Domestic abuse is rooted in generational cycles

Growing up in a home with partner-on-partner violence significantly increases the chances of living with domestic violence later in life.

see more at [Crime Victims Institute](#)



What does this mean for content & stories?

*Domestic abuse is more often than not framed as a gender issue. But how often do we challenge the received wisdom and seek out counter narratives? They don't need to contradict the conventional view, but add another layer to it.*

For brainstorm discussion....

- What other traits, positive or negative, are carried on from generation to generation? Is each genetic or learned?
- Which assumptions do we commonly have about family life? Which kinds of families challenge those?
- Where are the hidden risks in our lives? What if our innocent mistakes became our worst nightmares?

Already in this space:

BBC Two's *Beautiful People*



**TASK**

List some behaviours, attitudes and values that children learn from their parents. What stories might arise when children break those generational patterns?

## #21 Overcoming the monster.

### A typology of stories



narratives that delight & endure

In these stories, the hero or heroine must overcome some mighty and malevolent power to reach his or her goal – for example, they learn of a great evil threatening the land, and set out to destroy it. Think: modern tales of addiction recovery to classic *Jack & The Beanstalk*-type fairy tales.

extreme examples

[The volunteer army fighting ISIS](#)

[20 best addiction recovery blogs](#)

[Best movie villains of all time](#)

Looking for these stories? Think:

- threats, dangers and risk that can extinguish life or quality of life
- extreme goals, dreams and wishes- and the outside forces that might get in the way of them
- types of people who have overcome destructive forces out of their control
- your own worst fears & nightmares, & what they might stop you achieving

## Now is the best time in history to be alive

Life expectancy has risen more in the past 50 years than the previous 1000, and poverty has dropped significantly since 1981 in the developing world.

see more at [BBC Future](#)



What does this mean for content & stories?

Stories based in the past can often idealise the historical period they represent – content's answer to an individual's rose-tinted glasses. Conversely, all the negativity around life today suggests there's a real appetite for optimism and, at the very least, healthy perspective.

For brainstorm discussion....

- What is there to celebrate about life in 21<sup>st</sup> century? And what more good things could be to come?
- Why do we have a tendency to think the world is in a downward spiral? Where is the concrete evidence?
- In which other areas are we misinformed or even deluded? What if we acknowledged that?

Already in this space:

*Homo Deus* a brief history of tomorrow



**TASK**

Find examples of headlines and reports adding to the 'hell in a handcart' narrative. What would the opposite be? Could it also be true? What stories would illustrate it?

[ family life ]

[ human life ]



1 generate ideas

**Tuning into the muse in you**

What do you dream about? Or think about a lot? Or find yourself regularly talking about? Identify the topics, people and experiences that stay with you, get your heart burning and your mind churning, and keep coming back to you. Discover one new fact about that topic, and follow the clues until you find a story.

For example:

Does being overly positive harm your health?

[Why Optimism Can Be Bad For Your Mental Health](#)

[Christian rock star comes out as gay after acquiring a dangerous illness](#)

need stimulus?  
Top artists reveal [how to find creative inspiration](#)

2 develop ideas

**Forcing the story through new shapes**

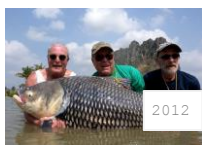
Write a list of common emotions and motivations which drive human behaviour. Which one is the driving emotion or motivation in your story, in one word or phrase? How would the story end if any of the others were the leading force?

Have you still got the right one originally, or is it subtly but importantly different? Or does the story work better with another motivation all together?

**Fishing buddies used their dead friend's ashes as bait**

... and caught the biggest carp in the world in the process. Which, of course, they named Ronnie in memory of their friend.

see more at [sunnyskyz.com](http://sunnyskyz.com)



What does this mean for content & stories?

*Sometimes fairy tales do come true, and the truth is stranger than fiction. Let's not be afraid of happy endings or 'against the odds' outcomes. Even if our audiences don't know for sure that the impossible is always possible, they will more than likely want to believe it. Good stories also sell.*

For brainstorm discussion....

- How far do people go to honour friends they have lost? What ways do people give their loved ones a send off?
- What if the friends had not put the carp back in the water? What other adventures might have ensued?
- In what other relationships do loyalty and honour dominate? How do they find expression?



**TASK**

Discuss the lengths you've gone to, to show your friendship and commitment to someone. How could you have taken it to the next, headline-grabbing level? What would that headline be?

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