



Throw Forward Thursday: Where to look to see the future

Come with me to the future. My name is Graeme Codrington, this is Throw Forward Thursday, and I want to talk this week about where to look to see the future coming.

A few weeks ago, I was asked about askaboutthefuture.com. That's a website. You can go to www.askaboutthefuture.com to ask me any questions, give me feedback and give me some ideas of what you can see in the future. Anyway, Susan F contacted me and asked me where do I get all of my ideas from. So, last week I talked about our TIDES model of disruptive change. Tides being an acronym for the five areas that our team looks at to identify key disruptive forces coming our way. If you haven't watched that video, I know it was a slightly longer episode than normal, but please stop this video, go back and have a look at that, otherwise, this one isn't going to make as much sense. But when you're using the Tides model, you now know what you are looking for, you are looking for evidence and artefacts of change. In those five categories, there's still a big question, and that is, where do I go looking?

So, the first thing I've done is I have switched on my radar. I've alerted my brain to the fact that I want to find evidence of disruption. That's an important thing to do. It's called reticular activation if you want to know how your brain is working, think about it. When last, did you see a yellow car on the roads? And then if I say to you, there are a lot more yellow cars than you can imagine, and if you remember that statement, if you disagree with me and you think, Graham, I've never seen a yellow car, I think you'll see a lot of yellow cars in the next few days. Maybe that example is a cheap one because it really makes no difference to you if somebody in your life, including yourself, falls pregnant, you'll suddenly discover the world is filled with pregnant women because your reticular activation method of your brain ignores a whole lot of stuff and only look for the things that it wants to look for. So, you've got to alert your brain to the fact that you do want to look for these Tides.

Okay, but now where do you actually go looking?

Well, first of all, do some reading. So read books that are about the future. Books, not just nonfiction business books, but there are actually some amazing science fiction books and even novels that will alert you to different ways in which the world might be put together. Those are particularly useful for some of the institutional change issues that we are looking at. But I'm also thinking about reading books that get you to see the world in a different way. Adam Grants, "Think Again", Jane McGonigal's, "Unimaginable" and the list goes on and on. There are plenty of these types of books that are easy to recommend. Follow our newsletters at Tomorrow Today Global. Go to [TomorrowToday Global](#) and sign up for our newsletter. Whenever we find a good book like this, we put it in our weekly newsletters to alert you to them, but those books will help you to open your minds. Also, follow the authors of those books.

So, it takes a long time to research and write a good book. You shouldn't trust authors who churn out a book every six months. Good books take time, but a lot of those authors are putting stuff out on a regular basis, especially on social media these days, social media isn't all just about cat videos and dance-offs. And so follow some of those authors I've talked about, especially, for example, Adam Grant is brilliant, follow the Singularity University, for example, Google's Future focused Think Tank as an example, and just look at who those people follow, and build up your list of people to follow. In my case, follow me on LinkedIn.

At the moment, being late 2022, I kind of am just using Instagram for memes and dad jokes and things like that. My team keeps speaking me to shift to something more serious, so maybe in the future, Instagram will be a good place to follow me for this sort of information, but for now, LinkedIn is the best place to do that. Two or three times a week I'll put something out, including these Throw Forward Thursday videos, but I'll just reference something, point you to somebody, retweet or share something from somebody. Follow those people as well to get their insights. Then read magazines, physical ones if you want to. Magazines that look at science, that look at engineering, that look at future issues, but of course, there are a lot more opportunities to do this in the digital space, YouTube channels, and so on.

I don't want to make specific recommendations, because it really does depend on your industry, your function, your interests, and where you find yourself in your career, but feel free to contact me and ask me for specific recommendations if you're battling to find stuff, or just follow me and I put out lots of these recommendations on a regular basis.

The final thing that you can do is build your network real world. So not just following people on the social space, but looking at your real-world network for people in your network, or adding people to your network who are tuned to the

future of their industries. These might be colleagues in your industries, it might be people that you meet, you go to an industry conference and there's a keynote speaker that the conference organisers have brought in. They are there, go stand in line to go and meet them, follow them on LinkedIn, build a network with them, comment on what they put out, get connected with them, and slowly. This is not something you do by next Friday. This is something you do by 2035, is you build that network of people who are watching the future of their particular part of the world, watching the future of their industry.

The final thing that you must do is just keep your eyes open, and especially, I would suggest, around demographics. Keep your eyes open for people who are looking at deep structural changes taking place. Here's something interesting. I don't watch or read a lot of news. There are very few things in the world where I'm going to need breaking news information. Yes, if there's a third World War and somebody drops a nuclear bomb somewhere, I'd like to know about that as quickly as possible, but I'm pretty certain my social feeds and the things I'm looking at will explode with that information very quickly. So, I don't actively go out and seek breaking news, even worse are the news bulletins where they are talking about a press conference that's about to happen, and five talking heads are sitting around the desk discussing what they think the president of this or that country is likely to say. That's just sheer nonsense, in my opinion. Wait for them to say it, and talk about what you think we need to know.

But I'd actually go a step further, I want to wait three or four days for those people who think deeply, who give an opinion piece about the news. So, I would read magazines like The Economist, for example, where I've got a subscription, The New York Times, for example, I don't necessarily agree with all of their politics or their worldview. I think both of those publications are a bit neoliberal and a little bit conservative, even for my tastes, but they are considered insights where they've had three, four days, maybe sometimes a few weeks, to think about the implications of something, and that's the stuff I really enjoy reading, and I listen to podcasts that help me with that analysis. I like in-depth investigative journalism, not breaking news hype and clickbait.

So, I don't know if that's useful for you or not, but Susan, thank you for your question about where I look for future information. I'm privileged enough that this is my job, people pay me to do this, it's my career, and I've studied research methodologies, I've got a Doctorate in Business Administration with a focus on future studies.

So, this is what I do, and some of our clients pay me to do this. You can pay somebody to be your futurist in residence, you can pay them once or to come and speak to you when you're doing your planning, you can sign a retainer with us

where we send you regular insights, typically like a once a quarter scenario that we get you to think through. But I really do believe that this is a capability and a skill set that you and your team can develop for yourselves, and last year, so at the end of 2021, I put together a little miniseries, I'll link to it in the notes, wherever you're watching this video, just look at the notes to the video, and I'll put a link to a little miniseries I did as part of Throw Forward Thursday that gave you some of the toolkits that we use to think like a futurist. Otherwise, just make sure you contact me and the team at Tomorrow Today Global and we can give you some more information.

Right, so we've taken a two-week, little break after doing that long end of series, and I'm going to spend the rest of this year that's the rest of 2022 if you're watching this from the future. I'm going to spend the rest of this year focusing quite a lot more on how the world of work is going to change in the future and what we need to be doing today in order to be engaging with tomorrow's world that's already arrived today.

So, thank you, as always, for joining me from the Throw Forward Thursday studio. I will see you next week.

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