Your Turn: The Author's Command Brief

Working with your answers

This is where you take your seven answers to your Book Project. There's a line to paste in first, and then two questions for each answer.

For authors who have not yet published, there is a parallel set of questions to use, beginning on Page 7, with the Day or Two Later sequence on Page 12.

The consultant line

Paste this once, at the top of a new chat inside your Book Project. It asks the AI to answer as someone who knows what happens to serious non-fiction books after publication, and it asks for honesty. It also asks the AI to keep working within your Project Instructions.

'For this exercise, I'd like you to act as a world-class consultant in the promotion of books after publication, someone who works with serious non-fiction authors. Be direct and specific. Don't flatter me. If you're unsure, say so. My Project Instructions still apply. Where promotion advice would conflict with them, for example by broadening my ideas for wider appeal, don't resolve it quietly. Name the conflict, and let me decide.'

How to use the questions

Take your answers one at a time. Put your answer where the brackets are in the first question, send it, and read what comes back properly before you go on. Then ask the second question, which goes further into whatever the first turned up.

The AI may sound very sure of itself. Treat what it says as a strong opinion to test against what you know, not a verdict.

Sometimes it will tell you that a piece of advice conflicts with your Project Instructions. That isn't a fault. Promotion often means making an idea easier to grasp, and your Authorial Shell exists to stop your book being simplified. When you see the conflict named, you're looking at a real choice about your book. Make it yourself.

1. Where the Work Now Stands

Question 1

'Here is where my book currently stands, as plainly as I can describe it: [paste your answer]. As that consultant, read this only as information, not as a problem to fix. What does the pattern of who is engaging with it, and where, tell you that I might not see clearly from inside it?'

Question 2

'Given that pattern, where does the book's real energy already exist right now, the interest that's genuinely there rather than the interest I might wish for? What would it mean to build on that, rather than start somewhere else?'

2. What Has Become Clear Since Publication

Question 1

'Here is what I now understand about my book that wasn't visible to me when I wrote it: [paste your answer]. As that consultant, tell me which of these discoveries is a real strength I'm not yet using, and which is a misreading I should get ahead of before it spreads.'

Question 2

'If the strongest of these discoveries became the centre of how I talk about the book for the next twelve months, what would change in how I approach conversations, interviews and events? What would I stop saying? Describe the shift rather than drafting the words for me.'

3. Where Momentum Has Been Lost or Diffused

Question 1

'Here is where momentum has slowed or scattered for my book: [paste your answer]. As that consultant, tell me what usually causes attention around a serious non-fiction book to disperse this way. Which of those causes show up in what I've described, and which don't?'

Question 2

'Suppose I could re-engage only one group of people who showed early interest in the book. Which group should it be, what could I offer them that they haven't already had, and what should I leave alone?'

4. Where You Have Remained Passive

Question 1

'Here are the areas where I have stayed passive with my book: [paste your answer]. Speak to me as a consultant who has watched many authors do the same. Which of these is costing me the most? Which is a reasonable choice I should keep making? And what am I probably telling myself to justify the rest?'

Question 2

'Take the passive area that matters most. What is the smallest active step I could take on it within a week, and what would I expect to see change afterwards? Be specific.'

5. The Book as It Now Wants to Be Understood

Question 1

'Here is what I believe my book now does for a thoughtful reader: [paste your answer]. As that consultant, tell me how a busy, intelligent stranger would hear this. Where is it vague? Where might it be misread? Could someone repeat it accurately to a colleague? Don't rewrite it for me. Show me where it's weak.'

Question 2

'What would a reader need to already believe for this to land, and who doesn't yet believe it? What does that tell me about which readers I should be talking to first?'

6. What Now Requires Decision

Question 1

'Here are the decisions about my book that I keep circling: [paste your answer]. As that consultant, tell me what each decision is really about underneath, meaning what I'm actually choosing between. What is it costing me to leave each one open, and what would I need to know in order to decide?'

Question 2

'If you had to advise me which of these to settle first, which would it be, and why? What tension would I lose by settling it, and how would I know within ninety days whether it was the right call?'

7. What You Need from This Work

Question 1

'Here is what I need from this work: [paste your answer]. Hold it against everything I've told you in my other six answers. Is this the right thing for me to be asking for, or is there something more important that I've missed or been avoiding?'

Question 2

'From all seven of my answers, give me the three questions I most need to answer before I plan anything further. They should be questions I have to think through myself, not tasks for a to-do list.'

A Day or Two Later

When your consultant conversations are finished, give it a day or two. Then open a fresh chat inside your Book Project and paste in the prompt below. Follow it with your seven answers as they **now** stand, and add a few lines of your own about what you took from the consultant conversations and where you disagreed.

The consultant role belonged to the earlier chat, so it doesn't follow you into this one. What you have now is the Project as it normally works, listening to what you wrote and to what you made of the advice, with no advice of its own.

'I've just completed a structured self-examination of where my book currently stands, and I've talked each answer through with an AI consultant. Below are my seven responses as they now stand, followed by a few lines on what I took from those conversations and where I disagreed. Please reflect back what you hear: what seems most significant, what feels most unresolved, where the thinking appears most alive, and where my own answers and the consultant's advice seem to pull in different directions. Don't offer advice, plans, or next steps. Stay close to what I've actually written.'

For Authors Approaching Publication

For authors whose books are close to publication. Use your seven answers in the corresponding sections of the Strategy Planner. These questions ask what is known now and what you are preparing to learn; they do not require evidence of a readership that has yet to meet the book.

The consultant line

Paste this once, at the top of a new chat inside your Book Project. It asks the AI to answer as someone who knows what happens to serious non-fiction books after publication, and it asks for honesty. It also asks the AI to keep working within your Project Instructions.

'For this exercise, act as a discerning consultant who works with serious non-fiction authors before and after publication. Be direct and specific. Do not flatter me or treat my hopes as evidence. If information is missing, say what cannot yet be known. My Project Instructions still apply. If promotional advice conflicts with them, name the conflict and let me decide.'

How to use the questions

Take your answers one at a time. Put your answer where the brackets are in the first question, send it, and read what comes back properly before you go on. Then ask the second question, which goes further into whatever the first turned up.

The AI may sound very sure of itself. Treat what it says as a strong opinion to test against what you know, not a verdict.

Sometimes it will tell you that a piece of advice conflicts with your Project Instructions. That isn't a fault. Promotion often means making an idea easier to grasp, and your Authorial Shell exists to stop your book being simplified. When you see the conflict named, you're looking at a real choice about your book. Make it yourself.

1. Where the Work Now Stands

Question 1

'Here is where my book stands as publication approaches: [paste your answer]. What is already real and in place? What am I assuming will happen? Distinguish evidence from expectation, and tell me which missing information would most change your view.'

Question 2

'Given what I know now, where is there genuine early interest in this book, however small? How might I learn more from it without treating a few responses as proof of a larger audience?'

2. What Has Become Clear as Publication Approaches

Question 1

'Here is what has become clearer to me as I prepare to publish: [paste your answer]. Which discovery gives me a stronger way to introduce the book, and which claim still needs testing with readers? Do not invent a reader response.'

Question 2

'If the strongest discovery shaped my conversations, interviews and events over the next twelve months, what would I emphasise differently? What might I stop saying? Describe the shift rather than writing promotional copy for me.'

3. Where Momentum Could Be Lost or Diffused

Question 1

'Here is where my attention or effort has become scattered as publication approaches: [paste your answer]. Which sources of diffusion can I address now, and which may simply be part of finishing and launching a book?'

Question 2

'If I could develop one existing conversation or relationship before publication, which would be most worth my attention? What could I offer or ask that would help me learn whether there is real interest?'

4. Where You Have Remained Passive

Question 1

'Here are the areas where I have left decisions about my book's future to other people, the launch, or chance: [paste your answer]. Which choice most needs my judgement now, and which is reasonably in someone else's hands?'

Question 2

'For the choice that matters most, what is one active step I could take within a week? What could it clarify, and what would still remain uncertain afterwards?'

5. The Book as It Wants to Be Understood

Question 1

'Here is what I believe my book may do for a thoughtful reader: [paste your answer]. How might a busy, intelligent stranger hear this? Where is it vague or open to misreading? Do not claim that readers have already experienced the change I hope for.'

Question 2

'What would a reader need to believe or be curious about for this promise to matter? Which readers might be ready for it first, and what would I need to learn from their actual response?'

6. What Now Requires Decision

Question 1

'Here are the decisions I keep circling before publication: [paste your answer]. Which genuinely need settling now, and which would benefit from meeting readers first? What is each decision really asking me to choose?'

Question 2

'Which decision should I settle first, and why? What would be a sound basis for choosing, and what could I review ninety days after publication without pretending that early sales tell the whole story?'

7. What You Need from This Work

Question 1

‘Here is what I need from this work as publication approaches: [paste your answer]. Consider it alongside my other six answers. Am I asking for something this stage can provide, or am I asking it to remove uncertainty that only readers and time can resolve?’

Question 2

‘From all seven answers, give me the three questions I most need to think through before planning the book’s life after publication. They must be questions for my judgement, not a task list.’

A Day or Two Later

Open a fresh chat inside your Book Project. Paste your seven answers as they now stand, then add a few lines on what you took from the consultant conversations and where you disagreed. The consultant role belongs to the earlier chat.

'I have examined where my book stands as publication approaches. Below are my seven responses, followed by what I took from the consultant conversations and where I disagreed. Reflect back what seems most significant, what remains unresolved, which expectations need to be tested by real readers, and where my answers and the advice pull in different directions. Do not offer plans or next steps. Stay close to what I have written.'