Emotional Intelligence of Human vs. Robot

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A 50-ish man walked into the doctor's room from the crowded patients waiting outside. He squeezed his old faded hat, feeling nervous. His poor desperate figure was reflected on those shiny expensive machines in the background, mostly the imaging automated devices used for cancer diagnostics. The nurse was yelling at the patients outside, telling them to keep quite. The atmosphere seemed to be stressful. Inside, the man spoke with a slowly monotone: "Dear Doctor, I was diagnosed with liver cancer from last month, but I couldn't afford to pay for surgery and chemotherapy, so please just give me some pain medication to take home, that's the only thing I can pay." A young couple was called next, looked even more miserable than the previous man. The husband asked to take his wife home because he could no longer pay for her chemotherapy. Of course we can see how dreadful he was, he looked as if he just ended his love's life.

That was my experience shadowing doctors in Vietnam last summer. Imagine how AI would interact with these special patients. The man could just order pain medication as he wished, and the couple just needed to cancel their chemotherapy agreement and be responsible for their decision later on. However, in reality in which human interaction is never as important as in this situation, where the relationship between doctor and patient, the understanding, empathy, and encouragement, the interpersonal interaction between a human being with another unfortunate, that no newest technology can ever substitute for. Our doctor had a long thoughtful conversation with these patients, convinced them to continue their treatments and he would call out to charity to raise fund for them. He also told the nurse to stop nagging the patients because they have been waiting for so long, many of them even waited over long weekend just to see the doctor.

So what makes us unique as human? A lot. Since childhood I was taught to obey rules and to work hard at school, from my parent's strict discipline to invisible pressure from society and peer have made me wonder countless times that am I taught to become a machine in the future that works extremely well and accurate without being creative and without other soft skills? And with the new era of AI accelerating, perhaps the machine

can do this job much better than me, I would rather be different. Out of Gardner's Eight Multiple Intelligences, AI can perform well on others but not the nature, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences, which are unique to human. So I decided to stop. I transformed myself into another type of person, with intrinsic motivation that I learn something because I truly want it, not by outside force or other incentives. I stopped prioritize grades and rankings, instead I focused on volunteering at different organizations and charity groups to improve my communication and interpersonal skills, and allowed myself to dig deep into the knowledge that I wanted to learn with creativity and imagination rather than general but shallow knowledge I learned at school. I tried to read different books with various topics, from classical to politics. I read about the Ju'/hoansi tribe in Kalahari Desert in the book 'Affluence without Abundance' whose classless and peaceful society is what our modern human always strive for. I read about Dr. Catena, a surgeon who has being working in South Sudan to help his patients despite of continuous bombing and terrorism. I also read about how cooperation and team work value are essential to fix the Hubble space telescope, about how Martin Luther King Jr. and his fellows overcame sufferings and struggled for true democracy of his race in the book 'Why we can't wait'. I traveled to different places, met new different people, chatted with homeless men near the metro, helped operate a concert for disabled individuals, made long-life friendship with colored people. I learned that everyone has a unique story to tell and everyone is worthwhile to learn from and inspires me in their own way, something that is completely different from what I was "programmed" to learn at school, to interact only with "good" people. I learned to understand, to sympathize, to actually see and feel others. I am also grateful that I was born and grew up in both Vietnam and America that I could have the opportunity to experience different cultures and lifestyles. Those meaningful experiences have helped me to feel more as a human being rather than a machine following orders. Thus one of the important aspects that distinguish us from machine is our ability to learn through social interactions with others. We can learn from ourselves through trials and errors, by observing others according to Social Cognitive Theory, and by influence from others, as stated by sociologist Charles M. Cooley in his famous the Looking-Glass Self Theory. We also learned not to conform to rules that we believe are wrong and we learned to differentiate many aspects of life.

Each of us is a unique individual. Each has a different culture, belief, personality, life experience, self-concept and self-identity. We have different roles and status, either by ascribing or achieving, and thus not only generalize labeling as a robot. We have creativity, imagination, will power, and motivation to seek optimum arousal, rather than seek biological needs, in order to satisfy our curious and adventuresome nature. We can delay our physical needs for higher purposes such as hunger strike or sacrifice ourselves for others, in contrast to the robot in order to function properly would require continuous energy input and regular maintenance. We also ultimately aim to reach the highest step of self-actualization and self-transcendence on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, that is to fulfill our most potential and even beyond ourselves.

According to George Homans's social-exchange theory, human interactions are based on calculating to try to maximize benefits and minimize costs (1), and we tend to make decisions based on logic choice rather than emotion. Critics argued that this theory sees human as a "rational calculator" rather than actual human being. For example, a school would only accept students from high income families rather than low income students who can't afford to pay the tuition fee, a company would operate in a way that make huge profits for it despite destruction to the environment. We cannot always apply game theory to our human social behaviors. Human interaction is not always a game, we are not players, we do not always use analytics and strategies to maximize our wins in the cost of others. Altruism and social responsibility take place when we realize that sometimes we need to sacrifice our wishes and needs for the benefit of others too, and that we are a united whole, our social interactions with others is what make us who we are as human being and bond us together, if one is weak, the other cannot be strong.

We have tremendously seen what AI can do to make our lives better that it can substitute for many types of intelligences, except emotional intelligence, which belongs uniquely to us as described above. We express our love, hate, being aggressive, involve in romantic relationship, friendship, or kinship, enjoy a good meal or the uncomfortable feeling from food aversion or someone we don't like, all of those emotions, feelings, and thoughts are uniquely us. Those qualifications would not worry us so much about losing our jobs to the automated era, as Peter Drucker predicted. We should not feel threatened by the replacement but instead working together with the new technology in order to gain

the most benefits from it. Peter Drucker also pressed the importance of active and life-long learning; to continue to improve our hard and soft skills: "People have to learn how to learn. No one is allowed to consider himself or herself 'finished' at any time" (2). His human-centered approach still strongly applies today, that we need to improve our own self and interactions with others in order to stay human in a robot society, that human being is the soul of the organization and the society as a whole, not the robots. Creativity, imagination, persistence, and willing to take risk are major determinations in any career field to create new innovation or invention, something that AI cannot perform. And sometimes accidents can lead to new discovery, which would never expect to happen in the case of precise-programming AI, such as penicillin was discovered by Alexander Fleming who was too tired to clean up his lab bench and contaminated his studying bacteria with the mold, or Wilhelm Rontgen accidentally discovered the X-ray; and the most extraordinary thing is that they continued to stick to the unusual discovery until they finally achieved something. Institutions and organizations therefore should encourage and promote each individual's culture and difference, give opportunity for them to grow to their most potential, provide frequent courses that update their job-related skills and social skills, and open forums and conferences to meet and exchange new ideas to colleagues.

Would robots be able to have some form of emotions? Would we be able to put in complex algorithms into the robot that can be as fast as our neural transmission and as complex operation as our frontal lobe in making judgments and our limbic system in controlling emotions? My answer is perhaps yes, but in the robotic way. At least something the robots can do but many of us still cannot, is to treat people with equality, regardless of their race, income, class, socioeconomic status, etc. A research carried out by Frost & Sullivan, HealthcareIT news, and Accenture showed that AI can reduce the cost of healthcare by as much as 50% (3), so it would be more accessible to the lower income patients, especially when the health care cost is accelerating in the US. I'd imagine a world where a poor man walked into a dental office and being treated the same as other patients instead of being looked down by the staff because of his status; a school in a poor neighborhood that has equal quality of teaching and equipments as its rich neighborhood uptown. AI would not only transform our lives in a more convenient and

faster, smarter living way, but it would also reduce the gap of inequality between us, and would serve as a point of reference for us to check if we are living as our true human being or not.

Sources:

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