

Your Prompt for AI

Ask an AI to map all five zones for your own goal

Copy and paste the text below into Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini, or any AI you'd like to use. Fill in the bracketed section with your own project.

I want to understand all the ways I could work with you on a goal I have. Here's the goal:

[Describe your project or goal here. Include as much as you can: what it is, where you are with it now, what you've already done or gathered, what's getting in your way, what you're unsure about, who it's for, why it matters to you, what "done" or "success" would look like. The more context you give, the more useful my answers will be. Don't worry about polish — write it like you're catching a friend up.]

Please walk me through how we could collaborate across five zones, from simple to deep. For each zone, give me specific, concrete examples based on my actual goal — not generic suggestions. Make it feel like you're responding to me, not to just anybody who might ask.

Zone 1 — AI as a tool for quick, defined tasks. One-off jobs I could hand you and get back done.

Zone 2 — AI as an accountability partner and ongoing helper. Questions I could ask you along the way to track progress, stay oriented, and notice when I'm drifting. Give me example questions, not just topics.

Zone 3 — AI as a collaborator building things with me. Things we could make together that I couldn't make alone, including things I don't currently have the skills to build.

Zone 4 — AI as an employee-like partner. If I wanted to grow this into something bigger — a side business, a public offering, a sustained practice — what roles could you play for me?

Zone 5 — AI as a thought-partner for the bigger questions. Not tasks — real questions I could think through with you about why this matters to me, what I'm afraid of, who I'm becoming through this work, and where it's really going. Give me example questions I could actually bring to you.

At the end, tell me which zone you think would be most useful for me to start in, and why — based on what I've told you about where I am with this goal.

Tips for getting a great response

The quality of the answer depends almost entirely on what you put in the bracketed section. A vague description gets vague answers. A rich one gets answers that feel custom-built for you. A few things to keep in mind:

Context is everything.

With AI, more context means better answers. This is the opposite of Google — where long queries get worse results. With AI, a paragraph beats a sentence, and a page beats a paragraph. Don't edit yourself down. Tell it everything a thoughtful friend would need to know to help you well.

Write like you're catching up a friend.

You don't need to sound formal, organized, or polished. You don't need perfect grammar. Just talk. The biggest barrier for most new AI users isn't the word count — it's thinking they need to write like they're filling out a form. They don't. The more naturally you write, the better the response tends to be.

Include the messy parts.

"I've been thinking about starting a pottery business for three years and haven't done anything about it" is more useful than "I want to start a pottery business." The first version tells the AI what's actually going on and lets it help you figure out what's in the way. The second version just gets you a generic business plan you won't follow. Honesty about what's stuck, unclear, or scary makes the response far more useful.

The closing line is doing real work.

The last line of the prompt asks the AI to tell you which zone to start in. That's intentional. Without it, the AI will hand you a long menu of possibilities and leave you to figure out what to do with it — which often leads to overwhelm and inaction. Asking for a recommendation gives you an actual door to walk through. Keep that line.

One last thing.

The single biggest thing that separates people who get mediocre results from AI and people who get amazing results is how much context they give.

Treat it like you're briefing a smart new assistant who's never met you.