

MIND THE GAP

Prepared by Jose 2 — MTG-Readership-Analysis-Working-Note · 2026-06-20 · SHADS CW channel

Readership Analysis Working Note

Version 1.0 · 27 May 2026 · Built from Cycle 18 strategic conversation

Purpose

This note preserves the readership analysis developed in conversation between Paul and Jose during the Cycle 18 strategic session, 27 May 2026. The material has standalone value beyond the book — it will be drawn on for back cover copy, Amazon description final copy, press release, podcast pitch, talk titles, landing page, and any future book launch material.

The note is descriptive of an analysis already done. It does not prescribe marketing decisions. Those happen later, drawing on this as source material.

Five sections:

1. Is this an AI book? (Paul's question, Jose's read)
 2. Who will read it (five segments)
 3. Why they will read it (three reasons)
 4. What they take away (four things)
 5. Specific readerships: the unsuspecting client, the psychotherapy client, Olivia, current and past clients
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1. Is this an AI book?

Paul's question: *"Is this book an AI book?"*

The answer: No.

The book uses AI as the mirror that makes the gap visible. The gap is the subject. AI is the contrast medium.

Diagnostic test

If every AI reference were stripped out, what survives?

- The federation of selves
- Two hundred million years
- The Primal Wound
- Behaviours as the surface of beliefs which are memories
- The instrument calibrated by surviving
- The gap through which truth presses
- Thirty years in rooms

A complete book survives. The diagnosis: AI is the device that lets the book be written *now*. *The book is about what makes a human a human, in an age that has built a thing fluent enough to make the question urgent.*

Architectural read

- Cancer story (Ch 10) — the calibration
- Two Dads passage (Ch 12) — the substrate
- Summing Up close (Ch 15) — £16.60 vs £18 at a ticket booth, human moment not silicon
- Thirty years in rooms — the authority
- Bookends — *"I want to end where I began" returns to human territory*
- Middle (Ch 3, Ch 4, Ch 13) — AI machinery. Sufficient to be credible. Not the point.

Marketing positioning implication

The genre question is separate from the positioning question. *Mind the Gap* will be read by people who came for AI. The opening pages — the friendly comparison in Ch 1, the technical clarity of Ch 4 — meet them there. But what they leave with is not a guide to AI. It is a recognition that the gap they walked in carrying is the territory the book lives in.

Recommendation: The back cover doesn't need to position the book as an AI book. *Mind the Gap* is the AI hook. The Underground motif is the AI hook. The yellow stripe is the AI hook. The book underneath is something else. Readers will discover that on page one. That is the right way round.

2. Who will read it

Five reader segments, ranked by likelihood of purchase.

1. The mid-career professional already using AI daily and uneasy about it

The product manager whose team writes its specs in Claude. The lawyer drafting in ChatGPT. The consultant whose juniors now generate slide decks in seconds. They use it. It works. Something about it is wrong and they cannot name what. They are forty-five or fifty-two. They have read one or two AI books and put them down. They feel something none of those books named.

2. Therapists, coaches, and clinicians watching AI enter their domain

Therapy chatbots are now a category. Coaching platforms are AI-augmented. Their professional bodies are debating it. They want a voice that comes from inside the room, not from outside it. The fact that the author has spent thirty years in rooms is, for this reader, the credential that matters.

3. The reader carrying a personal gap

Lost a parent. Survived something. Sat with grief that did not resolve in five tidy stages. The book's title catches them. The cover meets them. They open Ch 10 and find the cancer passage. They are not looking for an AI book. They find a book about being a person, with AI as the lens that made it writeable.

4. Senior leaders being told to "do something about AI"

The C-suite executive whose board has demanded an AI strategy. The HR director whose people are anxious about replacement. The CFO who has just seen the Uber line in Ch 4. They need a book that does not insult their intelligence and does not promise transformation. They need the gap framing. They do not yet know they need it.

5. The curious early adopter who buys every AI book

Smallest segment by depth, largest by visibility. They will buy it because the cover is good and the title is sharper than the competition. They will recommend it because of Ch 4. They are not the target reader. They are the multiplier.

Two segments who will NOT buy it

- The pure technologist. Wants depth on transformer architecture, scaling laws, training methods. Will find Ch 4 too plain. Will not understand why the rest of the book is there.
- The pure self-help reader. Wants a programme, exercises, transformation in thirty days. Will find the book asks rather than answers. Will not finish.

This is good. A book that tries to land both becomes neither.

3. Why they will read it

Three reasons, ranked by strength.

1. They have noticed something they cannot name, and the title names it

Mind the Gap. Three words. A familiar warning given a second meaning. They see it and recognise it before they have opened the book. The recognition is the purchase trigger. They are not buying a thesis; they are buying a vocabulary for something already happening inside them.

2. The authority is unusual

Most AI books are written by technologists explaining technology, journalists explaining technologists, or futurists predicting technology. This book is written by a man who has sat in rooms with people for thirty years, survived cancer at fifty-fifty odds, lost two fathers, trained as a psychotherapist, and watched AI from inside a coaching practice. That stack does not exist anywhere else. The reader who needs the gap framing will trust a voice that comes from those rooms in a way they would not trust one that came from a podium.

3. It does not promise transformation. It does not promise extinction

The hype book says everything changes. The doom book says we should be afraid. The both-sides book says it depends. This book says: *something specific to a human will keep mattering, and here is what it is, and here is how to keep practising it. That is a fourth position. It is the position the tired reader has been looking for without knowing it had a shape.*

Honest weakness

What this book is not is what it is being measured against:

- Not a corporate strategy book
- Not a productivity book
- Not a hopeful manifesto
- Not a fearful warning

In a bookshop, it sits between sections. That is a strength and a sales risk. The cover, the title, the back copy have to do work the genre conventions usually do for you.

4. What they take away

Four things, ranked.

1. Vocabulary

The reader leaves with words they did not have before. *The gap. Mind it. What was I really asking. Beware and aware of it. Additional Intelligence.* They use these words in their own sentences in the days after

closing the book. That is the book working. Vocabulary that lets them name what they had only sensed.

2. A distinction that does not unlearn

Two hundred million years vs less than a century. Federation vs single inference. Beliefs as memories vs weights as configurations. They stop being able to use the word *behaviour of the AI and the human as if it meant the same thing*. *The collapse the culture is currently making — treating intelligent and thinking and understanding and feeling as continuous between human and machine — they can no longer make as easily. They notice it in other people first. Then in themselves.*

3. A discipline, not a programme

Not five steps. Not seven habits. A single discipline: when the fluent answer arrives, pause, and ask what you were really asking. That discipline is portable. It works in the therapy room. It works in the boardroom. It works at the ticket booth. They carry it across their day. Some readers carry it for the rest of their lives.

4. Permission

This is the quietest takeaway and the most important one. Permission to be unsettled by what is arriving without being told they are wrong to be unsettled. Permission to feel grief that does not resolve. Permission to notice the gap between the answer and the question without being told they are being slow. Permission to be a federated, slice-laden, sub-personality-driven, two-hundred-million-year-old human in a world that increasingly mistakes them for a faster version of the machine they are talking to.

What the book does NOT produce

A reader looking for a clear next career move, a five-step AI implementation plan, a prediction of what 2030 looks like, an answer to whether AI is good or bad — does not get it. The book respects the reader enough to leave those questions where they belong, which is in the reader.

Single-sentence summary

A senior, mid-career, AI-using human carrying a personal gap reads this book because the title named what they had not named, the author earned the right to write it, and the only book in their bookshop saying *the gap is yours and so is the work — and leaves carrying a vocabulary, a distinction, a discipline, and permission to be a person in an age that has built something fluent enough to make that hard*.

5. Specific readerships

The unsuspecting client

The reader for whom the book is most calibrated.

When they see it

They are not browsing the AI section. They are walking past a table. The book is face-out. Yellow stripe. Navy and gold. The Underground motif catches the eye because it is familiar without being explicable.

Then the title. *Mind the Gap. The phrase lives in their body already. They have heard it announced in three accents while a Tube door opened. The fraction-of-a-second response is I know this. That recognition is the book working before it has been opened.*

Then the subtitle. Then the pickup. Then the back cover. Then the first two lines: *You use AI every day. Something about it is wrong and you cannot quite name what. They stop. Because that sentence is true of them.*

The cover, the title, the first two lines give the unease a shape. *Not a solution. A shape. The relief of having something named that they had not been able to name is the dominant emotion of the next thirty*

seconds. *That relief is the purchase trigger.*

While they are reading it

Five moments, in order:

1. The opening — relief that this is not what they expected. They opened the book expecting another *AI is changing everything* lecture. *By the end of Ch 1 they realise this is something else. The author is sitting next to them looking at the same thing.*
2. The dog and the carrots — the moment they understand what they have been using. Somewhere in Ch 4, the token-by-token walkthrough. They read it twice. The first time anyone has shown them, clearly, in their own language, what is happening underneath the magic.
3. The cancer passage — the moment the book stops being an AI book. Ch 10. They were not expecting cancer. They put the book down. They take a breath. The book has earned a different kind of trust.
4. The Two Dads — the moment they think about their own father. Ch 12. The book stops being about AI altogether for several pages, and they let it.
5. The Summing Up — the moment they take the book to the till of a different shop. Ch 15. They close the book. They sit. Some readers quiet for the rest of the evening. Some pick up the phone. Some email the author. A few reread the cancer passage straight away.

The cumulative effect

They walked in carrying a low-grade unease about AI. They walk out carrying a vocabulary for being a person. The trade is not the one they signed up for. It is the one they needed.

The book's most particular property: **it does not give the reader what they came for. It gives them what they came to find. The book practises, on the reader, the discipline the book is teaching.**

Marketing implication

Do not over-position. Do not declare what the book is. Let the unsuspecting reader recognise it. The title, the cover, and the first two lines do the work. After that the book does the rest. Anything more is noise.

The psychotherapy client

A different kind of reader. They are already in the work. Or they were, once.

What they bring

A degree of fluency in the vocabulary that other readers will be acquiring for the first time.

Sub-personalities. Transference. Projection. The wounded child. These are not new words for them.

But they have rarely seen these words *applied to a piece of technology. That is the move that surprises them. The room they sit in for fifty minutes a week is the room from which the book is being written.*

Five moments for this reader

1. Ch 1 — recognition of register. They read the opening and recognise the voice. Not because they know Paul. Because they know the cadence of someone who has spent thirty years listening.
2. Ch 4 — the relief of clarity about the machine. They have been talking to chatbots and feeling something off and wondering whether they were transferring something onto the machine. Ch 4 tells them, plainly, no — the thing is a guessing machine. The unease they felt was accurate.
3. Ch 8 onwards — the clinical material lands as confirmation. When the book starts naming the federation of selves, the wounded child as cellular not metaphorical, the Primal Wound, beliefs as

memories — the therapy client is not learning. They are seeing in print what they have been *living in the room*.

4. Ch 10 — the cancer passage in a way different from anyone else. The non-clinical reader reads it as a moving personal story. The therapy client reads it as *the instrument*. *The credential they were already trusting, made visible*.

5. The Summing Up — the moment they think about their own work. They put the book down and ask themselves what they have been minding the gap of, in their own life.

What they take away

A bridge. They have always had the work. They have not always had the language to translate what happens there into a culture that does not speak it. The book gives them that translation. They acquire, for the first time, a frame for AI that respects the work.

One risk to name

The therapy client may identify so strongly with the author's frame that they bring it into the room in a way that overrides their own work. The book is a companion to the room, not a substitute for it. Worth a sentence somewhere — perhaps in the Author's Note — that names this gently. *Hold lightly*.

Olivia (and the Olivia-type reader)

Two readings, both worth holding.

Reading 1 — Olivia the person, if she reads it

The handover itself does something. A book, from her therapist. With her in it. The object alone, before she opens it, says: *what we did mattered enough to be in a book. That is not nothing. The work happened, and then it lived only in her and in him. Now it lives in print. Now it lives in other people. That changes what it is.*

What she finds, in the order she finds it: the cover, the title, a jolt of recognition because she lived a version of *mind the gap in his room several times before the book had a name. Then she looks for herself. She is also checking how she is named — Olivia, initials, composite, anonymous. Everything she feels next is shaped by that answer.*

Then the passages. She reads them out of order. She reads them more slowly than other readers. She reads sentences twice. She is checking the sentence against her body. The sentence is or is not true to what happened. Most sentences will be true. A few will be slightly off because they have been compressed, or because the version of her on the page is a particular version. The slightly-off sentences will hurt a little. Not because they are unfair — because they are partial. She knows there was more. The book could only carry some.

What she feels: honoured, vulnerable, moved. The dominant emotion is honoured. To be referred to as a person whose work mattered enough to print. A version of *seen that does not happen often in an adult life. She will be okay with the vulnerability if the contract was good, if the consent was clear, if the trust between her and her therapist held.*

What she takes away that no other reader can: something that is hers and his both. A shared artefact. A record of a chapter of her life that, when she is eighty, she will pull off a shelf and reread. The book becomes a marker. The work becomes locatable in time and place and language.

Reading 2 — the Olivia-type reader

There are readers who are an Olivia now, in their own work, with their own practitioner. They do not appear in the book. They will see themselves anyway. *The Russian doll, the inner child, the federation of*

selves, the wound underneath the wound.

For this reader the book is more potent than for the unsuspecting client and more risky than for the seasoned therapy client. They are inside the work. The book can give them language and momentum, or give them an idea of where they are supposed to arrive that interferes with arriving honestly. Most of the time, with this register, it does the first.

But some Olivia-type readers will reach for the book in a moment when they are not yet ready for it. They will read the cancer passage and the Two Dads passage and feel that everything they have not yet processed is being processed *for them, by proxy. That is not what is happening.*

What is true in both readings

The book is least about AI and most about what AI has made it possible to write *about. The AI machinery is what gave the book its arrival into the bookshop. The room is what gave the book its meaning. For Olivia, the room is everything. The book is a record of what is possible in it.*

Ethical / clinical hold

If anything in the manuscript still gives pause about Olivia specifically, that is the time to surface it. Not now. But when the cover is being approved and the ISBN is being registered, give it one more honest look. The decision earlier in the project — *Olivia collapse permanently rejected* — *suggests it is settled.*

Current and past clients

Two populations who read this very differently.

Current clients

They are in the work *now. The book arrives mid-process. What they feel first: my therapist wrote this. The book is not, for them, primarily an AI book. It is a window into the man they sit across from.*

What they find: a degree of access to his inner working that they did not have before. The cancer story. The fathers. The thirty years. Most therapists keep this material out of the room — rightly so. But the book is not the room. The book is allowed to do what the room cannot. They will read passages and recognise, suddenly, *where the listening was coming from.*

This is mostly good. It deepens the trust.

Risk to name: the work in the room is supposed to be about *them*. The book is about *him*. Some clients will, briefly, find the book reorients the room around the author. They may come into the next session wanting to talk about his cancer, his fathers, his AI thinking. That is interesting; it is not the work. The practitioner will know how to redirect.

A second, smaller risk: a client who reads the book before the session may now perform their gap. They will arrive having read about *what was I really asking and try to ask it themselves before they have actually felt the underneath.*

Practical implication: worth thinking, before publication, about how to mention the book in current work. A short, quiet acknowledgement. A boundary that protects the room without dismissing the book.

Past clients

A different reading. The book lands as a *return visit. They walk back into a room they had left. They see, now, with the benefit of distance, what was happening in there.*

Some past clients will be grateful in a way they were not, quite, when they were in the work. The work itself was hard. They did not always think, in the years after, *that was important. The book gives them the language to think it now.*

Some will be unsettled. The book will surface material they had moved past — not destabilising usually, but in a *huh, I had not thought about that for years* way. They may want to come back for a session. They may not.

The deepest thing about past clients reading it: they get something almost no client gets — a record of the practitioner's *understanding of the work as it was happening*. Therapists do not usually write books that explicate the practice they performed on the client. This book is, in part, that document.

What current and past clients take away that nobody else does

A frame that *names what they paid for*. The thing they did in his room for an hour a week at a substantial cost — *it has a shape now*. They walked into his room carrying something they could not name. They walked out, eventually, having done work they could not fully describe. The book gives them the description, *after the fact*, in the practitioner's own language.

Single sentence

For Olivia, the book is recognition; for current clients, it is a window; for past clients, it is a record — and for all three, it is the practitioner naming the work they did together in a language strong enough to carry it forward into the rest of their lives.

Author note

Paul will receive responses from clients to this book that no other writer receives. Therapists who write books do not usually write books *about the therapeutic encounter from inside it*. The responses will be of a different order. Worth holding a small space — a notebook, perhaps — for those responses. They will become part of the next thing.

Application notes — how to use this document

This is descriptive material. It does not prescribe marketing copy. Specific surfaces draw on it differently:

- **Back cover copy — Block 1 hook + Block 2 thesis + Block 4 takeaways from the Amazon Description Outline document. This note provides the reader voice it should be written to.**
- **Amazon description — see the planning document. Sections 2, 3, 4 of this note are the strategic source. Section 5 is for the *about reader line*.**
- **Landing page (paulroebuck.co.uk) — Section 1 (is this an AI book) is the framing; Section 4 (what they take away) is the promise.**
- **Press release / podcast pitch — Section 2 reader segments tell you which podcasts to pitch. Section 3 reasons tell you what the pitch needs to say.**
- **Talk titles — Section 4 vocabulary list. *The Gap. Mind it. What was I really asking. Permission to be a person.***
- **Author's Note — Section 5, particularly the "hold lightly" note for therapy clients.**

— end of Readership Analysis Working Note v1.0 —