

The Veil of Control: Finding Purpose in the Age of AI

Dean Ellsworth. First published on X on 22 January 2026; revised 11 October 2026.

For me, my current everyday job is a veil of control, a "mental prison," if you will. For some people, work is their passion, and that's real too. A good transition has to handle both. Amid all the doom and gloom about AI right now, we must ask: How will humanity transition with AI into a world of abundance and, more importantly, freedom for the masses?

Stories of communities fighting to block new AI data centers are everywhere now. People point to power bills, water, and noise, and I think underneath a lot of it is a deeper fear: what AI will do to their jobs. We live in a system we were born into, not by choice, but by probability. Our minds have been molded by the concepts of "hard work" and "perseverance." For many of us, unless we are among the select few who "beat the odds" by turning a startup into a profitable empire, it can feel like feeding off the bottom of the fish tank, searching for scraps. We sacrifice precious hours of our lives to claw through an endless cycle of promised prosperity, only to realize we have been running toward a goal that never arrives, because the prize is dangling from a fishing pole at the end of the treadmill.

We have been conditioned to believe our sense of existence should be based on titles bestowed by a "job", to live the societal dream of paying

rent and putting food on the table. This is the everyday "brain rot" of repetitive responsibilities that come with an "honest" living. Eventually, this spans into years of complaining, stress, and anxiety, knowing the rug could be pulled out from under your feet at any moment.

Control is an inherent trait of human nature; we crave it for safety and peace of mind. Ironically, it is this very need for control that locks so many lives into a narrow existence. It is like looking at a roller coaster and saying, "I'm not going to like this; I'm going to be terrified," only to finish the ride with an enthusiastic smile, eager to board again. People become so complacent in their habits that any change is viewed as a threat.

Let's examine the idea of purpose. Why is work our purpose? To sustain the status quo? To survive? For me, this system has felt like paid slavery. Does the fact that you must work to survive justify labor as a "purpose"? Does a janitor's existence rely solely on scrubbing toilets? Societal conditioning would have you believe so, but humans do not exist for the sake of labor. We exist for shared consciousness and experience.

Sorting people into roles by traditional measures of intelligence keeps those labeled "slow" stuck and puts those labeled "smart" under constant pressure. We are creatures of curiosity, exploration, and creativity. Jobs are not our purpose; too often, they have become a mechanism of control. We need to help people unlearn that. There is purpose beyond work, and when you focus your energy elsewhere, you will find true mental and physical freedom.

In a society where labor is performed by AI and machines, you will finally be free to use your time for what truly matters: family, exploration, and love. You will move from "survival mode" to actually living.

The obvious objection is a fair one: "If I don't have a job, I can't afford to live." In today's system, that's true, which is exactly why the transition has to solve it first. I believe we're heading toward a future where money matters far less and the old system no longer holds the threads of society together. If we don't plan for that future, we risk serious unrest.

Transitional plans must be drawn up. Education on our future in the wake of AI is vital. People need to understand how to undergo an "ego death", to lose the identity their job gave them, and embrace the creative endeavors that await when time constraints are removed.

If you receive two weeks off and sit at home not knowing what to do with yourself, you are not ready for this transition. The time is now to find new hobbies, passions, and experiences that breathe life into your existence. We must reach a consensus on a future dependent not on roles or titles, but on hope and love.

The Transition Roadmap: From Labor to Liberty

1. The Economic Bridge (The Safety Net)

Before people can let go of their "job identity," they must feel safe. This stage is about decoupling survival from a paycheck. I will not detail the technicalities of how this transition will unfold here, as many brilliant minds are working on solutions. While no one person has all the answers, I point to David Shapiro as a leader in this space. He has spent significant time examining this dilemma and proposing frameworks for its execution.

2. The Psychological Transition (The Ego Death)

This is the "Mental Health" pillar. People have been "caged" for so long they fear the open door.

- Transition Hubs: Community hubs (formerly office buildings) dedicated to helping people move beyond the "work-to-live" mindset.
- Identity Reconstruction Workshops: Guided programs helping individuals find value in their character, creativity, and community contributions rather than their titles.
- The "Gap Year" for All: Offering everyone an optional period of rest to flush out "brain rot" and rediscover latent curiosities.

3. The New Education System (Curiosity over Compliance)

We currently go to school to become "good employees." We need to go to school to become "good humans."

- Philosophy & Ethics Training: Making these core subjects so people can navigate a world where they have the power to choose their own meaning.
- Mastery-Based Learning: Education focused on art, music, science, and exploration for the sake of joy, not for a degree or a salary.
- The "Play" Initiative: Reintroducing the concept of play into adulthood

as a valid and productive use of time.

4. Community and Connection

In the absence of a "workplace," we need new ways to bond so people don't fall into isolation.

- Local Contribution Networks: A system where people trade passions (e.g., teaching a language, gardening, storytelling) to build social capital.
- Shared Consciousness Projects: Large-scale, global goals (like space exploration or environmental restoration) that humans can volunteer for to feel a sense of grand purpose.

Final Thoughts

The transition will be incredibly difficult for some to see through and prevail. For generations, we have defined our "worth" by our "output." To break that link is to undergo a collective spiritual crisis. However, our freedom is waiting on the other side. This is an exchange: we trade the grueling struggle for survival for a world of abundance, love, and true free will.

We are moving from an era of Human Doing to an era of Human Being. In this new dawn, your value isn't measured by the sweat on your brow or the digits in a bank account, but by the depth of your connections and the curiosity of your soul. The veil is lifting; it is time to decide who you are when you no longer have to work to exist.

Written by Dean Ellsworth. The original draft and core ideas are my own. Grok proofread the original and contributed ideas to the transition roadmap. Revised in October 2026 with editing help from Claude.