



THE MENTAL RESET

Summary keynote



How hybrid working and living strengthen your resilience

WITH DR. ELKE GERAERTS

THE MENTAL RESET

Dr. Elke Geraerts

2020 and 2021 represented **one of the greatest resilience experiments** of our lifetime. What if we embraced this crisis as an opportunity for **true transformation**? What if we **reset our habits** so we can face challenges stronger than ever before? What if we take this momentum as **an advantage for ourselves, our teams, and our organizations**?

I wrote the book **The Mental Reset** at a time in the pandemic when I realized what resets I was making myself. Both privately, and professionally, a lot of **challenges** were coming my way. But as a psychologist, I think it was also an interesting time. Suddenly we all universally had **the opportunity to live and work in a different way** and experiment with it. I hope to inspire you in how you can live and work healthier in the future in order for you **to make certain resets yourself**.



The Great Glass Elevator

What resets you make, I can't tell you. But mainly my advice is: make sure that your resets are **brain friendly**, that you put your brain at the center. To do that you need an increased portion of **awareness**. Awareness to check whether something is energizing or draining you and to determine your direction based on that and to check regularly whether you are still going in the right direction.

When it comes to awareness, we like to use the metaphor of the **Great Glass Elevator**. It is that elevator that gives us the ability of abstract thinking. Something that is a really unique quality for us as human beings. So it's in your brain and you often use it, but usually without really being aware of it. In the Great Glass Elevator you can create distance between yourself and the situation, allowing you for **perspective**.

You can go up in that elevator to gain perspective, but this can also be done to define new goals, projects, opportunities and resets. In doing so, you can ask yourself what is going well in your life, what you want to change and what dreams, ambitions and plans you have.

After that, you go down. And make sure to not stop at ground level, but go down as deep as possible to define concrete steps from there, execute them, and hence motivate your brain to go further and thus move towards a reset. You do that on ground level.





It is an imaginary elevator and therefore it can also travel sideways, towards others. You can travel in that Great Glass Elevator to understand the other person's perspective, feel it and then respond appropriately.

So it's important to make regular time to take your elevator up, down and also sideways. It will allow you to increase your awareness of yourself, others and the world you are in.



Drivers of productivity



	 ENERGY	 FOCUS	 COORDINATION	 COLLABORATION
OFFICE	...			+
HOME	...			
SYNCHRONOUS			+	
ASYNCHRONOUS		+		

When we think of **hybrid work**, we almost spontaneously think of the possibility of **flexibility** in *time* and *place*. Besides the possibility of being flexible in time and place, it also makes sense to do this in such a way that you get the **most out of your job**. This is where **productivity** comes in. In most jobs, productivity is evident in 4 drivers: energy, focus, coordination and cooperation.

Flexibility

Location

As long as you are working efficiently, you can work from the office, your home, a local hub or even at a park.

Time

You have **synchronous** working, where you work at the same time as your colleagues. There is also **asynchronous** working, in which you are working at certain times while your colleagues are *not* working. Asynchronous working can also mean that you are working at the same time as your colleagues, but that you temporarily make yourself unavailable. This way you have the opportunity to work in full focus.

Energy

This driver is most effective when you combine it with flexibility in location. Some people get energy when they work at the office and others can recharge during moments of working from home. However, circumstances also play a role. For example, after a lockdown almost everyone is excited to return to the office.

Focus

Most jobs also require focus, when you need to work with full concentration. Focus can mainly be experienced when you have the opportunity to work asynchronously, when you are not reachable. This allows you to get into the flow and get things done.

Coordination

Coordination also has to do with flexibility in time. It is only when you are working *in sync* with colleagues that you can coordinate swiftly.

Collaboration

Many jobs involve collaboration between colleagues, external partners or with clients. Research shows that when you meet physically, you can brainstorm better, engage quickly with colleagues via eye contact and interpret body language correctly.

Elephants and rabbits

The importance of a reset for the way we work from home is becoming increasingly clear. The most essential thing is to keep the importance of **focus** in mind. Focus is also called the new IQ. After all, you can be as smart as Einstein, if you fail to focus the spotlight of your attention on one task, then you are little with that great IQ. In this information-rich world, that is the real art: focus.

“ **FOCUS IS CALLED
THE NEW IQ** ”

For this we use the metaphor: **when hunting elephants, don't get distracted chasing rabbits**. The elephant represents the priority of the day. It is a task that often requires you to go into the Great Glass Elevator and come up with a plan from there. The rabbits are the issues of the day. They might be your emails, phone calls, text messages or video meetings. They take you out of focus.

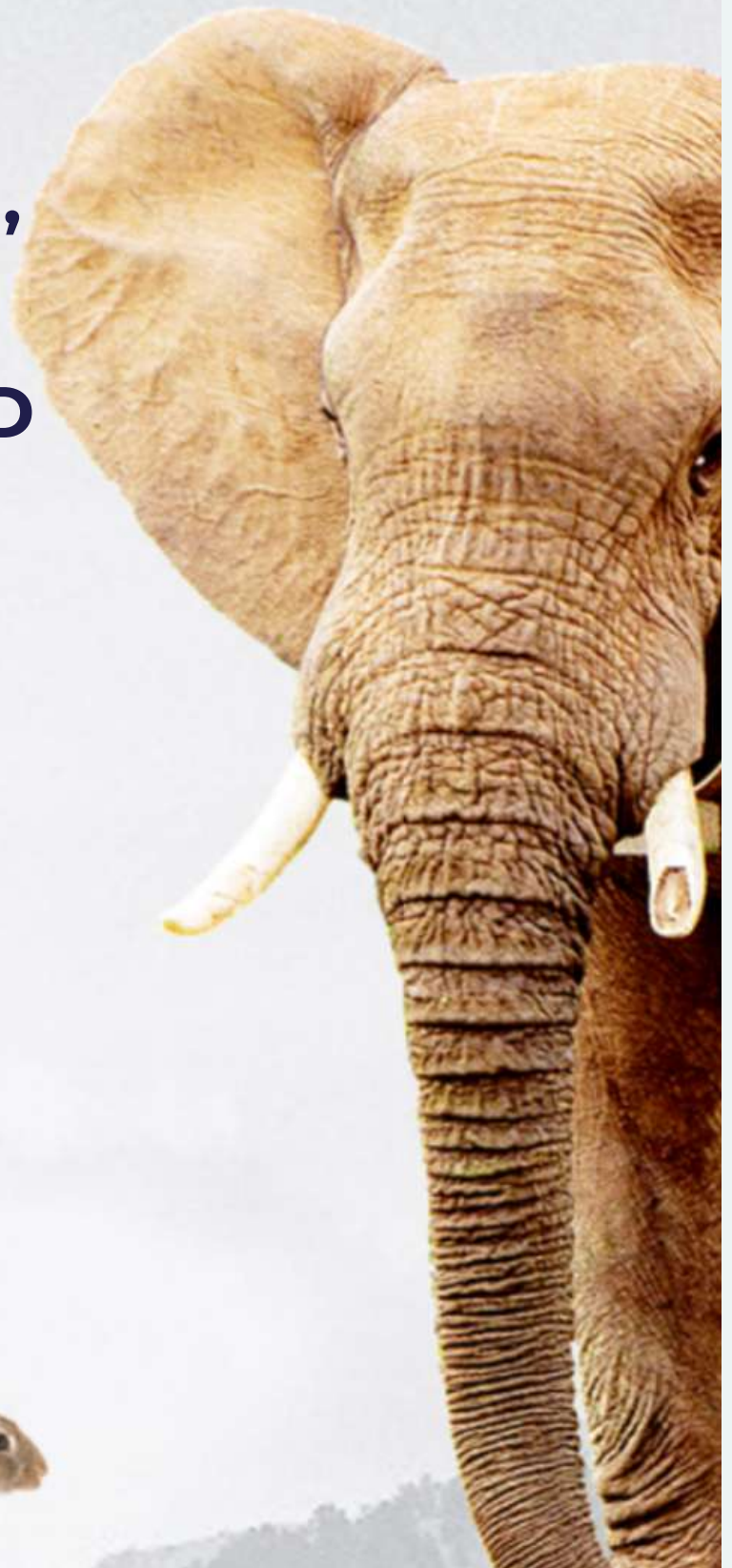
The majority of employees start their day by opening that rabbit hutch. We get satisfaction from having already ticked off our little to-do's. However, in the morning our brains are at their **brightest and full of energy** because of the night's rest. What a waste to chase those rabbits when we have our full energy!

After a while, the elephant of the day approaches, but our brain already feels a bit foggy. We feel tempted to postpone it until after lunch or even until the next day. Most likely with the idea that by then you will have regained energy, but the next morning that rabbit hutch will open again and your elephant will stay put once more!

This will give stress, but something even much more important: you are way too smart to only chase rabbits! You **need the elephants** in our work. They ensure that you feel job satisfaction, experience enthusiasm and feel connected to your team and organization. Especially since we more often work remotely, we need to have those elephants in sight.

We invite you to make this translation. We need to create the respect for focus in the workplace, both online and in the office. Try to do this by introducing the **elephant culture** in your network.

**WHEN
HUNTING
ELEPHANTS,
DON'T GET
DISTRACTED
CHASING
RABBITS.**



Psychological safety

Harvard Professor Amy Edmonson did a study where at first glance it seemed that **successful teams** made more mistakes. After a revision of the results, it was concluded that successful teams did not make more mistakes, but they do *talk more* about them. The team members feel safe enough to allow themselves to be vulnerable and talk about their mistakes, without fearing loss of face.

How can you create space for this safety?

- 1** Pave the ground
By not only asking after someone's successes, but also their mistakes, you pave the ground. You ensure that it's okay to talk about mistakes.
- 2** Asking the right questions
When starting a new project, try not to act as if you know everything. Dare to ask questions, such as: what are we missing? Am I not seeing certain things? Where can it go wrong? This way you can already see many things coming from afar.
- 3** Respond correctly
When someone comes to report a mistake, don't immediately ask them *why* that person was at fault. At a first stage, try to ask what you can do for them. In a subsequent conversation, you can ask about the reasons for the mistake.

Trust

We need to trust each other more. Especially during hybrid working, we need to trust more instead of wanting to be in control. As Dutch historian Rutger Bregman wrote in his bestselling book: *most people are good*. Also the people in your team, so start by trusting each other in the hybrid work context.



Panorama



Not just any glass elevator

If you manage to see the crisis as an opportunity, have enough resilience and have prepared your mindset for moments of crisis, the most fun part begins: shaping your own life. It's something you do for yourself. If your company or country also sets things in motion or provides tools, that's fine. But if you want to avoid disappointment, it is best not to project your expectations onto other parties. You are in **the driver's seat**.

That is why we need to step into the Great Glass Elevator. It's not just any glass elevator, but one that takes you to a beautiful panoramic deck of a skyscraper.

Imagine yourself standing there now. Look around carefully, to all sides. Perhaps take binoculars with you, talk to others on the platform, linger for a while. Look down first, at how your life, business, school or country looks from a distance. Observe where things can be improved. **Determine the area in which you want change**.

As you whiz down, you test that brand new dream of the future against the **brain criterion**. You can make a stop on four floors to check them off.

4 floors that check off the brain criterion

- 1 Does this dream give me positive energy?
- 2 Is this dream addressing my *why*?
- 3 Are there possibilities for growth in this dream?
- 4 Is this dream giving me opportunity to focus on my priorities?

If the answer to any of those questions is *no*, then go all the way up again and **adjust your dream**. In doing so, be careful not to shrink your dream, but **make it bigger**, crazier, wilder, more ambitious.

Only when you can say *yes* at every check, you take the elevator to the basement. There you are going to split out the dream in concrete steps. **You're going to craft it**, like a sculpture, with great attention to detail. When your dream is finished, you take your creation under your arm and take it to the ground floor, where you make the dream a reality.

Keep it simple

Do I have to do this now?

Good advice is to keep it as simple as possible. You can always ask yourself: do I have to do this now?

Try to put the emphasis on another word in each sentence:

Do **I** have to do this now?

Do I **HAVE TO** do this now?

Do I have to do this **NOW**?

This way, you can reduce about half of your *musts*. The most important simplification you can make is to live in the here and now.

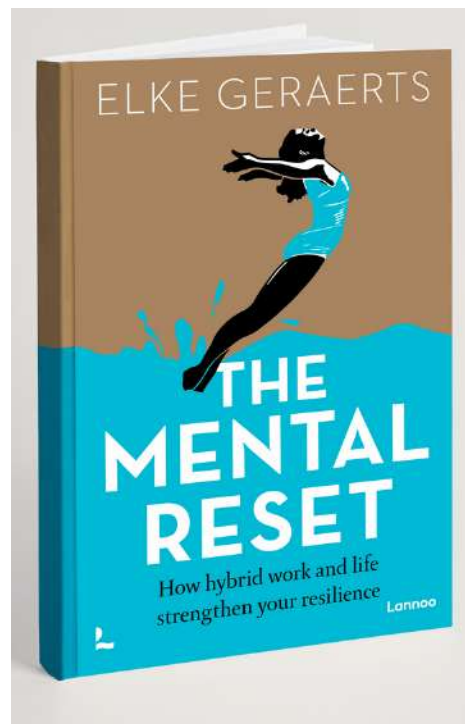
“

DO I
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Information

In her groundbreaking new book, Elke Geraerts gives you the tools you need to prepare for the many challenges that life and work have in store for us post-covid. In this book, she gives your brain a central role and teaches how to make brain-aware choices. She shows how hybrid work can lead to more productivity and more peace, how you can chase your dreams and how you can achieve real focus in a never-ending digital world. It will never be like before... and maybe fortunately so!



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