

Creating with Claude

A Practical Guide for Everyone

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Introduction

I was a skeptic. My son was downright anti-AI. I have been working with technology most of my adult life. He grew up on it and was an accomplished programmer. I am not.

I'd been playing with ChatGPT for about a year, but "playing" is the right word. I treated it like Google on steroids — quick research, how-to questions, the occasional summary of something I didn't feel like reading. I was basically paying \$20 a month for a super search engine. It never occurred to me that AI could actually build things.

Then I met Chuck Poole at my local bar poker league.

Chuck is a security guy like me. He'd sold his last company and was figuring out what he wanted to do next. What he settled on was going all-in on AI. Pun intended. By the time I went to visit him, he'd been fully immersed for months. He was using AI to automate everything in his life. He used it to organize his thinking and draft new ideas for his blog. He even built a digital personal assistant he named Jarvis that wired all of his productivity tools together to simplify his increasingly complex life. But the part that got my attention was this: he was building things. Real things. Applications and websites for his friends. Tools that actually worked and were commercially viable.

I was blown away at what he described to me over the course of a few conversations, so I asked if he'd show me.

The following Saturday morning, we met for breakfast, and then I followed him home to see where the magic happened. He told me to bring my laptop because we were getting me set up to run Claude myself. I was skeptical, but I did as instructed.

I didn't follow a lot of what we did that morning, because it all happened so fast. Chuck got Claude installed on my machine along with some basic plugins and tools and got me started. Four hours flew by before I knew it, and I left his house intrigued by what I'd just opened up for myself.

Later that week, we talked on the phone and I told him what I'd been working on. I was excited. Then we started talking about poker — something we both love. I asked him if he thought Claude could help us build a poker training app.

He said, "I don't know. Let's find out."

That night, an obsession was born.

Over the next forty-five minutes or so, we laid out the parameters of what we wanted to build — for whom, and why. Then there was a two-hour session with Claude, creating the first prompt and refining the outputs until Claude was clear on the vision. Chuck already had all of the back-end

systems wired up, so he told Claude to build it and went to bed.

He woke up to a working MVP — a minimum viable product. I was not expecting what he shared with me in the morning. The app worked. It didn't do a lot, but it actually worked.

Over the next few weeks, we kept sharing ideas, and both of us were working on the code. It was the most fun I'd had in years. We talked about the commercial viability of the app, all the cool things we could do with it. We got it to a point where we were sharing it with friends, and they were actually using it.

Then I got an idea.

I'd been carrying around a couple of book ideas for years. I had notes and outlines and lots of emails to myself and lots of rants in Word documents about my vision — but no real progress in more than fifteen years on either one. In December, a mentor and good friend gave me a nudge and told me it was time to write my book.

Then the question that literally changed my life. Could Claude help me organize my thoughts and build the framework for a book?

To be clear — Claude didn't write my books. It was my guide through the process. It took a lot of trial and error to get the rules down, but I was able to go from a pile of notes and a thesis to a finished manuscript in about three months — most of that learning how to work with Claude. That is to say, three months after getting started with Claude, I had a book ready to publish, a novel in progress, and the poker project had branched into two more apps and a third book.

I am doing more at sixty-two than I ever have before.

If I can do it, so can you. Start thinking big and dusting off your dreams. Claude can help you bring them to life.

That's what this book is about. I'm going to walk you through everything I wish someone had walked me through — from your first conversation with Claude to building things you didn't think were possible. No code required. No technical background. Just you, a laptop, and a willingness to try. I can't teach you everything — most of it you will figure out on your own. But if you follow along and put in the time, you will find the sky is your limit and Claude is your new best friend.

Please make sure your seat backs and tray tables are in their upright and locked positions, because we are getting ready to take off.