CAREER · 7 min read · October 15, 2026 · By Kelly Stratton

AI Prompts for a Career Change: The 7 I Used in Claude to Plan My Way Out

Want out of your job but don't know where to go, what you're worth somewhere else, or how to leave without wrecking your finances? These are the seven Claude prompts I used to map my own way out. Paste them in order and you'll have a direction, a 30-day test, and the month you can leave.

You've known for a while that you want out. What you don't have is a map. I was in healthcare, and I spent a long time knowing I was done before I had any idea where I'd go, what I was worth anywhere else, or how I'd leave without blowing up my finances. So one night I sat down with Claude and asked it to help me figure that out. These are the seven prompts I used, in the order I used them, and they're yours now. Be honest with Claude about your job, your week, and your money, and what comes back is a plan you can actually start on this week.

> IN A NUTSHELL
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> A career escape plan is a conversation with Claude that works through one question at a time: where you could go, what you already have that gets you there, whether the money is real, how to try it without quitting, and when you can leave. Seven prompts, one chat, one evening.

> WHAT YOU NEED
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> Claude, on any plan including the free one, at claude.ai or in the app. Nothing to install. Stay in one chat for all seven prompts so Claude remembers everything you've told it.

PART 1 The 7 Prompts, in Order

One at a time, in this order, all in the same chat. Each prompt builds on the answer before it, and Claude carries everything forward. Anything in [square brackets] is a blank for you. Read the prompt first, then write your part. That’s how I did it.

> BEFORE YOU FILL IN THE FIRST PROMPT
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> Claude only knows the context you give it. Give it as much as you can, so it can give you the answer you're actually looking for. Too little, and you'll get the same advice as everyone else who wants out. Plain words, no resume language, and don't tidy it up. Brain dump: what you do, how long you've done it, what you did before, what you're good at, what you're sick of, what you've been curious about. The messier and more honest it is, the better Claude can help you.

Prompt 1. Start here

What to give it: your whole work life, not your resume. Where have you worked, and what did you actually do there, the parts that never made it into the job description? What do coworkers come to you for? What did you do before this, even the jobs that seem unrelated? What have people told you you’re good at that you waved off? And what have you been quietly curious about for years? Put all of it in.

PROMPT

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I've spent years building a career I don't want anymore, and I'm ready for a change, but I don't know where to start. Here's my background: [paste]. Map out 3 realistic paths to a different kind of work or income, easiest first. Explain why each fits me and which I should explore first.
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Claude gave me three directions and told me which one to try first and why. None of them were the trendy jobs you see on every list. They were tied to things in my own background I’d stopped noticing. If one of the three makes you sit up a little, that’s your

[new path] for the rest of the prompts.

Follow-up: “Give me a real example of someone doing each path, what their week looks like, and what they’d say the hardest part is.”

Prompt 2. Find what’s draining you

What to give it: a real week, not a good one. Which hour of the day do you watch the clock, and which hour do you forget to? What’s the first thing you dread when the alarm goes off? Who do you deal with, and which of them take something out of you? What’s the one task you’d pay someone to take off your plate, and the one you’d keep even if you didn’t have to? What goes through your head on Sunday night? That’s the week Claude needs.

PROMPT

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Here's what a normal work week looks like for me: [paste]. Tell me which parts are draining me and which parts I seem to enjoy or be good at. Use that to describe the kind of work I should move toward.
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This one hit hard. Claude pointed out that I was giving my best hours to my job and my tired hours to my future, and then it described the kind of work I should be doing instead. Be honest. The part of the week you dread is the most useful thing on the page.

Follow-up: “Now hold that up against the three paths from Prompt 1. Which one has the most of what I like and the least of what wears me down?”

Prompt 3. Find skills that transfer

What to give it: you can write “the background I gave you above,” since it’s the same chat. But add the things you’d never put on paper. What do you fix at work that nobody taught you? What gets handed to you because “you’re good at that”? Which hard

conversation are you always the one to have? Who do people call when something's gone wrong? Those are the skills someone else will pay for, and you've been calling them your job.

PROMPT

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Based on my experience [paste], list 5 skills I already have that other careers pay for, including ones I dismiss as "just my job." For each one, name a role or service where it's valued.
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I honestly thought what I knew only worked in a clinic. Claude found five things I could do from home, on my own schedule, where I'd decide what my time is worth. Watch for the ones you'd never have put on a resume. Those tend to be the ones somebody will pay for.

Follow-up: "Rewrite each of the five as one line I could put on a profile, in plain words, no buzzwords."

Prompt 4. Reality check the new path

What to fill in: the path you picked from Prompt 1, and your city or region. Then add one more line: what you're afraid the answer is. "I'm worried it pays less than I make now." "I'm worried I'd have to go back to school." "I'm worried everybody doing this is already ten years in." Claude will check the fear along with the facts, and half the time the fear turns out to be wrong.

PROMPT

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I'm thinking about switching to [new career or idea]. Search the web and tell me the typical pay range in [your area], what training I'd need, how long the switch usually takes, and the biggest downside nobody talks about.
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I picked one career I'd been curious about and asked. Claude came back with what it pays around here, the training I'd need, how long people usually take to make the switch, and the one thing nobody warns you about. This is the only prompt of the seven that leaves the chat and looks things up, so make sure it does. If the answer shows up with no sources, type "Search the web for this before you answer" and send it again.

Follow-up: "Find three current job postings or client listings for this near me and tell me what they have in common."

Prompt 5. Test it before you leap

What to fill in: the path, and the hours you can really keep. Count them. Not the hours you'd like to have, the ones that actually exist between work, dinner, and sleep. If it's four, say four. Then tell Claude what "I like this" would look like for you. Would you do it on a Saturday morning for free? Would you talk about it at dinner? That's the test it should build toward.

PROMPT

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I want to try [new path] without quitting my job. Give me 3 low-risk ways to test it in [X] hours a week over the next 30 days, so I know if I actually like it.
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Before I quit anything, I wanted to know if I'd actually love the work or just the idea of it. I put in 10 hours a week, and Claude gave me a 30-day plan that fit around my job. Use the number you can really keep, not the one you wish you had. A small plan you finish beats a big one you drop in week two.

Follow-up: "Turn the one I pick into a week-by-week checklist, and tell me what 'I like this' and 'I don't' would each look like at the end of 30 days."

Prompt 6. Build the bridge

What to give it: the honest numbers, from your bank statement, not from memory. Rent or mortgage, every bill, what actually leaves your account in a month, what's saved, and the cushion that would let you sleep (three months? six?). Add anything coming: a car, tuition, a trip you've promised someone. And if the new path could earn even a little on the side first, say how much. That one line can move the month.

PROMPT

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Here are my monthly expenses and how much savings I'd want before switching: [paste]. Build me a simple month-by-month plan to move from my current job to [new path] safely.
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I handed Claude my actual numbers, and it built me a month-by-month plan and showed me the month I could walk away without risking everything. Use the true figures. Claude can't see your bank account. It can only work with what you tell it.

Follow-up: "Run the same plan if I make [a small amount] a month from the new path on the side starting next month. Which month moves?"

Prompt 7. Take ONE step

What to fill in: the path. That's it. Then don't negotiate with the step. If Claude says "email one person" or "write the first draft," do that one, not a smaller version of it.

PROMPT

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Give me ONE step I can take this week toward [new path]. It must take under 2 hours. Then do as much of it for me as you can right now.
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This is the one that got me moving. One step, under two hours, and Claude did most of it for me right there in the chat. A draft, a list, a first version of something. Your only job is to finish it this week.

Follow-up, next week: "I did it. Here's what happened: [paste]. Give me the next step, same rules."

PART 2 Why Does the Order Matter?

Because the first three prompts are about you, the fourth is about the world, and the last three turn those two things into a plan. Run them in order and each answer feeds the next one. By Prompt 6, Claude is remembering your week from Prompt 2, your skills from Prompt 3, and the pay range from Prompt 4, and the plan it builds uses all of it.

Skip ahead and you lose that. Ask for the month-by-month plan before you've tested the path and you get a very confident plan for something you might hate by week three. Ask what a career pays before you've figured out what's draining you and you'll chase the money straight back into the same kind of week you're trying to get out of. One at a time, in order, in one chat. That's the whole trick.

PART 3 How Do You Use the Answers?

Don't be shy. If Claude says something about you that's wrong, push back and tell it why: "That's not right, because [reason]. Redo it." The next answer will be better, because now it knows one more true thing about you. My answers weren't great on the first try either. They got good on the second and third.

A few follow-ups I kept going back to:

- "Which of the three paths would you pick for me, and what would change your mind?"
- "What am I not asking that I should be?"
- "List the three biggest assumptions you just made about me. I'll tell you which ones are wrong."
- "Say that again like you're explaining it to a friend across a table."
- "Put everything we've worked out on one page I can read in two minutes: the path, the five skills, the pay range, the 30-day test, the month, and this week's step."

Save that last one to your phone. Read it on the days the job wins. There will be some.

PART 4 Before You Act on Anything Claude Tells You

I'm sharing what I did and what worked for me. I'm not a financial advisor, a career counselor, or a lawyer, and neither is Claude. Everything that comes back from these prompts is a starting point for your own thinking, not advice to act on as is. Here's where to be careful.

The money. The pay range from Prompt 4 is whatever Claude found on the web that day. It can be out of date, wrong for your city, or wrong for your experience level. Nobody is promising you'll earn it. Check it against real job postings or real clients near you before you plan around it.

The month. The month-by-month bridge in Prompt 6 is arithmetic on the numbers you typed. If a number is off, the month is off. It doesn't know about a surprise expense, a slow first year, or a client who pays late. Treat it as a rough estimate, and show it to someone who knows your situation, an accountant or a financial advisor, before you give notice.

The plan. Claude can't promise a path is doable for you, that you'll like it, or that it'll work out. Prompt 5 exists so you find that out yourself, on the side, before anything is at risk. Don't quit a job, sign a lease, take on debt, or pay for a course on the strength of a chat.

The decision. Every choice you make from these answers is yours, and so is what comes of it. I can tell you these prompts helped me see my own way out. I can't tell you what's right for you, and neither can Claude. Use them to think better, then decide like the adult in charge of your life, because you are.

THE FINE PRINT

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FAQ Questions People Search About Changing Careers

Straight answers

How do I know what career to change to?
Start with what you already have instead of a list of hot jobs. Give Claude your real work history, including the parts that never made the job description, and ask for three realistic paths ranked easiest first, with the reason each one fits you. That's Prompt 1. The one that makes you sit up is the one to explore.

What are the best AI prompts for a career change?
The ones that use your details, in an order that builds. Map three paths, find what drains you, name the skills that transfer, check what the new path pays, test it on the side for 30 days, build a month-by-month money plan, and take one step this week. Those seven are in this guide. They're written for Claude and run in ChatGPT too.

How can I change careers without going back to school?
Find out whether you need to before you assume you do. Prompt 3 lists five skills you already have that other work pays for, and Prompt 4 searches the web for the training a specific path really requires and how long the switch usually takes. Plenty of paths need a short course or none at all, and Claude will tell you which.

How much money should I have saved before quitting my job?
There's no one number, and anyone who gives you one doesn't know your bills. Prompt 6 builds it from your own figures: your monthly costs, what you've saved, and the cushion that would let you sleep. Give it the honest numbers from your bank statement and it shows you the month you could leave safely.

Should I quit my job before finding a new one?
No, and these prompts are built so you don't have to. Prompt 5 gives you three low-risk ways to try the new path on the side over 30 days, so you find out if you like it. Prompt 6 tells you the month you could leave without putting your bills at risk. Quit on a plan, not on a bad Tuesday.

How do I try a new career without quitting?
Give it 30 days and the hours you actually have. Tell Claude the path and the hours a week you can really keep, and ask for three low-risk ways to test it in that time. Then decide ahead of time what "I like this" looks like, like doing it on a Saturday morning for free. If you'd do that, you have your answer.

What are examples of transferable skills?
The things you do at work that nobody taught you and everybody hands you. Explaining something hard in plain words, calming someone who's upset, keeping ten things on schedule, training the new person, being the one who has the difficult conversation. Prompt 3 finds five of yours and names a role or service that pays for each.

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