



A Woman and Her Maid in a Courtyard, Pieter de Hooch, c. 1660-1661

FREE GUIDE

Keep the Human Touch

Using AI without losing what matters: simple rules for small businesses and families.

WHAT'S INSIDE: what to hand to AI and what to keep, seven house rules, the moments that should always be yours, how to tell people when AI helped, and a one-page checklist.

FREE GUIDE. Share it with your team, family, or friends. Please don't sell it.

VERSION 1.2, OCTOBER 2026.

Written by David Michaelson, MS. Last updated October 2026.

Pending review by an independent industry expert.

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THE IDEA IN ONE LINE: let AI take the busywork so you have more time, attention, and warmth for the people in front of you.

SECTION 01

Why this matters

IN SHORT

The worry is fair. Used carelessly, AI can make work and life feel colder. Used well, it gives you time back for people.

Many people worry that AI will take the human element out of everyday life, such as a handwritten note or a call from someone who knows your name. Those things matter, and none of them need to go away.

You don't have to choose between using AI and keeping the human touch. You decide, on purpose, which parts of your work and life you hand to a tool and which parts you keep. This guide gives you a simple way to make that choice and stick to it.

What this guide is built on

- 1. Tools serve people.** If a tool makes someone feel less seen, it's being used in the wrong place.

- 2. **Time saved should go to people.** The payoff of AI is more attention for customers, coworkers, and family, not just more output.
- 3. **Your voice is yours.** People trust you because they know how you sound and what you stand for.

SECTION 02

What AI can do, and what stays human

IN SHORT

Give AI the first draft and the sorting. Keep the judgment, the care, and the final word.

LET AI HELP WITH	KEEP HUMAN
First drafts of routine emails, posts, and documents	Judgment calls, and the final say on anything that goes out
Summaries of long notes, threads, and reports	Listening, and noticing what isn't said
Sorting, tagging, and organizing information	Care for someone who is upset, sick, or grieving
Checklists, schedules, and reminders	Relationships: knowing names, history, and what matters to people
Rewording for clarity or a shorter length	Hard conversations, apologies, and bad news
Brainstorming options to choose from	Saying thank you, and meaning it

A good test: **if the person on the other end would feel hurt to learn a machine handled it, a person should handle it.**

SECTION 03

Seven house rules

IN SHORT

Seven plain rules keep AI useful and keep people at the center. Adopt them as they are or adapt them.

- 1. **A person reviews before it goes out.** Nothing AI drafts reaches a customer, coworker, or friend until someone has read it and agrees with it.

2. **Never let AI send condolences or apologies for you.** These are the moments people remember. Write them yourself, even if they're short.
3. **Keep your own voice.** Edit drafts until they sound like you. If it reads like a template, rewrite it.
4. **Tell people when AI helped,** when it matters to them. A simple, honest line builds trust.
5. **Protect time with people.** Put the time AI saves back into calls, visits, and conversations, and put it on the calendar so it actually happens.
6. **People decide.** AI can suggest, but a person makes decisions about jobs, money, health, and anyone's well-being.
7. **Say thank you yourself.** Gratitude from a person lands. Gratitude from a tool doesn't.

FOR FAMILIES: the same rules work at home. A birthday message drafted by AI is fine as a starting point. Add the memory only you have, and send it in your own words.



SECTION 04

Moments that should always be yours

IN SHORT

Some messages carry the relationship itself. AI can help you get started privately, but you write and send them.

MOMENT	WHY IT SHOULD BE YOU	HOW AI CAN STILL HELP
Condolences	Grief deserves a real person	Suggest what to avoid saying, privately
Apologies	An apology is a promise from you	Help you list what went wrong and what you'll fix
Bad news	People need to ask questions and be heard	Help you plan the order of what to say
Thank-yous	Gratitude only counts if it's yours	Remind you who to thank and when
Praise and recognition	Specific praise shows you noticed	Help you recall details from notes
Saying no	Clear and kind takes judgment	Suggest gentle wording you then make your own

A quick way to tell

Ask yourself: **would this person want to know it came from me?** If yes, write it yourself. Use AI only to think it through first.



SECTION 05

Telling people when AI helped

IN SHORT

You don't need to label every email. Be open when AI shaped something people rely on or would want to know about.

When to say so

- AI wrote most of something people will rely on, like a guide, report, or summary.
- A customer or friend asks.
- An AI tool is talking with people directly, like a chat assistant on your website.
- The content includes AI-generated images or voices.

When you don't need to

- Fixing spelling or grammar in something you wrote.
- Rewording a sentence to make it shorter or clearer.
- Sorting or summarizing your own notes.

Simple lines you can use

"I used an AI tool to help draft this, and I've read and checked every part of it."

"Our website assistant is an AI tool. For anything important, you can always reach a person at [email or phone]."

"This summary was prepared with AI help and reviewed by [name]."

KEEP IT PLAIN. One honest sentence is better than a long disclaimer.

SECTION 06

The human touch checklist

IN SHORT

Run through this list once a month, or any time a new AI tool joins your business or household.

Keep the human touch: monthly check

Before anything goes out

- ☐ A person read it and agrees with it
- ☐ It sounds like us, not a template
- ☐ No condolences, apologies, or bad news written by AI
- ☐ We said so if AI did most of the work
- ☐ Every fact, name, and number is right

Our people

- ☐ A person makes every decision about jobs, money, or health
- ☐ Anyone can reach a real person easily
- ☐ Hard conversations happen in person or by phone

Our time

- ☐ We know roughly how much time AI saves us
- ☐ Some of that time went back to people this month
- ☐ We thanked someone personally this week

Our tools

- ☐ Every AI tool has a person responsible for it
- ☐ We know what each tool can do on its own
- ☐ Private details stay out of AI tools

One thing to try this month

Want more?

Terrapilgrim AI is a small team in the Pacific Northwest helping small businesses and families use AI in ways that strengthen people, not replace them. Find plain-English guides and kits at www.terrapilgrim.ai, or write to us at hello@terrapilgrim.org.

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Terrapilgrim AI | www.terrapilgrim.ai | hello@terrapilgrim.org