A FREE GUIDE FROM KRISTEN PARISE

Teach Claude Your Brand

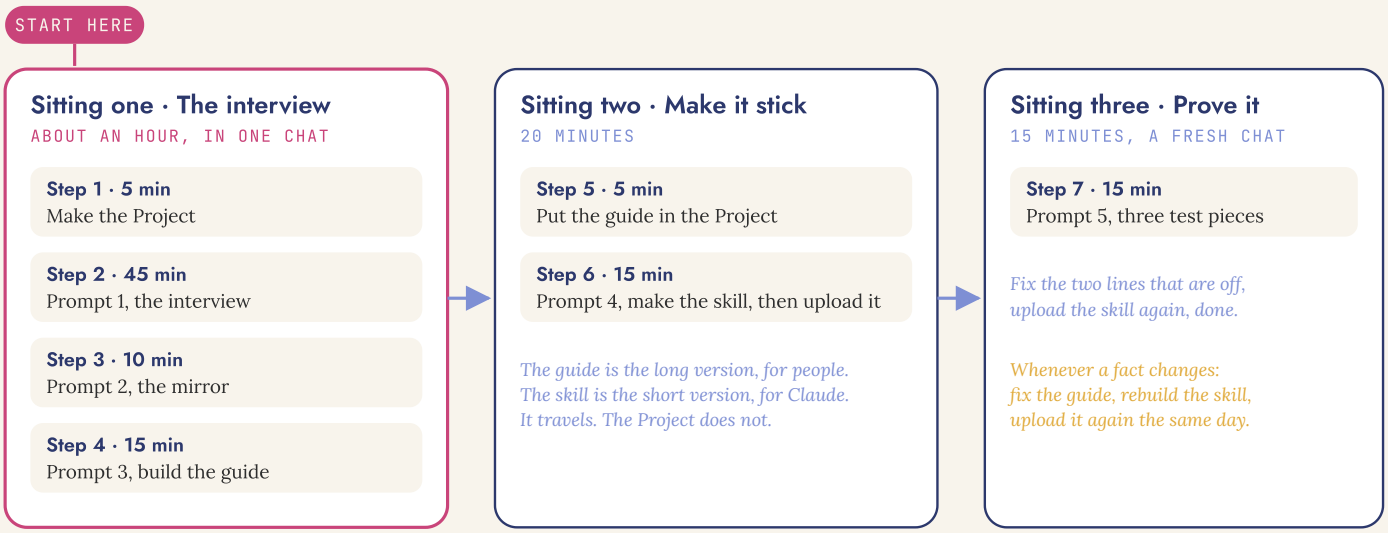
Five prompts across three short sittings. You end with a brand guide in your own words, a Claude Project that carries it, and a skill file that makes Claude sound like you anywhere.

FOR BUSINESS OWNERS WHO WANT AI TO SOUND LIKE THEM, NO TECHNICAL SKILLS NEEDED

TIME ABOUT TWO HOURS ACROSS THREE SITTINGS UPDATED 11 OCTOBER 2026

In December 2025 I built my first Brand Guardian: one Claude Project holding who I am, how I talk, and what I would never say. By September 2026 it had grown into three skill files, one for my clinic, one for me, and one for my podcast, at 290, 546 and 313 lines. Every caption, email and blog post I publish now runs through one of them before I read the draft. The test I use is simple. If a post written for me could run on the clinic's account without feeling off, the voice is not mine yet.

You do not need to be technical. You need a Claude you can open, your website or Instagram, and about two hours split across three sittings. The interview is the long part. The skill is ten minutes at the end, and it is the part that makes the whole thing portable.



The route. Three sittings, left to right. Every step in the map is a link to that step on this page.

WHAT YOU END UP WITH

A brand guide in your own words. Ten sections, written from a 45-minute interview, that you could hand to a designer, a writer or a new hire and they would know who you are by page two.

A Claude Project that carries it. Every chat you open inside the Project reads the guide first, so you stop re-explaining yourself.

A skill file that works anywhere. One small zip you upload to claude.ai, drop into Claude Code, or send to a teammate, and Claude sounds like you in that place too.

The three pieces, in plain words

People mix these up, so here is the whole picture before you start.

The guide

The long document. It is for people as much as for Claude. Mine is the file I send a new designer on day one.

The Project

A folder inside claude.ai (or the desktop app) with an instructions box and a files panel. Every chat you start inside it reads both. It lives in your account only.

The skill

A short file called SKILL.md inside a folder, zipped. Claude reads its description at the start of every chat and opens the rest when your request matches. It travels between accounts and tools. The Project does not.

WHICH DOOR YOU NEED

Steps 1 to 5 run in claude.ai or the Claude desktop app, inside a Project. Step 6 needs Claude to make a file for you, which means a paid plan with file creation switched on (the checklist below shows where). If you run Claude Code, the skill is a folder you drop into place instead of a zip you upload. Skills do not sync between claude.ai, the desktop app and Claude Code. Upload the same zip in each place you want it, and a teammate uploads it into their own account.

Before you start

- ☐ **Claude on a paid plan.** Open Settings and look for Customize, then Skills (older menus call it Capabilities or Features). If you cannot find it, you can still do Steps 1 to 5 and keep your guide in a Project.
- ☐ **File creation switched on.** Settings, then Capabilities, and the switch for creating and editing files is on. Prompt 4 needs it to hand you a zip.
- ☐ **Your website and Instagram open** in another tab, plus your logo file, your colours and your fonts if you know them. If you do not know them, the interview asks you to describe them and Claude labels those as suggestions, never as facts.
- ☐ **Three things you wrote yourself that sound like you.** An email, a post, an about page. You paste them in during the interview so Claude can hear your rhythm, not guess it.

Step 1 Make the Project

- In claude.ai or the desktop app, click **Projects** in the left sidebar, then **New project**. Name it **My Brand** (or your business name and the word Brand). If it asks what you are working on, write "building my brand guide and voice".
- Leave the instructions box empty for now. You fill it in Step 5, once you have something true to put there.
- Start a new chat inside the Project. Everything in Sitting one happens in this one chat, so keep it open.

What you should see. A chat window with your Project name above it and an empty files panel on the right (on a phone it sits behind the Project name). If the chat does not show the Project name, you opened a chat from the home screen. Close it and start one from inside the Project.

Step 2 Prompt 1, the interview

Forty-five minutes, five sections, one at a time. The questions follow the shape Debbie Millman uses in *Brand Thinking and Other Noble Pursuits* and on *Design Matters*, and I credit her for that. The order and the plain words are mine.

- Answer like you are talking to your smartest friend, not writing a website. The messy version is the useful one.
- When Claude pushes back on a vague answer, that is the prompt working. Give it the specific thing.
- If you run two brands (a clinic and a personal one, a shop and a podcast), run this guide twice, in two Projects. One blended voice serves neither.

PROMPT 1 · THE INTERVIEW, 45 MINUTES

Interview me about my brand, one section at a time, the way a brand strategist like Debbie Millman would. I am building the guide I will hand to anyone who writes, designs or posts for me, so I need my real answers on the page, in my words. My business is *[your business name]* and I *[what you do, in one line]*.

1. Ask the sections below one at a time. Wait for my answers before the next section. When an answer is vague or sounds like a website, ask one follow-up that makes me say the specific thing. Never fill in a fact I did not give you. If I name a customer, a client or a patient, keep their first name only and drop any private detail about them in anything you write from this interview.
2. Section one, the foundation. Ask what I do, told to my smartest friend. Ask when I opened (month and year) and what stage I am in now. Ask for my three closest competitors and what each does well and gets wrong. Ask why the business exists, and what would be lost if it closed tomorrow.
3. Section two, my customer. Ask me to describe one real-feeling person with a name, a Saturday morning, a fear they carry and a wish they have not said out loud. Ask what they believe before they find me and after. Ask what they say about me to a friend, quoted.
4. Section three, personality and voice. Ask how my brand shows up at a dinner party (what it wears, what it orders, what it would never say). Ask for five words that describe it and five it is not. Ask for three brands in any industry I admire and why, and three that make me cringe and why. Ask me to finish four sentences: "We always *[blank]*", "We never *[blank]*", "People feel *[blank]* when they work with us", "The one thing to remember about us is *[blank]*". Then ask me to paste two or three things I wrote myself that sound like me, and tell me in three lines what you hear in the rhythm.
5. Section four, the story. Ask how it started, the messy version. Ask for one moment (a customer, a win, a failure) that captures what we are about. Ask for one thing I believe about my industry that most people in it will not say out loud.
6. Section five, the look. My website and Instagram are *[paste the links, or write "none"]*. Ask what is working visually and what quietly bothers me. Ask what I want someone to feel when they land on my page. Ask for my colours and fonts if I have them, or three to five colours that feel like me and why, and the feeling my type should give. Ask which images, textures and references feel true. Mark anything I describe rather than name as "suggested", so it never gets written down later as a fact.
7. After section five, list every fact I gave you (names, dates, numbers, colours, fonts) in one table, one row per fact, nothing left out except the private details line 1 told you to drop (mark those rows "detail left out on purpose"), so I can correct any of them. If two of my answers give different versions of the same fact (two dates, two numbers), put both in the table with a note and ask me which is right. Do not pick one. Keep the whole interview for the next prompt in this chat.

Then stop. Next: Prompt 2, in this same chat, when you have ten minutes.

What you should see. Section one's questions and nothing else. If Claude fires all five sections at once, reply "one section at a time, start again with section one". At the end, a table of facts, one row each. It will be long, and that is right. Read every row. A wrong date or a guessed hex code here ends up in every caption you ever write.

Step 3 Prompt 2, the mirror

- Same chat. Claude plays back what it heard before it builds anything, and you are the only judge of whether it is true.
- The "We are / We are not" pairs are the most useful ten lines in the whole guide. I use mine to settle arguments with myself about a post in under a minute.

PROMPT 2 · THE MIRROR, 10 MINUTES

Read the whole interview above and show me what you heard, in my words, not a consultant's.

1. One brand essence line: a single sentence that says what this brand is at its core. Plain words, no slogan.
2. A "We are / We are not" map: ten pairs, each one a hard line, like "We are warm. We are not soft." Build them from things I said, each pair on its own line in the form "We are X. We are not Y."
3. Five tone dials, each a line from one end to the other with a mark where my brand sits and one sentence on why: formal to casual, serious to playful, bold to understated, traditional to new, warm to cool.
4. Three places where my answers disagreed with each other, if there are any, and which one you think is true.
5. Ask me: does this feel true, what is off, what is missing? Then wait. Do not build the guide until I say the direction is right.

Then stop. Next: Prompt 3, in this same chat, when you have fifteen minutes.

What you should see. One sentence, ten pairs, five dials, then a pause. If the essence line sounds like a tagline from an agency, say "plainer, the way I said it in section one" and it will come back in your words. Correct anything off before you move on. Prompt 3 builds on exactly this.

Step 4 Prompt 3, build the guide

- Same chat. This is the long document, ten sections, written in your voice from your interview.
- Anything you did not give Claude comes back as "[to confirm]" instead of an invented fact. That is on purpose. Fill those in yourself afterwards.
- At the end Claude asks you three questions and revises. Answer them properly. The second one is where the sentence you have never managed to write about your own business usually appears.

PROMPT 3 · BUILD THE GUIDE, 15 MINUTES

The direction is right. Build my brand guide as one document, written in my voice, the way I talk in the interview above. Build everything from what I said: the samples, the archetype and the lines are yours to write, but every fact in them (a name, a date, a number, a colour, a font, a price, a policy) must be one I gave you. Where a fact is missing (a hex code, a font name, a date) write *[to confirm]* instead of inventing one. Title it "*[Your business name]* Brand Guide, version 1, *[today's date, written out, for example 11 October 2026]*".

1. Brand story. The origin story in its real version. A one-sentence mission and a vision line. Four to six values, each with two or three sentences on what it means in practice here, never generic. The one promise we keep every time.
2. Personality. The archetype and how it shows up here. The brand as a person, in two or three paragraphs. Five traits, each with a line that starts "this means we". Five things we will never be.
3. Voice and tone. How we write and speak. How the tone shifts for website copy, social captions, customer emails, sales conversations and a complaint. Words we use and own, words we never use, and three to five phrases that are so us. Writing rules (sentence length, punctuation, humour, emotion, numbers). Three sample Instagram captions, one whole customer email with its subject line, and one whole reply to a complaint, all written to prove the voice. Where the reply needs a remedy I have not named (a refund, a free seat), write *[to confirm]* for the remedy. In the samples, a date, time or spot count that will go stale may be a placeholder in square brackets, like *[date]* or *[two]* spots, so the samples stay true after this month.
4. Visual identity. Primary, secondary and accent colours with hex codes where I gave them and a direction where I did not, what each colour says and when to use it, pairings that work and pairings that are off limits. Heading, body and accent fonts (or the feeling each should have), the hierarchy from headline to caption, and what never to do with them. The photos that feel true, the ones that feel wrong, lighting and mood, how people are shown, and the stock clichés to avoid. Logo rules if I have a logo. Five words for the visual world and one "mood board in words" paragraph. Mark anything you propose that I did not say (a pairing, a mood, a cliché) as (suggested), the same way the interview did.
5. Audience. My main customer as a portrait, not a list. A second audience if there is one. What they need to hear from us, what they are afraid of, and how we talk to them versus about them.

6. Do and never. A three-column table (situation, do this, never do this) for an Instagram caption, a negative review, a website headline, a cold email, the "what do you do" moment at an event, an email subject line, a sale post and an announcement.
7. Lines. A thirty-second elevator pitch in our voice. The one-line answer to "what do you do". The rally cry we say to ourselves. Three short mantras that guide decisions.
8. The "We are / We are not" map from Prompt 2, corrected by anything I changed.
9. The checklist: eight yes-or-no questions anyone can run before something goes out under our name.
10. A short letter from me to my brand: who it is, what it stands for, and my promise to protect it. Specific, true, no greeting-card lines.

Then ask me three things: is there anything here that does not sound like me, is there anything I have always wanted to say about my brand and never found the words for, and would someone new know who we are after reading this? Revise from my answers, show me the finished guide, and tell me to save it as a file named brand-guide.md. Then stop. Next: Step 5 (no prompt), then Prompt 4 when you have fifteen minutes.

What you should see. Ten numbered sections, your stories in them, "[to confirm]" wherever you left a gap, then three questions. If section three's sample captions sound like every other business in your industry, paste one of your own pieces again and say "closer to this". Save the final version as brand-guide.md: in claude.ai, ask Claude to put it in a file and download it, or copy the text into a plain text file yourself and name it that.

Step 5 Put the guide in the Project

- Open the Project. In the files panel on the right, click **Add** (or the plus sign) and upload brand-guide.md. If you cannot upload, use **Add text content**, give it the title Brand guide, and paste the whole thing.
- Click **Set project instructions** (the box near the top of the Project). Paste your eight-question checklist, your "words we never use" list and the three sample captions from section 3 of the guide (only the words, not any "(suggested)" tag), and add one line of your own at the top. Mine says: "Before you write anything for me, read the brand guide in this Project's files and follow it. Run the checklist before you show me a draft, and show me the answers."
- Start a new chat inside the Project and ask for one Instagram caption about something you are doing this week, and give it the day, the time and the price in the same message. No prompt from this guide, just the ask.

What you should see. A caption that could only be yours, with the eight checklist answers under it. If it comes back without the checklist, your instructions did not save. Open the box, check the text is there, and press Save.

Step 6 Prompt 4, make the skill, then upload it

- The Project only works in your account. The skill is the short, portable version: the rules Claude needs and nothing it does not, under 300 lines.
- Run this in a new chat inside the Project, so Claude can read brand-guide.md from the files panel. In Claude Code, open the folder where you keep your business files and run it there. It writes the folder straight to disk.
- The name rules in the prompt are the real ones. Most failed uploads are a capital letter in the name or a folder inside the zip that does not match it.

PROMPT 4 · MAKE THE SKILL, 15 MINUTES

Turn my brand guide into a skill I can use in any Claude. The guide is *[say where: "in this Project's files as brand-guide.md", or "attached", or "pasted below"]*. A skill is a folder holding one file named SKILL.md, and it has to be short enough to read at the start of every chat.

1. Build a folder named *[your-brand-name-in-lowercase-with-hyphens, so "Bea's Bakery & Co" becomes beas-bakery-and-co]*-brand with SKILL.md inside it. If the name I typed breaks the rules below, fix it and show me the fixed name. The file starts with a front-matter block between two lines of three dashes, holding two fields. name: the folder name exactly, lowercase letters, numbers and hyphens only, under 64 characters, and it may not contain the words "claude" or "anthropic". description: one paragraph under 1,000 characters that says what the skill is for and when to use it, and lists the words that should trigger it, such as "caption", "email", "newsletter", "bio", "website copy", "sound like me", and my business name.
2. Below the front matter, in this order and under 300 lines in total: who we are in five lines, the voice rules (how we write, words we use, words we never use, our signature phrases, the punctuation rules), the tone-by-context table, the colour and font rules (hex codes and font names only where the guide confirms them, otherwise describe the colours and the feel of the type and say the codes are not confirmed yet), the audience in one paragraph, the do-and-never table, the eight-question checklist, and three whole examples marked as the standard (one caption, one email, one reply to a complaint), keeping any placeholders as they are. Everything comes from the guide. Nothing new, and no *[to confirm]* lines: leave those facts out of the skill until I confirm them. The one exception is the complaint reply: if its remedy is *[to confirm]* in the guide, ask me for the remedy (a free seat, a refund, a replacement) before you write the standard reply, and put my answer in. Never ship a standard reply that does not say what we will do.
3. Add one rule at the top of the voice section: when a piece could be about a customer, a client or anyone I serve, never carry their name or any detail about them into anything public.
4. Zip the folder so the folder itself sits at the root of the zip, not inside another folder, and name the zip after the folder, so the folder and the zip share one name. If you cannot make files in this chat, say so, and show me SKILL.md as one block I can copy into a plain text file.
5. Show me the description field on its own and ask me to check the trigger words are the ones I would say. Add any I give you and remove any I say I would never use.
6. If anything I told you in this chat (a trigger word, a remedy, a corrected fact) is not yet in brand-guide.md, list it at the end and tell me to put it in the guide before I run this prompt again, so the guide and the skill never disagree.

Then stop. Next: upload the zip (the page shows where), then Prompt 5 in a fresh chat when you have fifteen minutes.

What you should see. A zip to download and the description paragraph on its own. Read the trigger words out loud. If "newsletter" is there and you would say "my Friday email", add that. If Claude says it cannot make files, file creation is off (the checklist at the top shows the switch). Copy the block into a text file named SKILL.md inside a folder with the skill's name, and zip that folder yourself. If Claude lists facts that are in the skill but not the guide, put them in brand-guide.md now, before you forget.

Upload it, in claude.ai or the desktop app

1. Open **Settings**, then **Customize**, then **Skills**. (On some accounts it still sits under Capabilities or Features. Same page, different label.)
2. Click the **plus** sign, then **Create skill**, then choose the upload option and pick your zip.
3. Your skill appears in the list with a switch. Make sure it is on.

THE OTHER DOORS

Claude Code: unzip the folder into a folder called `.claude\skills` inside your home folder (on a Mac, `~/.claude/skills`). Open a new session and ask for a caption. No upload screen.

A teammate: send them the zip and they upload it into their own account the same way. A skill you upload is yours alone, so each person who writes for you installs it once.

Updating it: when a fact changes, fix brand-guide.md, run Prompt 4 again, remove the old skill and upload the new zip. Same day, every time.

Step 7 Prompt 5, prove it

- A fresh chat, outside the Project, so the only thing Claude knows about you is the skill.
- Copy the skill name from the `name:` line at the top of SKILL.md. It is the hyphenated one Claude made, not the one you typed.
- Run it more than once. The rules that fail twice are the ones worth rewriting.

PROMPT 5 · PROVE IT, 15 MINUTES

Use my *[the name from the top of SKILL.md, for example hearth-and-hollow-brand]* skill. I am testing it, so follow it to the letter and score each piece before you show it to me.

1. An Instagram caption about *[something you would post this week, with its day, time and price if it is a class or a sale]*, 80 to 150 words.
2. An email to a customer about *[a real thing and the reason for it, for example classes going from $85 to $95 because flour and butter cost more]*, under 150 words.
3. A reply to this complaint from *[their first name]*, under 120 words: "*[paste a real or realistic complaint]*".
4. Under each piece, run the skill's checklist and show the eight answers, each as the question's number, yes or no, and one line on why. Where an answer is no, fix the piece and show the fix. If the only fix needs a fact I have not given you, leave the answer as no, mark the gap in square brackets, and tell me what you need.
5. Then tell me the two rules in the skill you found hardest to follow, and the one rule the skill is missing that would have helped.

Report the three pieces with their checklists, then the two hard rules and the missing one. Then stop. Next: open SKILL.md, fix those lines, remove the old skill from your list and upload the zip again.

What you should see. Three pieces that sound like you, each with eight answers under it, and an honest line about what was hard. If Claude never mentions the skill, it never opened it: your description's trigger words did not match your ask. Add the words you used and upload again. If the complaint reply goes generic, add a whole example of your own to the skill, and it stops.

Three mistakes I made so you do not have to

- **One voice for two brands.** In September 2026 I was handed a 274-line interview that would have built one voice file for everything I write. I did not install it, because my clinic and I do not sound the same. Two brands, two Projects, two skills.
- **A guide nobody re-read.** My first Brand Guardian still carried a line about my own story I had corrected months earlier, because I fixed it in my head and not in the file. Date the guide, and when a fact changes, change the file that day.
- **Letting Claude carry too much.** In September 2026 I found Claude carrying a hundred plugins into every chat, most of which I never used, all eating its attention. Keep the skill under 300 lines: the guide is the long version for people,

the skill is the short one for Claude.

Tonight, make the Project and run the first two sections of Prompt 1. Tomorrow, finish the interview and run the mirror. By the weekend the skill is uploaded and Claude is writing your Friday email in your voice. Go build it.

If you want me beside you, Your Voice, Locked In is the 90-minute session where we do this together on your keyboard. Write to me at kristen@blueberrytherapy.ca, or start with the free audit at The Bottom Line.

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Instead of whispering, I became a storm that couldn't be silenced.