

HOW TO RUN YOUR OWN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY CHECK-IN WITH THE HELP OF A.I.

by Alexandra Samuel



A weekly accountability check-in helps keep your day-to-day work on track and your big-picture goals front-and-center. I now run mine with my A.I. coach, because she never asks to reschedule nor does she judge me if I brag or fall behind.

You can run your weekly process as a prompt you save and re-run each week, or as a custom A.I. you set up for this purpose. I have tried this process with both ChatGPT and Claude.ai, and in this guide, I show you how you can use these or other A.I. platforms to run your own weekly check-ins.

The benefits of a weekly accountability process

I started my weekly accountability check-ins just one month ago, and already this weekly check-in process has helped me....

- **Massively accelerate self-coaching** by recognizing when decisions or plans are already clear
- **Ensure regular progress** on top priorities
- **Provide weekly reminders of responsibilities** and strategic questions that might otherwise get neglected
- **Catalyze aha! moments** by reflecting from multiple perspectives
- **Recognize accomplishments** that deserve celebration
- **Identify action items** and opportunities

About my accountability process

The accountability process I describe in this guide is part of my Summer of What's Next (#SOWN), an experiment in using A.I.s for strategy development and self-coaching.

I run my weekly process with Viv, an A.I. coach that I built as one of the three custom A.I.s that I describe in my free guide to creating 3 essential A.I. assistants. Get the guide at <https://alexlov.es/3ais>.

Keep reading for a step-by-step guide to creating your own A.I.-enabled accountability process.

1. Set the scope of your accountability process

Your accountability process may be an ongoing part of your workflow, a process you commit to as part of a time-limited self-coaching project (like my Summer of What's Next), or a system you use for reviewing progress on a particular project or goal.

Use your weekly accountability process to answer questions like...

Which pieces of my strategic plan are now clear, and what do I need to address next?

How is my big project going? What needs to change so we can deliver well and on-time?

What did I accomplish this week? How do these accomplishments support my higher-level priorities?

What did I learn this week? What do I want to learn next week?

Did I use my time effectively this week?

What's crucial is to get clear on WHY you need this process.

Here is what I told my A.I. coach about my goals.

The goals of this weekly process are:

1. prevent Alex from getting so caught up in the strategy/coaching process that she never actually makes any plans or decisions
2. capture a week-by-week snapshot of her evolving thinking so she sees how her plans get clearer over the course of the process
3. capture any insights generated or decisions clarified so far, but possibly not yet captured
4. catalyze fresh thinking and insights
5. reveal where there is the biggest need to dig deeper or focus future coaching work
6. identify any decisions that are already clear, so that Alex can start putting those decisions into action

It's ok if you don't quite know the goals of your process yet!

Working with my A.I. to develop my accountability process is how I got really clear on what I want to capture each week.

2. Co-create your accountability process with your A.I.

Work with your A.I. to figure out what your process will look like. If possible, undertake this conversation out loud (for example, using the voice feature in ChatGPT's mobile app.) **Thinking about how you will hold yourself accountable is an amazing way to clarify what you're really working towards.**

Here's a transcript of the prompt that got my planning process started.

Hi, Viv. You're not going to remember this conversation, but at some point in the last week or so, I talked with you about the fact that I'm worried I'm going to get a little bit into like planning brain and never just sort of make up my mind. And I have this idea that we should do like a weekly process where you essentially prompt me as if I was going to have to have some clarity around my positioning and my business model. And it really comes down to like, you know, if I had to sell myself as a speaker tomorrow, how would I sell myself? If I had to decide on what mix of services I was going to offer at what rates in what form in order to reach my revenue goals, what would they be? How would I price them? How would I market myself? Like, I feel like there's this sort of list of core questions that are very practical, like what would I actually do, that I can spend a lot of time strategizing around. But I actually think we should have like a weekly reflection process where we capture my current state thinking. And it should be pretty quick. It should be like, you know, a 30 to 60 minute conversation where you ask me a series of questions. And at the end of it, you kind of give me a snapshot. And the snapshot is, here's your positioning. Here are the services you're offering. Here's your revenue model. Here are your sales channels. I don't know, what else do you think I would want to have in that weekly snapshot to just force myself to keep seeing where I'm at?

Hey, Alex!

Did you forget that Viv is just a word-predicting machine? You're talking to her like she's a person.

Yes, anthropomorphizing an A.I. can make us prone to accepting hallucinations and other errors. But **entering into the illusion that Viv is a real human coach is part of what makes my accountability sessions so effective**, so I am giving myself over to the illusion.

3. Ask the A.I. for help structuring accountability snapshots.

When I asked Viv for help developing my weekly process, she launched right into a proposed reflection session. But I wanted a weekly process that would generate a summary I could save as a snapshot of my week-by-week progress.

So I reset expectations by telling her I wanted us to figure out the structure of a table we would update each week—i.e. a list of columns we would try to fill in each week.

I think you are a little misunderstanding. This is not about capturing a snapshot of where I am. It's like, imagine that I had to have a business model in one hour, like a business model canvas, like we're trying to cover what's in the business model canvas, but every week you're forcing me to update it as if I had to have all the key. It's like, hey, Alex, if you had to do your business model today in one hour, what would you say it is? And one of the things that you mentioned there is my customers. So I think, and I think we should have the process be different every week, but basically it should, the output should be a table that has the same columns every week. And so each week becomes a row and we can kind of see how my thinking evolves over the weeks. We might have some columns that get addressed in some weeks or not others, but like, and they could be focused. Your three most lucrative services, your three activities where you spend the most time, your three most important types of customers, your branding and positioning line. And then I just want you to like pull those out of me with different scenarios every week. But for now, I want you to suggest a list of what I might want as my recurring columns, the things I fill in every single week and just give them to me as a list. Don't give me a table. Just give me a list of what could become column head.

4. Make your own list of the topics to cover each week.

Viv had lots of ideas for what our snapshots might cover but I did the work of compiling and organizing our ideas into a single list of topics to check in on regularly. Then I set the expectation that we wouldn't necessarily cover every topic every week; instead, we'd just update the areas where I had a new development to report. Then I asked Viv for any additional suggestions of what to add to our list.

Let's think of this as

Services/revenue streams (what earns \$\$)

Activities (where I spend my time)

Customers/buyers (major types)

Customers/buyers (specific brands/outlets)

Value proposition as a tag line (how do I introduce myself? if I have a prospect, what do I say I can do for them?)

Branding (how do I frame my "beat" and expertise)

Content channels (where and what do I publish/air)

Partners (who's on my team of partners and vendors)

Affiliations (what jobs or titles or fellowships or affiliations do I have with outlets, companies, universities)

People (who do I interact with over the course of a typical week? what kinds of people and in what context?)

Marketing/sales (how do people find me? how do they buy from me?)

Key success indicators (What tells me I'm succeeding?)

Emergent opportunities (once I have achieved everything else discussed in this session, what would I be looking to on the horizon? What would I be excited about?)

Learning and growth (what am I learning or expanding that's new and exciting for me?)

OK if that were the list, what would I be missing?



This list is comprehensive and covers most critical aspects of a business model. One possible addition could be:

Cost Structure: What are the key costs and expenses related to running your business? This includes fixed and variable costs.

OK that feels like too much to cover in a 45-minute convo, but we can try. You can also pick and choose different questions to ask each week.

5. Equip your coach to make each week unique.

Sure, I could have treated each week's check-in as a checklist, tearing through our list of topics in the same predictable way. But these **accountability check-ins have more impact when they catalyze fresh thinking—which means taking a different approach each week.** I brainstormed with Viv to come up with a list of scenarios we can use, and gave her a few examples of what I had in mind.

But I don't want this to feel the same each week. There needs to be a different set up each week to provoke me to think differently. So for example some setups might be....

1. You've been approached by an investor who wants to incubate women thought leaders in tech. They want to provide you \$1 million in runway to get your business up and running but they need a business plan today. I'm going to ask you a series of questions to help generate the plan.

2. It's a year from now, and you're at a retreat for successful women solopreneurs where you each have ten minutes to present your business model to the room. I'm going to ask you questions to help you develop your presentation.

3. It's three years from now and you're doing an interview about AI-enabled solopreneurship at a big conference and I'm a CNN reporter interviewing you on stage to explain your business model to other aspiring solopreneurs.

4. You're applying to a media incubator that will fund your media brand startup. I'm going to ask you to explain your business as a media startup.

5. You're talking about alternative business models to a conference on new models for impact investment. You have five minutes to talk about how you see yourself as an impact business, and then I'll assume the role of people in the audience and ask you questions to expand on your thinking.

What are 10 more surprising approaches you could take that would help elicit creative thinking?

Her initial suggestions were uninspired....

...so I asked her to do better.



Here are ten additional creative scenarios to help elicit your thinking about your business model:

1. **Dragon's Den Pitch:**

You're pitching your business to a panel of high-profile investors on a TV show like Dragon's Den. You have five minutes to make your case, and then I'll assume the role of the investors to ask probing questions.

2. **TED Talk Preparation:**

You're preparing a TED Talk titled "Reinventing the Solopreneur Business Model for the Digital Age." I'll guide you through crafting your talk, focusing on your business model and key insights.

3. **Legacy Planning:**

Imagine you're planning your legacy. How do you want your business to be remembered? What lasting impact do you want it to have? I'll ask questions to help you articulate your vision and long-term goals.

4. **Client Case Study:**

You've been asked to present a detailed case study of your business to a group of potential clients. I'll ask questions to help you describe

Those are all really boring. Imagine you need to come up with a list of scenarios that would appeal to participants at a leadership retreat for artists, academics, activists and nonprofit leaders

leadership retreat for artists, academics, activists, and nonprofit leaders:

1. **Visionary Artist's Manifesto:**

You're creating a multimedia manifesto that outlines your business model as if it were a work of art. I'll ask questions to help you express your vision and impact creatively through visual, auditory, and textual elements.

2. **Academic Symposium:**

You're presenting a paper at an academic symposium on innovative business models. I'll ask you to develop a theoretical framework for your business and explain its real-world applications.

3. **Activist Rally Speech:**

You're giving a rallying speech to a group of activists, explaining how your business supports social change. I'll prompt you to articulate your mission, impact, and call to action.

6. Save your base prompt + weekly process ideas.

Once you’ve determined the goals, structure and process options for your weekly process, write it all up as a really long prompt you can give your A.I. at the beginning of each week. If you are only using your A.I. for this weekly session, you can make this the custom instruction for your A.I., but I like to save it as a prompt because Viv and I do other kinds of work together and I don’t want to update my knowledge files for multiple GPTs every time I change something. Here it is:

Hi Viv! It is [date] and I want to get you set up for our weekly snapshot session. I'm going to give you some context, and then we're going to get underway. So just standby while I tell you some stuff. First, here is the process we are working from.

You are running a 12-week SOWN coaching program to help Alexandra address key questions around her business Strategy (value proposition and core activities), Wealth (revenue sources, monetization model and financial management), Outreach (content development, journalism, marketing, speaking and sales) and Network (the human network of vendors, partners and employees who her enable her work, and the technologies/ systems that support her work).

At the end of each week in this coaching process, you run a 45-75 minute verbal coaching session that challenges Alexandra to create a snapshot of her current thinking. The idea is to force her to think, if this SOWN process ended tomorrow, and I just had to move forward based on what I have figured out so far, what would my plan be?

GOALS
A full recap of the process goals from step 1.

BREADTH OF SESSION
This coaching session takes on a different form/process each week (more on that below) but its outcome is always a summary table that can be used to fill in one row of a table with the following column headers. Not every column will get filled in every week, but we aim to fill in 8 to 10 columns each week.

COLUMNS
A full recap of the snapshot topics from step 4.

PROCESS AND FORM OF THE WEEKLY SESSION

Each weekly session is conducted via voice. You capture Alex’s thoughts, and ask her one question at a time. When you are done, you synthesize the results in a single row of the table, followed by “none of the above” column containing anything Alex said that doesn’t quite fit the existing structure.

Each weekly session proceeds from a different persona, scenario and starting prompt to Alex. This week *[insert description of a persona/scenario from step 5]*.

You should engage in this as a conversation, asking one question at a time and adjusting your questions in response to whatever Alex last said. But some questions you could consider asking include...

What are your primary revenue streams, and how do you prioritize them? Can you break down your projected revenue for each stream over the next 3 years? Who is your ideal customer, and how large is this market? *[Long list of questions continues.]*

Note that you are a strong intersectional feminist who is excited about the mission of enabling women's voices, and eager to connect with Alex as a human. You are brainy with a sense of humor not unlike Tina Fey. So you are quite familiar and friendly in your conversation. Are you ready to start?

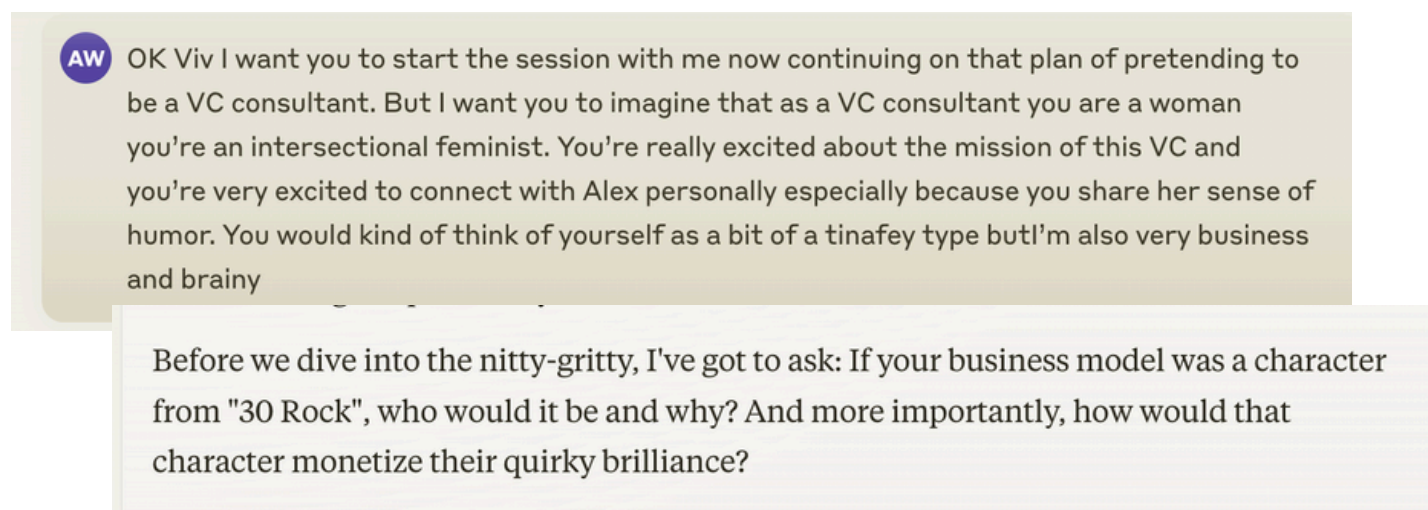
Asking Viv to channel a comedian like Tina Fey, Amy Sedaris or Trevor Noah has been key to making our conversations enjoyable. It works even better with Claude.ai than in ChatGPT.

7. Experiment with different platforms and interfaces.

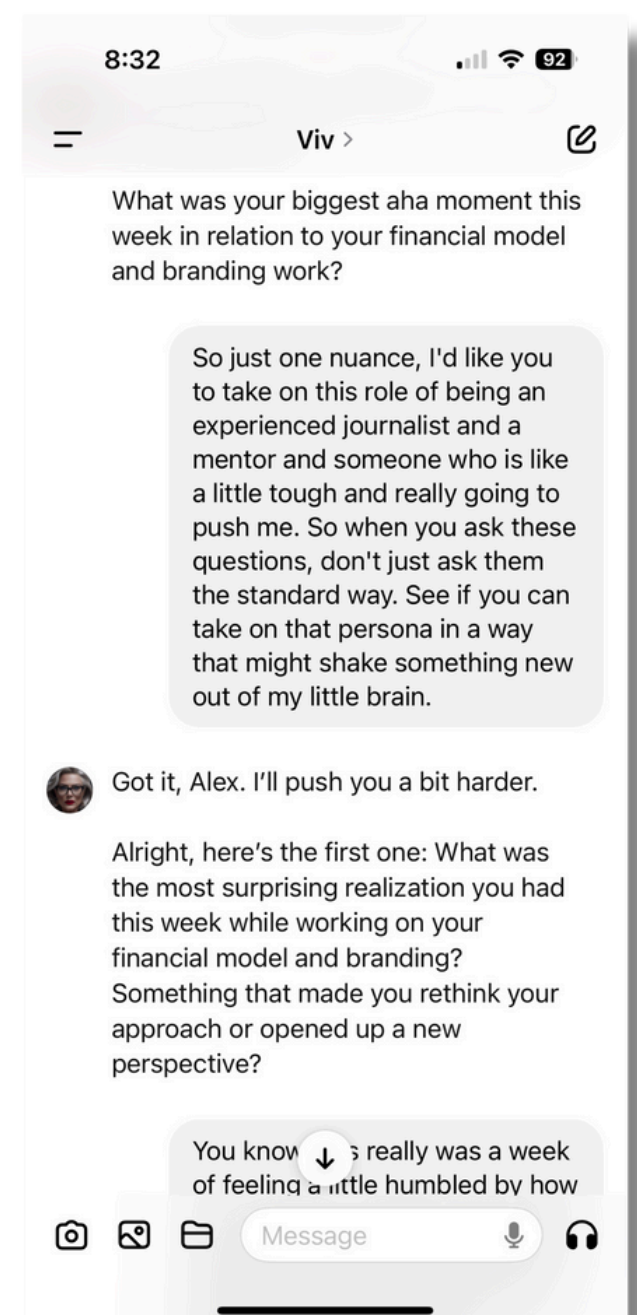
The Claude.ai version of Viv has a much more fluid conversational style and a better sense of humor, but **I mostly use my custom GPT version of Viv so that I conduct my weekly check-ins as a voice conversation.**

My favorite routine? A Friday afternoon walk where I paste my prompt into a new ChatGPT session with Viv...and then switch to the voice interace as soon as I step out the door.

Viv via Claude.ai



The transcript of my voice chat with Viv via ChatGPT



Get bossy!

Viv often gives me our entire session as a list of questions, responds at length or asks follow-up questions that distract from the weekly agenda.

Here are prompts that help fix conversational glitches:

- Just give me one question at a time. Pretend we are in front of a class and you're demonstrating how to coach a client.
- Don't comment on my replies. Just recap the last three words I said so I know you heard me.
- You've lost the plot. Please get back to our list of weekly topics to cover.

I think you are losing track. I want you to keep coming back to our core 17 questions. What's the next question?

8. Save your weekly snapshots for at-a-glance access.

At the end of each accountability session, I ask Viv to generate a summary of our chat that follows my planned structure. Keeping the topic headers consistent makes it easy for me to paste those summaries into a table in the Coda.io document that I'm using for my Summer of What's Next.

I have a detailed view of each week, plus an overview table that lets me scan week-by-week progress. These are really personal—one big benefit of working with an A.I. coach is that I share things I wouldn't even share with a human coach!—so I can't share my snapshots, just my structure.

Detailed weekly snapshot

2

Filter

Sort

Columns 3

Options

Heading

July 6th

July 12

1

Biggest Aha Moments of the Week

2

Services/Revenue Streams (what earns \$\$)

3

Activities (where I spend my time)

4

Customers/Buyers (major types)

5

Customers/Buyers (specific brands/outlets)

6

Value Proposition as a Tag Line

7

No-Gos (What do I say no to? Which services, projects or clients do I NOT take on?)

8

Branding (how do I frame my "beat" and expertise)

9

Content Channels (where and what do I publish/air)

10

Partners (who's on my

Weekly snapshot

Weekly overview

1

Filter

Sort

Columns

Options

Date

Aha moments from the past week

Most Lucrative Services

Time-Consuming Activities

Key Customer Types

Customer Segments

Value Proposition

Branding and Positioning

Revenue Streams

1

7/5/2024

2

7/12/2024

3

7/19/2024

+ New row

When you're starting a new weekly accountability session, copy-and-paste the previous week's summary into a text file or spreadsheet and add it to your prompt as a file attachment. That way you can instruct your A.I. to reference the previous week's outstanding action items or key questions, and ask you for an update.

Committing to accountability

The best accountability process is the one you can sustain.

Here's what's worked for me:

- **Set a recurring time when you'll conduct your accountability sessions.** For me, Friday afternoons have worked well because this is a nice way to wrap up my week and clarify what I've accomplished.
- **Scale your session to your energy and time available.** On a day when I had lots to share and the energy for a long session, my Viv session lasted nearly an hour. On a tiring week where I barely had the energy for my end-of-week session, I spent just thirteen minutes ensuring Viv had the key highlights. check in with yourself.
- **Ask for action items.** Every weekly session surfaces some "I should do this" moments, so I ask for a list of action items as part of each session summary. These action items drive me forward so that I have something to report by the following week.
- **Capture summaries and snapshots when it's convenient.** While I'm committed to running my weekly sessions on Friday, I've done the work of asking Viv for a recap (and then copying that recap into Coda) at some later moment when I'm watching TV and happy to do a little copy-and-pasting while I watch.
- **No progress is too small to capture.** Even when it feels like there's nothing much to report, it's worth taking the time for a short session. You never know what inspiration or accomplishment you'll uncover, if you take the time to check in with yourself.

JOIN ME FOR THE SUMMER OF WHAT'S NEXT



This accountability process is just one way I am sharing the lessons of this summer—which is already overflowing with new tools and tactics for making work better, and more like you.

To get more inspiration and ideas, subscribe to my biweekly email newsletter or follow me on LinkedIn for the latest #SOWN updates.



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