

THE QUIRK'S EVENT
FOR MARKETING RESEARCH & INSIGHTS PROFESSIONALS



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THE
HUMAN

EDGE

IN AN AI-DRIVEN INSIGHTS INDUSTRY

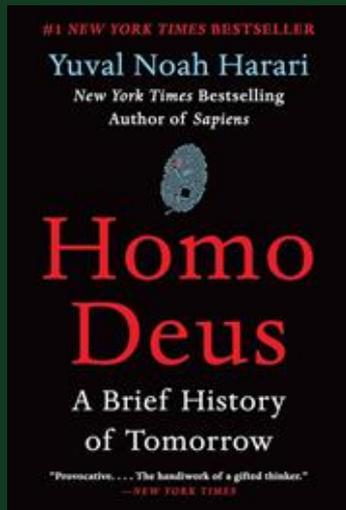
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One of our core *assumptions* is being challenged:

That us humans give the world its meaning



A TIMELINE OF WHERE MEANING HAS COME FROM

WE ARE (MAYBE) HERE

ANIMISM

NATURE | SPIRITS | TRIBE

Spirits and nature give the world its essence



THEISM

GOD | FAITH | SCRIPTURES

God(s) are the ultimate authority



HUMANISM

HUMAN | REASON | SCIENCE

Human feelings & reason drive life



DATAISM

DATA | ALGORITHMS | NETWORKS

Data flows & algorithms dictate everything



We want to know what *we* can bring to the table to remain relevant

71%

of people are worried that artificial intelligence will put people out of work permanently

Source: Reuters/Ipsos poll, August 2025

How quickly things change in just a few years...

MAY 2023

"AI will not take your job, but someone who knows how to use AI will."

– Economist Richard Baldwin



to:

FEBRUARY 2026

"AI can replace most if not all white-collar work in the next 12 to 18 months."

– Mustafa Suleyman, Microsoft AI CEO

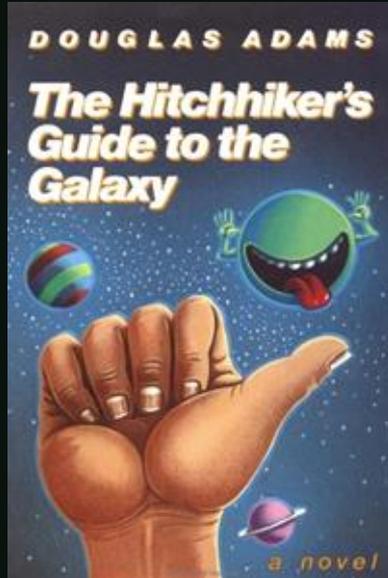


What does it mean to be human at our jobs...

*...when we are no longer the only ones able to do things
our species was once uniquely capable of?*

Often just jumping to the answer can feel
so unsatisfying

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Effort
creates
meaning

The “IKEA Effect”

People value things
more when they
invest effort into them

+63%

How much more people building
items in an experiment were
willing to pay for those items
than for identical pre-built ones

Source: Norton, Mochon & Ariely
Journal of Consumer Psychology, 2011

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“

Sometimes when I ask AI to help me solve a problem, whether it's math problem or something else that's technical, it skips certain steps that I feel like I would want to have written out. Otherwise I don't understand what actually happened. Like, how do you jump from one thing to the other? I want to verify if the math was indeed correct. I want to know how it got to the answer.”

Focus group respondent, Talk Shoppe project for an educational AI tool

There is a reason why

'friction-maxxing'

took off as a consumer trend this year



The Guardian US

Friction-maxxing: could less convenience lead to much more happiness?

Forbes

LEADERSHIP > CAREERS

Why Friction Maxxing Should Be Your Go-To Emotional Intelligence Strategy In 2026

By [Kevin Kruse](#), Contributor. © Kevin Kruse covers leadership development & ...

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Published Feb 13, 2026, 07:00am EST

LIFESTYLE ASIA



ARTS & CULTURE

Why We Need Friction-Maxxing In A World Of Hyper-Convenience

BY MI CALAJAN
13 HOURS AGO

We don't advocate for more grunt work

*But, what would your day
look like with more?*

***"Healthy
Friction"***

Don't let your mind *become atrophied*

Invest in it every day, strive for a state of
Perma-nourishment:

READ
more

Live more
EXPERIENCES

Say
'YES'
to more

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Your lived experience is no longer a nice-to-have

AI can synthesize information but it can't live a life (yet)

STORY:

Lesotho is in the top 20 poorest countries in the world, but there is a lot of happiness there. “I heard America is stressful, I’d only want to visit and come home.”

YOU put data within human context



A more nourished mind does not just interpret data better, *it makes you a more creative prompter*

FINE, BUT UNINSPIRED, LOOKS LIKE...

*"Analyze this data matching
back to the study objectives"*

Gets you an answer.
Doesn't get you insight.



INSPIRED LOOKS LIKE...

*"Analyze this data using
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs"*

*"Analyze this data through a
Jobs-to-be-Done framework"*

*"Analyze this data as if it was
a Taylor Swift song"*

...AND MANY MORE



AI can intensify the existing
coordination issue created by

Siloing

83%

of executives acknowledge organizational silos exist in their companies

97%

of those say silos negatively impact business performance

Source: Harvard Business Review

~80%

of companies experience strongly pronounced silos that hinder performance

Source: Roland Berger study

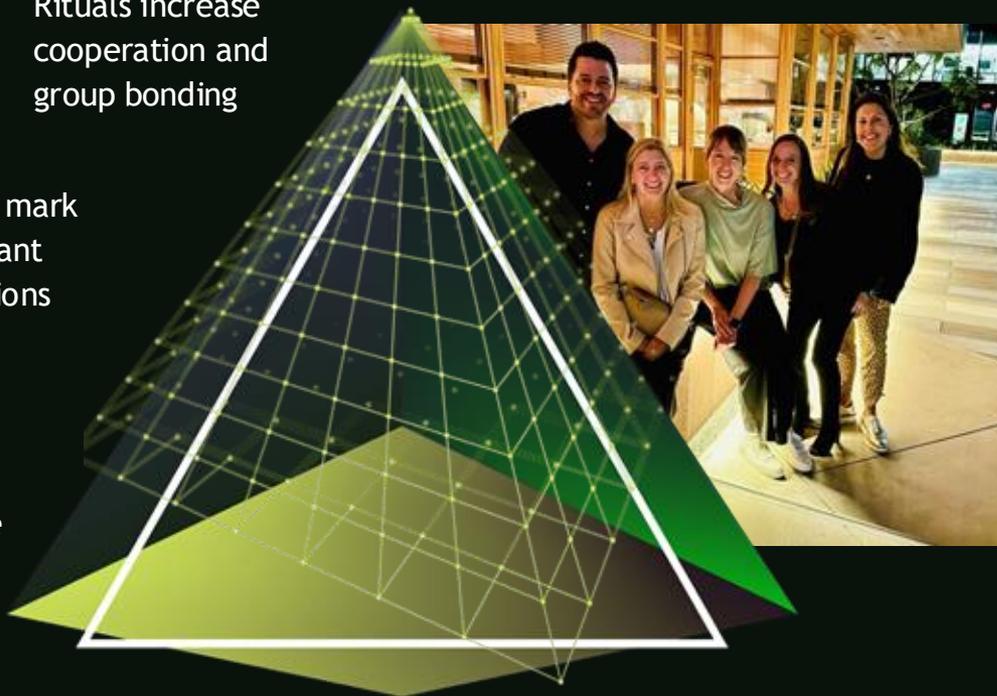
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Workplace rituals are those seemingly senseless acts that *help fracture silos*

Rituals increase cooperation and group bonding

Rituals mark important transitions

Rituals signal commitment because they're hard to fake



"A fascinating, well-researched book about a fascinating subject. You will learn a lot."
— Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE

DIMITRIS XYGALATAS

RITUAL

How Seemingly Senseless Acts Make Life Worth Living

"Deep, engaging, magnificent."
— Nicholas A. Christakis, author of *Blueprint* and *Apollo's Arrow*

Incorporate more

team rituals

in your workflow

FROM THE SMALL...

Daily Moments
of Zen

#wrld Slack channel
(Since 2020)

TO THE MEDIUM...

Formal-ish
Sharing
Sessions

Monday Bites

TO THE BIG...

Get
Together
IRL

Retreats

Rituals can benefit you and your team at work

Organizational Culture

The Surprising Power of Team Rituals

by Marilyn Zakhour and Constance Noonan Hadley

January 17, 2025



hermanns/Getty Images

+28% growth in interpersonal knowledge

+23% increase in commitment to team purpose

+22% higher job satisfaction

+20% boost in psychological safety

Source: *Harvard Business Review*

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Ultimately, *context & clarity* are our human edges as researchers

WHAT AI DOES

- Pattern recognition
- Synthesis at scale
- Under or over-representation
- Probable answers
- A first pass

WHAT IS HUMAN

- ▶ **Clarity in ambiguity**
- ▶ **Judgment in uncertainty**
- ▶ **Confidence in decision-making**
- ▶ **Context that changes direction**
- ▶ **Passionate storytelling**

Thank you!

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