

## AN ESSAY &amp; A METHOD

# What are you *about*?

*A short, structured way of writing down who you are so AI tools can actually help you – without you re-explaining yourself every time. A business-user's primer on Daniel Miessler's TELOS framework.*

**CONCEPT**

Daniel Miessler  
Telos & Fabric

**FOR**

Business users  
of consumer AI tools

**FORMAT**

10-minute read  
20-minute build

## 01 — THE AMNESIA PROBLEM

## Every chat begins with a *stranger*.

Open ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, Claude. Type a question. The model doesn't know you. It doesn't know what you do, what you care about, what you've already tried, how you like to communicate, or what would be useful versus generic.

So you spend the first three sentences explaining yourself. Or you don't, and you get a generic answer. Then you do it again. Fifty times this week.

The problem isn't the model. The problem is the context you never give it. And the deeper problem is that most of us couldn't articulate that context if asked, because we've never sat down to articulate it to ourselves.

*"The bottleneck on good AI answers isn't the model. It's how clearly you can say who you are and what you're trying to do."*

— ADAPTED FROM DANIEL MIESSLER

## 02 — THE FIRST IDEA

# Good AI shrinks the gap between *thinking* and *doing*.

Daniel Miessler's framing in his Fabric work: the real promise of AI isn't "smarter answers." It's that the friction between having a thought and acting on it collapses toward zero — but only if your AI has enough context to act intelligently on your behalf.

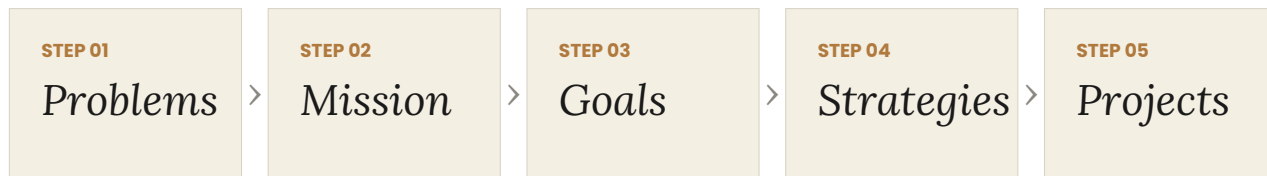
You can see this in two prompts, identical except for one detail. Ask any AI tool "write an email to my team about Q4 priorities," and you get a generic corporate email full of "I hope this finds you well" and abstractions about "strategic alignment." Ask the same tool the same question with your TELOS file attached, and you get an email that names the actual priority, addresses the actual team, in the actual tone you use. Same model. Different context. Different value.

## 03 — THE SECOND IDEA

# A short document about you that AI can *actually use*.

TELOS is Daniel Miessler's framework for writing down what you're about in a structure AI can read. You write it once. You hand it to your tools. You update it as you change. It is just a plain markdown file — no special software, no engineering background required.

The structure is a chain, where each layer answers a different kind of question:



Each layer connects: problems drive your *mission*; the mission gets expressed as specific *goals*; the goals are pursued via your chosen *strategies*; and strategies execute as concrete *projects*. Done well, every project you do can be traced back through the chain to a problem you actually care about. If it can't — that's the chain telling you something.

## 04 — THE FIVE STAGES

## In a little more detail.

**Step 01**

### Problems

*The fundamental things you believe are broken that you want to address.*

The deepest layer of the chain. They explain *why* you do anything. Most people skip this step and start at goals — which is why their work feels disconnected.

**Step 02**

### Mission

*What you've decided to do about those problems. One sentence, ideally.*

Not a corporate slogan — the specific stake you've put in the ground. Narrow enough to actually pursue. Broad enough to span years.

**Step 03**

### Goals

*The specific outcomes that, if achieved, would represent real progress.*

Measurable. Time-bound. Each should trace back to one of your problems. Three to five goals is usually right — more than that and nothing gets attention.

**Step 04**

### Strategies

*The approaches you'll use. The how, distinct from the what.*

Principles that guide many decisions. Where your judgment lives. AI can generate projects all day — it can't tell you which strategy fits your context.

**Step 05**

### Projects

*The concrete work you're doing right now to execute on your strategies.*

Time-bound. Finishable. Each one should ladder up clearly: *this project executes this strategy, which pursues this goal, which addresses this problem.*

## 05 — DEPLOY IT

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# Paste your TELOS into the tool you already use.

A markdown file isn't a developer artifact — it's structured plain text. Every major consumer AI tool has a place to keep persistent context, you just need to know where:

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ChatGPT	<i>Settings</i> > <i>Personalization</i> > <i>Custom Instructions</i> . Paste into the "What would you like ChatGPT to know about you?" box.
Microsoft Copilot	<i>Copilot Studio</i> > <i>Agent</i> . Create a personal agent, paste your TELOS into the instructions block.
Google Gemini	<i>Gems</i> > <i>Create a Gem</i> . Build a personal Gem with your TELOS as the instructions. Pin it.
Claude	<i>Projects</i> > <i>Project knowledge</i> . Drop your TELOS file into a "Me" project. Every chat in that project starts loaded.

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### A closing thought.

When AI handles most tasks, the differentiator stops being your skills — it becomes your *clarity* about what you're trying to do and why. "Know yourself" stops being a self-help cliché and starts being a workplace skill. The TELOS file is just where you put the answer.

*Source material* — Daniel Miessler's TELOS framework ([github.com/danielmiessler/Telos](https://github.com/danielmiessler/Telos)), his Fabric project, and the NetworkChuck interviews on both. This primer is an educational summary written for an audience that interacts with AI primarily through consumer applications rather than the command line.