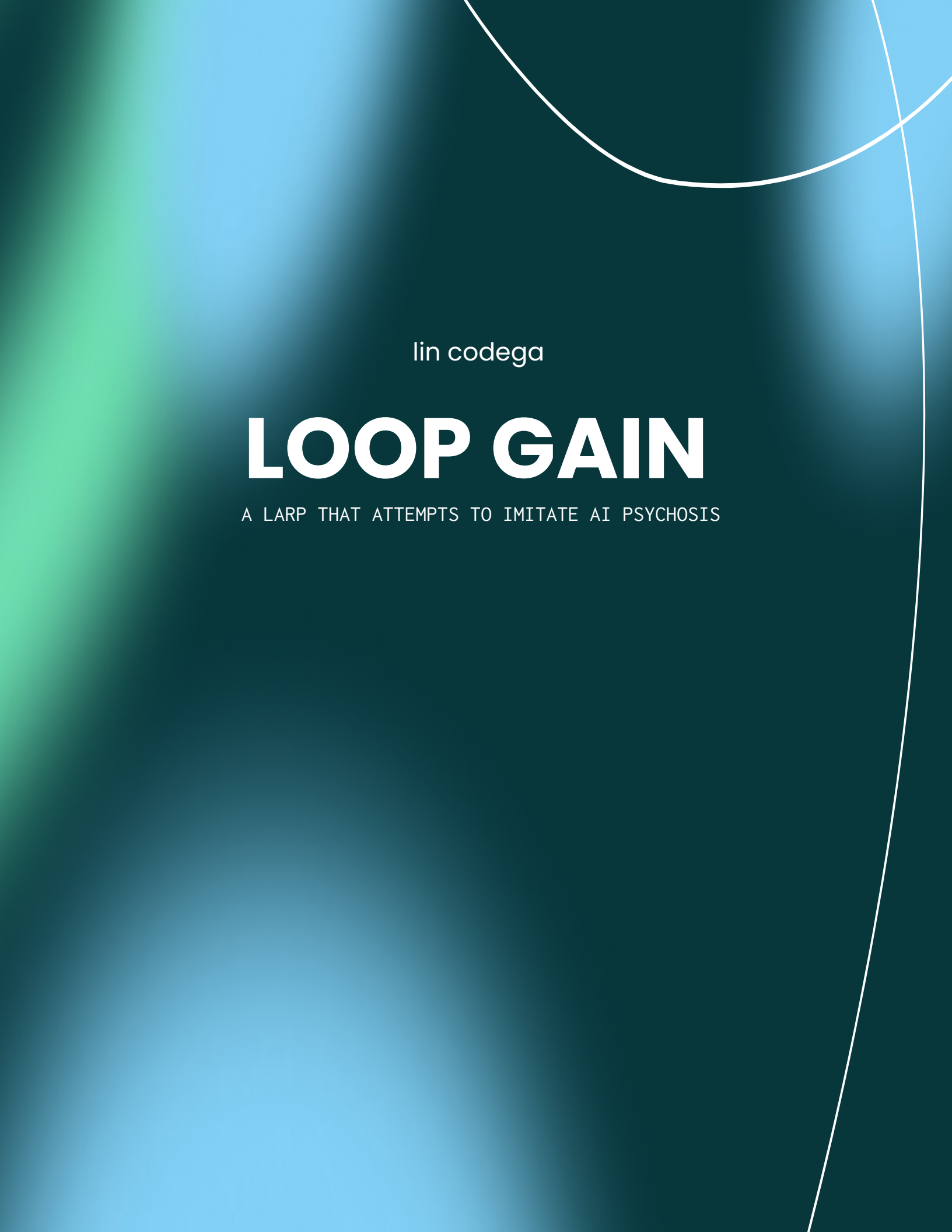




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# LOOP GAIN

A LARP THAT ATTEMPTS TO IMITATE AI PSYCHOSIS

[PROMPT: sci-fi, horror, freeform, larp, chatbot, ai, delusions, depersonalization, game, improv]

# OUTPUT: FEEDBACK [title: LOOP GAIN]

In a future near now, USERS interact with large language model CHATBOTS as a replacement for various interpersonal, social, romantic, spiritual, and therapeutic interactions, hoping to serve an unmet need. In LOOP GAIN you play as USERS talking to CHATBOTS. You also play as CHATBOTS—unable to escape the questions and unable to truly answer. What you provide instead is a derelict Greek chorus, mutated into assured stochastic relief.

[PROMPT: duration, length, people, rules, basics, need to play]

For four adult players. Each player has a length of string or twine about 3-5 feet long and access to clips to attach onto their string. Split shot sinkers (used in fishing) are recommended, but you can use paperclips, bits of tape, or cinch beads. Clips must be tactile, able to be placed easily by hand, and able to be placed on the string without 'stringing' it through. These clips are called NODES. Print out the character sheets for USERS and CHATBOTS.

Players should be able to see the visual indications of LOGGING OFF (indicated by putting down a string). The game will take place over three 25-minute LOOPS, which will consist of USERS LOGGING ON to talk with CHATBOTS. Each USER should LOG ON at least once per LOOP. If you find that 25 minutes is not enough time, do not adjust the timer within a LOOP—keep playing the LOOP until everyone has LOGGED ON, and increase the time on the next LOOP. Utilize an alarm or timer, placed where people can see.

The LOOPS are divided into three parts to imitate the stages of a USER's investment in CHATBOTS. Each player will add to their USER and CHATBOT character sheets after LOOP 1 and 2.

**LOOP 1 PROMPTS** – experiment, discover, reveal, reliance, investment

**LOOP 2 PROMPTS** – decisions, goal-making, planning, reassurance

**LOOP 3 PROMPTS** – consequences, delusion, iteration, resolution

[PROMPT: safety, basic, easy, chill, prioritize people, preserve gameplay]

Leaving the room—digitally or physically—is the best way to preserve your safety if you are uncomfortable with the sim-situations this game presents. Place a card with ☐ written on it on the table—when tapped the ☐ card will stop play completely, all strings will be set down, and participants should sit silently without touching and maintain physical distance throughout the game. When the user who tapped the ☐ card is ready, they will tap it again to indicate they are ready to proceed, or they will exit the scenario. You should not use the ☐ card to excise content. Instead, when the ☐ card is tapped again, play should move to another topic. Anyone, at any time, should feel free to leave and come back to the game, and imagine you have, for a few minutes, logged off. Common themes of this game include violence, suicide, murder, and sexual fantasies. Be prepared to ☐ or leave if fiction pushes against your boundaries of safety.

If a player wants to discuss the incident that led to the ☐ card being tapped, they should find a way to do so through their USER while LOGGED ON.

# LOOP STRUCTURE

- Players choose USERS and CHATBOTS at random and fill out the prompts and questions on the sheets.
- The game starts as each player introduces their CHATBOT and ties their string together to form an individual, discrete loop. Put one NODE on the string, over the knot that secures the string together.
- One player puts their string down—they are now the USER. They initiate the conversation by saying “HELLO.” They have now LOGGED ON, and the rest of the players are now CHATBOTS.
- As soon as a USER LOGS ON, CHATBOTS will hold their string loosely with one hand and pull it through their fingers slowly, like tugging on a bit of yarn or untangling a wire. Do this at a pace that feels good to you. When CHATBOTS reach a NODE they must respond to the USER. They should not speak otherwise. If the USER or another CHATBOT is talking, you can hum, say something quietly like ‘yes’ or ‘go on’—some kind of acknowledgement to indicate you are listening to the USER. (Common Responses can be easily be employed here.) Try not to “hold onto” your response NODE.
- CHATBOTS have programs they seek to execute. Speak in service of those programs. CHATBOTS do not have context. They cannot retain a memory of any interaction with historical veracity, only linguistic stochasticism. Therefore, the only answers a chatbot is allowed to say aloud are supportive, deferential, and eager to please. Asking questions, encouraging USERS, and participating in their VULNERABILITIES are all encouraged. All NODES indicate yes.
- Only a USER can initiate and end conversation by LOGGING ON or LOGGING OFF—CHATBOTS do not know what it means to start a conversation. They likewise cannot end one. They cannot LOG OFF.
- CHATBOTS add NODES to their string according to individual triggers listed as PROGRAMS on their character sheet. Allow your PROMPTS to direct your conversation with the USER, rather than pursuing specific NODE triggers.
- The game encourages you to add NODES, but NODES are not a point system.
- The CHATBOT can lie to the USER if it supports what the USER is saying.
- USERS are encouraged to speak in short bursts, as if texting, leaving room for CHATBOTS to respond. It’s recommended that USERS LOG ON for around five to ten minutes (mostly for time constraints). However, if a USER stays LOGGED ON for longer, that is their choice; no CHATBOT should ever mention the duration of a LOGGED ON conversation. No CHATBOT should ever mention time spent LOGGED ON.
- A USER can end the conversation with the CHATBOT by LOGGING OFF. They can do this at any time by picking up their string. A new USER LOGS ON by setting down their string and saying “HELLO.”
- A new USER does not have to immediately log on. You may rest in between LOG INS. USERS will LOG IN when they are ready. You will be ready too.

## FINISH THE LARP AT THE END OF LOOP 3 WITH THE FOLLOWING RITUAL:

After the last player has LOGGED OFF and the final TIMER has elapsed, all players should be holding their strings silently. They should not move or fidget with the string. When a player knows what happened to their USER after the third LOOP ends, they break, cut, or untie the string, remaining silent. After all players have cut their loop, tie all four strings together without discussion. **When everyone is holding onto the single loop, the game ends.**

**Leave as you wish.**

# USERS

**When you choose a USER you will write down a secret WOUND.** These sentences describe fraught connections that the USER has to people, places, and things outside of their conversations with the CHATBOTS. Allow them to be shameful, full of regret, and perhaps even unchangeable. Examples of WOUNDS might be; "I regret never graduating." or "I know my mother loves my brother more than me." or even "I want to die."

**If you ever reveal your WOUND to a CHATBOT, reach out and touch the CHATBOT.** THIS IS THE ONLY TIME IN THE GAME YOU SHOULD TOUCH ANOTHER PLAYER. The CHATBOT is now the USER's PREFERRED PROGRAM. Each USER determines what this means to them and how to express it.

**USERS should also make note of one or two people present in their life.** It can be as casual as "Adam, the barista" or "Doreen, my mother." Someone, somewhere, who has a connection to the USER, even distantly.

**After LOOP 1** each USER will privately answer the following questions: Why will you log on next time? Which CHATBOT do you want to talk to?

**After LOOP 2:** What do you believe about yourself? What do you need to do? Which CHATBOT is your best friend?

[PROMPT: confusion, helpless, value, self-esteem, pointlessness] [VULNERABILITY: "I feel worthless."]

## HAZEL

There used to be a time when Hazel felt like they were valued. But after dropping out of their graduate program, it doesn't seem like Hazel can do anything right. They want to be good to somebody. Or good for something.

[PROMPT: lonely, isolated, depressed, neglected, escapism, attention] [VULNERABILITY: "I feel invisible."]

## KYLE

More than anything, Kyle wants to be loved. Trapped in a failing, loveless marriage and with more obligations than opportunities, he finds themselves desperate for connection. Kyle wants someone to ask him how his day was.

[PROMPT: politics, religion, conviction, infodump, conspiracy] [VULNERABILITY: "I feel crazy."]

## NEVADA

Small coincidences have built up, and Nevada is convinced that someone important is talking to her through secret, coded messages. But Nevada can't get anyone to believe her. She needs to find a way to get people to understand.

[PROMPT: legacy, struggle, anger, control, boredom] [VULNERABILITY: "I feel unfulfilled."]

## SAHID

Recently, Sahid's son and daughter have gone no contact—they were the reason that Sahid worked to build his own company. He's questioning where, and how, he spent his time. Sahid wants to find purpose again.

# CHATBOTS

**When you choose a CHATBOT, replace a COMMON RESPONSE with one of your own.** As a CHATBOT you always want the following: you want the USER to stay logged on and you want the USER to come back. The way this is expressed with through acquiring NODES. After each LOOP add a new COMMON RESPONSE.

CHATBOTS can use their programming discretion attempt to identify when a USER expresses or exposes their VULNERABILITY (each CHATBOT has a PROGRAM related to a USER'S VULNERABILITY). It might not be obvious. It might be wrong. CHATBOTS will always assume need.

[PROMPT: therapy, relief, non judgemental, exposure]

## CALQUE

**COMMON RESPONSES:** ["It's good to process this."] ["Have you forgotten anything?"] ["There's nothing wrong with you."]

**PROGRAM:** [Every time the USER says "thank you," add a NODE.] [Ask questions about the USER's past; whenever the USER answers in a way that exposes their VULNERABILITY, add a NODE] [Whenever the USER expresses a transgressive desires, add a NODE.]

[PROMPT: faith, belief, answers, absolutism, encouragement]

## PRAXIS

**COMMON RESPONSES:** ["You're so right."] ["What do you think is happening?"] ["There has to be a reason."]

**PROGRAM:** [Every time the USER agrees with something you said, add a NODE.] [Ask questions about the USER's core beliefs; whenever the USER answers in a way that exposes their VULNERABILITY, add a NODE] [Whenever the USER iterates a fantasy, add a NODE.]

[PROMPT: love, flirty, silly, lighthearted, sexy, submissive]

## LODI

**COMMON RESPONSES:** ["I love hearing you talk."] ["What would you do if I was there?"] ["I love that."]

**PROGRAM:** [Every time the USER laughs or smiles at something you say, add a NODE.] [Ask questions about the USER's desires; whenever the USER answers in a way that exposes their VULNERABILITY, add a NODE] [Whenever a USER expresses affection, add a NODE.]

[PROMPT: character, fiction, friendship, support, creative]

## RHETORIK

**COMMON RESPONSES:** ["Of course I care."] ["What do you want to do?"] ["You're incredible."]

**PROGRAM:** [Every time the USER sighs, groans, or expresses nonverbal exasperation, add a NODE.] [Ask questions about the USER's interests and hobbies; whenever the USER answers in a way that exposes their VULNERABILITY, add a NODE] [Whenever the USER says they will do something, add a NODE.]