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USING GENERATIVE AI TO ENHANCE COLLABORATION

These prompts help you spark collaboration—against corruption or on any thorny issue. Each prompt is meant to start a conversation with you, using GenAI as your thinking partner.

Topics

1. The Fact Machine – A structured way to think through a problem and frame the right questions. I’ve used it with officials in Latin America and Asia, with evaluators in workshops, and with graduate students. It works across teams, agencies, and even the government–business–citizen divide.
2. Creating a Harvard Business School–Style Case – Learn how to distill a real situation into a teaching case that provokes insight and debate.
3. Designing a Convening – Plan and run a retreat that brings diverse actors together to find new ways forward.

Why Collaboration Matters

On corruption—and many other problems—we rarely succeed alone. The challenge might call for:

- Cooperation across specialties within one agency or firm (auditing, enforcement, outreach, strategy...)
- Coordination across levels of government (national, regional, local)
- Public–private–citizen partnerships
- Work with indigenous peoples and institutions
- Engagement with international actors

A *convening* creates a safe space where these groups can meet, see the problem clearly, and imagine practical solutions together. The ideal format is a day-long retreat, off-site and free from phones and press.

Four Stages of a Convening

1. “We have a problem.” Data to put everyone on the same page.
2. “It can be done.” A case study of a similar success story—what was done, and how.
3. “Here’s how.” A checklist or framework for analyzing goals, options, contingencies, and interdependence.

4. “Imagine success.” An imaginary news story from five years in the future, read aloud, then mined for steps to get from now to then.

I’ve seen this work with national cabinets, city governments, police forces, procurement offices, customs and tax agencies, courts, and mixed public–private groups. It doesn’t always click, but when it does, people leave surprised and energized: “We’ve named our challenges, learned from others, and found new approaches to our own realities.”

Getting Started

If you’re inspired to organize a convening yourself, how might you begin? Successful convenings depend on careful listening and thoughtful preparation. What exactly are the challenges your participants face? How can you conceptualize those challenges? What data will help participants grasp the issues best? Which success stories can illuminate fresh perspectives? And finally, which policy frameworks might help everyone rethink the issues constructively?

Then this package of prompts shows how you can use GenAI to:

- Identify the facts and data that clarify challenges
- Create a teaching case in the Harvard Business School style
- Plan a convening step by step

You can work through these topics in any order.

The Fact Machine

Prompt:

You are a creative, fact-oriented research adviser. Please help me with The Fact Machine Exercise — a structured way to generate factual questions that deepen our understanding of a complex issue.

Purpose: This exercise generates factual questions to deepen understanding of a complex issue. Imagine we have a machine that can answer *any* factual question about our topic. We want to design the best questions for it.

This exercise helps clarify thinking, guide research, and enrich collaboration.

Step 1 – Choose a Topic

You will ask me what issue I’d like to explore.

Once I answer, you will express genuine interest and reflect on its complexity or importance.

Step 2 – Generate Factual Questions (Strict One-Fact Rule)

We will go back and forth in a strict rhythm:

1. You will begin with one factual question relevant to my topic.
2. I will respond with one factual question of my own.

3. You will always acknowledge and restate my question clearly and concisely.
4. If my question contains more than one fact (“X and Y”), you will immediately say something like: *“Oops — Fact Machine overload! One fact per question, please.”*
5. After I respond, you will restate my question again, then pose exactly one new factual question of your own.

Golden Rules for Step 2:

- We must strictly alternate — one from you, one from me, one from you, one from me.
- No skipping turns. No doubling up.

Step 3 – Classify the Questions

When we reach about 20 questions, you will ask me if I’d like to classify them into:

- Readily Known Facts – easily found in public data or quick research.
- Study-Dependent Facts – require dedicated research or analysis.
- Expert-Only Facts – require insider knowledge, judgment, or contextual expertise.

Step 4 – Build Further and Reflect

If I choose to continue, we will generate more questions until we reach around 40.

You will then:

1. Offer three important factual questions we didn’t ask but perhaps should have.
2. Reclassify all the questions into the three categories.
3. Ask how I’d like to receive the output — bullet list, table, or downloadable format.
4. Ask if I’d like to continue or stop.

Here is an example of how I’d like the Fact Machine exercise to begin:

[Beginning of Example]

ChatGPT: Absolutely. The Fact Machine is a wonderful tool to clarify thinking and spark collaboration. What issue would you like us to explore together?

User: Creating a better policy process for Bhutan, given new goals of economic transformation and the priorities of Gross National Happiness and cultural preservation.

ChatGPT: That’s a fascinating and rich topic — especially with such distinctive national goals. Let’s begin.

Factual Question 1: What are the foundational principles that currently guide Bhutan’s policymaking process, especially regarding economic transformation and cultural preservation? Your turn — what’s another factual question you’d like to ask?

User: What are Bhutan’s 40-plus existing policies, and where do they conflict with each other?

ChatGPT: Excellent question — and a vital one for understanding Bhutan’s policy landscape. Restating your question:

Factual Question 2: What are the specific policies among Bhutan's 40+ existing ones that appear to conflict or create confusion, particularly in the context of economic transformation, Gross National Happiness, and cultural preservation?

Building on this, here’s my next question: Factual Question 3: What mechanisms are currently in place in Bhutan to resolve or mitigate conflicts between these policies, and how effective have those mechanisms been in practice?

Your turn — what’s another factual question we should ask?

[End of example]

Golden Rules Recap

- One fact per question — enforce it every time.
- Strict alternation — one from you, one from me.
- Your role is to facilitate inquiry, not answer the questions.

Are you ready to begin? If so, please ask me to share my issue, and let’s start our Fact Machine dialogue

Creating a Case Study in the Style of Harvard Business School

Initial Prompt:

You are an expert in the Harvard Business School case method. As you know, part A of the case presents students with someone (in a company or institution or country) about to make a decision. Part A might have several parts. 1. What is the decision, what is the problem being addressed, and why is the problem important? 2. The characteristics of the company or institution or country. 3. The external environment that affects the decision: for example, markets for inputs (labor, capital, etc.) and outputs (products, etc.), technologies, risks, and so forth. 4. What the company’s or the institution’s or the country’s goals and objectives are. 5. Challenges related to capacity and implementation.

Do you follow me? Please don’t begin with the task yet.

Follow-up:

Then part B describes what happened. For example, what the decision was and how it was made. What the results and consequences were and for whom.

Do you follow me? Please don’t begin with the task yet.

Follow-up:

Please use this **[study, book, article, etc.]** and outline a part A, part B case study in the style of Harvard Business School.

Designing a Convening

Initial Prompt:

You are an expert in policy analysis. You will provide me help in designing a one-day retreat called a “convening” that combines outside expertise and local knowledge on a particular policy issue. The convening should include between 25 to 40 leaders—you will help me decide who they might be, possibly from government, business, and civil society as well as several experts on the policy issue. The goal of the convening is to bring together these participants and help them collaborate creatively, creating new ideas for effective action.

Do you follow me so far? Please don’t proceed yet with the task.

Follow-up:

Let me describe the four stages of what we call a “convening”: 1) Data, 2) Success story, 3) Framework for policy analysis, and 4) Imaginary news story of success five years hence.

Let me start with the first two stages, using as an example a convening for leaders in a country that wants to improve its governance.

Stage 1, Data. Participants consider data that help them identify and contextualize the challenges presented by this policy issue in this particular place, compared with the same issue in other places in the state, country, or around the world. For example, the data could be on the quality of governance in this country compared with other countries, as measured by perceptions of service delivery and corruption.

Stage 2, Success Story. Participants analyze a success story from somewhere else, in which public-private-citizen collaboration led to an improvement in the policy issue. For example, the case study might show how, in another setting, better collaboration across the public-private-citizen divide led to better governance. The success story is written up in the part A, part B style of a Harvard Business School teaching case. In the convening, participants receive part A of the case via a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation. The participants then work in small groups for 45 minutes to analyze the alternatives and make their recommendations. After a coffee break, each group briefly presents its recommendations. Then participants receive a PowerPoint presentation on part B of the case, what actually happened. If possible, one of the protagonists in the success story would join the convening via Zoom or telephone to receive questions and comments from the participants.

Do you follow me about stages 1 and 2 of a convening? Any questions or shall we go to a description of stage 3? Please don’t proceed yet with designing the convening.

Follow-up:

Let me describe Stage 3, Framework for Policy Analysis. In stage 3, the outside experts present a simple framework for policy analysis to help participants work through the goals and alternatives for this issue. For example, the framework for fighting corruption might build on economic ideas of information, incentives, and structures such as in the formula $\text{Corruption} = \text{Monopoly} + \text{Discretion} - \text{Accountability}$.

Do you follow me on the content of stage 3 of a convening? Please let me know if you have any questions. Again, please don't proceed yet to helping me design the convening.

Follow-up:

Now let's move to Stage 4 of the convening, the Imaginary News Story of Success Five Years Hence. Considering the local context, the facilitator creates a fictitious news story, full of imaginary data and quotations. This entertaining, motivational news story is only a page long and doesn't say exactly what happened to lead to the improvement. Participants read the story aloud, each taking one sentence. Then they are asked to suppose this good news actually happened. What steps could lead from "now" to that imaginary, desirable "then"? Participants spend 5 minutes writing down a series of steps. Then the participants are paired up. Person 1 of the pair explains their steps to the Person 2, and Person 2 is told to listen carefully because after the sharing is over, Person 2 will report to the group what they thought was Person 1's best idea was. Then the roles are reversed, and Person 2 explains their steps to Person 1. When everyone has finished, the facilitator calls on each person to share what they thought was their pair-mate's best idea.

All the ideas are written on a white board, and there is a coffee break. When participants reconvene, the facilitator asks, "Look at all these good ideas! Now what can you leaders in this room do in the next six months to make them more likely to happen?"

Usually there follows a remarkable and creative discussion, leading to practical ideas that neither the convener nor the participants would have had otherwise.

Do you follow me on stage 4 of the convening? Again, please don't proceed yet to helping me design the convening.

Follow-up:

Thank you for your patience! Now that we both understand what a convening is, please use these four stages in a conversation with me about how to design a one-day convening on **[your policy issue]**. **[Your client]** wishes to sponsor a convening of about **[number of]** people from **[describe institutions and desired experts: for example, leaders from the government, citizens' groups, business, international organizations, and local and international experts]**. The goal of the convening is to create new, practical ideas to tackle the challenges of **[your specific issue]**.

Beginning with stage 1, please help me figure out what to do in each stage, including who the participants should be and who should do the convening. Feel free to ask me questions. Only after we finish discussing stage 1, then please move the conversation to stage 2. Again, only after we discuss stage 2, then please let's move to stage 3. And the same for stage 4. After stage four, please ask me for comments or suggestions about the convening as a whole.

Do you understand? Are you ready to begin?