

## LEARNING A DECK OF CARDS- after they are shuffled. Part 2

So now to create your unique LINKING story. I was tempted to do a sample number of cards but decided to do an entire pack to see how easy it is to make up a long linking story.

It also helps if you notice anything that could be grouped, worked together easily, or was very silly. The important point is LINKING.

There follows the order of my shuffled pack of cards, and you may want to look at the transcript of the podcast for this.

3 spades, 7 diamonds, Jack clubs, Ace of hearts, 10 hearts, 2 clubs, 8 spades, K clubs, 9 diamonds, 5 hearts, 6 diamonds, 8 diamonds, 5 spades, 9 spades, 7 spades, Ace spades, 4 clubs, 4 diamonds, Q diamonds, K diamonds, Q clubs, 3 clubs, 10 diamonds, 2 spades, 6 spades, 9 clubs, Q spades, 10 spades, 5 clubs, 7 clubs, 6 clubs, 8 clubs, 5 diamonds, 1 diamonds, Ace clubs, 10 clubs, 2 hearts, 3 hearts, 4 spades, J spades, 6 hearts, 4 hearts, 7 hearts, Q hearts, K hearts, 8 hearts, J hearts, 9 hearts, 3 diamonds, J diamonds, 2 diamonds, K spades.

I originally suggested using the shape system for the black suits and the rhyming system for the red suits, but by now I hope you are familiar enough with the number images to be able to mix and match these for your linking story. For example, the first card is a 3 of spades: a spade and a tree fit into a story perfectly.

### Linking Story

Dig up a Christmas tree (3 spades)

Top it with an angel (heaven) hung with diamonds (7 diamonds)

Bambam (Jack of clubs) wants it

Distract him with a chocolate (heart) bun (1 hearts)

He feeds the chocolate to a hen (10 hearts) Your brain could also make the connection between chocolate and eggs – an easter egg.

who lays an egg in his (remember he is a caveman) shoe (2 clubs).

*Change of scene but link the shoe*

Using a spade Marylyn Monro (8 – hourglass figure MM) levers on the shoe (8 spades)

Fred Flintstone comes in (K clubs)

And courts her with wine (rhyming 9) in a diamond glass (diamonds are a girl's best friend) (9 diamonds). This is another example of using connections,

and a Crunchie (honeycomb bar coated with chocolate) (5 hearts)

They go for a walk taking a diamond stick (6 diamonds)

and open a diamond gate (8 diamonds).

*Note that you have 3 lots of diamonds close together broken up by 1 chocolate honeycomb. Keep the gate link but change the scene.*

Go through the gate,

and take down a spade from a hook (5 spades),

fix the spade to a balloon on a string, (shape 9)

It floats off over a cliff (shape 7) and high over the sea. (7 spades). So you have a mental picture of a spade attached to a balloon on a string floating over the sea.

There is a huge (exaggerated) pencil floating in the water. Drop the spade on it. (Ace/1 spades).

It sinks and a boat crewed by cavemen (4 clubs) sails up.

*Now focus on the boat.*

The cabin has a diamond door (4 diamonds),

the crew go through and meet the Queen and Elton John, (K & Q diamonds)

Donna Summer (Q clubs) and Meghan (3 clubs)

*Note a nice group of celebs.*

Meghan kneels down and puts a diamond necklace on a hen (10 diamonds) this works well as Meghan is known as a keeper of hens

but she shoos away a black swan with a spade (2 spades).

*Change of scene, link with the swan.*

The swan eats black cherries off a spade (6 spades) and wine in a nightclub (9 clubs). The music stops when Maleficent (Q spades) comes in.

*Change of scene, link with Maleficent.*

She walks onto a cricket pitch - bat and ball using a spade as a bat (10 spades)

*Change of scene, link with cricket pitch*

The cricket team are cavemen and in the changing room, one takes his club from a hook (5 clubs).

*Change scene, this works as stone age man did hunt by chasing prey over cliffs.*

He chases his prey over a cliff (7 clubs)

He then smashes cherries with his club (6 clubs)

then smashes a snowman (8 clubs) Here I have chosen a snowman for 8 rather than Marylyn, to avoid a negative image.

*Note the sequence of 4 club suits.*

Inside the snowman is a diamond hive (5 diamonds) but a shining sun also made of diamonds (1 diamond) is melting the snowman and we are back on the cricket pitch with the cavemen team one of whom is fielding he runs to make a catch in the cricket match (bat and ball 10 clubs) 'How's Zat' *note 2 aces 1 of diamond, 1 of clubs.*

He has something in his shoe and takes out melting chocolates (2 hearts) which he hangs on a tree to harden up a bit (3 hearts)

*Change of scene*

The tree is by the sea. He jumps in a boat using a spade as an oar (4 boat spades).

He picks up Prince (J spades)

But his oar is a stick made of chocolate (6 hearts) (chocolate finger?)

He goes through a door made of chocolate (4 hearts)

to meet angels who give him chocolate (7 hearts)

which he shares with Princess Di (Q hearts) and Hugh Grant (K hearts) who are sitting on a gate sharing chocolates (8 hearts)

with Prince Harry (J hearts). They all follow a line of chocolates (9 hearts)

*This is a nice little group of hearts. Note that earlier we had the King and Queen of diamonds together.*

and come to a tree hung with diamonds (3 diamonds) underneath Ed Sheeran (J diamonds) is singing, wearing diamond shoes (2 diamonds) which are stolen by the pirate King (K spades).

## **The End**

Check this silly story through to ensure that you have remembered what card each image represents noting the change between the rhyming system and the shape system then -

Shuffle your cards and create your own story. Do not spend too much time on it. Initially, some bits will stick others not so much, until the images for the cards become fixed. Look for what hangs together, the celebs, and see if you can put in some music, and lots of action.

This is hard creative and imaginative work, but hugely valuable in fixing those two numerical systems in your memory. I now have no difficulty swopping between all three numerical systems, choosing whichever fits best with the scenario I am creating.

## **TIMING**

I have not tried this method of remembering card sequences for about 25 years, which was when I first became interested in mnemonics. Recently I was asked a question about it on Quora and although I knew the theory, I had no idea of the timing involved,

Although personally I have no interest in learning card sequences, I am always interested in new challenges, and I thought it was an excellent opportunity to follow my thought processes as a novice as the images I created for the cards are, after 25 years, all new. I was pleased to discover that my first effort to remember the story faltered only a couple of times.

Using the interval system, I tried to remember the sequence the following day and I had 11 errors out of 52. I checked out the errors and made the sequences stronger, one major change was that I made bat and ball (10 spades, 10 clubs) into cricket pitches.

The next day, I had the story perfectly. Using the interval system, I would normally try it again in a week, but there is no point in learning a card sequence permanently. However, I may be tempted to play the game again as it is a trick to impress friends and creative practice is a major exercise for the brain.

So that is the best I can offer. 1 day fix your images and practice with a story, after that, just practice, practice, practice.

You could also use the PAO system which has the advantage of chunking the cards into sets of 3 for Person Action Object. The disadvantage for beginners is that you will need to have a whole set of images - a Person an Action or an Object for each card. It's a good mnemonic system and used by many memory experts but a bit daunting for a beginner, whereas the system I have suggested just employs a lot of imagination and I know it works.

I have an idea that, all those years ago, I was waiting for a friend outside a pub by the river and as I was early I took out a pack of cards to see if I could remember their order. It took me about 20 minutes to learn my story. I think that with practice, someone could become very good at doing this. It is very challenging because – unlike learning pi or -prime numbers the order will always change

but it is a very useful and creative exercise.

I first wrote this as an answer on Quora, but I had such fun with it that I decided to add it as two podcasts. Clearly learning a pack of cards intrigues people and if it entices anyone to look at mnemonics as excellent exercise for the brain then it is worth the effort. I hope you enjoy this exercise; it is fun and most impressive for onlookers.