

Lesson 6 Worksheet: Handling a Creative Block

This worksheet will help you handle the anxiety of experiencing a creative block when you rely on your creativity for your living and professional reputation. It will also point you to my free ebook about 'creative blocks' which has lots of suggestions for specific creative blocks.

1. Is it just normal Resistance?

Remember, Resistance to getting down to work is an occupational hazard for creative professionals. I experience it every time I sit down to write. So does best-selling novelist Steven Pressfield. So do the hundreds of artists and creatives I've coached over the past two decades.

The only difference between the amateurs and the pros is that the amateurs use Resistance as an excuse to avoid work, while the pros get started *in spite of the Resistance*.

Next time you experience a reluctance to get started:

- i. Notice what it's like. What thoughts go through your mind? What feelings are you aware of? What sensations do you experience in your body?
- ii. Tell yourself: *"This is not a creative block, it's just normal Resistance. I'm not going to make a big deal out of it."*
- iii. Get your work equipment out, ready to start.
- iv. Tell yourself: *"I don't have to start work, but I can't do anything else. I have to stay here with the equipment for at least 30 minutes."*
- v. Notice what happens next.

2. Talk to someone you trust

Who can you trust to offer support and understanding if you tell them about the difficulty you're having, without sharing your secret?

- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues or peers
- Boss
- Mentor

Colleagues, peers or your boss or mentor can be particularly helpful, given their understanding of your professional situation. But don't worry if you'd rather not talk to anyone from work.

One category of person you might not want to tell is your clients or customers. They understandably like to feel confident in your abilities, so you might want to maintain your professional image with them. That will make life easier for everyone concerned.

3. Remind yourself of past successes

- i. Make a list of your past successes.
- ii. Show it to the trusted confidant from the last question and ask them to add any achievements you left out.
- iii. Read through the list and relive the successes in your imagination, remembering how it felt to overcome the difficulties in each case and reap your reward. (It might help to play some favourite music while you do this)
- iv. Keep the list handy for when you next need it, and keep adding to it each time you achieve a new success.

4. Fast forward to a successful future

Try a little thought experiment:

- i. Imagine that you somehow get past this block and back into the creative zone. Spend a few minutes daydreaming about this new and vital creative future. Tell yourself it won't be long until you get there.
- ii. Notice what you are doing *differently* in this future — maybe you could start doing some of that right now?

5. Get out of your head (and into your body)

We often get stuck by spending too much time in our heads, thinking and thinking about a problem, and blowing it out of all proportion. Pick 2 or 3 of the following activities and use them to switch off from thinking about the problem, and reconnect with your body. It's surprising how often this is all it takes to get past a block. At the very least it will give you a break so that you return to your work with a fresh perspective.

- Vigorous exercise – e.g. sports, the gym or a run
- Gentle exercise – e.g. going for a walk or mowing the lawn
- A hot bath or sauna
- Massage and other sensual pleasures
- Cooking a meal to share with your partner, family or friends

6. Look through the 'creative blocks' ebook

Go to this page and download a free copy of the ebook I wrote about dealing with different types of creative block: <https://dl.bookfunnel.com/u8488beors>

Pick the ones that sound most like your own situation, read through them and try the suggestions.