Thoughts from Linda:

The Future Leader
*9 Skills and Mindsets to Succeed
In the Next Decade*

by Jacob Morgan
2020

Baylor University uses this book in their graduate doctoral studies program, where my husband, Tony, earns his EdD. He introduced it to me, and I recommend it to every leader I know today. There are a few reasons for this; all of us are familiar with traditional books on leadership, and in fact, there are many on our collective bookshelves. What is so special about this one?

The timing of the book, along with its content, makes it unique in very specific ways. Since the November 2022 public launch of the AI chatbot, ChatGPT, the world has been in a new conversation about technology's current and future role in our lives. People are now dealing with an understanding of this technology and what it means in macro and micro ways. They are experiencing the rapid pace of the adoption and applications of AI in their businesses and lives. Naturally, how leaders deal with this phenomenon is an issue. This book helps frame the issue and offers advice to leaders in some very practical ways.

This book is not only current but also based on data. Jacob Morgan writes clearly and concisely and has an important message about what is called for from successful leaders in the next decade. He interviewed over 140 CEOs globally from companies such as Unilever, Mastercard, Best Buy, Verizon, Oracle, and Audi. Additionally, he partnered with LinkedIn to add over 14,000 members he surveyed worldwide.

These factors make this an interesting and important read for leaders of organizations, both large and small. There is never before seen research displayed in easy-to-read ways and summarized by the author for quick absorption.

He lays the groundwork by explaining the problem as expressed by those interviewed in his first chapters titled: The Leadership Gap, Three Essential Leadership Questions, The Impact of a Leader, Artificial Intelligence and Technology, Pace of Change, Purpose and Meaning, New Talent Landscape, Morality, Ethics and Transparency, Globalization, Are We Ready for these Trends and Challenges.

He then focuses on what he calls "The Notable Nine,"—which includes four mindsets and five skill sets that he contends leaders of our future will need. The mindsets include The Explorer, The Chef, The Servant, and The Global Citizen. He organized the skillsets as archetypes: The Futurist, Yoda, The Translator, The Coach, and the very significant Technology Teenager.

He wraps up with a chapter entitled How Well Are We Practicing These Skills Today and Knowing vs. Doing. Here are a few interesting facts about leadership and its current state:

o McKinsey predicts that in 2030 the global workforce will be around 3.5 billion people, and there should be somewhere between 87 million to 400 million leaders.
o To support his understanding that leaders today are not doing a great job, he notes that the Center for Generational Kinetics and Ultimate Software just conducted a study that says some "80% of employees say they can do their jobs without their managers and think their managers are unnecessary."
o A RandstadUSA study found that 60% of employees have left jobs or are considering leaving due to not liking their direct supervisors.
o A Gallup study of over 7,000 Americans concluded that managers account for at least 70% of the variance in employee engagement scores.
o The British *Independent* found that 13% of employees even said their bosses are dangerously incompetent at their jobs.
o The seminal Gallup study on employee engagement noted that only 15% of employees worldwide are engaged in their jobs.
o In their latest Global Leadership forecast report of over 25,000 leaders, DDI found that only 42% of those surveyed felt that the overall quality of leadership inside their organizations was high.
o DDI also reported that only 14% of organizations reported having a strong 'bench' of 'ready now' leaders who can step in to replace those who retire or move on.
o To the point of the book, the DDI report, "State of Leadership Development," noted that 50% of organizations surveyed said their leaders are not skilled to lead their organizations today, and alarmingly, 71% said they are not ready to lead into the future.

Clearly, there is a problem. As Morgan inquired with the CEOs in his interviews, "is leadership of 2030 really that different from today?" he received a strong response, calling for new models, mindsets, and skill sets. He noted that on this question, only a small handful said leadership will change so drastically that it will be unrecognizable, and a slightly larger group said that it will stay pretty much the same as it is now. The vast majority of the CEOs replied that "leadership will be based on a set of fundamental existing principles and ideas such as vision and being able to execute on that vision, but that future leaders will need to build on top of these things with a new arsenal of skills and mindsets."

He has a nice treatment of the impact of 'bad leaders' and notes the many advantages of working to develop and promote 'good leadership.' He quotes the Zenger Folkman study, which states that good leaders can double company profits. This report, supplemented by the DDI global leadership numbers, notes that the survey of 15,000 participants globally indicated that organizations with the highest-quality leaders were 13 times more likely to outperform their industry competitors. They also had higher employee retention and engagement, up to three times that of their competitors.

I particularly appreciated his treatment of the technology challenges facing leaders of every organization. As he noted, "Artificial Intelligence and technology was by far the number-one trend that CEOs and employees across all levels identified as most impacting the future of leadership." He noted that PwC, in their annual CEO Survey of over 1300 global leaders, found that 42% of them identified AI as their most prominent topic and believed that "AI will have a larger impact than the internet." To support this thinking, PwC also estimates $15.7 trillion in global GDP gains from AI by 2030.

In a section called "Are the Machines Going to Take Over? Morgan notes that clearly one of the roles that will be most affected is leadership. He said that almost every CEO with whom he spoke was quite optimistic about AI and technology's impact on leadership and the future of work. This belief is because technology will free up our time and resources and allow us to focus on the people inside of organizations, which is what leadership is all about. Contrary to so many articles about 'machines replacing people,' what the CEOs had to say focused on shifts in the workplace and workforce, but not wholesale replacements of people.

He offered several great examples to illustrate this point, including a story of Accenture, which automated over 17,000 employees yet didn't replace a single worker. This example showed how they implemented AI in accounting and finance. Instead of the employees crunching numbers, they were upskilled and retrained to be more like

strategic advisors to help Accenture's clients understand what the numbers mean and what actions they should take. He includes another interesting example of how McDonalds has shifted to become a "customer-experience" organization and has successfully implemented AI to achieve this goal.

There are many individual stories of exceptional leaders from Unilever, McDonalds, Solvay, and others. You will learn more about Julia Child in his chapter on a skillset like that of a chef. And you'll learn about Reed Hastings and his insights from old video stores that led to his concept of Netflix.

As we all contemplate the next 7 to 10 years, exploring different scenarios for our organizations, here are a few exciting and mind-blowing statistics:
- Property built today with a lifespan of 50 years will face technology 30 million times more powerful than today.
- Eleven-year-olds today will see a 64-fold increase in computing power by the time they finish high school.
- An executive moving from graduation to management over 20 years will face technology 500,000 times more powerful than the day they started work.

As we collectively contemplate and prepare for the future, I like ending with this quote from Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, the chairperson, managing director, and founder of Biocon, a biotechnology company with 10,000 employees.

"A leader of the future will have to be astute enough to balance automation with the human touch. They have to decide what types of tasks to automate so that people can spend more time on high-value activities and also decide which businesses will continue to benefit from human judgment."

We can and should use technology to make our organizations more human. The future holds much promise, and this book will help you think about the most significant insights gathered from today's CEOs and help us all re-frame our thinking for our world ahead.