

SELF-GUIDED CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

This guide leads you through the four stages of creative problem solving with a series of divergent and convergent questions, ideal for when you are working on your own. Let's get started.



Clarify

1. Explore the vision in 5 minutes

Diverge first. Make a list of your wishes, starting with the words: "I wish..." or "It would be great if...". To get started, think about:

- What's been on your mind?
- Where do you need a breakthrough?
- What do you wish you had time for?
- What would your 5 year-old self want?

Wishes and Goals I wish / It would be great if:

Now **converge**.

- Review your list and put a check mark against every goal that you feel is important.
- Put another check mark against every goal you can influence.
- And put another check mark against every goal that requires imagination, or new thinking.

You've now got some goals that have more check marks than others. What stands out, what do you want to solve today?

2. Gather data in 10 minutes

Now that you have selected a challenge, let's ensure you have a clear understanding of it.

Diverge first, making a list of all the information relevant to the goal.

- What do you know about this goal?
- What is the history of the situation?
- Who else is involved?
- How does this situation make you feel?
- What have you already tried?
- What is your ideal outcome?
- What are your hunches?

Long list of data

Now **converge**. Look at all the data you've captured, and circle the items that are important to you in solving the problem.

Tip: you can draw a mind map if you find it easier.

3. Define the challenge in 5 minutes

Diverge to create a series of challenge statements that invite new solutions, based on your prioritized goal and data.

Each challenge statement should be written with an invitational stem "How might I...?"; "How might we...?"; "How to...?", or even "What are all the ways I might...?"

- Rephrase barriers to success as questions
- Try using different verbs, adjectives and nouns
- Think about how this challenge is similar to something you've observed in life, in movies - how would you write that?

Long list of challenge statements. "How might I, How might we, How to..."

After you have several potential challenge statements, **converge**. Review each statement and prioritise the statement/s that best get to the heart of the matter? Select the challenge statement that is the most promising and inspiring.

Selected challenge statement



Ideate.

4. Generate ideas in 10 minutes

Looking at your selected challenge statement, it's time to **diverge** on new ideas, striving for quantity. Come up with **20+ ideas**, using the following questions:

- What ideas spring to mind immediately?
- If money and resources were unlimited, what would you do?
- If another person had this challenge, for example a kindergarten teacher, what would they do? What about an entrepreneur?
- If you had to solve this tomorrow, what would you do?

Long list of ideas (continue list on next page)

IDEA BOOSTER

Reflect on the ideas you've written. Stretch your thinking, generate another 10+ ideas with these forced connection questions:

- Take a look around you and select a random object. Keeping the challenge in mind and looking at the object, what ideas come to mind for solving the challenge?
- Think about the qualities of the object - the colours, textures, how it works. Thinking about the challenge, consider how these qualities might help. What new ideas come to mind?

Ideas (continued)

Ready to **converge**? Read through all the ideas you've generated, and circle the ones that really catch your eye. Consider the ideas that are novel, unique, and likely to really have impact. Group the circled ideas into clusters, and restate each one as a concrete solution, a "bigger idea" that encapsulates the other ideas. For each cluster, use the words "What I see myself doing is..." and be specific about activities, the timeframe and any supporting information.

Enhanced Solution *What I now see myself doing is...*



Develop.

5. Strengthen the solution in 10 minutes

Reflecting on your challenge statement and looking over your top ideas, use this series of **divergent** questions to review where you are at.

- What are the positives of the ideas (the benefits, specific strengths)?
- What are the possibilities of the idea (how could it be stretched, what are the spin-offs, the future gains)?
- What are the possible limitations of the idea? What is concerning? We can pose these as questions: "How to/ How might?"
- What opportunities can you see to overcome the concerns?

Positives (at least 3)

Possibilities (at least 3)

Concerns (at least 3)

How might we...

Opportunities (at least 3)

Now it's time to **converge**. Revisit all the positives, possibilities, limitations and ideas. Which will really help you get to your goal? Circle the items that will strengthen the solution. Select the most important options to incorporate, and write an enhanced solution statement.

Enhanced Solution *What I now see myself doing is...*



Implement.

6. Plan for action in 5 minutes

Start off by **diverging**, coming up with a list of all the resources and actions that might be needed. These questions will help:

- Who or what might help you (assisters)? What sort of help is required?
- Who or what may hinder you (resisters)? What challenges might be posed?
- What resources are available? What steps might you take to put your solution/s into action?

Long list of actions and resources

What do you need to do in the next 24 hours? Looking at the list, **converge**, to select all the items that are needed to ensure success. Consider what needs to happen first, and arrange actions in order of sequence.

Jumpstart: Next 24 hours

WHAT

WHO

Time period _____

WHAT

WHO

Time period _____

WHAT

WHO

Time to put your plan into action!

The future is ours to design. Let's make it the best.

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