

The Potentialist: Your Future in the New Reality of the Next Thirty Years

Ben Lytle

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The Potentialist is a provocative self-help book that looks toward the future, arguing that people should chart new career paths and improve their lives.

Ben Lytle's intriguing self-help book *The Potentialist* names strategies for facing the coming life and career revolutions brought about by amazing changes in technology.

In contemporary times, when it comes to work, Lytle observes that distance matters less, transparency is increasing, and relationship skills are of paramount importance. His book suggests that these trends will continue: the "pace of change and innovation will accelerate, exponentially," thereby forcing people to deal with adaptive challenges—and with the volatility that results from shifts in the status quo. Theory related to such changes dominates the book's early sections, which name ten emerging trends that are predicted to alter how people live and work. These notions are intriguing: Lytle posits a world without technological privacy, and wherein people have "superhuman" abilities, thanks to links to cloud computing and technology.

Real world changes and developments are included to support the book's theories, as with Elon Musk's note that "the technology already exist[s] to fly people from Los Angeles to London in twenty-three minutes, and to anywhere in the world in under one hour." Detailed explorations of the highlighted trends amplify this work, as with moves away from trial and error approaches, and "sweeping [social] changes [that] will alter the fabric of daily life and belief systems." The result is a clear introduction to an optimistic future—one that suggests that humans are changing for the better.

But here, the "big question" is not what will happen, but how individuals should prepare for the coming changes. Thus, the book's predictive work gives way to practical suggestions for courting success in the coming decades. As examples, it shares elaborate anecdotes that imagine how the changes might impact certain individuals—as with the story of a woman feeling stuck in her accounting career, who uses artificial intelligence and technology to start a business with gig workers. Her tale is used to indicate the decreasing importance of distance and location in a business's development. Such examples have a humanizing affect.

The book closes with advice for developing personal brand strategies and understanding what work will look like in the future. A few self-help quizzes are included, but the book's primary tool is the power of its ideas, which are both inspirational and adaptive.

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JEREMIAH ROOD (May 16, 2022)

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