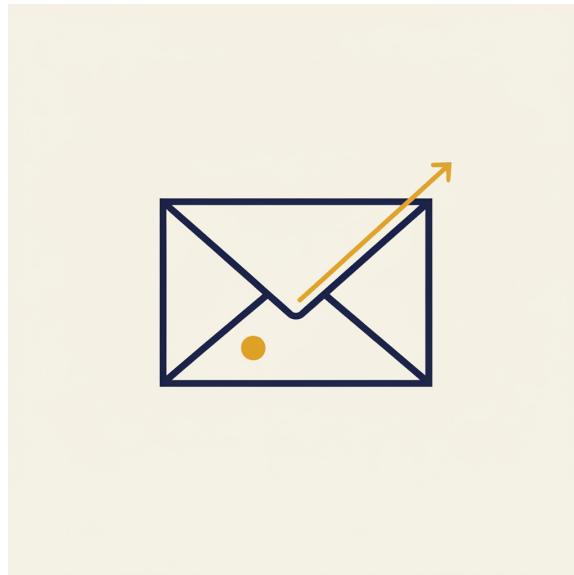




TIER 1 - FOUNDATIONS \* V1.0 -- MAY 2026

# ARD CONVERSATIONS AND PERSONAL

How to use AI to find the words when you have the feeling but not the structure. Where it helps, where it gets the emotional register wrong, and the moves that keep your voice in your own writing.



**BY**

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v1.0 -- May 2026

Anyone facing a piece of writing they can't start -- sympathy notes, complaint letters, the difficult coworker email, the wedding speech, the message to an estranged family member

15-20 minutes

Free. Forever.

**EDITION**

**AUDIENCE**

**READ TIME**

**COST**

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## SECTION 1

# The blank page that's been open for three days

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## Some writing is hard for a reason

Your friend's mom died two weeks ago. You haven't sent the card. Not because you don't care -- because every time you sit down to write something, the words that come out feel like a Hallmark template and you put the pen back down.

A coworker did something that crossed a line, and you've been drafting the email in your head for a week. You can't pin down whether you sound petty or whether you're letting it slide.

There's a wedding next month and you're in the toast lineup. You have things to say. You can't get them out.

Your dad's sister hasn't spoken to you in three years. You think the silence has gone on long enough. You don't know how to start a letter that doesn't sound like an accusation or a surrender.

The pattern is the same. You have the feeling. You don't have the words. The blank page sits open for days, then weeks, then it's too late and the moment passes.

This is the right job for AI -- used carefully. The wrong job -- used carelessly.

## What you'll have by page 13

By the end of this primer:

- The feeling-fin instead.
- A session p emotiona
- The after every draft.
- **Three worked sessions** -- sympathy note, hard coworker email, wedding toast -- to show the workflow.
- The revision r
- The honest lin

***The feeling has to be yours. The words can be partly the model's. The reader can usually tell the difference -- and the moves in this module are how you make the difference invisible.***

## SECTION 2

# The feeling-first rule

The single most important framing in this whole module:

### **The feeling-first rule:**

Don't ask AI to write the message. Ask AI to help you find the words for what you already feel.

The order matters. If you start with "write a sympathy card for my friend's mom," you'll get a competent generic paragraph that sounds like nobody you know. If you start with "I'm trying to write a sympathy card for a close friend whose mom just died -- let me describe what I actually feel and the kind of person her mom was, then help me put it into something I can sign my name to," the model has the only thing it can't generate on its own: your specific situation.

The reframe:

that requires actual feeling -- sympathy, gratitude, regret, repair -- has to start with you describing what you actually feel, in plain words, before the model writes a single sentence.

**AI doesn't**

## **Why generic AI emotional writing reads wrong**

You've probably seen AI sympathy notes already. They have a specific shape. Vague poetic language. Phrases like "during this difficult time" and "thoughts and prayers." A reference to the deceased that could apply to anyone. A closing that ends with "wishing you peace."

Reading one feels like opening a Hallmark store catalog. The recipient knows. They might not be able to articulate it, but they know.

The reason is simple: a generic emotional message is what you get when you ask the model to generate "an emotion" without giving it any of the specific reality of your relationship, the deceased's character, the particular gap their absence creates. The model averages every sympathy note in its training data. The output is the average.

The fix is to refuse the average -- by giving the model the specific.

## SECTION 3

# The session pattern that works

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## Three steps, in this order

### The hard-writing session:

- 1. You describe the feeling -- to the model -- in plain words.** Not to write a polished message. Just to put what you actually feel into typed text. This is the hardest part and you have to do it.
- 2. You give the model the specifics.** Who is this person? What's your real relationship? What did the deceased actually mean to your friend? What did the coworker actually do? Specific facts, real names, real history.
- 3. You ask for structure, not voice.** "Help me organize this into something I can sign my name to. Use my own words where they're already on the page. Don't add sentimentality I haven't earned. Don't use phrases like 'thoughts and prayers' or 'during this difficult time.'"

That's the pattern. The model is not the writer; you are. The model is the editor and the structure helper.

## What goes in the prompt -- concretely

For a hard message, your first prompt should usually contain:

- **The relationship.** "My closest friend from college. We've been close for 22 years."
- **The situation in plain language.** "Her mom died two weeks ago. Cancer. Long illness. Her mom was the kind of person who knew everyone's birthday and made the best apple pie in the family. I went to their house dozens of times growing up -- her mom treated me like one of her own."
- **What you want to say.** "I want my friend to know I'm thinking about her, that I remember specific things about her mom that I miss too, and that I'm here when she's ready to talk."
- **What you DON'T want.** "I don't want this to read like a Hallmark card. No 'thoughts and prayers.' No vague poetry about loss. No phrases I wouldn't say out loud."

- **The format.** "It's a handwritten card. Three or four sentences max."

That prompt -- five minutes of typing -- gives the model everything it needs to give you something usable. The output won't be the final card. It'll be the rough version you edit by hand into your real voice.

***The five minutes you spend describing the relationship to the model is not wasted time. It's the same five minutes you would have spent staring at the blank page. The difference is at the end of it, you have something to react to.***

## SECTION 4

# The emotional-register failures

## What AI gets wrong, every time

These show up in nearly every draft AI produces for hard writing. Catch them on the revision pass.

**1. Stock phrases.** "During this difficult time." "Thoughts and prayers." "Words cannot express." "I'm here for you." "Reaching out." If any of these survived from the AI draft into your final, the recipient will feel the template underneath.

Cut them

**2. False sentimentality.** A specific kind of overwriting where the model adds emotional intensity that wasn't in your prompt. "My heart aches for you" when you said "I'm sad too." "I cannot fathom what you're going through" when you said "this must be hard." The model sometimes thinks more emotion = better message. It's wrong.

Tone it ba

**3. The wrong specificity.** AI sometimes invents specific details that aren't true -- "I remember when she made you a chocolate cake for your 16th birthday." Maybe she did, maybe she didn't.

Read

**every specific detail in the AI output and verify it actually happened.** Cut anything you can't confirm.

**4. The closer that doesn't sound like you.** "Wishing you light during this dark passage" is not how anyone actually closes a card. Whatever the AI gave you for the closing, replace it with how you actually sign things. "Love, Alex." "Talk soon." "Thinking about you."

**5. The cadence is off.** AI-written sentences have a specific rhythm -- slightly longer than natural, slightly more even. Real human writing has fragments. Sentences that trail off. Sentences with three words.

Read the

line in your own cadence.

## The "would I say this out loud?" test:

After you have a draft, read every sentence as if you were saying it directly to the recipient, in person, looking at them.

- Anywhere you'd say it that way -> keep.
- Anywhere it sounds like a card -> rewrite.

Most AI emotional writing fails this test on at least one sentence. The test is fast. Run it before you send.

## SECTION 5

# Three worked sessions

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## Worked session 1 -- Sympathy card

Your closest friend's mom died. You have to send a card. It's been two weeks.

*"I need to write a sympathy card to my closest friend, Liz. We've been close for 22 years -- met in college. Her mom Helen died two weeks ago after a 2-year fight with cancer. Helen knew every birthday in their family and ours. She made the best apple pie I've ever eaten. I went over to their house probably 50 times in college and she always treated me like one of her kids. I want Liz to know I'm thinking about her, I remember specific things about Helen that I'll miss too, and that I'm here whenever she wants to talk. Three or four sentences, handwritten card. No 'thoughts and prayers,' no 'during this difficult time,' no vague poetry. Use my own words where they fit. Don't add sentimentality I didn't put in."*

Output you'd get:

*Liz -- I've been thinking about you since I heard about Helen. I keep coming back to her apple pie and the way she remembered every birthday -- yours, mine, all of ours. The world is smaller without her in it. Take whatever time you need. I'm here when you're ready to talk.*

That's usable. Maybe you change "the world is smaller without her in it" to something more in your voice. Maybe you keep it. Either way, you went from a blank card to a draft you can edit in five minutes -- and Liz is going to read something specific instead of generic.

## Worked session 2 -- The hard coworker email

Coworker took credit for your work in a meeting last week. You've been drafting this in your head. You need it on paper before the next meeting.

*"I need to write an email to a coworker, Ryan. In a meeting last Wednesday, Ryan presented a proposal as his own work. I built that proposal -- he saw it Monday in our 1:1. I'm not trying to escalate this to my manager yet. I'm trying to write Ryan an email that says clearly: I noticed, this isn't OK, going forward I expect attribution. I want to be direct, not aggressive. Not passive-aggressive. Not begging. Professional adult talking to professional adult. Five or six sentences. No corporate fluff. Skip the 'just wanted to circle back' opener -- that signals weakness."*

Output:

*Ryan -- quick note about Wednesday's meeting. The proposal you presented as 'your idea' was the work I shared with you Monday. I'm not assuming malice, but the framing wasn't accurate, and I want to flag it before it becomes a pattern. Going forward, when we collaborate on something, I expect the work to be attributed to whoever actually built it. Happy to talk this through in person if you'd like.*

That's the rough draft. You read it out loud -- does it sound like you? If yes, send. If no, rewrite the lines that don't.

## Worked session 3 -- Wedding toast

Your sister's getting married. You're giving a toast. You haven't started.

*"I'm giving a wedding toast for my younger sister Emma's wedding in three weeks. Emma is 28, marrying Marcus, who I've known for 4 years and like a lot. Specific things I want to mention: she was the kid who organized everyone's birthday parties growing up so this is fitting; she's the most stubborn person I've ever met which is sometimes infuriating but it's also the reason she finished her PhD; Marcus brought a calmness to her life that nobody else could. I want this to be 90 seconds, max. Funny in places, but the heart is sincere. No 'on this special day' or 'please raise your glasses' clichés -- I want it to sound like me actually talking. Help me organize what I gave you above into something I can practice."*

The output gives you a structure: opening anecdote (Emma organizing birthdays as a kid), the affectionate-tease (the stubbornness story), the sincere turn (Marcus brought calmness), the close (raise the glass). You'll spend the next week practicing it, cutting lines, swapping phrasing for things you actually say. By the wedding, the toast is yours -- but you wouldn't have started without the structure.

***The toast at the wedding will be in your voice -- but you'll have started it three weeks earlier instead of three days earlier, and that head start is the difference between a toast that lands and a toast you stumble through.***

## SECTION 6

# The revision pass -- putting your voice back in

After you have an AI draft, run this 5-step revision pass before sending or signing. Total time: 5-10 minutes.

### The 5-step revision pass:

- 1. Read it out loud.** Every sentence. Anywhere you stumble = wrong cadence for your voice.
- 2. Cut every stock phrase.** "Thoughts and prayers." "During this difficult time." "Just wanted to reach out." "I hope this finds you well." If you wouldn't say it in person, it doesn't go in.
- 3. Verify every specific.** AI sometimes invents details. Anything specific in the draft (a memory, a date, a fact) needs to actually be true. Cut if you can't confirm.
- 4. Replace the closer.** AI closers are almost always wrong. Use whatever you actually say at the end of cards or emails.
- 5. Swap one phrase per paragraph for your own words.** Even if the draft is good, picking one line per paragraph and rewriting it in your phrasing puts your fingerprints on the message. Recipients can tell.

After the pass, the writing is yours. AI was the structure helper. The voice is human.

## SECTION 7

# When NOT to use AI for personal writing

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Three categories where the framework breaks down:

- **Wedding vows, eulogies, the most important speeches of your life.** AI can help you outline; it should not write any of the actual lines. These are documents people remember the wording of years later. The wording has to come from you. Use AI only for "what should I cover?" -- not for any of the language.
- **Anything where the recipient might suspect AI involvement.** If you've never written this person an email longer than two sentences, suddenly sending them a 5-paragraph carefully-structured letter will feel off. Match the AI-assisted output to your normal communication style.
- **Active conflict or legal matters.** Active divorce, custody dispute, employment dispute, anything where the words are going to be looked at by lawyers later. AI's "professional and direct" tone is fine for low-stakes coworker friction; it can read tone-deaf in legally-charged situations. Get human guidance -- and an attorney if applicable -- for these.

Within those limits, AI for hard writing is one of the highest-ROI uses of the tool in personal life. The cards that don't get sent and the emails that don't get drafted have a real cost. AI removes the activation energy from sitting down to start.

## SECTION 8

# Where to go from here

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You have the framework for hard writing. Five more modules in the Tier 1 expansion ahead:

- **AI and your money** -- budgeting, debt, comparison-shopping, preparing for the meeting with the actual financial pro.

After that: daily learning, privacy hygiene, travel and research, recovering when AI is wrong. Then Tier 1 closes at 18 modules.

**Get the next module the day it drops: [theaiguywi.com/training](https://theaiguywi.com/training)**

One email per release. No drip. No spam. Opt out anytime.

If you want this same hard-writing discipline trained into a small team -- the kind that has to write to clients in difficult moments, handle complaint correspondence, or send messages when the company hits a hard week -- that's the consulting offer.

**Reach out: [alexanderjahn79@icloud.com](mailto:alexanderjahn79@icloud.com)**

A short call. Honest scope. We figure out together if it's a fit.

## **Closing -- the lock-in line**

The hardest writing in your life is the writing you put off because you don't know how to start. AI doesn't replace the feeling -- it replaces the blank-page paralysis. You still have to do the hard part of describing what you actually feel. The model handles the structure; you handle the voice.

# 5

**Five minutes.**

That's the time it takes to type out the relationship, the situation, what you want to say, and what to skip -- the prompt that turns a blocked card into a draft you can edit. Five minutes that may have replaced two weeks of putting it off.

You have the framework. Five more modules in this batch.

**Agent Logic --**

Fond du Lac, WI. This is module 13 of 18 in Tier 1 (Personal).

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