

DR. OZTURK EDITIONS · NOTES ON WORKING WITH AI

Make the Machine Work for You

Simple, no-jargon ways to save real time on the everyday.

EVERYDAY LIFE & PRODUCTIVITY EDITION

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You don't need to understand AI to get hours back from it.

Most guides to AI are written for people who want to build the thing. This one is for people who just want their evening back — who have an email they've been dreading for three days, a trip to plan, a confusing letter from the insurance company, and not enough hours. You do not need to know how any of it works under the hood. You need to know what to type and what to trust.

So there's no jargon in here, and nothing to set up beyond opening a free chatbot in your browser. Each chapter takes one ordinary situation — writing something hard, making a plan, understanding something confusing, getting an answer you can rely on — and shows the before and the after. The promise isn't magic. In a careful study, people doing everyday writing finished about 40% faster with this kind of tool, and their work came out better, not worse. That's the realistic prize: not a robot that runs your life, but a fast assistant that clears the busywork so you can spend your time on what actually needs you.

Everything here comes from my notes at drayseozturk.org, and where I give you a number, I've linked where it came from. Read it over a coffee. Then try one thing on your real to-do list today.

Ayse

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Five everyday wins

Each chapter ends with three things you can try today.

01 **Never start from a blank page again.**

The dreaded email, the tricky message, the letter you keep putting off — AI gives you a solid draft in seconds. You just make it sound like you.

02 **Turn the mess in your head into a plan.**

A trip, a week of dinners, a birthday, a move. Dump everything out and let AI sort it into an order you can actually follow.

03 **Your patient explainer for anything.**

Confusing insurance letter? New hobby? Kid's homework topic you've forgotten? Ask to have it explained simply — then even more simply.

04 **It sounds sure even when it's wrong.**

AI can state a wrong fact with total confidence. The trick is knowing what to trust it for, and what to always double-check yourself.

05 **Ask it like a person, not a search box.**

A few extra words about what you actually want turns a generic answer into a genuinely useful one. Plus: what to keep private.

01

CHAPTER ONE

Never start from a blank page again.

The hardest part of any email, message, or letter is the first sentence. That's the part AI is genuinely great at handing you.

You know the email. The one to the contractor who did shoddy work, or the polite-but-firm note to the school, or the message turning down an invitation without sounding cold. It's been sitting in your head for days, because starting is the hard part. Staring at a blank screen is where the time disappears.

Here is the shift: you no longer have to start. Open a chatbot and tell it, in plain words, what you need — "Write a polite but firm email to my landlord. The heater has been broken for two weeks, I've asked twice, and I want it fixed this week." Ten seconds later you have a complete, reasonable draft. It won't be perfect, and it isn't meant to be. It's a starting point that gets you past the worst part.

It gets you **most of the way** in seconds. Making it sound like you takes a minute.

Then you do the part that's actually yours: change a line so it sounds like you, soften or sharpen the tone, add the detail only you know. This works for almost any everyday writing — the thank-you note, the tricky text to a relative, the cover note for a job, the complaint to the airline, the birthday toast. The blank page was never the real work. Getting it right was. Now you can spend your minutes there instead of on the dread.

40%

less time spent on everyday writing tasks in a careful study of working professionals — and the writing came out better, too.

Noy & Zhang, *Science*, 2023

Good for: emails, complaint letters, thank-you notes, awkward messages, invitations and declines, first drafts of anything.

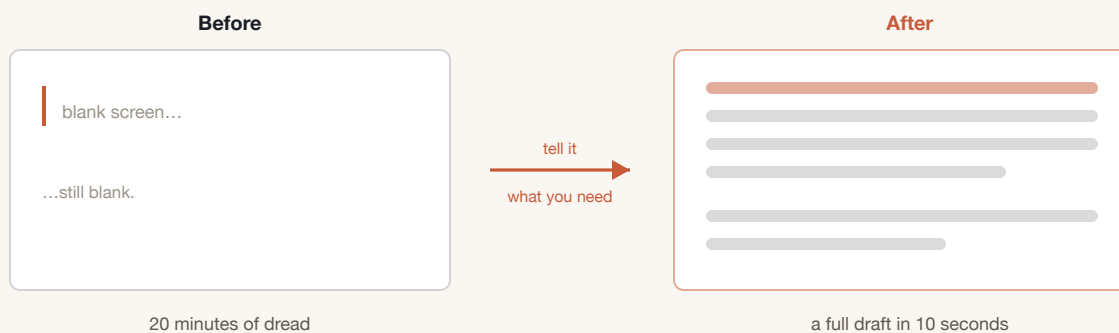
The two-minute habit

The whole move is just two steps. First, tell it what you want in a sentence or two, like you'd ask a helpful friend — who it's for, what it's about, and the tone you're going for. Second, read what comes back and make it yours. If the draft is too formal, say "make it warmer." Too long, say "cut it in half." Wrong angle, tell it what's off and ask again. You can go back and forth as many times as you like; it never gets impatient.

One honest note: read every word before you send it. AI writes confidently and occasionally adds a detail that isn't true or a line that doesn't fit. You are still the one signing it, so the final read is yours — but starting from a draft beats starting from nothing every single time.

Quick fixes to ask for:

"warmer," "shorter," "more formal," "less pushy," "in my voice," "add a friendly opening line."



BEFORE & AFTER. The work was never typing the first draft — it was getting the message right. Start from a draft and you skip straight to the part that matters, in a fraction of the time.

TRY THIS TODAY

- 1 Pick the message you've been avoiding.** Tell a chatbot who it's for, what it's about, and the tone — then let it draft.
- 2 Make it yours in one pass.** Ask for "warmer," "shorter," or "in my voice" until it sounds right, then add the detail only you know.
- 3 Read every word before you send.** You're signing it — give it the final once-over to catch anything off.

CHAPTER TWO

02

Turn the mess in your head into a plan.

You already know everything that needs to happen. AI is very good at taking that jumble and putting it in an order you can actually follow.

Planning is rarely hard because you don't know what to do. It's hard because it's all swirling in your head at once — the trip with the flights and the dog-sitter and the time off, the week of dinners with one picky eater and a soccer practice, the move with the address changes and the boxes and the utilities. Holding it all at once is the exhausting part.

This is where AI shines, because turning a messy pile into a clear order is exactly its strength. The move is simple: dump everything out, unsorted, and ask it to organize. "We're driving from Ohio to Florida with two kids and a dog over three days. Here's everything I'm worried about: [list it all, messy]. Turn this into a day-by-day plan with a packing list and what to book first." What comes back is structured, complete, and — crucially — something you can react to instead of inventing from scratch.

Dump out the mess. Let it **sort** the order.

Then you adjust. "We're vegetarian." "Add a stop at my mom's." "The budget is tight." It reshuffles instantly. The same trick plans a birthday party, a week of meals around what's in your fridge, a garage clear-out, a study schedule, a holiday dinner for twelve. You're not handing over the decisions — you're handing over the sorting, and keeping the decisions.

Great for: trips, weekly meals, parties and events, moving house, big to-do lists, budgets, study or workout schedules.

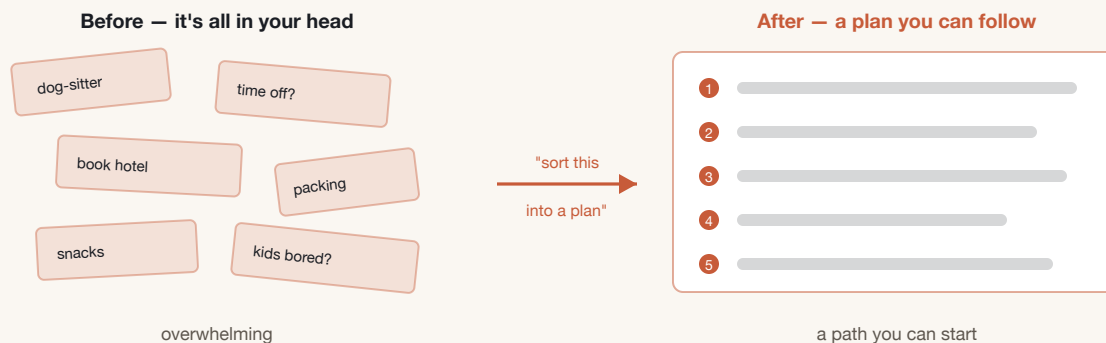
The magic words: "Turn this into a step-by-step plan."
"What should I do first?"
"Make me a checklist."

Tell it your real constraints

The plans get dramatically better when you tell it the true-life details up front: how much time you have, the budget, who's involved, what you can't eat, what you're dreading. A plan that knows you have ninety minutes and a tight budget is useful; a generic one isn't. Don't be shy about the messy specifics — the more real-world limits it knows, the more the plan actually fits your life.

And keep it as a back-and-forth. The first plan is a draft, like everything else here. Push on it — "this is too packed," "I forgot we have the dentist Tuesday" — and watch it adjust. The goal isn't a perfect plan on the first try; it's getting out of the swirl and onto a path you can start walking.

Tell it the limits. Time, money, people, dislikes, the thing you're worried about. Real constraints make a plan you can actually use.



BEFORE & AFTER. You bring everything that's rattling around your head; it hands back an ordered plan you can react to and adjust. The hard part — holding it all at once — is the part you give away.

TRY THIS TODAY

- 1 Brain-dump one thing you're putting off planning.** Type it all out, messy, and end with "turn this into a step-by-step plan."
- 2 Add your real limits.** Time, budget, people, dislikes — then ask it to redo the plan to fit them.
- 3 Push back until it fits.** Tell it what's wrong and let it reshuffle. The first plan is a draft, not the answer.

CHAPTER THREE

03

Your patient explainer for anything.

The confusing letter, the unfamiliar word, the thing everyone else seems to understand. You can ask as many times as you need — it never sighs.

Some things are confusing on purpose, and some are just written badly. The insurance letter full of clauses. The medical result with words you've never seen. The lease, the tax form, the error message, the recipe term, the thing your teenager is studying that you last saw thirty years ago. Normally you'd squint, search a little, feel a bit dumb, and give up.

Instead, paste it in and say: "Explain this to me in plain English." When the answer still has a word you don't know, you do the thing you could never do with a person without feeling silly — you say "explain it simpler," and then "simpler still," and then "like I'm twelve." It will keep going, patiently, until it clicks. You can ask it to define one word, give you an example, or compare it to something you already understand.

Ask it to explain like you're twelve. Then ask again, simpler.

This quietly removes a lot of the small helplessness of modern life. What does this clause actually mean for me? What are these two options really trading off? What questions should I ask my doctor, my mechanic, my accountant? It turns "I don't understand this and I'm embarrassed to ask" into a thirty-second conversation with something that has infinite patience.

Try it on: insurance and medical letters, contracts and leases, tax terms, error messages, recipes, the news, your kid's homework topic.

It sticks better when you try to explain it back. Reading the answer is fine; saying it in your own words is how it lands.

One careful exception

Use it to *understand* freely, but be careful about acting on the high-stakes stuff without a real human. For anything about your health, your money, or the law, AI is a wonderful way to learn the vocabulary and the questions to ask — and a poor substitute for a doctor, an accountant, or a lawyer who knows your actual situation and is accountable for the advice. Let it prepare you for the conversation. Don't let it replace the conversation when the stakes are real. (More on this in the next chapter.)

With that one guardrail, treat it as the most patient teacher you've ever had. There's no such thing as a question too basic, and no one is keeping score.

Understand, don't

prescribe. Great for learning the terms and the questions. For health, money, or legal decisions, confirm with a real professional.



Keep asking "simpler" as many times as you need. It never runs out of patience.

THE SIMPLER-STILL LADDER. You don't have to understand it the first time. Each "explain it simpler" strips away another layer of jargon until it finally makes plain sense — something you'd feel awkward asking a real person five times.

TRY THIS TODAY

- 1** **Paste in something confusing** — a letter, a term, a form — and ask for it "in plain English."
- 2** **Keep saying "simpler."** Don't settle for an answer you half-understand; ask again until it genuinely clicks.
- 3** **For health, money, or legal matters,** use it to learn the terms and the questions — then take those to a real professional.

04

It sounds sure even when it's wrong.

AI will give you a wrong fact in the same calm, confident voice it uses for a right one. Knowing what to trust it for is the whole skill.

Here's the one thing that trips people up, so it's worth saying plainly: AI doesn't actually know facts the way a reference book does. It's extremely good at producing text that sounds right — which is not the same as text that is right. So it will, now and then, invent a fact, a date, a quote, or a source, and deliver it in the exact same confident tone as everything true it says. There's no nervous wobble to warn you.

This isn't rare, either. Even the companies that make these tools publish their own tests showing the latest versions get a meaningful share of factual questions wrong. That doesn't make AI useless — it makes it a confident assistant you double-check, not an oracle you obey. The skill is simply knowing which jobs are safe to trust and which ones always need a second look.

Trust it for **words**. Check it for facts, numbers, names, and anything about your health or money.

The safe zone is anything where you're the judge of whether it's good: drafting, rewording, brainstorming, summarizing something you'll read anyway, planning, explaining ideas. The check-it-first zone is anything where being wrong has a cost: medical or legal or money advice, specific facts and statistics, names and dates, quotes, news, and "is this safe to mix/eat/take." For those, treat AI as a starting point and confirm with a real source or a real person.

often

Even the makers' own tests show the newest AI gets a real share of factual questions wrong — and states them just as confidently as the right ones.

OpenAI's own results, 2025

The mindset: a brilliant, fast assistant who occasionally makes things up with a straight face. Useful — never blindly trusted.

A ten-second safety habit

You don't need to fact-check everything — that would defeat the purpose. You need one quick instinct: before you act on something that matters, ask "what happens if this is wrong?" If the answer is "nothing much" — a reworded email, a brainstorm, a draft — send it. If the answer is "I'd take the wrong medicine, miss a deadline, lose money, or repeat a false fact in public" — take ten seconds to confirm it against a trustworthy source before you rely on it. A made-up citation or a wrong dosage falls apart the moment you check; the check is cheap and the mistake is not.

One more helpful trick: you can ask it to tell you when it's unsure, or to give you its sources so you can look them up. It won't be perfect, but inviting it to admit doubt beats taking every answer at face value.

The one question. "What happens if this is wrong?"
Nothing much → use it.
Something costly → check it first.



Safe to trust — you're the judge

- Writing & rewording (email, posts)
- Brainstorming & ideas
- Making plans & checklists
- Explaining concepts to you
- Summarizing something you'll read



Always double-check first

- Health, medicine & safety
- Money, legal & tax advice
- Specific facts, stats & dates
- Names, quotes & sources
- News & "is this true right now?"

WHAT TO TRUST, WHAT TO CHECK. The left column is where AI saves you time with little risk — you can see if it's good. The right column is where a confident wrong answer can actually cost you, so confirm it with a real source or person first.

TRY THIS TODAY

- 1 Ask "what happens if this is wrong?"** before you act on any AI answer. Let the stakes decide whether you check it.
- 2 Confirm the costly stuff.** Health, money, legal, names, numbers, dates — verify against a real source before you rely on it.
- 3 Invite it to doubt.** Ask it to flag when it's unsure or to give sources you can look up. It's not perfect, but it helps.

05

Ask it like a person, not a search box.

The single biggest upgrade to your results isn't a trick. It's telling it what you actually want, the way you'd tell a helpful person.

Most people type into a chatbot the way they type into a search engine — a few clipped keywords — and then feel let down by the generic answer they get back. But this isn't a search box. It responds to detail the way a capable assistant would: the more you tell it about what you want, the better it does.

Compare the two. "Dinner ideas" gets you a bland list anyone could've guessed. "Give me three easy dinners for a family of four, one kid won't eat vegetables, I have about 30 minutes and chicken and pasta in the house" gets you something you can actually cook tonight. Same tool, wildly different result — and the only difference is that you told it the truth about your situation. The trick that isn't a trick: include who it's for, what you want, and any limits that matter.

***A few honest details turn a
generic answer into a useful
one.***

And remember it's a conversation, not a vending machine. If the first answer isn't right, you don't start over — you just say what's off. "Too fancy." "We don't eat pork." "Make it cheaper." It adjusts every time. The people who get the most out of AI aren't the ones who know secret commands; they're the ones who keep talking to it like a person until it gets there.

Include three things: who it's for, what you actually want, and any limits (time, budget, taste, tone). That's 90% of getting a great answer.

Worried about energy use?

One question uses roughly the power your oven draws in a second or two — small per use. The bigger footprint is in building these systems.

Reported figures, 2025

Keep the private things private

One last habit, and it's about safety, not skill. Free chatbots may use what you type to help improve their systems, and your chats aren't guaranteed to be private. So treat the chat box like a postcard, not a diary. It's fine for the dinner plan and the landlord email. It's not the place for passwords, full bank or card numbers, your social security number, or anyone's private medical details. When you want help with something sensitive, take out the identifying bits first — use "my friend" instead of a name, round the numbers, drop the account details. You'll get the same useful help without handing over what you'd rather keep to yourself.

That's the whole edition, really. Start from a draft, not a blank page. Hand over the sorting, keep the deciding. Ask until you understand. Check what matters. And talk to it like a person. None of it requires knowing how it works — just knowing how to put it to work for you.

Postcard, not diary. No passwords, full account numbers, or private medical details. Strip the identifying bits and you still get the help.



BEFORE & AFTER. Same tool, same question, opposite usefulness. The only change is a few honest details about your real situation — who it's for, what you want, and the limits that matter to you.

TRY THIS TODAY

- 1 Add three details to your next request** — who it's for, what you want, and your limits. Watch the answer get sharper.
- 2 Don't start over — steer.** If it's not right, say what's off ("too fancy," "cheaper," "shorter") and let it adjust.
- 3 Keep it a postcard.** No passwords, account numbers, or private details — strip the identifying bits and ask anyway.

Where to take this next

Four pages on drayseozturk.org, picked for everyday life — each with why it's worth a click.

AI Tools

drayseozturk.org/resources-ai-tools

Not sure which chatbot to open? A plain guide to what the main free tools do well, so you can pick one and start without the overwhelm.

Prompting & Asking Better

drayseozturk.org/resources-prompting

More of Chapter 5 — simple, copy-able ways to ask so you get useful answers the first time, with examples for everyday situations.

AI Dictionary

drayseozturk.org/ai-dictionary

Whenever a word trips you up, a plain-English glossary that explains it without assuming you know anything. No jargon, by design.

AI Notes

drayseozturk.org/ai-notes

The running notes behind this edition — for when you're curious about a claim here or want to keep up as the tools keep changing.

SOURCES CITED IN THIS EDITION

Noy & Zhang, [Experimental evidence on the productivity effects of generative AI](#) (Science, 2023) · OpenAI, [o3 and o4-mini System Card](#) (2025) · Data Center Dynamics, [on the energy and water used per AI query](#) (2025). Energy figures are the companies' own and don't count the larger footprint of training; the accuracy figures are point-in-time and shift with each new version of these tools.

DR. OZTURK EDITIONS

Short, friendly field guides to working with AI.

Each edition takes the same body of notes and rebuilds it for one audience — everyday life, professionals, educators, students, beginners, and advanced practitioners — so you read only what changes your day. Clear, concrete, jargon-free, and honest about what to trust. Made to be finished over a coffee and used the same afternoon.

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A FREE AI-LITERACY HUB BY DR. AYSE OZTURK · DARLA MOORE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS