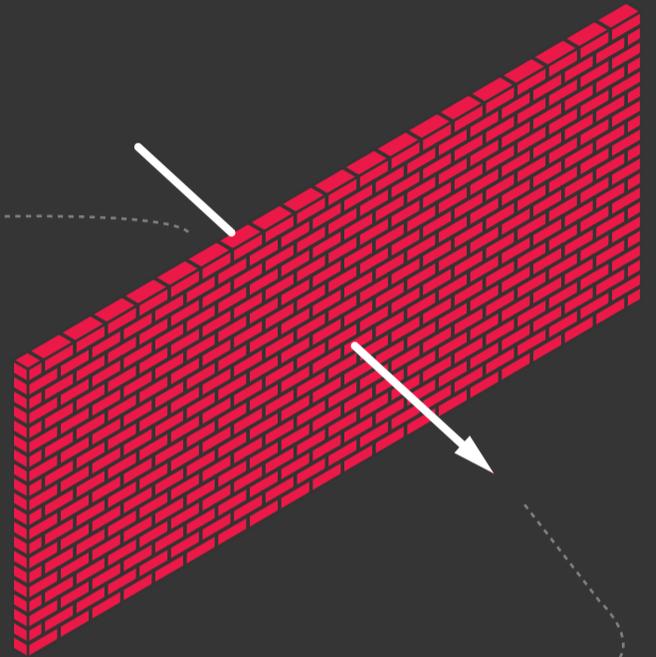


Absorb that with which you disagree.

We call this technique “polar empathy”. Read books or listen to music that challenges your point of view. This will jar your rhythm and sometimes, if you’re lucky, unstick you. By doing this, you can better understand how they arrived at their point of view which might, in turn, allows you to better understand your own argument.

Write the block.

Ugis Pinka, a poetry professor in Michigan, had this great line about creative block: "Write the block." We are always trying to look directly at the block for the answer. You have to embrace and describe it. By doing so, you can penetrate whatever is stopping your natural flow.

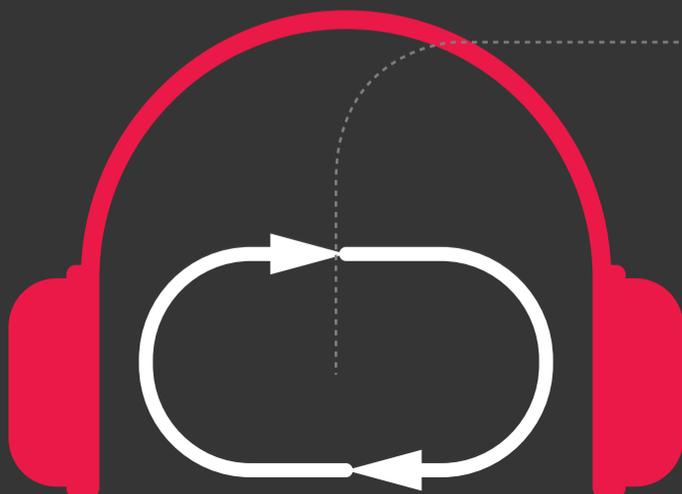


Use creative **exercise books**.

There are all sorts of useful creative exercise books out there. One I recommend is “Caffeine for the Creative Mind” by Stefan Mumaw and Wendy Lee Oldfield. But don't turn reading them into a compulsory activity. As soon as it becomes compulsory, it gets cataloged in your mind as a "have to" versus a "have the opportunity to". This re-framing is critical for maintaining focus.

Look at **opposite industries**.

Working on a car design? Look at shoe design. Working on a system design for manufacturing hammers? Look at how your grandma knits. The solutions are often peppered out in our world. It's a matter of piecing the parts together to create the answer that solves the problem at hand.



Listen to audio loops!

Sometimes listening to an audio track for extended sessions creates a sort of focal meditation. You can get stuck in the rhythm and begin to focus for longer periods of time and wind up being more productive and more able to create amazing solutions. It can really propel your creativity if you can handle the repetition.

In 2009, Con Cor Design performed an experiment in this with a 13 second long track looped for eight hours and led to over 100 concepts for a product design!