



THE STORY OF NEXT

(is a human story)


JOSEPH PISTRUI



Oceans, fields, mountains. Water and soil. Nature evolves. Lives. Grows.



HUMANS
HAVE
ALWAYS
RESPECTED
NATURE
AND
HAVE
ALWAYS
REFUSED
TO BE
LIMITED
BY THE
ELEMENTS

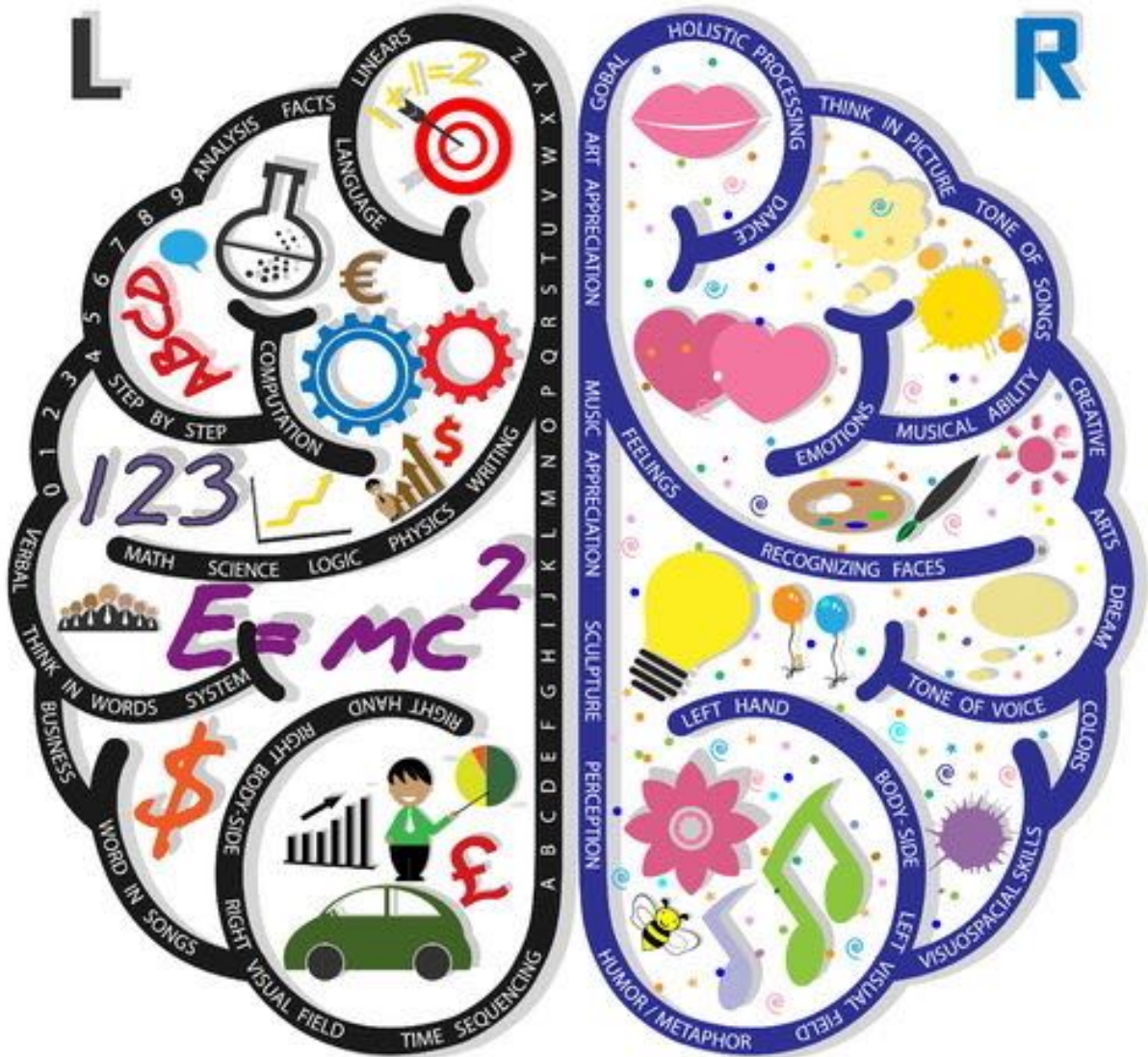


What is it that confers the noblest delight? What is that which swells a man's breast with pride above that which any other experience can bring to him? **Discovery!** To know that you are walking where none others have walked; that you are beholding what human eye has not seen before; that you are breathing a virgin atmosphere. **To give birth to an idea** – an intellectual nugget, right under the dust of a field that many a brain-plow had gone over before. To be the first – that is the idea. **To do something, say something, see something, before anybody else** – these are the things that confer a pleasure [that] compared with other pleasures are tame and commonplace, other ecstasies cheap and trivial.

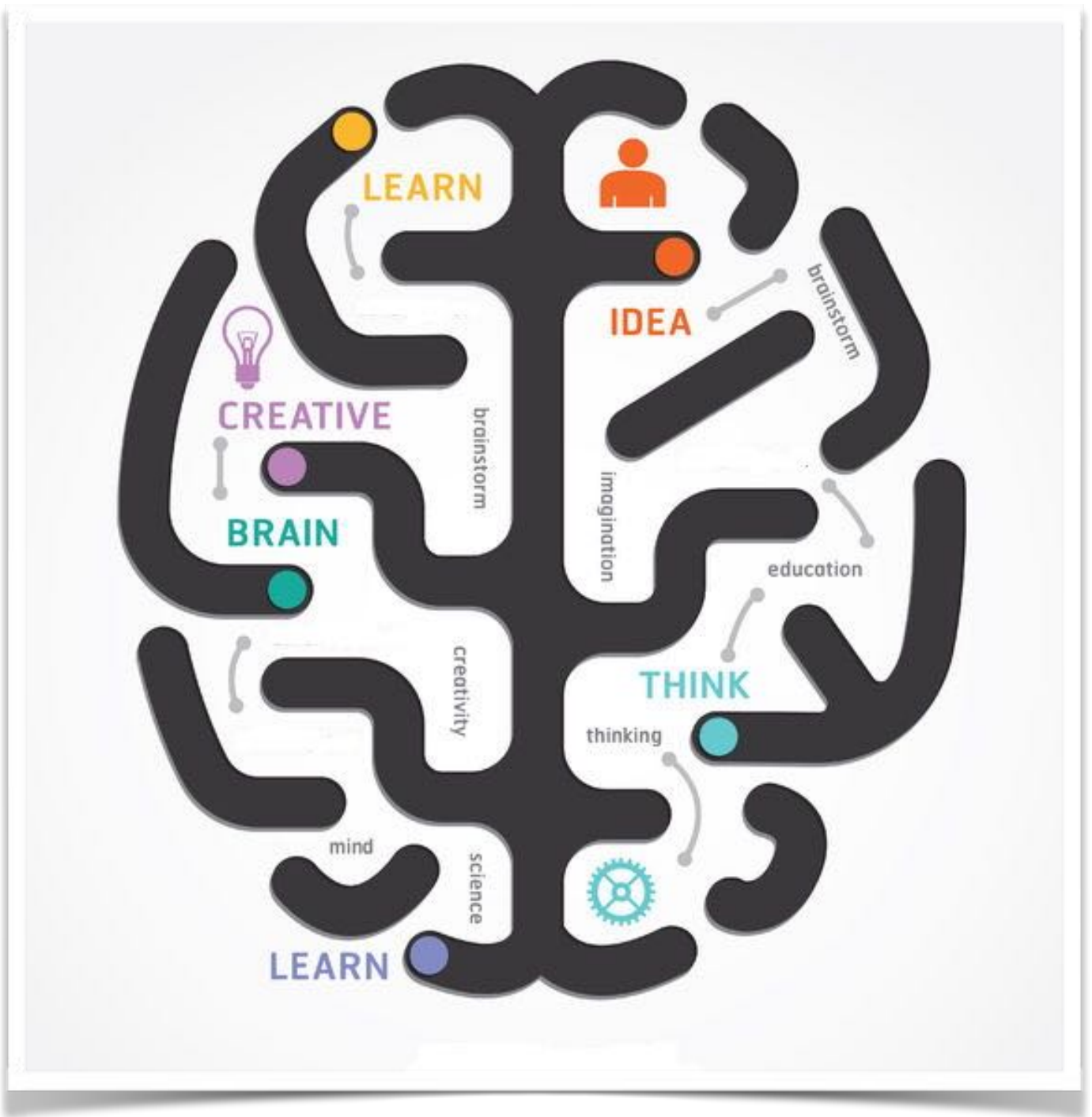
— **Mark Twain,**
Innocents Abroad (1869)



**Buildings, vehicles, tools, technology.
Music, art, sculpture, movies.**



Humans leverage nature to extend its power. We imagine. Invent. Reinvent.



**To be human is to ask the question
behind all human progress.**



... **WHAT'S NEXT?** 10,000–4,000 B.C. In an area now mostly Iraq, settlements become cities supported by the wheel, pottery-making and improved cultivation. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 2580–2560 91-million cubic feet great pyramid (Giza) built in Egypt. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 117–138 A.D. Romans codify common laws; establish a postal system. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 650–670 Woodblock printing appears in China. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 1150–1167 England, France found universities. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 1271 Marco Polo of Italy travels to China. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 1312–1337 Mali Empire in West Africa exceeds in size any European kingdom; trade triples and major libraries, universities built. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 1438–1472 Incas build Machu Picchu 7,970 feet above sea level; temples built with mortarless construction. **WHAT'S NEXT?** ~1556 Akbar the Great in India innovates decorative coinage to expedite commerce. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 1610 Galileo uses telescope to view Jupiter. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 1807 Robert Fulton steamboats from New York City to Albany. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 1825 England inaugurates passenger trains. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 1879 Edison invents lightbulb. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 1957 Russians launch Sputnik and space age. **WHAT'S NEXT?** 2007 Apple's first iPhone — followed by iPad in 2010 ...



In every age, on every continent, in the face of obstacles, leaders asked:



[illegible]

Answering “What’s next?” is harder than ever because of...





Harry McCracken ✓

@harrymccracken



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Tim Cook on TV: "Why does a channel even exist? My nephew asked me once. I couldn't even answer."



* TIM COOK IS CEO OF APPLE.



... **WHAT'S NEXT?** All countries are interconnected; a health risk in one country can rapidly spread at the speed of a jet.

WHAT'S NEXT? Decisions about currencies and other economic matters affect every other trading partner. **WHAT'S**

NEXT? Business requires an international perspective; ITC's Trade Map tracks the flow of 5,300 products among 220

countries. **WHAT'S NEXT?** International online business is booming, per survey: "57% of respondents in 24 countries in six continents had shopped from an overseas site in last six

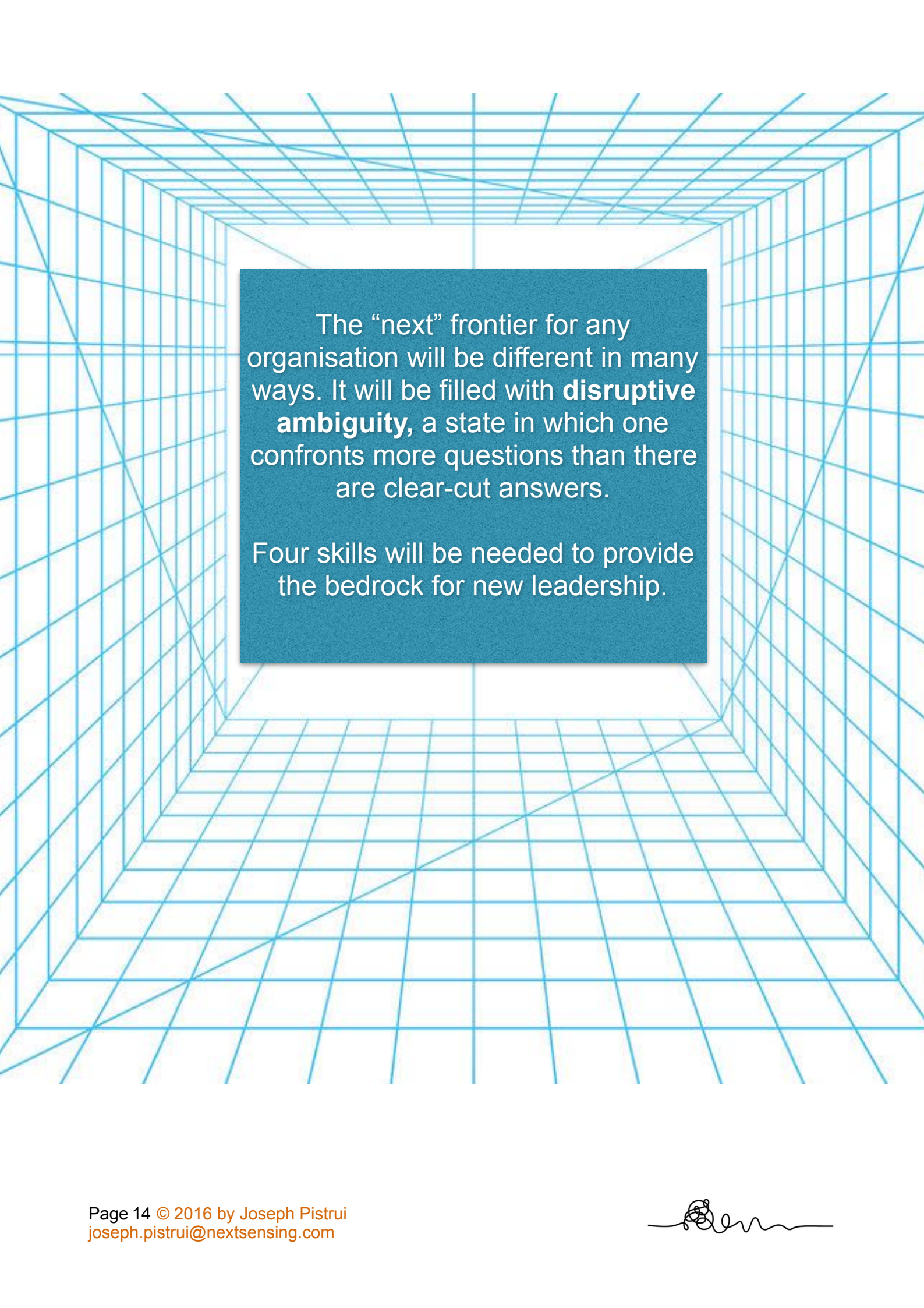
months." **WHAT'S NEXT?** In 2015, 25 million US students take college courses online, with huge drop in students on

campus. **WHAT'S NEXT?** Consumer trends and preferences are shaped in seconds thanks to social media networks such as Facebook (with 1.5+ billion active uses). **WHAT'S NEXT?**

Entire industries are in revolution. One example: television networks and studios are giving way to upstarts like Netflix — even Amazon produces TV content. Theatres and TV sets are being replaced by app-driven smart phones and tablets.

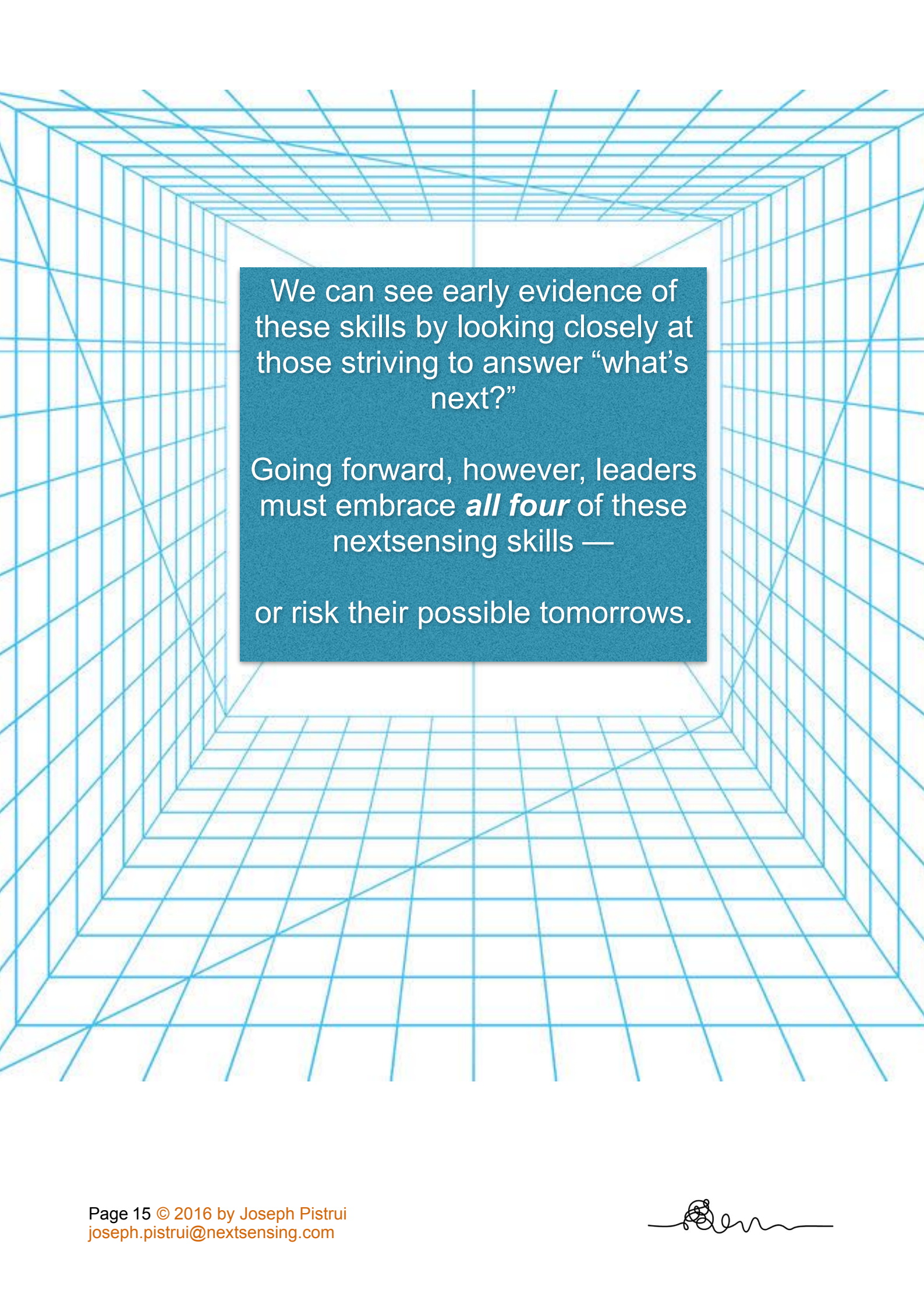
WHAT'S NEXT? All marketplace norms are being shaken by direct computer-to-computer (Internet of Things) links, artificial intelligence, 3-D printing, and paper-thin computing devices. **WHAT'S NEXT?** That's no longer easy to answer ...





The “next” frontier for any organisation will be different in many ways. It will be filled with **disruptive ambiguity**, a state in which one confronts more questions than there are clear-cut answers.

Four skills will be needed to provide the bedrock for new leadership.



We can see early evidence of these skills by looking closely at those striving to answer “what’s next?”

Going forward, however, leaders must embrace ***all four*** of these nextsensing skills —
or risk their possible tomorrows.



Stretch sensibilities.
Take a stand.
Create a new order.
Act with foresense.
(the four nextabilities)

THE  TIMES

MAGAZINE

Eat! DONNA HAY
FOOD PULLOUT

09.03.13

The men who
will pay £7,000
for a date – and
go home alone

By Sally Williams

Caitlin Moran:
the poor are better
than the rich

SHE'S THE MOST
**POWERFUL
WOMAN**

IN CYBERSPACE
(but still cries at work)

Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg

Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg

(but still cries at work)
IN CYBERSPACE





1. Leaders stretch sensibilities and never lead alone.

By including the points of view of many others, he or she begins to address the “what’s next” question by **expanding the leadership circle**.

Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg is committed to **leading via a diverse team** and wrote *Lean In* to encourage women to be more involved. By **consciously including others** in sensing out the firm’s direction, leaders confirm that no one person nor small group is clever enough to know where to lead his or her organisation in a complex world. How to start?

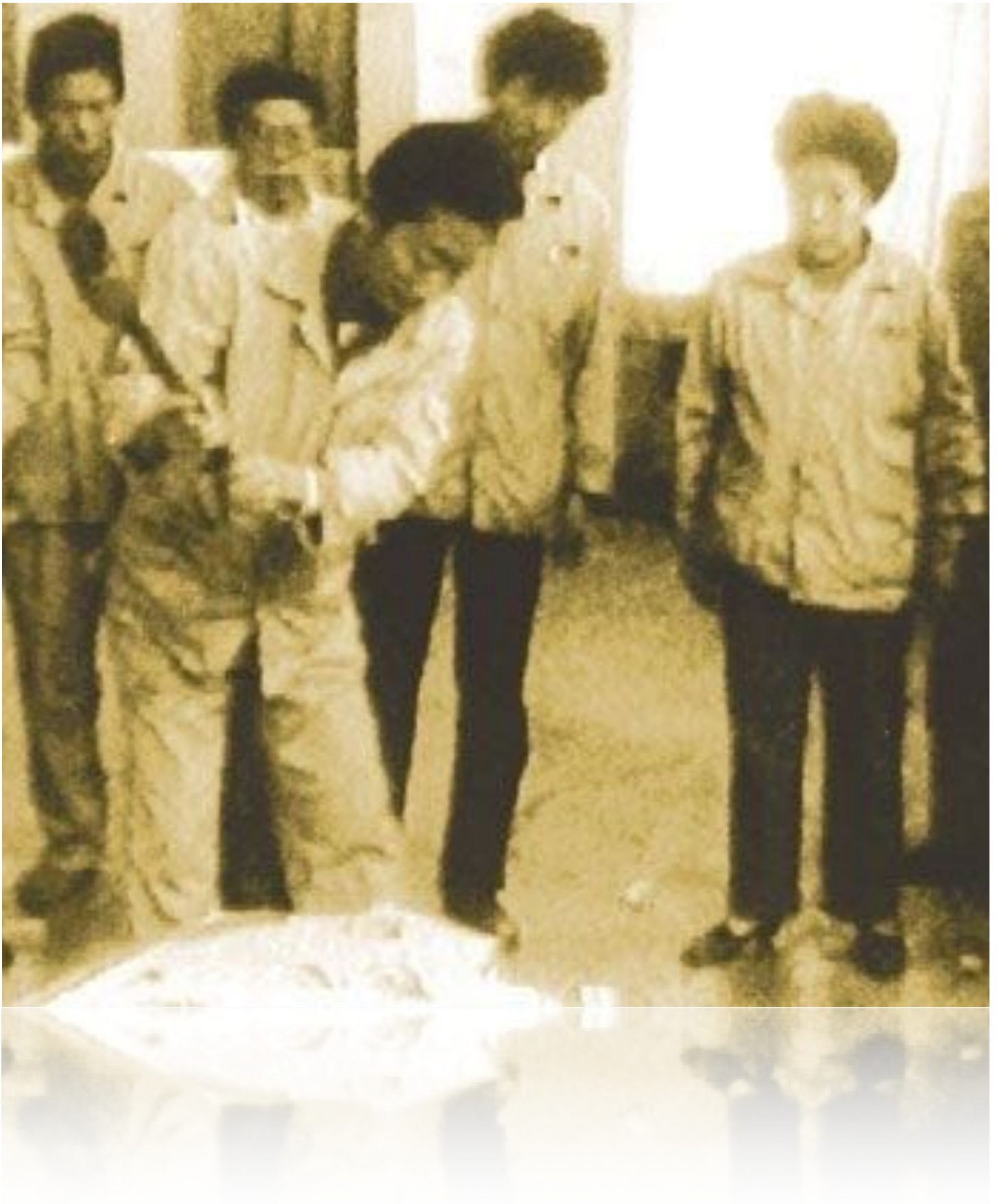
First, leaders ask the leadership circle to **talk about things that are happening in other fields** that might affect the company’s future.

Second, leaders **establish a culture of curiosity**, to increase the alertness of everyone. Of Sandberg, one writer noted, “An effective leader needs to be abreast of the latest happenings as well as grasp the changes their profession demand and tweak their product accordingly. None of this is possible if the leader is clueless and cannot generate ideas by himself.”

Third, leaders **embrace the interaction afforded by social media** — to boost the team’s thinking about how its business operates.

Lastly, leaders **reject overdependence on outdated methods, systems, products and services**. They continuously monitor all systems and practices to see if they are approaching the “use-by” date, and, if so, update or replace them.







2. Leaders take a stand and announce their aspirations to the world.

The story is now legend. When Zhang Ruimin (now CEO of the multi-billion dollar Haier Group in China) was placed in charge of the Qingdao Refrigerator Factory, he immediately challenged the status quo. The products being made were, to his mind, junk. Per one news report: Zhang “had 76 defective ones pulled out from the rest, gave the staff sledgehammers, and ordered them to destroy every one. The message: Poor quality is no longer tolerated.” **Leaders in search of “what’s next” take a stand, boldly and publicly.** How to start?

First, they **appeal to people’s innate aspirations**. The secret of Zhang’s turnaround is not only that poor quality had to be removed from all product lines but also that it was more important to create a spirit of excellence in everything they do! Recognizing that excellence is a habit, he urged the workers to aspire to be better, if not the best, at whatever they do.

Second, they **speak confidently but listen attentively**. With a leadership circle, standing for change is more about *rallying for change* than dictating that it happen. Nextsensing leaders transmit important messages; yet, they are genuinely receptive to news (good and bad) and the ideas of others.

They also **embrace learning on the job and encourage the organisation to be agile**. Microwave ovens. Artificial sweeteners. Velcro. Penicillin. Levi jeans. Scotchgard. Safety glass. Ivory soap. Aspirin. Post-it notes. All evolved from initial failures. Leaders encourage everyone to keep moving forward without insisting on perfect information or short-term success.







3. Leaders create a new order to focus everyone on tomorrow.

In 1994, why was Microsoft CEO Bill Gates holding a compact disc while suspended above a forest — just next to a huge stack of paper towering like a tree? He was signaling to everyone in his company that technology could change the world — and change it fast. Paper and ink were doomed.

To move a firm to what's next, **leaders must create a new order**. How to start? As with Gates, the first way is to **frame a new sense of purpose**. When Gates had to get everyone to focus on the Internet, he told all: “Now I assign the Internet the highest level of importance. In this memo I want to make clear that our focus on the Internet is crucial to every part of our business. The Internet is the most important single development to come along since the IBM PC was introduced in 1981.”

Just as Microsoft, then, needed to move toward the Internet, so today its current CEO, Satya Nadella, is moving the company beyond the desktop to **unlock new streams of value**. In brief, he made its cloud platform the umbrella for the whole company, made customers everyone's central focus, moved into the Internet of Things industry — and even into the field of holography. Also, he made sure Microsoft apps worked on all iDevices.

Leaders also emphasize **monitoring progress and making course corrections**. Leveraging the leadership circle, they help set clear milestones and agree to measure progress, constantly. Every leader knows that real progress is never a straight line, and they anticipate the need to make course corrections: it's alarming only if they do not.





PREETI SHARMA MENON

MD, Vira Gabs



0:17 / 1:00



0:17 / 1:00

MD, Vira Gabs

PREETI SHARMA MENON





4. Leaders act with foresense and create their own futures.

The taxi world is in tumult. Consider this headline: “Uber usage by business travelers surpassed taxi and car rentals in 2015.” In India in 2011, Preeti Sharma Menon was busy **creating her own (taxi) future**. Viira (means “courageous woman”) Cabs offers a service *for* women, driven *by* women. All cabs use green technology. Its underprivileged drivers are trained by a sister company, including martial arts techniques — and etiquette. Many have done news features on Viira, including *The Irish Times*.

Menon’s leadership reflects the words of computer sage Alan Kay: “The best way to predict the future is to invent it.” This is the essence of opportunity foresense. How to start? First, leaders **make sure the profile of the business is understandable, shareable, and build-able**. These few words have been the core “drivers” Viira’s business from day one:

Vision	Mission	Goal
Empower women with dignified & sustainable employment.	Promote road safety and green transport systems.	Become India's premier chauffeur and fleet service.

Leaders also **rally and reinforce desired future outcomes**. The spirit that Menon imparts is apparent in Viira’s YouTube video. Menon says that “her company is going to change the way women live and operate in Mumbai.”

Via Viira, Menon **supports others in their endeavours** and, akin to other leaders with foresense, she likely **spots exemplary behaviors to codify and grow leadership skills in others**. India now has other companies similar to Viira Cabs; perhaps it’s the dawn of a whole new industry sector.



Nature evolves. Lives. Grows. *Humans imagine. Invent. Reinvent.* The story is as old as man; humans have used Earth for many achievements and much progress. Though beset by some ills, **the future of mankind remains bright** — fueled by leaders who question all bounds. In the mid-1900s, rocket scientist Wernher von Braun was asked if man will ever grow beyond this planet. He had no doubts. “Don't tell me,” he said, “that man doesn't belong out there. Man belongs wherever he wants to go; and he'll do plenty well when he gets there.”

Be excited.

Be very excited.

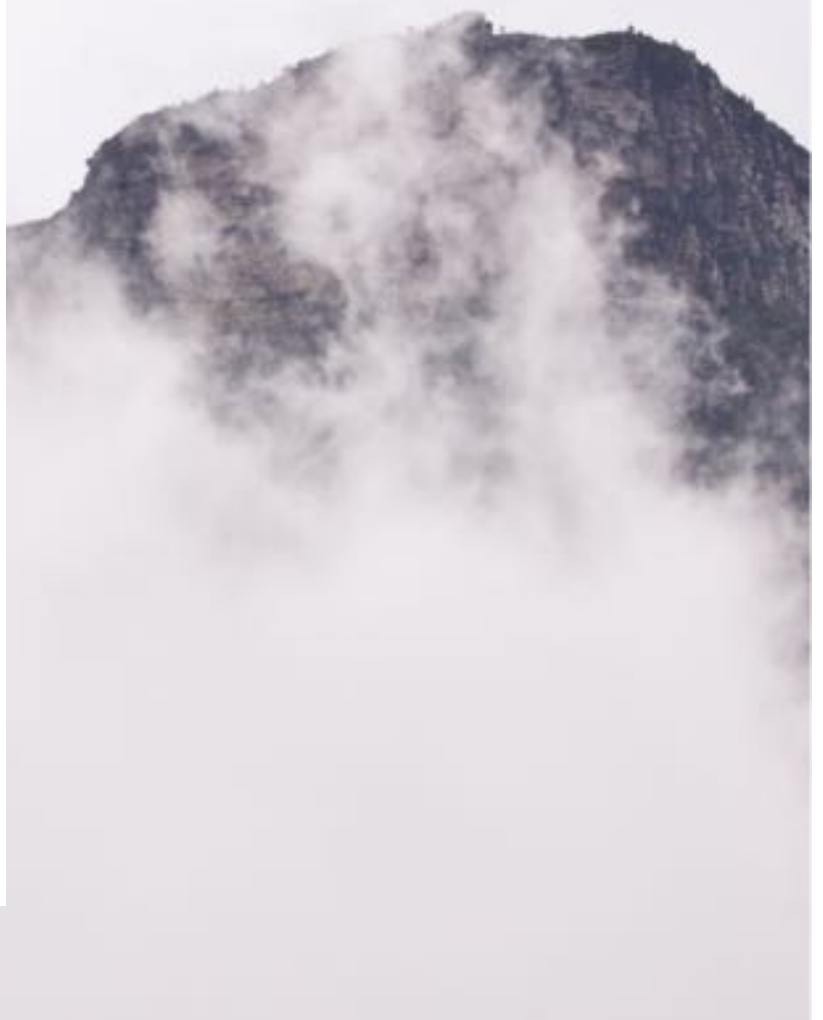


RESOURCES

Dozens of sources were tapped for this e-book; a list of the major sources is available on request.

The core concepts behind the four nextabilities were derived from selected members of our Nextsensor team.

To address major questions, our NextSensors often use the one-page “Opportunity Canvas” (please last two pages). The process of observing-organising-originating-forsensing — as framed on the canvas — led to the projection that tomorrow’s leaders will embrace the nextabilities outlined here.



The fundamentals of nextsensing are explored in three e-books, of which this is third. All are without cost and may be downloaded at www.nextsensing.com.

The Nextsensing Project was launched by Joseph Pistrui in 2012.

The project team's focus is on the challenge of converting disruptive ambiguity into opportunities for entrepreneurially minded leaders.

Whether dealing with individuals, small groups or entire organisations, the project team helps leaders make better sense of emerging opportunities by developing 'opportunity foresense', a novel point of view that helps turn ideas for opportunities into strategic initiatives.

The project team also aims to become the epicentre of best practices for leaders, especially those related to the four nextabilities. For more information, contact joseph.pistrui@nextsensing.com.





Opportunity Foresensing Canvas

The opportunity summary ...

Observing

Your data: List the most critical factors you have observed about the opportunity domain of interest to you.

Organising

Your insights: Refine your observations into patterns and insights. What is happening in this opportunity domain?

Originating

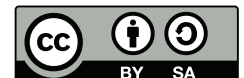
Your point of view: Convert your thinking into a novel point of view. List any interesting, emerging possibilities.

Foresensing

Your best hunch about what novel product-service might form the basis for a new and compelling value proposition.

Your key learning from this process ...

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Opportunity Foresensing Canvas

The opportunity summary ...

Observing

Organising

Originating

Foresensing

Your key learning from this process ...

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