



penny **WRENN** MEDIA · IF I WERE YOU

FREE · RECEIPTS INSIDE

101 THINGS I'D DO IF I WERE YOU

AI ideas for people who've been working longer than the internet has.

You: charge nurse | IIWY: #49 — the schedule nobody fights about

You: truck driver | IIWY: #74 — turn your commute into a course

You: salon owner | IIWY: #97 — draft the succession pitch

You: your job here | IIWY: page 15 finds your ten →

DON'T YOU HATE A FREE DOWNLOAD?

You know the one. You hand over your email and receive, in return, a brochure — eleven pages of somebody clearing their throat before inviting you to a webinar. The "free gift" that is actually a coupon for the real thing.

This is not that. This is the thing.

What you're holding is a full magazine issue — ten articles, 101 ideas, a quiz, and exactly one ask — and here is the part I need you to sit with: **AI is what made this download possible.** I made it on Day 3 of building something else entirely (a free 5-Day AI Activation Plan — also yours, also actually free, back page). I've been a magazine editor. I know what an issue costs in people, months, and meetings. This one took a workweek and a machine that never needed lunch — with every judgment call still mine.

That's the whole gospel of this issue, delivered up front: the distance between knowing better and doing better just collapsed. You have decades of judgment and a computer that can finally keep up with it.

The 101 run through every page like a ticker — boxes, sidebars, footers, one quiz. Read the articles or hunt your number. Both count.

And if you get to the end and think *"right, but for MY situation..."* — good. That sentence is on page 24, and it has a door attached.

— Penny

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YOU CAN'T CONTROL WHAT ANYBODY SAYS ABOUT YOU

I used to manipulate search results for a living. It taught me the only reputation rule that matters — and it's the same one your grandmother had.

THE 101 · THIS SPREAD: #1–10

I used to manipulate search results for a living. That's the sentence that makes people lean in, so let me earn it honestly: I worked in search engine marketing, in a specialty called online reputation management. When you hear "manipulate search results," you picture a villain — a black-hat thing. And the black-hat version existed; it was the attack version. What we did was called *white hat* online reputation management. But here's what I figured out, and it took me years: it was never about hats. It's not about good content or bad content on the web.

It's about how things are packaged.

You can't control what anybody says about you. That's the Maya Angelou lesson by way of Oprah, and it's the sticks-and-stones lesson your grandmother had before either of them.

What you *can* control is what you say about you — and who you decide gets to say something about you, and where it stands when someone comes looking.

Because someone is always coming looking. When you type a name into Google, the first page of results is the story. There's a statistic about how few people ever click to page two — I lived by that statistic professionally. Most people only ever read the cover.

So here's the reframe I want to hand you, the one I got paid to understand: **your job on the internet is the same job you have when you leave your house.** Are you dressed? Are you safe? Can you get where you need to go? I do all the things I need to do at home, and there is nobody out in the world who has seen me not looking the way I intended to be seen.

#1

Price yourself.

Have AI pull current pay ranges for your exact role, region, and seniority, then draft the raise case your boss can forward upward. (nurses, teachers, accountants, plant managers, admins)

When we leave the house, there are things we just know. We know outside is fair game. We conduct ourselves accordingly — not because we're fake, but because we need a job, a neighbor, a life.

*"We keep acting like we've shown up **dressed to the public party** just by logging on. We have not."*

And — this is the part that should make you a little mad — the internet is not the world. Outside is fair game; the internet is *controlled*, by actual entities, in ways that never got codified into anything you voted on. You cannot get a job in this marketplace without your application being read up, down, and sideways by an algorithm that nobody who's hiring understands. We just keep acting like that's okay. That's not the marketplace of ideas we were promised. It's a marketplace, all right — and you're in it whether you dressed for it or not.

So this magazine starts here, with the least glamorous, most load-bearing move in the whole issue: go find out what the internet says when someone searches you. Not what you hope it says. *What it says*. Then start deciding — deliberately, the way you decide what to wear to the interview — what the first page of you is going to be.

You can't control what anybody says about you. You can absolutely control what you say about you. And for the first time in your working life, you've got a machine that can help you say it — packaged, findable, and dressed for the party.

That's the work. The next 101 ideas are the wardrobe.

YOU: ANYONE WITH A NAME

IIWY: **#87 — Be findable.** Have AI audit what the internet says when someone searches you, and draft the fixes. (*this article's homework, on loan from page 17*)

YOU: ____ | IIWY: ____

You: executive assistant.

#3 — Inventory the invisible work: dump a typical week into AI; have it name every unlisted skill you've never put on paper.

You: mid-level manager.

#4 — Audit your last review: what do they keep praising but not paying for?

You: hospital or government worker.

#9 — Decode your benefits: feed in the PDF nobody reads; ask what you're leaving on the table this year.

YOU: OFFICE MANAGER

IIWY: **#2 — Translate your title.** It undersells you. Rewrite what you actually do in the language three other industries use for it.

#10 — Write your walk-away number. The spreadsheet that prices your freedom. You'll want it by page 22.

THE ROBOT READS YOUR RÉSUMÉ **FIRST**

Before any human decides anything about you, a computer already has. You can't win a game you keep pretending isn't being played.

THE 101 · THIS SPREAD: #31–40

Let me tell you the quiet rule of the modern job market: before any human decides anything about you, a computer already has.

You cannot get a job in this marketplace without your application being looked up, down, and sideways by software running an algorithm that nobody — including, in my experience, the people doing the hiring — fully understands. We trust it anyway. It never went to a vote. It's not codified into any law you can appeal to. It's just... how it works now. There are things that prevent you from getting a job online that we keep treating as weather, when they're actually plumbing.

I'm not telling you this to make you despair. I'm telling you because you can't win a game you keep pretending isn't being

played.

Here's what changes when you admit the game exists. The résumé stops being a sacred document about your worth and becomes what it actually is: a formatted input, submitted to a parser. Your worth is real; the document is packaging. And packaging — I have said this before and will say it until they take my microphone — **packaging is a job you can do deliberately.**

This is where the machine earns its keep. Not by faking anything — by translating. The posting speaks a dialect: exact phrases, weighted words, the vocabulary of whoever configured the screen. AI reads dialect fluently.

#31

Beat the résumé robot.

Have AI tailor your résumé to one posting's actual language — then have it explain what it changed and *why*, so you learn the pattern.

Feed it the posting and your history and let it show you what it changed and why. You're not gaming the system; you're finally addressing the actual reader — which, first pass, is a machine.

And once the robot passes you forward, the humans get the version of you that you intended. Warm lists. Reach-outs that aren't cringe. Interview prep like a beat reporter. The gap explained in two unapologetic sentences. All of it on this spread, all of it doable this week.

Twenty years of work deserves better than dying in a parser. Dress the application for the door it actually has to walk through.

"You can't win a game you keep pretending isn't being played."

YOU: THE INTERVIEW-NERVOUS

IIWY: **#35 — Prep like a beat reporter.** The company, the interviewer, the five questions you'll get — with your answers outlined from your real stories.

YOU: ANYONE WITH A GAP

IIWY: **#37 — Explain the gap.** Caregiving, illness, layoff, life — two unapologetic sentences that close the topic. AI drafts; you approve.

YOU: ____ | IIWY: ____

You: 20 years of contacts.

#33 — Build the warm list: every former colleague, vendor, client, classmate now somewhere useful.

You: allergic to networking.

#34 — The reach-out that isn't cringe. Three versions; you send one.

You: chronic under-asker.

#36 — Rehearse the salary conversation until the number comes out of your mouth clean.

#40 — Debrief every no. Ask what to adjust and what to ignore. Then actually ignore it.

BY THE WORD OR BY THE HOUR

I asked a machine to settle an old argument with my own career. It took ninety seconds — and the answer wasn't about writers.

THE 101 · THIS SPREAD: #11–20

I once asked a machine to settle an old argument with my own career. It took about ninety seconds.

The question: what pays better, writing by the word or by the hour? I fed it the numbers from my life. A 1,500-word reported story — the kind with real sourcing — takes a mid-level writer twelve to twenty hours. Do the arithmetic against a dollar-a-word rate and you're somewhere between minimum wage and modest. Now hold that against an hourly rate a working professional would actually quote — thirty-five, say — and watch the whole magazine economy explain itself.

By-the-word is a great deal for fast writers with clean sources and no revisions. I was not that writer. I was the writer who

did *more* — who made the thing what I knew it needed to be, whatever it cost in hours, because I was married to the standard. The work was good. The math was terrible. My income was capped by my own care. That's why I got out of publishing.

Here's what I need you to hear: **that math is not a writer problem. That math is a worker problem.** Every one of you is paid on some ratio of care-to-throughput, and most of you are quietly subsidizing your employer with unbilled excellence. The invisible work. The triage, the translating, the "can you just look at this." Nobody itemizes it, so nobody pays for it.

#11

Write the case study of your best work.

One project, told as problem → what you did → result, drafted by AI from your own retelling. (*consultants, contractors, event planners, sales reps*)

Then 2022 happened, and I started using this technology for the thing I hated most — writing cover letters, talking about myself in that dialect I never mastered. And the ratio moved. For the first time in my working life, the care stayed mine and the throughput stopped being the bottleneck.

The writing never stopped living in me — the putting-together of the pieces that tell the story. What stopped was the tax on it.

*"Most of you are quietly subsidizing your employer with **unbilled excellence**."*

YOUR 90-SECOND AUDIT

Hours you actually work ÷ what you're actually paid — invisible work in the denominator. The prompt: **"Here's my week, itemized. Price it three ways: my salary's real hourly, market hourly for each task, and what a contractor would invoice."** Fair warning: the number tends to make people do something about it.

YOU: MANAGER, FUNDRAISER, AE
IIWY: **#12 — Build the brag file.** Have AI mine your sent mail for wins you forgot; compile the running document.

YOU: 20 YEARS IN
IIWY: **#15 — Document your method.** The way you do the thing is teachable; AI interviews you and writes it up as your named process.

YOU: ____ | IIWY: ____

You: ER nurse, plant supervisor, chef.
#13 — Turn a war story into the lesson it deserves.

You: career changer.
#18 — The "20 years in one page" document — for humans, not parsers.

You: the one everyone asks.
#19 — Mine your inbox for a niche: the recurring question is a service.

#20 — The succession doc that makes you promotable instead of just indispensable.

RIGHT, BUT...

What software developers do all day — and why you've been fluent in their language your whole life.

THE 101 · THIS SPREAD: #41–50



Hey girl. This is the thing about AI, baby. Come to find out what software developers do all day: **they write their way through everything with "right, but..."**

Somebody tells them: we need this feature. And the developer goes — right, but the database. Right, but the login. Right, but what happens when a user does the dumb thing on a Tuesday. And here's what blew my mind, blows it still: *the feature stays non-negotiable*. Nobody hears "right, but" and cancels the feature. The right-buts aren't objections. They're the to-do list.

The thing that gets negotiated is never *whether* — it's *what*, exactly, in what order.

Now. Think about the last time somebody told you "know better, do better," and you felt that little *ugh* on the inside. Every part of you said: right, but what do we DO? And somebody answered with something useless, and you kept right-butting, and eventually everyone agreed you were being negative.

You were not being negative. You were being an engineer without a keyboard.

Because here's the sentence I've been circling my whole life, and I'm going to say it plain: **your brain already does, on its own, what computational languages had to be built over decades to do.** The if-thens. The dependencies. The this-won't-work-unless. Some of us have felt handicapped our entire working lives — not because we couldn't see the whole board, but because we could see *all of it*, every dependency, so clearly that we couldn't pretend the first step was simple. Other people called that overthinking. It was actually just... thinking. Yours came with you. And the you is more than you.

What's been missing is not resolve. It's a counterpart that can *hold all the right-buts at once*. That's what this technology is. It can handle you not having the exact right words. It can handle rambling. It can handle a transcript. It can handle the next right-but, and the one after that, until the right-buts run out and what's left — is the feature. Shipped.

So the practice, and it's the whole centerpiece of this magazine: stop treating your right-buts as the reason you can't. Write them down — all of them — and hand them to the machine as requirements.

You've been fluent in this language for years. You just never had anything on the other end of the conversation. Now you do. Right, but — exactly. Go.

"A spec is a right-but list with a deadline."

#41

Automate the report you dread.

Whatever you compile weekly by hand — AI drafts it from your bullet points in minutes. *(ops managers, program directors, shift supervisors)*

#46 — The checklist that stops the mistake.

#47 — Prep difficult conversations.

#42 emails in your voice · #45 de-jargon for exactly their level · #49 the schedule nobody fights about · #50 the decisions log = proof of judgment

THE MACHINES WORK OVERNIGHT

Somebody's computer did a day's work last night. Several days' worth, actually. Here's why yours didn't — and what managers already know about fixing it.

THE 101 · THIS SPREAD: #51–60

While you were asleep last night, somebody's computer did a day's work. Several days' worth, actually.

This is not science fiction; it's just Tuesday in software. Developers talk about it the way farmers talk about irrigation: they set the AI running before bed — writing the code, combing the databases, assembling the report — and in the morning they harvest. The machines are working hours at a time, up to all twenty-four of them, carrying whatever mental workload a person managed to hand off. The work is happening. Right now. At scale. For them.

And the rest of us? We're not using it that way. You know why. **Because it takes so much work to get it to do the work.** You've seen the downloads, the cheat sheets — "10 prompts for more views." Fine, as far as they go, which is about an inch. They're all so *specific* — somebody else's use case, somebody else's business. Meanwhile the thing you actually want is bigger and weirder and yours: the three mini-businesses, the shop that posts itself, the emails that go out while you're at your actual job, the five offers orchestrated by one patient agent that never sleeps.

That's not a prompt. That's a *delegation* — and delegation is a management skill.

#52

Onboard without babysitting.

Turn your knowledge into a first-two-weeks guide a new hire — human or machine — can follow alone. (*small-business owners, department heads*)

You already know how to do this. You've onboarded people. You've written the handoff doc, built the checklist, explained the job to someone new and then — this is the crucial part — *let them do it*.

Do that. The first two weeks with the machine are onboarding: teach it your formats, your standards, your voice. The document you'd write for a new hire is the document it needs. Then the handoffs begin — the posting, the report, the follow-up, the schedule — one at a time, reviewed like a manager reviews a new employee's work, until you're not doing the tasks anymore. You're running them.

The economy splits, quietly, right here: people who use AI like a search box, and people who use it like a staff. Same tools. Same price. Different decade ahead.

You've managed harder cases than this one. This employee shows up.

*"Search box or **staff**. Same tools. Different decade ahead."*

**YOU: PROGRAM MANAGER,
CLINICAL DIRECTOR**

IIWY: **#56 — Make the case for headcount.** AI turns your overwork into the numbers-and-risk memo leadership responds to.

YOU: MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

IIWY: **#57 — Translate up.** Convert what your team did into what your boss's boss cares about.

YOU: ____ | IIWY: ____

You: new manager.

#53 — Feedback that lands: direct, fair, documentable.

You: property manager, school staff.

#58 — De-escalate on paper: the angry email answered calmly.

You: change-maker.

#60 — The memo that answers objections before they're raised.

#59 — Plan the meeting worth having — or draft the recommendation to cancel it.

I AM THE BOTTLENECK NOW

I have to tell on myself now, because this magazine would be dishonest without it.

For years, the system was the bottleneck. No time, no team, no budget, no access — every idea I had cost more hours than I owned. Then this technology showed up and started filling in blanks. Business plans. Formats. Whole drafts of things I'd carried in my head for a decade. The blanks filled. The folder grew.

And nothing shipped. Because the bottleneck had moved, and it was me.

Here's the sentence I keep taped over my desk now: **the only thing I can control is that a thing goes live**. An email is sent. A page is published. A file exists where a stranger can find it. That's it. That's the whole job at the end of every project — not perfection, not readiness, not one more pass. Live.

The machine solved the making. Nobody's machine solves the shipping. That one stays human — which is inconvenient, because the human has feelings about being seen.

So this page is short on purpose, and it ends in a checklist instead of a flourish — because you have a folder like mine, and one thing in it is closest to done.

THE SHIP-IT CHECKLIST

1. Name the one thing closest to done. (Not the best thing. The closest.)
2. Ask AI: "What is the smallest public version of this that could exist by Friday?"
3. Strip everything that isn't load-bearing.
4. Put it where one real person can respond — a link, a post, a send.
5. Tell one person it exists. Done is when *they* can see it.

YOU: EYEING A \$2,000 COURSE

IIWY: **#71 — Build the syllabus yourself.**
Structure the free version first, then decide.

#72 the patient tutor · #76 dumb questions, safely · #77 reverse-engineer the good ones · #78 the learning log that compounds

WHICH OF THE 101 ARE YOU?

Two questions. Pencil. The website version does the finding for you — and emails your ten.

STEP ONE — WHICH VERB PAYS YOU?

- ☐ **You manage** — people, ops, projects
- ☐ **You sell** — clients, deals, relationships
- ☐ **You count** — money, books, rules
- ☐ **You care** — patients, clients, communities
- ☐ **You make & move** — product, plant, logistics
- ☐ **You tell** — words, media, story
- ☐ **You build & investigate** — systems, cases

STEP TWO — NAME THE ITCH

- ☐ **Leverage** — I mostly like my work; I want it to pay more, cost less, count bigger.
- ☐ **Pivot** — I'm circling something else: out, up, or sideways — before the decade decides for me.

STEP THREE — FIND YOUR TEN

Sample: Manage × Leverage

#1 · #12 · #20 · #41 · #46 · #50 · #52 · #56 · #57 · #59

Circle yours as you meet them. All 14 combinations mapped at the website — plus your ten, emailed.

pennywrenn.media/quiz

Want your ten turned into your five deliverables — with the order and the prompts? That's the \$5 adventure. [Back page.](#)

SEEING THE THING MEANS DOING THE THING

Seth Godin proved an idea by giving the book away. The gate you've been waiting at is unstaffed now.

THE 101 · THIS SPREAD: #81–90

There's a man I keep mentioning on my livestreams — Seth Godin — and one move of his that I hold like scripture. In 2000 he wrote a book arguing that ideas that spread, win. And instead of defending that idea in meetings, he *released the book as a free download* to prove it. The free thing carried the idea. The idea built the audience. The book became a bestseller in print. The demonstration WAS the argument.

That's the whole lesson, and I want to hang it on the most practical wall in your life: **the only way anyone knows a thing can be done is if they see the thing.** That's how everything works. We pretend it's credentials and interviews

and applications, but you've watched people get hired on the strength of a thing they could point to, and you've watched brilliant people stall for the lack of one. The seen thing wins. Every time.

Now — the writer's confession that makes this personal. I spent years not putting things into the world because I needed somebody else to tell me they were done. A book is a finished product; I needed an editor, an assigner, a permission slip. That's the disease of talented people who came up in institutions: we learned to make things *for approval*, and approval had a gate, and the gate had a keeper.

#81

Write the post only you could write.

One observation from your years that outsiders find fascinating; AI helps shape, you sign. (*the quietly expert*)

The gate is unstaffed now. You can put the thing where people can see it — tonight, alone, free. Which means the only remaining question is whether the thing exists to be seen.

And this is where I'm supposed to say "just start" — but you've read sixteen pages of me by now, so you know I don't believe in *just* anything. I believe in obedience to what you see. I see things as a magazine — always have, see everything as an issue of some larger container — so when it came time to make a free download, I was obedient to that, and you're holding the result. What you see is different. A class. A shop. A service. A slideshow with cool songs. Whatever it is, it's been standing in your head, fully furnished, waiting for you to stop asking the world's permission to build it.

Godin didn't ask permission to prove his idea. He shipped the proof.

Your proof has been drafted for twenty years. The publishing part just got easy.

*"The gate is **unstaffed** now."*

YOU: NURSE, PLUMBER, TEACHER, LOGISTICS PRO

IIWY: **#82 — Pitch the trade publication.**

Every field has one; AI drafts the 150-word pitch from your best war story.

YOU: 20 MINUTES OF KNOWING

IIWY: **#90 — Build the talk.** Deliverable at a conference, a classroom, or a retirement dinner.

YOU: ___ | IIWY: ___

You: exactly what they need.

#83 — The local panel: AI finds the rooms that need speakers like you, and drafts the offer.

You: monthly, useful, yours.

#84 — Start the tiny newsletter. AI handles consistency; you supply the knowing.

You: too modest to apply.

#89 — Nominate yourself. Awards go to people who apply.

#88 — Record the origin story. Dictate how you got here; AI shapes it for bios, interviews, the about page.

OWN THE LAYER

The economics, said plainly, for people who don't read the tech press: this only works if you and I own some of it.

THE 101 · THIS SPREAD: #61–70

Let me say the economics part plainly, because somebody has to say it to people who don't read the tech press.

The way I see AI: this whole economy only works if you and I own some of it. Not stock — standing. The models themselves belong to a handful of companies; that fight is above our pay grade. But on top of the model layer sits everything the models get *used for* — and that layer is unclaimed land. The service. The product. The little machine that does the thing for your county, your industry, your church, your block. **Ownership on top of the model layer: that is where our**

income growth is — and I'd argue it's where we take back the internet while we're at it.

Here's the mechanism, stripped bare. You have expertise the model doesn't have — twenty years of what actually happens, in your field, when theory meets a Tuesday. The model has capacity you don't have — the overnight hours, the throughput, the patience. Ownership is what happens when you put your judgment on top of its capacity, wrap the result in an offer, and charge for it. That's it. That's the whole business model of the next decade, available in sizes from side-hustle to staffed company.

#61

Name the sellable slice.

From your skill inventory (#3), have AI identify the one service strangers would pay for this month.

"But I'm not technical." Baby, we covered this on page 10 — you've been writing requirements documents in your head your whole life. The trades understand this instantly, by the way: no plumber thinks owning the wrench company is the job. The wrench is leverage; the *license* is the business. Your experience is the license. AI is the best wrench ever made, and it rents for twenty dollars a month.

In the meantime — before the grand version — you become a provider. This decade of the 101 is the on-ramp: name the sellable slice, put up the one-page offer, pitch the five businesses who already meet your customers, package the knowledge you give away at work. Small. Priced. Real. Because you'll need money to fund what you really want to build, and the fastest honest money is selling what you already know to people who need it.

They sold us the internet as a marketplace of ideas, then charged us rent to stand in it. The counter-move isn't a boycott. It's a deed.

*"Your experience is the license. AI is the best wrench ever made — and it rents for **twenty dollars a month.**"*

#62 — Set up the offer page.

#64 — Package your knowledge.

YOU: ___ | IIWY: ___

You: photographer, bookkeeper, trainer.

#63 — The first five pitches, to businesses who already meet your customers.

You: ops, HR, safety, IT veteran.

#66 — Consulting without quitting: ten hours a month, structured.

You: 20+ years, licensed.

#70 — Paid judging and reviewing: what your field pays experienced eyes for.

#68 — Run the numbers before the leap: side income needed, taxes owed, hours available. The honest model.

IS THE INTERNET A HUMAN RIGHT?

I say it is. But I'm not going to argue the way you expect.

THE 101 · THIS SPREAD: #21–30

The usual debate goes: is it or isn't it, and everyone retreats to their corners, and nothing happens. But watch what the question is actually doing. If the internet is *not* a human right, you're not going to do anything differently tomorrow. Nothing changes. The debate is free. But if it *is* — then blank. Right? **Then blank.** And it's in solving for that blank that you arrive at things you find you're willing to affirm. If it is, then a citizen locked out of it is being denied something owed. If it is, then an algorithm that silently decides who gets hired is a public matter, not a business secret. If it is, then what we build there — and who owns what we build there — is a question of rights, not just markets. You

don't have to win the debate. You just have to live as if the answer matters, and see what it obligates.

This is how the founders did it, by the way — and I say that with every asterisk attached, because the imperfect union ignored and undermined plenty. But be clear about the mechanism they used: nobody assigned them power. They were people who decided the truth they could affirm was *self-evident* — and the only truth that has ever actually been self-evident is this one: **we are.** We exist, we're here, we're a public. Not citizens-or-not, not this party or that one. A public. We, the people. Everything else in that document was aspiration; that one word — *we* — was fact.

#21

Find your adjacent jobs.

Feed AI your history; ask for the ten roles one step sideways that pay more or cost less of you. (*tellers* → *compliance*; *teachers* → *instructional design*; *drivers* → *logistics*)

And because we keep fighting about who "we" is, we cannot assert a single thing that "we" is owed.

Here's why this belongs in a magazine about AI ideas for working people, and specifically on the pivot decade of the 101. The internet was sold to us as the marketplace of ideas — free, fair, open to anyone with something to say. It is not free and it is not fair. But it is, for the first time, *buildable* by people like you — and every pivot on this spread is really the same move: deciding that where you stand is yours to choose. A step sideways into the role that pays more or costs less of you. Government experience translated to private, or back. The license carried across a state line. The two-year experiment run before the resignation letter. Little acts of self-determination, every one.

A right you don't exercise is a ruling you've accepted. If the internet is a human right — then blank. Go fill in your blank.

*"The only truth that has ever actually been self-evident is this one: **we are.**"*

YOU: MILITARY, MUNICIPAL, DEFENSE

IIWY: **#26 — Translate public to private (or back).** Government experience into corporate language, or corporate résumé into civil-service application.

YOU: THE SENSIBLE DREAMER

IIWY: **#30 — The two-year experiment plan.** One class, one client, one shift — before any resignation letter.

YOU: ___ | IIWY: ___

You: romanticizing the pivot.

#22 — Interview the other side: role-play a day in the job you're eyeing, annoying parts included.

You: staring at a job post.

#23 — Gap-map it: real requirements vs. decoration.

You: crossing a state line.

#27 — Check the license transfer and the fastest bridge.

#29 — Age-proof the plan. Where does experience price you UP rather than out? Steer there.

THIS MIGHT BE MIDLIFE

If you're 35 to 50, I'm talking to you. (You and my mom, if she happens to be reading.)

THE 101 · THIS SPREAD: #91–100

There's a sweet spot for the person this whole issue has been addressed to, and it's not a marketing demographic — it's a feeling. It's the *oh, shoot* that arrives somewhere in this stretch: this might be midlife. It sure feels uncomfortable. You've been working longer than the internet has existed. You know things — real things, expensive things, things that took a decade a piece to learn. And some morning recently you did the math on how many working decades remain, and the number had a two in it. Maybe a one.

So when somebody says *know better, do better*, you feel that little ugh — because every part of you answers: right, but

what do we DO? (Page 10. I told you that sentence would follow you out of this magazine.)

Here is what I believe we do, and why I believe this cohort — X, Y, and the leading edge of Z, everybody who remembers both the before and the after of the internet — is the one that has to do it. **We become an activation generation.** Not a retraining generation, lord. Not "learn to code" at 47. *Activation* — as in: the judgment is already loaded, the experience is already banked, and what changed this year is that the execution layer finally showed up.

The long game, then — the last decade of the 101, this spread: design the glide path instead of waiting for the cliff. Price the encore career. Outline the book even if you never write it — the outline tells you what your career was about. Document the family knowledge with the same method you used for the work knowledge, because your mother's recipes and your father's repairs are institutional knowledge too, and that institution has no succession plan either. Rehearse the identity that doesn't need the badge before the badge comes off.

And then — because you've been generous with me for twenty-some pages, I'll say the quiet part — pass it down. The whole point of a generational inheritance is that somebody has to decide to leave one. Write the letter to your younger colleague. What you know now, addressed to who you were. AI helps; the wisdom is yours. Publish it or hand it over — either way it outlives the job, which means you will have built the thing every working life is secretly trying to build.

This might be midlife. Good. Midlife is the only point in the ride where you can see both directions clearly — and you're holding a machine that can finally keep up with what you see.

One page left. It's for the question you've been avoiding.

"Not a retraining generation — an activation generation."

#91

Design the glide path.

Model part-time, consulting, or seasonal versions of your job for your last working decade. (*trades, healthcare, education — fields that flex*)

YOU: A CAREER'S WORTH OF CHAPTERS

IIWY: #93 — **Write the book outline.** Even unwritten, it clarifies what your career was about.

YOU: COP, EXECUTIVE, CLERGY

IIWY: #98 — **Rehearse the retirement identity** before the badge comes off.

YOU: ____ | IIWY: ____

You: builder, chef, nurse, driver.

#92 — Price the encore career: the lower-body-mileage versions of your field.

You: everyone with people.

#95 — Document the family knowledge too.

You: finance, legal, HR, ops.

#99 — The board-seat résumé, in governance language.

#100 — The letter to your younger colleague. What you know now, addressed to who you were.

#101

Tell the machine everything.

The job. The years. The itch you've had since page one.

Then ask it the question:

**"If you were me —
what would you do?"**

Read the answer. It will be smart, and thorough, and it will be missing exactly one thing: someone who's been where you're going, willing to put her name on what to do first.

That part doesn't come from the machine.

That's the \$50 door. It's exactly what I do.

Book the session: I'll pick your path, order your moves, and write the Blueprint — addressed to you alone. [**Book it →**](#)



THE BACK PAGE

THE OFFER STACK

This issue was made with AI in a workweek — on Day 3 of a five-day plan you can run yourself. Here's the whole machine. No funnels pretending not to be funnels.

FREE **This magazine.** You're holding it. Forward it to somebody mid-ugh.

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FREE **The 5-Day AI Activation Plan.** The workbook this issue came out of. Five days, timers, pencil.

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FREE **The Picker.** The page-15 quiz, but the website does the finding — and emails your ten.
pennywrenn.media/quiz →

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\$5 **The Adventure (IIWY CYOA).** Your ten become your five deliverables — the order, the prompts, the ship moves. Anchored to the 220 real-world tasks AI was actually measured against.

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\$50 **The Session + Blueprint.** One hour about your one live opportunity. You leave with the Blueprint: what I would do if I were you — in order, in writing. pennywrenn.media/meet →

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\$500 **Publications & Deployments.** For the story that needs to land in a bigger room: the Oprah pitch and its kin. By application. pennywrenn.media/deploy →

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Founding rates for the first three buyers at each level — then they expire, because I said so publicly and integrity has a price tag.

penny **WRENN** MEDIA