



# **FRICITION** | The Cognitive Friction Toolkit

*Seven deliberate practices to protect the human capacities that convenience will not preserve. These are not anti-AI practices. They are pro-human ones.*

## THE GOVERNING PRINCIPLE

The question is never simply *can AI do this*. The question is *what is built inside me in the process of doing it myself — and what is lost when I don't*.

## THE SEVEN PRACTICES

### 01 Pre-AI Thinking

**PRACTICE** Before opening any AI tool, spend 10–30 minutes alone with the problem. Write your raw, unfiltered thinking longhand before any external input enters the room.

**GOAL** *Preserve the integrity of your actual cognitive starting position. The first thought is where you actually are — the most honest data point available about the current state of your thinking.*

### 02 The Naïve Question

**PRACTICE** Weekly, return to something you know deeply and ask the question you would ask knowing nothing. Write it down before doing anything with it.

**GOAL** *Maintain the range of motion that expertise tends to reduce. Occasional naïve questions reveal what sophisticated questions have been making invisible.*

### 03 Ethical Stress Testing

**PRACTICE** Take a decision you have already made and argue the opposing moral position seriously — fully, rigorously, and without AI assistance.

**GOAL** *Expose the edges of your ethical reasoning before pressure demands it. The places where you struggle are the places where your ethics need the most attention.*

### 04 The Moral Journal

**PRACTICE** Keep a physical record of ethical tensions you navigate — not the resolution, but the reasoning. Write within 24 hours of any decision that carried genuine moral weight.

**GOAL** *Build ethical muscle memory. Track how your moral reasoning actually operates across time — the patterns only become visible across entries, not within a single decision.*

## 05 Cross-Domain Friction

**PRACTICE** Read one book or long-form piece per month from a field entirely foreign to your expertise. No goal except confusion and curiosity. Do not try to extract applications.

**GOAL** *Keep the capacity to operate in genuinely unknown territory. Maintain intellectual range of motion. Periodically, the foreignness yields an unexpected connection.*

## 06 The Structured Opposition

**PRACTICE** Weekly, write the strongest possible argument for a position you disagree with — built from the ground up using its own logic, not a summary of what its proponents claim.

**GOAL** *Develop perspective agility and the intraspective capacity to genuinely encounter a position rather than characterize it from the outside.*

## 07 The Beginner Audience

**PRACTICE** Monthly, explain something central to your deepest expertise to someone entirely outside your field — without jargon, without assumed context, without shortcuts.

**GOAL** *Nothing exposes the edges of knowledge faster. The places where explanation falters are where real thinking begins — and where the beginner's question becomes the most important one in the room.*



# FRICION | Reference & Application

## WHAT TO DELEGATE VS. WHAT TO PROTECT

*Not all cognitive work carries the same risk when delegated. Use this framework to make deliberate decisions — before the moment of pressure, not inside it.*

SAFE TO DELEGATE	USE WITH CAUTION	DO NOT SURRENDER
Data retrieval & synthesis	Ideation & brainstorming	Problem framing
Structural formatting	Communication drafting	Moral reasoning & ethics
First-pass research	Strategic planning	Emotional intelligence
Administrative reasoning	Creative concepting	The instinct something is missing
Logistical planning		Productive confusion

## WHERE AI APATHY STRIKES FIRST

*The risk is never the tool. It is the atrophy of the human capacity the tool is replacing.*

**AI Mental Health Tools** *Presence replaced by pattern-matching*

**AI Legal & Ethical Advisory** *Justice becomes actuarial*

**AI in Education** *Productive struggle removed from learning*

**AI-Generated Narrative** *Homogenization of how reality is interpreted*

**AI in Leadership** *Moral judgment replaced by data justification*

**Autonomous AI Agents** *Life conducted by proxy*

*Friction is not what stands between you and the answer. Friction is what builds the mind capable of finding one.*

FRICION: The AI Curiosity Paradox

By Jon Millikan · Noah Stults | April 2026

