

Think like the director.

The mental habits that keep people in their crew role with AI, and the shifts that move them into the director's chair.



A film crew is full of specialists. The camera operator thinks in shots, the editor thinks in cuts and craft services keeps everyone fed. Each one is excellent, and each one sees part of the film. **Only the director is responsible for the whole thing.**

Work is organised the same way, so most people use AI through the lens of their own role. A marketer asks it for posts; an analyst asks it for formulas. AI is the first tool that can help at every stage of a project. To use it well, step back from your crew role and take the director's view.

01 Crew roles and what they miss

 CREW Camera operator <i>"I do the shots."</i> HOW THEY USE AI Asks AI for help with one task in their own lane. WHAT THEY MISS How the shot serves the story.	 CREW Editor <i>"I fix what I am given."</i> HOW THEY USE AI Uses AI to polish finished work, never to plan it. WHAT THEY MISS The chance to shape the work before it starts.	 CREW Craft services <i>"I keep things running."</i> HOW THEY USE AI Uses AI for routine chores and nothing more. WHAT THEY MISS Where their know-how could lift the whole production.	 THE GOAL Director <i>"What does the whole film need?"</i> HOW THEY USE AI Briefs AI across every stage: plan, draft, review and delivery. WHAT THEY MISS Very little. They see the whole production.
--	---	--	---

02 Six mental blocks, and the shift for each

These are well documented patterns in how people think. Naming them makes them easier to catch in yourself.

01 The ELIZA effect We treat fluent machines as if they understand us, so we leave out the context they need. SHIFT Brief AI like a capable stranger.	02 Functional fixedness We see a tool only for the job we first used it for, and miss its other uses. SHIFT Ask what else it could do on this project.
03 Role identity We define ourselves by our job title and stay inside it, even when the goal needs more. SHIFT Own the outcome, not only your task.	04 The curse of knowledge Once we know something, it is hard to imagine not knowing it, so we assume others share our context. SHIFT Write the context down before you ask.
05 Automation bias We trust confident, polished output more than we should, and stop checking. SHIFT Approve the final cut yourself.	06 Fixed mindset One weak result becomes proof that "AI is not for me" or "I am not technical". SHIFT Treat it as a skill. Call for another take.

03

The mindset checklist

Read across each row. The left column is the crew habit. The right column is the director's version. Tick the ones you already do, and pick one to practise this week.

CREW MINDSET		DIRECTOR MINDSET
That's not my department.	→	☐ What does the whole project need?
I use AI for my one task.	→	☐ Where else in this project could AI help?
It should know what I mean.	→	☐ What would a capable stranger need to know?
I need the perfect prompt.	→	☐ I need a clear brief and a few good notes.
The first answer is the answer.	→	☐ Take one is a draft. What notes do I give?
It said it can't, so it can't.	→	☐ What other route could get us there?
It sounds confident, so it's right.	→	☐ Which facts do I check before this goes out?
I'm not technical enough for this.	→	☐ A director doesn't need to run the camera.
AI will make my craft irrelevant.	→	☐ My craft tells me when the output is good.
I'll wait until someone shows me how.	→	☐ I'll set the vision for my part of the work.
I'll try it when I have more time.	→	☐ I'll try it on today's task.
Success is doing my part well.	→	☐ Success is the whole production landing.

04

Where are you today

COUNT
YOUR TICKS

0 TO 4

Crew member

You use AI inside your lane. Pick one row and try it on today's task.

5 TO 8

Assistant director

You brief well. Next, widen the brief to the stages before and after your part.

9 TO 12

Director

You lead the work. Now teach it: your team will follow the way you brief.

You were hired for a role

Your role gave you the craft. That craft is exactly what lets you judge whether AI output is good.

AI works across roles

It can plan, draft, design, check and summarise. Holding one job title does not limit how you direct it.

This is your chance

Every project you touch is a production you can direct. Start with one, and build from there.