



Dear {{ contact.FIRSTNAME }} }

Welcome to the fortieth instalment of the serialisation of my upcoming book **“The Futures Effect - Change Your Story, Change Y’our Future!”** - the second volume in the **“Futurize Yourself”** series - that is scheduled for publication on Wednesday, 8 February 2023.

Just like in the previous two weeks, I’m again very grateful to have received another great review of the complete book this week. This time by Alireza Hejazi, Ph.D., a Leadership and Futures Studies analyst and author of a.o. *Responsible Foresight* and *Becoming A Professional Futurist*.

This book is all about inspiring you to think constructively about your future. By providing a straightforward and useful framework based on unwavering principles, it fosters the development of a guiding narrative for the future, for one’s life.

By using that framework, we can define and design a preferred scenario of the future that is better than one left up to chance. Everyone can easily follow the steps suggested by the book to progress, live a meaningful life, and assure a “GREAT” future in this fast-changing and challenging world. It teaches us how to analyse, develop, and pursue our preferred plans using language that is simple to read and understand.

The clever use of “Y’our” rather than “Your” by the author serves to remind us that our choices, decisions, and actions influence more than just our own lives. We must thus construct our future based on that awareness to be responsible people who care about the future.

For readers at all educational levels who want to live a purposeful life in our volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, this book is highly helpful.

Thank you, Alireza.

Now, without further ado, here is the eleventh episode of Chapter Four: **“Being a pragmatic futurist”**.

Happy reading.

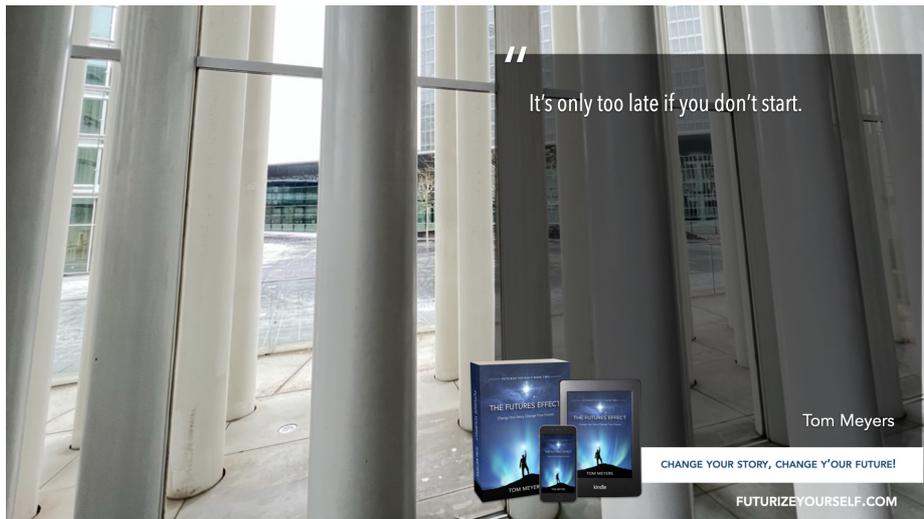
Tom

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PREVIOUS EPISODES

CH4.11 Being a pragmatic futurist



The future is unpredictable and will be what it will be. However, as I've been saying throughout this book and the previous one, that doesn't mean we can't anticipate the future or create scenarios of the future and work towards making these scenarios into an ongoing reality. A process that is not predicting the future but shaping the future so that it can shape you.

When I started to futurize myself, I had no idea that I was doing it. It just felt right, and when I started to see how my life changed for the better, I kept doing it. I never questioned it until others asked me about my story. Only when telling my story did I start to see how everything I had done and become had started with giving shape to my future. You could say that by giving shape to my future, my future had shaped me.

I also realised, as a result of talking to others, including futurists, that the future had never been something abstract but was, in fact, very concrete. Created into being through my decisions, choices and actions, the future became part of my present. Again, I wasn't aware of this at first, but it was working for me. I never questioned whether others were doing the same. I stopped comparing myself with others when I stopped living the dreams of others.

Now I recognise that what I have been doing all these years is putting into practice the theories and methods that professional futurists use to help organisations prepare for the future. The reason why organisations think about the future is to stay relevant and succeed in this fast-changing world. They know that if they keep doing what they've been doing all

along, or doing it in the same way it has always been done, it will eventually lead to failure.

We human beings are each a living “organisation” of trillions of cells. Just like the organisations we have created, we live with and for others, compete with others and need others to survive. We live in that same fast-changing world in which we also want to be relevant and succeed. So, just like organisations, we need to anticipate probable, possible, plausible or preferable scenarios of the future, and then take action in order to prepare ourselves ahead of change. We – and that means each and every one of us, including you – need to think about y’our role in the future and prepare y’ourself for when the future becomes the present. Doing this will save a lot of stress and harm to your own health and wellbeing and that of the people around you.

What the future do you want? Here I am again, I know. I think you want to have a GREAT future. You want it to be good, resilient, evolvable, actionable and transcendent. So you can feel good, adaptable, flourish in the flow of evolution, and thrive in this fast-changing world and, through doing so, make the world a better place for yourself and future generations.

Yes, you can do this – because, between our ears, we humans have all that is needed to futurize ourselves. We have all it takes to think of the many scenarios of the future including possible, plausible, probable, preferable and projected futures.

When I first started futurizing myself and imagined my GREAT future, I didn’t know what a wondrous, life-changing experience would result. Neither did I know about the theories and methods that can be used to think about the future, nor about the different scenarios of the future. All I wanted was to feel content, fulfilled and healthy. I wanted a good life and a sense that I was evolving somehow, growing, getting smarter and more complete with time, and being good at something. In short, I wanted to flourish and thrive, and I imagined a future where I was living in my element. So, when I was asked to imagine an ideal day in 10 years’ time, I knew in my heart of hearts that it had to fill all the aforementioned boxes.

Designing my life on purpose was my answer. As I now look at my answer, I also realise that the future I envisaged included all the different (possible, plausible, probable, preferable and projected) future scenarios in one. Maybe one could say that, whether intuitively or by chance, I had created a holistic personal futures scenario.

Was it possible, plausible, or even probable that I could become a therapist who had developed his own approach and written a book about it and was asked around the world to give presentations and workshops? Yes, as I had not only found within me the potential of all these traits, but in a way, I had already expressed them – and when I had expressed them, I remembered having felt in my element, content, fulfilled and healthy, even if only for a moment. So when I projected living my potential, I couldn’t imagine feeling anything other than at least the same as I had felt before. That was what I wanted. That was my preferable future, a future I positively hoped for. Today, and for some time now, my holistic future scenario has become my ongoing present.

It all depends on how you look at it. There is always room for improvement, and futurizing yourself is a pragmatic approach to life in a fast-changing and challenging world – not an exact science. For example,

I didn't picture myself sitting here in this exact room, in this exact place with this exact laptop in front of me writing these exact words, but I have what I sought and intended to pursue. Do I feel complete? Completer than I was before, that is for sure. More content, more fulfilled and healthier too.

As I'm also evolving, over the years I have found other traits within that I'm called to develop further. Traits that could only manifest themselves after my initial five had their place and I was ready for them. This is the beauty of it. When you evolve on purpose, you develop and continue developing by discovering other traits that set in motion other discoveries, and so on. You never seem to arrive somewhere – and when you do, you never stay long. It's something I needed to learn and accept. See it as a process that you enjoy moment-to-moment and not at a specific point in time.

I do have to remind myself to enjoy the process now and then. Like most human beings, I am not hard-wired to enjoy the moment. By that, I mean that, from an evolutionary perspective, we are hard-wired to see danger and respond to immediate threats. This makes enjoying the moment possible – but as soon as the moment is gone, we are already thinking of the next challenge or problem. This is one of the reasons why it's so difficult to enjoy the process or the journey, but with practice and repetition, it can be learned. Our brains, unlike the brains of almost every other species, are prepared to treat the future as if it were the present (Gilbert, 2006).

This hard-wiring for immediate threats is also one of the reasons why we are not so good at responding to probable but distant dangers, like global warming. It creeps up on us slowly, in an initially non-threatening way. If I may make the comparison, it is like a back pain that starts with a bit of discomfort, but you dismiss it and hope it will go away. Meanwhile, you get used to the pain and don't do anything about it until a small, insignificant move has you stopped in your tracks and screaming with pain. Patients who come crawling into my practice often tell me that the pain they are experiencing started weeks ago. A pain that went away and then suddenly re-emerged with a vengeance. I think it probably didn't go away, but they got attuned to it, as it wasn't severe enough and thus could be ignored. I've been there, done that, got the T-shirt.

Anyway, where were we? Oh yes: being a pragmatic futurist who enjoys the process of evolving on purpose. I must admit, I count my blessings that I started futurizing myself more than 20 years ago, when life was still relatively simple. There is so much more at stake now. Maybe there always was a lot at stake. But only now do we feel and see it. We have seen with the COVID-19 pandemic how our behaviour matters. We are also experiencing the effects of climate change which are threatening millions of lives, plus we are all seeing how fast new technologies are emerging and influencing our private and working life.

Your life, health and wellbeing are at stake. We are faced with challenges so big that if we don't do anything now, there will only be a future for tardigrades. Yes, those "little water bears" that have survived exposure to outer space and are among the most resilient animals known to man.

Let's not wait before we do something about it. We, and I mean all of us, must think about what the future we want, and treat it as the present. We must think about uniting possible, plausible, probable, preferable and projected futures for the good of mankind. To flourish and thrive, we need

to incorporate futures thinking into all our decisions, choices and actions on purpose.

We all need to think ahead – not only about what we want, but our role in it and which steps we can take to make it happen. Make it happen so that all benefit. This is what futurizing yourself stands for.

We are relatively insignificant in global terms at the individual level. We need to turn our “Me” behaviour into “We” behaviour without losing sight of our individual strengths, role and evolution. Each and every one of us is unique, different, and that is our strength – and, together, we all need to play to our strengths to make the whole better.

As a wellbeing futurist, I share my story because I want to encourage and empower you in the present to make sure that you realise your power to create the future you want to see happen. Your contribution is important so that we can collectively flourish in the flow of evolution and thrive in this fast-changing world.

The job of a futurist is not to say what is going to happen. The job of a futurist is to empower people in the present to create the future they want to see.

(Rushkoff, 2018)

This requires a new mindset where, as author, teacher and documentarian Douglas Rushkoff (2018) says – in a conversation with Luke Robert Mason (Director, Virtual Futures) on “Why Futurists Suck” at Nesta’s FutureFest 2018 – we see the word “future” as a verb, not a noun. The future is not some inevitability at which we arrive – it is something we make. According to Douglas Rushkoff, if we give up on the future as something that we’re making in the present, then we’ve basically given up on free will and given up on humanity itself.

Powerful words. Seeing the future as a verb changes your perspective on life, don’t you think? Futurizing yourself is the action you can take in the present to make the future you want, based on self-defined unwavering principles, into an ongoing reality.

The future is not far away – it is here in the making. Here and now. Not created by chance, but built on every decision and choice you make, all the actions you take or do not take, and the time left for you to make a difference.

Futurizing yourself is taking ownership of your future in the present, but for the good of mankind as a whole.

I know futurizing yourself isn’t a walk in the park. But your life, health and wellbeing depend on it. Playtime has come and gone. Now let’s step up and dedicate some of our time to shaping and creating the future we want – and, by doing so, we will evolve on purpose.

To be continued next week with:

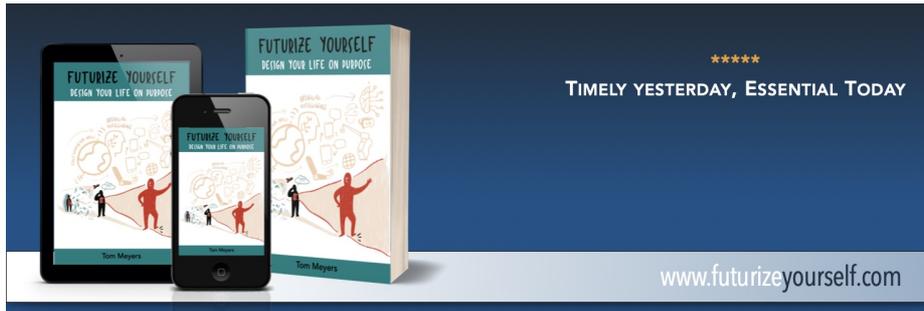
CH4.12 How to feel about the future



About the author

Tom Meyers, also known as “TomTom the Health Navigator”, is an osteopath D.O., body-centred stress coach, the founder of the “Reset Approach”, a wellbeing futurist, space enthusiast, TEDx organiser and author of “*Futurize Yourself - Design your life on purpose.*”

His mission is to empower you to flourish and thrive in this fast-changing, uncertain and challenging world full of opportunities.



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