

# The Creative Brain Reset.

A short toolkit to unlock  
cognitive flexibility.



by Mo Vasconcelos

# The Creative Brain Reset

## Before the Toolkit

### When to use this reset

You might try this toolkit when:

- your thinking feels repetitive
- you're stuck on a problem for too long
- you keep returning to the same solutions
- your brain feels mentally rigid

This is not about being more creative.  
It's about resetting the way your brain  
approaches problems.

Think of it as a short cognitive detour. A way to  
interrupt automatic thinking.



# The Creative Brain Reset

## A short toolkit to unlock cognitive flexibility

Most people think creativity is about talent. It isn't.

Creativity is the brain's ability to escape its own patterns. And patterns are exactly what the brain loves to create.

- They save energy.
- They make decisions faster.
- They help us navigate complex environments.

But after years and decades, those same patterns can become invisible cages.

- We stop questioning assumptions.
- We repeat familiar solutions.
- We think we're "stuck".

Often, we're just thinking along the same neural path.

Cognitive flexibility is the brain's ability to step off that path and explore new ones.

The exercises below are small disruptions. They don't require inspiration. Just curiosity.



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## Technique 1 The Reverse Question

When we face a problem, the brain immediately tries to solve it.

But this can trap us in predictable thinking.

### **Instead of asking:**

- “How do I solve this?”

### **Try asking:**

- “How could I make this problem worse?”

At first it sounds absurd.

But something interesting happens.

Your brain suddenly starts identifying hidden assumptions.

It notices weak points.

It reveals mechanisms you hadn't seen.

And once you understand how a problem could worsen, the path to improving it often becomes surprisingly clear.

Sometimes the brain needs permission to think in the wrong direction first.



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## Technique 2

### Borrow a Different Brain

Your brain has favourite thinking styles.

Engineers analyse.

Designers imagine.

Children experiment.

When we stay inside our usual thinking style, solutions tend to look similar.

#### **Try this exercise:**

#### **Take a current challenge and ask:**

- How would a scientist approach this?
- How would a designer approach this?
- How would a 10-year-old approach this?

Each perspective activates different cognitive pathways. And suddenly, the problem may look completely different.

Not because the problem changed.

But because the brain did.



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## Technique 3 The Curiosity Detour

When the brain feels stuck, we often try to push harder.

More focus.

More pressure.

More urgency.

But creativity rarely responds well to pressure. Instead, give the brain a small detour.

**Spend ten minutes exploring something unrelated to your work:**

- a new idea
- an unfamiliar field
- an unexpected concept

Novelty activates dopamine and stimulates new neural connections.

You are not escaping the problem. You are refreshing the system that will eventually solve it.



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## Flexibility Is a Cognitive Advantage

Creativity is about keeping the brain flexible, and flexibility becomes increasingly valuable after midlife.

### A flexible mind can:

- adapt faster
- learn continuously
- generate new ideas
- remain professionally relevant

**One small practice:** You don't need to apply everything in this toolkit. Pick one exercise and try it this week. Not perfectly, just intentionally. Cognitive flexibility grows through small disruptions repeated over time.



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## About the author

Creativology was founded by Monica Vasconcelos. After many years working in creativity and innovation, she became increasingly interested in how the brain adapts through experience, learning and curiosity.

Today, Creativology explores how creativity can function as cognitive training, helping people remain mentally flexible, curious and professionally relevant after 45.

## Continue exploring

If you enjoyed this toolkit, you can explore more reflections and practical tools at: [creativology.org](https://www.creativology.org)



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