

SENG NICKERSON

# 31 Days of Small Automations

START HERE · THE SETUP GUIDE

*Simple systems and small automations for busy business owners — no coding background required.*

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## Start Here Before Day 1

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Welcome! If you are following the 31 Days of Small Automations series, this short guide gets you ready before we begin.

This is not a developer setup manual. It is the shortest possible path to “ready,” so you can follow along without getting stuck on tools before we even start.

The goal is simple: **take the chaos you already have in your business and start giving it a place to go.** One repeated task. One small improvement. One better workflow. That is how these systems become useful.

Before the series begins, you need three tools ready:

- **Codex** — an AI coding partner that turns a small idea into a real, working change.
- **Hermes Agent** — an AI assistant that can use tools, remember context, and run your workflows.
- **Discord** — a free chat app that gives your AI workflow a home, instead of one giant chatbot thread.

**You do not need to be technical to start.** You do need a safe place to experiment. That is what this guide sets up.

## The Quick Version

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If you only do the minimum, do this:

Prep Day	What You Set Up	“Ready Enough” Means
Day 1	<b>Codex</b> — your AI coding partner	You can open it, sign in, and point it at a practice folder.

Prep Day	What You Set Up	“Ready Enough” Means
Day 2	<b>Hermes Agent</b> — your AI assistant hub	Hermes opens, and <code>hermes doctor</code> does not show a blocker you do not understand.
Day 3	<b>Discord</b> — where your workflow lives	Your Hermes bot responds to you in a private test space.

“Ready enough” is the goal. Not perfect. Not fancy. Not a whole new life system before the series starts. Just ready enough to follow along.

## First, a 60-Second Word About “The Terminal”

A few steps in this guide ask you to copy a command into the terminal — the plain text window where you type instructions directly to your computer. That is the whole trick: copy, paste, press Enter.

- **On a Mac:** press `Cmd + Space`, type **Terminal**, and press Enter.
- **On Windows:** open the Start menu, type **PowerShell**, and press Enter.

If a command does not work, do not panic. Copy the error message and paste it into the tool’s chat — these AI tools are very good at explaining their own error messages.

## Before You Connect AI Tools to Anything

### Start small and keep it safe.

These tools can read files, write code, run commands, and connect to online services, depending on how you configure them. That does not mean you should start with your real work, your client work, or anything sensitive.

Make a practice folder first. This is your sandbox — everything in this series happens inside it.

#### Mac — copy and paste into Terminal:

```
mkdir -p ~/Small-Automations-Lab
cd ~/Small-Automations-Lab
```

#### Windows — copy and paste into PowerShell:

```
mkdir $HOME\Small-Automations-Lab
cd $HOME\Small-Automations-Lab
```

## House Rules Before You Start

- Use a personal computer, or a machine you are clearly allowed to configure.
- Work inside your practice folder — not your work files, client files, Desktop, or Downloads.
- Do not feed the tools private company data, customer data, client files, health data, school records, or financial records unless you have permission and understand the policies.
- Keep API keys, bot tokens, passwords, and private keys in a password manager.
- Never paste secrets into screenshots, videos, public chats, GitHub, or support forums.
- If a tool asks to run a command, read it before approving it.

This is not about being scared of the tools. **It is about learning the right habits while the stakes are low.**

## PREP DAY 1

# Codex — Your AI Coding Partner

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Codex is the coding partner for this series. You are not using it to say, “Build me a giant app.” You are using it to practice a better habit:

*“Here is a repeated workflow. What is one small feature that would make the next step easier?”*

That is the muscle we are building for all 31 days.

## Start With the Official Pages

- [Codex overview](#)
- [Codex quickstart](#)
- [Codex CLI docs](#)
- [Codex pricing](#)

## Do This

- Create or sign into your OpenAI / ChatGPT account.
- Check the current Codex pricing page before paying for anything.
- Decide whether you want the app, the terminal version, or both. (Not sure? Start with the app.)
- Install Codex from the official docs.
- Open Codex and sign in.
- Point it at your practice folder.
- Ask it: **“Tell me what is in this project.”**

If you prefer an app, use the [Codex quickstart](#) and download the macOS or Windows app from there. If you prefer the terminal, these are the official install commands:

### Mac / Linux:

```
curl -fsSL https://chatgpt.com/codex/install.sh | sh
```

### Windows PowerShell:

```
powershell -ExecutionPolicy ByPass -c "irm  
https://chatgpt.com/codex/install.ps1 | iex"
```

### Or with npm or Homebrew:

```
npm install -g @openai/codex  
brew install --cask codex
```

## Before You Ask Codex to Code, Try This Prompt

```
I have a repeated workflow I want to improve.  
  
Before writing code, help me define:  
- the input  
- the output  
- the smallest useful feature  
- the human decision that should stay in the loop  
- how we will know it worked
```

**If you get stuck, do not make the project bigger. Make the task smaller.**

### PREP DAY 2

## Hermes Agent — Your AI Assistant Hub

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Hermes is the assistant layer. If you have ever had one giant AI chat thread full of content ideas, reminders, business thoughts, random questions, and half-finished plans, you already know the problem: the chat gets messy, the context gets buried, and the useful stuff is hard to find later.

Hermes helps you start thinking in workflows instead of one-off prompts. It can connect to tools, remember useful context, and meet you in places like Discord.

For this series, that matters because we are not just asking AI questions. We are building small systems around real work.

### Start With the Official Pages

- [Hermes docs](#)
- [Hermes installation docs](#)
- [Hermes on GitHub](#)

**Want the easiest path? Start with Hermes Desktop.** The Desktop installer sets up both the desktop app and the command-line app, so you get a visual starting point with terminal access available when you need it. If you are already comfortable in the terminal, command-line only is fine.

### Do This

- Go to the [Hermes docs](#).
- Use the official Desktop installer if you want the visual path.
- Follow the setup prompts.
- Choose a model provider during setup.
- Open a terminal and run `hermes doctor`.
- Open Hermes and ask: **“What folder am I in?”**
- Installed command-line only and want the app later? Run `hermes desktop`.

**Command-line install — Mac, Linux, WSL2, or Android Termux:**

```
curl -fsSL https://hermes-agent.nousresearch.com/install.sh | bash
```

### Windows PowerShell:

```
iex (irm https://hermes-agent.nousresearch.com/install.ps1)
```

### Basic checks once it is installed:

```
hermes setup  
hermes doctor  
hermes  
hermes status --all
```

**Keep Hermes simple at first.** You can add tools, memory, files, terminal, browser, scheduled jobs, and messaging later. You do not need to turn on every permission on day one.

Treat Hermes permissions like access to your laptop — because in a lot of ways, that is what they are.

## PREP DAY 3

# Discord — Where Your Workflow Lives

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Discord is where the workflow can live. This may feel strange if you only think of Discord as a community or gaming app. But channels are useful for AI work because they give your thoughts somewhere to land.

Instead of one blank chatbot box, you can create separate spaces for:

- content ideas
- product and business thoughts
- reminders
- business experiments
- build logs
- messy brain dumps

That structure matters. When everything goes into one chat, everything eventually feels like clutter. When each type of work has a place, it becomes easier to build small routines around it.

**Start private.** Do not test this in a public community server.

### Start With the Official Pages

- [Discord Developer Portal](#)
- [Hermes Discord setup docs](#)
- [Hermes messaging docs](#)

### Do This

- Create a private Discord server for your automation lab, or a private test channel in an existing server.
- Go to the [Discord Developer Portal](#).
- Create a new application. **Small Automations Bot** is a fine name.

- Open the **Bot** page.
- If you want to use Discord's invite link, set **Public Bot** to ON.
- Leave **Require OAuth2 Code Grant** OFF.
- Turn on **Server Members Intent**.
- Turn on **Message Content Intent**.
- Save changes.
- Copy the bot token one time and store it in a password manager.
- Invite the bot to your private server or private channel.
- In Discord, turn on **Developer Mode**.
- Right-click your username and copy your **User ID**.
- Run `hermes gateway setup`, choose Discord, and paste the bot token and your Discord User ID when prompted.
- Start the gateway.
- Send the bot a test DM, or mention it in your private test channel.

#### Hermes Discord commands:

```
hermes gateway setup
hermes gateway run
```

#### Or, if you use service mode after setup:

```
hermes gateway install
hermes gateway start
hermes gateway status
```

## Common Gotcha

**If the bot looks online but does not respond, check Message Content Intent.** That one tiny setting can make the whole thing feel broken.

Also: your Discord bot token is basically a password for the bot. If it ever leaks, reset it in the Discord Developer Portal.

## How You Know You Are Ready

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You are ready enough when:

- Codex** opens, you are signed in, and it can see your practice folder.
- Hermes** opens or runs from the terminal, and `hermes doctor` does not show a confusing blocker.
- Discord** has a private test space where your Hermes bot responds.

That is enough for now. You are not trying to master every tool before the series starts. You are setting up the minimum environment you need to learn the system thinking behind the build.

The pattern we will keep using all month is simple:

*Start with a repeated behavior. Add one small feature. Watch where the friction moves. Then build the next thing.*

## Your Starter Prompt for Build Day One

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Save this somewhere handy. Use it when the series starts:

```
I am building one small automation as part of a 31-day
systems-thinking series.

Help me turn a messy repeated workflow into one tiny feature.

Keep it local, safe, and testable.

Before writing code, ask:
- What is the input?
- What is the output?
- What is the smallest useful change?
- What human decision should stay in the loop?
- How will we know it worked?
```

**Small features. Real workflows. Less chaos.** That is the point.

## The Fine Print (Boring but Important)

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These tools are powerful, they change quickly, and a short setup guide is not the same thing as legal, financial, security, or workplace advice.

This guide is for educational and informational purposes only. It is not legal, financial, tax, employment, cybersecurity, compliance, or professional advice.

Tools, commands, pricing, availability, setup steps, and terms can change. Check the official OpenAI, Hermes Agent / Nous Research, Discord, and vendor documentation before installing, purchasing, or connecting anything.

Unless stated otherwise, this guide is not sponsored by, endorsed by, or affiliated with OpenAI, Nous Research, Hermes Agent, Discord, or any other named vendor.

AI coding agents and assistant agents can read files, change code, run commands, and connect to online services depending on how you configure them. Use a test project first. Back up your work. Do not use confidential, proprietary, client, employer, regulated, or sensitive personal data unless you have permission and understand the policies and terms.

Keep API keys, bot tokens, passwords, private keys, and credentials private.

The examples in this series are demonstrations of a personal workflow. Your results may vary based on your operating system, subscriptions, tool versions, account permissions, technical experience, and the current state of third-party services.

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## SENG NICKERSON

*Product strategy, systems, and decision-making for business growth.*

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