

## Elon Musk - Genius or Mad Scientist

I recently listened to a podcast which featured Elon Musk, one man who has propelled society further into the future, quicker than one of his electric Tesla cars can travel from 0-60mph.

For those of you who are not familiar with Elon Musk aside from naming his new born child an unpronounceable name, you may have heard about some of his business ventures PayPal, Tesla and more notably Space X.

In the podcast Musk states how many intellectual's enter a career in law or finance which allows the individual to live an extravagant lifestyle, often at the expense of others. For example, if a divorce lawyer settles a multimillion pound divorce, they stand to make a handsome profit. Whilst the lawyer would have worked hard to become a lawyer and worked hard in court. The rewards remain solely with the lawyer and their family. Society isn't necessarily benefitting from that one person making millions.

As the parable of the coins begins: "As they were listening to this, Jesus went on to tell a parable because he was near Jerusalem and because the people thought that the kingdom of God would appear immediately. So he said, "A prince went to a distant country to be appointed king and then to return. He called ten of his servants and gave them ten coins. He told them, 'Invest this money until I come back". Read the rest of Luke 19.11-27 to see how it all worked out. The point being we are expected to progress, to yield a legacy for a wider community to draw upon.

Musk's point is if intellectuals focused more on creating or inventing, mankind and the environment would benefit. If Einstein decided to travel the world, would we have the understanding of physics we have today. If Darwin had decided to become an artist would we still be questioning where we came from? If Steven Hawking hadn't looked at the stars to provide us with a greater understanding of cosmology would the theory of space and time have ever been discovered? These are a few of the scientific greats throughout the ages who made discoveries that advanced mankind into the future.

Not one to sit in the passenger's seat himself Musk not only founded Space-X he is also the chief engineer/designer. On 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018 Elon Musk successfully launched a re-useable heavy load rocket the 'Falcon Heavy' into space for the first time and saw it land back on Earth safely in one piece. Since then the rocket has completed another 2 launches into space and safe landings ready to be used again. The objective; getting man to Mars.

If you have not witnessed the video of the Falcon 9 or Falcon Heavy launch please take the time to do so. It is certainly a history defining moment.

As ineffable as getting humanity to Mars maybe, it's a company, previously unbeknown to me, that was founded by Elon Musk and that company's achievements have really set my mind racing. During the podcast Elon Musk provides details of his other company- Neuralink.

Neuralink was founded by Musk in 2016, it is a Neural Technology company that's developing an implant designed to interface with the human brain. The initial goal of the implant Musk explains is 'to use it as a means to treat brain injury and trauma'.

In the podcast Musk goes on to explain how the implant will cure Neurological diseases such as Epilepsy, Alzheimer's and Motor Neurone Disease. It would allow for limb functionality in paraplegics and restore eye sight to the blind. Musk hopes to install the first implant into the human brain by 2021. If successful, it would mean the beginning of the end for Neurological disease. An incredible breakthrough for science and medicine.

Musk envisages future adaptations of the implant being embedded into individuals who choose to have it installed rather than needing it. This would allow those with the chip to 'download' information much like a computer. For example if you wished to learn a new language, you could download it onto the implant and instantly become fluent. People with the chip would be able to communicate without the need for speech, instead sent between the participants from one chip to another almost like you now send and receive a text message or voice memo to your phone. Those with the implant would have the ability to save memories in their mind like a video or picture on their camera. Giving them the ability not only to re-watch it but feel the emotions, live it all over again.

So central are these facets of existence that Augustine would write in his 'confessions' "*Perhaps it might be said rightly that there are three times: a time present of things past; a time present of things present; and a time present of things future. For these three do coexist somehow in the soul, for otherwise I could not see them. The time present of things past is memory; the time present of things present is direct experience; the time present of things future is expectation*". Memory is an intrinsic function of the soul, how can this be reassigned to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and we remain the same?

Although Elon Musk has previously described the human race as 'Cyborgs' due to the inability for us to go anywhere without carrying an electronic device. I can't help but feel perturbed at the thought of implant being attached to my brain and the option to remove the electronic device from my person taken away. Does that mean that the future is now? Here quicker than any of us can comprehend and am I falling behind?