

Artificial intelligence, cybernetics, mind uploading, cryonics, beauty experiments, and genetic coding? Humans have always striven for immortality. People have always pondered how to stay young or cheat death. Who hasn't heard of ambrosia, the Fountain of youth, the Philosopher's Stone or the Elixir of life? These substances conferring life extension we know from legends and mythology; and they clearly indicate people's pursuit of physical immortality.

**But do we really want to live forever or do we rather want not to die forever?**

Most of my work life, I speak to teachers, but today standing in front of you, standing next to this red sign I feel I'm speaking to the people on the other side of the fence. As I suppose most of you aren't teachers, but you ARE parents, step-parents, grandparents, godparents or at least uncles and aunties, aren't you?

How many of you have ever bought an electronic educational toy to a child?

Who believed they were going to teach them something? Like counting, the English language, songs?

Let me tell you a short story of mine. A few years ago, when my daughter, now 9 years old, was a toddler, not yet a kid, but already not a baby, we bought her a lot of electronic devices, of course not tablets or smartphones, but singing interactives pots, teddy bears, zoos.

They sang songs, made animal sounds, repeated some English and Polish vocabulary, and many others. Yet, after a few months we realized that she did learn the sang songs, and the recited rhymes, she knew some words, but not because she spent her time with the toys. She did because she spent the time with us, parents or adults repeating them, having fun singing songs, reciting rhymes and being with her.

You may think that it is not my ingenious discovery. And you are completely right. Despite the prevailing opinion of many parents who think that their children will learn while playing with interactive toys, watching TV cartoons, playing games or listening to YouTube songs, it is scientifically proven that children do not learn from devices.

American Academy of Pediatrics even underlines clearly that young kids must not spend time surrounded by electronic screens, unless they are with their parents helping them understand what they see. Electronics are responsible for children's delay of speech development.

I hope you get my idea now, but if you not yet, it will probably seem a bit controversial, but let me scare you a bit now.

Imagine, you woke up tomorrow knowing that your blood tests revealed death markers in your blood, death was inevitable, you had only a few years, maybe months left. You were dying. In such a situation, what would you do first? Would you think of doing a complicated research to find the cure? Would you think of looking for a code that might prolong your life turning you into artificial intelligence?

No, if you know that nothing, really nothing may help, you don't look for solutions, you got to take the crooked with the straights and reconcile with your mortality. Usually in such moments, people start improving their relations with others, family and friends, relatives and colleagues. This is how the world works. Nobody wants to die alone, nobody wants to become forgotten.

Relations are much stronger than devices. People are extremely intelligent, they can invent everything, they can discover new territories, new materials, but without good relations and emotions, humans wouldn't do anything, because nothing would ever motivate us.

Then, why do we try to find the salvation in innovations and technologies? If we want to leave our mark, if we want to live the eternal life, instead of looking for technological solutions like mind-to-computer uploading, making robots substituting people, we should start all over again, start from scratch, from the basics. What we really need are good relations!

According to the report from the Brookings Institution, released in January 2019, 25 percent of U.S. employment will face high exposure to automation in the coming decades. Jobs mostly vulnerable to automation are routine jobs, predictable physical jobs and cognitively undemanding ones, in other words the lowest wage jobs. Teachers' salaries are the lowest as well, but even though teaching jobs are so highly underpaid and nowadays replacing teachers by machines is being tried in many countries like South Korea or Georgia, I think school jobs are certainly not possible to be replaced by machines. Robots can be assistant teachers, can do tedious works, may help students, but they won't teach them.



In my teaching career, I observed a lot of overstimulation and sensory overload among students. The phenomena were always connected with the overuse of technological devices and the internet. Technologies help students do their homework, find answers to their scientific problems, but they don't explain the problems and don't help the students understand them. Teachers may feel safe, because only humans can provide higher-order thinking skills needed by the students, robots can't. It is all because higher-order thinking skills like critical thinking, problem-solving or decision making are so closely related to emotional intelligence. Artificial intelligence and machines can't feel, they've no emotions, which is only the human skill.

And this is what I found out while teaching. I spent almost 15 years at school. For the last five years I taught kids with health and psychological problems. They were often called so-called difficult students, but they showed me the most. We had a good rapport.

Thanks to them I understood that children learn from the teachers they like, teenagers learn from the teachers they like or respect. And we all learn if we like, love or respect the person who is teaching us.

Emotions are stronger than any other stimulus and only they can compete with technologies. This is our key to be remembered and not to die forever. We will live in the memories of others and in the feelings they have towards us.

Quoting the words of Maya Angelou, an American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist: "At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel."

I do not devalue or negate the need of technological advancement, on the contrary, I think we should improve technologies, go further and further, find new cures for terminal diseases, save the planet, but being close to our pupils, being with our families, and keeping good relations with each other is the key to immortality.

In-depth communication, abilities to understand and manage emotions, as well as longer-term relations are our treasure. This is our heritage. It's our only way to leave our mark and stay in this world, stay in other people's minds. They will make us immortal.

**Life means Education. Education means Relation.  
Relation means Eternal life.**