

FUTURE NEWS

TO CONNECT, TO INFORM AND TO INSPIRE

IN THIS EDITION

Why has capitalism been so enduring? Does it reflect the human condition?

by Stephen Aguilar-Milan
(page 2)

BOOK REVIEW Disrupt With Impact

by Roger Spitz
(page 5)

Futurists in Action A Letter to My Granddaughter

by Morris Misel
(page 7)

Signals in the Noise Top 5 Ways We'll Have Fun in 2050

by: Molly Edmonds
(page 21)



WHY HAS CAPITALISM BEEN SO ENDURING? DOES IT REFLECT THE HUMAN CONDITION?

by Stephen Aguilar-Millan



Photo by Kenny Eliason on Unsplash

Following the global financial crisis there was a great deal of talk about the emergence of a post-capitalist future. These were the days of Occupy Wall Street and popular discontent about the way in which life is organised. It even gave rise to distributed currencies, of which Bitcoin is the most noted, that were going to disrupt the capitalist system. None of that has happened, so where did all of that protest get to? What is it that makes capitalism such an enduring way to organise human affairs? What are the sources of its endurance?

The notion of capitalism arose in the Romantic era. Although it had been given form in previous writings, the idea of capitalism is often associated with the works of Karl Marx. From a Marxian perspective, capitalism is associated with the accumulation of capital as part of a class interaction between the owners of capital — the capitalists — and the owners of labour. The two classes had an essentially competitive and zero sum relationship over the means of production. If we limit our view to this narrow definition, then we are currently living in a post-capitalist world because Marx described a world that no longer exists.

However, that is an unhelpful and inadequate conclusion.

It might be more helpful to start with the features of capitalism to discern some of the dynamics that have led to its longevity. The core of capitalism is private property and the operation of markets. Written into the human condition is the desire to trade our current situation for one that we think might be better. Markets are a means by which we can swap what we have for what we would like to have. There are other means, such as forced seizure, plunder, and looting, but these haven't stood the test of time as a means of distributing wealth. This is because they fail to secure established property rights.



Established property rights are central to the operation of a market based system because they provide a legitimacy to title that is necessary if two people are to trade with each other. The role of money is to facilitate this process. Trade is made so much easier if there is a generally accepted common denominator for all goods — a monetary value that provides an exchange rate for all goods. This is why Bitcoin struggles as a currency. It does not have the stable value relationship with all goods and services that, say, the US Dollar has. As a means of exchange, it is extremely limited.

There is a further dimension that needs to be introduced at this point. If the fundamentals of capitalism are private property and market exchange, then what system of government best guarantees these conditions? It is often argued that liberal democracy is the best method of government to secure private property and market based exchange. The 'liberal' part of the equation implies a respect for individual property rights, and the 'democracy' part of the equation provides a consensual framework for collective action.

This is why capitalism is often accompanied by a liberal democratic framework.

At this point it could be objected that China currently operates a capitalist system, but is far from being a liberal democracy, as the phrase is understood in North America and Western Europe. This is true, but we could question the extent to which private property rights are respected in the Chinese system. For example, the recent crackdown on the operation of technology companies in China points towards a system where private property rights are respected, but only up to a point. Capitalism with Chinese characteristics doesn't feel like capitalism at all. It feels a little too arbitrary. A little too illiberal. Which brings us back to the liberal democratic framework.

If we adopt a purely Marxist view of capitalism, two rather large problems arise. The first is what are called pre-capitalist capital accumulations. The second is the operation of the features of capitalism prior to the establishment of capitalism. These are serious objections.



A tour of the stately homes and cathedrals in England gives a view of what pre-capitalist capital accumulations might have involved. Whereas a number of the grand houses and buildings may have been established using loot and plunder, they were maintained over the centuries by trade and commerce. It was the landed gentry and aristocracy who gave impetus to the Industrial Revolution in England, as they attempted to secure greater returns on their capital employed, whether it was from domestic ventures or from colonial ventures. They gave rise to the paradox of the pre-capitalism capitalists. If we delve even further back in time, we see medieval capital accumulations in the form of castles and landed estates. If we reach into the time of Rome, we see capital

accumulations in terms of villas and landed estates. Arguably, the richest man in history was Marcus Licinius Crassus — an archetypal capitalist of Republican Rome who made his money from real estate speculation, military provisioning, and the operation of silver mines. This indicates that the capitalist system was in operation centuries before it was defined as such and that its operation has a very long history.

We can see this if we revert to the features of capitalism. The one feature that links Republican Rome, medieval Europe, and Enlightenment England with today is the operation of markets. All of these systems resolved the distribution question through the use of markets and trade. All of these systems respected the rights to property, of sorts, within the confines of the time. They all acknowledged the democratising force of money. For example, Crassus was a plebeian, not a patrician, by birth. Money and trade were the means for social advancement, even in medieval Europe. If there is a footprint of a capitalist society in pre-capitalist times, then we have to ask about the degree to which we can consider capitalism a form of modernity?

However, it is also the case that Roman capitalism and the form we experience today are also worlds apart. We have to consider why that might be? The Romans were comfortable about basing a social and economic system upon the institution of slavery that was fed by military conquest. We would consider this system with revulsion if it were to be proposed today. This revulsion represents a shift in the attitudes and values of society away from military conquest and slavery. And yet the footprint of capitalism — private property rights and the operation of market based trade — continues to today. What has happened in the intervening years is that social attitudes have evolved and the institutional framework has evolved with them.

This gives us an important clue about the continuing endurance of capitalism as a form of social and economic organisation. A social institution is unable to exist detached from the society it serves. It has to reflect the values of that society in the way in which relationships are conducted. As social attitudes have evolved over time, so has capitalism as an

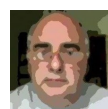
institution. It also gives us a hint about the future development of capitalism.

In many respects, capitalism does provide a reflection of the human condition — the acquisitive desire to own material goods, to trade to a better standard of living, to enjoy peacefully those goods. On this level, talk about a post-capitalist future is likely to be a bit premature. If we were to move to a post-capitalist society, some consideration would have to be given to the distribution mechanism by which who does what is determined. There would need to be a value shift away from an acquisitive society. This is not impossible, but it is also fair to say that there isn't much evidence of that just yet.

This argument is a little disingenuous because it misses an important point about the capacity of capitalism as an institution to evolve over time. The prospect of a transformation of capitalism is likely to have a better future. There have been a number of transformations of capitalism in the past, which suggests that there could be more in the future. The likelihood of this happening is increased further as the world continues to play down and ignore the disruptive potential of climate change. We can speculate about the form that the next phase of capitalism will take, but it's quite likely that it will have some form of green tinge to it.



Capitalism has proven to be quite enduring over the centuries because it is wired to the human condition. This is likely to continue, but the shape of the institution is likely to change, reflecting the underlying shifts in the values of society. More a case of evolution than revolution.



Stephen Aguila Milan is the Director of Research of the European Futures Observatory

Book Review

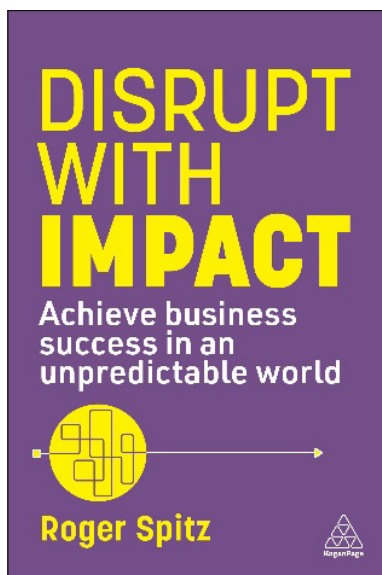
by Charles Brass – Chair, Futures Foundation

Disrupt with Impact

Achieve business success in an unpredictable world

by Roger Spitz

“Everything in our world is constantly evolving – except our organizations, strategies and governance structures



Roger Spitz has been a practising futurist for many years. His list of Board appointments and consulting clients is extensive and impressive. His latest book is designed to help readers “navigate increasingly fast-paced and complex environments” (p1). As Spitz says, “This book is not about either trends or the latest technology fads” (p1) because “I realize that our systems are not just fragile, but outright ineffective. Everything in our world is constantly evolving – except our organizations, strategies and governance structures” (p1).

Like many futurist authors, Spitz is very concerned to remind his readers that in an ultimately unpredictable world, conventional strategy plans are doomed to failure. He invites his readers to contemplate having “a compass calibrated for the unpredictable

(p2) and the book sets out to provide just such a compass.

The book is divided into four sections, with the first reminding readers that the whole of human history is a tale of disruption. The difference is that “Today, we are faced with profound questions on the fundamental features of our world” (p9). Only in the twentieth century did humankind demonstrate our capacity to destroy the habitable world, and hence only since the twentieth century did the pace and complexity of disruption become something the human race needed to come to terms with. Spitz’s ambition in this section is to remind us “we have the power to shape our own futures” (p16 – emphasis in original). He lists the many ways in which we are already confronting many of the major issues we face as a species, while also emphasising that much more needs to be, and can be, done. In describing how this can happen Spitz reminds readers that reliance on so-called experts is more fraught today than ever, and encourages everyone to “wander around, imagine, ask questions and challenge assumptions” (p18 – emphasis in original).

The second chapter focuses on the changes in mindset needed to confront disruption, and Spitz introduces his “6 i’s” as one mnemonic. The chapter includes many other examples, including inspiring stories from other

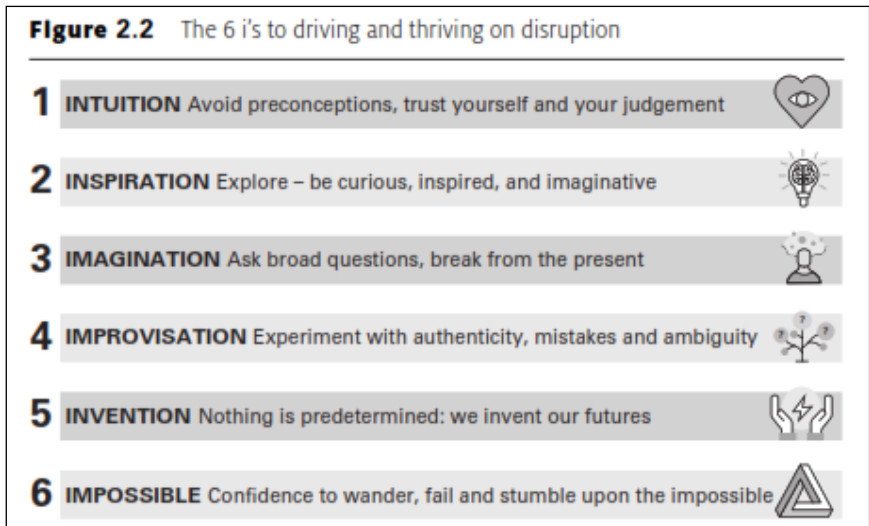
leaders (including Arthur Clarke's three laws, which if you don't know them are worth looking up).

Part One then concludes with an exploration of a number of tools commonly used by futurists to navigate and anticipate disruption.

The second part then focuses on how to harness disruption to your advantage. The whole book is clearly focused on corporations, and one of the important points made here is about the rapid increase in what is often called 'intangible value' (as distinct from bricks and mortar type value). This in itself is a significant disruption and the world is still leaning how to manage this.

Spitz also references Nicholas Nassim Taleb's book *antifragility* (in which this is defined as: "Antifragility is beyond resilience or robustness. The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; the antifragile gets better" (p127). Spitz outlines why antifragility is such an important concept in managing disruption and he devotes many pages to describing how it might be created.

He also explains why thinking across many different timeframes is so important (something non-Western and Indigenous cultures seem much better at doing).



Chapter 6 introduces the principles of system thinking, and Spitz has his own acronym for reminding readers of all of the elements necessary to take a systems approach. For those either not familiar with systems thinking, or perhaps challenged by the complexity of other models the 25 or so pages, liberally sprinkled with case studies, is very readable.

Chapter 7 moves into global systems (the chapter is called *Greenaissance*) and takes a similarly readable approach to the complex elements interplaying in the global ecosystem.

Chapter 8 begins to think about the existential consequences of disruption on businesses – will they survive, die or merge? Again the narrative is compelling and the case studies very relevant.

The third part of the book begins to consider artificial intelligence and its disruptive impact.

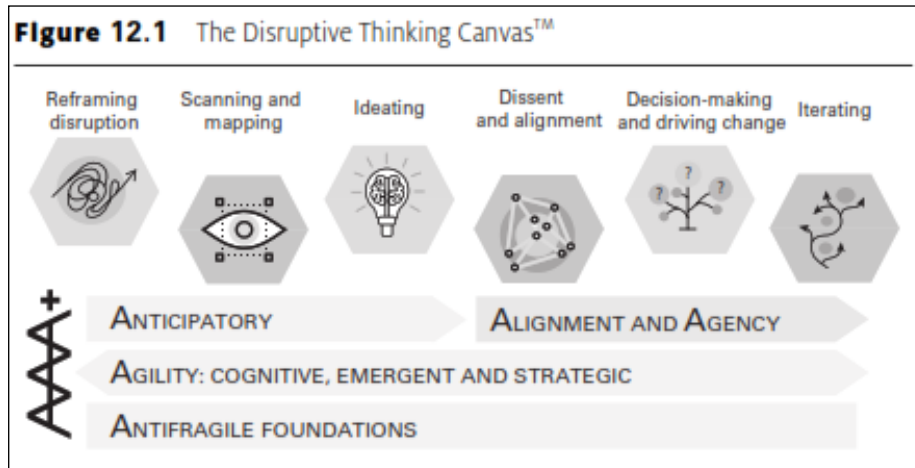
Here a listing of some of the subheadings gives a good indication of the content:

- Technology is ubiquitous
- Technology is exponential
- Technology is combinatorial, converging and fusing
- Technology is alive
- Technology is invisible
- Technology is incomprehensible
- Technology is irreversible
- Technology is hyperconnected
- Technology is unpredictable.

Spitz devotes some pages to the use of science fiction in prototyping technological change, along with a number other processes often used by futurists to assist their clients.

The final part of the book explores how individual and collective thinking will need to change in an era characterised by disruption, and here again Spitz introduces his own theory called "the disruptive thinking canvas", on which he elaborates as the conclusion to his book.

This book is not just a wake up call to all business leaders, it also provides a detailed and eminently readable road map to achieving success in an era of inevitable disruption.



FUTURISTS IN ACTION

LETTER TO MY GRANDDAUGHTER

by Morris Misel



Introduction:

Today marks my granddaughter's 1st birthday, and this letter is my gift to her—perhaps the most personal thing I have ever written or reflected on.

It imagines the next 120 years of her extraordinary life, from this very moment as a one-year-old through to the year 2143 when she'll be 120.

It's a look at the world she will grow up in, the challenges, joys, and transformations she—and her generation—will experience.

But this letter is not just for her.

It's for anyone thinking about the legacy we leave behind and the future our children will shape.

I hope you'll take the time to read it and perhaps reflect on what you want for the generations yet to come.

Today, on your very first birthday, I find myself reflecting on the incredible future that awaits you.

This world, full of wonder and possibility, stretches out before you, and I can't help but be excited for all the adventures and discoveries you might one day experience.

Every day, I spend my time imagining the future—it's what I do, it's part of who I am—and now, with you in my life, looking ahead brings even more joy.

I wish I had the skill to carve you something from wood, to paint you a picture that would last through the ages, or to craft a physical gift that could be passed down for generations.

But instead, all I can give you are my thoughts, my hopes, and my love.

These words, dreams and hopes are my way of sharing that joy, of thinking about the future through the possibilities of your life and all the remarkable things it might hold for you.

Your great-grandmother, my mother, shared a piece of wisdom with me that I now pass on to you:

“What we hold in our hands is never as important as what we carry in our minds and hearts.”

It was a phrase that sounded much better in her original tongue, and it reminds us that no matter how the world changes, the love, wisdom, and strength we hold within will always guide us.

This has been true for generations, and it will remain true as you grow. With these two lights, you will always find your way *home*, no matter where life takes you.

This letter is not only a reflection on the incredible future you will witness, but a way to share the love, lessons, and foresight that have been passed down through our family.

You are entering a world that will become more extraordinary every day, filled with advancements and opportunities beyond imagination.

But with that, there will also be challenges—challenges that every generation has faced in its own way.

I want you to always remember that your curiosity, your courage, your determination, your passion, and the wisdom you gather will nurture, energise and sustain you as you navigate this ever-changing world.

As you continue to grow, this letter will be here for you as a reflection of the journey we share, and a reminder that you have everything within you to create your extraordinary life.

Imagining the possibilities ahead, with you as my inspiration, fills me with more hope and joy than I could ever express.

▪

Age 1: 2024 – The Beginning of a Journey

You are just a year old today, my dear. The world you’re growing up in is filled with possibilities, yet it’s also marked by the remnants of difficult times—things you’ll only come to understand much later.

The pandemic’s shadow still lingers, and while you are thankfully unaware of the unrest, it’s a world grappling with economic challenges, global uncertainty, and social fragmentation.

The economic downturns, societal upheaval, and shifts in global power are quietly shaping the foundation of the generation you belong to—Generation B.

But you, in your innocence, are focused on discovery—learning to walk, speak, and experience the simple joys of life. You are blissfully unaware of the struggles the world is facing, and for you, the world is a place of endless curiosity.

Technology is already a part of your home life. AI, while still in its early stages, will slowly start integrating into your world, helping your family with simple tasks. Perhaps it’s managing schedules or offering basic reminders, but its real potential is just beginning to emerge.

The World Around You:

- **Housing and Family Life:** The house you call home will reflect the early stages of smart living. Energy-efficient, eco-friendly homes are increasingly common,

and while your family's house may not be fully autonomous yet, technology is beginning to ease the burdens of everyday life. Voice-activated systems and basic automation help manage tasks like adjusting lighting, controlling temperatures, and maintaining home security. Family size is shrinking in many parts of the world due to economic pressures, and parents like yours are increasingly sharing caregiving and work responsibilities equally, adapting to a more flexible, resilient way of life.

- **Global Shifts:** The world outside your home is in flux, but you'll grow up in a time where these changes are expected. Global power dynamics are starting to shift. Countries like Africa and India are on the rise, gradually asserting their influence economically and culturally, while traditional superpowers, including the United States and China, are grappling with internal challenges and shifting roles on the world stage. These geopolitical movements won't impact your day-to-day life now, but they are shaping the world you will eventually navigate.
- **Your Digital World:** As of 2024, AI and automation are making waves across industries, governments, and homes. The integration of digital technology into everyday life is relentless, from voice-activated assistants to the early stages of autonomous vehicles. By the time you can speak, you may already be conversing with AI systems as if they are part of the family. These systems will know your habits, preferences, and moods better than any generation before you could have imagined, helping manage your family's routine and even guiding your early education.
- **Your Family's Resilience:** The economic downturns and global unease that define 2024 won't touch you directly, but they will influence the way your generation—Generation B—views the world. You'll grow up in a time where resilience, adaptability, and creativity are essential traits. Your family's conversations, though focused on love and nurturing in these early years, will be shaped by the challenges of the outside world, and these will leave an imprint on the environment in which you're raised.
- **Food as Medicine:** Even the food you consume will reflect a more health-conscious, technology-driven world. The early stages of "food as medicine" will be underway, and your parents may already be tracking your nutrition with precision, ensuring you receive the nutrients that support your optimal development. This personalised approach to health will be a cornerstone of your childhood, with advancements in genetic profiling guiding nutrition, health, and wellness from an early age.
- **The Bigger Picture:** You'll grow up in a world that is still grappling with questions of identity and direction. Global politics is fractured, and the possibility of new conflicts and wars looms. Climate change remains a constant concern, with unpredictable weather patterns becoming more frequent. These events will form the backdrop of your childhood, though you'll likely be blissfully unaware of them for now. What matters most is that you are growing up in a world that, despite its challenges, is full of opportunity for those willing to find them.

A Note for You:

The world is transforming rapidly, and the systems that shape it will influence your earliest experiences.

As the technology around you grows smarter and the divide between it and humanity smaller, remember that the most important developments happen within you—in your curiosity, creativity, and willingness to learn.

You will grow up surrounded by technological wonders, but what you carry inside—your

imagination, your resilience—will always be your greatest strength.



Age 5: 2028 – Your First Steps into a New World

At 5 years old, you are stepping into a world full of possibility and wonder.

This year, you will begin your formal education, marking one of your first major steps into the outside world. School will be a place where your curiosity will take root and grow, a world of new experiences, new people, and new ideas.

You'll begin to discover your voice, your talents, and the things that make you light up with excitement.

The school you attend might look a lot like the one your parents went to—perhaps even the same building. But inside, the way education is delivered will have transformed.

Your teachers will still be there, guiding you with care, but they will have a powerful new assistant in technology.

By now, AI will be woven into the fabric of your classroom, not replacing human connection but enhancing it, making learning interactive, personalised, and tailored to how you think and grow.

This year, the economic downturns that marked your birth are now distant memories, and you are living in the more prosperous half of this decade, where positivity is more prevalent. Yet, much remains unresolved and contentious in the world around you.

However, in your world of learning and discovery, these larger global issues will feel

distant, like faint ripples on the edge of a calm pond. You'll be immersed in the joys of exploring new ideas and making new friends, and that's exactly how it should be.

The World Around You:

- **Your School and Education:** By 2028, your education will be very different from the rote learning of the past. Schools will focus on creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Assessments won't just measure how much you can memorise but how well you can apply what you've learned, how you think, and how you approach challenges. AI will help create a personalised learning experience, allowing you and your classmates to move at your own pace. It will assist teachers in crafting lessons that nurture your imagination, curiosity, and unique gifts.

Technology will be a seamless part of your everyday school life. Smart devices, interactive lessons, and AI-driven learning tools will make learning more dynamic and immersive. You won't just learn from books—you'll explore topics in virtual environments, solving creative challenges and collaborating with classmates across the globe. AI will help track your progress, giving your teachers insights that allow them to focus on developing your critical thinking and creativity, while ensuring your education is deeply human at its core.

- **A World in Recovery:** Outside your classroom, the world will still be in a state of recovery, reshaping itself after the upheavals of the early 2020s. Global volatility—economic, political, and social—will still exist, but society will have learned to handle it with more resilience. The systems around you, including education, will reflect this shift toward flexibility and adaptability. While the world may feel uncertain for adults, for you, it will be a time of possibility, where the seeds of your generation's resilience and creativity are planted.
- **Your Family and Home:** As you start school, you will be growing up in a home where technology continues to make life easier. Your family will rely on smart home technology, not only to manage the day-to-day tasks but also to ensure sustainability, keeping energy and water use efficient. Your parents will share work and caregiving responsibilities more equally, giving you a strong example of how family life is adapting to the demands of a changing world.

What Lies Ahead for Generation B:

Your generation—Generation B—will inherit a world where adaptability and creativity are essential traits. As you grow, you'll witness shifts in global power and culture, with regions like Africa and India rising as major global influencers, reshaping economic and social narratives. These shifts may feel distant during your early school years, but they will eventually shape the opportunities you encounter as you get older.

By age 5, AI will be an integral part of your world, but it will still feel more like a tool than a dominant force. Your digital twin—a virtual version of yourself, powered by AI—will quietly begin to play a role in your learning, supporting you with tailored experiences that guide your education and development. But the most important lessons won't come from AI; they will come from the connections you build with your teachers, friends, and family, and the creativity and imagination that AI will help you unlock.

A Note for You:

As you begin this new chapter of your life, I want you to hold onto your curiosity and imagination. These early years are the foundation of everything that will come next. You are growing up in a world where technology will make your life easier, where learning will be tailored just for you, but always remember that the most important lessons are the ones you create for yourself.

You will learn so much in these coming years, but my hope for you is that your

education never dulls your sense of wonder. Let it spark your imagination, let it teach you how to ask the big questions, and let it encourage you to explore the world around you with a full heart and an open mind.

Age 10: 2033 – A World of Growing Independence

At 10, you'll be stepping into a new phase of your life. This is the time when your curiosity will expand, your independence will grow, and you'll start to understand more about who you are and what excites you.

The world around you will still be familiar, but it will also be changing in ways that will shape your thinking and your future opportunities.

By now, technology will have become a natural part of your daily life, a tool that helps you navigate the world.

You'll be using it at school, at home, and in ways that previous generations never imagined.

But your real learning will still come from the people around you, the relationships you build, and the creativity you develop.

The World Around You:

- **Your School and Education:** By 2033, education will look very different from what it was when I was your age. Schools will focus on fostering creativity and critical thinking, rather than just preparing students for exams. Advanced AI will play a supporting role in helping teachers tailor lessons to each student, including you, allowing you to move at your own pace and explore subjects that excite you. But even with these advancements, the most important lessons will still come from the human connections you make—with your teachers, your friends, and your family.

By this age, you'll be able to collaborate with other students, not just in your classroom, but around the world through virtual platforms. You'll be working on projects that expand your thinking and challenge you to solve problems creatively. AI will help track your progress, suggesting new ways to tackle challenges, but your education will remain deeply personal, centred on nurturing your unique gifts.

- **Technology and Your Growing Independence:** Technology will offer you a greater sense of independence. You'll begin managing more of your daily tasks, learning goals, and even exploring new interests on your own, with technology and AI quietly assisting in the background. But technology won't define you—it will simply be a tool that helps you explore the world more freely. What will define you is the way you think, the questions you ask, and the curiosity that drives you forward.
- **The Bigger Picture – A Shifting World:** The world you're growing up in is in the midst of significant global shifts. By 2033, the rise of regions like Africa and India will be reshaping global economics, culture, and innovation. These emerging powers will challenge the dominance of traditional superpowers, creating new opportunities and perspectives for your generation. These changes won't always feel close to home, but they will influence the world of possibilities that open up to you in the coming years.

A Note for You:

As you continue to grow, your digital twin will become a quiet companion, helping you manage your day-to-day life. It won't take over—it will simply guide you, offering advice when needed and suggesting new ways to learn and grow.

But remember, the most important guide in your life is still you. Technology will assist, but it's your imagination, your creativity, and your relationships with the people around you that will shape who you become.

Age 18: 2041 – Stepping Into Adulthood

Eighteen years have passed, and now, here you are on the cusp of adulthood. It's a strange and exciting time—one filled with choices, possibilities, and perhaps a little uncertainty. You're starting to forge your own path, to make decisions that will shape the rest of your life. It feels like the world is opening up in front of you, full of promise and wonder.

At this age, you'll feel a sense of freedom and autonomy like never before. The decisions you make now will begin to define who you are and what kind of life you want to lead. But unlike the generations before you, the world won't expect you to have it all figured out just yet. The idea of finding one career, one path, and sticking with it for life will be a relic of the past. Instead, you'll have the chance to explore multiple careers, interests, and passions as you grow. Your life will be one of ongoing learning, reinvention, and adaptation—and that's something to embrace, not fear.

The World Around You:

- **Education and Career Exploration:** By 2041, the world of work and education will have evolved even further. No longer is there pressure to immediately choose one career path or a defined role. Instead, you'll be able to explore a variety of fields and disciplines, learning and adapting as you go. The education system will have evolved to focus more on fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, giving you the flexibility to pursue what excites you most.

The concept of work itself will be different. Rather than being defined by a job title, you'll likely engage in multiple streams of income, working across various projects and industries. This task-based work will enable you to use different skills and explore different aspects of your talents. Some tasks may be handled by machines, others by humans, but you will have the freedom to blend your interests and contribute in ways that feel meaningful to you.

- **Independence and Adulthood:** Growing up in a world of autonomous vehicles and transport-on-demand systems, you may not feel the urgency to get a driver's licence like earlier generations did. Freedom, for you, will not be tied to driving; you'll have the autonomy to move through the world with the click of a button. Public and private transport will be efficient and accessible, giving you choices that previous generations could only dream of.

In Australia, 18 is also the age when you can vote. Political engagement will likely look different for your generation, with digital platforms offering immediate ways to connect with global issues. Yet, the importance of your voice will remain. Voting, both online and offline, will give you the opportunity to influence the world you're stepping into, shaping the policies and decisions that will affect your future.

A Note for You:

As you turn 18, you're not expected to have everything mapped out. This is a time for discovery, for exploring what drives you, and for making choices that reflect who you are—not who the world expects you to be. You don't need all the answers right now; what matters most is that you remain open to possibility and willing to learn as you go.



Age 25: 2048 – Defining Your Place in the World

At 25, you'll be entering a period where life begins to take on new layers of meaning. You're not a child anymore, but you're also not bound by the expectations of being fully "settled." The world you live in will provide flexibility, independence, and the opportunity to craft a life that is uniquely your own. You'll have the space to explore, experiment, and define success on your own terms.

At this stage, you're making decisions about the kind of life you want to lead—whether that's career, relationships, or personal growth. But unlike generations before, the pressures to conform to a single path will feel distant. Your choices will be defined by fluidity, by the freedom to change direction, and by the understanding that life is a series of evolving phases.

The World Around You:

- **Education and Career Flexibility:** By 2048, education and career structures will have evolved significantly. The idea of a fixed career path will feel outdated. Instead, you'll be exploring multiple streams of work, driven by your varied interests and talents. Work will be more about solving problems, being creative, and leveraging technology where it makes sense.

You may find yourself earning income from several different sources simultaneously—some tasks completed by AI or automation, while others focus on human-centric, creative, or strategic work. Your generation will be at the forefront of task-based working, where jobs are broken into smaller, more flexible roles that fit around your life, rather than the other way around.

- **Global Work and Digital Citizenship:** At 25, you'll have grown up in a world where borders, both physical and digital, are more permeable. The rise of

global powers like Africa and India will shape the economic and cultural landscape. You'll have opportunities to work with people from around the world, not just physically, but digitally. Your career might span different countries, industries, and projects, creating a new kind of global citizen—someone who navigates the world both online and offline, balancing collaboration and creativity across time zones.

A Note for You:

At 25, you're an incredible woman at an incredible point in your life—filled with energy, potential, and a deep sense of possibility. You don't need to have all the answers yet, and the world won't expect you to. Take this time to explore, to challenge yourself, and to find joy in the opportunities that come your way.

Age 35: 2058 – At the Height of Your Powers

At 35, you'll be stepping into a period of life where you feel more certain of yourself and your place in the world. This is a time where your confidence, skills, and influence will align, and you'll likely be seen as someone with experience, knowledge, and authority. Whether it's in your career, relationships, or personal growth, you'll be in a phase of life that allows you to fully harness everything you've learned up to this point.

By now, you'll have established yourself professionally, but that won't mean settling into one role. Instead, you'll continue evolving, exploring new interests, and pushing the boundaries of what's possible. Your life at 35 will be defined by balance, leadership, and a deeper understanding of how to manage both your personal and professional worlds with intention.

The World Around You:

- **Leadership and Career Mastery:** By 35, the world of work will be more fluid than ever, with careers that cross industries, regions, and roles. You'll likely be at the forefront of this evolution, having developed a flexible career that allows you to tap into different projects, skills, and opportunities. Leadership will be less about titles and more about influence—whether through entrepreneurial ventures, guiding teams, or thought leadership.

The global landscape will continue to offer opportunities to work across borders, both physically and digitally. As the rise of Africa, India, and other emerging regions drives innovation, your work will likely be globally interconnected, giving you the chance to influence and collaborate on a larger scale. You'll be part of a generation that operates without borders, navigating multiple markets and cultures seamlessly.

A Note for You:

At 35, you'll be at the height of your powers—confident, capable, and well on your way to building the life you want. But remember, this isn't the finish line; it's just another chapter in a long, evolving journey. Life at this age will be about balance—balancing work, relationships, health, and personal growth—and you'll have the tools to manage it all.



Age 50: 2073 – A Time of Reflection and Reinvention

At 50, you'll find yourself at a pivotal moment—a time to reflect on everything you've accomplished and experienced, while also looking forward to what lies ahead. Fifty will no longer be the age to start slowing down; instead, you'll likely feel a sense of reinvention, knowing that there's still much more to explore and achieve. This phase of your life will be marked by a deep sense of self-assurance and a readiness to embrace new opportunities, both personal and professional.

Thanks to advancements in health and longevity, 50 will be a time of strength and vitality. Rather than focusing on retirement or winding down, you'll be preparing for new adventures. Whether it's career reinvention, exploring new hobbies, or deepening your personal relationships, this is a time where you'll be at the height of your powers, with the wisdom of experience guiding you.

The World Around You:

- **Health and Longevity:** By 2073, healthcare will have reached remarkable heights. Personalised medicine, gene therapies, and regenerative treatments will keep you physically and mentally fit, allowing you to enjoy a longer, healthier life. Your wearable technology will monitor your health in real-time, making it easier to prevent and manage any health issues before they become serious. You'll have the freedom to pursue new interests, take on fresh challenges, and live with the energy of someone much younger than 50 felt like in past generations.

This will be a time when longevity means not just living longer but living better. Your focus will be on preventive care, staying ahead of potential health concerns, and making sure your mental and emotional well-being remain strong. It's a stage of life where health is about sustaining vitality, not battling decline.

- **Career Reinvention and Leadership:** At 50, you'll have amassed a wealth of knowledge and experience in your career, but that won't mean settling into a routine. Reinvention will be a key theme, and you'll likely find yourself exploring new roles, industries, or ventures. Whether it's mentoring younger generations, leading innovative projects, or taking on a completely new path, you'll continue to learn, grow, and make an impact.

Leadership will come naturally at this stage, not just in formal work settings but also through your influence on others. You'll be a mentor, a guide, and a trusted voice in your field, helping to shape the future while staying open to new possibilities for yourself.

A Note for You:

At 50, you'll be standing at the crossroads of reflection and reinvention. You'll have accomplished much, and yet, there will still be so much more ahead. This is the time to look at your life with gratitude for the lessons learned, but also with excitement for what's still to come.

Age 75: 2098 – Wisdom and Legacy in a Time of Transition

At 75, you will find yourself approaching one of the most significant milestones in human history—the transition from the 21st to the 22nd century. This isn't just a symbolic moment; it will be a profound psychological and societal shift as humanity reflects on the progress of the past century and looks toward the future. For you, it will also be a deeply personal moment—a time to reflect on your own life and legacy, and what you've contributed to shaping the world that lies ahead.

This transition, however, won't be about the technology or tools that define the 21st century. By 2098, the very concept of technology, as we understand it today, will have disappeared into the background of daily life. The things that once seemed futuristic—artificial intelligence, energy abundance, bio-digital interfaces—will be so deeply integrated into life that they're no longer thought of as "technology. Much like electricity or the internet in 2024, these systems will simply *be*.

The World Around You:

- **Health and Longevity:** At 75, you will still be active, healthy, and mentally sharp. Longevity will have advanced far beyond the limits of earlier generations, with regenerative medicine and personalised health systems keeping you youthful and vital. By now, disease prevention and even reversal will be embedded into your daily routine—handled by bio-digital systems that track and optimise your body's performance without conscious thought on your part.

Healthcare will have shifted from treating illness to sustaining vitality. At 75, you won't be thinking about age as a limitation; you'll continue to explore life with the same curiosity and energy you had in your earlier years.

- **The Role of the Storyteller:** In this digital age, where you may live on in both physical and digital forms, there will remain one task that is wholly human. You will be the **custodian of culture**, the **keeper of stories**. The technologies that archive knowledge can't carry the heart of it—that's something only you can do. As you approach this grand milestone, it is your stories, your traditions, and your wisdom that will keep the past alive for future generations.

A Note for You:

As you approach 75 and the world prepares to enter the 22nd century, you will be standing at a moment of profound transformation. The world around you will have changed dramatically, but your role in it—shaped by the love, wisdom, and values you've carried through your life—will remain as vital as ever.



Age 100: 2123 – A Century of Life, A Century of Change

As you celebrate your 100th year, you stand not only at the end of a personal century but also as a witness to a life filled with transformation. By 2123, the world will be a place defined by its seamless integration of technology, societal evolution, and deep global connections. Though living to 100 will no longer be considered extraordinary, the journey you've taken and the changes you've experienced are anything but ordinary.

In this age, technology will no longer be something that you actively think about or use. It will simply *be*—integrated into your very existence in ways that were unimaginable in your youth. The focus won't be on the tools that enhance your life, but on how these tools allow you to fully live, connect, and grow.

The World Around You:

- **Health and Longevity:** At 100, your body and mind will still be sharp, a reflection of the incredible advancements in bio-digital networks and regenerative medicine. The diseases and ailments that were once inevitable with age will have long since been cured or prevented. Longevity is no longer about extending years but ensuring those years are filled with vitality.
- **Family and Relationships:** By now, you'll be part of a multigenerational family, possibly spanning five generations. Relationships will be more flexible, as people live longer and form connections that evolve over time. You will be the elder storyteller, passing down wisdom, traditions, and the values that have shaped your family through the decades.

A Note for You:

As you reflect on your 100 years of life, know that while technology can solve many of the world's challenges, the role of the storyteller and the keeper of culture remains human. Carry forward the stories, pass on the love, and remember that, in the end, it's not the years but the impact you've made that truly matters.

Age 120: 2143 – A Century and Beyond

One hundred and twenty years. Few can imagine living so long, yet here you are, a testament not just to the incredible advancements of the world around you, but to

the strength and spirit you've carried within. At this age, life has taken on a different pace, perhaps slower in some ways, but richer in others. Every moment, every breath feels like a culmination of not just your own experiences but the collective wisdom and growth of humanity itself.

By now, **digital immortality** may have long since become a reality. Through advanced technologies, your thoughts, memories, and even personality could live on, interacting with loved ones and guiding future generations even after your physical presence begins to fade. But while these systems are incredible, what truly remains timeless is the impact of your human legacy—your love, your wisdom, and your experiences.

The World Around You:

- **Health and Purpose:** At 120, your health will still be cared for by bio-digital systems that keep your body functioning at its best. You'll still walk, talk, think, and engage with the world, though perhaps in new and evolving ways. Your body might be more of a hybrid than it was when you were younger—organics and bio-engineering working together in seamless harmony. Regenerative medicine and cognitive augmentation will ensure you live a full, purposeful life.
- **The Custodian of Culture and Tradition:** In this era, where many may have chosen digital immortality, the task of preserving **human** stories and values will fall to you and others like you. You will carry forward the traditions, the lessons, and the wisdom that no technology can replicate. You'll be the bridge between the past and future generations, ensuring that the essence of what it means to be human endures.

A Note for You at 120: Immortality in All Its Forms

At 120, you may ponder what immortality truly means. It could be the bio-digital systems that carry a part of you forward, a version of your consciousness that continues long after your physical body fades. Or it might be something simpler: the love and wisdom you've shared with the world, the connections you've built, and the lives you've touched.

As you move further into this extraordinary life, remember that immortality isn't just about the continuation of life—it's about **what you leave behind**.

Your digital twin may persist, but your **human legacy** will endure far more deeply in the hearts of those you've impacted.

Final Reflections – A Journey Through Time and Love

As you look back on the life you've lived, my dear granddaughter, know that it wasn't just the advancements in technology or the wonders of the world that defined your journey. It was the moments—the decisions you made, the laughter you shared, the tears you shed—that truly shaped your existence.

Life has not been without its challenges. You've faced difficult times, moments of loss, uncertainty, and doubt. But through it all, you've stood tall, a testament to the strength that runs deep within you.

Even though your journey began just 365 days ago, and you do not yet have a voice or words, I can already see the possibilities unfolding before you.

Your forever smile, the zeal with which you discover the world, and the joy you exude as you navigate it are early signposts of the remarkable person you will become. You are already finding your way, drawing others to you with a light that is unmistakably yours.

And as you have grown, so too has the love you share with the world. You have touched hearts, healed souls, and created connections that will last a lifetime.

The world in 2143, for all its progress, still grapples with many of the same human challenges we faced when you were born.

But despite this, you've navigated your life with grace, courage, and an unshakable compassion that has left its mark on the people around you.

You have loved fiercely and been loved deeply in return. Your legacy is not only in the advancements and changes of the world, but in the hearts you have touched. The memories you've created will live on, written into the stories that will be told for generations to come.

So, as you step into the next chapter of existence, know this: your love, your wisdom, and your spirit will continue to live on, in every life you have touched, in every heart you have healed.

Your journey, your story, and your love will echo through eternity, shaping the world long after you are gone.

With all the love that has ever filled my heart, I leave you with this final thought: you have lived, you have loved, and you have been loved in return.

You have left this world more beautiful, more compassionate, and more human because of who you are.

No matter what the future holds, your legacy will endure, woven forever into the fabric of time and hearts.

With all my love, for now and forevermore,

Always and eternally yours,

Zaida XXX ❤️



As you've now walked through these pages, reflecting on the journey of life and the future that awaits us all, I hope this letter has inspired you as much as it did me.

Writing this for my granddaughter was a way of leaving behind not just my thoughts, but a part of myself—my hopes, my foresights, and my love for her and the world she will grow into.

In my work as a futurist, I spend much of my time imagining what tomorrow might bring.

But this letter is personal.

It's a reflection on the things that truly matter: love, wisdom, and the legacy we leave behind for future generations.

I believe these are the most valuable gifts we can pass on.

A Challenge to You

Now, I invite you to think about your own legacy.

What will you leave behind?

What stories, wisdom, and love will carry on through your family, your work, and your life? If this letter has moved you,

I encourage you to take a moment to write your own love letter to the future generations in your life—whether it's a child, a grandchild, or someone dear to you.

Share your reflections, and let's start a dialogue.

The future is not just something to be predicted, but something to be shaped by the love, wisdom, and actions of each of us.

About the Author

Morris Misel is a globally recognised business futurist, media commentator, and keynote speaker with over 30 years of experience shaping the future for industries, organisations, and individuals across 160 sectors worldwide.

Signals in the Noise

TOP 5 WAYS WE'LL HAVE FUN IN 2050

by Molly Edmonds

Predicting the future is always a tricky business. We've long been promised flying cars, jet packs and robot maids, only to be disappointed year after year when the technology fails to appear. In 1968, science fiction writer James R. Berry made his predictions for the year 2008 in the pages of "Mechanix Illustrated." Some of his forecasting was dead-on, including his prophecies of online shopping and home computing, while other guesses have yet to make an appearance, including a four-hour workday and automated doctor's visits

Now it's time for HowStuffWorks.com to pick up James R. Berry's mantle and peer 40 years into our future. We'll leave the more serious predictions regarding climate change and overpopulation to others; in this article, let's examine how we'll have fun in the future. Will we still like to tilt back a cold one at our neighborhood pub? Will we still be shaking what our mommas gave us in dance clubs? Or will we partake in simpler pursuits, like knitting and woodworking? While the staff here at HowStuffWorks.com hopes that reading this site is always a part of your future fun, let's take a look at five other ways we might entertain ourselves in 2050.

5: BIRD WATCHING



A couple enjoying a futuristic hobby
© iStockphoto.com/morganl

While you may have hoped for some futuristic gossip in this article, you'll be very familiar with one activity: bird watching. In 1997, Newsweek published a list of outdoor activities and their expected rate of growth by 2050, and bird watching far outpaced the rest. In fact, back then, bird watching was estimated to grow faster than the projected population of the United States, with a growth rate of about 58. By 2050, there may be as many as 127.8 million birders .

When bird enthusiasts spot a new find in the future, it will be a pretty big deal. That's because by 2050, the existence of about 400 to 900 species of land birds will be threatened thanks to climate change and habitat destruction . So if you relish in the excitement of a rare find, then you have lots of exciting opportunities to await you.

If you consider bird watching to be too much of a fuddy-duddy hobby, consider the fact that the population will be fairly elderly in 2050; in fact, seniors will make up a quarter of all Americans. There's a large number of baby boomers, and they're aging during a time in which we're discovering life-elongating technologies every day. With more years to fill, it may be time now to invest in a good pair of binoculars.

Signals in the Noise

TOP 5 WAYS WE'LL HAVE FUN IN 2050

4: JELLYFISH RESTAURANTS



Yum!

© iStockphoto.com/red_moon_rise

It's hard to imagine a time when friends and family won't meet up for a bite to eat, so of course we're including dining out on our list. However, don't plan on heading to a local steakhouse or burger joint. Because of factors including land use, population and water supply, the American diet will undergo some changes by 2050. We'll be eating a lot more grains and beans and a lot less meat and dairy. We'll still eat our veggies, of course, but we won't have the wide array to choose from that we enjoy today. Futurists estimate that about 15 percent of our diet will be from animal products, and the rest will be from plants; the United States as a whole may have to stop exporting food by 2025

If a juicy burger isn't an option, where will those animal products come from? One possibility is that we'll eat more fish, but we certainly won't be eating the tuna and cod that we're accustomed to. According to reports published in the journal *Science* in 2006, commercial fish stocks could be completely decimated by 2050 because of overfishing and pollution. Our fishing throws aquatic ecosystems off balance in irreparable ways; for example, by fishing for tuna, marlin and swordfish, we eliminate the major predators of jellyfish. As a result, jellyfish numbers are increasing rapidly, which may mean that we'll have to develop a taste for jellyfish sushi. Jellyfish have been eaten for thousands of years in Asian countries, but its taste may require some getting used to – one biology professor described it as “tough strips of cucumber”. One slightly more palatable option we might have in 2050 is squid, which unfortunately are very high in cholesterol.

3: ROBOT SOCCER GAMES



Future robot adversaries?

© iStockphoto.com/D4Fish

It's difficult to even comprehend all the ways we might interact with robots by 2050. It's possible that robots will be conducting routine surgeries or piloting our airplanes. They could be conducting search and rescue missions or fighting in wars. One researcher even predicts that by 2050, we could be having sex with and marrying robots

But when it comes to having fun either now or in 2050, you'd be hard pressed to find a better way to spend a Saturday or Sunday

than outside in the beautiful sun, enjoying a sporting event. What might change by 2050, though, is who's playing. Roboticists predict that by 2050, they will have developed autonomous robots that will be able to beat the best soccer players in the world That's right, by 2050, we could see Robots vs. Humans in the contest for the World Cup. Now that will fill some bars and basements!u;

These robots won't just be wired with the steps for winning a soccer game. Rather, roboticists are working now to train robots how to play soccer by using human models. The robots are presented with data that shows how humans respond to a

Signals in the Noise

TOP 5 WAYS WE'LL HAVE FUN IN 2050

series of soccer plays, so that when the robot is presented with the same setups, they have choices in how to respond. These robots will be able to perceive the play and act accordingly. If you want a glimpse of the future, check out the RoboCup games, in which researchers test out their current “players” and share information with one another. So far, there are no robotic concession workers for these events.

2: ORAL STORYTELLING



Reading books could be obsolete by 2050.
© iStockphoto.com/digitalskillset

Currently, many of us spend our spare time using social media like Twitter and blogs, mediums that allow us to type up a quick message to let our friends know what we’re doing. However, writing and reading those messages may not be how we communicate with our pals in the future. In fact, we may not read or write at all, a future that many dying newspapers are already confronting.

Futurist William Crossman believes that spoken language will replace written communication in the coming years, meaning that we won’t need to teach children how to read and write, but rather how to use computers and think creatively .

Crossman envisions a world in which we all use voice-in, voice-out (VIVO) computers. Everything we need to communicate will be handled by these machines. Rather than writing our memoirs, for example, we’d sit down in front of a webcam and tell our story. As the recent rise of reality television and YouTube superstars bears out, there are many people who would happily sit and watch a complete stranger spin a tale.

Crossman’s future means that vast swaths of the population will be illiterate, but should those people need to read something, their computer could scan and read it to them. In some ways, this may make communication more democratic, and with the explosion in populations that are predicted, it may even be necessary. Computers would have instantaneous translation services, making it easier for an urban resident to connect with a rural resident a world away.

1: VIRTUAL REALITY ENTERTAINMENT



By 2050, this girl could be off to visit friends living across the country with the push of a button.
© iStockphoto.com/caracterdesign

Your flat-screen television may represent the epitome of entertainment right now, but by 2050, it will seem hopelessly outdated. In 2050, we’ll likely demand that our entertainment not be contained by the screen – we’ll want to interact with it via virtual reality. Imagine playing a video game about World War II: You and your friends will have the option of hopping off the couch and storming the beaches of Normandy with

Signals in the Noise

TOP 5 WAYS WE'LL HAVE FUN IN 2050

everybody else. With this technology, your children will be able to interact with their favorite fuzzy friends by inviting them into the living room to dance around.

Entertainment won't be the only way we'll use virtual technology, however. Likely, we'll be able to meet up with friends and family around the world thanks to hologram technology. Let's say you have a business meeting with colleagues from New York, Seattle and Beijing – all of you can meet up in one office to discuss the matter at hand. Long-distance relationships will become a little more manageable because of virtual visits, and all of your pals can show up to your destination wedding, no matter where they live.



Molly Edwards is part of the team at howstuffworks. A graduate of Emory University, where she majored in creative writing and political science, Molly spends her spare time seeking out good books, live music and people who will cook for her. This article is reproduced with permission.