

THE EIGHT TELLS.

Why AI images look fake, and the words that fix them.

AI didn't make your image look like a stock photo from 2009. Your prompt did. After decades directing creative and production, I can spot a lazy visual in three seconds. The model is doing exactly what you told it to do. The problem is what you didn't tell it.

THE EIGHT TELLS.

Each one quietly tells your reader something is off. Here's the exact fix for each.

1

STIFF SUBJECTS

Characters look embalmed. AI defaults to facing camera, perfectly still.

FIX relaxed posture
· leaning slightly ·
shifting weight ·
unposed moment

2

CREEPY SYMMETRY

Everything is suspiciously balanced. Real life isn't centered.

FIX loosely arranged
· slightly uneven ·
subtle asymmetry

3

PLASTIC SURFACES

Nothing has ever been touched, used, or lived in.

FIX visible texture
· fabric wrinkles ·
matte surface ·
material grain

4

DRAMA LIGHTING

Contrast cranked to 11, for absolutely no reason.

FIX soft diffused light · warm ambient light · gentle shadow falloff

5

STOCK ENERGY

Staged. Polished. Soulless. Looks like it came with the frame.

FIX candid moment · documentary style · caught off guard

6

FLOATING OBJECTS

Things float. Nothing rests, leans, or touches anything else.

FIX resting on · leaning against · settled on surface

7

FLAT BACKGROUNDS

No air, no depth, no atmosphere. Just a wall.

FIX soft background blur · subtle haze · atmospheric depth

8

STERILE SPACES

No one has ever lived or worked here. Ever.

FIX lived-in · light clutter · subtle wear · casually placed objects

THE PROMPT FORMULA THAT WORKS.

Every strong AI image prompt needs exactly three layers. Most people only write layer one, which is why you're getting mannequins in front of painted backdrops.

01**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

What the subject is.

02**BEHAVIOR OR INTERACTION**

What they're doing.

03**ENVIRONMENTAL REALISM**

Where they are, and how it feels.

BEFORE

"woman holding product"

One layer. Mannequin energy.

AFTER

"woman glancing down at product, slight smile, warm window light, relaxed grip, lived-in apartment background softly blurred"

Same subject. [12 extra words](#). Completely different image.

THE FASTEST FIX IN THE ROOM

Before you re-prompt, re-engineer, or give up, add two things.

A BEHAVIOR VERB

loosely · glancing · leaning · resting

A TEXTURE CUE

fabric wrinkles · material grain · matte surface

BEFORE

"woman with coffee"

AFTER

"woman loosely holding coffee cup, fabric wrinkles visible on sleeve, glancing slightly off camera"

WHY THIS MATTERS BEYOND AESTHETICS

There's a joke here. A brand called Needs more human, teaching you to make AI people look human.

But every fix on the last page is human observation the model didn't have until you gave it one. The AI brings the capacity. You bring the noticing.

PROMPTS IN ACTION.

TELL #1 • STIFF SUBJECTS

unposed, mid-gesture, weight shifted

BEFORE



AFTER



TELL #3 • PLASTIC SURFACES

ring stain, condensation, grain

BEFORE



AFTER



TELL #8 • STERILE ENVIRONMENTS

lived-in, light clutter, subtle wear

BEFORE



AFTER



THERE'S **MORE.** IT ISN'T NAMED YET.

COMING SOON