



NON-ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Human Flourishing in an AI-Driven World

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Kevin Joyce, EnJoy Productions ©2026

Before we begin

By way of introduction, I'm a performer, composer, director, organizational leadership trainer, non-profit fundraiser, comic event host, and co-founder of EnJoy Productions with Martha Enson, my wife and partner of 42 years. We live on 5 acres in the woods on a small island in the Puget Sound, which you access by ferry. Yes, we have electricity.

Over 36 years of doing this work, I'm very grateful for having the opportunity to connect with very diverse sectors and collaborate with many different kinds of organizations. Right now, I see all us poised, and for the moment, paused, at an inflection point in our relationship to technology.

Here's the claim: AI is here, it's not going anywhere, it's becoming more and more pervasive and disruptive, and most people aren't paying attention to the ways it might impact them. I mean "us", because honestly, this is as much about what I've noticed in myself as what I see "out there".

The idea of Non-AI (a framework and a manifesto of sorts) emerges from decades of working with diverse groups of humans in a room together – connecting with each other, reclaiming presence, practicing discernment, laughing, feeling joy, empathy and freedom, and being invited to have a true sense of agency in their lives. It's very pro-human: let's be awesome, the world needs us to be!

I use computers and tech as much as the next guy. But my take right now (increasing confirmed by research) is that AI deployment, for all its promise, may be accelerating the erosion of those very capacities we are most committed to cultivating. Which seems very unfortunate, to put it mildly.

So, this document aims to name this (potential) problem and propose a practice-based response. And while this project IS grounded in research, it's more a whole-human-system construct - concerned with how real, actual people are behaving, relating to each other, and flourishing (or not) in their use of AI. It feels pretty urgent - not because AI is inherently dangerous, but because we're developing and adopting it faster than we're strengthening the authentic human skills this time demands. It very much seems like we're at a pivotal, liminal moment, and if we're asleep, it might be a really good idea to wake up. (Insert reassuring smiley face here.)

Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence is being deployed at a speed that outpaces our collective capacity to guide it wisely. The current trajectory risks creating a single-minded fixation on AI's promise while overlooking its potential perils. Human flourishing in the age of AI, particularly as we edge toward the ill-defined threshold of AGI (Artificial General Intelligence), must be rooted in a clear-eyed, robust maintenance of the uniquely human attributes that AI cannot, and should not, supplant: empathy, intuition, applied imagination, problem-solving, and intimacy.

To offload these capacities onto machines is to invite an impoverishment of the human developmental process itself—an atrophy of the very qualities that make us capable of resilience, meaning-making, moral discernment, and connection. Non-Artificial Intelligence (Non-AI) begins with the premise that our most redemptive human properties are not negotiable; they are the ground from which we must design, deploy, and live alongside artificial intelligence.

Why Now: Strengthening Human Capacities

Amid the accelerating deployment of artificial intelligence, the most urgent task is not to contain the technology itself but to fortify the human capacities that give it direction. Before ethics can be meaningfully articulated—much less enforced—individuals and organizations must cultivate and master the inner skills required to navigate disruption: presence, discernment, relational intelligence, resilience, and creative imagination. These are the faculties that allow us to engage AI as a tool rather than outsource our judgment, attention, or agency.

Without intentionally strengthening these human foundations, any conversation about responsible AI will collapse under the weight of its own abstractions.

Premise and Challenge

AI and its associated tools are extraordinary amplifiers of human capability. Yet as these systems become more present, persuasive, and integrated into everyday life, humans risk overuse and misuse of technologies that can undermine their own flourishing.

Leaders relying on ChatGPT for strategy thinking may risk losing the depth and coherence of authority and vision that is grounded in lived experience, intuition and understanding of the people they lead.

Teams relying on summaries ready-made solutions may risk losing the friction, development and complexity that comes from real debate and dialogue

Individuals may risk increased isolation and loss of interpersonal skills when relational nuance is lost in AI-written communication.

Unchecked dependence on AI (and screen-based technology in general) can erode:

- self-awareness
- clarity of personal values
- mental acuity
- embodied presence
- relational intelligence
- cognitive rest and recovery

- intuition and internal guidance
- sources of meaning, purpose, and belonging

Hypothesis and Orientation

Humans—individually and collectively—are capable of recognizing unconscious, maladaptive behaviors and replacing them with intentional, beneficial ones.

A structured practice of awareness, experimentation, and behavior change can mitigate the risks of technological overreach while strengthening the human capacities that AI depends on for responsible deployment.

Ethics emerge from human capability, not vice versa. Before any organization can deploy AI responsibly, its people must cultivate the discernment, empathy, presence, and critical thinking that make ethical behavior possible. Without these foundations, no policy framework will hold. Ethical AI use is therefore not primarily a governance challenge—it's a human development challenge: the outcome of human maturity, exercised daily in how we attend, interpret, relate, and choose.

The Non-Artificial Intelligence Teaching Model

These seven components work synergistically to rebuild human capacities that AI deployment tends to erode. Each addresses a specific pattern of atrophy documented in neuroscience, psychology, and organizational research. Together, they constitute a comprehensive approach to ensuring that humans remain capable of leading technology rather than being led by it.

1. Creative Agency

Human creativity begins with self-generated thought — the effortful process of imagining, synthesizing, and producing original ideas. As generative AI reduces the friction of producing content, individuals may increasingly bypass the effortful cognitive processes that support imagination, synthesis, and original thought. Reduced engagement in self-generated creation weakens the creative capacities that drive innovation and cultural meaning-making. Non-AI cultivates creative agency through structured challenges, cognitive disruption, and collaborative experimentation rooted in neuroscience and organizational psychology. These practices restore playful exploration, deepen independent thinking, and strengthen the ability to generate original work rather than merely refine machine outputs.

2. Relational Intelligence

Human agency unfolds in relationship. As AI mediates more human communication — from drafted emails to synthesized meeting summaries — people lose rehearsal in reading emotional nuance, navigating disagreement, and building trust through live interaction. The gradual erosion of relational practice contributes to disconnection, misinterpretation, and reduced social resilience. Non-AI restores relational intelligence through facilitated interaction grounded in frameworks such as David Rock's SCARF Model® and Liberating Structures®, cultivating presence, metacognition, and communication skills that strengthen connection and organizational cohesion.

3. Embodied Presence

Human connection and cognition are grounded in the body. As work becomes increasingly mediated through screens, dashboards, and abstract digital interfaces, attention narrows and cognition becomes separated from physical experience. Over time, sedentary patterns and continuous digital engagement reduce perceptual bandwidth, disrupt emotional regulation, and fragment sustained attention. Non-AI restores embodied presence through intentional movement, play, and somatic engagement integrated into collaborative experiences. These practices reconnect individuals with sensory awareness and physical agency, improving clarity, resilience, and collective attunement while counteracting the fatigue and isolation associated with screen-mediated work.

4. Ethical Discernment

Ethical discernment emerges from practiced human capacities — the ability to create, relate, and remain grounded while navigating complexity. As AI systems expand their predictive reach, efficiency and convenience increasingly encourage users to defer evaluation and judgment to algorithmic outputs. Over time, reduced opportunities for critical reflection weaken the muscle of discernment — the human capacity to interpret complexity, navigate ambiguity, and make ethical decisions in context. Non-AI strengthens ethical discernment through structured reflection, writing, and facilitated dialogue, enabling individuals and teams to articulate values, interrogate assumptions, and develop decision frameworks that remain usable under pressure.

Research Base

This model draws from contemporary and historical research, writings, and thinking in:

- Organizational Psychology
- Systems Thinking
- Neuroscience
- Technology Ethics
- Sociology
- Physiology
- Wisdom Traditions

Each discipline affirms the same truth: human capacities must be developed and exercised, not replaced or neglected. (See bibliography)

The Opportunity

Interactive trainings and immersive experiences designed to strengthen human flourishing in the AI era. These are not lectures - they are experiential practices drawn from three decades of theatrical, organizational, and facilitation work. Participants practice discernment, presence, relational intelligence, play and creative problem-solving - skills that enable them to lead lead conscious relationships to technology rather than be led by it..

From Human Capacities to Practice

The four pillars above describe capacities that must remain active if humans are to retain agency in an AI-driven world. Yet capacities do not develop through insight alone. They require environments and practices that deliberately engage them.

Non-AI is not defined by the absence of technology, but by the intentional cultivation of conditions that exercise human faculties directly rather than delegating them to automation. Without such conditions, even well-intentioned experiences risk reinforcing passivity rather than strengthening capability.

For this reason, Non-AI practice includes a set of minimum specifications — not as philosophical ideals, but as practical boundaries. These specifications ensure that the core human capacities described above are actively engaged, rehearsed, and strengthened.

Minimum Specifications for Non-AI Practice

Non-AI is not defined by the absence of technology, but by the intentional cultivation of human capacities that cannot be delegated or automated.

For an experience to qualify as Non-AI practice, it must meet three minimum conditions:

1. Human-to-Human Interaction

Meaning emerges through direct relational engagement between people.

2. Friction

Effort, disagreement, uncertainty, and ambiguity are preserved as essential drivers of learning and ethical development.

3. Creative Output

Participants generate original expression or decisions rather than consuming pre-generated content.

Design Principles

Effective, human-centered experiences must:

- Establish psychological safety and trust
- Layer challenge appropriately (meet people where they are, stretch them intentionally)
- Honor multiple ways of knowing (analytical, intuitive, somatic, creative)
- Integrate body, mind, and imagination (humans are not brains on sticks)
- Sustain engagement through varied modalities (movement, reflection, conversation, play)

Structures and Activities

- Interactive conversations
- Small and large group challenges
- Practices in improvisation, movement, and play
- Reflection and writing
- Mindfulness practices
- Consensus-building on shared values
- Short talks and demonstrations
- Intentional disruption of habitual thinking

- Co-creation of best practices tailored to the context

Conclusion: A Collective Call to Action

If we accept that human capacities must be intentionally strengthened to guide AI wisely, then the next step is not merely technical—it is cultural. The essential conversation now is not about what AI can do, but about what humans must continue to cultivate: attention in an age of distraction, connection in an age of isolation, discernment in an age of acceleration, and imagination in an age of automation.

Organizations, conferences, and communities will be best served by exploring this shift—experimenting with new forms of human-centered learning and establishing principles and practices that align technology with human flourishing. This includes designing environments that strengthen presence and relational intelligence, supporting ethical reflection, and creating cultures where creativity, intuition, and embodied awareness remain central to decision-making. EnJoy Productions has been experimenting with these forms for three decades. We are now formalizing and sharing this methodology because the moment demands it.

The work ahead is not about resisting technology but about shaping the conditions under which humans remain capable of leading it. The question is not whether AI will reshape our world—it already is. The question is whether we will strengthen the human capacities required to shape it wisely.

About EnJoy Productions

EnJoy Productions, founded in 2003 by Kevin Joyce and Martha Enson, designs and facilitates experiences that strengthen human capacity, connection, and wise decision-making in complex environments. For over two decades, we have delivered more than 1,000 programs across healthcare, nonprofit, corporate, educational, and civic sectors, supporting organizations navigating disruption, growth, and cultural change.

Our work integrates organizational development, meeting design, leadership training, and live performance into practical, highly interactive formats that build discernment, collaboration, and adaptive capacity. Clients range from Fortune 500 companies and major health systems to government agencies, global institutions, and community-based organizations, including Amazon, Kaiser Permanente, the University of Washington, Navy Region Northwest, and more than 200 nonprofit partners.

The Non-Artificial Intelligence framework formalizes this practice for the AI era, focusing on the human capacities required to guide technology wisely rather than be led by it. Based on Vashon Island in Puget Sound, EnJoy Productions brings a grounded, human-centered perspective to helping people and organizations remain capable, connected, and resilient amid accelerating change.

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