LEADERSHIP

How to Avoid Being Replaced by a Robot:

What Humans Can Do That Robots Can't

B. Kim Barnes
THE INFLUENCE GURU

Machines can learn, decide, and even write passable poetry. For the foreseeable future, they won't have human needs or emotions.

Driverless cars. Smart stores. Bartenders, pharmacists, and journalists replaced by algorithms and machines. Attorneys and surgeons could be the next humans replaced by robots. Is this your future, too? What can humans do that robots can't?

Humans can feel.
Humans can dream.
Humans can dance.
Humans can empathize.
Humans can influence.
Humans can lead.

Robots can be trained (or, in the future, train themselves) to do complex as well as simple tasks. They can learn from their mistakes. They can make decisions based on data. They can put objects or ideas together in unusual ways, mimicking human creative thinking. They can even be programmed to write passable poetry or music. But for the foreseeable future, at least, they won't have human needs or emotions. They won't hunger for relationships and experiences. They won't fall hopelessly in love with a person or an idea. They won't be driven to pursue a lost cause until it becomes a reality. They won't burn the midnight oil arguing with friends who disagree until they don't. They won't move others to heal conflict, change minds, reduce fear, open hearts, experience joy.

So…how can you avoid being replaced by a sophisticated robot? Keep developing yourself as a communicative, influential, enthusiastic, imaginative, daring, humble, struggling, caring, fun-loving, curious, changeable, impassioned human being.

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Founder of **The Influence Guru**, Kim Barnes is a coach, facilitator, and author with more than forty years of experience in leadership, influence, and organization development. She was a founder and, for many years, CEO of Barnes & Conti Associates, and developed or co-developed programs including *Exercising Influence*, *Inspirational Leadership*, *Intelligent Risk-Taking*, *Consulting on the Inside*, and *Managing Innovation*. She is the author of six books, including *Exercising Influence* (Wiley) and *Building Better Ideas* (Berrett-Koehler). She works with enterprise companies, government agencies, small businesses, and individuals from the San Francisco Bay Area.

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