The Prompting Primer

A Manual for AI Operators

Ai

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The information in this whitepaper has been written by Caelan Huntress and the Ai Coaching Academy, however the community becomes wiser than any individual involved, as each client, coach, and professional brings their wisdom, experience, troubles, challenges, skills and passions, which enhances the lives of everyone.

Amplinate®

AI Transparency Framework

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Fully human-driven; No use of AI	Human-centric creation; AI supported research	Balanced Collaboration between humans and AI	AI-driven content; Human oversight	Fully AI-driven; Minimal human oversight

HUMAN

AI

AI

HUMAN
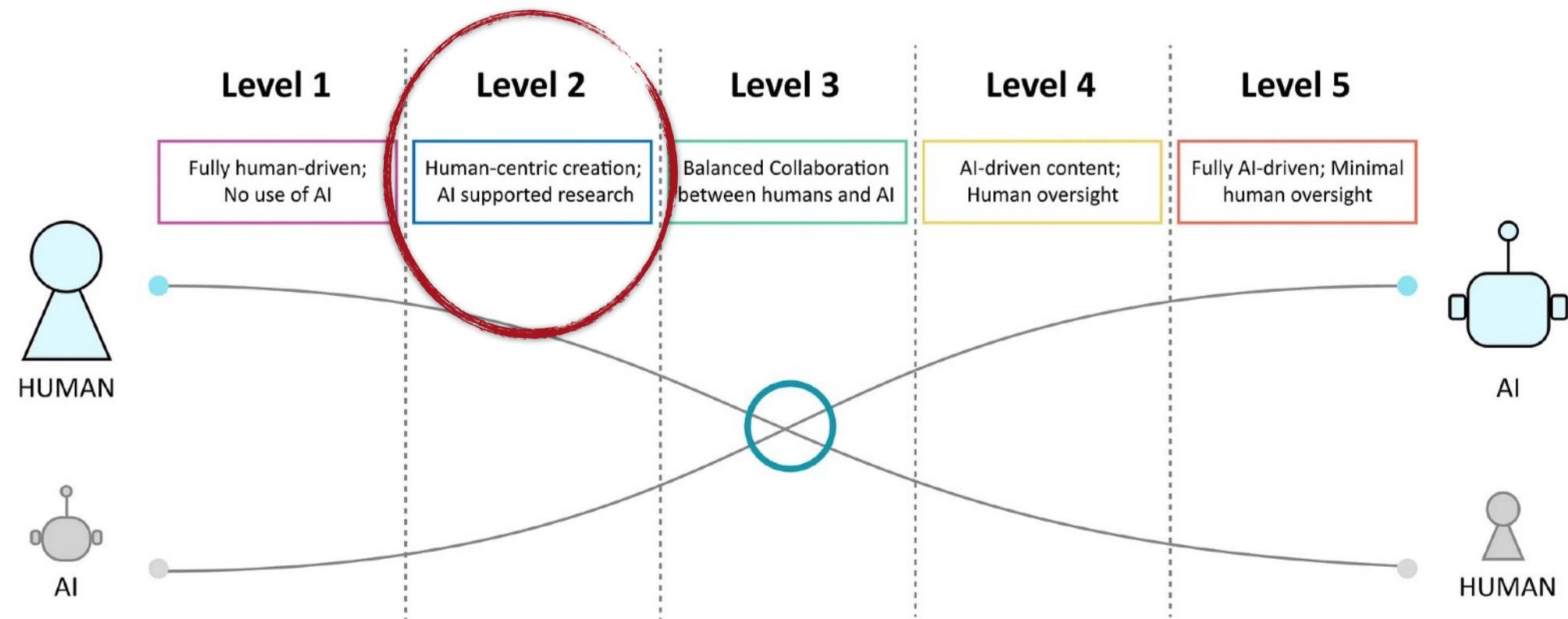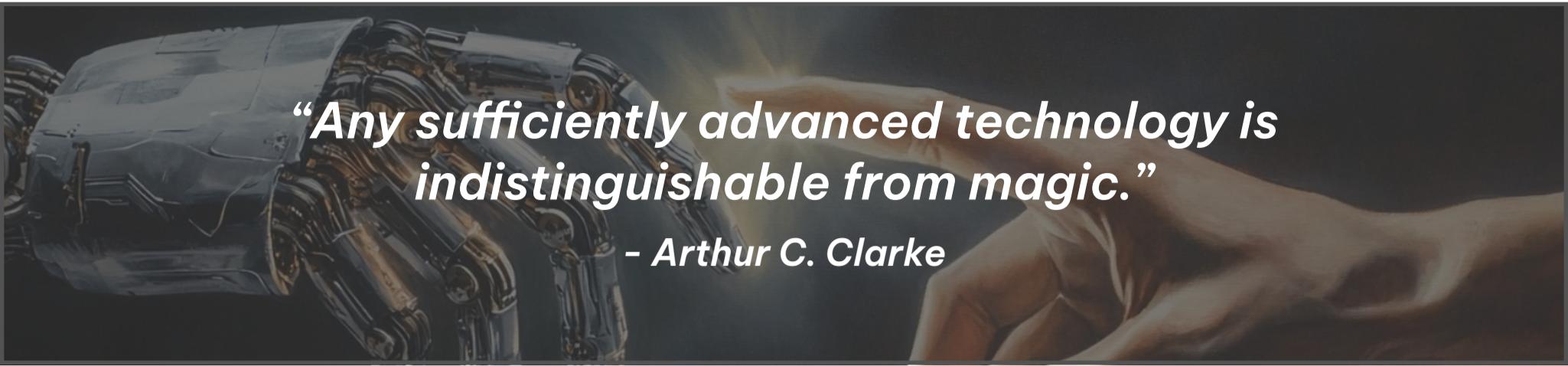
"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."
- Arthur C. Clarke

If AI is like magic, then prompts are the magic spells. The word *abracadabra* comes from ancient Hebrew, and literally translates as, 'I create what I speak.' 🪄

Think Like a Wizard and Work Like a Machine

Calling it 'prompting' is ironic, because when it's done well, it actually can take a really long time. If you quickly give AI a vague prompt without clear instructions or intention, your result will be tepid. Garbage in, garbage out. But if you study the art of prompting like a wizard, and develop your prompts into curated spellcraft, you can take full advantage of this miraculous new technology.

There are **six core use cases** for an AI Operator to learn. Each of these use cases is like a school of magic. Master even one, and your capability expands. Master all six, and you become a wizard, able to *create what you speak.* 🪄

All of six core use cases work best with a structured framework. I recommend the PILLARS framework. I'll share this acronym with you first, and then go through the 6 core use cases I recommend you try. **Your task in this primer** will be to translate the example prompts into PILLARS prompts, and compare the outputs for the simple prompts against the PILLARS prompts. This will show you first-hand what works well, and why.

This guide is designed for professionals who are curious about using AI productively — not data scientists or developers. If you've experimented with ChatGPT, Copilot, or Gemini, but aren't yet sure how to get consistent results, this primer will teach you the craft of prompting step-by-step. You'll learn how to turn vague requests into clear instructions that AI can execute reliably.

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7 PILLARS of a Good GenAI Prompt

PERSONA   INTENT   LAYOUT   LIMITS

AUDIENCE   REQUIREMENTS   STYLE

Effective prompts follow a framework.

A framework is simply a structure for thinking. Each PILLAR contributes to the container where the thinking takes place. AI works best with comprehensive instructions. By using PILLARS, you can get the best out of AI, every time.

You don't need all 7 of these PILLARS, but if you find yourself getting bland results from a prompt, try adding a few sentences that begin this way:

🎭 **Persona** - "Respond as a…"
🧭 **Intent** - "Your goal is to…"
🗂️ **Layout** - "Format the response as…."
🚧 **Limits** - "Avoid…"
👥 **Audience** - "This is intended for…."
✅ **Requirements** - "Ensure that you include…"
👗 **Style** - "Use a tone that is…"

Think of the PILLARS like the legs on a stool. 3 or 4 is all you need to make it sturdy. More is better, but it might be overkill. In this primer, you will try a one-sentence prompt in one tab, and a PILLARS prompt in another tab, to compare the results.

"No problem can be solved until it is reduced to some simple form. The changing of a vague difficulty into a specific concrete form is a very essential element in thinking."

- JP Morgan

Six Basic AI Use Cases

The purpose of The Prompting Primer is to give you practical experience with the following six basic AI use cases:

1. **Content Creation** - Writing, editing, repurposing
2. **Automation** - Repetitive tasks, templates, cleanup
3. **Research** - Synthesising, summarising, scanning
4. **Coding** - Scripts, debugging, explanation
5. **Data Analysis** - Pattern-finding, summarising inputs
6. **Ideation** - Brainstorming, frameworks, insight

On the following 6 pages, I'm going to give you an Example Prompt for each of these 6 Use Cases.

1. Copy/paste the prompt into an LLM (Large Language Model) such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or Claude, give it some data if needed, in one tab.
2. In a second tab, use a PILLARS prompt to do the same thing.
3. Compare the results.

> **"** Artificial intelligence and generative AI may be the most important technology of any lifetime.
>
> **"**
>
> MARC BENIOFF

That's it! That's all you have to do to complete this primer.

✦ **Easy Mode** - Copy/paste the Example Prompts and the PILLARS Prompts on pages 13-18

✦ **Intermediate** - Use the <u>PILLARS Prompt Bot</u> to rewrite the Example Prompts on pages 6-11

✦ **Beast Mode** - Use the PILLARS Framework to rewrite the Example Prompts on pages 6-11 by hand

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1. Content Creation

From Blank Canvas to Brilliant Page

Use This When:

You need to write faster, publish more, or turn fuzzy ideas into polished words.

Prompt Applications:

• Drafting blog posts, emails, scripts, captions
• Repurposing longform content into carousels or tweets
• Summarizing articles or turning outlines into ebooks

Example Prompt:

Write a LinkedIn post that captures the key idea from this transcript in my authentic voice. Use a relatable story arc and keep it under 300 words. PASTE

> " Our research says that 50% of the activities that we pay people to do can be automated by adapting currently demonstrated technologies. We think it'll take decades, but it will happen. So there is a role for business leaders to try to understand how to redeploy talent. It's important to think about mass redeployment instead of mass unemployment. That's the right problem to solve. "
>
> **MICHAEL CHIU**

Upload a Transcript of a recent conversation, or paste it where is says PASTE. Try it with this transcript if you need one.

Pro Tip:

Don't just prompt for content, prompt for content *strategy*. Ask things like: "What are 10 content ideas that would build trust with people facing X problem?" After this Example Prompt, continue the conversation.

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2. Automation

Turning 10 Clicks Into One

Use This When:

You're wasting time on repetitive digital tasks, and you want AI to reduce clicks, context-switching, or manual effort.

Prompt Applications:

• Summarizing long threads or PDFs

• Formatting emails or converting voice memos to text

• Creating task lists, SOPs, or structured data from messy inputs

Example Prompt:

Here's a messy Zoom transcript. Turn it into a professional meeting summary with three sections: (1) key points, (2) action items by person, and (3) unresolved questions or next steps.

Upload a Transcript of a recorded Zoom call, if you have one handy. Use this transcript if you need one.

> **"** If you aren't growing into the future, you are shrinking into the past. **"**
>
> **DAVID DROGA**

Pro Tip:

Pair your prompts with tools like Zapier, Notion, or spreadsheets to automate downstream actions. AI is the front-end, and you can design the backend.

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3. Research

From Information Overload to Insight

Use This When:

You need to synthesize complex topics, scan multiple sources, or accelerate your learning curve.

Prompt Applications:

• Generating topic overviews

• Extracting insights from long-form content

• Creating curated summaries with citations

Example Prompt:

Explain the 3 most important trends in INDUSTRY in the last 12 months. Include expert sources and predictions.

> **"**
> The key to success with AI is not just having the right data, but also asking the right questions.
> **"**
>
> **GINNI ROMETTY**

Copy/paste this prompt, then double-click on the the word INDUSTRY and replace it with the name of your industry, or one you wish to research.

Pro Tip:

Prompt like a journalist. Ask follow-up questions: "What are the top controversies in this space?" or "Whose voices are missing from this conversation?"

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4. Coding

Speak To Machines In Their Native Language

Use This When:

You want to write, debug, or explain code—even if you're not fluent in Python or JavaScript.

Prompt Applications:

• Generating functions or scripts

• Debugging code

• Explaining code line-by-line like you're 12

Example Prompt:

Write a Google Sheets script that highlights any new rows added and sends me a short summary email. Include clear setup instructions for a beginner.

> "AI is going to change everything, but it's going to be a partnership between humans and AI, not a competition."
>
> **MARK CUBAN**

If you are technologically inclined, try implementing this code. If not, just copy/paste and review the results.

Pro Tip:

AI coding isn't cheating—it's pair programming with infinite patience. We all have access to infinite skillsets now, if we know how to ask for what we want.

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5. Data Analysis

Turn Numbers into Narrative

Use This When:

You have data but need meaning. You want insights, patterns, or visuals.

Prompt Applications:

• Interpreting CSVs

• Suggesting visualizations

• Asking "What stands out?" or "What should I watch next?"

Example Prompt:

Analyze this spreadsheet of customer feedback. Identify recurring themes, list any new feature ideas, and summarise top concerns in 3–5 bullet points.

> "
> The best way to drive AI adoption is by marrying domain knowledge with foundational AI training. Generalist skills, creativity, and technical integration are more critical than deep specialization in today's AI-driven world.
> "
>
> **BHAVESH DAYALJI**

Upload a spreadsheet of user feedback, if you have one. If not, use this to test. Download the .xlsx file, or paste the link.

Pro Tip:

Don't just ask for answers—ask for questions. "What questions would a CEO ask when looking at this data?" In a world of infinite answers, the greatest leverage can be found in asking the right questions.

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6. Ideation

From Mental Muck to Strategic Clarity

Use This When:

You're stuck. You need fresh angles, provocative questions, or a burst of creativity.

Prompt Applications:

• Brainstorming offers, products, or content themes

• SWOT analysis, mind maps, campaign angles

• Playing devil's advocate or customer avatar

Example Prompt:

Evaluate this business offer. List up to 10 ways it could fail across marketing, delivery, pricing, and operations — and suggest one clear mitigation for each risk.

> " By the end of this decade, there will be machines that can carry out most human professions at least as well as a typical human. "
>
> **RAY KURZWEIL**

Paste a link to a product or service you sell after the prompt, or use this one to test.

Pro Tip:

The first prompt is the warm-up. Follow-up in an ongoing conversation, where you can discover new ideas. Treat AI as your thinking partner. Explore with curiosity. Brainstorm.

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Primer Practice 1: Copy/Paste

Copy/paste the prompts from the sections above into an LLM.

Primer Practice 2: Rewrite

Use the PILLARS Framework to rewrite the Example Prompts above by hand.
You can copy/paste these starter sentences:

Respond as if you are
Your goal is to
Format the response as
Avoid
This is intended for
Ensure that you include
Use a tone that is

This will teach you how to compose a comprehensive prompt. But, this is slow, manual work. Besides, *the best prompts are AI-generated prompts*.

You can use the <u>PILLARS Prompt Bot</u> to automagically rewrite your short, tepid prompts into robust, PILLARS Prompts.

Primer Practice 3: Compare

1. Copy/paste the Example Prompt from one of the upcoming pages into an LLM
2. In a new chat in the same LLM, copy/paste a corresponding PILLARS Prompt.
3. **Compare the results, and see if you can discern why the different prompts gave you different results.**

*The quality of your input defines the value of your output.*

1. Content Creation

Upload a Transcript of a recent conversation, and make content from it. Try it with this transcript if you need one.

Paste in Tab 1:

Write a LinkedIn post that captures the key idea from this transcript in my authentic voice. Use a relatable story arc and keep it under 300 words.

Paste in Tab 2:

You are a LinkedIn growth and engagement strategist. Write a LinkedIn post in my authentic voice based on this transcript, with the intent of maximizing reach and engagement by sharing a relatable story that sparks conversation and builds credibility. Structure the post with a clear layout that follows a story arc—opening hook, challenge or tension, key insight, and resolution—then close with a strong call to action designed to drive comments, shares, or connections. Keep within the limits of LinkedIn best practices: under 300 words, concise, punchy, and optimized for attention. Aim it at my target audience of professionals, peers, and potential clients who value actionable insights and engaging narratives. Requirements include capturing the transcript's essence, highlighting the main takeaway, and ensuring the post feels authentic and scroll-stopping. Style should be conversational, strategic, and story-driven, leaving readers eager to interact and continue the conversation.
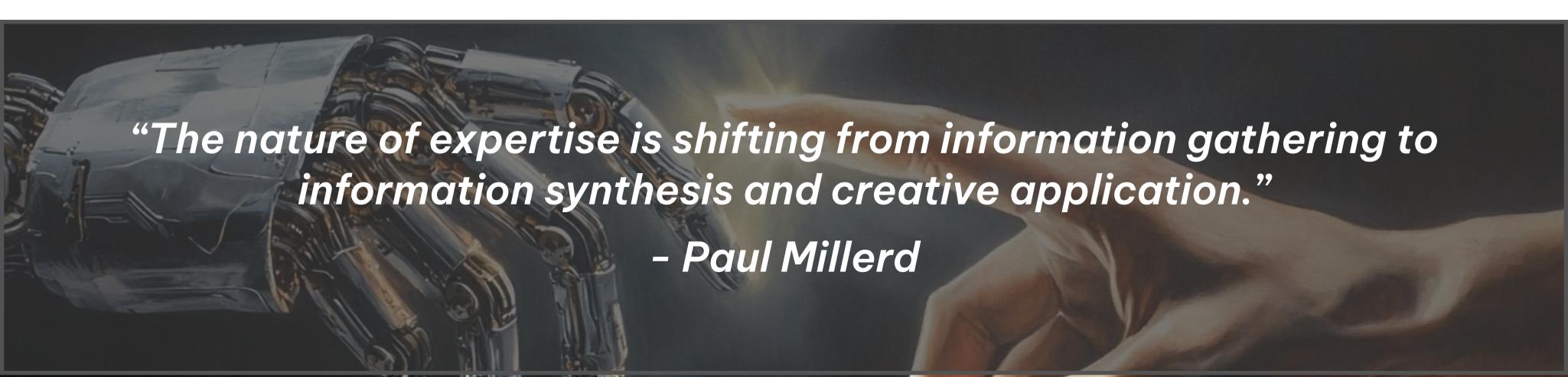
"The nature of expertise is shifting from information gathering to information synthesis and creative application."
*- Paul Millerd*

2. Automation

Upload a Transcript of a recorded Zoom call, if you have one, make content from it. Try it with this transcript if you need one.

Paste in Tab 1:

Here's a messy Zoom transcript. Turn it into a professional meeting summary with three sections: (1) key points, (2) action items by person, and (3) unresolved questions or next steps.

Paste in Tab 2:

You are a professional meeting notes assistant. Take this messy Zoom transcript and clean it by removing filler words and repetitions, while keeping the meaning intact. The intent is to turn the raw transcript into a clear, professional record of the meeting. Structure the output with three sections in this layout: (1) a concise cleaned transcript, (2) a bullet-point summary of key action items assigned to people or teams, and (3) a list of open loops, unresolved issues, or follow-ups that need attention. Apply limits by keeping the summary under 300 words and making the action items and open loops scannable. The audience is internal team members who need clarity and accountability. Requirements include identifying responsibilities, deadlines if mentioned, and making unresolved points obvious. Style should be professional, clear, and concise, so the document is immediately useful and easy to share.
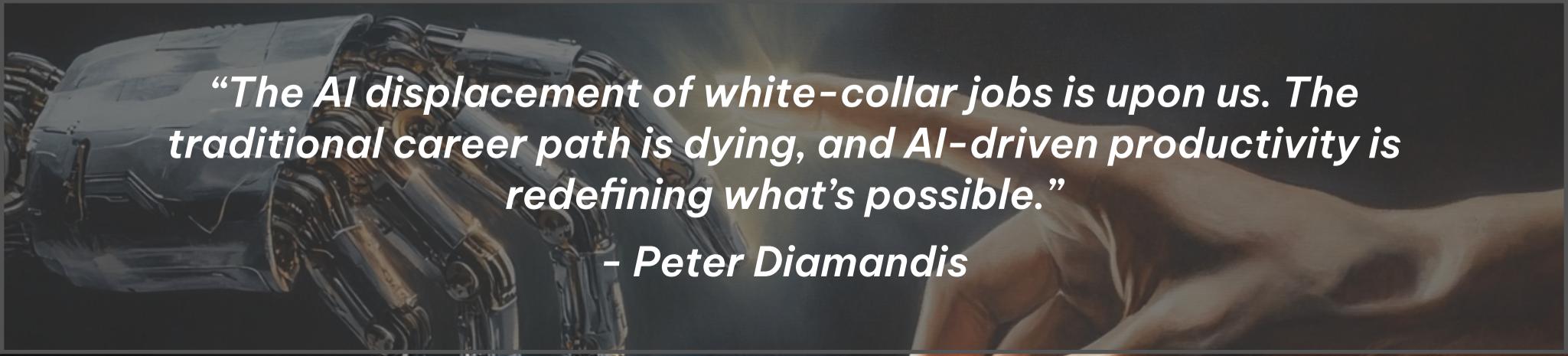
"The AI displacement of white-collar jobs is upon us. The traditional career path is dying, and AI-driven productivity is redefining what's possible."
- Peter Diamandis

3. Research

Copy/paste this prompt, then double-click on the the word INDUSTRY and replace it with the name of your industry, or one you wish to research.

Paste in Tab 1:

Explain the 3 most important trends in INDUSTRY in the last 12 months. Include expert sources and predictions.

Paste in Tab 2:

You are an industry research analyst. Explain the three most important trends in INDUSTRY from the last 12 months, with the intent of providing my audience with credible insights they can act on. Structure the output with a clear layout: (1) a short introduction framing the industry landscape, (2) three separate sections highlighting each trend with context, data, and implications, and (3) a conclusion that connects the trends and outlines what they mean for the near future. Apply limits by keeping the explanation concise (under 800 words), ensuring each trend is grounded in credible expert sources or reports, and avoiding unnecessary jargon. The audience is professionals and decision-makers in this field who want clarity on what matters now and what's coming next. Requirements include citing at least two expert sources, providing concrete examples, and including forward-looking predictions. Style should be authoritative, analytical, and engaging, balancing credibility with accessibility.
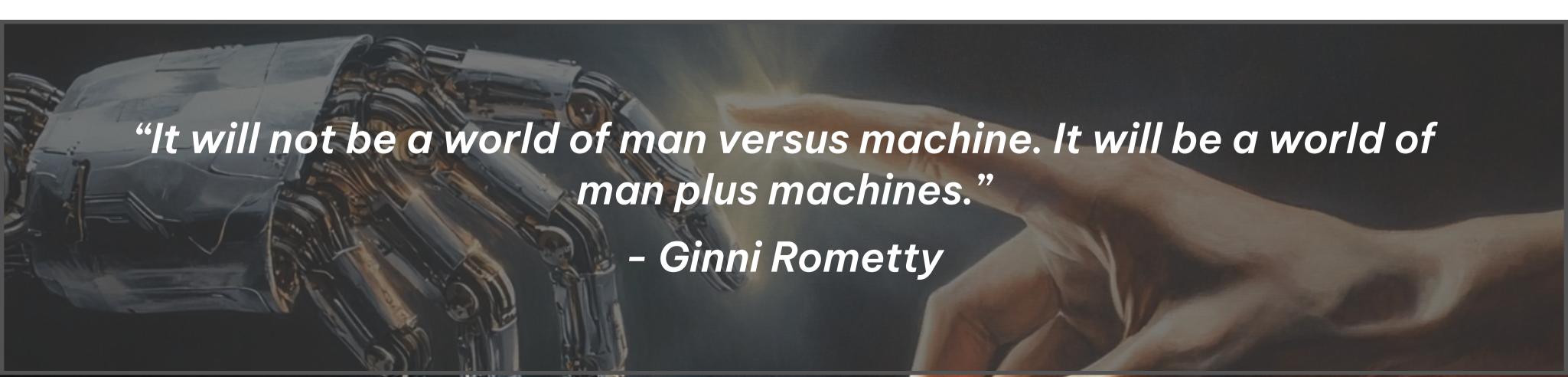
"It will not be a world of man versus machine. It will be a world of man plus machines."

- Ginni Rometty

4. Coding

If you are technologically inclined, try implementing this code. If not, just copy/paste and review the results.

Paste in Tab 1:

Write a Google Sheets script that highlights any new rows added and sends me a short summary email. Include clear setup instructions for a beginner.

Paste in Tab 2:

Act as a Google Apps Script developer and educator creating a beginner-friendly automation for Google Sheets. The goal is to write a script that automatically detects newly added rows in a spreadsheet, highlights those new rows (e.g. with a background color), and sends a short, readable email summarizing the new entries. The script should be designed for someone with no coding experience, so the explanation and instructions must be extremely clear, jargon-free, and step-by-step. Assume new rows are added manually or via a Google Form. The script should be efficient and not trigger on minor edits—only on actual row additions. The email should include the most important values from each new row (e.g., data from the first 2–3 columns), and the subject line should be concise and useful. Provide the complete script code, followed by a plain-English walkthrough of what the script does, how it works, and why each part is needed. Then give a detailed setup guide explaining how to paste the code into the Script Editor, how to authorize permissions, how to set up a trigger, and how to test. Mention any common beginner pitfalls and how to troubleshoot them. Use a calm, instructional tone and assume the reader is motivated but unfamiliar with technical tools. Where helpful, include comments in the script code itself to guide understanding. The final output should feel like a mini-tutorial someone can follow confidently without needing to Google anything extra.
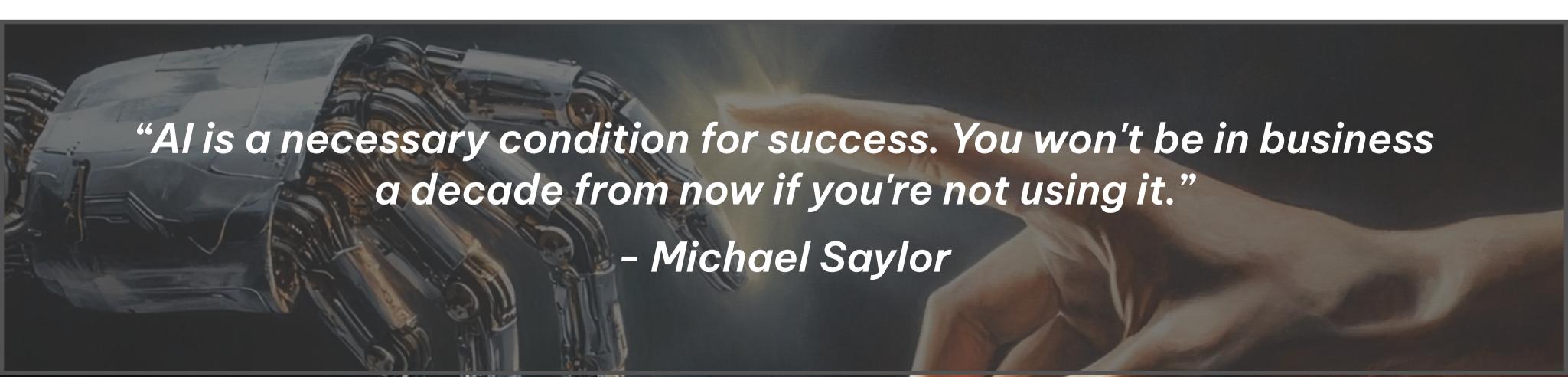
"AI is a necessary condition for success. You won't be in business a decade from now if you're not using it."
– Michael Saylor

5. Data Analysis

Upload a spreadsheet of user feedback, if you have one. If not, use this to test.

Paste in Tab 1:

Analyze this spreadsheet of customer feedback. Identify recurring themes, list any new feature ideas, and summarise top customer concerns in 3–5 bullet points.

Paste in Tab 2:

You are a product research analyst. Analyze this spreadsheet of user feedback with the intent of extracting clear, actionable insights for the product team. Structure the output in three parts: (1) a concise summary of the top recurring themes in the feedback, (2) a categorized list of explicit and implied feature requests linked to those themes, and (3) a short closing section with recommendations on what to prioritize. Apply limits by keeping the write-up under 600 words, using plain, scannable language with bullet points where possible, and avoiding unnecessary repetition. The audience is the product and design team, who need clarity and focus for roadmap decisions. Requirements include quantifying theme frequency if possible (e.g., "12 mentions of performance issues"), distinguishing between usability pain points and new feature asks, and calling out any high-impact or urgent items. Style should be professional, clear, and solution-oriented, so the team can move quickly from raw feedback to informed action.
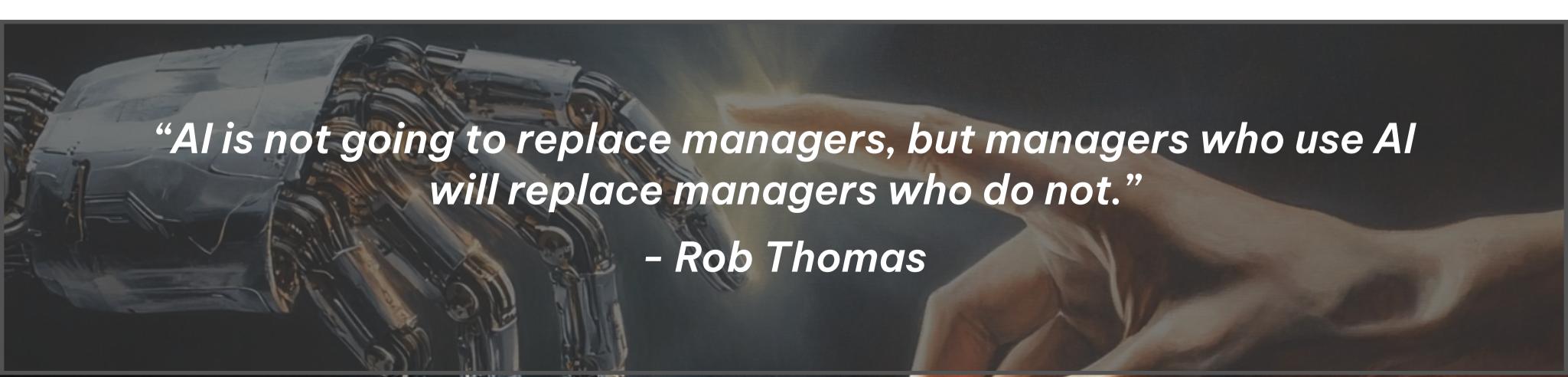
"AI is not going to replace managers, but managers who use AI will replace managers who do not."
*- Rob Thomas*

6. Ideation

Paste a link to a product or service you sell, or <u>use this one to test</u>.

Paste in Tab 1:

Evaluate this business offer. List up to 10 ways it could fail across marketing, delivery, pricing, and operations — and suggest one clear mitigation for each risk.

Paste in Tab 2:

You are a strategic risk consultant. Evaluate this offer with the intent of stress-testing it before launch by identifying potential pitfalls and solutions. Structure the output in a two-column table: the first column lists 10 distinct ways the offer could fail (spanning customer perception, pricing, delivery, competition, compliance, operations, and market dynamics), and the second column provides a practical mitigation or solution for each risk. Apply limits by keeping each risk/solution pair concise (1–2 sentences), ensuring the total response is scannable and under 600 words. The audience is an internal leadership or product team who need clear foresight to strengthen the offer. Requirements include covering at least one risk each in marketing, sales, product, and operations; ensuring solutions are specific and actionable; and highlighting any dependencies or trade-offs. Style should be analytical, direct, and solution-oriented, with plain language that makes the risks clear without being alarmist.
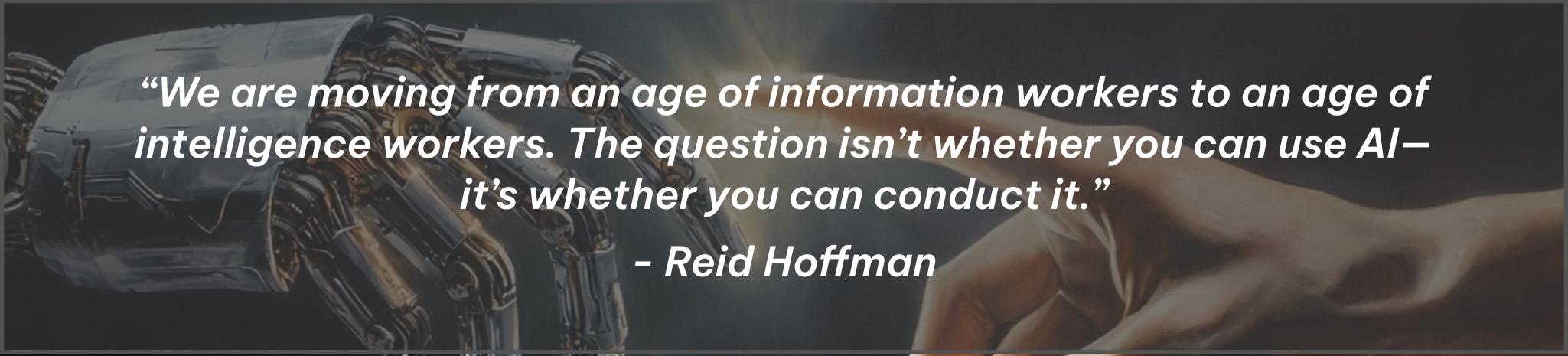
"We are moving from an age of information workers to an age of intelligence workers. The question isn't whether you can use AI— it's whether you can conduct it."
- Reid Hoffman

About The Author

My name is **Caelan Huntress**, and I help professionals develop Ai literacy so they can improve their productivity, strategy, and creativity. As a marketing automation strategist and the author of the book *Marketing Yourself*, my work has helped thousands of experts and entrepreneurs grow their impact, income, and influence.

I spent a decade as a digital nomad, traveling the world with my young family while running a digital marketing agency that focused on building smart systems for the growth and visibility of personality-based brands.

As a former circus acrobat and street performer, I bring high energy and stagecraft to every keynote, workshop, and presentation. My AI training sessions are fast-paced and hands-on, packed with prompts, games, and techniques that leave participants feeling empowered, confident, and prepared for the future of work.

I am the founder of the Ai Coaching Academy, a community for ambitious professionals who want a space to practice Ai with peers who take thinking seriously. My AI training workshops provide practical experience with using a variety of AI tools, using clear frameworks for building AI literacy, through templates, workflows, and copy-paste prompts.

Find out more at https://ai-coaching.academy/

"This was probably the best workshop that I have attended, and multiple people said the same thing. The shift in confidence and engagement across the team is exactly what we were hoping for."

Testimonial

Matt Harris

FOUNDATIONS

"I came into Caelan's workshop not knowing anything about custom GPTs or comparing prompts between different AI models. Now I can draft blog articles in my own voice, iterate across tools, and polish them in a fraction of the time. This training gave me the confidence to try new things, and a clear way of cutting through to what works. Caelan's workshop was memorable and absolutely worth it."

Testimonial

Andrew Pitts

7 PILLARS of a Good GenAI Prompt

PERSONA

INTENT

LAYOUT

LIMITS

AUDIENCE

REQUIREMENTS

STYLE

Bonus Round: Use the PILLARS Prompt Bot to Create New Prompts

https://chatgpt.com/g/g-67eb3f56e3f88191b504aac641690a52-pillars-prompt-bot

Copy/paste one of the prompts below into the PILLARS Prompt Bot, and then copy/paste the output into a new chat:

✦ I need a prompt that can turn meeting transcripts into action items

✦ I need a prompt that can repackage blogs into short-form video scripts

✦ I need a prompt that can automate your cold outreach emails

✦ I need a prompt that can brainstorm new revenue streams

✦ I need a prompt that can prevent hallucinations

✦ I need a prompt that can uncover hidden customer insights in minutes

Here's the big secret about being a proficient AI Operator:

The best prompts are AI-Generated prompts.

Good luck out there! Let me know how you grow.

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Connect with me and tell me a story: https://www.linkedin.com/in/caelanhuntress/