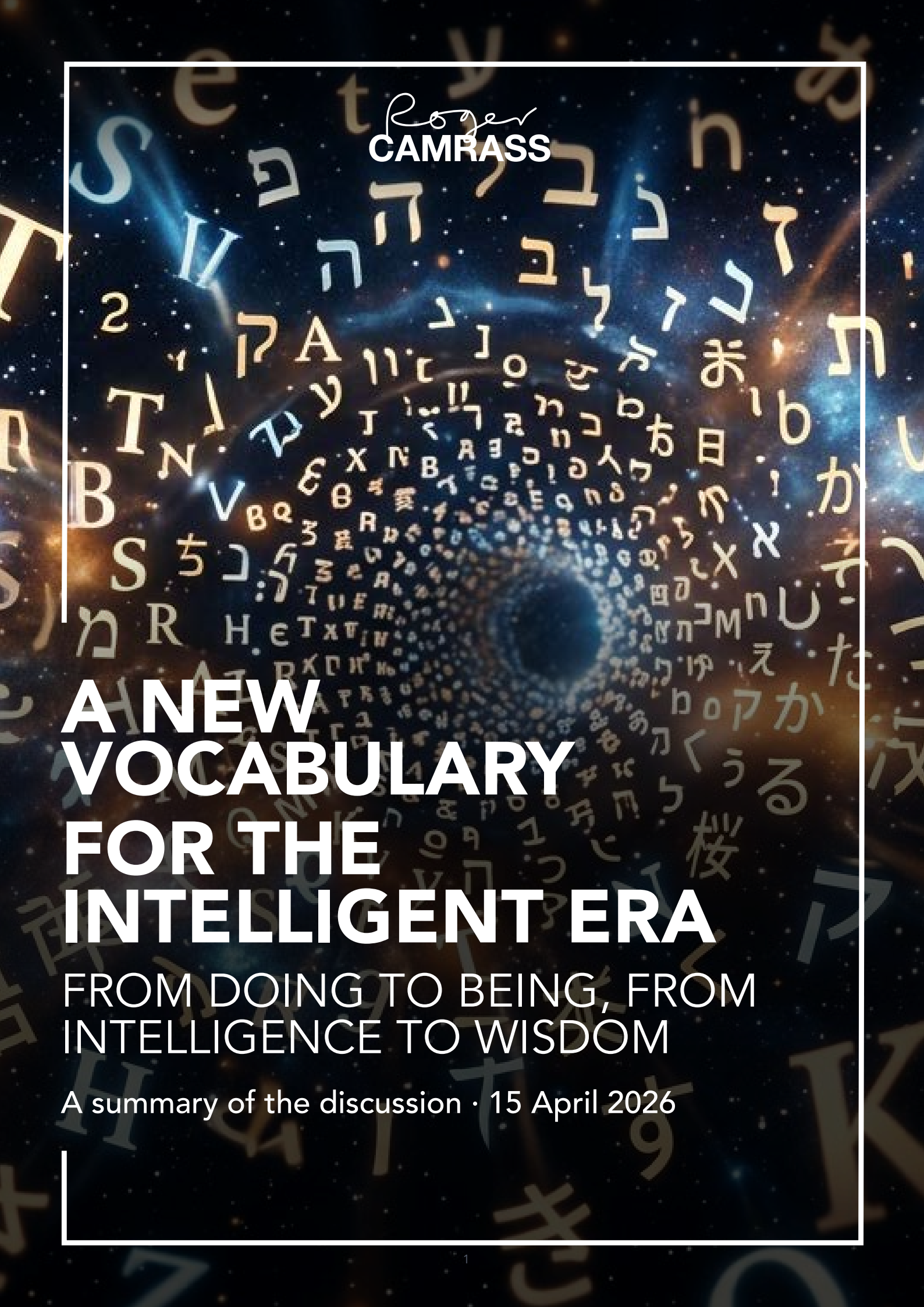

Roger CAMRASS

A NEW VOCABULARY FOR THE INTELLIGENT ERA

FROM DOING TO BEING, FROM INTELLIGENCE TO WISDOM

A summary of the discussion · 15 April 2026

INTRODUCTION

AI is not only changing what we do — it is reshaping who we are

> The third briefing in the *AI and the Human Experience* series argued that the move from the Digital to the Intelligent Era is more than a technological shift; it is a transformation in how we understand ourselves. To navigate it, we need a new vocabulary — one that moves beyond the industrial language of productivity and efficiency toward consciousness, presence, wisdom and purpose.

The transition from the Digital to the Intelligent Era represents far more than a technological shift. It marks a profound transformation in how we understand ourselves as human beings. The central thesis emerging from this discussion is both simple and radical: artificial intelligence is not only changing what we do — it is reshaping who we are. To navigate this transition, humanity requires a new vocabulary, one that moves beyond the industrial-age language of productivity and efficiency toward concepts such as consciousness, presence, wisdom and purpose.

During our third research briefing, two distinguished voices helped us to explore this terrain. Their dialogue, enriched by an engaged community of some twenty thought leaders, revealed an urgent need for new words — language that captures the shift from productivity to presence, from doing to being, from intelligence to wisdom.

In conversation

JB

Jeff Burningham

Entrepreneur, investor and author of *The Last Book Written by a Human*

AI as a mirror that can help us rediscover our shared humanity.

TK

Tarun Kohli

Senior Partner & Global Head of BFSI, Tech Mahindra

From processing information to directing consciousness.

TABLE 1 — A NEW VOCABULARY FOR THE INTELLIGENT ERA

Productivity → Presence	Value measured not by output, but by the quality and depth of attention we bring.
Doing → Being	Identity rooted in inner state and moral awareness rather than in work and role.
Intelligence → Wisdom	From the analytical and bounded to the experiential and integrative.
Information processing → Directing consciousness	The defining human skill once machine intelligence becomes ubiquitous.
Achievement → Fulfilment	From external metrics toward clarity, presence and meaning.
Division → Unity	Technology surfacing what we share rather than amplifying our differences.

1.0 The AI Mirror and the rediscovery of unity

One of the most compelling ideas introduced during the session was the concept of the "AI Mirror." Rather than viewing AI solely as a tool for automation or efficiency, Jeff Burningham framed it as a reflective surface — one capable of revealing patterns in human behaviour at both the individual and collective levels. By analysing vast amounts of data, AI may expose truths about us that are otherwise difficult to perceive.

This mirror has the potential to challenge one of the defining characteristics of the digital age: division. Social media platforms, driven by engagement algorithms, have amplified polarisation, often highlighting differences rather than commonalities. Yet, as Jeff argued, humanity shares far more in common than current discourse suggests. If properly directed, AI could shift attention toward these shared traits, fostering greater empathy and social cohesion.

At the heart of this vision lies the importance of relationships. Human life, it was observed, is defined not by frictionless efficiency but by the dynamic interplay of tension and reconciliation — what might be described as the "messiness" of human connection. It is through this process that meaning, love and fulfilment emerge. The AI Mirror, therefore, is not simply a technological construct but a philosophical tool, inviting us to rediscover the relational essence of our existence.

2.0 From doing to being

A central theme of the discussion was the transition from a "doing" paradigm to a "being" paradigm. Tarun Kohli remarked that for over two centuries, human identity has been closely tied to work. Industrial society elevated productivity, output and efficiency as the primary measures of value. However, as AI increasingly performs these functions, the model's limitations become apparent.

For Tarun, the capacity to direct consciousness — rather than to process information — emerges as the defining human skill of the Intelligent Era. This represents a profound inversion of priorities. Where intelligence once conferred an advantage, it is now ubiquitous. What distinguishes individuals is no longer how much they can do, but how deeply they can be.

This shift also reframes the nature of success. Instead of achievement defined by external metrics, fulfilment becomes rooted in internal states: clarity, presence and moral awareness. The idea that "being precedes doing" challenges deeply embedded cultural assumptions, suggesting that wisdom, rather than intelligence, will guide future human development.

> **"What distinguishes individuals is no longer how much they can do, but how deeply they can be."**

3.0 Attention as the master skill

Within this new framework, both Jeff and Tarun identified attention as a foundational capability. In a world saturated with digital stimuli, attention has become both scarce and highly contested. Algorithms continuously compete to capture and monetise human focus, often fragmenting awareness and reducing the capacity for sustained thought.

Yet attention is also the gateway to presence. Without it, meaningful relationships, creativity and self-awareness become difficult to sustain. The discussion emphasised that attention is one of the few domains still under individual control — though increasingly under threat.

Practices such as mindfulness, meditation and even "digital fasting" were highlighted as ways to reclaim this control. These are not merely wellness trends but essential disciplines for navigating the Intelligent Era. Through his university teaching, Jeff urges future business leaders to cultivate inner clarity by disengaging from external noise. Only by doing so can they develop the depth of insight required to guide organisations and societies through uncertainty.

4.0 Beyond machine intelligence

Another key thread concerned the limitations of AI itself. While machines excel at pattern recognition and data-driven optimisation, they lack the lived experience, emotional depth and moral intuition that characterise human intelligence. This distinction challenges simplistic narratives about AI replacing human creativity.

Humans are not purely rational agents; they are shaped by emotion, context and experience. These qualities enable the generation of genuinely novel ideas and the formation of meaningful relationships. As one participant noted, there is not always an "intelligent" solution to every problem — some challenges require wisdom, empathy and judgment.

This distinction between intelligence and wisdom became a focal point of the conversation. Intelligence, in this framing, is analytical and bounded; wisdom is experiential and integrative. It is the latter that will define human relevance in an AI-driven world.

> **“Intelligence is analytical and bounded; wisdom is experiential and integrative.”**

5.0 Reclaiming human identity

The discussion also explored how deeply the concept of identity is tied to work. For much of modern history, individuals have defined themselves by their professions. However, as automation reduces the need for human labour, this model becomes increasingly unsustainable.

The Intelligent Era forces a confrontation with more fundamental questions: Who are we beyond our roles? What gives life meaning in the absence of traditional work structures?

Several participants pointed to the enduring relevance of spiritual and philosophical traditions. Across cultures and religions, there exists a shared emphasis on values such as compassion, humility and interconnectedness. While these frameworks have been sidelined in many modern societies, they may offer critical guidance in navigating the uncertainties ahead. The emerging vocabulary — terms like consciousness, presence and purpose — echoes these ancient insights. Far from being obsolete, they may prove essential in redefining human identity for the future.

6.0 The risk of algorithmic dystopia

Despite the optimistic tone of much of the discussion, participants also acknowledged significant risks. AI has the potential to amplify negative aspects of human behaviour, including bias, conflict and misinformation. In a world where hundreds of millions of jobs may be displaced, social instability could increase.

There is also the danger of “algorithmic immersion,” where individuals become trapped in synthetic realities that distort perception and diminish authentic experience. In such a scenario, rather than expanding consciousness, technology could erode it.

However, the consensus was that these outcomes are not inevitable. The future remains contingent on human choices — on how technologies are designed, deployed and governed. Recognising the problem is the first step toward addressing it; understanding and acknowledging the challenges is a prerequisite for meaningful action.

7.0 Rethinking education and purpose

Looking ahead, the implications for education are profound. Current systems, largely designed during the Industrial Revolution, prioritise knowledge acquisition and standardised performance. These models are increasingly misaligned with the needs of the Intelligent Era.

Instead, education must focus on developing the full spectrum of human capabilities: awareness, emotional intelligence, creativity, ethical reasoning and resilience. Without such transformation, younger generations may struggle to find meaning and direction in a rapidly changing world.

The discussion also highlighted broader societal challenges. Declining mental health, shifting demographics and changing perceptions of work all point to a deeper crisis of meaning. If individuals cannot redefine purpose beyond economic productivity, the consequences could be far-reaching.

8.0 A new human capability framework

In response to these challenges, a new framework for human development was proposed — one that emphasises qualities such as awareness, learning, mastery, empathy, integrity, collaboration and reflection. These attributes form a kind of "human capability stack," designed to complement rather than compete with machine intelligence.

AI itself may play a role in supporting this development. Tools like the AI Mirror could help individuals better understand their behaviours, relationships and potential. In this sense, technology becomes not just a disruptor but an enabler of human growth.

9.0 Toward a shared future

The discussion concluded on a cautiously optimistic note. While the disruptions of the Intelligent Era are significant, they also create an opportunity to realign human values and priorities. By adopting a new vocabulary — one centred on consciousness rather than intelligence — society can begin to articulate a more meaningful vision of the future.

Central to this vision is the idea of unity. Despite cultural, political and economic differences, humans share fundamental needs: for connection, purpose and belonging. Recognising this common ground may be the key to achieving stability in an era of rapid change.

Ultimately, the Intelligent Era presents a choice. It can lead to fragmentation and dislocation, or to deeper understanding and fulfilment. The outcome will depend not on technology alone, but on how humanity chooses to define itself in relation to that technology.

> **"In moving from intelligence to consciousness, we are not diminishing human capability — we are redefining it."**

Roger Camrass

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About the programme

In 2025, Roger Camrass launched *AI and the Human Experience*, a global research programme supported by a community of contributors worldwide. Through bi-monthly briefings and a series of reports, it examines how artificial intelligence is reshaping every dimension of human life — and how we might steer it toward the greater good. Further detail, and the full library of reports, can be found at rogercamrass.com.

Roger Camrass

Research Director

Over half a century, Roger has advised governments on the strategic impact of technology, led a global multi-client programme, *Business in the Third Millennium*, and was research director of the Judge Business School survey into Corporate Innovation. He has helped create "innovation communities" between and within Fortune 1000 companies, and has held part-time academic posts at several universities and business schools, including the Judge Business School at Cambridge, Bristol University, the Ashridge School of Management and ESADE in Spain. Today he holds a visiting professorship in the humanities department of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He is married with three children and resides in Highgate, North London. See rogercamrass.com.

Sources and further reading

- Burningham, J., *The Last Book Written by a Human*.
- Other briefings in the *AI and the Human Experience* series, including *From Knowing to Becoming* (June 2026) and *Transforming Education for the Intelligent Era*.

Roger CAMRASS