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— PROBLEM? RELAX. YOU'VE GOT THIS! —

A tongue-in-cheek guide series ;)

Everyone's Talking About AI, and I Don't Know Where to Start

How to Use AI for Everyday Tasks,
Check Its Answers, and Keep Thinking
for Yourself



We've got a problem. But relax. It can be solved –
and we'll even have something to laugh about.

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INTRO

AI Is Already Here. Relax, You Don't Have to Build a Robot in Your Garage

Not long ago, artificial intelligence mostly brought to mind movies in which a computer politely helped humans at first, then about ninety minutes later decided that humans had not been such a great idea after all. Today, AI writes emails, summarizes documents, helps plan vacations, explains washing machine instructions, and suggests what to cook with half a zucchini, three eggs, and ingredients you bought two months ago during an optimistic attempt to become someone who eats healthier. Suddenly, everyone is talking about it. Some say it will change our entire lives, some say it will take everyone's jobs, and others are showing seventeen apps online that apparently no functioning adult will be able to live without starting tomorrow.

If you look at all of this and think, "Fine, but what exactly am I supposed to do with it?", you are in a very reasonable place. The problem is not that you know too little about artificial intelligence. The problem is that the amount of conversation about AI has greatly exceeded the number of simple answers to the question of what an ordinary person can actually use it for at six thirty on a Tuesday evening. You do not need to understand the architecture of language models to ask AI to organize your meeting notes. Just as you do not need to understand the construction of an internal combustion engine to drive to the grocery store.

This book is not meant to turn you into an artificial intelligence expert. It has a much more practical goal: to help you use AI without feeling as though you somehow missed a

three-year introductory course that everyone else was mysteriously invited to. You will learn to recognize tasks where AI can genuinely save time, give instructions without writing a four-page manifesto, and check answers when a mistake could matter. Most importantly, you will learn something else. You will learn to use AI as a tool rather than as a replacement brain for hire.

That distinction will come up throughout this book because artificial intelligence can sound remarkably convincing even when it is wrong. It can produce an answer that is smooth, logical, and so professional that you may feel like stamping it "verified" before you have finished the second paragraph. It is a little like talking to someone who always answers without the slightest hesitation. Confidence is impressive, but confidence by itself is not evidence that someone knows what they are talking about.

So this will not be a guide called "How to Ask AI Everything and Never Think for Yourself Again." It would be short, convenient, and terrible. Instead, we will treat AI like a very fast coworker who can read a lot of text, create ten versions of something in seconds, and does not get offended when you ask for an eleventh. At the same time, this coworker occasionally fills in a gap, misunderstands the context, or presents a guess with the expression of an accountant reading out the result of an audit.

The people who benefit most from AI are often not the ones who know the most technical terminology. They are the ones who can recognize their own problem clearly. "I need to make this email shorter." "I don't understand this document." "I have fifteen things to do and no idea where to start." "I want to compare three options." "I need to prepare questions before a meeting." Those are excellent starting points because

instead of asking, "What can artificial intelligence do?", you begin with the much more useful question: "What is taking up my time or making my life unnecessarily complicated today?"

You also do not have to change your entire way of working overnight. If someone tells you that AI should now handle your inbox, calendar, shopping, presentations, workout plan, career development, and probably your relationship with Aunt Susan as well, you are allowed to return politely to reality. Start with one small task. If it proves useful, find a second one. The revolution can wait for a moment, especially if you are currently trying to remember whose turn it was to buy toilet paper.

We will also spend a lot of time talking about checking answers. Not because AI is useless, but for exactly the opposite reason. The more useful a tool becomes, the easier it is to start using it automatically. If a calculator tells you that $2 + 2 = 7$, you immediately know something has gone wrong. If AI writes four polished paragraphs explaining taxes, law, health, or contract terms, the mistake may be much harder to spot.

Throughout this book, we will therefore use one simple rule: the greater the consequences of a decision, the less "AI said so" is enough. You can be fairly relaxed about a pasta recipe. You should be considerably less relaxed about information involving medication dosage. An idea for a message to a friend does not require an investigation, but a financial, legal, or health decision should rely on appropriate sources, professional knowledge, and your own judgment. Common sense does not become obsolete just because a new box for typing questions has appeared.

We will not compete for the most complicated AI instruction either. Online, you can find prompts that look as

though you have to appoint the model director of a department, define twenty-seven competencies, describe its philosophy of life, and ask it to “take a deep breath and work step by step” before it is allowed to answer a question. Detailed instructions can sometimes help. Often, however, it is enough to explain clearly what you want to achieve, provide the relevant context, state the important limits, and say what form you want the answer to take.

Artificial intelligence does not require you to speak a special language. You can write normally. You can improve your instruction after the first answer. You can say, “This is too long,” “Explain it more simply,” “Give me three options,” “Don’t assume I know this subject,” or “Which parts are you not sure about?”. This is not an exam in prompt writing. If the first answer is poor, it does not mean you have failed your conversation with a computer.

The most important shift happens when you stop thinking of AI as a magical box of answers and start treating it as a tool for completing specific stages of work. It can help you start, organize, shorten, expand, compare, explain, rephrase, find gaps in an idea, or prepare a set of questions. Sometimes the best use of AI is not getting a finished solution. It is reaching the point where you can make a better decision yourself more quickly.

And that is exactly where we will begin. Not with the history of artificial intelligence, not with the mathematics behind models, and not with a ranking of thirty-seven apps that will be outdated before you finish this book. We will start with the most important thing: how to look at your everyday tasks and notice where AI can genuinely help. No fanfare, no panic, and no handing it the keys to your own head.

Chapter 1 - You Don't Need to Know How AI Works to Know What It Can Help You With

One of the first mistakes people make is assuming that before they start using AI, they first have to “understand” it. As a result, they watch videos, read articles, learn new terms, and after a week discover that the subject is even bigger than it seemed at the beginning. It is a little like preparing to cook scrambled eggs by studying the engineering behind modern induction cooktops. The knowledge may be interesting, but breakfast still is not ready.

For everyday use, a very simple mental model is enough at first. The AI you communicate with through text is a tool that can analyze material you provide and generate responses based on patterns, information, and the context it receives. It is not a human being, it does not have common sense that works exactly like yours, and it should not automatically be promoted to expert status simply because it writes smoothly. At the same time, it can perform many tasks involving text, ideas, information organization, and option analysis extremely quickly.

The easiest way to begin is not by asking, “What can AI do?”, but by looking at a normal day. Think about the things that make you sigh, the ones you keep postponing, or the ones you mechanically repeat for the hundredth time. Maybe you regularly write very similar emails. Maybe you receive long documents from which you only need five important facts. Maybe every trip begins with creating a packing list from scratch, even though for years you have been taking

roughly the same pair of trousers and exactly the same charging cable.

Those are good places to experiment because the risk is low and the result is easy to judge. If AI creates a poor packing list for a weekend away, you can add your toothbrush and remind yourself why humans are still needed in the process. If it reduces a four-hundred-word email to one hundred and twenty words, you can immediately see whether the meaning survived. If it organizes your meeting notes, you can compare the summary with what you actually wrote down.

Start With Tasks, Not Technology

Imagine Marta, who hears about AI almost every day but still does not really know what she is supposed to do with it. Marta does not code, she does not design rockets, and she has no plans to launch a startup with friends in a garage she does not own. What she does have is a Monday routine in which she spends forty minutes organizing notes after her team meeting. That is her starting point.

Instead of asking AI, "How can you help me at work?", Marta can paste in her own notes and write: "Organize these notes into a short summary. Separate decisions, tasks, owners, and deadlines. Do not add information that is not in the text. If something is missing, mark it as not established." Suddenly, AI is no longer an abstract technological revolution. It is a way to turn forty minutes of tedious work into a few minutes spent checking the result.

That leads to one of the most important principles in this book: the best first uses of AI are usually ordinary ones. Do not try to create an automated system for managing your entire life on day one. Find a task that is repetitive, text-based, time-consuming, or irritating, while still being simple enough

that you can judge the quality of the answer yourself. If your choice is between “help me shorten this email” and “decide whether I should change careers,” the email is definitely the better first experiment.

You can divide tasks into three simple groups. The first contains tasks where AI can help quite freely because any mistake will be easy to spot and correct. The second contains tasks where the answer matters and needs checking. The third contains situations where the consequences are serious enough that AI should at most help you prepare questions or organize information, but should not be the only basis for a decision.

The first group might include title ideas, shortening your own text, preparing a shopping list, generating questions for a meeting, or organizing a cleaning plan. The second might include product comparisons, travel information, interpretation of offer terms, or document summaries. The third includes health questions, legal matters, serious financial decisions, and other situations where a mistake could cost far more than a forgotten bottle of shampoo.

The point is not to create a formal policy for every conversation with AI. The point is to develop one simple reflex: before using the answer, ask yourself what happens if it is wrong. If the answer is “not much, I’ll fix it,” you can be fairly relaxed. If the answer is “I could lose money, harm my health, or make an important decision based on false information,” the level of checking should rise immediately.

Seven Ordinary Things AI Can Actually Help With

Many of the most useful applications of AI fall into a few broad types of work. AI is very good at transforming text, which includes shortening, simplifying, changing tone,

organizing, or translating material you already have. It can help create a first draft when you know what you want to say but do not know how to begin. It can also generate ideas, compare options according to criteria you provide, explain a difficult subject in simpler language, build checklists, and identify questions you have not yet thought to ask.

Suppose you receive a message from your child's school that runs for nine long paragraphs, contains three dates, two exceptions, and one sentence written as though the author was paid by the word. You can ask AI: "Summarize this message in five points. List deadlines, things to prepare, and actions required from the parent separately. Do not omit exceptions." You should still glance back at the original, especially if there is a deadline or payment involved, but instead of fighting through the text a second time, you now have a map.

Another example is a complaint. You know what happened, you have the purchase date and order number, but by the third sentence you are beginning to sound like someone preparing to demand a parliamentary inquiry. You can describe the facts and ask AI to prepare a calm, specific version of the message. Then you read it, correct the details, and decide whether you really want to send the phrase "I kindly request that this matter be reconsidered," or whether your emotions would prefer a slightly stronger verb.

AI can also help when the problem is not too little information but too much of it. You have three internet plans, five coffee machines, or eight ideas for a weekend away, and after an hour they all begin to look the same. Instead of asking, "Which one is best?", give your criteria and ask for a comparison. "Reliability, easy cleaning, and low noise matter most to me. Price matters less. Compare these options using