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The Only Trait That Matters in the AI Era

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In 2023, Perplexity was valued at \$150 million. Today, in late 2025, it's a **\$20 billion company** competing with giants like Google, OpenAI, and Meta. At the center of this meteoric rise is Aravind Srinivas, its co-founder and CEO, who believes there's just one trait that makes all the difference in the AI age: **the relentless desire to learn.**

This isn't just theory. It's the foundation behind Perplexity's exponential growth and its bold bet on the future of AI-powered search and personal assistants.

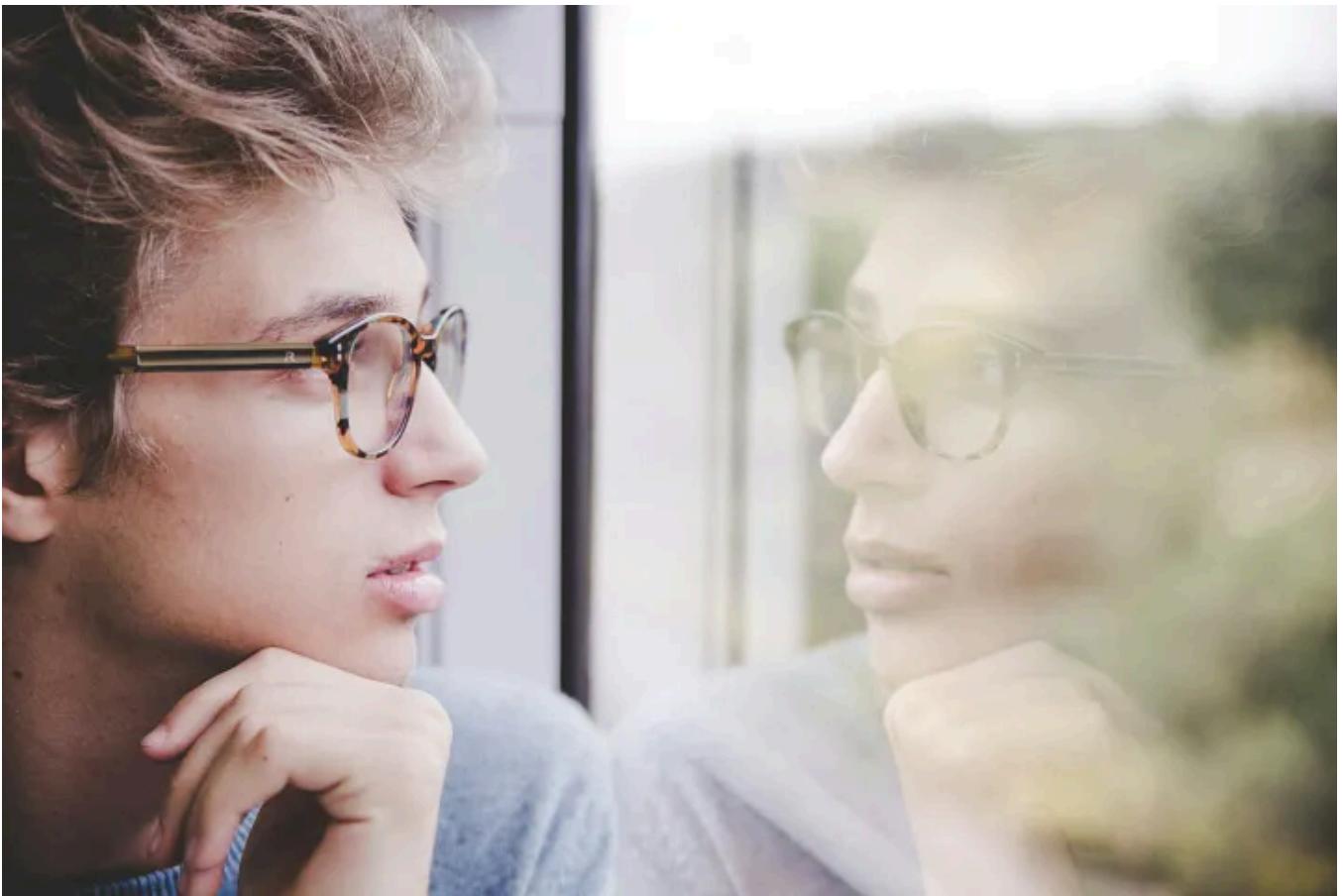


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Relentless: The Spirit of Perplexity

When asked to describe his company's journey in a single word, Aravind doesn't hesitate: **Exponential**.

That exponential curve is fueled by what he calls "relentlessness." The team ships fast, fixes problems daily, and constantly improves the product. Aravind's mantra is simple but powerful:

"If you improve 1% every day, by the end of the year you've improved 3,700%."

This compounding mindset is what allowed a small startup to stand tall against trillion-dollar incumbents.

From Search Engines to AI Agents

Google and Amazon already use AI — but in ways that serve advertisers first. Search results and product rankings are influenced to drive purchases.

Perplexity flipped the script. Its new **AI browser, Comet**, is designed to work *for the user, not the advertiser*.

Imagine an assistant that:

- Skips ads automatically
- Reads reviews across platforms to give you unbiased recommendations
- Summarizes long videos in seconds
- Book meetings, draft emails, or even shop on your behalf

For the first time, AI isn't just in the hands of Big Tech — it's in yours.

What This Means for Businesses

If agents like Comet are filtering ads, how will companies reach customers?

Aravind's answer: **build better products.**

Fake reviews or manipulative ads won't survive long when an AI assistant scans thousands of sources and compares notes. The only winning strategy is to create something worth talking about and let genuine reviews spread.

The future of commerce is simple: users will ask their AI to “find me the best,” and only the best will survive.

The Future of Work

What about jobs? Aravind is clear-eyed: **entry-level roles are disappearing.**

Financial advisors, real estate agents, and analysts who do little more than filter information are being replaced by AI tools that do the same — faster and cheaper. But this doesn't mean opportunity is gone. It just means humans need to **push further up the value chain:**

- Provide access that AI can't (exclusive deals, private markets)
- Deliver human judgment in high-stakes, nuanced situations
- Expand skills beyond the basics that AI can already handle

In Aravind's words: “*Your value-add should expand further than just managing a portfolio. AI is already smarter at that.*”

Should You Still Get a Degree?

Aravind himself earned a PhD at UC Berkeley, but he admits: it wasn't about the research papers. The real value was learning how to **learn deeply, ask the right questions, and persist through complexity.**

In today's world, you don't need a PhD to contribute to AI. But you do need the PhD *mindset* — curiosity, persistence, and the willingness to dig until you understand.

Betting on Yourself

If Aravind were 18 again in America, he wouldn't overthink the market. He'd pick something, go deep, and prove to himself he can get good at it.

Confidence comes from execution. From sticking with a skill for years until you're excellent. From building that inner trust that no matter the challenge — even taking on Google — you can persist.

And that's the only trait that matters.

Key Takeaways

1. **Relentlessness > Talent** — Consistent 1% improvements compound into massive gains.
2. **AI shifts power to the user** — Assistants like Comet will prioritize your interests, not advertisers.
3. **Mediocrity won't survive** — Build something genuinely valuable; AI will cut through the noise.
4. **Jobs are evolving fast** — Entry-level information work is disappearing, but opportunities exist in deeper, harder problems.
5. **Learn how to learn** — Whether through school or self-taught, curiosity and persistence are the real edge.

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