

FROM AI USE TO AI FLUENCY

The Human Capabilities Behind Better AI Outcomes

THE FLUENCY GAP

Using AI Is Not the Same as Working With AI

More people are using AI to generate content, summarize information, explore ideas, and save time. But access and use do not automatically create AI fluency.

When AI produces a weak or generic response, it is easy to conclude that the technology is not useful. Sometimes, however, the problem is not the tool. It is how we work with it.

Working effectively with AI requires more than entering a prompt and accepting the first response. It requires the person to bring purpose, relevant context, thoughtful exchange, and sound judgment to the process. These are the human capabilities behind better AI outcomes - and they are at the heart of AI fluency.

That is the shift from transactional AI use to a relational approach. The 3-minute self-assessment on page 2 will help you identify whether your current approach is primarily transactional or relational.

WHAT IS RELATIONAL AI?

Relational AI is the practice of engaging artificial intelligence as a thinking partner rather than using it only as a transactional tool.

"Relational" describes the human approach to the interaction. It does not suggest that AI thinks, understands, or participates like a person. "Thinking partner" is a functional metaphor. AI can help you explore questions, generate alternatives, examine assumptions, and refine ideas.

The person remains accountable. AI does not replace your experience, values, judgment, or responsibility.

THE FRAMEWORK

The Five Pillars of Relational AI

Five human capabilities shape how a person approaches working with AI:

PURPOSE	Begin With Intention Clarify what you want to accomplish before engaging AI.
PRESENCE	Bring Awareness to the Interaction Approach the exchange with attention, curiosity, and awareness.
PARTNERSHIP	Co-Develop Through Exchange Use a back-and-forth exchange while remembering that the person directs the process.
PRECISION	Provide Clarity and Context Give AI the relevant information, perspective, and direction it needs.
PRACTICE	Build Relational Habits Strengthen how you work with AI through reflection, feedback, and repeated application.

3-MINUTE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Are You Using AI - or Working With It?

A relational approach describes how you work with AI - with intention, context, exchange, and judgment. Rate each statement based on your typical practice. If you are completing this assessment with another leader in mind, rate each statement based on the behaviors you have observed.

RARELY = 1	SOMETIMES = 2	CONSISTENTLY = 3	
STATEMENT			SCORE
1. Before using AI, I clarify what I want to accomplish.			___
2. I provide relevant background and context instead of relying on a brief, one-line request.			___
3. I approach the interaction with curiosity and openness to ideas or perspectives I may not have considered.			___
4. I use a back-and-forth exchange to develop and refine ideas rather than automatically accepting the first response.			___
5. I use AI-generated questions, alternative perspectives, or counterpoints to examine my own thinking.			___
6. I provide feedback and additional direction to improve the relevance and usefulness of the response.			___
7. I evaluate AI-generated information and ideas using my own experience, values, and judgment.			___
8. I reflect on what made an AI interaction effective so I can improve how I work with it over time.			___
ADD ALL 8 RESPONSES		YOUR SCORE: ___ / 24	

WHAT YOUR SCORE SUGGESTS

8-12

PRIMARYLY TRANSACTIONAL

You tend to approach AI as a tool that receives a request and produces a response. This can work for straightforward tasks, but may also produce generic or incomplete output.

Move beyond one-and-done prompting by becoming more intentional about how you guide and evaluate the interaction.

13-19

BEGINNING TO PARTNER

You are beginning to use AI more intentionally. You may provide context, refine responses, or co-develop ideas - but not consistently.

Strengthen the habits that produce more relevant outcomes while keeping human judgment at the center.

20-24

RELATIONAL AI THINKER

You typically use AI as a thinking partner - a resource for exploring, questioning, developing, and refining ideas.

AI supports your thinking; it does not replace your experience, values, judgment, or responsibility.

Your score reflects how you currently approach working with AI - not how much you know. Relational AI strengthens the human practice of working with AI; it does not humanize the technology.

FROM AI USE TO AI FLUENCY

Your result is a starting point. Relational AI helps people strengthen and amplify human capabilities. Using the Five Pillars framework improves AI fluency and shapes a positive approach to working with AI.

READY TO LEARN MORE?

**Bring Relational AI to your company.
Contact Carol Heady at 914-980-2078**