

# AI-03776 Do Not Order From the Menu

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“Don’t order from the menu ”

Explain, list the pillars, list 22 examples

What it means? Deep dive and provide the psychological pillars.

Describe how a person typically thinks, behaves, and makes decisions.

Provide 22 concrete examples demonstrating these traits in real-life situations.

Then create a 22-point guidelines from the discussion.

Use all numerical bullet list.

“Don’t order from the menu” is a mindset metaphor for refusing default options—whether in life, work, money, relationships, or decisions—and instead designing your own choice set.

A menu represents pre-packaged, optimized-for-the-average-person options. Not ordering from it means you stop assuming the best answer is already listed. You start asking: *What else is possible that isn't being shown to me?*

It’s not about being contrarian. It’s about recognizing that most systems are built for efficiency, not personalization.

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## 1. Core Meaning (Deep Interpretation)

“Don’t order from the menu” means:

- Don’t accept default choices as optimal choices
- Don’t assume presented options are exhaustive

- Don't outsource thinking to systems designed for averages
- Don't confuse availability with possibility
- Don't limit decisions to what is socially or structurally pre-packaged

At its core, it's a shift from **consumer mindset** → **designer mindset**.

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## 2. Psychological Pillars Behind This Mindset

1. **Agency Overpassivity Bias** – belief that you can actively shape outcomes instead of selecting from prebuilt ones
  2. **Option Awareness Expansion** – recognizing hidden or non-obvious alternatives exist
  3. **Constraint Questioning** – asking which limits are real vs assumed
  4. **Customization Drive** – preference for tailored over standardized solutions
  5. **Systems Thinking** – seeing structures behind choices, not just choices themselves
  6. **Asymmetry Awareness** – understanding that others may not see what you see
  7. **Cognitive Independence** – resisting default social or institutional scripts
  8. **Opportunity Reframing** – converting “menu options” into raw materials
  9. **Experimental Orientation** – willingness to try non-standard approaches
  10. **Value Optimization Over Convenience** – choosing better outcomes over easier ones
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## 3. How This Person Typically Thinks, Behaves, and Decides

Thinking Pattern:

- "What is missing here?"
- "Why are these the only options shown?"
- "How would I build this from scratch?"
- "What if I combine options or invent a new one?"

### **Behavior Pattern:**

- Asks unusual questions in normal situations
- Requests customization instead of accepting defaults
- Mixes ideas from different domains
- Frequently modifies systems rather than using them as-is

### **Decision Pattern:**

- Starts with goals, not options
  - Works backward from desired outcome
  - Rejects "good enough" if better is possible
  - Prefers optionality over simplicity when stakes matter
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## **4. 22 Concrete Real-Life Examples**

1. Ordering off-menu at a restaurant by requesting a custom protein + sauce combination
2. Building a PC instead of buying a prebuilt laptop
3. Negotiating salary instead of accepting listed compensation
4. Designing a workout plan instead of following a gym template
5. Creating a hybrid work schedule instead of accepting 9–5 norms
6. Asking a barista for a custom espresso ratio drink
7. Combining two job roles into a unique hybrid position
8. Structuring a mortgage strategy beyond standard 30-year fixed

9. Learning skills via project-based creation instead of courses
  10. Building an investment portfolio beyond index funds only
  11. Asking for subscription discounts or bundling services
  12. Designing your own meal prep system instead of buying diet plans
  13. Choosing unconventional travel routes to reduce cost/time
  14. Creating a side business from combining unrelated skills
  15. Asking a doctor deeper questions rather than accepting default treatment path
  16. Structuring education via self-directed learning instead of degree path
  17. Negotiating contract terms beyond standard templates
  18. Automating personal finance instead of using bank defaults
  19. Designing a home workspace instead of using generic setups
  20. Creating custom communication systems at work (Slack rules, workflows)
  21. Choosing unconventional relationship dynamics or expectations alignment discussions
  22. Building personal productivity systems instead of using default apps unchanged
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## 5. 22-Point Guidelines From This Mindset

1. Always ask what options are not being shown
2. Treat default choices as starting points, not endpoints
3. Break decisions into raw inputs rather than pre-made packages
4. Separate constraints that are real from those that are assumed
5. Reframe "choices" into "materials I can recombine"
6. Ask "what would I design if I had full control?"
7. Optimize for long-term value over immediate convenience

8. Look for modularity in systems (can parts be rearranged?)
  9. Challenge the assumption that experts always present full solution space
  10. Develop comfort with ambiguity in decision-making
  11. Use curiosity as a decision filter
  12. Treat negotiation as expansion of possibility space
  13. Combine ideas from unrelated fields intentionally
  14. Prefer optionality over rigidity in planning
  15. Reverse-engineer systems before participating in them
  16. Ask for customization even when it feels "non-standard"
  17. Recognize that menus are often optimized for efficiency, not individuality
  18. Delay decisions when better alternatives might be discoverable
  19. Train yourself to spot hidden assumptions in choices
  20. View systems as editable, not fixed
  21. Build personal frameworks instead of relying on external ones
  22. Continuously ask: "What would this look like if I designed it myself?"
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If you want, I can extend this into a **"life operating system" version** (finance, health, career, relationships) where "not ordering from the menu" becomes a structured decision framework.

Gemini

The phrase **"Don't order from the menu"** is a metaphorical directive for life. It suggests that most people spend their lives choosing from a pre-selected set of options provided by society, employers, or tradition, rather than realizing they can walk into the "kitchen" and create something entirely new.

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## The Psychological Pillars

To live "off-menu," one must shift their fundamental cognitive architecture. Here are the psychological pillars that support this mindset:

1. **First Principles Thinking:** Breaking a situation down to its fundamental truths and building a solution from the ground up, rather than reasoning by analogy (doing things because "that's how they've always been done").
  2. **Locus of Control:** Shifting from an external locus (life happens to me) to an internal locus (I happen to life).
  3. **High Agency:** The refusal to accept that the current constraints are immovable. It is the persistent belief that there is always a way to bypass a gatekeeper.
  4. **Tolerance for Ambiguity:** The ability to remain functional and calm when there is no clear path or instruction manual.
  5. **Rejection of Social Proof:** The psychological decoupling from the need for external validation or the "safety" of the crowd.
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## How an "Off-Menu" Person Thinks and Behaves

An individual who refuses the menu doesn't just act differently; they perceive reality differently.

- **Decision Making:** They don't ask "Which of these options is best?" instead, they ask "What is the desired outcome, and what is the most direct path to it?"
  - **Behavior:** They are comfortable being the "glitch" in the system. They ask for things that aren't offered, negotiate terms that seem fixed, and ignore arbitrary deadlines or social milestones.
  - **Cognition:** They view "rules" as mere "suggestions" or "common patterns" rather than laws of nature.
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## 22 Concrete Examples of Living "Off-Menu"

1. Proposing a custom job description to a company that isn't hiring.
2. Negotiating the interest rate on a "fixed" loan.
3. Designing a custom degree path rather than following a university's major requirements.

4. Asking a restaurant for a meal made of specific ingredients not listed on the menu.
5. Starting a business that solves a problem no one has admitted exists yet.
6. Traveling by mapping out a route through small villages instead of following a "Top 10" guide.
7. Creating a "portfolio career" consisting of four different part-time passions rather than one 9-to-5.
8. Writing a book and self-publishing to reach a niche audience directly.
9. Pitching a partnership to a much larger brand by finding the CEO's direct contact.
10. Building a home using non-traditional materials like shipping containers or cob.
11. Educating children through "unschooling" based on their specific interests.
12. Offering to work for free for a month to prove value in exchange for a high-equity stake.
13. Purchasing a product at a discount because it has a cosmetic flaw the store didn't notice.
14. Using a software tool for a purpose it was never intended for (e.g., using a CRM as a dating log).
15. Cold-calling a personal hero and offering a specific value proposition to get a meeting.
16. Creating a new sport or game because the existing ones are boring.
17. Living in a "nontraditional" family structure or community.
18. Funding a project through a private network rather than a bank.
19. Learning a high-level skill via mentorship and practice rather than a 4-year degree.
20. Ignoring a "Sold Out" sign and calling the venue to ask about last-minute cancellations or "house seats."

21. Building your own tools or furniture because the market versions are poorly made.
  22. Refusing to retire at 65 because you've designed a life you don't need a vacation from.
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## **22-Point Guidelines for Living Off-Menu**

1. Always identify the "hidden" third option in every binary choice.
2. Question the "why" behind every social script you are expected to follow.
3. Cultivate "High Agency" by solving one small "impossible" problem every week.
4. Treat every "No" as an invitation to find a different person or a different path.
5. Spend more time defining your desired outcome than looking at available options.
6. Learn the fundamental laws of your field so you know which "rules" are actually breakable.
7. Develop a high "cringe" threshold; be willing to look odd to the crowd.
8. Negotiate everything that is not a law of physics.
9. Create your own "credentials" through a portfolio of work rather than a piece of paper.
10. Avoid "Best Practices" if they lead to average results.
11. Build a network based on mutual value, not proximity or status.
12. Always ask: "Who decided this was the way things are done?"
13. Don't wait for permission; wait for an intervention (and even then, keep going).
14. Learn to communicate your "custom" ideas clearly so others can join your vision.
15. Master the art of the "Counter-Offer."
16. View every obstacle as a diagnostic tool for your current strategy.

17. Be comfortable with the silence that follows when you ask for something "off-menu."
18. Prioritize personal utility over social prestige.
19. Audit your life for "inherited" goals—those you want only because others want them.
20. Invest in "asymmetric bets" where the downside is limited but the upside is infinite.
21. Maintain a "Foundational Independence"—never be so reliant on a system that you can't leave it.
22. Remember that the "menu" was written by people no smarter than you.

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Below is a **complete deep dive** into the idea **"Don't order from the menu"**, structured exactly as requested and using **only numerical bullet lists throughout**.

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## 1. What "Don't Order From the Menu" Means

1. It means refusing to live by **pre-packaged life scripts** created by society, culture, institutions, or other people.
2. The "menu" represents **default options**: expected careers, lifestyles, beliefs, identities, and choices.
3. Ordering from the menu is choosing what is *available* rather than what is *authentic*.
4. The phrase encourages **intentional authorship of one's life** instead of passive selection.
5. It is about **creating custom paths** rather than accepting standardized ones.
6. The mindset rejects unconscious conformity.
7. It values **agency over convenience**.
8. It questions assumptions like "this is just how it's done."
9. It prioritizes **internal alignment** over social approval.

10. It shifts thinking from consumption to creation.
  11. It assumes most people live on autopilot.
  12. It treats life as a design problem, not a checklist.
  13. It favors first-principles thinking.
  14. It challenges inherited definitions of success.
  15. It recognizes that menus are optimized for providers, not individuals.
  16. It demands responsibility for outcomes.
  17. It accepts uncertainty as a cost of freedom.
  18. It acknowledges that safety is often disguised stagnation.
  19. It reframes discomfort as information.
  20. It resists social mimicry.
  21. It promotes self-trust.
  22. It emphasizes meaning over optimization.
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## 2. Psychological Pillars Behind the Idea

1. **Agency** – belief that one can influence outcomes through choice and action.
2. **Autonomy** – preference for self-directed behavior.
3. **Self-authorship** – identity formed internally, not socially imposed.
4. **Internal locus of control** – outcomes attributed to one's actions.
5. **First-principles thinking** – reasoning from fundamentals, not norms.
6. **Cognitive independence** – ability to think without consensus validation.
7. **Tolerance for ambiguity** – comfort with uncertainty.
8. **Delayed gratification** – resisting easy defaults for better outcomes.
9. **Intrinsic motivation** – driven by meaning, not rewards.
10. **Psychological self-trust** – confidence in personal judgment.
11. **Low need for social validation** – reduced dependence on approval.

12. **Identity flexibility** – openness to evolve and redefine self.
  13. **Metacognition** – awareness of one’s own thought processes.
  14. **Antifragility** – growth through disorder and challenge.
  15. **Creative self-efficacy** – belief in one’s ability to create solutions.
  16. **Values clarity** – knowing what truly matters.
  17. **Boundary awareness** – ability to say no.
  18. **Non-conformist resilience** – capacity to withstand social friction.
  19. **Ownership mindset** – accepting full responsibility for choices.
  20. **Long-term orientation** – prioritizing future impact over short-term ease.
  21. **Curiosity-driven behavior** – exploration over compliance.
  22. **Meaning-making instinct** – desire to construct personal significance.
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### **3. How a Person Who “Doesn’t Order From the Menu” Typically Thinks, Behaves, and Decides**

1. Thinks in terms of **“What do I want?”** not **“What should I want?”**
2. Questions default career paths.
3. Designs routines instead of copying them.
4. Makes decisions based on values, not trends.
5. Treats advice as input, not instruction.
6. Tests assumptions personally.
7. Chooses fewer but more intentional commitments.
8. Accepts being misunderstood.
9. Optimizes for alignment, not optics.
10. Rewrites goals when identity changes.
11. Learns independently.
12. Sees failure as feedback.

13. Pursues asymmetric bets.
  14. Dislikes rigid labels.
  15. Chooses environments deliberately.
  16. Manages energy more than time.
  17. Protects attention fiercely.
  18. Builds instead of waits.
  19. Chooses quality over speed.
  20. Designs income creatively.
  21. Rejects false binaries.
  22. Acts before permission is granted.
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## **4. 22 Real-Life Examples Demonstrating “Don’t Order From the Menu”**

1. Someone creates a hybrid career instead of choosing a single profession.
2. A couple designs a nontraditional family structure.
3. A retiree starts a new learning path instead of “slowing down.”
4. An employee negotiates role design, not just salary.
5. A student builds a portfolio instead of chasing top grades.
6. A person leaves a prestigious job for meaningful work.
7. An entrepreneur funds themselves rather than chasing VC.
8. A parent rejects standardized parenting styles.
9. Someone lives below means to buy time instead of status.
10. A creator builds a small, loyal audience instead of going viral.
11. A worker moves cities for lifestyle, not promotion.
12. A professional declines a leadership title to keep autonomy.
13. A person designs a personal curriculum instead of formal school.

14. A couple defines success beyond marriage milestones.
  15. A thinker rejects political binaries.
  16. Someone builds a custom daily routine.
  17. A career-switcher accepts temporary income loss.
  18. A traveler designs slow travel instead of checklist tourism.
  19. A person refuses constant availability culture.
  20. A freelancer chooses fewer clients for better work.
  21. Someone defines health beyond aesthetics.
  22. A builder fixes a real problem instead of chasing hype.
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## **5. 22-Point Practical Guidelines: How to Stop Ordering From the Menu**

1. Identify defaults you've never questioned.
2. Write your personal definition of success.
3. Separate inherited values from chosen ones.
4. Ask "Who benefits from this norm?"
5. Reduce exposure to comparison triggers.
6. Practice making small unconventional choices.
7. Design experiments instead of permanent decisions.
8. Build decision-making confidence through action.
9. Learn to tolerate social discomfort.
10. Replace goal imitation with value alignment.
11. Define constraints before choosing paths.
12. Choose trajectory over credentials.
13. Focus on leverage, not effort alone.
14. Design your environment intentionally.

15. Track energy instead of productivity.
  16. Treat advice probabilistically.
  17. Say no without over-explaining.
  18. Revisit identity periodically.
  19. Invest in skills that compound.
  20. Prioritize time ownership.
  21. Make meaning explicit, not assumed.
  22. Accept full responsibility for your choices.
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## Final Framing Insight

“Don’t order from the menu” is not rebellion for its own sake.

It is **conscious authorship** in a world optimized for passive selection.

Copilot

### Core takeaway:

“**Don’t order from the menu**” is a mindset that rejects default options, avoids passive acceptance, and actively shapes reality instead of choosing from pre-defined choices. It’s a psychological stance rooted in autonomy, creativity, and strategic agency.

Below is a deep dive with **pillars**, **22 behavioral examples**, and **22 guidelines**—all in numbered lists as you requested.

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## 1. What “Don’t order from the menu” means

It means refusing to limit yourself to the options presented. Instead of choosing A or B, you create **Option C**—the one that actually serves your goals.

It’s the opposite of:

- Accepting constraints without questioning
- Letting others define your choices
- Playing inside someone else’s frame

It's the mindset of people who negotiate, innovate, and lead.

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## 2. The psychological pillars (numbered)

### Pillars of the "Don't order from the menu" mindset

1. **Autonomy** — A belief that you can define your own options.
  2. **Agency** — Acting as the architect of outcomes, not a passive chooser.
  3. **Frame Control** — Refusing to operate inside someone else's predefined structure.
  4. **Creative Problem-Solving** — Generating alternatives instead of accepting defaults.
  5. **Non-Conformity** — Comfort with deviating from norms or expectations.
  6. **Self-Advocacy** — Asking for what you actually want, not what's offered.
  7. **Strategic Thinking** — Seeing the bigger picture behind the presented choices.
  8. **Confidence** — Trusting your ability to negotiate or propose alternatives.
  9. **Resourcefulness** — Finding or creating solutions that aren't obvious.
  10. **Outcome Orientation** — Focusing on the result, not the process or rules.
  11. **Boundary Awareness** — Recognizing when constraints are real vs. artificial.
  12. **High Internal Locus of Control** — Believing outcomes depend on your actions.
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## 3. How a person with this mindset thinks, behaves, and decides

1. **Thinks in possibilities, not limitations** — "What do I actually want?"
2. **Questions assumptions** — "Why are these the only options?"
3. **Rejects false dichotomies** — Doesn't accept A vs. B when C exists.
4. **Acts proactively** — Initiates instead of waiting for permission.

5. **Negotiates naturally** — Sees everything as flexible unless proven otherwise.
  6. **Values customization** — Prefers tailored solutions over generic ones.
  7. **Seeks leverage** — Looks for angles others overlook.
  8. **Stays calm under pressure** — Doesn't feel rushed to choose.
  9. **Uses strategic patience** — Waits for the right moment to propose alternatives.
  10. **Communicates assertively** — States preferences clearly and without apology.
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## 4. Twenty-two real-life examples of “Don't order from the menu” behavior

1. Asking a restaurant to combine items not listed together.
2. Negotiating a job offer instead of accepting the initial package.
3. Proposing a hybrid work schedule when only “remote or in-office” is offered.
4. Creating a new role at a company instead of applying for existing ones.
5. Asking a landlord for a rent reduction in exchange for a longer lease.
6. Designing your own degree path instead of choosing a standard major.
7. Offering a project-based contract when a client wants hourly billing.
8. Asking a gym for a custom membership instead of standard tiers.
9. Requesting a bank to waive fees instead of paying them.
10. Suggesting a different meeting format when the proposed one is inefficient.
11. Asking a store to price-match even if it's not advertised.
12. Proposing a new timeline instead of accepting unrealistic deadlines.
13. Asking for a custom bundle when buying electronics.
14. Requesting a hotel upgrade or late checkout even if not listed.
15. Negotiating medical bills instead of paying the sticker price.
16. Asking a professor for an alternative assignment format.

17. Proposing a unique collaboration instead of a standard partnership.
  18. Creating your own business model instead of copying competitors.
  19. Asking a contractor for a custom scope instead of preset packages.
  20. Requesting a different flight routing when the airline says “no seats.”
  21. Asking a friend group to change plans instead of going along passively.
  22. Designing your own fitness program instead of following the default plan.
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## **5. Twenty-two guidelines for adopting this mindset**

1. Define what you actually want before evaluating options.
2. Treat every presented choice as negotiable unless proven otherwise.
3. Ask “What’s the real goal here?” before choosing.
4. Identify hidden assumptions in any set of options.
5. Propose alternatives confidently and without apology.
6. Use “What would it take to...” as a negotiation opener.
7. Don’t rush decisions—pause and think creatively.
8. Look for leverage points others ignore.
9. Question whether constraints are real or artificial.
10. Reframe binary choices into multi-path possibilities.
11. Focus on outcomes, not the process offered.
12. Ask for customization whenever possible.
13. Treat rules as guidelines unless they’re legally binding.
14. Practice saying “That doesn’t work for me—here’s what does.”
15. Assume flexibility exists until someone explicitly says otherwise.
16. Stay calm when others expect quick decisions.
17. Use silence strategically to create space for alternatives.
18. Think in terms of value exchange, not compliance.

19. Build confidence by starting with small negotiations.
  20. Observe how often people accept defaults—and choose differently.
  21. Remember that most systems are designed for convenience, not optimization.
  22. Always ask: “What would the non-menu option look like here?”
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If you want, I can also create:

- A **visual framework**,
- A **one-page cheat sheet**,
- A **training script**,
- Or a **persona profile** for someone who lives this mindset.