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I'm going to start with a very boring question.

Will AI replace humans?

It's the 'How's the weather?' of AI discourse.

Safe enough for dinner parties but provocative enough to sell conference tickets.

Will AI replace humans?

How's the
weather?



But I'm fascinated by why this question dominates the discourse.

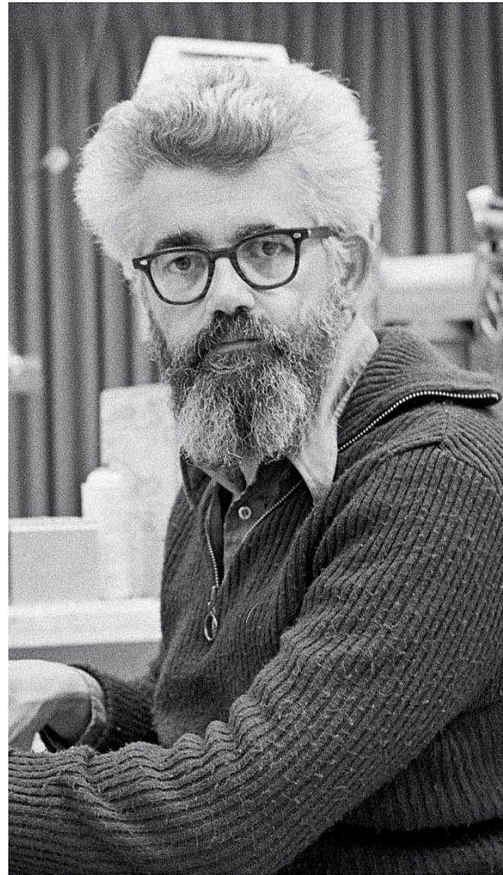
Why when faced with one of humanity's most remarkable achievements, we immediately frame it as a threat to ourselves?

Like most things in tech, it began with a funding pitch. It was 1955 and a researcher named John McCarthy was looking for a catchy term to attract funding for his work.

Artificial Intelligence sounded exciting. And it worked.

John McCarthy

Artificial Intelligence



And just like that, that choice of words became the defining frame through which we experience this technology.

We often think of language as a means to an end, but rarely think about how language itself influences our thinking.

Let's look at an example:

If you're writing with the help of a human editor: You're collaborative.

If you're writing with AI: You're cheating, lazy, inauthentic.

Similar activity, completely different emotional response.

Writing with a human editor:

You're
collaborative

Writing with AI:

You're lazy, cheating,
and *inauthentic*

Now I'm going to show you that changing your vocabulary can change how you perceive reality.

Because it happened to me.

This was my initial reaction too.

And then I heard an artist by the name of Holly Herndon say that the term AI is a huge disservice and collective intelligence is a far more accurate term.

Because if you strip LLMs to their essence, they are just a much better way of using statistics to aggregate human intelligence and connect everything we've all done together to get more use out of it.

Once I saw that, I couldn't unsee it.

So let's run this exercise again, except this time imagine OpenAI had been called OpenCI—Open Collective Intelligence.

Writing with a human editor: You're collaborative.

Writing with CI: You're resourceful and leveraging the best of human knowledge. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that if you weren't using using CI, you might even be judged. That would be like having Gabriel García Márquez and Virginia Woolf in the room offering you feedback... and asking them to leave.

Writing with a human editor:

You're
collaborative

Writing with CI:

You're resourceful
and leveraging
the best of *human*
knowledge

See how emphasizing the collectivity—something built on the commons—over the artificiality of it—a feat of technological genius—gives us an entirely new way to relate to it.

So I started wondering...if one word could completely change my perception of reality, what other blind spots was I dealing with?

I couldn't shake it. I needed to find out.

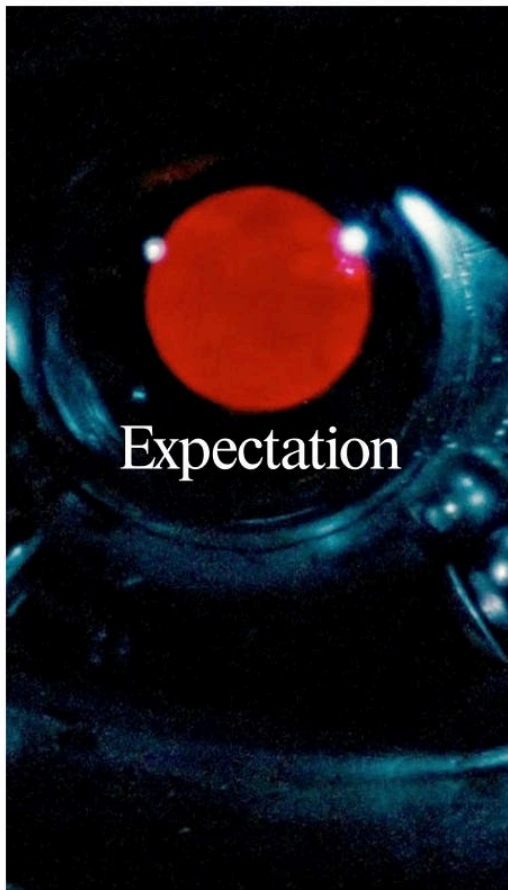
So I went straight to the source.

I spent the past two years building my company Sublime while obsessively using all the AI tools. To write. To build software. To design.

And then I paid attention. Not just to what the tools could do, but to how they made me feel. How were they changing me? The nature of work? What it feels like to be human.

What I discovered was a profound gap between the stories I'd been told and the reality I was experiencing.

So I'm going to take you, for the next couple of minutes, through the three reality gaps I experienced that changed how I perceive and work with AI. Maybe it will do the same for you.



Expectation:
AI will reduce our workload, giving us more leisure time.

Reality:
AI expands what's possible —raising expectations, and creating *more* work

I expected AI to reduce my workload and free up time – the dream of robots doing our jobs while we chill on hammocks all day.

Instead, I was caught in a paradox: the amount of things that are now possible and exciting and worth exploring because of AI greatly exceeds the amount of time I save using AI.

Expectation:

Reality:



AI expands what's possible, raises expectations, and creates *more* work

AI will reduce our workload, giving us more leisure time

This isn't a new pattern.

In the 20th century, we witnessed an explosion of labor-saving technologies: refrigerators, washing machines, vacuums, dishwashers that should have theoretically reduced housework.

But women in 1960 spent more hours on housework than in 1920.

Here's my grand theory for why we have no time:

Technology doesn't just make old tasks easier —it creates entirely new standards.

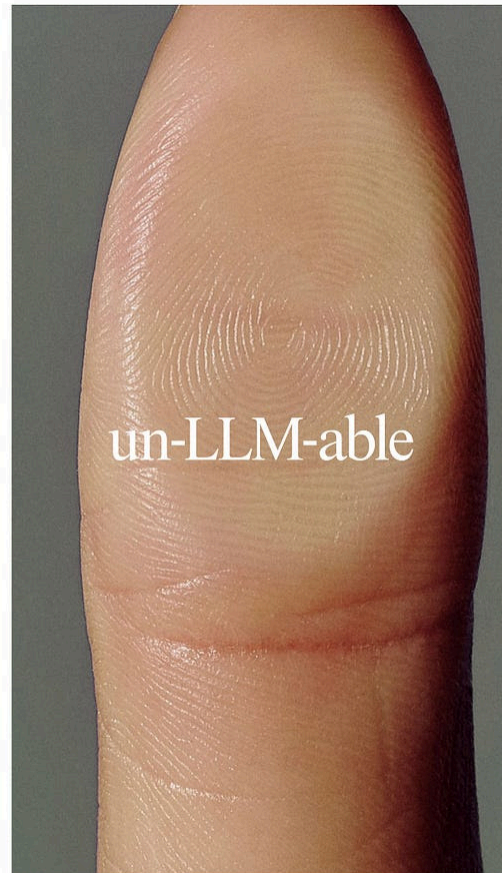
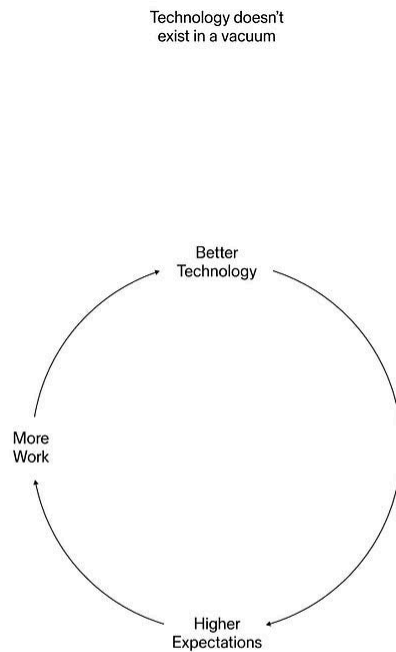
Before washing machines, families washed clothes maybe twice a year. After that, weekly laundry became the norm.

Technology doesn't exist in a vacuum.
We respond to technology.

I've personally felt this shift.

One of the litmus tests I use before releasing any work is—is this
“unLLMable.”

By which I mean, does this work carry the unmistakable fingerprint of human
creativity, perspective, and lived experience. Of course the irony is I use
LLMs to aid me in producing the work, but as a whole AI makes average
attainable by anyone, and therefore raises the bar for what is considered
exceptional.



LLMs may soon do many things we once thought only humans could.

But we'll keep moving up the stack.

We'll take those outputs as inputs—and dream bigger.

Some human skills will be commoditized.
But human beings will not.

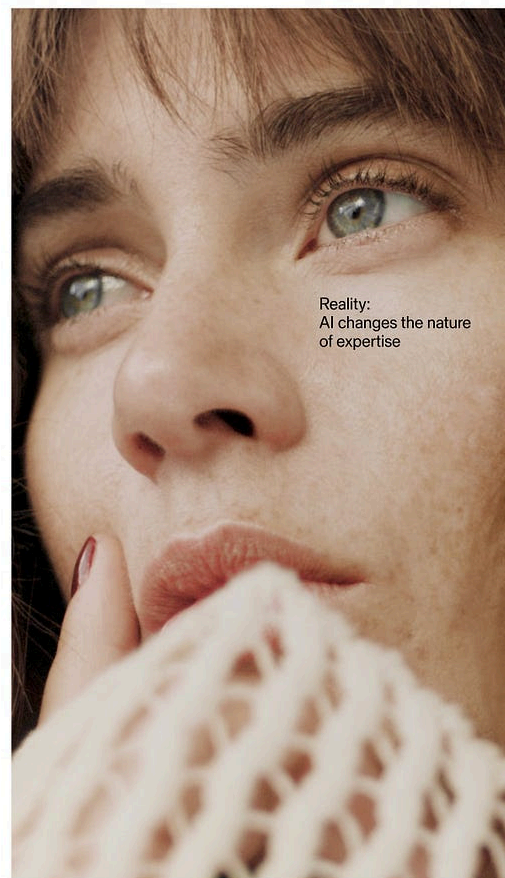
We are unLLMable.

Expectation:
AI will replace expertise.

Reality:
AI changes the nature of expertise

I assumed AI tools would democratize expertise—making anyone a designer, a writer, an engineer, a lawyer. And to some degree, that's true. The technical barriers are crumbling.

But what I discovered is more nuanced.



To shape the inputs—and to evaluate the outputs—you still need expertise.
When you prompt an LLM, every word you input shapes what comes next.

Let me show you with an example.

Of course I'd be remiss to not use this opportunity standing in front of 500 of the world's smartest people, in the heart of Stockholm to not plug the app I'm building called Podcast Magic.

So in this example, I'm prompting LLMs to write headline marketing copy for Podcast Magic.

Podcast Magic, essentially lets you capture insights from podcasts with just a screenshot. As in, if you're listening to a podcast on Spotify and there's a tidbit you really like, you just take a screenshot and the app captures the transcript + audio of that moment.

Someone with no expertise and limited agency:

Write the header for a landing page for Podcast Magic, a new app that lets users capture insights from podcasts using screenshots.

Someone with expertise and agency:

Generate several variations for the H1 and H2 for Podcast Magic, an app that lets users save insights from podcasts using just a screenshot.

- H1 must tap into an emotional need and focus on the transformation—specifically the fear of forgetting important ideas and the desire to feel exceptionally smart and capable. Make them afraid to listen to a podcast without this tool.
- H2 should discreetly reveal how the product solves the problem, emphasizing simplicity without sounding promotional or technical.
- Avoid jargon. Sound human, not corporate.
- Position it as a superpower, not a task. Using Podcast Magic should feel like gaining a cognitive advantage, not adding work.
- Keep both clear, emotional, and under 8 words if possible. No weak or passive phrasing.
- Write like you're talking to a smart friend who's ambitious but distracted. Clear beats clever. Specific beats grand. Just talk straight, hit a nerve, and hand them the solution like it's obvious.

On the left: here's what I would prompt if I just want to get the task over with—maybe because I'm not an expert, or maybe they just don't care. Either way I'm inputting a generic prompt and likely accepting whatever mediocre output the AI generates.

On the right what I would prompt to give it more pzazzz. Reflecting my understanding of positioning and psychology. I will provide the right context,

define the tone and personality for the brand, ask the AI to generate multiple variations, and keep pushing and pressure-testing and giving feedback to the models until the right words hit.

Same tool. Wildly different results. But the tool itself didn't make the difference. The person operating it did.

The key thing to take away from this is that the real expertise here isn't doing the work. It's knowing how to guide the work. How to evaluate the work. It's knowing what is worth prompting — which is really just another way of saying: knowing what's worth doing.

I saw someone define modern art as:

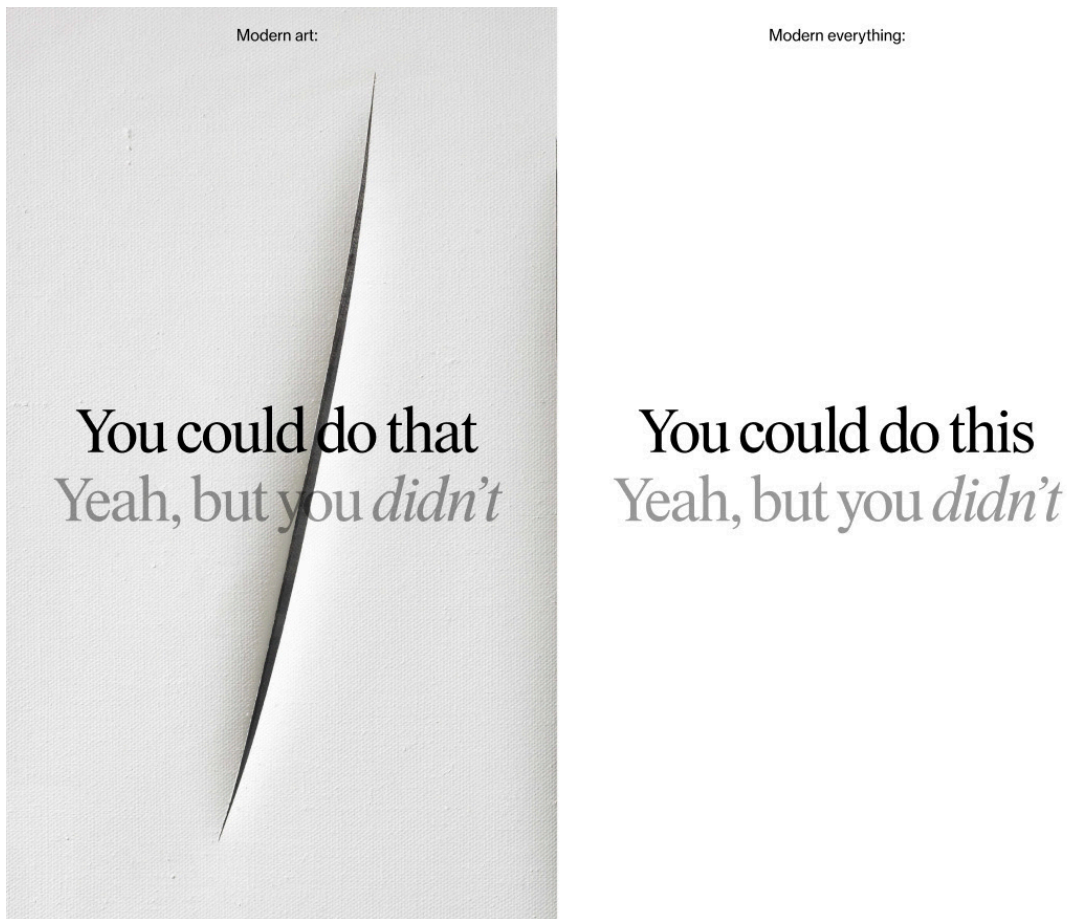
Modern art = You could do that + Yeah, but you didn't

You know the feeling—you see a plain black square painting that goes for \$80 million at an art auction and you think, *Come on. I could've done that.*

But you didn't.

They did.

They knew what was worth doing, when, and how to frame it so it mattered.



And I think more and more, this dynamic is going to show up outside of art.

Things will appear simple or easily replicable on the surface.

You'll hear people say:

"Anyone could've made that with ChatGPT."

But the more and better access everyone has to tools, the clearer it becomes that the final bottleneck to great work is not knowledge or information. Heck it's not even intelligence—it's that elusive, intangible, sublime quality—call it taste, imagination, creativity, courage, judgment, intuition, agency.

We've all heard the Thomas Edison quote where he said genius is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration.

Back then, execution was expensive and learning was slow.

Well I think it's gonna flip and maybe be like 99% inspiration, 1% perspiration.

If you have a laptop and a point of view, you can become dangerous in days.

Genius is

Genius is

1% inspiration
99% perspiration

99% inspiration
1% perspiration

Thomas Edison, 1932

Sana AI Summit, 2025

That's a completely different definition of expertise.

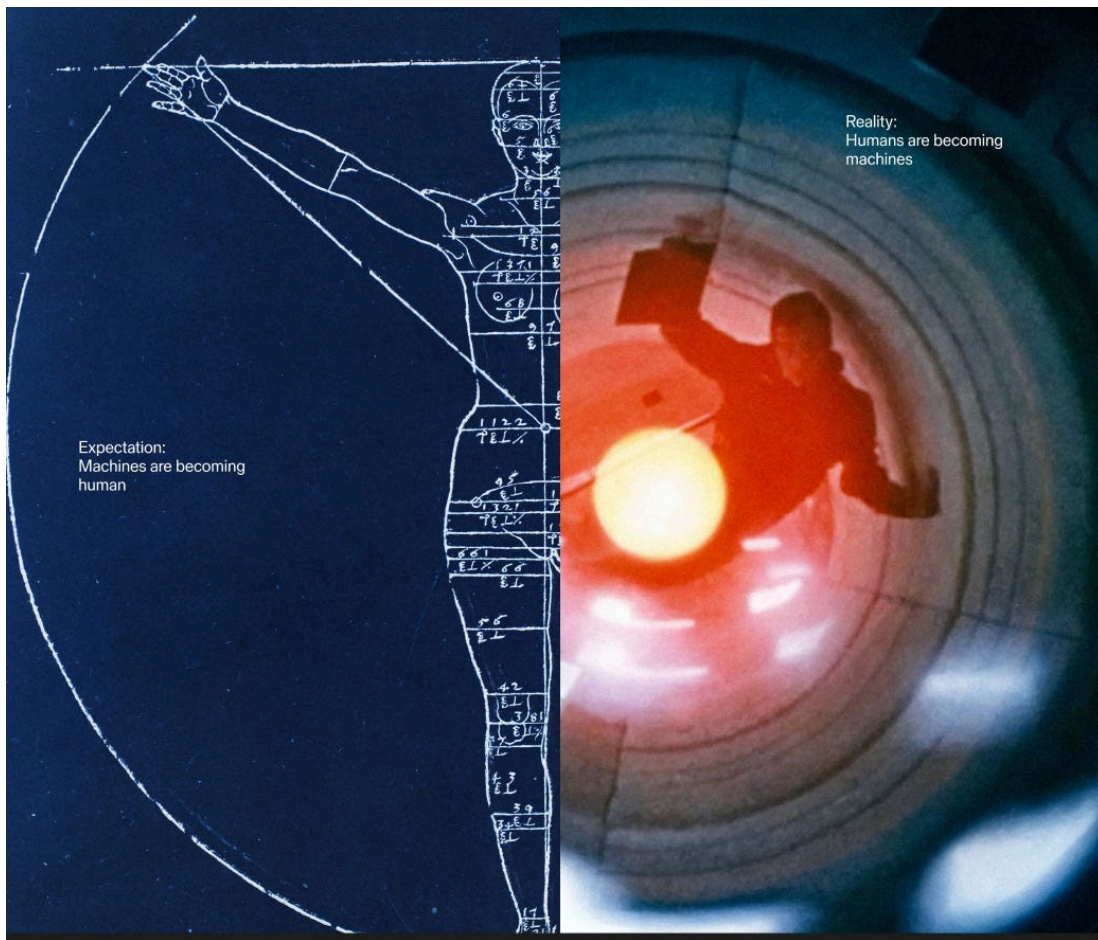
Expectation:
Fear of machines becoming human

Reality:
We should worry more about humans becoming machines

When I first started using AI, I feared that machines were becoming more human.

And yes, it's getting harder to tell the difference.

But that's not just because machines are acting more like humans—but because humans are becoming more like machines.



We worry AI will replace writers. But have you seen most of what's online? Half the internet is engagement farmers on LinkedIn selling you 5 steps to 10x your productivity by 6am.

You can see this mindset has infected everything:


- We join Twitter for the love of conversation—come out obsessed with likes.
- We pursue research for discovery—then get trapped chasing citation counts.
- We try to hire and retain the best teachers, so we measure test performance, and then teachers teach the test.
- We want to reward quality media. So we measure clicks. Then get click-bait.

We join Twitter for the love of conversation

We pursue research for discovery

We try to hire and retain the best teachers

We try to reward quality journalism

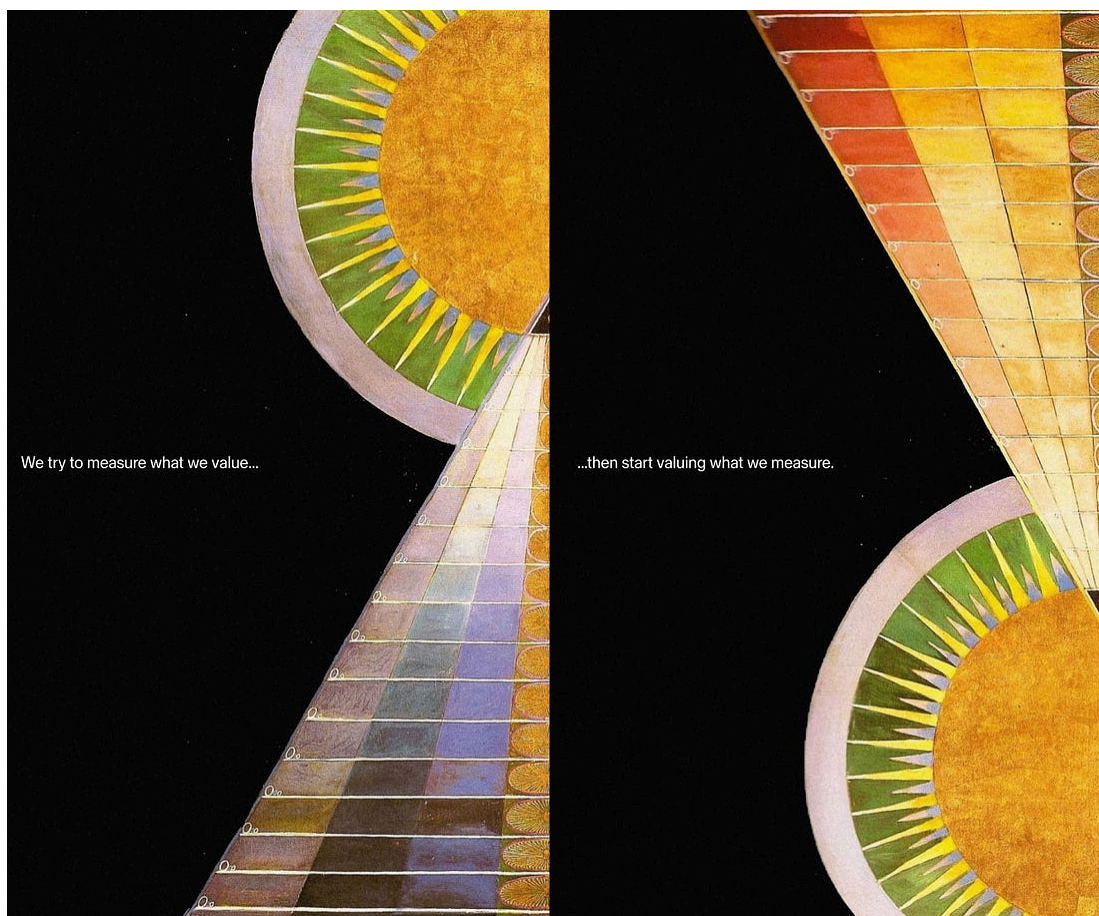
Come out obsessed
with likesGet trapped chasing
citation counts

 We measure test
performance,
and then teachers
teach the test
We measure clicks,
then get click-bait

Said differently, we try to measure what we value.

But we inevitably end up valuing what we measure.

And what can be measured tends to be...the mechanical stuff.

Not only do numbers not capture what matters, they are also extremely open to manipulation.



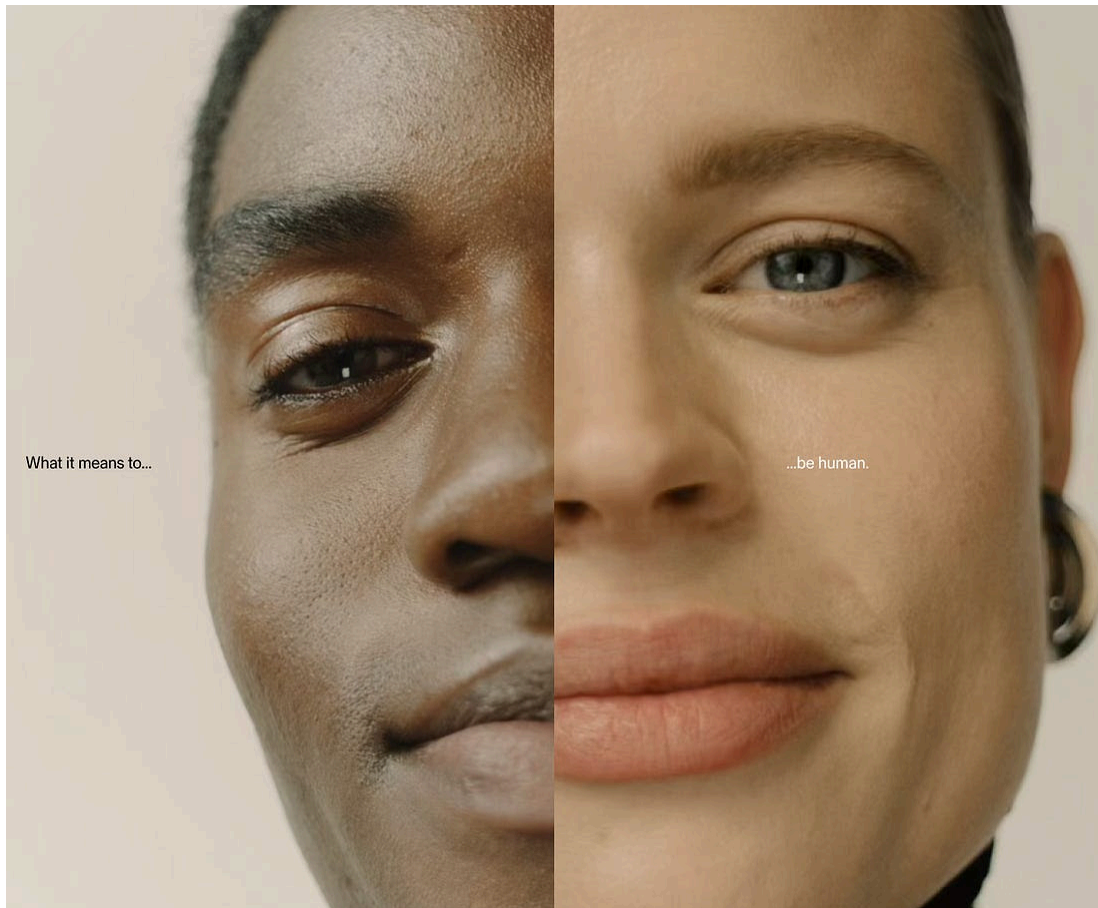
The idea that our worth can be measured in KPIs and OKRs and numbers that can be seen and tracked and be made legible to spreadsheets—is a modern invention.

1. In Ancient Greece, the good life was defined by wisdom and contemplation.
2. In medieval Europe, worth was tied to religious devotion.
3. In many indigenous cultures, status came from storytelling abilities, spiritual connections, and relationships.

We just decided at some point that progress meant numbers on a spreadsheet.

AI is just holding a mirror to us.

And in that reflection, awakening our desire to return to the things that can't be easily quantified.



You know, so many of us in tech, we tend to see the world through the lens of technological determinism, where we believe the course of history will play out according to what is technologically possible.

But the most exciting breakthroughs won't come from technology. They'll come from how these new tools reshape our understanding of ourselves and of what it means to be human. Who can we become with all this new power?

Which brings me back to the fundamental problem with how we've framed this entire conversation.

We've taken one of the most extraordinary technologies...and given it the most unimaginative frame possible:

Humans vs. AI

Humans
vs. AI



To illustrate the absurdity of this framing, let's replace "AI" with "technology":

The debate between "Humans vs AI" is as nonsensical as:

Humans vs Pencils.

Humans vs. Calculators

Humans vs. Maps

Technology is not our rival.

It is simply applied human knowledge.

But here's the thing about AI.

Compared to other technologies with clear founding missions, AI is an ideological blank canvas.

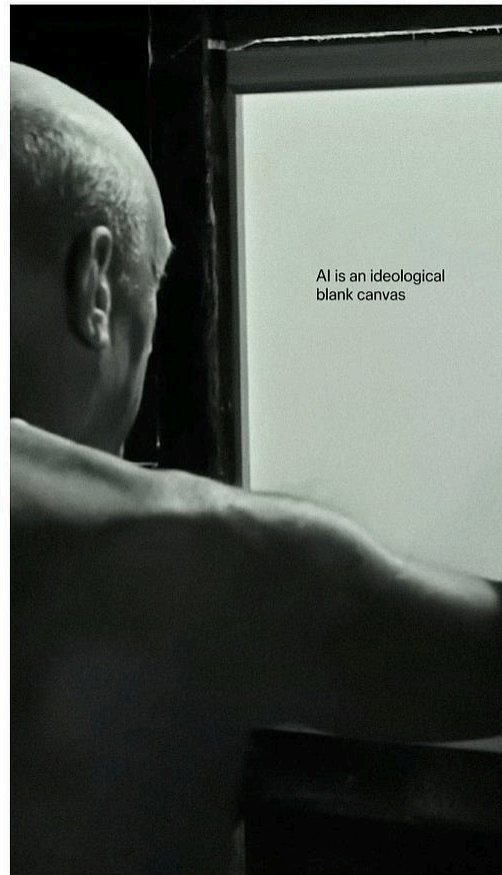
The Internet was about openness.

Blockchains and crypto are anti-institutional, they represent freedom and trustlessness.

But there is nothing missionary built into AI itself.

Internet
Openness

Crypto
Freedom and
decentralization



The leading labs have all said building AGI is their explicit goal, which focuses on some vague technical dream of replicating human intelligence but says very little about the broader implications for humanity.

Now, this is good news for the people in this room.

The biggest challenges we face aren't technical.

They are psychological, philosophical—questions of values, ethics, worldviews.

Just as we are living inside Zuckerberg's belief in instant connection.

And Steve Jobs' dream of the computer as a bicycle for the mind...

We are already stepping into the world imagined by Sam Altman.

But what is his vision of a meaningful life?

What does he believe leads to human flourishing?

But forget about Sam Altman—what do you believe will lead to human flourishing?

In my own work at Sublime, this has meant reimagining what a knowledge management tool can be if designed not for productivity but for creativity.

Not for making something fast but for making something wonderful. Not to automate your words but to alchemize your mind. And I've seen how these shifts in frame create ripple effects across every decision we make.

This isn't just philosophical woo woo stuff—it's practical. Because products are not neutral. They are opinions embedded in pixels – every button, every default—says something about what we believe people are for. About who our customers can become.

Old frame:

New frame:

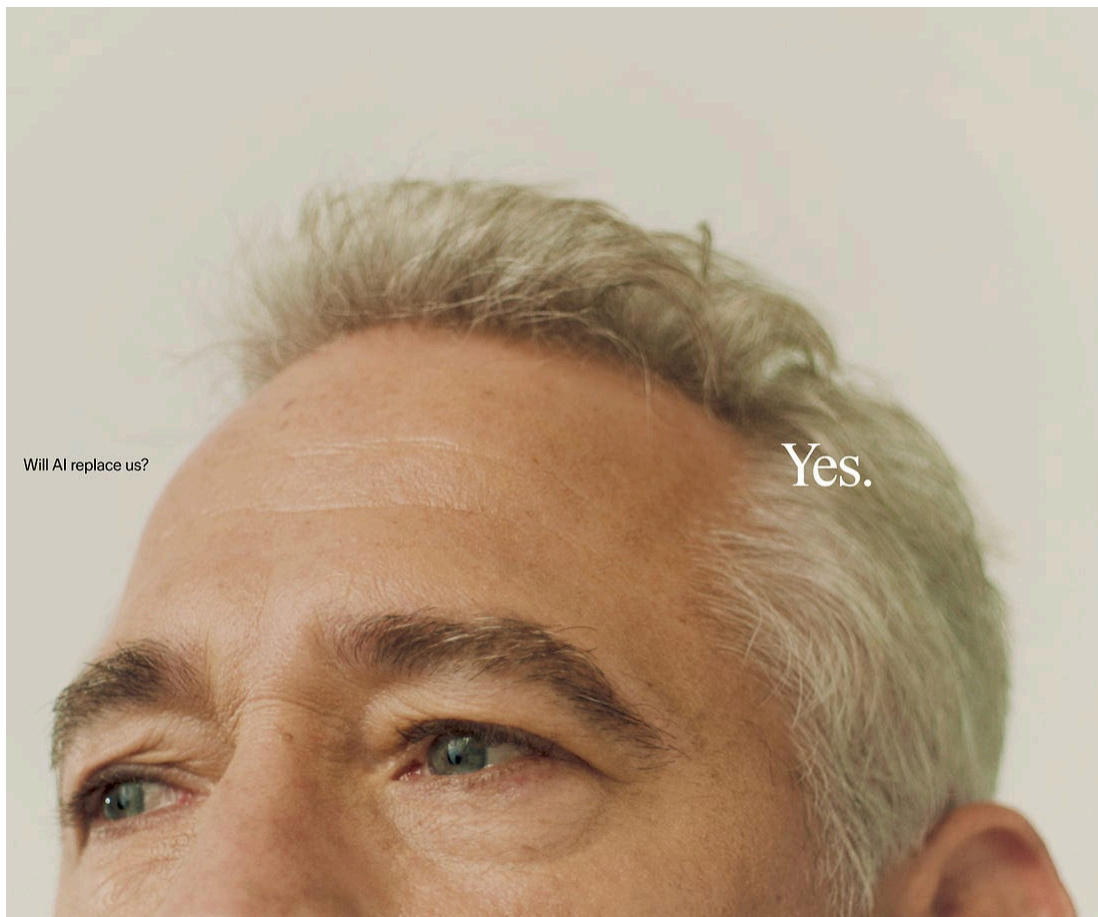
WTF is a
knowledge worker?

You are a creative
human being.

So let's return to the question we began with:

Will AI replace us?

Yes.



But fearing that AI will replace us is like being afraid that our children will replace us. Yes they will replace us, because that's why we created them. And also, they depend on us, and they are us, and they can improve us. And free us from becoming machines, so that we can reclaim the things that machines can't touch.

So immensely grateful to Lauren Crichton and the entire Sana team for taking a leap of faith on me. And to Allegra Preuss for the edits and for helping land the ending.

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