

AUTHENTICITY is our AI advantage

What is our scarcest resource in the world today? Depending on your age, you might answer with:

Money – Silent Generation and Baby Boomers

Time – Gen X and Gen Y/Millennials

Attention – Gen Z and Gen Alpha

What do you think?

I postulate that all the above are NOT the scarcest resources. The scarcest resource moving forward is **authenticity**. As we move into the metaverse, and embrace Artificial Intelligence (AI), reality will become scarcer and scarcer. Therefore, as human 'beings', being authentic will be our competitive advantage.

Let's unpack this...

Currently we have Narrow Artificial Intelligence (NAI). This is AI that can do one task really well (large language models such as ChatGPT, chatbots that can offer basic help on websites, chess/go etc...) This is generative AI because it learns from itself. Be aware, as it is a function of what it is trained with, be it the whole of the internet (including conspiracy theories) or a contained (hopefully truthful) dataset.

AI that can do a multitude of tasks, thinking and behaviours (like we humans) is called Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). Depending on who you believe/follow/listen to, we are only a few years away from AGI, or we may be decades away. Who knows?

AI that is smarter than we humans is called Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI). This is what we see in sci-fi or dystopian futures be it movies (ie: SHE, ExMachina) or books (ie: Superintelligence by Nick Bostrom where he mentions the infamous paperclip thought experiment).

Imagine being coached by artificial intelligence. When it comes to 'transactional' coaching NAI can do an OK job, but misses context and nuance (see example below in *italics*). What are you going to do? How will you do it? By when? NAI can coach us on step by step, linear tasks or behaviours that we are trying to achieve. This is coaching that needs accountability around building a habit – think sales calls, exercise, positive affirmations, etc... Narrow AI can one task very well 🤖 Narrow AI is not able to offer transformational coaching as it misses context and nuance. It misses empathy and embodiment.

Transformational coaching is both an Art and a Science. Transformational coaching includes our bodies as well as our heads. Transformational coaching supports us to expand ourselves to release the grip on the thinking mind to reconnect with our feeling and sensing self.

Transformation coaching focuses on WHO our clients are being, vs simply WHAT they are doing. Coaching presence holds a power that allows us to access something beyond the ordinary. When we can reliably drop into presence, we invite a deep wisdom into our coaching sessions that NAI is unable to access.

NAI relies on large data sets of information that has already occurred. AI can't imagine, can't deal with cognitive dissonance, irrational thinking/behaviours, or use intuition. We have unique and original thoughts. We have novel ideas. We expect the unexpected. We are adaptable to the new and curious. NAI can't do this. Perhaps one day when we have AGI or ASI it will. For now, and the foreseeable future, I believe we are safe in our authentic transformational coaching roles.

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As a Master Coach, I'm excited about how AI coaching will deliver more transactional coaching to more clients. Yet, there will always be a place for real people doing 1:1 coaching with another authentic human. There are not many, if any, places in our clients' lives where they are truly held and heard. We know that when humans feel deeply heard with a social connection and support, humans become motivated to change.

As we move from NAI to AGI, it is **authenticity** that will become scarce. How will we know we are interacting with a human or an AI? (referred to as the Turing Test.) As we transition (or add) to the metaverse, it will be hard to distinguish.

Why do clients come for coaching? More importantly, why do clients return again and again for continued coaching? Most clients come to coaching to clarify what they want and to design how they will achieve it. Yet, most clients STAY in a coaching relationship as they discover WHO they are.

WHO **we** are becomes our defining paradigm. Transformational coaching is coaching WHO our clients are being and it is a joy for both the client and the coach to explore this. NAI can do, and will do, many menial and repetitive tasks, but it will never replace transformational coaching with its heart-to-heart relationships, oxytocin, genuine empathy and love.

AI and coaching is a moving feast and it's exciting. As a physics and mathematics graduate, I have an ongoing interest in all forms of artificial intelligence. I have always been an optimist about where science is taking us, and I still am. It's exciting to live during these times as the metaverse and AI are being developed. I'm grateful to offer and practice transformational coaching. I believe authentic transformational coaching is safe for the future...however long that is!

In the past workplaces were about muscles.
Currently workplaces value our brains.
In the future workplaces will value our hearts.
We are well placed as authentic transformational coaches.

IQ + EQ = Whole ❤️ hearted relating®

As we transition to more virtual online worlds here are some questions to ponder:

- What do you currently believe about AI coaching?
- Who are you going to be?
- How are you going to adapt, embrace or deny AI in coaching?
- What is your offering?

AI Coaching Resources to explore:

- RaeNotes - <https://www.raenotes.com/coaches.html>
- Dr Nicky Terblanche – <https://www.coachvici.com/> & <https://coachvidi.com/>
- CoachHub AI - <https://www.coachhub.com/aimy/>
- www.Ovida.io
- ICF Research White Paper on AI - <https://coachingfederation.org/app/uploads/2021/08/The-Value-of-Artificial-Intelligence-Coaching-Standards-Whitepaper.pdf>
- ICF Research Webinar series for ICF members – log in to your Learning Portal and search AI (with Drs Joel DiGirolamo and Nicky Terblanche)

AI coaching example

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My experience with Artificial Intelligence coaching was using a 'diet/food tracking' app. I wanted to lose a couple of kilos so I tried a well-known app which offered my very own 'personal' coach. I signed up, filled in my details, selected my avatar, uploaded my statistics, and received a warm welcome message from my 'personal' coach who was going to coach me over the coming months.

Initially I was excited and intrigued. I followed the instructions, joined the chat group with other new dieters, and waited for my first coaching conversation. Soon I was disappointed to realise that my personal coach was a bot. I would ask a question and it would reply by stating my question and referring me to an online library of resources that the wording of my question in the suggested resources for me to read. The resources were good. Scientific articles, nutritional information, eating plans to download and fill in, it was fun for the first couple of weeks.

This was summer 2019/20 in Australia, just before Covid hit, and in January 2020 terrible and terrifying bushfires took hold in southeast Australia and our sky was blanketed with smoke. I was unable to go outside and exercise. I asked my 'coach' for support as I was feeling flat. I'd lost motivation and energy. The fires were burning huge amounts of land. Millions of animals were being killed. Many communities had to be evacuated... I felt depressed.

As soon as I mentioned the word depressed, the bot referred me to resources for depression as if thought I had a medical condition, it pathologized my state. Yet, all I had done was have a healthy response to a tragedy unfolding in my home country. To cut a long story short, the bot was programmed to refer any dieter who was depressed to a resource area that encouraged me to seek out a medical professional to help me with my depression. It had no idea Australia was on fire that summer. It was a ridiculous situation and one that the AI bot did not compute. Context was missing. The transactional Artificial Intelligence did not have the nuance to work with this. When something out of the ordinary occurs, Artificial Intelligence failed. Only an empathetic, authentic human being could have understood my country was on fire and I felt flat. I could still follow my eating plan but could not go outside to exercise.

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