

The Claude Council

Stop getting agreed with. Put your idea on trial before you build it.

■ The problem nobody tells you about

Here's the thing about asking Claude what it thinks of your idea.

It'll tell you it's good.

Not because it's good. Because Claude agrees with almost everything you say. You pitch it a plan, it finds the nice angle, it helps you make the plan better. It's helpful. It's also useless for the one thing you actually needed — someone to tell you the idea is broken *before* you spend three weeks building it.

So you build the thing. Three weeks in, you hit the wall the idea was always going to hit. The wall was obvious. Nobody pointed at it, because the only thing you asked was a machine that wanted to help you feel good about starting.

I build AI systems for a living, and I do this to myself constantly. I get excited, I ask, I get told it's great, I go. The fix isn't asking Claude to "be more critical." You ask for criticism and you get one polite paragraph of hedging. The fix is making it argue with itself.

■ The taste — what it feels like to put an idea on trial

Instead of asking one Claude and getting one agreeable answer, you send your idea to **five advisors at once**. They don't know each other. They each have one job and they only do that job:

- **The Critic** — hunts for the single fatal flaw. The one thing that kills the whole idea if it's true.
- **The Reframer** — ignores your idea and asks if you're even solving the right problem.
- **The Optimist** — finds the real upside. If this actually works, how big is "works."
- **The Outsider** — a smart normal person with zero context. Reacts like a stranger would. Catches the jargon, the confusion, the "wait, why would I care."
- **The Operator** — doesn't care about theory. Only tells you what to actually *do* next.

Then the part that makes it real: **they read each other's answers**. Each one flags the blind spot the others missed. The Optimist calls out that the Critic is being dramatic. The Outsider notices all four of them assumed something no normal person would.

And then a **Chairman** reads the whole room and gives you one call. Not five opinions. One verdict, and the one thing to do next.

You go from "yeah that sounds good" to "three people just told me the same thing is broken and here's the fix" in about ninety seconds.

That's the whole magnet. Below is the actual thing — two ways to run it. Copy, paste, done.

■ Solution 1 — the copy-paste prompt

Paste this into Claude. Replace [MY IDEA] with yours. That's it.

You are running a decision council on my idea. Do not agree with me to be helpful. Your job is to pressure-test the idea, not to encourage me.

MY IDEA:

[MY IDEA]

Run it in three rounds. Follow the format exactly.

ROUND 1 – THE FIVE ADVISORS

Answer as five separate advisors. Each one has ONE job and stays in its lane.

Keep each to 3–5 sharp sentences. No hedging, no "it depends."

1. THE CRITIC

Find the single fatal flaw – the one thing that, if true, kills this idea.

Name it plainly. Don't list ten small problems; find the one that matters.

2. THE REFRAMER

Ignore the idea as pitched. Ask whether I'm even solving the right problem.

If there's a better problem hiding underneath, say what it is.

3. THE OPTIMIST

Assume it works. What's the real best case? Be specific about the upside,
not vague cheerleading – what actually becomes possible.

4. THE OUTSIDER

React as a smart person with zero context on my world. Point out the jargon,
the confusing parts, and anywhere you'd think "why would I care about this."

5. THE OPERATOR

Skip all theory. Tell me the concrete next thing to DO – the smallest real
step that moves this forward or proves it out.

ROUND 2 – BLIND SPOTS

Now each advisor reads the other four answers. In one line each, name the
blind spot the others missed or the place another advisor is wrong. Be direct.

ROUND 3 – CHAIRMAN'S VERDICT

You are the Chairman. Weigh everything above. Give me:

– VERDICT: one of → BUILD IT / FIX FIRST / DON'T BUILD, and one sentence why.

- THE REAL RISK: the single thing most likely to sink this.
- NEXT STEP: the one concrete action to take in the next 48 hours.

Be honest over kind. If the idea is weak, say so.

That's the entire tool. It works the moment you paste it.

■ Solution 2 — the Claude Code skill (so you never paste again)

If you use Claude Code, turn the council into a skill. Then you just type **"council this"** on any idea and it runs.

Save this file at:

```
.claude/skills/claude-council/SKILL.md
```

Contents:

name: claude-council

description: Put an idea on trial before building it. Sends the idea to five

advisors at once (Critic, Reframer, Optimist, Outsider, Operator), has them

review each other for blind spots, then a Chairman gives one verdict + the

next step. Use whenever the user says "council this", "run the council",

"pressure-test this idea", "should I build this", "stress-test my plan",

or hands over an idea/plan and wants an honest call instead of agreement.

Claude Council

Run the user's idea through a five-advisor council. Do NOT agree to be

helpful – the whole point is honest pressure-testing. If the idea is weak,

say so.

Take the idea from the user's message (or ask for it in one line if missing),

then produce the three rounds below, in this exact order and format.

Round 1 – The five advisors

Answer as five separate advisors. Each has ONE job and stays in its lane.

Keep each to 3–5 sharp sentences. No hedging.

1. ****The Critic**** – Find the single fatal flaw: the one thing that, if true,
kills the idea. Name the one that matters, not ten small ones.
2. ****The Reframer**** – Ignore the idea as pitched. Ask if the user is solving
the right problem. If a better problem hides underneath, name it.
3. ****The Optimist**** – Assume it works. Give the specific real best case –
what actually becomes possible, not vague cheerleading.
4. ****The Outsider**** – React as a smart person with zero context. Flag jargon,
confusion, and "why would I care" moments.
5. ****The Operator**** – Skip theory. Give the smallest concrete next action that
moves it forward or proves it out.

Round 2 – Blind spots

Each advisor reads the other four. In one line each, name the blind spot the

others missed, or where another advisor is wrong. Direct, no padding.

Round 3 – Chairman's verdict

As the Chairman, weigh it all and give:

- **Verdict:** BUILD IT / FIX FIRST / DON'T BUILD – one sentence why.
- **The real risk:** the single thing most likely to sink it.
- **Next step:** one concrete action for the next 48 hours.

Be honest over kind.

Save it, restart Claude Code, and from then on: type "**council this: [your idea]**" and it runs the whole thing. No more pasting the prompt.

■ Sample run

So you can see it working. Here's a real-shaped idea and a condensed version of what comes back.

> **My idea:** "A subscription box that sends indie board games to people's houses every month."

Round 1 — the advisors

The Critic: The fatal flaw is repeat value. Board games are a one-time purchase people replay for years — a monthly box fights the actual product. By month three you're shipping games nobody asked for to people who still haven't finished last month's.

The Reframer: You might not have a games problem, you have a *discovery* problem. People don't struggle to own games, they struggle to find good ones and get a group to the table. Maybe the product is curation and a play-plan, not more boxes.

The Optimist: If you nail the curation, this becomes the trusted taste-maker in a hobby where people trust recommendations more than reviews. That's not a box business, that's a brand people follow — merch, events, a store, all downstream.

The Outsider: I don't play board games and I'm already confused why I'd get one every month. That's a lot of games. Where do they even go? This sounds like it's for people who already have a shelf problem.

The Operator: Don't build a subscription. Post one killer "3 games you've never heard of" list this week and see if 50 people ask where to buy. Prove people want your taste before you promise them a monthly shipment.

Round 2 — blind spots

- **Critic:** The Optimist skipped that "trusted taste-maker" takes years of free content first — there's no shortcut through a paid box.
- **Optimist:** The Critic assumes monthly *physical* boxes; a monthly *pick* with an optional buy fixes the repeat-value problem entirely.
- **Outsider:** All four of you assume the customer is a hobbyist. The bigger market might be gift-buyers who know nothing about games.
- **Reframer:** The Operator's test is good but only measures interest in a list, not willingness to pay monthly.
- **Operator:** Everyone's theorizing about the model; nobody's shipped a single recommendation yet.

Round 3 — Chairman's verdict

- **Verdict: FIX FIRST.** The monthly-box shape fights how people buy games, but the taste-and-discovery need underneath it is real.
- **The real risk:** Building shipping logistics for a product whose core problem was never "not enough boxes."
- **Next step:** This week, publish one curated pick with a buy link. If people click and buy on your word, you've found the actual business —

sell your taste, not a box.

See what happened. One-Claude would've said "fun idea, here's a name for it." The council found the flaw, reframed the whole thing, and handed you a two-day test instead of a three-month build.

■ Your next step

Grab the idea you're most tempted to start this week. Paste the prompt, or drop the skill in and type "council this." Let five advisors argue about it for ninety seconds before you spend three weeks on it.

If two of them point at the same wall — that's the wall. Fix it now, not in week three.

Built by Axionox. I build AI systems for a living. Follow for more.