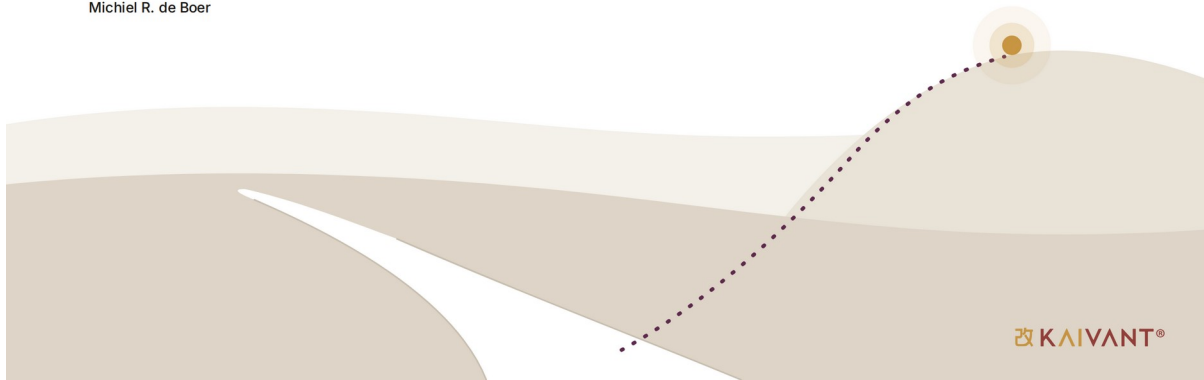


AI AND THE HUMAN BRAIN

Progress is *difficult*

Standing still has never protected anyone's uniqueness.

Michiel R. de Boer



Progress Is Difficult

Some people dismiss AI as useless, yet fear it will replace their uniqueness.

Michiel R. de Boer · October 2026

Progress is difficult. But standing still has never protected anyone's uniqueness.

I hear two things about AI, often from the same person. "It's useless, it just makes things up." And a minute later: "It's going to take my job."

Both can't be fully true. If AI is useless, there is nothing to fear. If it can replace you, it is not useless.

I have seen this pattern before. Many times.

What 30+ years of improvement programmes taught me

For more than 30 years, I have helped organisations across Asia Pacific improve the way they work, using best practices in programme, project and process management. The methods were good. The processes were well designed. People were trained and certified.

And very often, six months later, almost nothing had changed. People were back to working the way they always had. The new process existed on paper, in a tool, in a slide deck. Not in daily behaviour.

For a long time, I thought the problem was the method, or the training, or the management support. Those things matter. But again and again, the root cause turned out to be the same, and it was much simpler. It sits right between our ears.

30+ YEARS OF IMPROVEMENT WORK

Six months *later*

A pattern I have seen again and again.

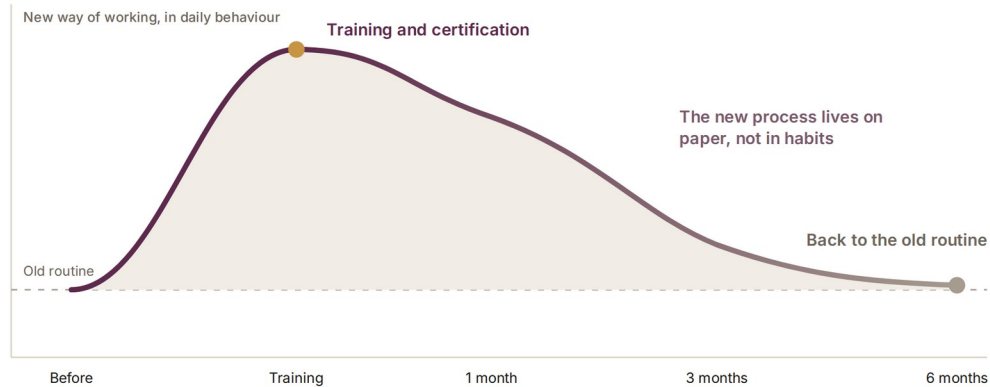


Illustration of a common pattern, not measured data.

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Your brain runs on 20 watts

The human brain runs on about 20 watts. That is roughly what a fast phone charger uses. With that tiny budget, it runs everything you think, feel and do.

So the brain is built to save energy. It loves routine. Every habit is a well-worn path that takes little effort to follow. Doing something new means leaving that path, and that feels harder, slower and more tiring.

When that happens, the brain pushes back. It does not say "I am trying to save energy." It says "This is useless." "This is fake." "We tried this before." "My way works fine."

This is not stupidity or bad will. It is biology. It is a natural process, and every one of us goes through it. The question is not whether we feel the resistance. The question is what we do next.

WHY CHANGE FEELS HARD

Your brain runs on about *20 watts*

Roughly what a fast phone charger uses. It runs everything you think, feel and do.

**Routine feels easy**

Habits are well-worn paths that take little effort.

New feels hard

Leaving the path feels slower and more tiring.

So the brain pushes back

"This is useless." "We tried this before."

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AI is the same story, only bigger and faster

With AI, the same reflex shows up in two ways.

Trap one: look away. Call it fake, refuse to touch it, wait for it to pass. This saves energy today. Meanwhile, the people around you are learning, and the gap grows quietly.

Trap two: hand it everything. Let AI write every email, make every plan, think every thought. This saves energy too. But every time you skip the thinking, you get a little weaker at it. Without noticing, you are training your own replacement.

Look closely and both traps are the same thing: the brain choosing the easy path. One avoids the effort of learning. The other avoids the effort of thinking.

This does not mean AI should never do the heavy lifting. Let it take over the repetitive work: the reports, the admin, the routine processing. That is good automation, and it frees up energy for what matters. The trap is something else: handing over your judgement. Automate the tasks. Keep the thinking.

HOW WE RESPOND TO AI

Two traps and a *third way*

What happens when the brain wants to save energy.

The easy path

Look away

Call it fake. Refuse to touch it.
Wait for it to pass.

WHAT YOU SAVE

The effort of learning

WHAT YOU LOSE

Your place, as others move
ahead

Hand it everything

Let AI write, plan and think for you.

WHAT YOU SAVE

The effort of thinking

WHAT YOU LOSE

Your own judgement, slowly

The path that builds you

Train your brain

Use AI as a sparring partner. You
still do the thinking.

WHAT IT COSTS

Some effort, every day

WHAT YOU GAIN

Sharper thinking and a
uniqueness that grows

Both traps are the same thing: the brain choosing the easy path.

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There is a third way: use AI to train your brain, not to replace it

Think of a gym. A machine that lifts the weights for you will never make you stronger. Muscles grow because of the effort, not despite it. Your brain works the same way.

Used well, AI is a sparring partner, not a substitute:

- Write your own first draft, then ask AI to find the weak spots.
- Ask it to challenge your plan, not to write the plan for you.
- Let it explain something new, then explain it back in your own words.
- Ask it the questions a tough client or board member would ask.

You still do the thinking. AI makes the thinking harder, faster and sharper. Yes, that costs some of those 20 watts. That is the point.

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

Use AI as a *sparring partner*, not a substitute

— Draft first

Write your own first draft, then ask AI to find the weak spots.

— Ask for a challenge

Ask it to challenge your plan, not to write the plan for you.

— Explain it back

Let it explain something new, then explain it back in your own words.

— Face the tough questions

Ask it what a tough client or board member would ask.

You still do the thinking. AI makes it sharper.

Where are you today?

Looking away

Handing it everything

Training your brain

Michiel R. de Boer

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Why we built KAIIVANT

If 30+ years taught me one thing, it is this: change does not stick by hoping the resistance goes away. It sticks when you expect it, name it and guide people through it.

This is not something people should carry alone. Individuals choose how they use AI every day. Leaders create the conditions: clear boundaries, room to experiment safely, and recognition for people who build new skills.

That is what KAIIVANT is for. Our goal is not to make people love AI. It is to wake them up, gently. Most people and organisations have no real picture of how they use AI today. Are they avoiding it? Outsourcing their thinking to it? Or using it to grow?

KAIIVANT gives them that baseline, and from there, an adoption strategy that makes people stronger instead of more dependent. A baseline is a starting point, not a verdict. It is there to help people and teams grow, not to watch over them.

Your uniqueness is your judgement, your experience, the way you connect dots no one else sees. AI cannot protect that for you. You protect it by using AI to get sharper every day, ideally with leaders who make that safe to do.

Progress is difficult. Standing still feels safe. It isn't.

What comes next

This is the first of three articles. This one is about the individual: why our brain resists change, and how to use AI to train it instead of replacing it. But people do not change alone, so the next two articles go one level deeper.

Article 2: Creating the conditions. What leaders and HR can do. Where to draw the line between smart automation and outsourced judgement, how to set clear boundaries for risk and data, how to measure real results, and how to build an AI baseline that people trust instead of fear.

Article 3: Making it stick. How L&D and managers can avoid the six-month fade. Learning paths for different roles, team habits that keep the brain engaged, and how to review work that was done with AI.

You will find them at kaivantscore.com/articles when they are published.

Over to you

Where do you see yourself or your team today: looking away, handing AI everything, or using it to train your brain? I would like to hear your view.

First published as a LinkedIn newsletter article, October 2026.

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