



# Seven methods

We don't give you the file. We teach you to build it.

## METHOD 01

### FIND

How to find any answer

Most people search like a customer.

Professionals search like an operator.

**Go to the primary source first.** The official docs, the actual job post, the company's own site. Not a blog summarizing it, not a reaction video. Primary sources are more accurate and usually faster.

**Search like an operator.** Use exact phrases in quotes. Narrow to a site (site:linkedin.com), a file type (filetype:pdf), a date range. Subtract noise with a minus sign. A precise query beats an hour of scrolling.

**Triangulate before you trust.** Three independent sources agreeing beats one confident source. If only one place says it, treat it as a rumour.

**Check recency and incentive.** Ask two questions of everything you read: When was this true? And who profits if I believe it?

**DRILL** Pick something you don't know, a tool, a rate, a process. Find a trustworthy answer in under 10 minutes using only primary sources. Write down the query that worked.

## METHOD 02

### DECONSTRUCT

How to build something you've never built

You never need a template. You need five examples and the ability to see the pattern.

**Collect five real examples.** Real ones, made by professionals, for the real situation. Not five templates, five artifacts that worked.

**Extract the skeleton.** List what every single example contains. That common structure is not a style choice, it's the function. That's your skeleton.

**Name the variables.** Note what changes between examples. Those differences are the judgment calls you'll have to make. Understand why each one was made.

**Write the rules.** Turn what you saw into explicit rules: 'every bullet contains a measurable result', 'the summary names the target role'. Now you have a method, not a copy.

**Build from the rules.** Blank page. Apply your rules. What comes out is yours, and it fits your situation, which no template ever could.

**DRILL** Take any deliverable you've never made. Find five real ones. Produce a written list of rules. Build yours from the rules alone, with the examples closed.

## METHOD 03

### LEARN

How to teach yourself any skill, fast

Courses are optional. The ability to learn without one is not.

**Define the outcome, not the topic.** Not 'learn QuickBooks'. Instead: 'reconcile a month of transactions for a real business without help'. An outcome tells you when you're done.

**Find the 20% that does 80% of the job.** Every tool has a handful of functions used daily and hundreds used never. Look at real job posts and real workflows to find which is which. Learn those first.

**Build a real artifact immediately.** Don't watch six hours of tutorial. Watch twenty minutes, then produce something real and flawed. The flaws tell you exactly what to learn next.

**Get feedback that stings a little.** Show it to someone who'll be honest, or have AI critique it against the rules you wrote. Comfortable feedback teaches nothing.

**Teach it back.** Explain it to another beginner, or write the SOP. If you can't explain it simply, you have a gap, and now you know exactly where.

**DRILL** Pick one tool from your niche. In 48 hours, produce one real artifact with it and write a one-page SOP teaching someone else to do the same.



# Seven methods

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## METHOD 04

### VET

How to judge information, tools, and opportunities

Confidence is not accuracy, and advice often arrives with an incentive attached. Learn to check both.

**Who benefits if I believe this?** Follow the incentive. A recommendation that profits the recommender needs outside evidence.

**Is this evidence, or is this vibes?** Numbers, sources, and dates are evidence. Confidence, screenshots, and lifestyle are not.

**Is it still true?** Platform rules, rates, and tools change yearly. A five-year-old answer about this year's hiring is a guess wearing a suit.

**Run the red-flag check.** Upfront fees, guaranteed income, secrecy, urgency, and vagueness about the actual work are the five signals of a scam or a bad client. Any one of them is a stop.

**DRILL** Take any opportunity or course you're considering. Run it through the four questions in writing. If you can't produce evidence for it, don't act on it.

## METHOD 05

### ASK

How to ask a question that gets answered

A well-formed question gets a professional's help. A vague one gets ignored, everywhere.

**Show what you're trying to do.** State the actual goal, not the symptom. 'I'm trying to reconcile March' beats 'it's not working'.

**Show what you already tried.** This proves you respect the other person's time, and it eliminates the first five things they'd suggest.

**Show what happened, exactly.** The literal error, the literal reply, the literal number. Not your paraphrase of it.

**Ask for the method, not the file.** 'Can you send me the file' gets you a file at best. 'How would you approach this' makes you a colleague, and teaches you something you keep.

**DRILL** Rewrite the last question you asked anyone into this four-part form. Notice how often you can now answer it yourself.

## METHOD 06

### UNSTICK

How to get yourself moving again

Every professional is stuck most of the day. They just have a procedure.

**Re-read the actual requirement.** A surprising share of 'stuck' is solving the wrong problem. Read what was asked, word for word.

**Shrink it to the smallest failing piece.** Cut the problem in half until you find the exact point where it breaks. Vague problems are unsolvable; small ones are trivial.

**Change one thing at a time.** Change two and you learn nothing from the result. Slow is fast.

**Explain it out loud.** Say the problem aloud to a wall, a friend, or an AI. The act of forming the sentence solves it more often than you'd believe.

**Time-box, then ask well.** Give yourself a hard limit, say 45 minutes. If you're still stuck, stop grinding and ask, using the ASK method. Grinding past the limit is ego, not work.

**DRILL** Next time you're stuck, run the five steps in order and write down which one freed you. Within a month you'll know your own failure pattern.



# Seven methods

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**METHOD 07****GIVE**

How to grow by giving first

The fastest way into any ecosystem is to put value into it before you ask anything from it.

**Do real work for a real need, at no cost.** One scoped pro-bono project for a school, parish, co-op, or small business. Choose where your hours do the most good: a small organization gains more from ten of your hours than a big one ever would.

**Teach what you just learned.** Write the guide you wish existed when you were stuck, and post it where the next beginner will find it. Teaching is also the strongest test of understanding: see LEARN.

**Share the method, not just the win.** When something works (a message that got a reply, a workflow that saved hours), share how it worked. Wins impress people. Methods help them.

**Show up in your niche's rooms.** Answer real questions in the communities where your niche gathers. In six months you are the person people tag, and referrals start arriving before job posts do.

**DRILL** This week: one hour of scoped, no-cost help for one real person or organization, and one written answer to a beginner's question in a community you belong to. Notice what both cost you, almost nothing. Notice what they start.

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