

Creative Fix

Creative First Aid Kit

VOLUME 1: STABILISE

ALLEGRA CHAPMAN

HELLO



My name's Allegra Chapman. I'm an author, columnist, creative wellbeing practitioner and creativity coach. Plus I love making art, crafts, jewellery, and magick!

I'm also an AuDHD mum of two, with fairly unpredictable mental and physical health.

You can find more from me on creative therapy, support for neurodivergent creatives, art magick and life as a writer at:



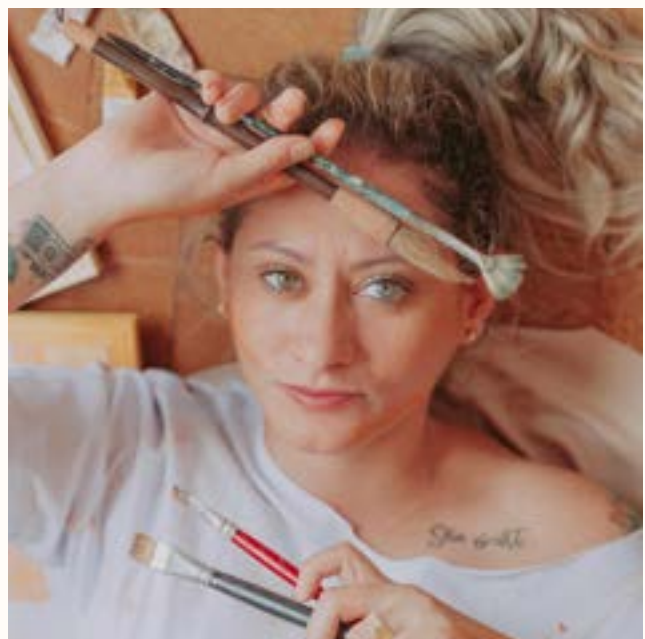
Instagram:
allegra_chapman



Threads:
@allegra_chapman



Substack:
@allegrachapman
YourCreativeFix.substack.com



WHAT'S IN THIS KIT?

I am **obsessed** with how good creativity is for wellbeing!

It lifts your mood, relieves anxiety and helps you process thoughts and feelings. It also boosts the immune system, reduces chronic pain, lowers blood pressure and more!

I love helping people to use art, writing and craft to care for their mental and physical health, and to navigate life.

Think of this as your emergency box of creative support.

When you feel overwhelmed, burnt out, anxious, stressed, depressed, frazzled, confused, unwell, or generally out of sorts, you can find something in these pages to help you.

If you are suffering from severe health challenges or feeling unable to cope, make sure you seek help from a qualified professional. This guide isn't a replacement for treatment or therapy, but it can be an addition.

As with all of my work, this kit is designed with neurodivergent, disabled, chronically ill and generally time/energy-limited folks in mind. That means that everything in here is low-demand, accessible and adaptable to your needs.

You don't have to do everything in this book. Definitely don't do it all in one go! Skip pages, do short bursts, pick sections that resonate in the moment, leave things unfinished, adjust activities to suit you. This is your kit - use it how you like!

This is **Volume 1** of a 4-volume series - here, we're starting with stabilising your nervous system when it's overwhelmed.

WHAT'S IN THIS KIT?

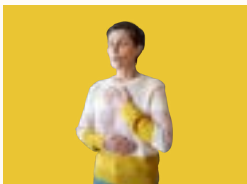
1: Understanding your nervous system



_____ Recognising your needs and responding with care.

Pages 6 – 8.

2: Quick regulation tools



_____ Simple techniques for fast relief when it's all a bit much.

Pages 9 – 10.

3: Permission slips



_____ Supportive reminders when you need to take pressure off.

Pages 11 – 12.

4: Rescue prompts



_____ Simple creative activities to support intense feelings.

Page 13.

5: Low-demand activities



_____ Gentle activities when you're ready to go deeper.

Pages 15 – 16.

WHAT'S IN THIS KIT?

6: Tiny daily actions



Micro-habits for weaving creativity into daily life.

Page 17.

7: Creative affirmations



Non-cringe ways to soothe your system and build safety.

Pages 18 - 19.

8: Journaling prompts



Exploring and processing your thoughts and feelings.

Pages 20 - 25.

9: Colouring pages



Sheets to use when you need calm and relaxation.

Pages 26 - 28.

10: Activity grids



Printable sheets for structured activities.

Pages 29 - 30.

1 UNDERSTANDING YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

Our modern world puts our brains under so much stress.

If you're also sensitive to sensory inputs, low on energy and/or carrying trauma, it's kind of impossible to maintain equilibrium. Our brains interpret excessive sensory inputs as danger. We then go into **fight-flight-freeze-fawn response**.

Signs you might be dysregulated

Fight response

- Irritability
- Clenched jaw
- Rapid heart rate
- Tense or shaking muscles
- "Knot" in your stomach
- Dizziness

Flight response

- Racing thoughts
- Anxiety
- Tightness in your chest
- Shallow breathing
- Constant worrying
- Nausea

Freeze response

- Withdrawing
- Dissociation
- Feeling hopeless or numb
- Doom scrolling
- Extreme fatigue
- Brain fog

Fawn response

- People-pleasing
- Overworking
- Neglecting self-care
- Forgetting to eat / drink
- Difficulty saying "no"
- Feeling stretched too thin

How creativity can help



You might not feel massively creative when you're stressed - your system is prioritising survival over imagination.

But creative acts (even tiny ones) signal to your system that you're safe, bring you into the present, connect you to your body, and help you process your feelings.

1 UNDERSTANDING YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

Here are some simple ways to respond to these signals:

When you feel...



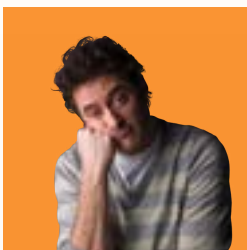
Restless / agitated

Your system may be asking for space and safety.



Frozen / stuck

Your system may be feeling under pressure.



Numb / disconnected

Reconnection often starts with the senses.

Try...

- Reduce stimulation (step away from noise, screens, or conversations).
 - Slow your pace — choose one small thing instead of five.
 - Move your body gently (stretching, walking, shaking out tension).
 - Lower expectations for the day.
-
- Start with the smallest possible action.
 - Warm your body (blanket, tea, warm shower).
 - Change your physical environment slightly.
 - Give yourself permission to do something very simple.
-
- Engage your senses (touch something textured, smell something comforting).
 - Look at colours or images you enjoy.
 - Sit somewhere different for a few minutes.
 - Let yourself rest without trying to “solve” anything.

1 UNDERSTANDING YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

Here are some simple ways to respond to these signals:

When you feel...



**Need to
please /
perform**

You can't pour from an empty cup.

Try...

- Pause before saying yes to things.
- Ask yourself what **you** need right now.
- Reduce commitments for the day.
- Do one small thing purely for yourself.



**Creatively
blocked**

Your system needs to feel safe to play and be imperfect.

- Rest without guilt.
- Lower the bar for creative output.
- Choose playful, low-pressure activities.
- Spend time noticing beauty.
- Give yourself permission not to create today.

What would help you right now?

Circle one thing you can give yourself today.

Rest

Movement

Fresh air

Less pressure

Quiet

Comfort

Creativity

Connection

Fun

Nourishment

Solitude

Stimulation

QUICK REGULATION TOOLS

Two-minute techniques for immediate grounding.

5-4-3-2-1

Look around and name:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch / feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Colour finding

Similar to the above. Close your eyes, take a breath and choose a colour at random.

Then open your eyes, look around and name five things you can see that are that colour.

Hold something cold

Take a glass of cool water, an ice pack wrapped in a towel, a bag of frozen peas, an ice cube, a bottle from the fridge... anything that feels cold but is comfortable to touch.

Hold the object for a minute or two and notice how the cold feels on your skin.

Allowing gravity

Press your feet into the floor. Notice the sensation of support.

Feel gravity holding you from above, and the ground meeting you below.

Breathe into this feeling for a minute or two.

QUICK REGULATION TOOLS

Two-minute techniques for immediate grounding.

Long exhale breathing

Breathe in for four seconds, and breathe out for six seconds.
Repeat for one or two minutes.

Optional variation: Square breathing.

Breathe in for four, hold for four, breathe out for four, hold for four, repeat.

60-second scribble

Take a pencil and paper. Set a timer for one minute.

Move your pencil across the paper making whatever shapes or lines your hand wants to make, but **do not lift your pencil from the paper** until the timer goes off.

Be a softie

Wrap yourself in softness – jumper, blanket, scarf... whatever you like.

Optional extra: find soft textured things to touch (feathers, yarn, cotton wool, towels... anything that feels good).

You could even make a soft collage with soft materials if you want to.

Appreciating beauty

Find something beautiful.

A plant, a photo, a piece of art, a view...

Spend a minute or two looking at it and appreciating its beauty.

3 PERMISSION SLIPS

Print and cut these out, ready for when you need them.

Choose the permission slip you need most right now.

*I am allowed to create
imperfectly and messily*

*I am allowed to rest - my worth
is not measured in productivity*

*I am allowed to ignore advice
that doesn't fit me*

I am allowed to change my mind

3 PERMISSION SLIPS

Print and cut these out, ready for when you need them.

Choose the permission slip you need most right now.

*I am allowed to make things
just for myself*

*I am allowed to stop
halfway through*

*I am allowed to start again
tomorrow*

I am allowed to move slowly

4 RESCUE PROMPTS

When you're really struggling and you need an outlet, but energy and capacity are low, these are your prompts.

Draw

a weather symbol
to represent
today

Write

a sentence
beginning,
"Today feels like..."

Colour

a page with the
colours of your
mood today

List

smells and tastes
that feel
comforting

Make

a collage using
items of the
same colour

Draw

a spiral
as slowly
as you can

Write

an encouraging
note to yourself
from future you

Draw

a shape, then fill
it with lines and
doodles

List

things, places,
people, etc. that
bring you joy

The process is the point

We're not trying to make
perfect art,
or even **good** art.

We're creating
for the sake of it.

**Make a mess. Play.
Have fun.**

5 LOW-DEMAND ACTIVITIES

Gentle creative activities to reconnect your body and mind.



Scrap paper collage

Take tissue paper, old newspapers or magazines, old books or journals, junk mail... anything you don't mind ripping up!

Tear off pieces and stick them down onto a piece of paper. Try not to think too much about how you're arranging them.



Unsent letter

Write a letter to a person or situation that's on your mind (for any reason, good or bad), or to yourself or an emotion.

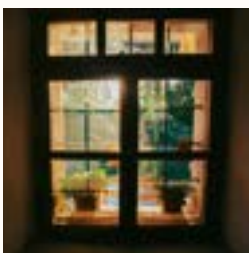
Get everything off your chest. **Do not send the letter.** Burn it (if you can do so safely) or rip it up once you're done.



Draw the music

Put on a piece of music - any music.

While you're listening, draw the colours or shapes that the music suggests to you. You could move your pencil / crayon to the beat, or vary your lines as the tempo changes.



Your view

Look outside the nearest window.

Draw something you can see, as accurate or abstract as you like, or write a description of the view and any details you notice.



Object history

Find a normal, everyday object near you right now.

Write about its life - with you (where you got it, what it's seen, what it's been involved in) or before you (who might have owned it before, where it might have been).

5 LOW-DEMAND ACTIVITIES

Gentle creative activities to reconnect your body and mind.



Colour mood map

On a piece of paper, draw a load of shapes that represent elements of your day and/or mood. They can overlap if you want, and be as big or small as you like.

Fill them with colours that represent your mood and feelings.



Random still life

Select five random objects and place them together. Don't overthink it.

Either sketch the arrangement, photograph it, or write a scene involving all five items.



Found poem

Flip through a book or magazine. Write down or cut out 10 – 20 words that catch your attention.

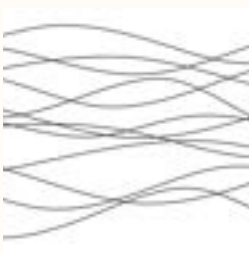
Arrange them into a poem. You can doodle, collage or colour around the poem if you like.



Comfort collage

Collect images, textures, words or colours that feel comforting to you.

Stick them onto a piece of paper to create a collage. You could keep this collage to look at when you need comfort.



Ten lines

Draw ten simple lines across a page in any direction – straight, curved, wobbly, long, or short. Look at the shapes those lines have created.

If you like, you can add colour to some spaces, or turn a shape into something (a leaf, a cloud, a face).

6 TINY DAILY ACTIONS

Choose one when you want to weave creativity into the day.

Take a photo of
an interesting
shadow or light

Use a different
coloured pen for
notes / lists

Rearrange
objects on a shelf
or table

Notice and write
down one
meaningful
sentence you
hear today

Doodle while
waiting for
something (bus,
oven, kids...)

Light a candle
before a
mundane task to
make it feel
special

Think of one
metaphor to
describe your
day

Learn a new
word, and write
down what it
means

Change your
phone
background to
something
inspiring

Throughout your
day, look for
examples of a
certain colour

Make a pattern
using leaves,
pebbles, shells or
small objects

Notice any
interesting
sounds, and see if
they suggest
emotions or
memories

CREATIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Repeat one that resonates when you need a lift. Print and cut them out if you want to carry one with you.

*I'm still a creative when
I'm taking a break from
creative activities*

*Small steps
add up to
real progress*

*I move at the pace
my body needs*

*Rest is the root,
not the reward*

*My individual way of
seeing the world is
powerful*

*I do not have
to prove my creativity
to anyone*

Don't believe these right now? That's ok, just borrow one for today and try it on for size.

CREATIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Repeat one that resonates when you need a lift. Print and cut them out if you want to carry one with you.

*I show up
with curiosity*

*It is perfectly ok
to not finish something*

*I can follow what
interests me or
lights me up*

*The only "right way" to
create is the way that is
right for me*

*My art is unique and so
is my way of creating*

*The process
is the point*

Don't believe these right now? That's ok, just borrow one for today and try it on for size.



JOURNALING PROMPTS

For when you're feeling discombobulated and you need to make sense of your thoughts, or empty your head. **You don't have to answer all the questions** - pick any that resonate.

Print out these pages, or copy the questions into a journal.

How are you feeling right now in your:

- **body**
- **mind**
- **heart?**



JOURNALING PROMPTS

What are you carrying today?

What can you let go of, just for today?



JOURNALING PROMPTS

What does your nervous system need right now?

What would “just enough” look like today?



JOURNALING PROMPTS

What shape(s) and colour(s) are your feelings right now?

Where are you feeling emotions in your body right now?



JOURNALING PROMPTS

When do you feel most like yourself?

What small thing made you smile recently?



JOURNALING PROMPTS

What else do you want to get out onto the page today?

9 COLOURING PAGES

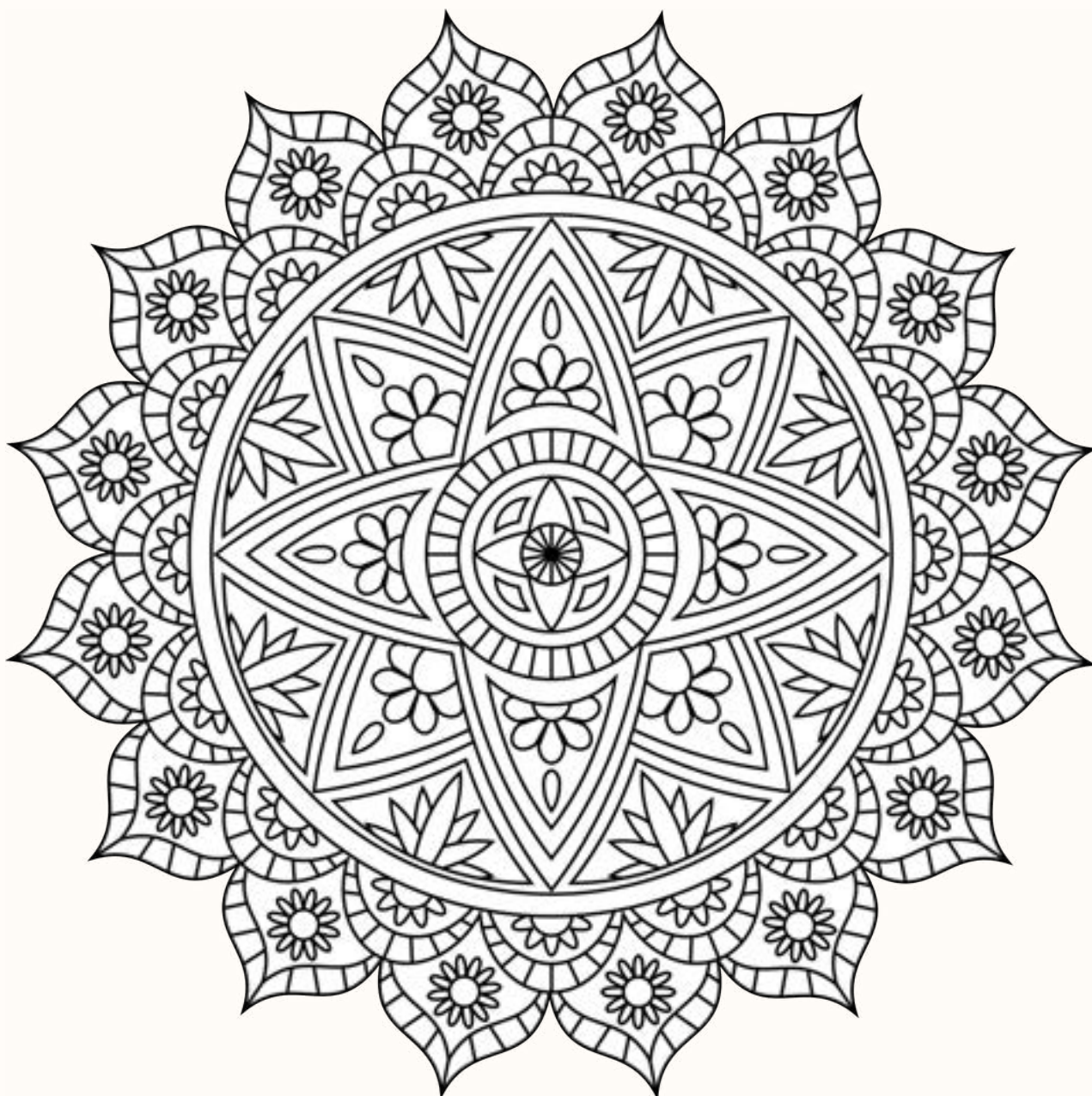
Take a mindful moment. When you feel stressed, pause to colour a little part of one of these pages any way you choose. You can add to it whenever you like.



9 COLOURING PAGES



COLOURING PAGES



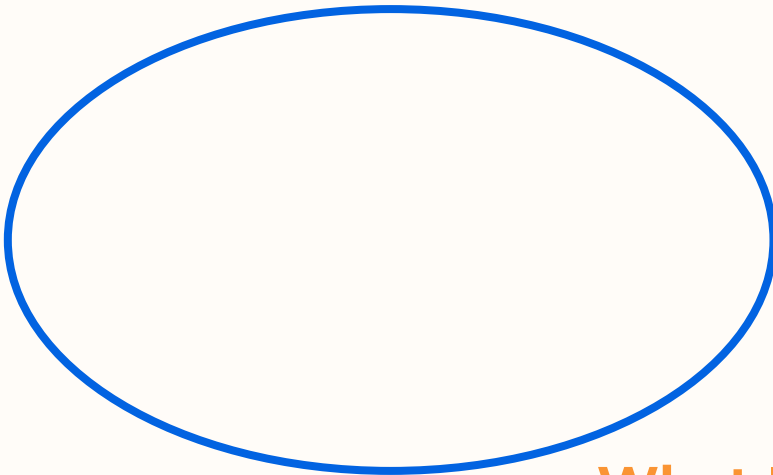
10 ACTIVITY GRIDS

In each of these squares, doodle different lines, patterns or shapes. You can do one square at a time, or the whole thing in one go. Keep it simple - the repetitive motion is what calms and soothes your system.

10 ACTIVITY GRIDS

Fill in these circles with the things you are worrying about or that are running around your head.

What I can control

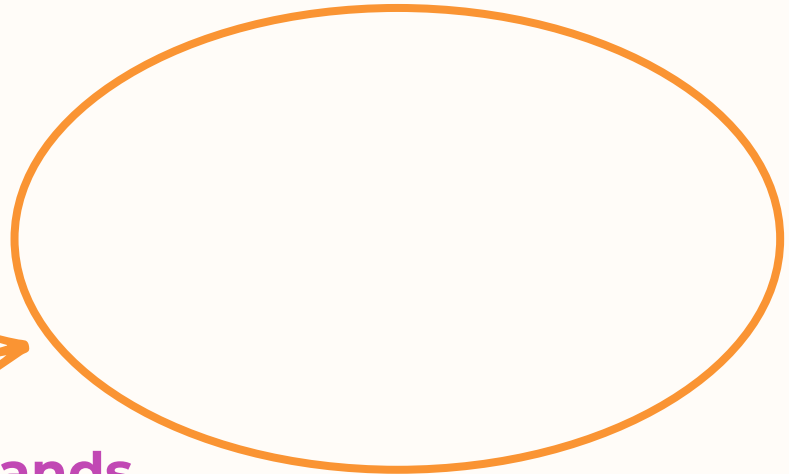


You can only control your thoughts and behaviours - these are in your power

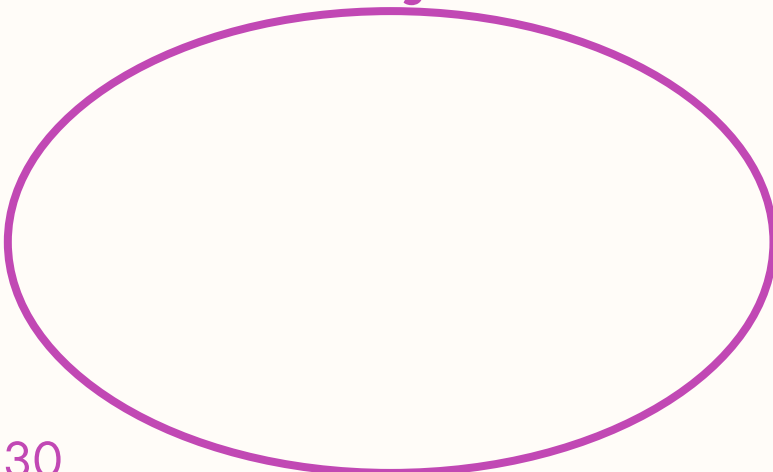


What I can influence

There might be ways you can contribute to change or someone you can speak to, but the ultimate action isn't yours to make - you can only do what you can



Out of my hands



If you can't do anything about it, let it go - worrying won't change it



IF YOU WANT MORE...

You can access a range of creative therapy activities, gentle prompts, and tools for managing your nervous system in my Creative Fix membership. Visit

YourCreativeFix.substack.com/FirstAid

to get a **7 day free trial**.

This is Volume 1 of a 4-volume series

Volume 2: Reconnect will focus on moving from survival mode to intentional action.

It will include:

- expanded creative activities
- tiny creative rituals to engage your senses
- ways to rebuild creative momentum
- more prompts and activities
- deeper journaling prompts
- creative actions to support you in the everyday

Visit **CreativeFix.net/shop** for details.

I hope this Creative First Aid Kit is helpful. Keep it where you can reach for it easily times of stress!

Creative Fix

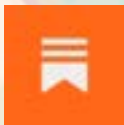
CreativeFix.net



Instagram:
allegra_chapman



Threads:
@allegra_chapman



Substack:
@allegrachapman
YourCreativeFix.substack.com