Seven Questions

Before you ask AI to help with something, ask these, in this order. No device needed.

1. **What is the real problem? What have you already tried?**
   What you tried tells you what the problem really is.

2. **What would a useful output look like?**
   A draft, a list, one page, one answer. If you can't describe it, you can't tell whether it worked.

3. **What information is safe to share?**
   Share the problem, not the private details. Most problems have a version with no names in it.

4. **Is this low-stakes or high-stakes?**
   Stakes decide how much checking it needs, and who has to do it.

5. **What must a person or an official source check?**
   Trust the verification, not the vibe. A confident tone is not evidence.

6. **Is a reusable workflow enough, or would a coded tool be better?**
   Start with steps you can write on a card. Build a tool only if the card keeps paying off.

7. **Could this be done with open or local tools?**
   And if not: **solve it, skip it, or refuse it.** Skipping and refusing are results, not failures.

Keep in your pocket: would this still work if the API shut off tomorrow?

Turn over to run your own problem through all seven.

My problem, run through the seven

Share the problem, not the private details. Leave names, numbers and addresses off this card.

The problem, in one line:

1 · Real problem / what I've tried

2 · A useful output looks like

3 · Safe to share

4 · Low or high stakes? *(circle)* **LOW / HIGH**

5 · Who or what must check it

6 · Workflow or tool

7 · Open/local? Solve / Skip / Refuse *(circle)*

The problems mapped in this room become the challenges we build together at the hackathon, Saturday Dec 12, North York Central Library.

Bring Your Problem: Can AI Help? · TPL Innovator in Residence, Applied AI.