

MY SECOND BRAIN IS A FOLDER OF TEXT FILES

Not an app. Not a subscription. A folder of plain-text notes that AI can read, search, and build on – and that will still open in 30 years. My exact setup.

BY DANIEL RIVERA – DANIEL ON PURPOSE · RIO GRANDE VALLEY, TX · 2026

Everything I know – projects, people, ideas, family logistics, content – lives in one Obsidian vault: plain markdown files in numbered folders. It costs nothing, it's mine forever, and because it's just text, AI can work inside it.

01 THE FOLDER MAP

FOLDER	WHAT LIVES THERE
00 Home	The dashboard – one note linking to everything (today, quick capture, the map)
01 Inbox	Quick capture. Everything lands here first, gets sorted weekly
02 Journal	Daily notes – one file per day
03 Goals & Areas	The ongoing stuff: yearly goals, work, health, finances, family, brand
04 Projects	One note per active project – things with an end date
05 Content OS	My entire content system: voice doc, calendar, prompts, scripts
06–08, 11	Life admin – family, health, home & money, legal
09 People	One note per person – my network, mapped by sphere
10 Ideas	Business ideas, content ideas, AI workflow ideas
90 Resources	Reference: tools, checklists, templates, saved knowledge
99 Templates	Note templates so every new note starts structured

02 THE FOUR VAULT RULES

- 01 Capture to Inbox.** Never lose a thought; sort weekly, not in the moment.
- 02 One note per thing.** A person, a policy, a warranty, a goal – each gets its own file so links work.
- 03 Separate lives, linked doors.** Work gets its own vault; the life vault links out instead of copying in.

04 Dates get properties. Anything that expires or renews gets an `expires:` field so a tracker note can catch it.

03 WHY PLAIN TEXT WINS

- AI can read it.** Point Claude or ChatGPT at a folder of markdown and it has your full context — no export, no API, no copy-paste marathon.
- It's future-proof.** Text files opened in 1996 still open today. Your notes app from 2019 doesn't.
- It's yours.** No subscription, no cloud lock-in, no company deciding your brain's fate.
- Links beat folders.** Notes reference each other like a wiki — the structure emerges from use.

04 START THIS WEEK (30 MINUTES)

- 01** Download Obsidian (free). Create a vault. Make two notes: **Home** and **Inbox**.
- 02** For one week, dump every thought, link, and task into Inbox. Don't organize yet.
- 03** Sunday: sort the week into folders that match YOUR life. Steal my map above as a start.
- 04** Then the AI move: ask it to summarize your week from your daily notes, draft from your idea notes, or prep you for a meeting from a person note. That's when it stops being a notes app and becomes a second brain.

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