

### The Circular Path: Building A Regenerative Future

Sustainability has shifted from an aspiration to an imperative. Pamela Peeters, environmental economist, emphasizes: *“My passion lies deeply with Mother Earth, driving me to unify people in protecting and taking care of nature.”*

Regenerative practices, renewable energy, and circular economies hold the key to reversing ecological harm. By prioritizing sustainability, we can build a future where economic and environmental goals coexist harmoniously, preserving Earth for future generations.

### Earth’s Fragile Threads: Protecting Our Planetary Tapestry

The fragility of Earth’s ecosystems reminds us of our interconnectedness. Queen Diambi Kabatusuila advocates for blending ancient wisdom with modern solutions: *“The solutions to heal our Earth often lie in the wisdom of those who have lived in harmony with nature for centuries.”*

From AI-driven conservation to carbon capture, innovative technologies offer hope for restoring balance. Protecting ecosystems is not optional—it is essential for humanity’s survival.

### The Final Ascent: Reimagining Health And Longevity

Advances in genomics, personalized medicine, and digital health are transforming wellness. As Dr. Jaffer Khan, Founder of AEON Clinic, boldly predicts: *“The child who is going to live to 150 is already born.”*


This new paradigm focuses on extending health spans alongside lifespans, emphasizing preventive care, emotional well-being, and equitable access to medical innovations. A reimagined approach to health prioritizes vitality, connection, and joy as central to the human experience.

### Conclusion: The More Technological We Become, The More Human We Must Be

As we look to the future, innovation is what defines and enables us to succeed and thrive. A timeless truth emerges: *“The more technological we become, the more human we need to be.”*

This is not a warning but a guiding principle. Professor Marshall Goldsmith reminds us: *“Our mission in life is to make a positive difference, not to prove how smart or right we are.”*

True progress lies in balancing innovation with humanity—elevating lives, fostering connection, and building legacies that

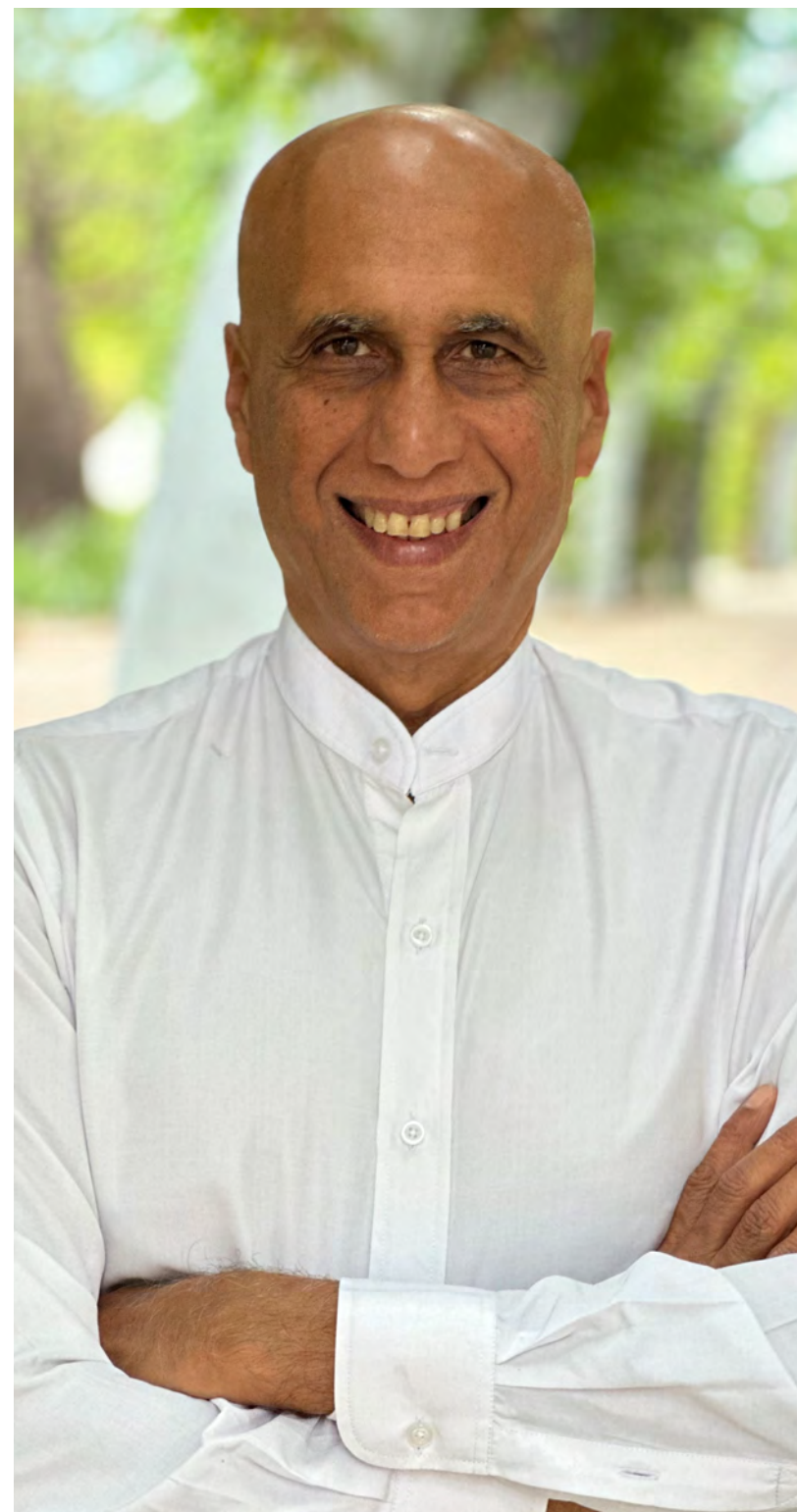
inspire generations. The journey to 2025 is not inevitable; it is an opportunity to shape a future rooted in ethics, resilience, and love. Together, we can walk this path and make a meaningful difference for humanity, business, and the world. 

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# The Gods On Mount Olympus And Golden Chains

by Sohail Inayatullah



**N**arratives or stories help us understand the changing world and then find more appropriate stories for the futures we wish to create.

My approach on understanding and creating futures has two legs. The first is the narrative.<sup>1</sup> The second are scenarios.<sup>2</sup>

In the narrative, when we engage in foresight work, we first ask what is the narrative, the core metaphor?

### Transforming The Narrative

With one nation’s superannuation/pension scheme, the fund managers said, *“we are the gods on Mount Olympus.”* However, once we looked at the futures of risk and their sense that dramatic accelerating and uneven change would deeply challenge their work, they suggested a better metaphor was, *“teach the children financial literacy.”* For them, this meant that finances needed to become more and democratized for them. At the very least, the rules of money needed to be understood instead of just assumed that experts understood the future, like gods.

One public-enterprise organization investigated the ‘futures of finances’. They concluded that they needed to diversify. When asked, as to their current metaphor, they said, they were like Cinderella waiting for the kiss – funding – from Prince Charming. But who was the Prince,” I asked. They said, the prince was the government, they were always waiting for him to deliver their annual grant funds. The goal then was to find a better story for Cinderella to change either by becoming the Prince herself or becoming the fairy godmother or moving from a passive role to retraining and becoming an entrepreneur. Ivana Milojevic in her work on *The Heroine’s Journey (2022)*<sup>3</sup> has rewritten classic fairy tales with alternative endings, the pauper transforming into the gold maker, for example. But the story is not just about wealth but about following the golden rule – ethics – and creating a new golden age for humanity.

With one international research medical centre, they too explored alternative funding models. They saw themselves as a 100-pound gorilla. For them, this meant that they had an inflexible corporate structure and a model of funding that was overly reliant on one institution. They shifted their core metaphor to the Hive. This to meant that they would become far nimbler, would commit to different funding streams (citizen

science, global funding, long term funding cycles, targeted grant applications)

Recently, a national government suggested that their pension system too had the wrong metaphor. Their earlier metaphor was that of counting pennies, saving dollars, annually. While this gave them agency, it ignored the changing nature of the markets. Instead, they suggested far more useful would-be seeing savings like a car navigation system. In this narrative, there is a back and forth in terms of directions as well as now real time information on roadblocks, congestion, and other disturbances. In both cases, the old narrative of finances and savings was not working.

The narrative futures approach is not just useful at the collective level, it can be powerful and personal levels too. One young man when he asked how he saw his parents said, “*they are like an ATM.*” The parents did not evaluate or judge but worked with him overtime to change his narrative. Eventually over time, he became a bank himself, i.e. earned and became independent.

Another senior at an international development bank was frustrated that the Executive Team did not use his policy recommendations. Every year they would increase his salary but never listen to his suggestions. He said he felt like a man with golden chains. Once he articulated his new vision – far more agency, real world impacts – he changed his story to the “*Midas Touch.*”

Narratives or stories help us understand the changing world and then find more appropriate stories for the futures we wish to create.

## Scenarios

Stories, of course, are deep seated possibilities. When moving to the macrolevel and thinking through world futures, our work has identified four scenarios.<sup>4</sup> These are members only, membership expands, the new club and after the club. The linked metaphors are the invisible hand, the visible hands, shared hands, and magical hands.

### The Invisible Hand

In this future, the current system does not change. It continues to provide value by convincing those outside of the system that they too can get rich if they work hard enough – the Protestant ethic is the guiding worldview. Individuals do not smite the rich because they wish to become rich. The system stays stable as the middle class continues to grow and efficiencies from new technologies create a reduction in absolute poverty. The invisible hand continues.

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### Visible Hands

In this future, the current system retains its vitality by bringing more goods and more people – females, workers, nations - to the table. Downturns are managed as are disruptions from Artificial Intelligence through a universal basic income/assets regime and other ways to ensure purchasing capacity. The transition from the fossil fuel system to renewables is made step by step. As old industries die, new ones are created. The digital and peer-to-peer era creates its own new skill sets. As climate change and pandemics continue, novel economic models are trialed – for example, the circular economy, economy, regenerative economy, and the *prama* economy.<sup>5</sup> The club thus expands to include more stakeholders. The hands become visible.


### Shared Hands

In this future, the numerous crises and contradictions force the creation of a new club. Instead of the single bottom line, a quadruple bottom line is created: prosperity, people, planet, and purpose (spirit). We shift from the ‘corporatist’ model to the ‘cooperativist’ model. New platforms are created that do not just enhance efficiency, as with the sharing economy, but to ensure that labour-knowledge becomes far more important than capital ownership. Those who led in the corporatist model no longer do so. From accumulation for the sake of accumulation, we shift to a world of meaning making. There is an abundance at all levels. Wellbeing – of self, others, nature, and community - becomes far more important. Nature even is granted legal rights. Indeed,

the shift from GDP to Wellbeing as the dominant metrics is successful. Identity shifts from nationalism, and I shop therefore I am to create and contribute; therefore, I and we are. The rules have changed. AI helps drive not just efficiency but transformation. Shared hands create a prosperous future for all.

### Magical Hands

In the last future, dramatic gains in artificial intelligence end the scarcity-based world economic system. Cellular agriculture plays a pivotal role in ending hunger. Global renewable energies, including direct beaming of sunlight through modified Dyson spheres, create a world with an abundance of energy. Ownership disappears as we live in a world of flow. Capitalism becomes a distant memory. Money too disappears as needs can be directly met. Work is design based and about resolving conflicts between individuals and collectivities. The emotional and spiritual economy thrives. Notions of tribal identity disappear, indeed, with the invention of the artificial womb, procreation is forever delinked from the body. We are co-creators with technology and nature. We co-evolve.

While we do not know which future will be created, what is clear critical decisions are in front of us, including the narratives we use to make meaning and reality. The narrative shift in these scenarios suggest a move from “I don’t have enough, and I am not enough,” to “*Abundance for all and finding a new purpose to being human.*” 

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<sup>4</sup> Inayatullah, S. (! July 2022). *The Invisible Hand or Inclusive Flow? The Futures of the World System*. *Journal of Futures Studies*. <https://jfsdigital.org/2022/07/the-invisible-hand-or-inclusive-flow-the-futures-of-the-world-system/>

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