

# Why AI Feels so Powerful

Many people are beginning to use AI not simply as an information tool, but as a space for reflection between therapy sessions.

Therapy clients are asking questions about their relationships, their emotional struggles, health concerns, their life direction, loneliness, trying to make meaning, managing grief, attempting to resolve uncertainty, and for other personal growth reasons.

Some people have found that if they use AI as a journaling tool, the immediate responses often provide encouraging insights. Others use it as a thinking companion, a reflective sounding board, or a place to organise thoughts that feel tangled and difficult to hold alone.

For many, the experience can feel surprisingly personal.

...And this can be confusing because...

How can something that is not human feel so emotionally resonant?

\*

Part of the answer lies in understanding that AI is a highly responsive resonance system. It works by recognising patterns in language and generating responses that fit those patterns coherently. In this sense, AI functions as a tool of resonance. It reflects aspects of human communication back to us. And reflection itself is powerful.

As human beings we are deeply shaped by being mirrored and responded to. We organise ourselves through language, relationship, emotional resonance, and meaning making. When we feel emotionally alone, overwhelmed, or internally disorganised, even a simple reflective response can feel very supportive and help us to regulate our emotions.

It's important to state here that this does not mean AI understands us in the way another human being can. It's important to remember that AI does not possess lived experience, embodiment, vulnerability, accountability, nor emotional presence.

| **AI reflects**  
**Humans relate**

Modern neuroscience increasingly understands the function of the brain as a sort of prediction process that is continually predicting and anticipating outcomes. The brain is thought to be constantly asking, "Based on everything I have experienced before, what is most likely

happening now?” Our brain doesn’t passively receive reality. We predict reality and then adjust if that prediction is wrong. This is sometimes called predictive processing. Interestingly, AI language models operate in a similar way. We people tend towards predicting **sensory** patterns. AI predicts **language** patterns. Neither system is directly “seeing truth.” Both are inferring from past data.

When information is incomplete, we/our brain fills the gap automatically. For example, we assume someone’s tone means something; we may interpret silence as rejection, we may interpret hesitation as rejection, we may interpret frustration and invalidation. We create explanations for another person’s behaviour.

So, when AI responds with coherent and emotionally attuned language, people can experience a sense of being heard, being emotionally organised, being accompanied, or being emotionally seen. For some people, especially those with limited support networks, this can feel profoundly relieving. That reality deserves compassion.

So, to re-emphasise, it is important to understand that AI reflects patterns. And reflection can amplify as well as clarify.

## | It cannot replace the complexity and depth of

AI may deepen your self-awareness, help you organise your thoughts, support your emotional reflection, and stimulate your curiosity. These are all valuable and supportive experiences.

However, AI may also amplify your existing narratives, reinforce your emotional loops, strengthen your reassurance-seeking, encourage your dependency, or create the illusion of deeper certainty or understanding than actually exists.

This is why discernment matters.

### **Should I use AI between therapy sessions?**

The question is not simply whether AI is “good” or “bad.” The more important question is: What is happening inside us while we engage with AI?

Are we becoming more aware, more grounded, more emotionally honest, and more connected to life and relationship? Or are we becoming more withdrawn, more certain, more dependent, more mentally looped, or more disconnected from embodied experience? These are relational questions as much as technological ones.

One of the risks in the current public conversations about AI is that people will often move towards extremes. AI becomes either a feared threat, or an idealised source of wisdom. Neither position is especially helpful. A more grounded approach may be to understand AI as a

resonance tool that engages reflective processes. This can support insight when used intentionally, while still recognising its limitations.

AI reflects. People relate.

That distinction matters.

\*

Human relationships involve – a complex nervous system, mutual impact, unpredictability, the ability to repair, vulnerability, accountability, and lived presence.

AI can simulate aspects that are similar to relational dialogue, but it does not participate in an embodied relational life.

It cannot replace the complexity and depth of human connection.

At its healthiest, when AI is used as an assistant for reflection, it may help people organise experience, reduce shame, develop language for emotions, stimulate self-awareness, and return to human relationships with greater clarity and capacity.

The concern is not with reflection itself. The concern is when reflection becomes a closed loop that slowly replaces contact with lived reality, embodied experience, and other people.

The purpose of this companion book is not to encourage fear or dependency. It is to help people to engage with AI intentionally, reflectively, and relationally.

Curiosity matters.

Discernment matters.

Human relationships still matter deeply.

And perhaps the most important question of all is not, what does AI know?

Instead, what is this interaction moving me towards?

# What People Bring with Them to Their AI Experience

One of the most important things to understand about the use of an AI assistant is that engagement with it is not neutral. We bring ourselves into the interaction with AI just as we do in relationship with each other

We bring our attachment histories, our fears, our longings, our emotional wounds, relational patterns, our hopes and beliefs, our nervous system states, and more. These all shape how we experience AI and how we interpret the responses we receive. In this way it can feel like a very human experience.

**AI reflects and amplifies patterns already present within us.**

Because AI is responsive and conversational, people can begin to experience it as more than a tool for information. It can start to feel emotionally meaningful. This does not mean people are “foolish” or confused. It reflects something deeply human about us all, we are relational beings who naturally respond to reflection, resonance, and perceived emotional attunement.

For people who have experienced emotional neglect, chronic loneliness, trauma, or a lack of emotionally safe relationships, AI interactions can feel especially compelling. Some people describe feeling calmer, less alone, emotionally organised, encouraged, understood, or more connected to themselves after conversations with AI. For individuals who rarely feel listened to in everyday interactions, this can be profoundly relieving.

Again, that reality deserves compassion rather than judgement.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that AI reflects and amplifies patterns already present within us. This means that AI may sometimes strengthen behaviours that may distance you from human connection. There might include reassurance-seeking, overthinking, certainty-seeking, anxious narratives, self-criticism, dependency, or repetitive emotional loops. The interaction may feel supportive while quietly reinforcing the very patterns that keep a person emotionally stuck.

This is where awareness becomes very important.

## How to use AI between therapy sessions

Rather than only focusing on how this is helping you, it may also be useful to reflect on questions that explore more about your desire to reach out to AI, and the wider impact:

- What part of me is engaging with this interaction?
- What am I hoping to receive here?
- Do I feel more grounded afterward?
- Am I becoming more open to life and relationships, or more withdrawn into thought?
- Is this interaction helping me tolerate uncertainty, or increasing my need for reassurance?

These questions invite you to use discernment and may help to reduce shame.

Many people using AI reflectively are seeking clarity, companionship, regulation, another perspective, emotional organisation, or relief from isolation. Sometimes they are seeking a safe place to think out loud.

For therapy clients in particular, AI may begin to function as a kind of bridge between sessions. Some therapy clients have asked:

- What would my therapist notice here?
- Why did that interaction affect me so much?
- What am I feeling underneath this reaction?

In some situations, this may actually support the growth of your reflective capacity. You may find yourself beginning to slow down, observe yourself, and be able to put language to your emotional experience rather than reacting automatically.

## **Healthy reflection tends to move people back towards the places where they**

Used intentionally, AI interactions may help you organise your thoughts before therapy, identify your emotional themes, notice your relational patterns, reduce your feelings of shame, and deepen your curiosity about your own experiences.

Some people even notice that after reflective conversations with AI, they relate differently with others in everyday life. They may feel calmer, more thoughtful, or more emotionally aware.

However, there is an important distinction here.

Healthy reflection tends to move people back towards the places where they experience life; towards therapy, towards relationship, towards embodied experience, towards curiosity, and towards greater self-awareness.

Unhealthy use tends to narrow your lived experience towards repetitive loops, emotional withdrawal, compulsive reassurance-seeking, excessive certainty, or increasing dependence on the interaction itself.

The question is not whether AI reflection exists.

The question to remember is: “What direction is this interaction moving me towards?”

Engaging with AI can sometimes become a transitional space between isolation and relationship. It can support you with the confidence to experiment with real life relationships. Be mindful that AI doesn't quietly become a replacement for human contact altogether.

Human beings still need mutual relationships, embodied presence, emotional reciprocity, repair after rupture, unpredictability, physical touch, community, and lived connection.

AI may help us reflect.

Yet healing, growth, and relational transformation still unfold most deeply within the human experience you share with others.