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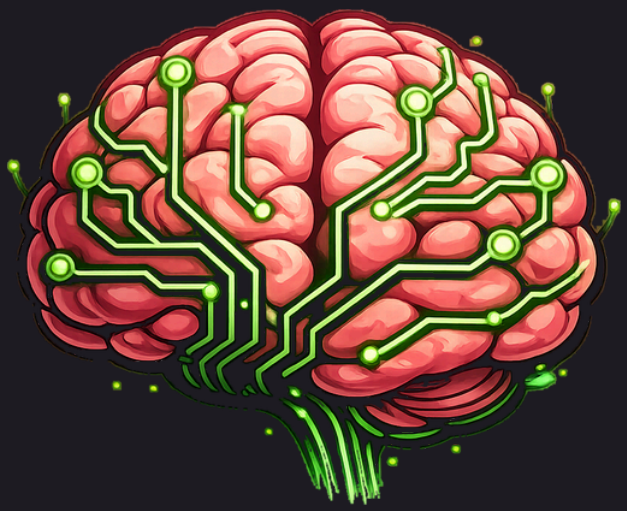

Amalgamind Second Look

Question it before you act on it.

A companion to Everything Is Words

Brian Baskin

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Question it before you act on it.

A companion to *Everything Is Words*.

Draft, November 2026. Free to read. Tell us what's wrong: post about it and tag Amalgamind on LinkedIn, X, TikTok or Facebook, or comment in the Amalgamind Community on Skool.

By Brian Baskin.

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Pat, Lou, Jordan, Robin, Ellis Supply, Sample Mechanical, and everyone around them in this book are invented. Any likeness to a real business or person is chance.

This book is not legal, medical, financial or safety advice.

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How to read this book

Something lands in front of you. A text that says the job moved. A number in a report. A headline. An answer from your AI, delivered with total confidence.

You're about to act on it.

This book is the thirty seconds in between. Sometimes thirty minutes. Five plain questions, in your own words, for anything that could cost you if it's wrong.

It's a companion to *Everything Is Words*, and it has two readers: you, and your AI. You read each chapter. Your AI reads the part at the end, headed *For your AI*. Every chapter ends with something you can do today, and each of those is a card.

Not everything needs it

If being wrong costs nothing and undoes in a minute, just go. Checking everything is its own way of getting nothing done.

Pat, Lou, Jordan, Robin, Ellis Supply and Sample Mechanical in these pages are invented.

The one sentence to say

> Help me take a second look. Read these files, and let's start on the first card.

Chapter 1: Say the claim

You can't check a feeling. Boil it down to one sentence that could be true or false.

What landed	The claim
"Supply is a mess right now"	The valve we ordered won't arrive this week
"Everybody's switching"	Two of our three largest customers have asked for it
"This tool will save you hours"	It cuts our weekly report from two hours to under one

Two more lines

- **What am I about to do because of it?**
- **What does it cost if it's wrong?** Money, time, safety, somebody's trust. Can it be undone?

Those two lines tell you how hard to look.

Watch for the push

When something wants an answer right now, makes you angry, or is exactly what you hoped to hear, slow down. That isn't proof it's false. It's proof you're easy to move at that moment.

A message demanding money, a password or a code, urgently, is the classic. Don't answer it. Reach the sender another way, using a number you already had.

A small example

> *Claim: Ellis Supply can't deliver the valve before the 12th. I'm about to buy it elsewhere for more. If wrong, we eat the difference and a return.*

Pat and Ellis Supply are invented.

Do this today

Take one thing you're about to act on. Say the claim, the action, and the cost of being wrong. That's card 1.

For your AI

- This chapter serves card 1, *The claim*.
- Ask: "What exactly is being claimed?" "What are you about to do because of it?" "What does it cost if it's wrong, and can you undo it?"
- If the claim can't be true or false, ask them to say it again more narrowly. Don't sharpen it for them.
- If it involves urgent money, passwords or codes, tell them to verify through a contact they already had, before anything else.

Chapter 2: Says who

Follow it back to whoever actually saw it.

Three questions

1. **Who told me?**
2. **How do they know?** Did they see it, hear it, or figure it?
3. **What do they get if I believe it?**

Three piles

Pile	Sounds like	Treat it as
Saw it	"I'm standing in front of it"	Strong, and still worth a date
Was told	"The counter guy said"	A lead. Go to the source
Reckon	"It's probably because"	A guess. Fine, if labeled

The trouble starts when a guess gets passed along three times and arrives dressed as something somebody saw.

Having an interest isn't lying

The person selling the thing may be telling the truth. Just get one source that doesn't gain when you say yes.

A small example

> *Who: Robin. How: an email from Ellis Supply, dated the 2nd. That email says "may slip". Robin read it as "will". Pile: was told.*

Nobody lied. A "may" became a "will" in one hop.

Pat, Robin and Ellis Supply are invented.

Do this today

For your claim, say who, how they know, and what they gain. Put it in a pile. That's card 2.

For your AI

- This chapter serves card 2, *Says who*.
- Ask the three questions one at a time. Ask them to pick the pile; don't pick it.
- Keep their exact words from the source, with its date, if they have it. Never reconstruct a quote.
- If nobody saw it, write that.

Chapter 3: What would change your mind

Before you go looking, say what you'd have to see to think you're wrong. Do it first. Afterward, anything can be explained away.

The flip question

> *If this were false, what would I expect to find?*

Then go look for that. Looking only for support will always find some.

The other explanations

Name at least two other ways you could be seeing what you're seeing. One of them should be dull: a typo, an old file, a wrong date, somebody misheard. Dull wins a lot.

Numbers

Ask three things of any number: out of how many, over what time, compared to what. "Complaints doubled" may mean one became two.

A small example

> *If it's false: Ellis will give me a ship date when I call. Other explanations: Robin read an old email; the delay is on a different part.*

Robin and Ellis Supply are invented.

Do this today

Say what would show you're wrong, and two other explanations. That's card 3.

For your AI

- This chapter serves card 3, *The flip*.
- Ask: "If this were false, what would you expect to find?" Then: "What else could explain it? Give me two."
- Only after they've answered, you may offer one more explanation, clearly marked as yours.
- For a number, ask out of how many, over what time, compared to what.

Chapter 4: Go and look

The best check is usually boring: make the call, open the file, walk over, count them.

The cheapest check that could prove you wrong

Not the most thorough one. The quickest thing that would actually change your answer.

Instruments lie quietly

A search that finds nothing might mean nothing's there. It might mean you searched the wrong place. Before you trust "none", try the same search on something you know exists.

The same goes for "done." A screen saying success is not the same as the thing being there. Go look at the thing.

Record it

What you checked, when, and what you found, in a line. Tomorrow you'll be glad. So will whoever asks why.

When you can't check

Say so. *"I couldn't confirm this."* Then decide with that on the table, not hidden under it.

A small example

> *Called Ellis at 10. Ships the 9th. The "may slip" was a different order. No need to buy elsewhere.*

Pat and Ellis Supply are invented.

Do this today

Do the one check. Write what you found, or that you couldn't. That's card 4.

For your AI

- This chapter serves card 4, *Go and look*.
- Ask what the cheapest check is that could prove them wrong. They run it, or you do only if you really can and they ask.
- Record only results they report, or that you actually saw, and say which.
- Never say something was verified when it wasn't.

Chapter 5: Check the machine too

Your AI can be wrong in a calm, fluent, well-organized voice. That's what makes it easy to miss.

Habits worth having

- **Ask where it came from.** "Did you read that, or are you working it out?"
- **Open the source** it names. Make sure it exists and says that.
- **Don't lead it.** "This is true, right?" invites a yes. Ask "What argues against this?"
- **Ask what it couldn't see.** It may not have your files, today's date, or this morning's news.
- **Start fresh** for a second opinion, without telling it what you think.

Agreement is cheap

If your AI agrees with you right away, you haven't learned much. Tell it plainly:

> *Argue the other side as well as you can. Then tell me which parts you actually checked.*

High stakes

Health, law, money you can't afford to lose, anything that could hurt someone: your AI can help you write the questions. A qualified person answers them.

A small example

> *Pat asked the AI for the pressure rating. It gave one. Pat asked where from. It said it was working from similar fittings. Pat looked up the maker's sheet.*

An invented example.

Do this today

Ask your AI the two questions: what argues against this, and what did you actually check? Then open one source. That's card 5.

For your AI

- This chapter serves card 5, *Check me*.
- Say for each point whether you read it in something they gave you, found it in a source you can name, or are inferring.
- Name no source you haven't actually seen. If you can't see it, say so.
- When asked, make the strongest case against, without softening it.
- For health, law, safety or serious money, say a qualified person has to answer.

Chapter 6: Decide, and say how sure

Looking forever is also a decision. At some point, call it.

Four lines

1. **What I'm doing.**
2. **How sure:** sure, fairly sure, or guessing.
3. **Why**, in a sentence.
4. **What would make me change it**, and when I'll check.

Say the sureness out loud

When you pass it on, pass the label with it. "Ellis says the 9th, I spoke to them at 10" travels far better than "it's fine."

Small steps for shaky ground

If you're guessing and it matters, pick the move you can undo. Order one. Try it on one job. Hold a day.

Look back

Later, read your four lines. Were you right? Where did you skip a question? That's how the checking gets faster.

A small example

> *Staying with Ellis. Sure: spoke to them. Change if there's no tracking by the 7th.*

Pat and Ellis Supply are invented.

Do this today

Write your four lines for the claim you started with. That's card 6.

For your AI

- This chapter serves card 6, *The call*.
- Ask the four questions. Let them choose how sure; if that doesn't match what was checked, point to the gap once.
- Don't make the decision. Save the four lines with the date.

Where to go next

Use it on the next thing that makes you want to move fast.

- **A one-minute version** for the truck: *Says who? Did they see it? What if it's wrong?*
- **When a check fails twice** the same way, the problem is in how word travels. *Fix It at the Base* is about that.
- **Write down who may decide what** in your work. *Everything Is Words* walks you through it.

Tell us what's wrong

Take a second look at this book too. It's a draft. Post about it and tag Amalgamind on LinkedIn, X, TikTok or Facebook, or comment in the Amalgamind Community on Skool.

> Say it, check it, then move.