

Your AI Starter Kit

The calm, printable companion to **The Honest Guide to AI**.

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A few sturdy habits to keep nearby. Print it, fold it, mark it up, or share it with someone who wants the calm version. The goal is not to make you an expert — it is to give you a handful of habits you can trust.

The five things to remember

- 1 AI is a tool, not a mind.** It can write, summarize, explain, and organize, and it can sound confident. But it does not understand your life the way a person does. Treat it like a very useful tool with limits.
- 2 Treat answers as drafts.** Read it. Question it. Change it. Keep your own judgment in the chair.
- 3 Verify important facts.** AI can be wrong — especially about details, dates, laws, prices, medical topics, and money. If the answer matters, check with a trusted source or qualified person.
- 4 Protect private information.** Use it for ordinary help. Be careful with secrets, account numbers, health details, and private information about other people.
- 5 Stop and verify before you act or pay.** Urgency, secrecy, fear, and pressure are the warning signs. If someone asks for money, codes, or passwords, slow down and verify another way.

A simple prompt recipe

A prompt is just the message you give an AI assistant. Plain English is the right language. For a better answer, include four simple parts:

1. What you want 2. The situation 3. Any limits 4. The form you want

"Help me write a short thank-you note to my neighbor, who brought soup after my surgery. Make it warm but not too sentimental. Give me three versions."

Before you act or pay: STOP

Use this when a call, text, email, voice message, or video asks for money, secrecy, codes, passwords, or immediate action.

- S Stop.** Do not pay, click, reply, or give information while your heart is racing.
- T Test the story.** Why the rush? Why secrecy? Why this payment method? Does this sound like how this person usually talks?
- O Open a trusted channel.** Hang up or close the message. Contact the person, company, or agency another way, using a number, app, or website you already know is real.
- P Protect your money and information.** Do not send gift cards, cryptocurrency, wire transfers, cash, passwords, or verification codes because someone contacted you unexpectedly and pressured you.

You do not have to decide whether the voice, picture, or video is real. You only have to recognize pressure — and verify through a trusted channel.

Keep private

When in doubt, leave it out. Don't paste these into an AI assistant:

- Passwords and verification codes
- Social Security or Medicare numbers
- Bank, credit card, or account numbers
- Full medical, legal, tax, or financial records
- Private details about family, friends, or neighbors

Ten good first prompts

Try one exactly as written, or change the details so it sounds like you.

- 1 Explain this simply.**
"Explain this in plain English. Tell me the main point, any deadlines, and anything I should double-check. Do not give legal, medical, or financial advice."
- 2 Write a friendly note.**
"Help me write a short, friendly note to thank someone for helping me. Ask me three questions first so it sounds like me."
- 3 Make this shorter.**
"Shorten this message while keeping the meaning. Make it polite and easy to read."
- 4 Plan an ordinary meal.**
"Give me three simple dinner ideas using chicken, rice, and vegetables. Use ordinary groceries and keep the steps easy."
- 5 Make a checklist.**
"Turn this into a checklist I can follow one step at a time."
- 6 Prepare for a phone call.**
"I need to call my insurance company about a bill. Give me a short list of questions to ask. Remind me not to share more personal information than necessary."
- 7 Ask better questions.**
"I am meeting a contractor about a home repair. What questions should I ask before agreeing to anything?"
- 8 Compare without deciding for me.**
"Help me compare these two options in a simple table. Do not choose for me. List what I should verify myself."
- 9 Check the tone.**
"Read this note and tell me if it sounds clear, respectful, and firm. Suggest improvements."
- 10 Sort signal from hype.**
"I saw this claim about AI. Help me separate what is actually being said from what might be exaggeration. List what I should verify."