Some Thoughts on *Abundance*, fourteen years later . . .

Back in 2012 when we published *Abundance: The Future is Better Than You Think*, the concept of abundance was still a distant prediction. Now it's become a rallying cry for global technology leaders.

"We're heading into a future where technology will unlock abundance in education, healthcare, and opportunity for everyone."
—Jensen Huang, CEO of Nvidia

"Artificial intelligence promises a future of unparalleled abundance."
—Vinod Khosla, founder of Khosla Ventures

"There will be an age of abundance. No shortage of goods and services. Everyone will have everything they want. The cost of goods and services will trend to zero. . . . A future where there is no poverty."
—Elon Musk, CEO of xAI, Tesla, SpaceX

"As we enter the AI era, we predict the benefits to consumers will be as profound as the technology is magical. . . . In a word, we predict an era of abundance—consumers' lives will be enriched through new channels for creativity and self-expression, new paths to self-discovery and belonging, and new ways to do the most meaningful work of their lives."
—Marc Andreessen, cofounder of a16z

"I think we see a path now where the world gets much more abundant and much better every year. . . . With superintelligence, we can do anything else . . . massively increase abundance and prosperity."
—Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI

"Some of the things we get to look forward to . . . near limitless intelligence and abundant energy . . . could fix climate, establish a space colony . . . an age of abundance."
—Garry Tan, CEO of Y Combinator

"Technology is not just a tool. It can be a force for good, a force for change, a force for a more abundant future."

—Tim Cook, CEO of Apple

"The abundance of information, if deployed correctly, should lead to an abundance of democracy."

—Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google

"I see a world of abundance ahead, where science and technology are used to solve the world's greatest inequities."

—Bill Gates, cofounder of Microsoft

What the world's greatest technologists and thought leaders are saying about *We Are as Gods* . . .

"*We Are as Gods* is the critical reading for the coming Artificial General Intelligence and Singularity. Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler show that while exponential technologies deliver the *capability* for radical abundance, the real challenge lies in upgrading our *consciousness* to match our accelerating power. This is more than a survival guide—it's a manual for optimizing our destiny, connecting the speed of technology to the unlimited potential of the human mind."

—Ray Kurzweil, inventor, futurist, cofounder of Singularity University, and author of *The Singularity Is Nearer*

"Diamandis and Kotler's bestseller *Abundance* helped shift the global conversation from fear to possibility. Now, *We Are as Gods* reveals that the forces they predicted—AI, clean energy, digital biology—are scaling at a pace few could imagine. This book argues persuasively that the Abundance era has arrived and challenges leaders to use these capabilities responsibly and ambitiously. A timely and important follow-on to a landmark work."

—Eric Schmidt, PhD, former CEO of Google, CEO of Relativity Space

"*We Are as Gods* is a guidebook for the age when human intelligence becomes networked with machine intelligence. Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler show us how exponential technologies—AI, robotics, synthetic biology, and beyond—don't just give us new tools, they give us new leverage to solve problems at societal scale. This book is essential for any entrepreneur or leader who wants to build a future defined not by limits, but by compounding possibility."

—Reid Hoffman, cofounder of LinkedIn, partner at Greylock, and coauthor of *Superagency: What Could Possibly Go Right with Our AI Future*

"Change is accelerating at an exponential pace. Diamandis and Kotler show you how to harness AI and converging technologies to create abundance, purpose, and true agency in your life. If you're ready to stop feeling overwhelmed and start taking control of your future, *We Are as Gods* is your guide for mastering an abundant future—and maximizing your impact now."

—Tony Robbins, the world's #1 life and business strategist and four-time *New York Times* bestselling author

"In *We Are as Gods*, Peter and Steven capture the same spirit that drives every XPRIZE: the belief that humanity's greatest challenges are solvable. This book is a powerful reminder that exponential technologies are dramatically expanding our reach—on earth and beyond. It's a must-read that invites us to think boldly, act courageously, and design a future worthy of our highest aspirations."

—Dr. Anousheh Ansari, CEO, XPRIZE Foundation, and first private female astronaut on the International Space Station

"This book redefines what progress should mean—not just more, but better. Diamandis and Kotler push us to build a future of shared prosperity, where abundance is measured by justice, creativity, and human potential. *We Are as Gods* is the conversation our times demand."

—Van Jones, CNN host, founder of DreamMachine.org, and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Rebuild the Dream*

"An extraordinary blueprint for hope. *We Are as Gods*—both exhilarating and grounding—shows how exponential technologies can serve our deepest human values. This book acts as an invitation and a practical guide at the time when humanity needs it most. It turns optimism into a discipline and a mindset that empowers us to build a hopeful and compelling abundant future. Diamandis and Kotler once again offer us all reason for optimism."

—Mo Gawdat, former chief business officer of Google X and bestselling author of *Scary Smart: The Future of Artificial Intelligence and How You Can Save Our World*

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Abundance: The Future Is Better Than You Think

WE ARE AS GODS

A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR THE AGE OF ABUNDANCE

PETER H. DIAMANDIS
AND STEVEN KOTLER

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Peter's Dedication

To my family, Jet, Dax, and Kristen—in a world where we are becoming as gods, you remind me that our humanity is not something to transcend but something to treasure. This book is for you and for the world you'll help create. May you wield these godlike powers with humility, curiosity, and an unshakable commitment to human flourishing.

Steven's Dedication

To Joy, for still holding my hand on this adventure

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PART 1

WARP SPEED

This is magic. Sure—but not necessarily fantasy.
—THOMAS PYNCHON

CHAPTER ONE

Theogony*

A Tall Order

"We are as gods and we might as well get good at it," wrote *Whole Earth Catalog* founder Stewart Brand in 1968. He was talking about technology. It was the start of the space age and the dawn of the computer era. The excitement was palpable. But it was a tall order.

Consider a few of the godlike miracles we'd have to master, like *creatio ex nihilo*, the creation of something from nothing. Now, there's a divine attribute rare in the universe of comparative mythology. You want to turn formless nothing into something? Anything? That feat is reserved. Only supreme deities need apply.

Yahweh, the God of the Hebrew Bible, pulled it off. He dragged light, land, and life out of the void. He qualifies. As does Brahma, who turned pure potential into a cosmic egg. Io in the Māori tradition, Atum in Egyptian cosmology, Pangu in Chinese lore, all pulled the rabbit of creation out of the hat of, well, nothing. Not even a hat.

Here's another divine superpower: omniscience. The ability to

* Theogony (*noun*): a work describing the origins and genealogy of the gods, traditionally a narrative or an epic poem.

know all things. A third: omnipresence. The ability to exist everywhere at once. Without question, the old gods could razzle-dazzle.

Praecognitio. The ability to foretell the future. The always-popular *praesentia invisibilis*, which is the ability to be invisible—technically "presence without being seen," more technically, "invisible presence."

Or shape-shifting, *mutatio formae* in the Latin, *metamorphosis* in Greek. This is one of the rarest supernatural talents. Kali could pull it off, as could Proteus. And then there's Loki, the enigmatic trickster in Norse mythology, who once transformed himself into a beautiful mare, was impregnated by a fierce stallion, and gave birth to Sleipnir, the eight-legged horse ridden by Odin.

In fact, if you thumb through the Old Testament counting superpowers, the standard total is eighty-three miracles that fall into ten major categories. Mind you, to create this list, we've ignored the global canon and confined our search to a single book. Still, here's the breakdown:

Creation Miracles: 1
Provision Miracles: 10
Nature Miracles: 16
Healing Miracles: 7
Resurrection Miracles: 3
Judgment Miracles: 15
Protection Miracles: 12
Prophetic Miracles: 9
Communication Miracles: 5
Victory-in-Battle Miracles: 5
Total Old Testament Miracles: 83

That's a lot of miracles. Plus, Stewart Brand made this proclamation in 1968—in the early days of godlike technology. Back then, mainframe computers the size of oil tankers were the rule, the microchip had just been born, and color television remained a neat trick. Yet we weren't nowhere.

In 1968, push-button phones were suddenly a thing. So was spaceflight. Of course, Neil Armstrong's small step was still a year away, but NASA did manage to orbit the moon with a man in the can—technically, three men in a big can, including Jim Lovell, who later became famous for being the commander of the ill-fated Apollo 13 mission. At the time, he was only a navigator. Still, imagine being the first person to chart a course around the dark side of the moon. . . .

So yeah, in 1968, when Brand's famous dictate first appeared, we were not quite gods. We were gods in training. But what nobody quite expected—we were very fast learners.

Theurgicon*

"I was blind, but now I see," reads the New Testament. The statement describes one of the more famed miracles in Scripture: Jesus's restoration of sight to the blind. Technically, a miracle of healing. But in this case, the small print is important.

The once-blind man healed by Jesus makes his claim while being interrogated by the Pharisees, the spiritual leaders of the time. Essentially, it is a statement given in religious court, under oath, as a testament to Jesus's supernatural abilities and de facto proof, in the mathematical sense of that term, of his divine origin. Like the Resurrection, the raising of the dead, and the parting of the Red Sea, the restoration of sight to the blind has become a baseline metric for divine power, which makes it a useful measuring stick for progress here in the early twenty-first century. In the calculus of Stewart Brand, the restoration of sight to the blind is a way to judge just how good we humans have gotten at behaving like gods.

This brings us to Max Hodak, who is founder of the Science Corporation, a company that is in the miracle business—using microscopic

* Theurgicon (*noun*): a divine academy, a place where gods go to learn how to wield their superpowers.

retinal implants and infrared optics to restore sight to the blind. A biomedical engineer by training, Hodak's primary focus is brain-machine interfaces, which is to say, the miracle business is business as usual for Max Hodak.

Before starting Science, Hodak co-founded and served as president of Elon Musk's brain-computer interface company Neuralink. Neuralink's mission is to build brain implants that let people with paralysis control devices with their thoughts. Technically, Neuralink is a triple miracle because their implant doesn't just heal paralysis, it also facilitates telepathy and telekinesis. Still, if we factor impact into our assessment, the PRIMA retinal prosthetic, as the Science Corporation's implant is known, wins the battle for scale.

Twenty million people suffer from spinal cord injuries. It's both the leading cause of paralysis and the trauma that Neuralink's device is meant to heal. The PRIMA implant, meanwhile, combats age-related macular degeneration, which is the leading cause of blindness in the world and a disease that affects over 170 million people. In other words, curing macular degeneration really is a miracle of biblical proportion.

Hodak's cure for blindness is a two-millimeter photovoltaic microchip containing nearly four hundred light-powered pixels that replace the retina's normal photoreceptors—the ones lost to macular degeneration. A camera mounted on a pair of glasses captures visual information, which is projected as a pattern of near-infrared light onto the chip's photodiodes. The chip works like a solar panel, converting infrared light into electrical signals that stimulate the surviving inner retinal neurons. These neurons transmit the signals along the optic nerve to the visual cortex, where the brain constructs them into images, mimicking the process of natural sight.

The surgery required to implant the microchip takes about eighty minutes. The results, pardon the pun, are eye-opening. In the United States, normal vision is 20/20, while 20/200 or worse is the threshold for legal blindness. In a trial of the implant run in the United Kingdom and Europe, thirty-two subjects started the study with 20/450 vision—legally blind by US standards. After receiving the device and

measuring visual acuity with the standard eye chart, all thirty-two people improved their performance by twenty-three letters, which is five lines down the chart from where they started. On average, postsurgery, eyesight improved to 20/160—the difference between seeing darkness and seeing faces (aka, a miracle). Because of the globe's aging population, by 2040, there will be nearly three million people in the world blinded by macular degeneration. Restoring vision for three million people—that's the scale of miracle we're describing.

Yet this raises a crucial question: What happened between 1968, when Stewart Brand first made his pronouncement, and today, when we can have a science-based discussion about humankind's newfound ability to perform miracles of biblical proportions?

The answer is exponential technology.

Any technology that doubles in performance while dropping in price on a regular basis is an exponential technology. Moore's law is the standard example. In 1965, three years before Brand's "we are as gods" pronouncement, Gordon Moore caught sight of a similar trend. He noticed the number of integrated circuits on a computer chip had been doubling every eighteen months while the cost of the chip remained the same. This is a classic example of an exponential doubling, a so-called price-performance curve, where costs stay constant and performance improves on a regular basis.

But really, what Gordon Moore noticed was the emergence of a piggyback ride. Once a technology becomes digital and can be translated into the ones and zeroes of computer code, it jumps onto the back of Moore's law and begins accelerating exponentially. Every doubling in computing power feeds a doubling in that technology's capability—which in turn drives further improvements in computing. Progress compounds upon progress, producing the runaway effect we now call exponential acceleration.

In 2012, we introduced the concept of exponential technology in our first book, *Abundance: The Future Is Better Than You Think*. In it, we held our ground against naysayers and pessimists and made bold, evidence-based predictions about technology's ability to improve

standards of living and where the future was heading. We examined ten technologies accelerating on exponential growth curves—computers, sensors, networks, AI, robotics, 3D printing, augmented and virtual reality, biotechnology, and blockchain—that would soon give humanity the ability to meet the basic needs of every person on the planet. In short, in terms of godlike powers, *Abundance* was a data-driven prophecy about the miracle of provision.

In the years since that book's release—as will be explored in greater detail throughout these chapters—exponential technology has made good on this promise. The world has witnessed measurable increases in a host of critical abundance-related metrics: per capita income, access to food, energy, communications, education, healthcare—the list goes on. Truthfully, there's no end in sight. Simply stated, if standards of living are your metric, more people are living better lives than ever before in history.

The rise in computational power that is driving this progress—what was the quaint, yearly doubling known as Moore's law when we wrote *Abundance*—exploded into tenfold annual growth between 2012 and 2022. Today, riding the triple engine of GPU acceleration, exponential data growth, and ongoing breakthroughs in generative AI, it's surging toward one-hundred-fold gains—godlike power indeed.

The Science Corporation and the PRIMA retinal prosthetic are where these surges have led. The implant is the result of exponential acceleration in a half-dozen fields and, more specifically, the *acceleration of acceleration* produced by converging exponentials. When waves of development for different accelerating exponentials collide, progress stops compounding—it detonates. These intersecting waves stack on top of one another, accelerating acceleration by doubling in power and size and producing a whole much greater than the sum of its parts.

These same forces are now transforming entire industries—especially at the intersection of AI and robotics, two of the central technologies fueling today's age of abundance. In 2012 when we wrote *Abundance*, we predicted a future for these technologies that included everything from autonomous cars and flying cars to autonomous

robots and delivery drones. It really was a prediction of transportation abundance—the safer, cleaner, and cheaper movement of goods and people than ever before in history.

Today, our prediction is reality. Thanks to the power of convergence, there are over thirty autonomous car companies, and nearly every major retailer has robots running their warehouses. Flying car companies are operational in the Middle East and Asia, and companies like Zipline are making thousands of drone deliveries every day, transporting lifesaving medicines, and saving tens of thousands of lives in the process. In a little more than a decade, we have gone from hard-to-believe stories about flying cars and robo-maids to commercial operations of electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicles (eVTOL), and internet videos of humanoid robots folding clothing, serving drinks, and holding yoga poses (google: Optimus). And transportation is only the beginning.

The same converging exponentials powering these new industries are also helping Hodak cure blindness. The PRIMA implant sits at the intersection of four accelerating technologies: computing, artificial intelligence, nano-fab electronics, and material science. Individually, each of these technologies is revolutionary. Together, fueled by convergence, they're a paradigm shift—one that requires miracle metaphors to explain.

Convergence is why it's no longer hyperbole to say that our ancestors would view us as gods. The blind can now see. The paralyzed can walk. While no one has yet multiplied loaves and fishes to feed the hungry, we can now grow fish from stem cells to accomplish the same miracle of provision. Certainly, the terminology has changed. The grandiosity of "omnipresence" and "omniscience" has been replaced by the prosaic "Zoom" and "Google"—but the underlying superpowers are the same.

Here's the catch. It's not just Max Hodak. It's all of us. These divine powers are everywhere and everywhen. They're now in your pocket. You carry miracle tech in your jeans and handbag. You can summon a chariot of the gods disguised as an Uber with a finger tap and conjure up a feast

via Uber Eats with another. You have answers to nearly every question in seconds. Translation, navigation, simulation—it's all on demand.

So, here's the next question: If we are literally walking the earth in an age of miracles, how come we don't feel divine?

Structure Mapping

If the divine feels distant, it's because our brains weren't built to process miracles at scale. Without grounds for comparison, novelty overloads the system. The unfamiliar floods perception and the wonders of the world register as fear and confusion. To make sense of an age of miracles, we need a way to translate the extraordinary into the understandable—a mapping system for the mind. That's where the work of Northwestern University cognitive scientist Dedre Gentner comes into our story.

In the 1980s, Gentner ran a series of experiments investigating how humans come to understand unfamiliar concepts. She asked people questions like, "How is a solar system like an atom?" or "How is a battery like a reservoir?" and examined how they reached their answers.

In the case of comparing solar systems to atoms, most people explained the relationship by saying something like: "Electrons orbit the nucleus like planets orbit the sun." In other words, when people try to understand atoms, they used space analogies—solar systems, orbits, gravitation. But Gentner's discovered something deeper about how the mind works, a process she termed *structure-mapping*.

In order to understand the unfamiliar, humans don't just make surface-level comparisons. We map deep relational similarities between domains. In Gentner's experiment, people were not saying atoms *look like* solar systems. They were saying: The structure of orbiting bodies under invisible forces in one domain helps explain the other.

This insight about analogy—that we understand new things by mapping them onto known structures—has become foundational to how we think about thinking. Analogy is now viewed as cognitive

infrastructure for the mind. If you agree with philosopher Douglas Hofstadter, it's the root of intelligence and creativity. It's how we learn to understand the new, the unfamiliar, even the incomprehensible.

In the twentieth century, the most transformative analogies reshaped entire sciences. Neuroscience, for instance, took a quantum leap once researchers began comparing the brain to a computer. Suddenly, cognition could be modeled in terms of information processing—inputs, outputs, memory, feedback loops. That analogy gave rise to computational neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and brain-computer interfaces (BCI) like Hodak's implant. The same principle applies at every scale: When we describe the internet as a "worldwide web," or genes as "code," or the universe as a "network," we're not just explaining—we're expanding what's possible to imagine.

Analogy is the brain's way of compressing novelty into familiarity. It's how we make sense of the world when it starts changing faster than we can keep up. But this ancient cognitive tool—structure mapping—fails in the face of modern technology. Our comparison machinery runs out of easy comparisons. Godlike powers in our pockets? What's the analogy here?

Without grounds for comparison, we can't parse the world. The result is cognitive vertigo—the sense that the world is moving faster than we can make sense of it. And if we can't reason our way through change, we myth our way into progress. When analogies fail, humans start hunting deeper patterns—meta-analogies of a sort—or what the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung called *archetypes*.

In Jung's definition, archetypes are universal, inherited patterns of thought, image, and idea that are embedded in humanity's collective unconscious. As a result, archetypes are primal symbols that evoke powerful reactions across cultures and generations. The Hero, the Shadow, the Great Mother, the Wise Old Man, these figures materialize in our myths, manifest in our dreams, and take form in our art—shape-shifting the human narrative by influencing our perception of self, other, and the world.

In the early twenty-first century, we find ourselves at a loss for

easy analogies yet awash in Jungian archetypes. Between 1968, when Brand made his pronouncement about our godlike potential, and today, when that potential is starting to be realized, one way to track the impact of technological acceleration on our psychology—call it the failure of analogy—is to track the rise of *archetypal media*, adding up the gods, goddesses, superheroes, and supervillains populating our screens to see what those numbers reveal about the modern mind.

If you begin in 1968, the next decade saw one notable cinematic release, *Superman*, a.k.a. the Hero, while television produced *Wonder Woman*, a.k.a. the Heroine. The 1980s saw the first step-function in amplification, with ten superhero films, including *Batman* and *Superman II*, and six TV shows, ranging from *Transformers* to *The Incredible Hulk*. Things doubled again in the 1990s, with twenty major cinematic releases and nearly that many TV shows. But between 2000 and 2010, the numbers triple: sixty films and thirty television series.

Jung would argue that this surge in archetypal media is an unconscious response to the psychic destabilization brought on by the radical acceleration in human potential. With each technological leap forward, there's a parallel need for new symbols and myths to anchor our understanding of our growing power. Archetypes provide narrative coherence and moral clarity. When humans face destabilizing change, archetypal figures emerge to help us integrate new abilities, often reflecting society's greatest hopes and fears. As Spider-Man says: "With great power comes great responsibility."

We live in a world of abundant archetypes because we live in a world of abundant miracles. They're the psychological byproduct of technological acceleration and its startling ability to help us solve intractable problems. In fact, if you chart major techno-sociocultural trends and their impact on the rate of change in the world, you find the pace of change accelerating 233 percent faster than it did in 2010. The results: Humans have superpowers.

Put differently, if we measure exponential progress against the Old

Testament's ten miracle categories, the results are—well, see for yourself.

But be prepared. This is a very long list.

Creation Miracles

- Synthetic biology and genetic engineering create new forms of life or modify existing ones.
- 3D printing brings matter into being layer by layer, building something from nothing.
- Generative AI creates virtual worlds populated by self-directed agents that are capable of forming new economies, religions, and societies.

Provision Miracles

- Vertical farming, desalination, and lab-grown meat provide a bounty of food and water with minimal land, waste, or suffering.
- Genetically modified crops and artificial photosynthesis turn sunlight into food and fuel.
- Solar-powered water purifiers, ovens, and aquaponic systems provide clean water, cooking, and sustainable protein even in deserts or disaster zones.
- Drones deliver meals and medicine where supply chains fail.

Nature Miracles

- Geoengineering, cloud seeding, and precision irrigation lets us steer weather and prevent drought.
- Disaster-prediction networks now forecast hurricanes, earthquakes,

and tornadoes with astonishing accuracy, while lightning-control lasers and wildfire drones prevent small sparks from becoming infernos.

- Carbon capture reduces atmospheric CO_2, while reforestation and anti-desertification efforts—tree-planting drones, high-efficiency crops, and water-saving irrigation—are feeding people and turning barren land green again.
- Aquatic robots clean pollutants from rivers and oceans, restoring ecosystems.

Healing Miracles

- Gene therapy and CRISPR cure disease at a genetic level.
- Stem cell therapy and tissue engineering repair what disease and injury destroy.
- Epigenetic reprogramming can reverse ocular degeneration in animals, and soon will be able to do the same in humans.
- Telemedicine enables the remote diagnosis and treatment of disease.
- Advanced diagnostics, such as imaging, genomics, and metabolic profiling, allow physicians to detect and intervene in seven out of the top ten causes of death, often before symptoms appear.
- AI-powered drug discovery accelerates cures for complex diseases, such as cancer and rare genetic disorders.

Resurrection Miracles

- Cryonics preserves the dead in the hope of future revival.
- Organogenesis uses stem cells to create new organs.
- Organ profusion and preservation technology allow donated organs to survive for days instead of hours, saving lives in the process.
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and drone-delivered defibrillators can revive people in cardiac arrest, a modern form of resurrection.

Judgment Miracles

- AI-powered surveillance—facial recognition, drones, and predictive policing—monitors, forecasts, and prevents crime.
- Autonomous weapons and battlefield AIs identify and engage threats at machine speed.
- In the courts, virtual reality reconstructions, DNA forensics, and sentencing algorithms analyze evidence and shape judgment.
- Behavioral analytics and lie-detection systems expose deception and flag danger before it erupts.

Protection Miracles

- Biometric security systems guard people and property.
- Body armor, exoskeletons, and autonomous vehicles enhance safety and prevent injury.
- Wearables and rescue drones summon help and save lives in emergencies.
- Air-defense networks and engineered barriers—tsunami walls, surge gates, wildfire breaks—shield populations from large-scale threats.
- Cybersecurity protects digital infrastructure and data integrity.

Prophetic Miracles

- Predictive analytics and machine learning forecast trends in business, health, and behavior.
- Weather, disaster, and disease models predict hurricanes, earthquakes, and epidemics.
- Economic forecasting tools reveal market shifts and guide global strategy.
- Augmented-reality systems anticipate complications in surgery and treatment.

Communication Miracles

- Telecommunications and the internet enable instant global communication.
- Brain-computer interfaces facilitate thought-based communication and brain-to-machine communications—that is, the miracle of telepathy.
- Translation apps and AI models dissolve linguistic barriers between cultures.
- Holographic technology enables in-person, 3D communication.
- VR headsets and haptic feedback teleport users into shared virtual environments.

Victory-in-Battle Miracles

- Cyber warfare cripples enemy infrastructure without traditional combat.
- Directed-energy weapons deliver laser and microwave strikes with pinpoint accuracy.
- Smart munitions and autonomous systems enhance targeting precision and minimize collateral damage.
- AI-driven command networks process data at lightning speed, amplifying tactical advantage.

A Moment of Not-Zen (a.k.a., the Age of Holy Sh*t)

If that catalogue of wonders feels overwhelming, pause and look around. You may not think of yourself as a miracle worker, but by 9:00 most mornings, you've already reenacted half of the Old Testament.

You summoned knowledge from the ether via Google. Moved money with the wave of your hand to buy coffee through Apple Pay. Spoke to a friend across the globe with the touch of a finger thanks

to FaceTime. Conjured fire on a smart stove and parted the clouds on a weather app. Maybe you even raised the dead, otherwise known as deepfake avatars.

But that's the issue: We don't call these *miracles*. We call them *Tuesday*.

It's a problem of perspective, and it's nothing new. Futurist Ray Kurzweil used to joke that we don't notice progress in AI because we keep renaming it—like the ATM. Technology has caught up to mythology, but we've misplaced the experience of awe.

Yet as we'll see, awe, and its darker counterpart, holy terror, are essential tools for the journey.

And make no mistake, this is your journey.

You're the one with godlike powers at your fingertips—and you thought getting the kids to school on time was a lot of responsibility.

So consider yourself warned. Because things are about to get weirder.

Exponentially weirder.

The Downside of Up

So, what's exponentially weirder than the miracles that fill our lives? The fact that we barely notice. Humans have superpowers, yet you wouldn't know it from reading the headlines.

Instead, we find dystopia in every direction.

Despite the fact that 78 percent of all companies use AI—and have seen significant gains as a result—the headlines tell a different story. They focus on the threat the technology brings to our economy, our political stability, our very survival. There are similar fears that video games will rot our minds, text messages will destroy our language skills, and robots will steal our jobs. This constant drumbeat of dread has reshaped our collective mood. Mental health disorders are at record highs. According to the World Health Organization, depression alone costs business more than a trillion dollars a year.

Even after five pages of human-created biblical miracles, we don't feel blessed. We feel besieged. Most of us still believe that today is worse than yesterday, and best not think of tomorrow. Spend time watching the Crisis News Network known as CNN, and the message is clear: The end is nigh. When the world changes faster than we can comprehend, we reach for analogies. When our analogies fail, we reach for archetypes. When archetypes fail, we imagine the apocalypse.

When fear becomes our default setting, it colonizes our imagination. Once again, we can see this trend in movies and television. At the same time that archetypal media is on the rise, we've witnessed a parallel explosion in apocalyptic fare. Sure, the genre has always lurked in the background, but the modern wave that began with *The Matrix* and *28 Days Later* has become a deluge*: The Road, Jericho, The 100, World War Z, The Walking Dead*, and all its zombified stepchildren.

The root of this problem runs deeper than failed analogies, exhausted archetypes, or our obsession with the apocalypse. It's not just cultural; it's cortical. The trouble begins in the gray matter inside our skulls. The brain is a prediction engine—literally. In every moment, it's trying to predict what is about to happen and how much energy will be required to meet the challenge. Efficiency is its goal. We evolved in an environment where resources were in short supply. As a result, what the brain wants most is precision prediction, so not a single hard-won calorie goes to waste.

When you approach a door, your brain asks a series of questions: How heavy is the door? Is it open or locked? How much force is required to open it? Is anyone on the other side? When the world matches our predictions, we don't notice. We just walk through the door and keep going. But when our prediction is misaligned with our reality—we think the door is open, but instead find it locked—the brain's alerting network floods stress hormones into our bodies while the voices in our heads shout: "Warning! Door is locked!"

Like AI, the brain uses pattern recognition to make predictions. The goal is to match information from our present to experiences from our past in order to predict the future. But very little in our past