PATREON PREMIUM GUIDE · FAITH & PRODUCTIVITY

BUILD A SECOND BRAIN: TURN YEARS OF NOTES INTO ANSWERS IN SECONDS

My notes on how I capture, store, and find years of teaching and meeting notes in seconds, with step by step instructions

By Rick Piña

MY VIDEO

Watch my video first

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liyETpiSsP4

Watch my video first

I recorded this video on a Sunday morning in my car on the way to church to preach. My car was driving me, so I could focus. It was a busy morning. My son Ethan had a game, my son Joshua had to work, my wife was taking Ethan to the game, and we had family in the house.

While all of that was going on, I was finishing my notes for the message. I wanted to quote my spiritual father, Pastor Tony Brazelton, and I did not want to quote him wrong. So I asked my second brain to find the first time he said it and give me the date. It came back with June of 2018, the actual date, the context he said it in, and points and bullets around what he said. I used that context in my message that morning.

A second brain is a system that holds what you have learned, taught, and discussed, so you can find it again when you need it. Mine is a set of notes that AI can search for me. I have been preaching for 30 years, and I can search all of those sermons, Bible studies, and notes in seconds.

Each point below starts with what I said in my video. Then **From my teaching** gives you what I have taught on it over the years. Then **How to do this** gives you the practical side. After the eight points, you will find step by step instructions for setting up your own.

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MY NOTES · BUILD A SECOND BRAIN

WHAT I SAID

These are my notes, with the time in my video for each point.

1. I prepare out of my overflow 00:29

I do Today's Word, my daily teaching, every day. I am used to doing the Word, releasing it, and ministering out of my overflow. So whenever I preach, I meditate on what I am going to talk about all week, but I don't finish my notes until Sunday morning. That is exactly where I was when this happened.

FROM MY TEACHING

I need to be FULL of the Word all the time. I need to be meditating on the Word all the time, and I need to be considering what the Holy Spirit is saying to me all the time. This way, when I minister, I am ministering OUT of the OVERFLOW. Living this way, I have SO MUCH IN ME that it is easy to GIVE OTHERS what is OVERFLOWING in my heart.

This is one of the reasons I teach series for so long. I like to meditate on things for a long time and LIVE what I am meditating. You can't just know God from a Book. You have to know God through experiences. So I daily experience whatever I am meditating on. When it becomes so real to me that I have an abundance of it and a revelation of it, I can preach it. At this point, I am not preparing a sermon like I used to. I am allowing the Holy Spirit to POUR OUT to others what He has POURED IN ME.

If you live full like this, you are always ready to preach, or to minister to someone when God sends you a divine appointment. You don't have to go live what you preach, because you only preach what you live. You are not wracking your brain to come up with something to say, and you are not stressed over preparing a perfect sermon.

HOW TO DO THIS

- Get in the Word every day. For me, that is Today's Word.
- Pick what you are going to teach or present early, and meditate on it all week. Live it before you teach it.
- When you have been full all week, you don't have to write everything days ahead. I finish my notes on Sunday morning.
- The same approach works when you are preparing a presentation for work, not just a sermon.

2. I did not want to quote him wrong 00:51

As I was working on my notes that morning, I wanted to use a quote from Pastor Tony, my spiritual father. I remembered him saying, "No word from God ever comes to you without the power to perform it." Or something like that. And I didn't want to quote him wrong.

FROM MY TEACHING

I have taught this truth for years. In 2025 I wrote it this way. My spiritual father, Pastor Tony Brazelton, taught me that no Word from God comes without the power to perform it. In other words, every Word God speaks comes with the grace to bring it to pass. The grace to obey and complete the task is embedded in the very Word you receive from God.

Back in 2018, I paraphrased him like this. When God speaks something to you, the Word He spoke comes WITH the ABILITY to do what He said. So when you receive a Word from God directing you to do what is humanly impossible, or beyond human limits, you must remember that ALONG with the WORD, you received the POWER to do it. This is how we live a supernatural life. This is how the supernatural becomes natural to us.

God's power comes with His words. This is why it is critical that you receive a Word from God concerning any situation you are in. If you are struggling to access God's power to overcome your situation, it could be because you have failed to discover His Word concerning it. When you get the Word, you will have access to the power.

If you love God and you give His Word first place in your life, the Word will produce, because the power of God is already in the Word. The Word will work if you simply allow it to.

Notice something. Over the years I have written his statement several different ways. That is exactly why I wanted to check the source before I quoted him from the pulpit.

HOW TO DO THIS

- Before you quote someone, check the original. Don't trust your memory for the exact words.
- If you can't check it, say so. That is why I said "or something like that" in my video.
- Do the same at work. Before you repeat what a client, partner, or teammate said in a meeting, check your notes.

3. My second brain 01:16

I have told you before how I set up my second brain. I use Obsidian, which is a note app. In Obsidian, a vault is the folder that holds a set of your notes. I have one vault for all my ministry content, and another vault for all my business proposals and meeting notes. With AI, I can query that vault. That means I can ask it a question in plain English, and AI goes into the vault and finds anything.

FROM MY TEACHING

What I am sharing with you is probably not "normal." I get that. I'm pretty tech savvy, and I have built systems that work for ME. But here is what I want you to understand. AI is not making people dumber. It is making people smarter. It frees me up to think about what I WANT to think about, and it makes me more efficient and effective so I can be more productive.

I still need the Holy Spirit. I still need to think. I still need to pray. But I use these tools to capture all my information, store it where it won't get lost, and access it whenever I need it. This is how I built my second brain.

My whole approach comes down to four things. First, capture everything. If it's worth thinking about, it's worth capturing. Second, organize intelligently. Use systems that make it easy to find things, not systems that take forever to maintain. Third, access instantly. Your knowledge is only valuable if you can find it when you need it. Fourth, leverage AI. Let AI do the heavy lifting so you can focus on the creative and strategic thinking.

HOW TO DO THIS

- Decide what goes in. For me, that is ministry notes and sermon series, business meeting notes, project documentation, personal reflections, teaching outlines, and everything I want to be able to find and query later.
- Keep your ministry and your business separate. I have one vault for each.
- Give your notes a simple structure. I have used a method called PARA, created by Tiago Forte, which stands for Projects, Areas, Resources, and Archives. Projects hold your active work. Areas hold the parts of your life, like business, ministry, family, and personal. Resources hold reference material you want to keep. Archives hold finished or inactive items.
- Link related notes together. When I search for something, I find everything related to it.

4. Give me the notes from that meeting 01:40

It could be a Friday, and I'm working on something, and I remember that last Monday we had a meeting with some people, and this guy said this, then this. I think that's what he said in the meeting. So I ask, "Can you go back and just give me the notes from that meeting?" The way my second brain is set up with AI, it goes in, finds the notes from that meeting, and gives me whatever I asked for.

FROM MY TEACHING

When I wrote about my system in 2025, I already had TWO YEARS of sermons, meetings, and conversations that I could instantly search and query using AI. Nothing is lost. Everything is accessible.

When you have stored what you know, it shows up in the room. It gives you meeting preparedness with comprehensive background knowledge. It helps you solve problems from more than one angle. It builds your reputation as someone who always has valuable insights. And it gives you confidence in high stakes environments, because you are drawing on deep expertise.

HOW TO DO THIS

- Record a meeting only with the permission of the people in it. Some states require everyone's consent, and many clients and government offices don't allow recording or AI note takers. When you can't record, take notes as the meeting happens. In 2025 I recorded every meeting and every sermon, mine and others. Then use the AI built into your recording tool to ask questions about the recordings.
- Ask for exactly what you need: "Can you go back and just give me the notes from that meeting?"
- Take it one step further. After a meeting with a vendor, I asked for a recap of the meeting and the bottom line on how much their solution would cost compared to what we were already paying. The AI went through the whole conversation and gave me a cost comparison. Then I could ask it to write a summary email about it for my CEO.
- Before your next big meeting, pull up the notes from the last one.

5. Find the first time he said it 02:06

So that morning I said, "Pastor Tony has said this, or something like this, and I don't want to misquote him. Can you find that quote for me?" I'm sure he said it more than once, so I told it to find the first time he said it. I wanted to know the date. It went back and said, "Okay, this is what he said." It was in June of 2018. It gave me the actual date, too. It showed me the context he said it in, and it gave me some points and bullets around what he said. That was super useful, because I was able to use some of that context within my message that morning.

FROM MY TEACHING

My own sermon notes from June of 2018 show it. I opened that message by telling the church that Pastor Tony had taught a message the Sunday before called "The Life of Grace." I shared his statement in my own paraphrase, and in the same notes I also wrote it as, "No Word from God is without the ability to perform it!" Ability instead of power. Same truth, different words.

He used Mary as his example. In Luke 1 the angel told Mary she was going to have a baby without ever being with a man. That is humanly impossible. But the Word God sent her came with the power to perform it.

This is why I love my second brain. This is not generic AI content. This is MY content, MY teaching, and MY voice, just organized and made accessible through AI tools.

HOW TO DO THIS

- Ask for the source and the date, not just the answer: "Find the first time he said it. I want to know the date."
- Ask your notes real questions. Here is one I asked: "I have to talk to somebody today about the grace life. Read through my notes and give me a short way, like a two-paragraph version of how I can explain the grace life."
- Here is another one I used for sermon prep: "Give me a summary from my notes about the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. I am about to teach on this, so give me my own bullets in my own words and all the key points and scriptures about this miracle that I have already written." It went through YEARS of my teaching on that miracle and organized it in my language and my teaching style.
- Capture in your own words. The more you capture in your own words, the more valuable your second brain becomes. AI can help you access YOUR thinking, not replace it.

6. I build systems to be efficient and effective 02:48

People ask me all the time, "Rick, how do you do so many things?" I am always trying to get more efficient and more effective. I build systems, technology, tools, and methodologies that help me be efficient and effective. What I am trying to do with this channel is share that with you.

FROM MY TEACHING

Being gifted is one thing, but developing skills is something else. You can even develop skills in the area of your natural gifts and talents. The more skills you develop, the more value you will be able to provide. When you are skilled and gifted, with the right mindset, you will be highly sought after.

Your skill set is tied to your work ethic. If you are gifted but lazy, and you are not willing to develop the skills required to do what God called you to do, you will die unfulfilled. You will die with your best still inside you. Today you have access to so much education that you can become an autodidact, which means someone who teaches themselves, and learn just about any skill.

It also takes mental discipline to focus on what you need to focus on when you need to focus on it. A computer with too many open applications and browser tabs puts undue stress on the processor. In the same way, we waste valuable mental cycles when we fail to "close the tabs" we are not using in our mind. To be efficient and effective, your mind needs to be clutter free. God has given you GRACE to do many things, and that includes the GRACE to be disciplined.

I teach The Grace Life. When you put all of this together and submit it all to the grace of God, God will breathe on you and cause you to do what you could never do without Him. He will favor the work of your hands, and He will empower you to do all things.

HOW TO DO THIS

- Use the tools available to you. There are tools to capture notes, help you write, check your writing, create ideas, develop graphics and marketing materials, and automate processes. Use them to get more done and free your mind to be more effective and creative.
- Build templates. I don't have to recreate the wheel every day. I have a template with everything I use regularly, and I just update the variable parts. In business, that works for proposals, emails, and reports you write over and over.
- Build systems, not just habits. Habits can be broken, but systems persist. Make it EASY to capture information, and make it EASY to find it again.

7. Capture it, then search it in seconds 03:10

If you are on the level where you can meet with me one-on-one every month, and you don't have a second brain and want to set one up, talk to me about it. I'll walk you through how to do it. If not, go look at my earlier videos on my second brain in Obsidian. I have taught on this before.

What I want you to see is what happens when you have a way to capture your meeting notes or your content. In my case, I have been preaching for 30 years. I have a lot of sermons, Bible studies, content, and notes, and I can search through all of it in seconds with AI.

FROM MY TEACHING

Wise people store up knowledge. Solomon, the wisest man of his time, knew that the wise are in a constant state of learning and that they meditate on the right things. His father David taught about the blessed man in the first Psalm, who meditates on the Word of God day and night. And when the Lord was preparing Joshua to lead Israel into the Promised Land, He told Joshua to keep the Word in his mouth and his mind, and to DO all that he learned. Then he would make his way prosperous and have good success.

The key to all of this is what we store in our heart. The wise store godly counsel in their heart. Eventually the abundance of their heart begins to flow out of their mouth. Before they know it, what is in their heart and their mouth begins to dictate what they put their hands to and how they do it. Continue down that road long enough and you will find yourself living in God's best.

Think of it like a pantry. When you consume good content regularly, you are filling your pantry with ingredients you can use anytime. Just like a chef needs a well stocked kitchen to create amazing meals, you need a well stocked mind to create impactful messages, solve complex problems, and lead effectively.

I have studied faith the entire time I have been preaching, and I started studying grace in earnest in 2012. Over the years, my understanding of faith and grace has grown and multiplied. It's like revelation stacking on more revelation. That is why those years of notes are worth keeping.

HOW TO DO THIS

- Store the most important principles in your heart. Offload the details to technology to free up mental bandwidth.
- Don't rely only on your memory. It is limited and unreliable.
- Build both. Keep internal wisdom in your heart and an external reference in your system. The combination is more powerful than either one alone.
- Let the system do the searching. I have THOUSANDS of sermons, teachings, and notes. Without a system, I would have to search through everything by hand. With AI, I can find exactly what I need in seconds.

8. Bring the past into the present 03:54

That is one of the ways I am able to recall or grab information from the past and present it in a way that is useful in the present. Let me know if this is something you want to set up. If you are on my one-on-one level, I can help you with it.

FROM MY TEACHING

The beauty of this kind of system is that when you need something, you have already prepared for it. You are not scrambling at the last minute. You are simply reaching into your well stocked pantry and assembling what you need from what you have already gathered. This principle applies to everything, whether it is spiritual growth, professional development, leadership challenges, or personal situations. Your effectiveness in any moment is directly tied to your preparation before that moment.

> And remember where true remembrance comes from. Jesus said the Holy Spirit "will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you" (John 14:26). Your system holds your notes. The Holy Spirit brings the Word back to your heart when you need it.

HOW TO DO THIS

- When you prepare a sermon or a presentation, search through your notes and resources first.
- Select the most relevant ingredients for your topic, combine them in fresh ways, and add your personal touch and experience.
- The more ingredients in your pantry, the easier it is to prepare for any situation.

DO IT

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

This is how to set up your own second brain. The goal is not to copy my system exactly. The goal is to build a system that works for YOU. Start simple, and add more as you need it.

1. **Decide what you want to be able to find later.**
   For most of you, that is your content (your messages, lessons, and writing) and your meeting notes. Write down the two or three kinds of things you are always searching for.

2. **Pick one capture tool and use it every day.**
   Any note app works. In 2025 I used an app called Drafts for quick notes. Your phone works too. Use it for voice notes during the week, and capture thoughts and ideas the moment they come. Get them out of your head. Writing things down frees up mental capacity and reduces stress.

3. **Capture your meetings and your messages.**
   Record your important meetings only with the permission of everyone in them. Some states require everyone's consent, and many clients and government offices don't allow recording or AI note takers. When you can't record, write the notes as the meeting happens. In 2025 I used a tool called Otter to record meetings and sermons, and I used its built-in AI to search the recordings.

4. **Give your notes a long term home.**
   I use Obsidian, with one vault for all my ministry content and another for all my business proposals and meeting notes. Only important, long term knowledge goes in there. Quick, temporary notes stay in your capture tool. That keeps your second brain clean and valuable. And be careful what you let AI read. Don't put client confidential information, government CUI (Controlled Unclassified Information, which is sensitive government information that must be protected), anything your contracts restrict, passwords, or private counseling and prayer details into an AI tool unless your contracts and the tool's settings allow it. Check each tool's privacy settings, including whether it trains on your chats, which means it uses your conversations to improve its AI.

5. **Dump daily, organize weekly.**
   In 2025 I created a daily note every day where I dumped everything, and I organized it every Saturday. Pick a consistent day and time, and treat it as seriously as any other appointment. It is a meeting with yourself. While you are there, review the past week, plan the coming week, and write down your accomplishments and the lessons you learned.

6 **Let AI do the filing.**
Start by experimenting with an AI assistant. Know this up front. A regular AI chat window cannot see your notes on its own. It only reads what you paste or upload, unless you use an AI app that you give permission to open your notes folder. In 2025 I used Claude, and I used Cursor, an AI app that can open a folder of notes, to organize and search my notes. I did not organize my daily notes by hand. I told the AI, "Look at my note from 10/9/25, read through it, and create individual notes from that note with titles, tags, and links, and put everything in the right folder." Use your own date. It created a separate note for each topic, added tags, linked related ideas, and filed everything in the right place. Before you let any AI create, move, or rename your notes, make a backup copy of your notes folder.

7 **Capture in your own words.**
When you write your notes in your own words, what you get back later is your own thinking, in your own voice. AI can help you access YOUR thinking, not replace it.

8 **Ask real questions.**
Ask your second brain the way you would ask an assistant. "Can you go back and just give me the notes from that meeting?" "Find the first time he said it. I want to know the date." "Read through my notes and give me a short way, like a two-paragraph version of how I can explain the grace life."

9 **Check the original before you use it.**
AI can miss a note, mix up dates, or state something your notes never said. Before you quote someone or act on what the AI hands you, look at the source note. That is why I asked for the date and the context, not just the quote.

10 **Keep your heart full too.**
Let the system hold the details, and let your heart hold the principles. I still need the Holy Spirit. I still need to think. I still need to pray. Submit your tools to the grace of God.

11 **Start simple and grow.**
Begin with one capture tool and one place to keep your notes, and add more as you need it. If you are on the level where you meet with me one-on-one every month, talk to me about it and I'll walk you through how to do it.

THE WORD

Scripture (NLT)

"Wise people treasure knowledge, but the babbling of a fool invites disaster."
Proverbs 10:14 (NLT)

"But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do."
Psalm 1:2-3 (NLT)

"Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do."
Joshua 1:8 (NLT)

"For the word of God will never fail."
Luke 1:37 (NLT)

> Jesus said the Holy Spirit "will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you."
>
> **John 14:26 (NLT)**

APPLY IT

Second brain checklist

1. I know what I want to be able to find later, my content and my meeting notes.
2. I have one capture tool I use every day.
3. My meetings and messages get recorded or written down.
4. My notes have a long term home, with business kept separate from ministry.
5. I dump daily and organize weekly, on the same day each week.
6. AI files, tags, and links my notes for me.
7. I write my notes in my own words.
8. I have asked my second brain a real question this week.
9. I check the original before I quote it.
10. I still pray, think, and listen to the Holy Spirit. The system serves that.

THINK IT THROUGH

Reflection questions

1. What do I keep losing or re-creating because I never captured it?
2. Where are my meeting notes today, and could I find last Monday's in seconds?
3. Whose words do I quote most, and have I checked them?
4. What would 10 years of my own notes be worth if I could search them?
5. What is in my overflow right now? Is my heart full, or only my system?
6. What is the one simple step I will start this week?

I love you.

This is the YEAR OF DISCOVERY.

GREATER IS COMING.

Rick

COACHING & MENTORSHIP

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