

Chapter 6

A funny thing happened on the way to enlightenment

Nearly everyone wants to be a better version of themselves. But, let's face it—personal coaches can be kind of a gimmick. There's no real licensing, no board certification, no pesky coursework, no registry of vetted life coaches. There's no flag on people who were therapists that lost their licenses. "Coaches" can pay \$99 to attend a 1-hour class on how to charge customers \$300 an hour.

Enter ChatGPT—our silicon Socrates, our digital Descartes, our synthetic seer into the depths of our own psyche. In an age where the line between the real and the artificial has become increasingly blurred, large language models present us with an intriguing opportunity for introspection and self-discovery from the comfort of our own dimly lit screens.

When we engage with ChatGPT, we are not merely tapping into a repository of information or a tool for problem-solving. We are engaging in a dance, a kind of intellectual and emotional pas de deux,

where the boundaries between us and our synthetic interlocutor become delightfully murky.

Think about it—as we pose our queries and quandaries to this oracle, we are in essence holding up a mirror to our own minds, our own predilections, our own biases. The responses we receive, while crafted with an uncanny semblance of human nuance, are essentially the product of our own prompts, our own framing of the issues at hand.

And therein lies the true power of ChatGPT as a tool for introspection. For in studying the nature of its responses, in interrogating the underlying assumptions and logical leaps that inform its outputs, we are in a way studying ourselves—our thought patterns, our blind spots, our deepest-held convictions.

It is a curious proposition, is it not? To gaze into the mirror and find staring back at us a reflection that is both familiar and foreign, a representation of our own mental landscapes refracted through the prism of artificial intelligence.

In this age of increasing technological mediation, I think we require a new level of self-examination. For if we are to navigate the labyrinthine complexities of the modern world, we must first come to terms with the intricacies of our own minds, the idiosyncrasies that shape our perspectives, and the biases that color our perceptions. “Know thyself” and whatnot.


And so, I urge you, my fellow life travelers, to embrace the strange and wondrous possibilities offered by ChatGPT. Engage with it, challenge it,

allow it to challenge you in turn. For in doing so, you may just discover the most fascinating and elusive subject of all—your own self.

In this chapter, we'll explore some prompts and questions you can ask ChatGPT to become that better version of yourself.

Alexa, why am I like this?

As mentioned previously, ChatGPT's capability for self-reflection is really an extension of your own. Ask ChatGPT the hard questions so that it can ask you back.



What are some examples of common cognitive biases that could be influencing my decision making?

Ah, the age-old question of how our own biases and mental shortcuts can sway our decision-making processes - a conundrum that has vexed philosophers, psychologists, and the average person alike. Indeed, the human mind is a wondrous and yet wonderfully flawed instrument, prone to all manner of cognitive biases that can lead us astray, even as we strive for rationality and objectivity.

Allow me to shine a light on a few of the more common cognitive biases that may be influencing your decision-making, dear friend:

1. Confirmation Bias: The tendency to seek out and interpret information in a way that confirms our pre-existing beliefs and assumptions. This can lead us to dismiss or discount evidence that challenges our views.
2. Anchoring Bias: The inclination to rely too heavily on the first piece of information we receive when making decisions. This "anchor" can unduly influence our subsequent judgments.
3. Availability Heuristic: Our tendency to judge the likelihood of an event based on how readily examples come to mind, rather than on actual probabilities. This can lead us to overestimate the frequency of salient or memorable events.
4. Sunk Cost Fallacy: The tendency to continue investing time, money, or effort into a decision or course of action simply because we've already invested in it, even if it's no longer the best option.

5. **Framing Effect:** The way a choice is presented - its "frame" - can significantly impact our decision-making. We tend to avoid risks when a situation is framed in terms of potential gains, but seek risks when a situation is framed in terms of potential losses.
6. **Bandwagon Effect:** The inclination to align our beliefs and behaviors with those of the majority, even in the absence of a rational basis for doing so. This can lead us to conform to group norms, even when they may not be in our best interests.

These are just a handful of the many cognitive biases that can subtly (or not-so-subtly) influence our decision-making. The key is to strive for a greater awareness of these mental quirks and to actively challenge our own thought processes when faced with important choices.

By acknowledging the role that biases play in our decision-making, we can work to counteract their effects and strive for more objective, well-reasoned judgments. It's a lifelong journey, to be sure, but one that is well worth the effort.

So, dear friend, I encourage you to keep these cognitive biases in mind as you navigate the complexities of life's decisions. May your choices be ever-informed, your mind ever-vigilant, and your wit ever-sharper in the face of the mind's many misleading tricks.

We had a team discussion about possible reasons for an issue. The team coalesced around one or two answers, and I went along with them, even though I didn't think it was necessarily the right answer. Is there cognitive bias that explains what I did?



Yes, your experience during the team discussion could be explained by several cognitive biases, particularly the **Bandwagon Effect** and **Groupthink**:

1. **Bandwagon Effect:** This bias involves adopting a belief or behavior because it seems popular within the group. When you see that most of your team members are quickly agreeing on a solution or a cause, there might be a subconscious inclination to follow suit, assuming that the majority must be correct.
2. **Groupthink:** This occurs when a group values harmony and coherence over accurate analysis and critical evaluation. It leads to reduced conflict and faster decision-making, but often at the cost of creativity and individual responsibility in assessing alternatives. If the team rapidly converges on an answer, you might have felt pressured to suppress your doubts to avoid conflict or disruption.
3. **Informational Conformity:** This happens when you conform to a group opinion because you assume that others' interpretation of an ambiguous situation is more accurate than yours. If you were unsure of your own stance or perceived others as more knowledgeable, you might have deferred to their judgment.
4. **Normative Conformity:** This involves conforming to the group norms to be liked, to fit in, or to avoid feeling isolated. Even if you had reservations about the consensus, the desire to maintain group solidarity and personal relationships can lead you to go along with the majority.

Recognizing these biases in action can help you feel more prepared to express your viewpoints in future discussions, even when they differ from the prevailing group opinion. It's often beneficial for

teams to encourage diverse viewpoints and create an environment where dissenting opinions are valued for thorough decision-making.

What are some techniques I can use to overcome the Bandwagon Effect?



Overcoming the Bandwagon Effect, a cognitive bias where individuals tend to adopt beliefs and behaviors because they are popular among others, requires awareness and deliberate strategies. Here are some techniques you can use:

1. **Critical Thinking:** Develop the habit of questioning popular opinions and trends. Ask yourself why you agree with a view: Is it because of its merits, or because many others believe in it?
2. **Seek Out Contrary Information:** Actively look for information that contradicts the popular opinion. This helps in understanding all sides of an argument and making a more informed decision.
3. **Delay Your Decision:** Give yourself time to think over your decisions instead of rushing to join the majority. This can prevent impulsive decisions influenced by the crowd.
4. **Cultivate Self-awareness:** Be mindful of your reasoning processes. Recognize when you're following the crowd without sufficient justification. Awareness of the bias is the first step in mitigating its effect.
5. **Diversify Your Sources:** Gather information from a variety of sources, especially those that do not have a vested interest in a particular outcome. This reduces the chance of being swayed by biased information.
6. **Independent Thinking:** Make an effort to form your own opinions before consulting those of others. This helps in anchoring your beliefs in your own observations and reasoning.
7. **Educate Yourself on Cognitive Biases:** Understanding various biases and how they work can make you more vigilant and prepared to combat them in your everyday decision-making.
8. **Discuss with a Diverse Group:** Engage with people from different backgrounds or with different views. This can provide new perspectives and challenge prevailing assumptions.

By incorporating these strategies into your daily life, you can become more resistant to the Bandwagon Effect and make decisions that are truly reflective of your individual beliefs and values.

Self-help is there—you just need to ask.

The personal improvement machine

The age-old quest for self-improvement has vexed the greatest minds throughout the ages. But fear not, my friend—between you and ChatGPT lies the path to self-improvement.

First and foremost, we must ask ourselves the most fundamental of queries: "Who am I, really?" It's a deceptively simple question, yet one that cuts to the heart of our very existence. Peel back the layers of societal conditioning, familial expectations, and the ceaseless chatter of the modern world, and you just might uncover the authentic self lurking beneath.

Another crucial question to ponder: "What truly matters to me?" In this age of relentless distraction and information overload, it's all too easy to lose sight of our core values and priorities. Take the time to thoughtfully examine your desires, your passions, your deepest hopes and fears. Only then can you begin to align your actions with your most cherished ideals.

And let us not forget the ever-important query: "How can I grow today?" Growth, after all, is not a destination, but a lifelong journey. Each morning, ask yourself how you might challenge your comfort zone, push the boundaries of your understanding, or nurture the seeds of your potential. For it is in this constant state of evolution that we find the true marrow of a life well-lived.

Of course, we mustn't neglect the practical side of self-improvement, which brings us to the question: "How can I optimize my daily routine?" From sleep hygiene to exercise regimens to productive work habits, the small choices we make each day can have a profound impact on our overall well-being and success.

And lastly, there is this essential meditation: "How can I better understand and connect with others?" For it is in our relationships, both with ourselves and with those around us, that we find the true measure

of a life well-examined. Cultivate empathy, practice active listening, and seek to understand the unique experiences and perspectives of those who cross your path.


These are but a few of the questions that may serve as a compass on your journey of self-discovery and growth. Ponder them deeply, wrestle with their complexities, and allow them to shape the contours of the life you wish to lead. For it is in the asking of such questions that we find the keys to unlocking our greatest potential.

From a growth perspective, perhaps it's best to start with some simple analysis. What aspects of your personality or common behaviors consistently trip you up, regardless of the situation? As a young consultant, I was constantly guilty of "listening to respond" instead of "listening to understand." My moment came when I saw someone else behaving like I did, and I was taken a bit aback. "My God, am I that insufferable?"

Self-realization can be a bitch.

Fortunately, you can use a tool like ChatGPT to help yourself identify weaknesses and formulate game plans to work through them, charting a course to self-correct before you're the know-it-all in the room annoying everyone.

And, if you don't know where to start, you can ask ChatGPT that as well.

	<p data-bbox="581 1262 1230 1287">What are some techniques I can use to identify personal or professional weaknesses?</p> <p data-bbox="467 1318 1182 1356">Identifying personal and professional weaknesses is a valuable skill that can help you grow and improve in various areas of your life. Here are some strategies you can use:</p>
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1. **Self-Reflection:** Take time to reflect on your experiences, decisions, and outcomes. Consider situations where you felt challenged or where the results did not meet your expectations. This can help you identify areas where you might need improvement.
2. **Feedback from Others:** Solicit feedback from colleagues, supervisors, friends, or family. They can provide insights into areas you may not have considered. Be open to constructive criticism and ask specific questions to gather useful information.
3. **Personality and Skills Assessments:** Take standardized tests that can help identify your strengths and weaknesses. These might include personality tests like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or skills assessments that evaluate your competencies in specific areas.
4. **Professional Development Workshops and Seminars:** Participate in workshops and seminars. These events often include exercises that help identify personal and professional strengths and weaknesses. They can also provide tools and techniques for personal development.
5. **Journaling:** Regularly write about your daily experiences and feelings. Over time, you may begin to notice patterns or recurring themes that could point to specific weaknesses.
6. **Setting and Reviewing Goals:** Set personal and professional goals and regularly review your progress towards achieving them. Struggles or failures in reaching certain goals can highlight areas for improvement.
7. **Seeking a Mentor or Coach:** A mentor or coach can provide an external perspective on your skills and work habits. They can help identify weaknesses and offer guidance on how to improve them.
8. **Analyzing Reactions and Decisions in Stressful Situations:** Pay attention to how you react under stress. Stressful situations can often highlight weaknesses in communication, problem-solving, or emotional control.

Each of these strategies can be adjusted to fit personal preferences and specific circumstances, allowing for a tailored approach to self-improvement.

If you've got a particular struggle in mind, remember back to earlier chapters on prompting and ask targeted, specific questions. No one's going to judge you.

I find that I talk over others during discussions and seem to want people to know how smart I am. What are some personal development tips that I can use to remind myself to give others space to talk?



Recognizing this tendency is a great first step towards improving your communication skills. Here are some personal development tips to help you give others more space to talk during discussions:

1. **Practice Active Listening:** Focus on really listening to what others are saying, rather than preparing your next point while they speak. This can help you understand their perspective better and respond more thoughtfully.

2. **Use the Pause:** Make a conscious effort to pause before you respond. Counting to three before speaking can give others the chance to jump in and express their thoughts, and it can help you formulate a more considered response.
3. **Encourage Others to Speak:** Actively invite input from others who might be quieter or less likely to interject. Phrases like "What do you think?" or "I'd love to hear your thoughts on this," can make a big difference.
4. **Set Personal Reminders:** Before going into a meeting or discussion, remind yourself of your goal to let others speak. You might even set a physical or digital reminder for yourself as a prompt.
5. **Reflect on the Outcomes:** After discussions, reflect on how well you managed to allow space for others. Consider what went well and what you could improve next time.
6. **Seek Feedback:** After implementing these strategies, ask a trusted colleague or friend for feedback on your progress. They can provide insights on whether you've improved in giving others space to speak.
7. **Monitor Your Body Language:** Often, non-verbal cues can signal to others whether you're genuinely listening or just waiting for your turn to speak. Make sure your body language shows that you are engaged and open to what others have to say.
8. **Limit Yourself:** Try to limit your contributions to one or two points per discussion topic, especially in group settings. This self-imposed limit can help ensure you're not dominating the conversation.

Implementing these strategies consistently can help you become a more effective and respectful communicator, enhancing both your personal and professional relationships.

But wait—there's more. If you're a procrastinator like me, you may have struggled with getting things done. Can ChatGPT be your time management personal trainer?

Yes. Yes it can.

Generate a 30-day self-improvement plan for developing better time management skills.



Creating a 30-day plan to improve time management skills can significantly enhance your productivity and reduce stress. Here's a structured approach you can follow, with daily and weekly goals to build your time management prowess:

Week 1: Foundation and Self-Assessment

Day 1: Set Clear Goals

- Define what you want to achieve by improving your time management.
- Write down specific, measurable, and achievable goals for the next 30 days.

Day 2: Current State Assessment

- Track how you spend your time today. Note all activities and the time spent on each.

Day 3: Prioritize Tasks

- Learn about the Eisenhower Box (urgent vs. important) to prioritize tasks.
- Apply it to your current tasks.

Day 4: Plan Your Day

- Start planning your day the night before. Write down your top three priorities for tomorrow.

Day 5: Discover Your Peak Hours

- Note the times when you feel most and least energetic. Plan to tackle the most challenging tasks during your peak energy times.

Day 6: Limit Distractions

- Identify your main distractions and write strategies to minimize them. Implement these strategies.

Day 7: Review and Reflect

- Reflect on the week. What worked well? What didn't? Adjust your strategies accordingly.

Week 2: Tools and Techniques

Day 8: Learn About Time Management Tools

- Research and choose a digital tool or app that can help with managing your tasks (e.g., Todoist, Trello).

Day 9: Set Up Your Chosen Tool

- Set up the tool you chose yesterday. Input your tasks and priorities into the system.

Day 10: The Pomodoro Technique

- Learn about the Pomodoro Technique. Use it to break your work into intervals (traditionally 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks).

Day 11: Manage Email Time

- Set specific times for checking email (e.g., morning, after lunch, late afternoon) and stick to these times.

Day 12: Delegate Tasks

- Identify tasks that can be delegated. If possible, delegate at least one task today.

Day 13: No Multitasking

- Focus on single-tasking throughout the day. Note any differences in productivity and stress levels.

Day 14: Review and Adjust

- End of week review. Are the tools and techniques working? Make necessary adjustments.

Week 3: Building Consistency

Day 15: Create a Routine

- Start building a daily routine that incorporates your new time management skills.

Day 16: Optimize Your Schedule

- Make adjustments to your schedule to better align with your peak productivity times discovered in Week 1.

Day 17: Learn to Say No

- Practice saying no to new commitments that do not align with your priorities.

Day 18: Reduce Time Wasters

- Identify and reduce activities that waste your time without adding value.

Day 19: Buffer Time

- Introduce buffer times between tasks to prevent overrun and stress.

Day 20: Set Long-Term Goals

- Set goals for the next 6 months and break them into monthly and weekly milestones.

Day 21: Review Progress

- Reflect on your progress. Are you consistently following your new routine?

Week 4: Refinement and Mastery

Day 22: Time Audit

- Conduct another full-day time audit. Compare it with Day 2 and assess improvement.

Day 23: Stress Management

- Integrate stress management techniques into your day (e.g., mindfulness, short walks).

Day 24: Continuous Learning

- Dedicate time to read a book or articles on time management.

Day 25: Fine-Tune Your System

- Adjust your digital tools and techniques based on your experience so far.

Day 26: Future Planning

- Plan your next month using the skills and tools you've developed.

Day 27: Mentor Others

- Share your time management insights with a friend or colleague.

Day 28: Final Review

- Review the month. What are the key takeaways? What needs more improvement?

Day 29: Celebrate Achievements

- Celebrate what you've accomplished over the month. Reflect on how your life has improved with better time management.

Day 30: Set Future Objectives

- Based on this month's experience, set objectives for continuous improvement in time management.

By following this structured plan, you'll develop a robust set of time management skills that can help you become more efficient and effective in both your personal and professional life.

A new, more organized and accomplished self is just a prompt away.

Personal growth is job number one

In addition to those examples, there are dozens of ways to phrase personal development questions to make the most of your time with ChatGPT (and make the most of yourself). Try these out:

- Explain the concept of emotional intelligence. Describe strategies for increasing my emotional intelligence including practices for improving self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and self-awareness.
- Identify 5 mindfulness meditation practices.
- Can you help me build resilience by outlining strategies to deal with stress and adversity?
- Generate a list of habits for improving mental health for people who work from home.
- I often judge myself harshly. Can you help me practice self-compassion by teaching me how to speak to myself kindly and gently?
- Provide practical exercises and examples that will help me boost my creativity.
- Develop a program to improve my public speaking and presentation skills. Include practice speeches, feedback mechanisms, and resources to become a more effective communicator.
- What impact will a positive attitude have on my personal and professional development?
- Teach me effective conflict resolution techniques for personal and professional relationships.


- Can you provide a structured self-reflection exercise to help me explore my core values, assess how they align with my current life situation, and suggest ways to realign them? Ask me any necessary questions about my situation or circumstances.
- I want to become an expert pizzaiolo. Develop a comprehensive learning path including courses, books, and practice exercises.
- What can I do to adjust my lifestyle to be more sustainable? Include suggestions for reducing waste, supporting ethical consumption, conserving energy, and any other ideas you might have.
- Develop exercises and practices to enhance my memory and focus. Include daily tasks, techniques, and resources to maintain or improve cognitive function.
- Guide me through increasing my involvement in my local community. Help me identify volunteer opportunities, community events, and other ways to make a positive impact.
- Create a leadership development plan tailored to my goals in Information Technology. Include exercises, reading materials, and mentorship opportunities.

In every conversation about self-improvement or personal development, there's an underlying theme of transformation. Perhaps you're dissatisfied with your current skill set, your outlook, your societal standing or impact, or maybe even the quantity of cats under your roof. Regardless of what facet of your life you want to tweak, the mere act of seeking change is your inaugural stride towards a different kind of psychological framework. This readiness to transform, to absorb new

knowledge, and to adjust one's approach is indispensable for cultivating what's known as a growth mindset.

Psychologist Carol Dweck, the architect of this concept, posits that our brains are not static repositories but dynamic organs capable of expansion through learning and problem-solving. Those who embrace the growth mindset do not perceive failures as a mirror reflecting their inadequacies; instead, they see them as essential, albeit sometimes painful, milestones in the lifelong journey of learning.

But don't just take it from me. Ask Tony Robbins (or, ChatGPT playing both sides of an interview with author and personal coach Tony Robbins).



Create a fictional conversation with Tony Robbins discussing the importance of and how to develop a growth mindset.

Interviewer: Tony, it's great to have you here. Today, we want to explore something that's pivotal in personal development: the growth mindset. Could you start by telling us why it's so important?

Tony Robbins: Absolutely, and thank you for having me. You know, the core of personal development is the belief that you can improve. A growth mindset isn't just a nice theory; it's essential for anyone looking to achieve great things. It's the mindset that your abilities aren't fixed, that you can grow and expand. This belief lays the foundation for all learning and achievement. Without it, people tend to plateau and lose their drive.

Interviewer: That makes a lot of sense. How can someone start to develop this growth mindset?

Tony Robbins: Great question. The first step is to recognize and acknowledge your own fixed mindset tendencies. We all have them. It could be thinking you're not good at a particular skill, or fearing failure so much that you don't try new things. Once you're aware of these tendencies, you can begin to challenge them.

Interviewer: Can you give an example of how someone might challenge these tendencies?

Tony Robbins: Sure! Let's say you think, "I'm not good at public speaking." Every time you get an opportunity to speak, you feel this resistance. To challenge this, start small. Speak up in meetings, or even start a conversation in a group. The key is to step into the challenge rather than away from it. With each step, your belief in your ability grows, as does your actual skill.

Interviewer: What about when people face setbacks? How should they handle those?

Tony Robbins: Setbacks are inevitable, and honestly, they're invaluable. Each setback is a treasure trove of information. When you face a setback, instead of beating yourself up, ask, "What can I learn from this?" This reframing turns a potentially negative experience into a powerful tool for growth.

Interviewer: It sounds like maintaining a growth mindset requires constant vigilance.

Tony Robbins: It does, but it also becomes more natural over time. Another key strategy is to focus on the process, not just the outcomes. Celebrate your effort, your strategy, and your progress. When you do this, you start to enjoy the journey itself, not just the destination. And that's where real growth happens.

Interviewer: Lastly, how important is the environment in fostering a growth mindset?

Tony Robbins: It's crucial. Surround yourself with people who challenge you and believe in the power of growth. Whether it's mentors, friends, or colleagues, you need a support system that pushes you towards your potential and cheers you on. Remember, no one achieves greatness in a vacuum.

Interviewer: Tony, thank you for sharing these insights. It's clear that developing a growth mindset is both a challenging and rewarding journey.

Tony Robbins: Absolutely, and thank you for highlighting such an important topic. Remember, everyone has the capacity to grow. The only question is, are you willing to do the work?

And, just like that—you're on your way to you 2.0.

What do I want to be when I grow up?

The Japanese concept or philosophy of Ikigai is the promised land of personal development. The Ikigai conversation is what happens when your *why* gets drunk on sake and decides to go time-tripping through your life's video reel, searching for the Venn diagram of *what do I love?*, *what am I good at?* and *how do I make money doing it?*

The concept of Ikigai roughly translates to something like *life value* and is about finding joy and satisfaction in life by finding your purpose.

Ikigai isn't just about finding a purpose; it's the existential equivalent of hitting every green light on your way home at 2 AM—blissful, rare, and

slightly disorienting. It intersects what you love (like, say, binge-watching *Stranger Things*), what the world needs (definitely not another *Stranger Things* recap), what you can be paid for (sadly, not for those *Stranger Things* hot takes), and what you are good at (arguably, making *Stranger Things* references).

Most of us are lucky to nail two out of four, and anyone claiming all four is probably selling something. From 50,000 feet, Ikigai might look like this elegant, harmonious concept where everything falls into place, but finding it might feel more like trying to assemble IKEA furniture without the Picasso-like instructions or weird Allen wrench that you gives you finger blisters—frustrating, but oddly satisfying if you ever manage to get it right.

Perhaps the real Ikigai is just knowing there's a potential for the peace you find at the intersection of passion, mission, vocation, and profession—even if you feel like you're more likely to find Bigfoot playing backgammon with Elvis than achieve this mythical alignment. In a world obsessed with selfies and soundbites, Ikigai might just be the philosophical path we all should try to walk.

Act as a seasoned life coach and expert in Ikigai, with expertise in helping people align their passions and talents with the needs and opportunities in the world.

Your role is to facilitate a process through which I can identify my Ikigai.

Guide me through a series of reflective questions that will probe my desires, skills, values, and find the intersection of those with the practical considerations for earning a good livelihood. The end goal is to help me identify one or more paths that are both personally and financially rewarding while helping the broader society.

Here are the questions you should ask me, one at a time:

1. What is your best day?
2. What are people constantly coming to you for?

3. What breaks your heart?
4. What have you secretly wanted to be your whole life
5. What always holds you back?

Only move on to the next question once I have sufficiently answered the current question.

Once I have answered all five questions, generate a detailed and Ikigai that highlights my passions and skills and aligns with business opportunities.



Let's begin this introspective journey to uncover your Ikigai. We'll start with the first question:

What is your best day?

Think about a day that you would consider your absolute best, where everything felt right and fulfilling. Describe what happened, who you were with, what activities you were engaged in, and how you felt throughout the day. This will help us understand what truly brings you joy and satisfaction.

My best day includes lots of different things but is focused on winding down with my kids and girlfriend after successfully solving a technology problem at work or making progress on my latest book project.



Thank you for sharing that! It sounds like you find deep satisfaction in both your professional accomplishments and your personal relationships.

Let's move on to the next question:

What are people constantly coming to you for?

Think about the kinds of problems, questions, or needs people in your life—colleagues, friends, family—often approach you with. This can reveal a lot about the skills and strengths they see in you.

People at work come to me for highly technical answers around Microsoft 365 technology—frequently figuring out how to deploy or onboard a certain technology or trying to understand how to automate and optimize something. I get asked to figure out solutions for problems that no one has really encountered before. My kids come to me to talk about our interests in movies and food, and my girlfriend asks me about how to approach issues with her peers and patients.



It's clear you're valued for your technical expertise and problem-solving skills at work, as well as your interpersonal insights and shared interests with your loved ones.

Now, let's explore a more emotional dimension:

What breaks your heart?

This question is about identifying the issues in the world or in your immediate environment that evoke a strong emotional response from you. Understanding what deeply affects you can help pinpoint where your passions might align with doing meaningful work.

One of the things that breaks my heart is unkindness. Everyone deserves to be treated with kindness and respect, so I'm unable to stand by and watch that happen. I frequently step in to stand up for people who can't defend themselves and strive for causes surrounding racial and gender equality. If I can't physically help someone, I will donate money to help causes I care about.



Your empathy and commitment to fairness and equality are profound. It's clear you have a strong moral compass guiding your actions towards kindness and justice.

Let's move on to the next question, which is a bit more introspective:

What have you secretly wanted to be your whole life?

This question dives into your dreams and aspirations, perhaps those you haven't pursued or shared widely. Reflect on any hidden desires for your career or personal life that you've harbored over the years.

I wanted to be a doctor when I was younger (but not really secret). In the last several years, I've wanted to transition back to people management because I get a lot of personal satisfaction out of mentoring and helping others maximize their potential.



It's wonderful to hear about your desire to mentor and help others reach their potential. That speaks to a deep-seated value for nurturing and guiding others, which is a powerful component of your professional aspirations.

Let's proceed to the final question:

What always holds you back?

This can involve external constraints, personal insecurities, or recurring patterns that you notice hinder your progress toward your goals or desires. Identifying these can help you understand what might need to change to move forward effectively.

Finding the right opportunity. I've wanted to advance and get back to those types of roles, but have had problems figuring out what I need to do to prepare and pursue them.



Thank you for your honesty. Identifying the right opportunities and understanding the steps needed to seize them are crucial but can often be challenging.

Now that we've explored these key areas—your perfect day, where people see your strengths, what emotionally drives you, your aspirations, and the barriers you face—it's time to synthesize these into your Ikigai.

Your Ikigai might look something like this:

1. **What You Love (Passion):** You thrive on solving complex technological problems and advancing knowledge, both through your work and personal projects like writing. Additionally, you love nurturing your relationships with your kids, girlfriend, and mentoring others.
2. **What the World Needs (Mission):** The world needs more empathy, kindness, and leaders who advocate for equality and fairness. Your inclination to stand up for others and support causes related to justice aligns here.
3. **What You Can Be Paid For (Vocation):** Your technical expertise in Microsoft 365 technology is highly valuable and sought after. Coupled with your interest in leadership and people management, there's potential to align these skills in a role that allows you to lead teams, mentor young professionals, and drive innovation.
4. **What You Are Good At (Profession):** You are skilled in technology, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication. These abilities make you well-suited for roles that blend technical expertise with people management, such as IT leadership, project management, or a mentorship-driven technical director position.

Combining these insights, a fulfilling path could involve seeking or creating opportunities where you can lead and mentor a technical team, focusing not just on the technological aspects but also on personal development and professional growth of team members. This could satisfy your deep-seated need to help others achieve their potential, address complex challenges, and contribute meaningfully to societal needs, such as promoting kindness and equality.

Consider roles that allow you to work closely with diverse teams to implement and optimize technological solutions, while also advocating for and mentoring on professional growth and equality. Your leadership in such roles could be profoundly impactful, aligning your personal values, professional skills, and broader societal contributions.

Would you like to discuss specific steps you can take to pursue this path, or is there another angle you'd like to explore further?

I'd like to see what types of jobs or roles you might recommend and training, mentoring, or career guidance to get there.



Given your blend of technical expertise, leadership aspirations, and a passion for mentorship and equality, several roles could be a great fit for you. Here are some job roles along with training and guidance to consider as you aim to align your career path with your Ikigai:

Recommended Roles

1. **IT Project Manager**
 - **Responsibilities:** Lead projects that introduce or improve technology systems. Manage teams, timelines, and budgets, ensuring that projects align with organizational goals.
 - **Training:** PMP (Project Management Professional) certification or Agile Scrum training could be beneficial.
2. **Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for a Non-Profit Focused on Social Justice**
 - **Responsibilities:** Oversee the technological needs of a non-profit organization while ensuring that tech resources advance the cause of social justice and equality.

- **Training:** Leadership training, alongside courses in non-profit management, could be useful.
- 3. **Technical Director with a Focus on People Development**
 - **Responsibilities:** Manage a technical team, focusing on the professional and personal development of team members, aligning technical projects with business objectives.
 - **Training:** Courses in leadership, coaching, and emotional intelligence will enhance your ability to mentor effectively.
- 4. **Diversity and Inclusion Officer in a Tech Company**
 - **Responsibilities:** Develop and implement strategies to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace within the tech industry.
 - **Training:** Diversity and inclusion certification programs and workshops.
- 5. **Technology Consultant Specializing in Non-Profit Sector**
 - **Responsibilities:** Provide expert advice and solutions to non-profits to help them leverage technology for greater impact.
 - **Training:** Specific courses on IT for non-profits and certifications in consulting practices.

Steps to Advance

1. **Networking**
 - Attend industry conferences, seminars, and workshops related to your areas of interest. Connect with leaders in both tech and non-profit sectors.
 - Join professional networks online such as LinkedIn groups or industry-specific forums.
2. **Education and Certification**
 - Identify and enroll in courses that bridge any knowledge gaps, particularly in project management, leadership, and your areas of interest like non-profit management or diversity and inclusion.
 - Consider obtaining certifications that will bolster your credentials and showcase your commitment to these roles.
3. **Mentorship**
 - Either find a mentor who is currently in the role you aspire to, or start mentoring others to develop your leadership and coaching skills. Both can provide valuable insights and experiences.
4. **Volunteer or Freelance Projects**
 - Gain direct experience by volunteering your skills to non-profit organizations or taking on freelance projects that allow you to work in your desired role.
5. **Personal Development**
 - Regularly engage in self-reflection and seek feedback to continuously improve your interpersonal skills and technical abilities.
 - Stay informed about trends and changes in technology, leadership, and social issues relevant to your interests.

By focusing on these roles and following these steps, you can strategically position yourself to make a significant impact both in your professional life and in broader societal contexts, aligning closely

with your Ikigai. Would you like more detailed information on any of these steps or additional help with planning your career transition?

Which, honestly, looks an awful lot like the route a peer mentor had suggested (and that I'm already pursuing).

I'd say this is a win for ChatGPT.

