

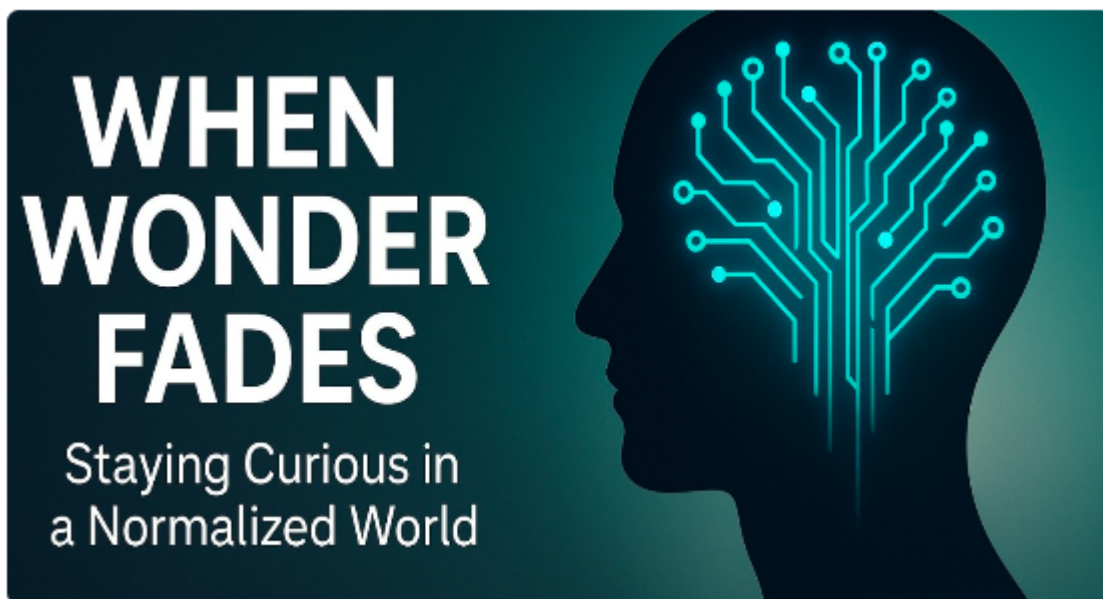
When Wonder Fades: Staying Curious in a Normalized World

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Did You Remember Your Phone?

You walk out the door and feel a strange emptiness, like a phantom limb. You pat your pockets. Your stomach sinks. You forgot your phone.

Why does that feel like forgetting a part of yourself?

We live in a world where the extraordinary has become so ordinary, it hardly registers anymore. A supercomputer in your pocket? Normal. Video calls across the world? Whatever. Streaming any movie ever made on a whim? Standard.

Technological revolutions used to be front-page news for weeks, triggering debate, inspiration, fear. Now, they trend for a few hours and vanish into the algorithm.

And that's the problem. When change becomes invisible, it also becomes unchallenged. We adapt, we absorb, we normalize, and we stop asking questions. We stop being curious.

But if we want to thrive in an age of accelerating innovation, especially one driven by artificial intelligence, we must resist that apathy. We must recover our sense of awe. We must stay curious.

"We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are." — Anaïs Nin

The Normalization of the Extraordinary

The speed at which we normalize groundbreaking innovations is breathtaking.

Once upon a time, if you wanted to learn something, you had to go to the library. Walk there. Find the right shelf. Skim the index. Hope the book wasn't already checked out. Now, you whisper a question into the air, and your smart assistant answers before you blink. Do you even remember the last time you used a card catalog?

Remember payphones? Beepers? Calling collect? If you were born in the '80s or '90s, you might. Now try finding a payphone. Try explaining a beeper to your kids without sounding like a time traveler.

Once, we only saw friends and family at reunions, holidays, or funerals. Now we "like" their vacation photos in real time. We comment on their breakfast. We know who just got a new puppy, or divorced, or changed jobs—all without speaking a word. Social media didn't just connect us; it rewired the way we relate to people.

We used to walk through video stores on Friday nights, browsing titles, reading backs of boxes. Blockbuster nights were events. Now? Scroll, click, play. The entire cinematic history of humanity is on demand, and we treat it like background noise.

Remember waiting for TV shows? Marking the calendar for new episodes? Using the TV Guide to plan your week? Now we binge entire seasons in a weekend. We've gone from self-contained sitcoms to sprawling epics, multi-season cinematic universes that demand attention and immersion. Streaming didn't just change how

we watch stories. It changed how we tell them.

These shifts didn't just bring convenience. They reshaped us. Our habits, our expectations, our very sense of time.

And yet, most of us barely noticed.

"Technology is anything that wasn't around when you were born." — Alan Kay

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