

The 4D Framework

Four habits for working with AI in ways that are effective, efficient, ethical and safe.

The whole thing in one line: hand over the task, own the check.

The four Ds

1. Delegation

Set goals; decide whether, when and how to use AI.

- Decide what is yours to keep, and what AI can take.
- Only hand over what you can describe and check.

2. Description

Say what you actually want, and what good looks like.

- Give the goal, the context, the format.
- Add a few sentences: scope, audience, tone. Vague in, vague out.

3. Discernment

Judge the usefulness of what comes back.

- AI is fast and sometimes confidently wrong. Read it like a sharp editor.
- Tell it why something works or does not. It learns your taste.

4. Diligence

Take responsibility for what you do with AI, and how.

- You sign the work, not the AI. Verify the facts that matter.
- Be honest about what AI made. Keep note of what you rejected.

How to use them: the two loops

Inner loop · Description and Discernment

Describe → the loop ← Judge

Describe, read what comes back, describe again, sharper this time.

Outer loop · Delegation and Diligence

Hand off → the outer ring ← Validate

Hand off the task, then stand behind the result.

The inner loop comes from Anthropic's applied courses. The outer ring is my own extension of the framework.

Three modes of AI interaction

Automation. AI does one job you spelled out. You ask, it executes.

Augmentation. You and AI think together, back and forth, as partners.

Agency. You set AI up once to run a whole job on its own, again and again.

Hand over the task, own the check.