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OUR FUTURE: Projections of Work and Life

Helen Harkness, Guest Editor

- **The Future**
 - **The End of Work as We Know It**
 - **Jobs and Careers on the Front Line of the Future**
 - **Silicon Valley and the New Rules of Work**
 - **Training Challenges Facing Education and Training and Career Development in the Future**
 - **Old people are people too, so let's act accordingly**
 - **Crisis of Human Capital in Aerospace: It's All About the STEM**
 - **College for All – Reality or Flawed Myth?**
 - **Our Jobs: The American Workforce and Economy in Crisis**
 - **The Future Has Arrived: The Future is Now the Present**
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OUR FUTURE: Projections of Work and Life

Looking Ahead with the Journal, by **Steven E. Beasley**, Managing Editor4
Introduction to this Issue, by **Helen Harkness, PhD**, Guest Editor5

Chapter 1: The Future, by **Leigh Ellen Key**8

Chapter 2: The End of Work as We Know It, by **Andy Hines**10

Chapter 3: Jobs and Careers on the Front Line of the Future, by **Gary Marx**20

Chapter 4: Silicon Valley and the New Rules of Work, by **Gary A. Bolles**28

Chapter 5: Training Challenges Facing Education and Training and Career Development in the Future, by **Timothy C. Mack**40

Chapter 6: Old people are people too, so let’s act accordingly, by **Aubrey de Grey** 47

Chapter 7: Crisis of Human Capital in Aerospace: It’s All About the STEM by Deborah Westphal51

Chapter 8: College for All – Reality or Flawed Myth? by **Helen Harkness**54

Chapter 9: Our Jobs: The American Workforce and Economy in Crisis, by **Ed Gordon**65

Chapter 10: The Future Has Arrived: The Future is Now the Present, by **Helen Harkness**77

Other Information

Guidelines for Authors81

Obtaining Back Issues of the Journal83

Joining the Career Planning Network85

Chapter 1

THE FUTURE

by Leigh Ellen Key

Tribalism will not be defined by geography but by an affiliation based on ideas. Ethnicity will play less and less of a role and instead people will affiliate across borders, ethnic groups and economic status to create change through ideas. Idea momentum will be globally shared but actions will be increasingly local. Loyalty will be defined by ideology. The value of safety and security will be redefined as safety through understanding rather than might. *Us and Them* begins to fade as understanding increases. Eventually opportunity will replace fear as a motivator.

Education will become a combination of remote and technological and extremely hands on and experiential. Philosophy and practice will merge and become integral at all levels of education – traditional higher learning and trade education will become equals and this will allow education to become more differentiated – more general and more specific at the same time. Each will carry equal power and weight. The liberal arts and applied trades will at once become more pure and yet more integrated.

Intimacy in relationships, particularly in friendships, partnerships and professional endeavors will become much more important even as technology becomes more widespread. We will be brought together by technology but kept together through intimacy.

Family life will become increasingly diverse. We will return to community-based responsibility for child rearing and development. Birth rates will decrease dramatically in the developing world, and women will become significant thought leaders and political leaders. Power definitions will change as a result. Influence will replace Might, with manipulation rather than physical dominance as the shadow side.

Wealth definition will become more egalitarian, and classes will be defined by their viewpoint rather than socio-economic status.

Life span will increase and health care will become a personalized medicine endeavor. Tailored and targeted procedures and drugs will become the norm as genomic medicine dominates on the one hand and low-tech preventive lifestyle medicine on the other hand. Big Pharma will die. Boutique medicine, genomics, nano-medicine, and coaching will prevail.

In fact, Big Anything will die. Corporations, Infrastructure, Governments. A networked nodal model will take over connecting smaller entities such as cities, small businesses, and local organizations to solve systemic problems. Infrastructure will become dispersed and repetitive rather than big and systemic. These local nodes will connect to facilitate communication rather than transportation. Massive urban infrastructure will slowly be replaced by non-infrastructure dependent technologies and ways of relating.

Religion will become more community-based – less formally organized, and less patriarchal. It will still be important.

Shared ownership will become popular in living and transportation situations. Urban development will become increasingly village-like such that urban neighborhoods and rural villages will have more in common than not. The same technological and governmental systems and best practices will apply to both.

Success will be redefined and a more personal pursuit. Generations will be more distinctive because the pace of change will increase and intergenerational sharing of knowledge and wisdom will become more valuable and valued.

Corporate structures will be more diverse and low-return for-profit models will become popular investment options. Meaning over money will become popular and as the social benefits play out, a more common mainstream investment option, even over philanthropic giving. As such, there will be significantly more funding internationally from private sources rather than public ones.

About the author



Leigh Ellen Key is changing the career paradigm from one of frustration with “finding a job” to enthusiasm and determination in “designing your career.” She is currently launching a business based out of Dallas-Ft. Worth that will directly impact how young adults choose and manage their careers over their lifetime and how universities and other institutions deliver career services. As a non-profit executive, she has designed and managed adult experiential education programs and services at an internationally acclaimed yoga and holistic health educational retreat. These programmatic experiences and trainings directly assisted clients in changing their lifestyles and self-limiting beliefs in order to transform their lives. She also has assisted nonprofit Boards in developing and managing their mission, organization, programs, and fundraising. Before finding this career path, she had extensive deal structuring and marketing, strategic planning, and financial analysis experience in the energy industry.

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