

Foreword

Abraham Lincoln once said, “If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it.”

Lincoln’s advice applies especially to leaders and those aspiring to leadership. We cannot be a light for others if we ourselves are in darkness. Before leading others, we must understand the world around us and how it is changing. Only then can we reasonably judge what should be done and create visions that will inspire people to do it.

But let’s not kid ourselves: It’s extraordinarily difficult today to know “where we are and whither we are tending.” Globalization means that we have to take account of events occurring in lands we never heard of, because they can cost us our jobs and even our lives. Furthermore, our world is experiencing the fastest technological and social change in history. The only useful way I know to keep up with what’s happening in the world around us is by *futuring*. This term may be unfamiliar to you, but the activity—seriously trying to figure out what is likely to happen in the future—is something we all do when we have to plan for future events in our personal lives, such as giving a party, going on vacation, getting a new job, moving to another city, etc.

Most *futuring* is done intuitively by people trying to imagine what might happen in the future, but since World War II, scholars, scientists, and other futurists have refined some useful ways to monitor global changes and forecast future developments. These techniques include trend monitoring and analysis, the generation of scenarios, Delphi polling, and gaming. Furthermore, there is an expanding body of books and journals discussing current trends and where they may lead. In addition, the World Future Society (wfs.org) holds yearly conferences where futurists share their latest thinking about the future.

viii Leadership and Futuring

You can start right now to expand your knowledge of futuring as well as leadership by reading this excellent book, *Leadership and Futuring*. The author, Professor John R. Hoyle, is a thoroughly trustworthy guide who has spent many years in leadership training. In 2004, his peers honored him as an “Exceptional Living Scholar” in educational administration. Professor Hoyle provides a wealth of wise advice on leadership, and it’s a pleasure to note that he also has a very engaging writing style. Readers will enjoy as well as learn from the many vivid anecdotes based on his personal experience.

But, in my view, what makes *Leadership and Futuring* a really important book for all who aspire to leadership is that it squarely confronts the extraordinary challenge that the current global transformation poses for leaders, and it suggests constructive ways to deal with it through futuring.

Edward Cornish
Editor, *The Futurist Magazine*
Founder, World Future Society
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