



Human?

“Cogito, ergo sum.” I think, therefore I am.

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I think, therefore I exist. Therefore, I am human.

Much of what we once believed made us human, made us different from, or perhaps superior to, other species, may soon become, at the very least, a shared experience with a new “species”.

Artificial intelligence (AI) thinks. Therefore, is it?

I sincerely hope thinking remains, at least, a shared experience.

It has become so convenient to leave all the thinking to AI. To outsource creativity to the machine. But if we stop using our imperfect brains, if we stop



struggling with difficult questions, it may lead to a gradual decline in our cognitive abilities, which, in the long run, could make us just a little less human.

An online article (one of many) published earlier this year warns that “excessive and unchecked use of AI in the workplace risks eroding human connection, cognitive ability” and a range of other qualities that define us as people (<https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en/insights/articles/the-human-side-of-ai-the-growing-risks-of-ubiquitous-use-of-ai-on-talent>).

It may be taking liberties, but if our cognitive abilities and our connections with one another are being negatively impacted, how is our humanity affected? Are we becoming something less because of the rise of AI?

Our ability to think now has competition. So the question becomes: what is it that truly makes us human?

I feel, therefore I am?

Often positively so but also in a negative sense.

I feel pain. I suffer. Therefore, I am?

Is it connection that makes us human? The old-fashioned kind, where we can see, touch, feel and smell each other.

I connect through my senses; therefore, I am.

Human senses are shared. Through them, I connect with other people, with nature, with spirit, and with myself.

This experience has touched my soul; therefore, I am.

In the past, questions of purpose and identity were largely individual. Going forward, many of these questions may need to become communal.

What is it that truly makes us human?

Then there is curiosity. Human endeavour, even when it is flawed. The drive and the ability to do hard things, sometimes willingly, maybe even foolishly, like running a marathon.

It is becoming increasingly necessary to understand that the value of our intelligence may diminish relative to AI. The value of our hearts, our feelings and emotions, however, will not.

Is it not ironic that AI may be the very catalyst we have needed to bring the focus back to all of this? Back to our humanity. Back to our shared humanity.

My vulnerability, my mortality, these represent my humanity.

AI may live on in the cloud.

My soul, I hope, will go to the clouds.

Make no mistake, empathy can be mimicked by a machine, but true humanity, born from shared vulnerability, cannot.

Some might say AI is the greatest threat humankind has ever faced. I think it is our greatest opportunity ever to rediscover Tribe and Fire – community, conversations, stories.

And perhaps what ultimately differentiates us is something as simple as this: I am afraid of dying. Or perhaps, even more profoundly: Thank God, I can die. Our limitation in life, our finite existence, is precisely what gives the present moment its infinite value.

So maybe AI is a Godsend. Maybe it is our Noah moment because, in this vast ocean of intelligence and information, it is only true humanity that stays afloat. Only genuine human connection matters.

Be that as it may, I embrace AI. It is a tool that can make us extraordinarily efficient. But eventually, we need to switch off and disconnect. We need to reconnect with Tribe and Fire. Namibia is the personification of exactly that.

Namibia offers culture, beauty and nature that remain remarkably untouched. Vast open spaces. Soulful experiences. No thinking required. Only feeling. Feeling that ultimately makes us human.

So let us embrace AI. But when we are done with our super-productivity, let the antidote be humanity.

Let the antidote be Namibia.

(At my own peril, no AI was used in the drafting of this article.) 