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Are You Smarter than a Computer?

By: Richard Chu

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Nowadays, it's hard to imagine life without computers. Aside from letting us play cool games on our desktops, laptops, and game consoles like the PS2, computers are in everything, from cars to microwaves, even lawnmowers and toothbrushes! They seem to be able to do almost anything, and do many things that people can't do. Does that make them smarter than people?

In one sense, they are smarter. Their memory can hold a huge amount of information, which they can recall in a split second. When it comes to math, a computer will beat a human virtually every time. Computers have become powerful enough to not only recognize human speech and writing, but even beat the best chess player in the world!

As amazing as computers may be, however, computers do have their limitations, especially when you compare it to our 'human computer'--the brain. Our brains are the most powerful computers in the world. Except in particular circumstances, we are born with the potential to not only do everything computers can do, but do much, much more. For example, while a computer can reproduce anything it records, people can create and *re-create* things from what we see, hear and feel. Einstein is a perfect example of this. He was a person who saw the world in a particular way, and 're-created' it with his Theory of Relativity, and totally changed the way people understood the universe.

This ability to 're-create' is not limited to special people. Each of us has this ability because each of us has own unique perspective on the world and our own unique mission in life. Unlike a computer, which has to be programmed with every tiny piece of information in order to work properly, we are able to develop their own understanding of the world from the day we are born. This is because we are born curious about what we see and hear. And the things we learn in school help us to reach our potential much faster, by learning about other people's ideas, accomplishments and mistakes. And as President Ikeda noted in his Dialogue of Hope, "The more you use your brain, the stronger and more complex the communication network of your brain becomes. As a result, your responses become faster and more readily adaptable to changing situations."

What is the most important aspect about our minds is the fact that, unlike computers, we are aware of our own existence. We know we exist and that we are alive. This awareness gives us so much more freedom because, unlike computers, we don't just follow commands and execute programs. We use our intelligence, our creativity, and our imagination to create value in our lives. It's because of this consciousness that people, from painters to philosophers, performers to pilots, are able to make a contribution to our constantly changing world.

The most important thing for us, whether we are teenagers, twenty-somethings, or over-the-hill, is to try our absolute best to fully utilize the potential in ourselves and to never give up and, as President Ikeda says, get "into the habit of trying your best, the habit of always putting in one-hundred percent—be it in our studies or whatever. If you succeed in that, you will find

yourself growing stronger and developing your ability, and you will eventually come to discover your mission in life.”