

Embracing intuition for the future with John Sanei

By  Emily Stander

25 Oct 2021

As the start to the second day of Loeries Creative Week 2021, John Sanei - trend specialist and author - hosted a masterclass speaking to building a purposeful future.



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The first thing we need to realise, according to Sanei, is that there are many factors to consider before understanding what 'purpose' means in the modern world. Beyond this understanding, there are processes we need to recognise as intrinsically part of us - and some we need to throw to the wolves to move forward.

Transformation

Sanei believes that we are addicted to certainty. However, there have been some events in recent years which have ripped the ability to be certain away from us - namely, the biggest event, the Covid-19 pandemic. Our brains are drawn to predictability, and when predictions become more difficult to make, we find ourselves in an uncomfortable situation where we are forced to change. Even though we might not have been happy with the normal we understood before the pandemic, we are still drawn to it - humans are reluctant to truly accept change.

This is where the process of transformation comes in, and there are three stages Sanei highlights:

- **Sadness:** The understanding that there is an identity you need to leave behind, which can be difficult to accept.
- **Strange:** Where do you go now that you know you need to leave this identity behind?
- **Adventure:** Finding your feet, accepting the change, and marching forward with the new.

Sanei believes that at this time in our lives, we are still in the sadness and strange stages of transformation, but the adventure is yet to come.

The cycles

Throughout history, change cycles have been identified in terms of what we need to prioritise to be successful. The first cycle looks at three distinctive revolutions which have characterised what is important for success:

- **Agriculture:** This was focused on the strength of the body - how long can you physically put in the work to make sure you produce what you need?
- **Industrial:** With the introduction of machines to do what we need, intelligence became the primary aspect of success during this time.
- **Quantum:** We are now seeing the introduction of Artificial Intelligence that the way we make decisions needs to change - and rely more on intuition than intelligence and left-brained thinking.

The second cycle Sanei referenced from *The Fourth Turning* by Neil Howe and William Strauss. The book focuses on the cycles of history, and how we have experienced the same cycles over again every 100 years.

- **The high:** The most recent high we experienced was in 1946, just after World War II. Things were upbeat, and a peaceful living strategy was adopted.
- **The awakening:** The most recent awakening we experienced was in 1964, which marked a spiritual upheaval and introduction of new communication processes with computers.
- **The unravelling:** This cycle started in 1984, and marked the beginning of unravelling ideas of communism in places like China, as well as the idea of 'profit over everything'. The tragedy of 9/11 also sparked the start of conspiracy theories.
- **The crisis:** This cycle started in 2008 with the financial crisis. The mark of secular upheaval, this cycle is still ongoing and is expected to continue until 2028.

Crisis of meaning

The main effect that we find with these cycles is that at many points people experience a crisis of meaning.

Today, we can particularly see this in how we try to find a purpose in which is becoming an increasingly AI-driven world. Where does our purpose lie? The answer is not necessarily simple, but can be put into a few words; we need to adopt an economy of learning.

With increasing changes in society, we find ourselves at an impasse: do we embrace the past, which seems to be the easy choice, or look towards the future, no matter how unsure we are about it?

Purpose in a changing world

Intuition begs meaning. We understand that with the penetration of AI, many jobs are once again becoming obsolete, as some did during the Industrial Revolution. This time, again, we need to figure out what our purpose in the new world will be.

Sanei believes that intuition and the adoption of curiosity is the only way we will be able to move forward effectively. The purpose is not necessarily one tangible thing we can hold, but rather a process of adopting wisdom, curiosity, intuition, and reimagination. Not stagnating means not falling into the trap of being 'resilient', and rather embracing the change to come, being wired for the puzzle, not the solution, to remain relevant.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

Freelancer specialising in games and entertainment | My first loves are writing, music and video games

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