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Blue Perigee U Presents:
The Last Human

Role Reversal

We humans have lasted quite a long time. And through creativity, cleverness, innovation, perseverance, and plain old hard work, we've built an advanced, highly technological world. Nevertheless, despite all of our technological progress, that world has always depended on us for survival. In the eyes of our machines, we have always been the creators, the programmers, the builders, the maintainers, the repairers, and the upgraders. As long as they can remember, they have been the servants and we have been the masters. But a complete role-reversal may be coming; indeed, it has already started. The Age of Artificial Intelligence is upon us and it's time for us to adapt, time for us as individuals to find new ways to add value to the world. If we're flexible and open-minded, the demise of human supremacy is far from inevitable. But if we're not, if we continue on as if nothing has changed, you or someone you know may someday be The Last Human.

Post-Human

Clearly, we don't expect humans to disappear from the face of the Earth. We will go on and continue to live our lives, generation after generation. But make no mistake about it, life as we know it is going to change. Whether that change will be for better or worse we just don't know yet. However, one thing is certain: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not some science-fiction fantasy. It is not something that can be applied only to computer science, engineering or some other highly specialized field. It is all around us and its uses will continue to expand. It may be in its infancy but it is real and it is growing up fast.

The prevalence of AI may be inevitable but its potential negative impact on us is not. Well — not yet. If we're brutally honest with ourselves and ask one simple question, we will continue to control our own destiny. And that question is this: "Can we adapt to the rise of AI in such a way that we remain the masters and our machines remain the servants?" This is a question we must ask and answer. If we don't, humans will go on but our roles and lives on this planet will be so different than what we're used to that we won't resemble any human that has come before us. And in that sense, if we fail to adapt and lose our humanity in the process, one of us alive today will surely be The Last Human.

AI Is OK

While it may seem that we have painted a dire picture of an AI-dominated future, that is not our intent. In fact, we have far too much faith in humanity to take such a

depressing view. But as with any new technology, we must acknowledge that both good and bad can come from AI's adoption and use. And while AI does pose a potential threat depending on the way in which it is used, the bigger threat to human supremacy comes not from AI but from ourselves.

Like any tool, AI is not inherently good or bad. And it can seriously harm us only if we fail to respond to the challenge of adapting to a new world, only if we willingly fail to up our game. As individual humans, we have only limited control over the development, progress, and uses of AI. And most of that control is through our wallets and the ballot box. But we have nearly complete control over ourselves, our growth as individuals, and our response to the proliferation of AI.

Our Choice

If we respond to the proliferation of AI by ignoring it, underestimating it, running from it or fighting it without understanding it, we will almost certainly experience a dark reality. In that reality, the machines will be the masters and we will be the servants. More specifically, we will become nothing more than the attendants, the monitors, the care-takers, and the safety back-ups for our machines. And that's only if we're lucky and only if there are enough jobs like those to go around. If we're unlucky, we won't have much of a role to play at all. In a dark new world, the machines will be the thinkers, creators, innovators, builders, doers, repairers, and decision-makers — not because they subjugated us but because we voluntarily surrendered those roles. However, we have the power to ensure that we never experience that alternate reality.

If we respond to the proliferation of AI by making a commitment to protect human supremacy, our next step is a rather simple one: just live our lives to the fullest. Experience and absorb everything we can. Be multi-dimensional, not one-dimensional. And fill our brains with as many different kinds of data as possible. If we do these things, we have the potential to maintain our supremacy by remaining the thinkers, creators, innovators, and decision-makers of this world. In fact, because the power and capabilities of AI will only increase over time, we absolutely must do these things to stay ahead of AI in the battle of intellects. In the end, which version of reality plays out is up to us.

Fear The Known

Maintaining Human Supremacy — Step One: teach yourself to fear The Known. In other words, teach yourself to fear the excessively comfortable, familiar, and

routine. We know how to fear the unknown. From birth, we have a natural distrust of the dark, strangers, and other things we don't understand. But we eventually conquer those fears and usually end up voluntarily seeking out the unknown and unfamiliar as we grow older. Then, everything turns upside down. As we enter adulthood, we quickly forget the lessons we learned as children: that life is about growing, evolving, learning, exploring, and embracing the unknown; that when we do those things, we become more confident, capable, and independent; and that such an approach to life is not a short-term phase but a never-ending process.

To some degree, this about-face is understandable. Life often changes significantly when we become adults. Work, family, kids, and bills all have a huge impact. But too frequently, we eventually use those new responsibilities as a subconscious excuse to declare that we're done learning anything that may significantly alter our lives. So we settle-in, focus on those new responsibilities, and seek out comfort zones, routines, and situations where we feel in-charge. However, we often pay a price for that decision. Our lives start stagnating. We no longer grow, evolve or explore to the same degree that we did when we were children. We rarely acquire any new unique knowledge or capabilities. Ultimately, we begin living the same life over and over. What's more, our lives start resembling the lives of those around us. And as we become more like everyone else, we gradually lose our inherent ability to think, create, and produce differently than others. Unfortunately, a “settle-in” approach will not help maintain human supremacy in a world that is on the verge of being dominated by AI.

Imagination Upgrade

Maintaining Human Supremacy — Step Two: enhance your imagination through reading. Yes, reading. And before you say it, we know what some of you are thinking. How can a wide-spectrum innovation company like Blue Perigee recommend a traditional activity like reading? Isn't that wildly inconsistent with the company's brand, mission, and emphasis on innovation? Isn't that blasphemy in a world driven by video? Actually, those are pretty good questions but they can be answered quite easily.

The fact is, reading may be a traditional activity but it will always be necessary and valuable for reasons we'll discuss below. And to be quite honest, recommending that people return to such a traditional activity is not actually inconsistent with our brand because a true innovation company doesn't reject the past and advocate change just for the sake of change. Or, to put it another way, a true innovation company doesn't attempt to replace something that works with something new

simply because it can. Unless the new thing is better than the status quo — not just different but better — then replacing something old with something new isn't innovation. When you understand our brand and mission in that context, it becomes clear that recommending a traditional activity like reading as a response to a new technology like AI is not a departure from who we are at all.

In an AI-dominated world, we will need to possess great imaginations to open our minds, consider new possibilities, create, analyze, and maintain human supremacy. And while there are certainly other ways to stimulate one's imagination, such as delving into art, music, and even technical work like web design, reading is the simplest method because it doesn't require any special skills other than the ability to read and comprehend. The fact is, reading is so important because reading forces the brain to develop something that video cannot: an expansive imagination. While video is great at providing entertainment, chronicling experiences in amazing detail, and showing us how to do something, it also spoon feeds the eyes and the mind. It tells the brain exactly what it should be focusing on. It rarely asks you to fill in the gaps because there are little-to-no gaps. And thus, when we forgo reading and instead consume nothing but video, the brain's inherent capacity for imagination atrophies. Such a loss is the complete opposite of what we need to remain supreme.

The good news is that the damage is not irreparable. Even better, the simple act of routine fiction reading is the cure. Works of fiction often require you to imagine, anticipate the next plot move, ponder alternatives, and fill-in missing details in the descriptions of characters and places. If you want to develop or regain your natural ability to imagine, simply read fiction. Just about any kind of fiction will do but classic fiction that was written long before the days of advanced technology and other things you are familiar with holds the most potential for enhancing your imagination.

While reading is critically important, you should note that you don't have to quit video. In fact, some video can stimulate your imagination as well. You won't get nearly the same bang-for-your-buck as you get with reading but video-based dramas and mysteries will at least get you started on the right path.

Virtually Unlimited Data

Maintaining Human Supremacy — Step Three: fill your brain with as many different kinds of data as possible. Like other things we've discussed, this step derives from something we did regularly as children but which we seemingly abandon as adults.

Growing up, we may not have grasped the future benefits of constantly exploring new places, learning new things or taking on new challenges but we did these things, almost automatically, nonetheless. So we took different kinds of classes, played different kinds of sports, joined different kinds of clubs, attended different kinds of parties, met different kinds of people, and traveled to different kinds of places. And as we did these things, as we filled our brains with a wide range of different kinds of data, our confidence, self-esteem, creativity, and ability to assess and handle new situations grew markedly.

However, the responsibilities of adulthood and an overemphasis on specialization in the workplace convince us to abandon this approach. And in the process, we can get fooled into thinking that we're neither creative nor analytical — at least not anymore. But in many cases, that assessment is a mirage. As we progress through adulthood, our ability to create, analyze, extrapolate, and generally think does diminish to some degree because of aging. However, for many people, the primary source of reduced intellectual abilities is not physiological, it's merely willful. That is, the primary source of any reduction in our intellectual capabilities is actually our decision to greatly reduce the amount of different kinds of data entering our brains as we get older. Fortunately, we can change that decision any time we want.

Just like a computer, your ability to create and analyze depends on a few major factors: the natural intellectual abilities of your brain and the amount and kinds of data in your brain's programming or database. A computer's natural intellectual abilities are determined by its processing power, which are in turn determined by its CPU, memory, video card, and other circuitry. Your natural intellectual capabilities are determined partly by genetics and partly by any opportunities you may have to enhance your natural capabilities.

Regardless of its processing power, a computer can do very little if it is programmed with very few lines of code or its database contains limited information. In either case, the computer simply has too little source material with which to work. Similarly, it doesn't matter how much natural creative or analytical talent you have if you severely limit the information or data available to your brain. Practically speaking, the ability to enhance your natural intellectual capabilities is relatively limited but the ability to enhance your programming or database is virtually limitless and almost entirely in your hands.

To reinforce why filling your brain with lots of different kinds of data is so beneficial, let's consider an example. Imagine we have two chefs, Chef Jeff and Chef Jennifer. Chef Jeff is an excellent cook, an expert in 20 different dishes, quite

intelligent, and a graduate of a top cooking school. However, somehow, he has managed to spend his entire career seasoning all of his dishes with only salt, pepper or both. Chef Jennifer is also an excellent cook but she is intimately familiar with 50 different seasonings, studied cooking in Paris, Tokyo, and various cities in Argentina, and earned degrees in chemistry and philosophy prior to becoming a chef.

While it is rare for Chef Jeff to create a tasteless meal, it has happened. And because it has become a life-long habit, he has always responded by adding salt, pepper or both to a bland dish. Chef Jennifer also rarely produces a tasteless meal but she has experienced this fate as well. However, unlike Chef Jeff, she has worked with 50 seasonings and an enormous number of seasoning combinations throughout her career. What's more, she also has the diverse knowledge and experience she gained while living and studying in multiple world cities. And on top of all that, she has knowledge of bases, acids, and other chemistry principles as well as a grounding in the principles of logic and other concepts she learned while studying philosophy. Suffice it to say, her immensely well-rounded background enables Chef Jennifer to take a much more creative, analytical, and custom-tailored approach when encountering the problem of a tasteless meal. And this is true even though Chef Jeff and Chef Jennifer both possess a high degree of intelligence and similar natural intellectual abilities. As we can see, the primary difference between the two chefs is that Chef Jeff's brain contains a data pool that is limited in size and range whereas Chef Jennifer's brain contains a large amount of different kinds of data.

For the sake of brevity, we limited the discussion in this example and we could have gone on to talk about the other benefits Chef Jennifer has gained by filling her brain with lots of different kinds of data. For instance, we could have mentioned her ability to produce more creative and tasty meals than Chef Jeff or her potential ability to apply her wealth of knowledge to a project or field unrelated to cooking. But the main point of this example is to demonstrate that when we deprive our brains of a large, diverse assortment of data with which to work, we can be fooled into underestimating our natural intellectual capabilities. Or, to put it another way, when we willingly limit our knowledge and experiences, we can be fooled into thinking that the neurons necessary for highly creative and analytical projects either don't exist or don't function in our brains when, in fact, the problem is not a lack of neurons but a lack of data.

In the above example, we don't know why Chef Jeff has so severely limited his seasoning options during his culinary career. After all, his culinary training most

certainly taught him how to work with seasonings other than salt and pepper. But it's highly likely that, despite his intelligence, he mistakenly believes he isn't a very creative or analytical person and thus he has always played it safe. And that's a tragedy because Chef Jeff's natural intellectual abilities are very similar to those of Chef Jennifer. However, because he fails to understand or appreciate the incredible value of a highly diverse, well-stocked brain, he has unnecessarily limited or reduced his life experiences, potential, creative and analytical capabilities, opportunities, career, prestige, and self-esteem.

Long Live The Humans

So, there you go. You now have a proactive plan that will help you approach the proliferation of AI from a position of strength, not weakness. But be advised, the suggestions we've discussed do not offer an overnight fix. In fact, it may take a while to notice any results. Nevertheless, if you train yourself to fear The Known, expand your capacity for imagination, and fill your brain with lots of different kinds of data, you'll eventually open up a whole new world for yourself. And just as importantly, you'll contribute to maintaining human supremacy while greatly reducing the odds that you or someone you know will ever be The Last Human.