



Dear {{ contact.FIRSTNAME }}}

Welcome to the eighth 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 later this year (2022).

This week’s episodes are:

- CH1.5 The future is not what it used to be
- CH1.6 The power of futures thinking

In this week’s extras, I have another book recommendation: *The Future: A Very Short Introduction* by [Jennifer M. Gidley](#). Thanks to this book, I also learned about Brussels-based futures researcher [Maya Van Leemput](#) whom I ended up meeting and invited to talk at [TEDxVilvoorde](#) (2020). The talks Maya and all the other speakers gave are available on tedxvilvoorde2020.weebly.com.

So, without further ado, enjoy the journey as we continue to explore “The Futures Effect” together!

And whatever you do, be good to you and y’our future, always.

Tom

PS: Audio and video links in this newsletter will redirect you to the respective platforms as Sendinblue doesn't support iframe embedding. My apologies for the inconvenience but I hope you will check them out.



[PREVIOUS EPISODES](#)

CH1.5 The future is not what it used to be



As I mentioned before, we are living in a fast-changing world, with significantly different challenges from two decades ago when I started to futurize myself. Today more than ever, we are urged to think about the long-term future, not only for our personal development but also for our very survival as a species. To think about it before it is too late.

We are also more interconnected than ever before. Back in 2000 when I started to imagine my future, social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok didn't exist. Going on the internet was still via a telephone line and made this very irksome "Pshhkkkkrrrkakingkakingkakingtshchchcchcch*ding*ding*ding" sound.

Today, we are not only more interconnected virtually, but globalisation has also made the world more interconnected culturally and in terms of production and trade. We are on this planet together and we depend on each other. What happens in China doesn't stay in China – and what happens in America, Africa or any other part of the world doesn't stay there either.

Each of us is simultaneously a whole in and of itself, as well as a part of a larger whole ([holon](#)). This means we are both a part and the whole. Whatever one does on an individual level affects the other and vice versa. If the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't made that clear yet, I don't know what will.

This means that, when you think about what the future you want and what you need in order to get what you want, you need to think very carefully. Every decision or choice you make and every action you take influences the outcome of not only your future but also the future of the people around you – people you know and people you don't know. And some decisions, choices and actions can have a global impact that will be felt for generations to come.

This is but one of the naked truths of why the future is not what it used to be. Another reason is, of course, that technology has accelerated the speed with which the world we live in is changing.

"While the past and present will undoubtedly shape the future to some degree and some artifacts from the past and the present will persist into the future, what we see as reasonable today is unlikely to be seen as reasonable in the future."

Maree Conway – Foresight: an introduction

Envisioning the world of tomorrow is a challenge, and we can't be sure it will look like anything we imagined.

But all that doesn't mean we should sit back and do nothing. I hope I can instil a healthy urgency in you to think about the future and inspire you to stay hopeful and positive, but above all to take action today despite the various challenges you and we all face.

I urge you to envisage what the future you want and what the future you

don't want, create scenarios of the future and raise y'our future consciousness. All that to inspire yourself to change the way you think about the future and realise that, through the decisions and choices you make and the actions you take today, you can steer yourself into the direction of the future you want.

If you opt for not taking action, leaving the future up to chance, then you will have to accept the possibility that the worst-case scenario will play out. Sure, it might turn out in y'our favour. As the future doesn't exist, it might turn out that climate change suddenly disappears and technological advances are put on hold so we can catch up. You never know - but would you put your money on it?

I know that, in turbulent times, thinking about the future isn't easy. However, that doesn't mean you shouldn't or can't do it. The world is changing in front of y'our eyes, and many challenges like climate change and the robotisation and automation of the workforce are very real. When you dig a bit deeper, you will find that the COVID-19 pandemic is but a small challenge compared to what awaits us. You can still change the tide. The future doesn't exist yet, but it is being created right here right now.

You can align yourself with the GREAT future you want and, through the decisions and choices you make and the actions you take, make the future you want an ongoing reality.

Imagine that the worst-case scenario is unfolding today. Is that the future you want? I hope not. I want you and the 7 billion souls we share this planet with to flourish in the flow of evolution and thrive in this fast-changing world, because that is what the future I want for myself.

You want that too? Great! Then that makes two of us already.

Are you asking how? How do I/you/we create the GREAT future we all want? Continue reading, and let me and the stories inspire and guide you to take the necessary steps to make a difference for yourself and others. There is no school for this, but by doing you will learn. You will be able to learn faster, because I will share with you not only my successes but also my failures, so you don't make the same mistakes.

Oh - you are worried that the decisions and choices you need to make might not pay off for many years? I beg to differ. Unlike in organisations where big investments need to be made that won't pay off immediately, when you futurize yourself there are many nearly instantaneous benefits, benefits for your health, wellbeing and so much more. That is just the beauty of it, and in this book I will share some examples of such benefits.

CH1.6 The power of futures thinking



One of the most important benefits of futures thinking for your health and wellbeing is that integrating futures thinking into your decisions, choices and actions helps you to be more resilient.

Futures thinking is not predicting the future. Futures thinking, sometimes also called prospection or mental time travel, is the generation and evaluation of mental representations of possible futures. “Futures” in the plural, as you can imagine and explore many different scenarios of the future.

While futures thinking is just that, thinking about the future, futurization on the other hand is the act of incorporating futures thinking into y’our decisions, choices and actions.

So how does futures thinking help you to build resilience?

Let’s use the example of a taxi driver.

Sam is 40, is married and has three young children. He has been a taxi driver for five years. Before that Sam, had been working in a factory but, due to automation, had lost his job. Sam had never really thought about his future and became a taxi driver for a popular ride-hailing service. He only started to think about his future and that of his family as more and more passengers started asking him if he was scared about losing his job now that the development of self-driving technology has become a priority for many car manufacturers. He always replied: “Taxis without a taxi driver!? Not in my lifetime!” and left it at that.

Then one day while watching TV, he saw a report about Waymo One™ the fully autonomous ride-hailing service in the East Valley of Phoenix, Arizona. He had heard of this but thought it was a joke. He had heard that some companies were testing automated trucks – that, yes but taxis, no. He had never really paid attention to what was going on around him. However, seeing the report on fully automated taxis did trigger his curiosity, and he followed this up with a quick search on the internet. He soon found out that the automation of taxis and other transport systems was far more advanced than he realised. While surfing the web, he stumbled on the website replacedbyrobot.info.

replacedbyrobot.info is a website created by Fabian Beiner, a computer science expert and web developer, in 2015 after the publication of the academic paper “The Future of Employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation?” (2013) by Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael Osborne of the Oxford Martin School. According to this academic publication, about 47% of all jobs will be taken by robots.

In the search box provided, he typed “taxi driver” and not even a second later he saw that the likelihood of his job being automated in the future was 100%.

100 % Chance of Automation

“Taxi Driver” will definitely be replaced by robots.

This job is ranked **#531** out of #702. A higher ranking (i.e., a lower number) means the job is less likely to be replaced.

When the 100% was going to be reached wasn’t mentioned, but with Waymo One™ already in town, Sam knew that it was just a matter of time. The future was already here. Instead of panicking, he realised that

he needed to prepare himself and look out for a new job. His kids were still young and needed schooling, and some would want to go to university. If he lost his job, it would affect his family badly. That evening, when the kids were off to bed, he talked to his wife about the future, their future.

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or the ability to bounce back into shape. Chronic stress, on the other hand, is when you have lost that ability to adapt or bounce back. Chronic stress, sometimes also referred to as distress, sets in when demands on you continuously outweigh your resources, and coping and adaptation processes fail to return to ease. Stress itself is a physiological reaction that goes hand in hand with the quickening of your pulse, a burst of adrenaline and cortisol, changes in blood flow in the body and brain which, when they become chronic and are not managed over time, lead to a wide area of health consequences if left untreated. These health consequences include physical problems like neck, shoulder and back pain; cardiovascular disease; mental health problems including anxiety, depression and a sense of hopelessness, and can lead to substance abuse.

Sam hadn't lost his job yet, and although there was an initial burst of stress and anxiety, he quickly bounced back and started to think of ways to prepare himself for the day that he would be laid off - again. This time, he was going to be prepared and ready to step into something new, as he knew that he wasn't the only taxi driver who would be looking for a new job soon. By futurizing himself, Sam proactively prepared himself in anticipation of a future scenario he wanted to avoid and that would cause him and his family a lot of stress. He was not out of a job yet, but he used his time wisely to reskill himself. By changing his perspective and adopting a futures mindset, he embraced the future and incorporated it into his decisions, choices and actions.

Sam is a fictional character that I made up based on a TV documentary I saw about the future of work. The only difference is that the taxi driver and father of three they interviewed (who had become a taxi driver after his first job had been automated) told the interviewer he was convinced that, now trucks were being automated, his job would soon follow. However, he pinned his hopes on the government to do something about it when the time came.

While my Sam futurized himself and created a plan for the future, this taxi driver didn't. Which of the two do you think will be more stressed when taxi drivers become a thing of the past? What would also be likely to happen is that my Sam, before losing his job, would probably already have seen an opportunity and changed jobs beforehand. This is the beauty of futures thinking. Through adopting a futures mindset, you anticipate and prepare yourself for change, but you'll be adjusting or adapting even before the change occurs. You'll always be one step ahead of the future scenario playing out.

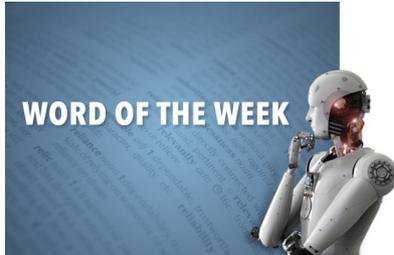
Taxi driver is but one of the many jobs that are at risk of being automated. Other jobs, like assistant paralegal, accountant, human resources administrative assistant, insurance broker, cashier are but a few on the chopping block to be definitely or almost certainly replaced by robots.

According to the website replacedbyrobot.info, my job as an osteopath D.O. will never be replaced by robots. But my job will change over time, or at least the demands will. If I want to be of service to my patients, I need

to make sure that I follow and prepare myself to treat new ailments. With the use of new technologies like exosuits and VR glasses, new challenges to body and mind will arise, and also new disorders. But what will happen when nanobots are the norm to measure and treat patients? Osteopathy or any form of manual treatment might not be replaceable, but it might nevertheless become obsolete.

To be continued next week:

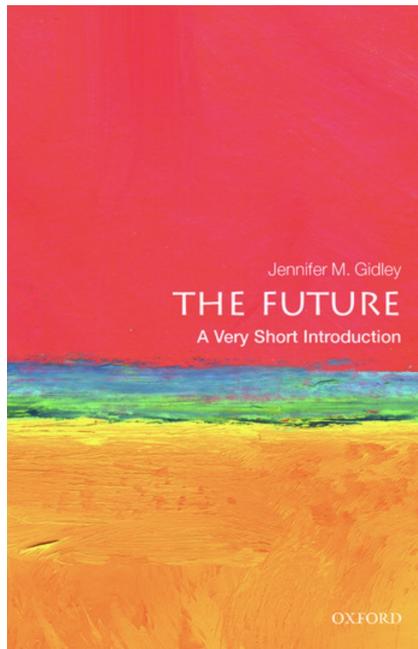
- CH1.7 The proactive approach
 - CH1.8 It's only too late if you don't start
-



Prospection

Involves mentally generating future possibilities and options. Its goal is less to predict what is going to happen than to prepare for action in a variety of circumstances that might demand different responses.

Book recommendation



The Future

A Very Short Introduction

In this Very Short Introduction, **Jennifer Gidley** considers some of our most burning questions: What is "the future"?; Is the future a time yet to come?; Or is it a utopian place?; Does the future have a history?; Is there only one future or are there many possible futures? She asks if the future can ever be truly predicted or if we create our own futures - both hoped for and feared - by our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and concludes by analysing how we can learn to study the future.

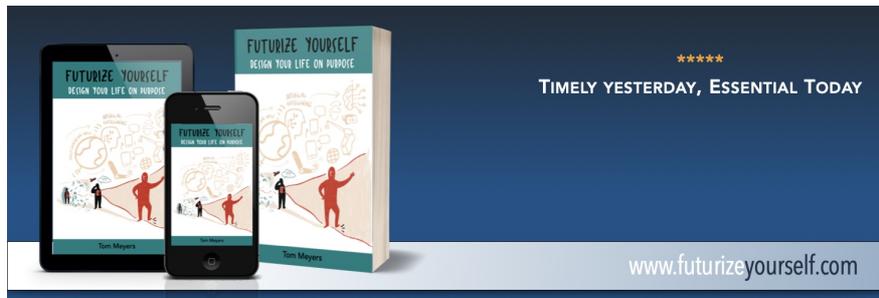
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About the author

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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