AI & Automation 101
A simple guide by Reza Shahrokhi

1) API Keys
Think of an API key like a hotel key card.
It lets your app prove who it is when talking to another service.
Do: store keys safely, use env vars, rotate leaked keys.
Don’t: paste keys in code repos or public docs.

2) Terminal
The terminal is a text control panel for your computer.
You run commands directly instead of clicking around.
Start with: pwd, ls, cd, mkdir, cp, mv, cat.

3) Environment Variables
These are private settings your app reads at runtime.
Use them for credentials and config per environment.
Example: SMTP_HOST, SMTP_USER, SMTP_PASS.

4) Webhooks
A webhook is an automatic message sent when an event happens.
Example: new signup triggers a confirmation email flow.

5) APIs
An API is a structured way for apps to exchange data and actions.
Read docs, test with sample requests, handle errors clearly.

6) Databases
A database stores your system state: users, leads, logs, status.
Pick simple first. Structure clean tables and indexes.

7) Automation Logic
Automation = trigger -> decision -> action -> log.
Always include retries and failure alerts.

8) AI Prompts
Be explicit about role, context, format, and constraints.
Prompt quality directly affects output quality.

9) Human-in-the-loop
Automate execution, but keep approval gates for high-risk actions
like publishing, payments, or customer messaging.

10) Monitoring
If you cannot see failures, you cannot trust automation.
Track health endpoints, error rates, and queue backlogs.

11) Security Basics