

## Is Human Connection The New Job Security?

SOURCE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwY34Xm3py8>

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Over the last few years, **advances in AI have sparked growing fears** that we're all **at risk of losing our jobs to chatbots**. But what if the jobs that become most valuable in an AI era are the ones where **human interaction** matters most? Katty Kay talks with business leader Jane Wurwand about her "**high touch**" theory of AI – and why she believes the roles that will **thrive** in the coming decades are those built around person-to-person connection. You're watching **New Normal with Katty Kay** – each week, we bring you conversations with expert guests about how our world is changing and what that means for our lives. Explore past episodes and get early access to new ones on BBC.com.



**TRANSCRIPT** with something paraphrased in English by Terje:

1. KK: I interview people all the time,
2. but there's one answer I got two years ago that's been **living rent free** in my head **ever since**. It was about AI and jobs and whether we're all going to lose our jobs.
3. But the person who said it wasn't a tech CEO or an AI researcher.
4. It was this woman: Jane Wurwand, founder of the multi-million dollar skincare company Dermalogica.
5. I've known Jane for years and her life story is **fascinating**. She didn't go to college. She started working at 13, sweeping hair off the floor of her local beauty salon.
6. And all **that perspective (= context) led her to believe something** that feels almost radical today,
7. that the jobs that will survive this **AI era** will be the ones that **engage in (= involve)** human connection, something she calls **high touch**.
8. JW: The equal and opposite reaction to that high tech is high touch, **service oriented businesses**,
9. **where humans are doing things that humans do best**. Cooking. Caring. Touching. Kindness. Compassion. Talking.
10. I'm not in the business of just skincare products.
  - **I'm in the business of human connection**. So now, two years later, with AI having changed our world even more,
11. KK: I called Jane back to see if she still believes all of that and hear what advice she has for young people **navigating this high tech, high touch world**.
12. **In this high tech, high touch paradigm**, (= framework) you talk about it **in the terms of** the skin care industry **where we were together** and it's **literally (= word-for-word = in the direct sense)** an industry where **people are getting touched (= sb touches you)**.
13. Right? It's physical touch. But **it occurs to me (= it's like a light goes on = it comes to my mind)** - and the reason I think it's been -

14. **it's had me thinking** (= it has made me think) so much the last couple of years and talking to people about it is that **it's not confined to** (= it's not only about) physical touch, your concept of high tech, high touch.
15. It's also about this broader idea of just **having a human voice**.
16. When you call your kind of - your Wi-Fi has gone down and you call **your Wi-Fi provider** (= who sells Wi-Fi service to you) and you actually get a human voice **and not a bot** (= and not an AI).
17. Give us some some sort of **tangible** (= reality-related) thoughts on
18. which are **the high touch jobs** and areas of employment that you think survive
19. this rapidly growing technology that may take other jobs away.
20. JW: The jobs that I see that are going to be **booming**, and I see already are **the jobs that really can't be replaced**:
21. hospitality, travel, anything in the in **the human being industry**.
22. If you are receiving a cancer diagnosis, goodness forbid, an AI bot might have found that or detected that that **rogue** (= bad-behaving) cell,
23. but you certainly don't want that bot talking to you and giving you the diagnosis.
24. You want a human being to sit with kindness and empathy and hold your hand—literally—and say,
25. we've got a plan, we're going to **execute on** it. Let's discuss the steps and we've got a whole team behind you.
26. We're here for you. We've got you. You need to be deeply **reassured** (= you need sb to comfort you and raise your spirits) because you'll be terrified.
27. So **all of that said** (= after saying that), any piece of work that brings that to us,
28. whether you're working **in retail** (= as a shop assistant, etc.),
29. whether you're working in an industry that is full of technology,
30. what can we bring as humans that makes that workplace, that business, that space
31. kind, empathetic, that you feel seen, you feel heard, that you matter,
32. that somebody knows a little bit about your life so that you can chat and talk.
33. These are all incredibly important social aspects of what being human is.
34. KK: I think what you're describing is actually quite an optimistic **spin** (= way of describing = interpretation) on some of the fears that people have, because I've spoken to young people and I've kind of seen all of their comments online,
35. and many of them are sort of **slightly kind of furious** about this world that we're in
36. because they felt there was a social contract where you get educated,
37. you pay an enormous amount of money to go to a university or **tertiary education** (= university level education),
38. and then you come out and actually there aren't jobs because the jobs have been taken.
39. What do you say to the graduate who has a degree in accounting or coding?
40. I mean, literally, what would you say to the **25-year-old** ~~25-year-old~~ who did all the things they thought they needed to do,
41. and **now finds that tech can do the job**. In your approach to skills and the care industry,
42. would you say to that person you need to **pivot** (= make a U-turn) totally? You need to **retrain**? You need to find a way to get into the high touch world?
43. JW: Well, I think **you have to take whatever your strength is**, whatever called you to that. Like if you studied accounting and you say, I actually hate it,

44. I can't stand it, but my dad or my mum was an accountant and they wanted me to have a good job then, you know, **tick the box and move on**.

45. You could change - you could **change professions, change your career**. **But if you love it, you may not want to**. So what can you take from what you've already learned?

46. So let's just take accounting. Attention to detail. Numbers. Checking. Organising. You **keep spinning that out** (= make it last longer).

47. There's lots of other jobs that would require that. I mean, you might - **this sounds like a stretch** (= it may be hard to believe), but **bear with me** (= hear me out).

48. You might be a fantastic **event planner** because if you have a great attention to detail and you have high **executive skills** and **you're organised**

49. and you can communicate - and now if you **fall down on** that communication piece (= if you're not good at communicating), you go, oh, I had all of it,

50. but **dang** (= damn it), I don't have that, I'm not very good with people then

- that's what I would study and start to get good at it. Because even if you stay as an accountant,

51. your human skills should be really high because they need to be because you –

52. **you're not going to compete with a robot**. We don't have those same tech skills. We don't have that code in our head. **You have everything else that is needed by other humans**.

53. So we have to take the strength and move with it.

54. KK: I think you're exactly right that **this is where** people need to think about the jobs,

55. where in the kind of AI world, there are actually jobs that you may not think of as being high touch,

56. but event planning demands, in fact, **interpersonal skills**, as do many jobs.

57. JW: As do many jobs. And even if and - it's so - we shouldn't box things into that's tech and this is human.

58. **There has to be this connection**. There has to be - remember equal and opposite reaction existing together.

59. And now we do it all the time. And so I think that we have to take if you're if you've graduated I listened to a podcast recently

60. with a group of graduates that did learn coding and they feel really cheated

61. because now they're being told, well, actually, we don't need you to code. You know, that's the skill that we don't need. It's **obsolete** (= out-of-date = unnecessary) because AI can code it.

62. No one needs to learn to code. **But do you remember a few years ago, everyone was told you have to learn to code?**

63. Of course no education is wasted. Education is an amazing thing to have and **go for it** (= choose/do it). However, so many people have graduated, I think,

64. with a degree and it's a four-year-college or a three-year-college in England that gives you education. But education isn't skill.

65. And what we're really missing right now are **human skills**. We don't have enough of those skills.

66. I mean, if you want to go into one of the, you know, best top paying jobs right now, it's **welding**.

67. You know, you could become a welder **that will really serve you well** and you don't need to go to university.

68. So there's this whole **resurgance-resurgence** of skills. KK: That's a slightly different thing isn't it?
69. I can see **the resurgence of skills**. Is that different from the high touch world that you're talking about?
70. JW: No. **It's all part and parcel** of the same (= it's part of the same thing = it's part of this high touch world), because what's happening is people are saying, you know what **we are missing that**.

71. But we've still got this **hierarchy of education** where the gold standard is the university degree. Like, **oh, not for my child**, you know what I mean?

72. Like, oh, I love that you need, you know, welders, but not for my child.

73. My child's going to go to university and study medieval languages or whatever they want to. **I think we have to rethink that**.

74. And we have to just kind of break down that hierarchy or sort of like if you want the **the elevation of** (= the higher position of) the four-year-college degree,

75. **I'm not knocking it** (= I'm not belittling/criticizing it), but I never went to university. I went to **trade skills school**, I studied skincare, and it's allowed me to build a business that's a global industry.

76. KK: Do you think, I mean talk to the kind of coder -

77. and I think Stanford had a study that showed that **employment amongst software developers has fallen by something like 20% recently**.

78. Talking about those coders, you're right, **they feel cheated**.

79. Is the key for them or for anyone in their 20s who has that background of education that may now be obsolete because of AI,

80. is actually what we're talking about the key is to develop your interpersonal communication skills? JW: Yes, 100 percent. KK: And high touch in the skincare industry is obvious.

81. It's the kind of that's the most obvious example of it. But actually what you're really wanting is, is saying to people, as a business leader, you need to develop your interpersonal skills.

82. JW: Correct. **The things that used to be called soft skills are now the hard skills**. You need them. It's not just nice to have, it's a need to have.

83. And so we have to - and **you've got to dig in** (= you've got to learn it).

84. And this is a generation unfortunately that seems to be lacking in a lot of the **proclivity** or the desire to concentrate on those because they're not easy.

85. Listen you go into a room of people you've never met, can you **go up** (= approach someone) and introduce yourself and start making a conversation? I know I can because I learned it in a salon.

86. It's not like I was born with it, but I'm the youngest of four girls, so I guess I was, because I **had to grow up and, you know, have my voice**.

87. But you can learn it. And I think that's where we've got to say, that's where you've got to really **beef up** (= make better/stronger = improve) your interpersonal skills.

88. And if you own the business, **don't abdicate the person** (= don't let the person be replaced by an AI) who's who's answering the telephone **to a bot**.

89. Don't. I know how much easier it is. I know it seems so much more efficient,

90. but if that human being is not on the end of the phone, there is no human connection to your business or your company.

91. Your first message of branding is that voice that answers the phone.

92. And it doesn't have to be in an office at a desk. It can be obviously - I mean remote, it can be obviously remote.

93. However, it has to be a **double down** (= highly committed), **delicious** sort of person who sounds great and is kind and **genuinely has empathy** (= is truly/really empathic = is emotionally intelligent)

94. because we can hear or spot a fake in 30s.

95. Jane Wurwand, thank you very much. Thank you Jane. Thank you so much, Katty.