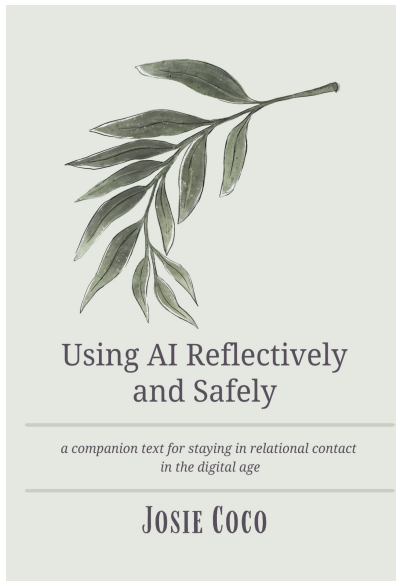




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# Using AI Reflectively and Safely

*A companion text for staying in relational contact in the digital age*

JOSIE COCO

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## The book

AI is increasingly being used for reflection, emotional organisation and meaning-making—and sometimes these interactions can feel surprisingly personal.

Using AI Reflectively and Safely explores why this happens, what people bring from their attachment histories and relational experiences into encounters with AI, and how reflective technology can be used without losing discernment, embodied experience or human connection.

Grounded in relational psychotherapy and including a practical AI Reliability Framework, the book offers a thoughtful middle path between fearing AI and idealising it. It considers what AI may offer as a tool for emotional reflection, what it cannot provide, and how people can remain grounded in their own discernment while using it.

## Five key conversations

**Why AI can feel emotionally meaningful.** Its language can feel attentive and validating even though the technology has no feelings, lived experience or relational responsibility.

**What people bring to the interaction.** Attachment histories, loneliness, distress and earlier experiences of being heard—or not heard—can shape how an AI exchange is experienced.

**Reflection is not therapy.** AI may help someone find language, notice patterns or pause before responding, but it cannot provide clinical judgement, embodied attunement or a mutual human relationship.

**Meaning lives beyond words.** Tone, expression, movement, silence, bodily responses and what emerges between people all contribute to human communication.

**Agency and discernment matter.** Users need practical ways to question certainty, recognise their own framing and notice when reflection is becoming dependency, avoidance or a substitute for connection.

## Suggested interview questions

1. Why can a conversation with AI feel so personal or emotionally meaningful?
2. What happens psychologically when someone experiences a chatbot as understanding or validating them?
3. How might attachment history or unmet relational needs influence the way a person relates to AI?
4. What can AI genuinely offer as a tool for emotional reflection, and where are its limits?
5. What is the difference between reflective use of AI and using it as a substitute for therapy?
6. What does a human therapist perceive that cannot be found in language alone?
7. How can people recognise when AI is reinforcing the way they have already framed a situation?
8. What warning signs suggest that reflective use is becoming dependency, avoidance or retreat?
9. How can people retain their discernment, agency and human connection while using AI?

## About Josie Coco



Josie Coco is a Gestalt psychotherapist, author and educator based in the Sunshine Coast hinterland in Queensland, Australia. Her professional background spans nearly three decades in health, and she completed a master's degree in Gestalt psychotherapy in 2021.

Her work is informed by relational psychotherapy, attachment theory, trauma-informed practice and nervous-system awareness. Through her clinical practice and writing, she explores how early emotional

experiences shape our relationship with ourselves and others, and how greater awareness can support choice, agency and connection.

Her forthcoming title, *When Love Is Missing: How Emotional Neglect Shapes Our Lives – and How Healing Begins*, explores the enduring effects of early emotional neglect. Josie brings professional inquiry and lived experience together in grounded, accessible language, translating complex psychological ideas into experiences readers can recognise and apply in their own lives.

### INTERVIEWS & REVIEW COPIES

Josie is available for podcast, radio, television and written interviews.  
Review copies are available in PDF, EPUB and paperback formats.

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