

# A Global AI Expert Identifies The Skills You Need To Thrive In The Next 15 Years



**Carmine Gallo** Senior Contributor ⓘ

Leadership Strategy

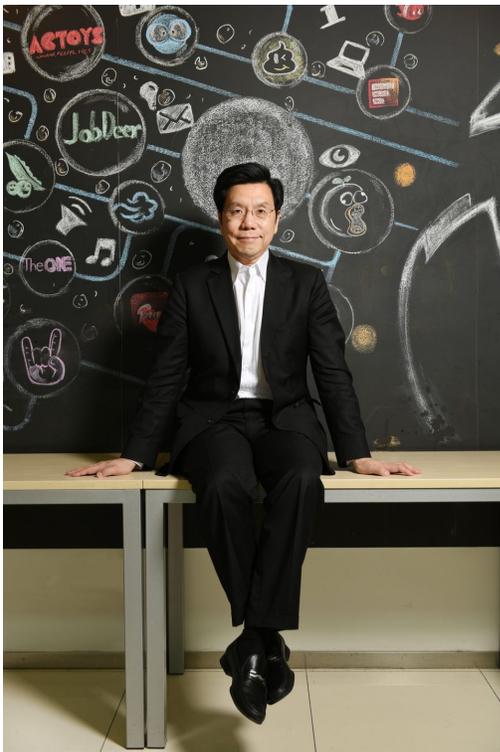
*I write about leadership communication to grow sales and build brands.*

---

## TWEET THIS



Dr. Lee realized that AI will not undercut our value as long as we double-down on what makes us truly human.



Dr. Lee is the author of *AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order* SINOVAION VENTURES

Dr. Kai-Fu Lee, a pioneer in the field of artificial intelligence, has two daughters. One is a fashion designer. The other is a photographer. Instead of following their father into computer science, they followed their heart, passion and skills. Lee encouraged them to do what they love because his work in making a machine more like a human has given him a unique glimpse into what separates humans from machines.

In his new book, *AI Superpowers*, Dr. Lee examines the race between China and Silicon Valley for the lead in artificial intelligence. I'll leave it other columnists to dig deeper into the battle of two global superpowers. I chose to spend my conversation with Lee on the other half of his book where he explains how we can all thrive in the age of artificial intelligence.

First, the bad news. Artificial intelligence will take over human jobs. A lot of them. According to Lee, in the next fifteen years, artificial intelligence will be able to “technically” replace 40 to 50% of all jobs in the United States. Lee makes an important caveat: just because AI *can* replace half of all jobs, doesn’t mean it *will*. However, “the disruption to job markets will be very real, very large, and coming soon,” Lee writes.

Now, the good news. And there’s plenty of it. First, there will be no robot apocalypse. Lee says we should keep that notion where it belongs—in science fiction movies. Despite all the advances in machine learning, Lee says we are “nowhere near” creating machines that have any emotion—at all. And that’s why AI has its limits.

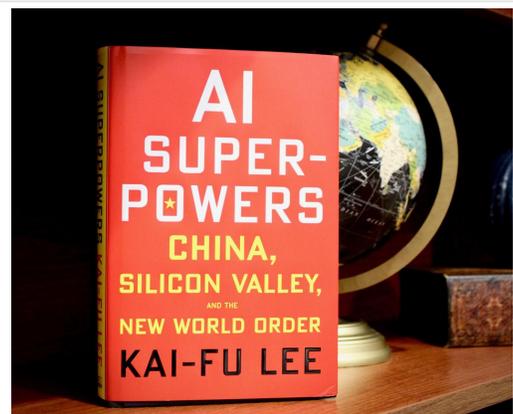
A computer isn’t proud and jubilant when it beats a human chess or Go champion. It has no capacity to feel love, excitement, compassion, or to dream of doing something other than what it was programmed to do. It has no imagination. It cannot motivate, inspire, or instill a desire to serve others. “It is in this uniquely human potential for growth, compassion, and love where I see hope,” says Lee.

## YOU MAY ALSO LIKE

---

**The cancer scare that changed Lee's outlook.** In our conversation, Lee told me about a personal health crisis that changed the way he thought about how AI and humans will co-exist. In 2013, Lee was diagnosed with stage IV lymphoma. After treatment, Lee’s cancer went into remission.

As one of the top AI researchers in the world and a venture-capital investor, Lee was a workaholic, leaving little time for family or friends. He was obsessed with building more and more powerful AI



AI Superpowers by Dr. Kai-Fu Lee GALLO COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

algorithms. After his cancer scare, he completely reshuffled his priorities, spending less time on social media, more time with his family, and pursuing the projects he deeply cared about. He spends more time mentoring young Chinese professionals, in addition to running one of China's most prestigious venture capital firms, Sinovation Ventures. His cancer diagnosis also gave him a fresh perspective on the technology he had pioneered.

Dr. Lee realized that AI will not undercut our value as long as we double-down on what makes us truly human. 🐦 “AI can handle a growing number of non-personal, non-creative, routine tasks,” Lee told me. But Lee says the skills that make us uniquely human are ones that no machine can replicate. The jobs of the future, says Lee, will require creative, compassionate, and empathetic leaders who know how to create trust, build teams, inspire service, and communicate effectively.

“People don't want to interact with robots for communication-oriented jobs,” says Lee. “They don't want to listen to robots making speeches, leading the company, giving pep talks, or earning our trust. They don't want robots to be teachers and nurses. We will end up with the inevitable outcome that, although large numbers of routine jobs will be eliminated, large numbers of empathetic jobs will be created.”

**AI creates role for compassionate caregivers.** It's in the field of medicine where Lee sees a great opportunity for AI and humans to co-exist. “I have little doubt that AI algorithms will eventually far surpass human doctors in their ability to diagnose disease and recommend treatments,” Lee writes in his book. “One response to this would be to get rid of doctors entirely...but patients don't want to be treated by a machine, a black box of medical knowledge that delivers a cold pronouncement.”

According to Lee, the medical personnel of the future will be “compassionate caregivers.” They will be trained in using the latest diagnostic tools, and also in communication, counseling, and emotional support. Instead of dryly informing patients of their chances of survival, they'll share encouraging stories, explain, guide and comfort patients through the treatment process.

**Educating students to co-exist with AI.** Lee told me that the future of AI completely disrupts how the U.S. and China teaches its students. By focusing on rote memorization, students have no chance to best a machine. Instead, says Lee, education should focus on helping students discover and nurture their creative talents. “If you’re destined to be the next Einstein, we should encourage your interest in math and science. If you're destined to a poet, painter or great philosopher, it should be encouraged, too.”

Lee says communication, teamwork, empathy and creativity must be taught as early as possible. “Those are the skills that matter in the future. No leader can be a great leader without those skills.” And that’s why Lee encouraged his daughters to pursue their passions. “They both received a good basic education [including math, science and physics], but I also made it a priority for them to become eloquent, trustworthy, and decent people who love what they do and who others like to work with.”

After thirty years of pioneering work in artificial intelligence at Google China, Microsoft, Apple and other companies, Lee says he’s figured out the blueprint for humans to thrive in the coming decade of massive technological disruption: “Let us choose to let machines be machines, and let humans be humans.”

*I am a keynote speaker, bestselling author, and communication advisor for leaders at the world’s most admired brands. I’ve written nine books that have been published in more than 30 languages. My new book is [Five Stars: The Communication Secrets to Get from Good to Great](#). I... **MORE***

*Carmin Gallo is the author of [Five Stars: The Communication Secrets to Get from Good to Great](#). He is a [keynote speaker](#), Harvard instructor and wrote “Talk like TED” and “The Storyteller’s Secret.”*