

How AI became my friend and colleague on a rainy Sunday afternoon

■ Wiepke de Heij

What will be the value of a person of flesh and blood if people can coach themselves with AI? It gives mixed feelings: excitement about endless possibilities, but also a fear that it will strike us as supervisors and coaches in our core—our reason for existence.

I was asked to write a column about AI. I like to write and enthusiastic as I am, I said “yes”. Afterwards I wondered: *why did I say yes?! I don't have the slightest idea how to use AI in my work as lecturer or supervisor!* On a rainy Sunday afternoon, I braced myself. I sat in an underground playground with my youngest daughter and decided to start a chat with Chat GPT for the very first time.

I started with asking how long a column should be, what kind of advice or tips “Chat” had for me etcetera.

Soon the “conversation” went on about how to handle European diversity.

And then I asked: “How can I deal with my own perfectionism while writing a column in an European journal?” I was surprised with the outcome as Chat told me that perfectio-

nism can be both a strength as a weakness.

And that my perfectionism could help me to thrive towards quality and precision, but it could also lead to postponing, stress or self-criticism.

Chat gave me valuable advice: to set reasonable goals for myself, give myself time and space and to embrace my imperfection as a learning moment. Wow, this is a lot of knowledge in a chat! What will be the value of a person of flesh and blood if people can coach themselves with AI? It gives mixed feelings: excitement to the future and endless possibilities, but also a fear that it will strike us as supervisors and coaches in our core: our reason of existence. In the underground playground it suddenly became very cold.

I asked *Chat*: how can supervisors and coaches use AI with their work? *Chat* gave a whole list of ideas, varying from research and inspiration, providing theoretical frameworks or alternative methods. To help us reflect, simulate feedback, roleplay or help us to improve our communication. Remarkably *Chat* added: “Without replacing your human depth.”



As AI can do a lot, it cannot feel, sympathize, acknowledge or build a relationship.

Chat speaks of working together instead of replacing coaches or supervisors.

In the vignette “How AI became my friend and colleague on a rainy Sunday afternoon” Wiepke de Heij, a supervisor and lecturer in supervision embraces herself and takes a dive exploring the use of AI for supervision and coaching.

This is reassuring to me and also mind-blowing! Imagine how fast we could learn to be a better supervisor (or professional) by using feedback and an endless source of knowledge. It is like having all your teachers in the room with you!

As a lecturer in supervision this is very interesting to me. How can we co-work with AI and what will “learning” (in the broad meaning of the word) look like in the future? Our main value as supervisors is to help professionals learn from their work. To help to break through their human patterns, to be a better social worker, doctor or manager. There will be a steep learning curve for a lot of professionals to work with AI. Maybe some of them will lose their jobs as they will be replaced by AI.

But our strength as supervisors lies in our humaneness and our human depth. We can feel, we can see a person in their whole, with all their personal qualities, abilities and fears. We can see their uniqueness and help them become a better version of themselves. By using our own strengths, weaknesses and quirks.

We can embrace this development of AI, try to work with it, fail, reflect, and try again. It is this experimental way of learning that we as supervisors are masters of. Or we can postpone, try to walk away and risk to be outrun by robots or younger AI skilled professionals...

I need a while to let all this sink in as I look around this underground playground what used to be a car tunnel in the '90's. The possibilities I didn't see before, the fear that is there. For now, my curiosity and desire to learn wins. Let's trust in our ability to learn and change and to see this process of learning as the most valuable way to contribute to our professional community. ■

Do you want to share your thoughts or ideas with me? You can reach me at: linked-in Wiepke de Heij, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/wiepke-de-heij-b476767/> or email me at wiepke@dewitteendewartezwaan.nl



Wiepke de Heij (Netherlands) is a supervisor, lecturer in supervision, and author within her own company *The White and Black Swan* in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.