



Pushing Our Horizons: Tackling the Big, Hairy Challenges of the Next 20 Years

@GrantLichtman
@VAISTweets

Agenda

- **The framing questions:**
 - **Why change?**
 - **What is it?**
 - **What is inevitable in the next 20 years?**
 - **How to change?**
- **Two rounds of tackling big questions.**
- **Deep dive**
- **Focus on “how”**

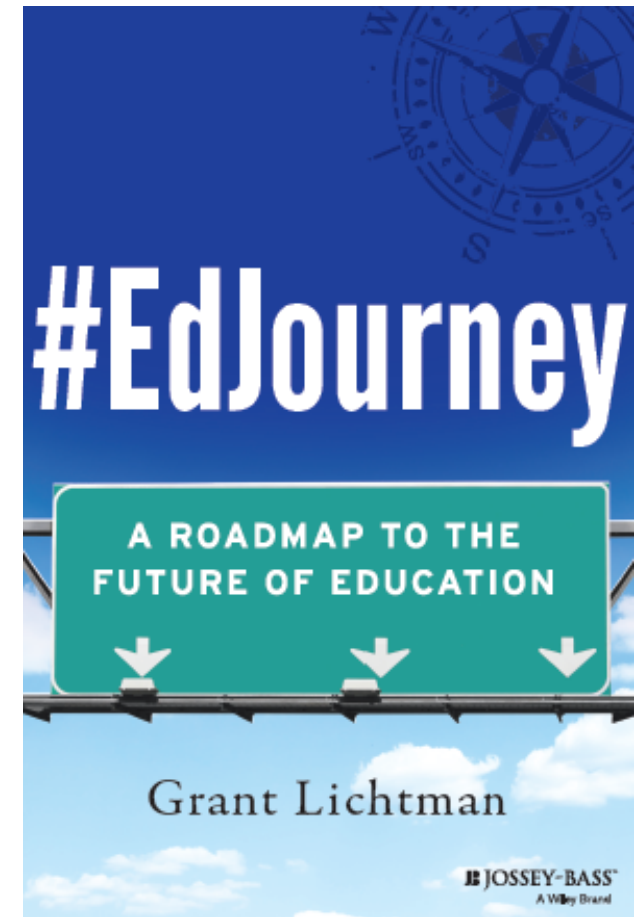
Goals

- Push our current time and thinking horizons
- Wrestle with big questions we need to ask
- Moving from the “why” and “what” of school change to the “how”.
- Capturing our collective thinking within four framing elements: Mission, Learning Experience, People, and Operations

**What does innovation
mean for education?**

What is working?

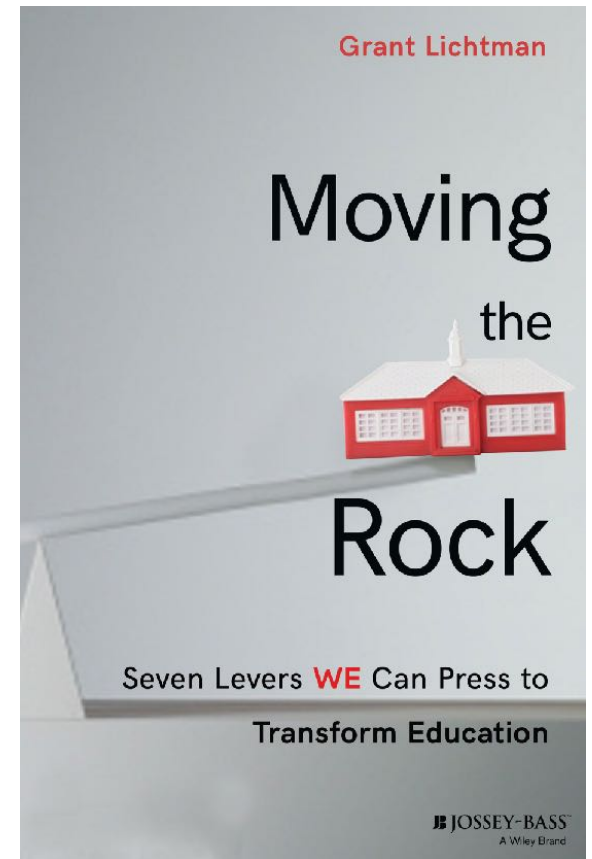
**How are we overcoming
obstacles to change?**



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Big levers for transformation...

- **Creating demand**
- **Community learning**
- **Open educational resources**
- **Measuring what we value**
- **Teacher training**
- **Leadership skills**



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a moment of peak learning...

the why, what, how, and future of education...

the call

the “why”

its not just about jobs



MUTATION:
**Global shift in
relationship
between
providers and
consumers**

education market pre-2000

- **Public neighborhood schools** ——— • **Free**
- **Parochial schools** ————— • **\$X**
- **Independent day schools** ————— • **\$2X**

education market today

- **Neighborhood**
- **Social-Structured**
- **Charter**
- **Magnet**
- **Choice**
- **Home**
- **Online**
- **After school**
- **Hybrid**
- **Parochial**
- **Other faith-based**
- **Hacked**
- **Independent day**
- **Boarding**

“Free”



Affordable to < 1%

In 25 years, schools will all fall into one of three categories:

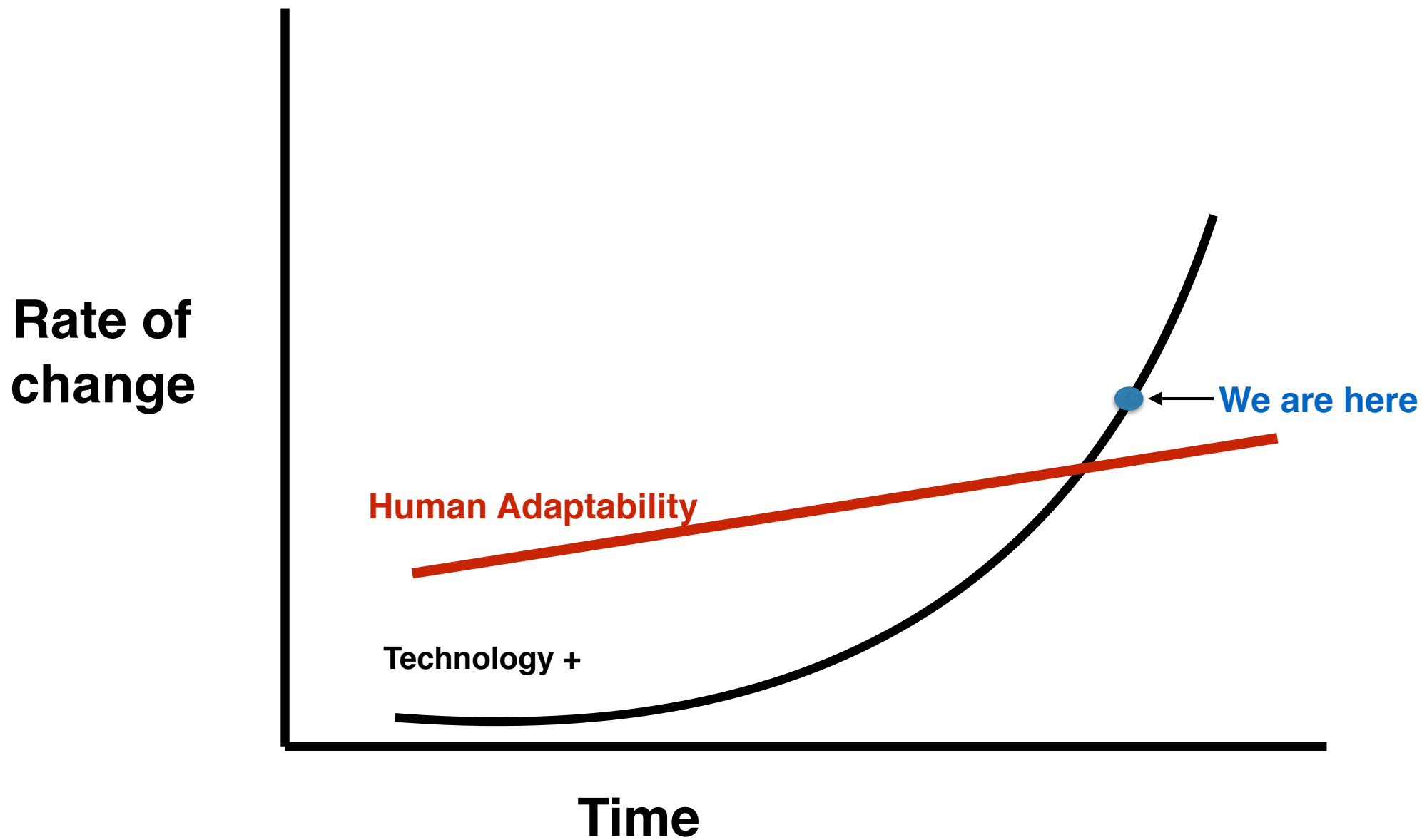
Insulated by some combination of market, legacy, demand, and finances

Highly differentiated by program or brand

Struggling/failing

The image features a complex, three-dimensional network of glowing, fiber-like structures against a solid black background. These structures, which resemble neurons or neural connections, are colored in a gradient: blue and cyan on the left, transitioning through green and yellow in the upper right, and then through orange and red in the lower right. The fibers are interconnected at various points, creating a dense, web-like pattern that fills the entire frame. The lighting is soft and diffused, giving the fibers a translucent, ethereal appearance.

welcome to the cognitosphere



Eric Teller, in Thomas Friedman,
Thank You for Being Late

So...why transform our schools?

We must

We want to

We know better

We can

the “what” today

community connection curiosity inspiring excitement success
wonder imagination curioisity amazing
possibility overcome integrity love confidence independence
individuality compassion challengeing kids reflective
meaningful growth intelligence purpose risk exploration
agency focus fun choice care voice positive dynamic
moment activity hope rigor progress inspring joy empathy
comfortable safe acceptance relationships potential inquiry equity
transformative flexible mindful happy
competitiveness openness dare motivation collaboration energy
leadership spirit respect inclusive authentic preparation quality commitment
pride impact fearless kindness experimenting diversity
awesomeness resilience optimism ownership engagement
perserverance listening forward passion evolving
enthusiasm opportunity excellence empowered
grit learning student-led believe exhilaration experience ingenuity

what we teach



how we learn



DEEPER LEARNING

```
graph TD; A[DEEPER LEARNING] --- B((STUDENT ENGAGEMENT)); A --- C((INCREASING CURIOSITY)); A --- D((STUDENT CENTRISM));
```

**STUDENT
ENGAGEMENT**

**INCREASING
CURIOSITY**

**STUDENT
CENTRISM**

“Deeper Learning Cheat Sheet”
www.grantlichtman.com/Resources

“The Box”



- **Time**
- **Physical space**
- **Subject**
- **Campus boundaries**
- **Age of student**
- **Student:teacher ratio**

WE HAVE TO BUILD A NEW OPERATING SYSTEM

www.grantlichtman.com/resources

stop and take a breath, Grant

A few questions or comments?

the future

some big, inevitable changes

the “how”

three big questions

Big Question #1: What is our “extra chunky”?



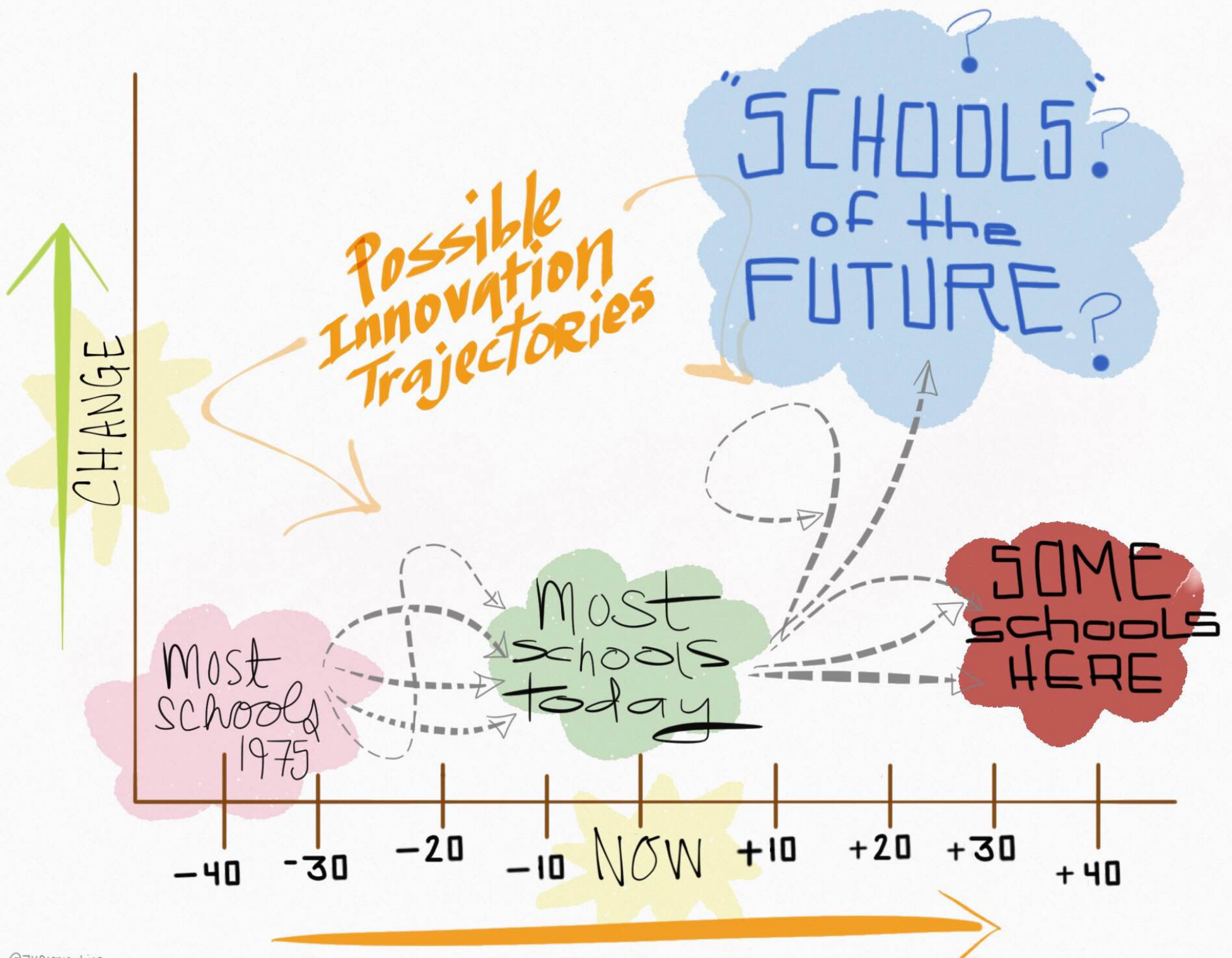
Big Question #2: What are we watching?




Big Question #3: How will we manage our horizons?

What is it in our organizations and structures that make it challenging to pursue a longer-term vision for our future; what can we do to refocus our sense of time and magnitude of our goals?

trajectory





Horizon 1: Known;
incremental;
modernizing curriculum

Horizon 2 : Semi-
known; new pathways
& centers of
excellence

Horizon 3 :
Unknown;
revolutionary; create
a school of
consequence

Are we ready to push out to the “Third Horizon”?

Using the Brains in the Room

Big Themes

- About 20 mins to generate essential questions and ideas
- Use post it notes and allocate to:



- Share out some reflections

Round One

**What is it in our organizations and structures as independent schools that make it challenging to pursue a longer-term vision for our future
(*comfort with the familiar, the inertia of success, head turnover, board term limits, annual contracts, cyclical nature of the school year, etc.*)**

What can we do to overcome these challenges?

Round Two

What are the changes and forces external to schools (*what will happen*) that will change us and what are the changes internal to schools that are within our control (*what do we want to have happen*)?

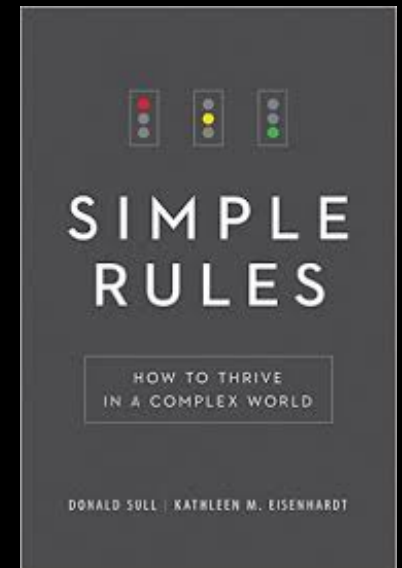
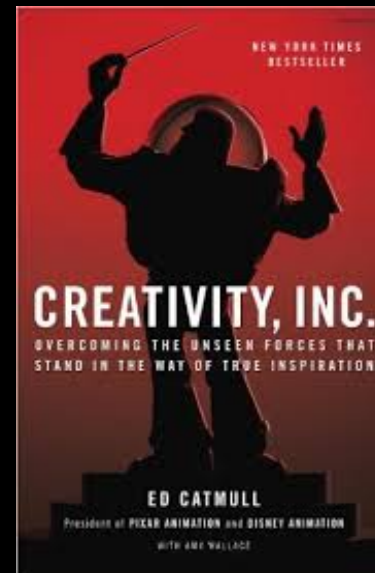
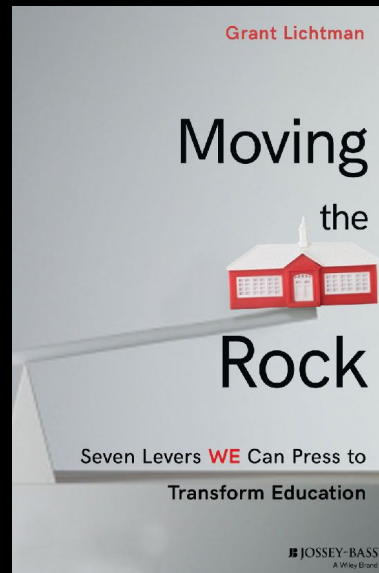
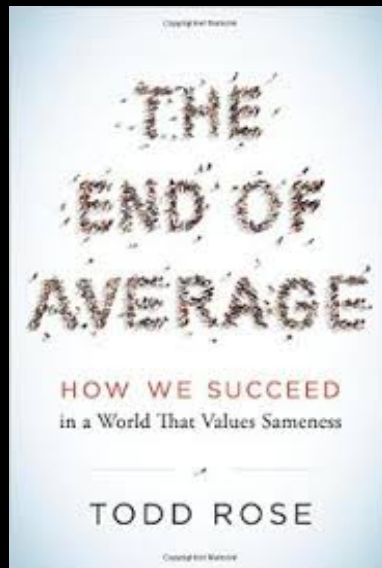
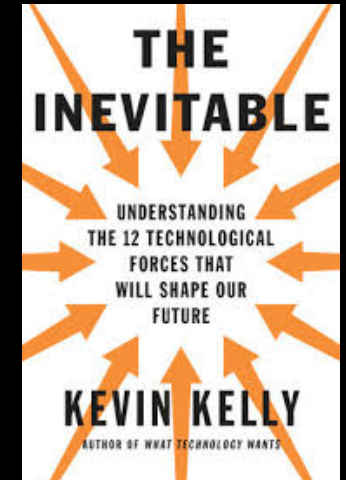
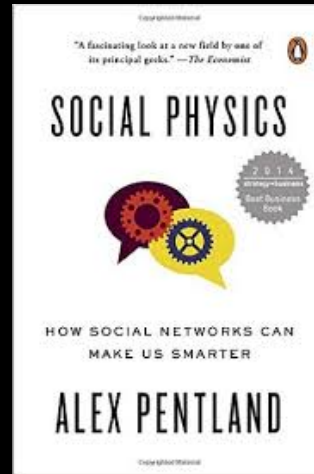
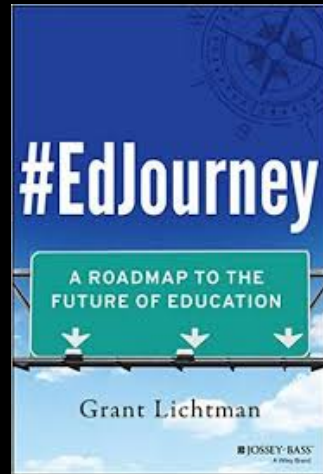
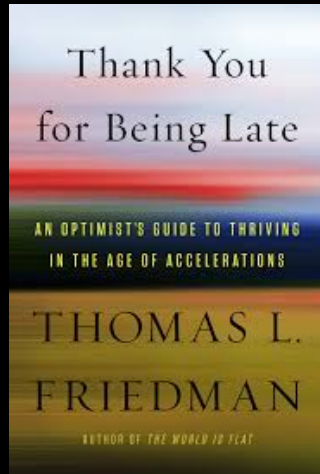
Round Three

What does it mean to shift schools from being “teaching organizations” to schools as “learning organizations”?

Which traditions are important to preserve and which traditions hamper this shift to a long-term growth mindset?

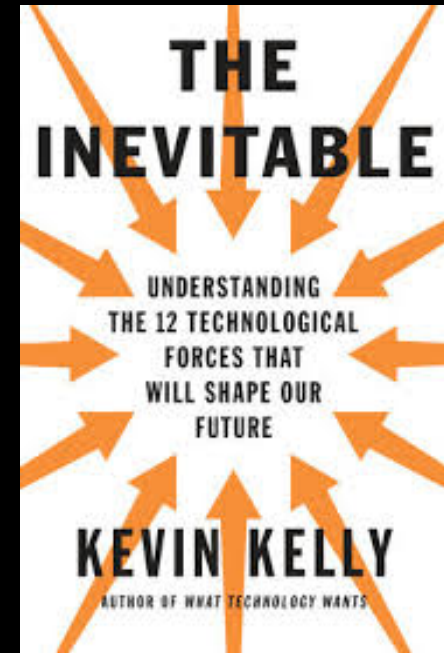
How will your school make this shift?

Essential Reading



Eight “generatives” that are better than free:

- **Immediacy**
- **Personalization**
- **Interpretation**
- **Authenticity**
- **Accessibility**
- **Embodiment**
- **Patronage**
- **Discoverability**



My Five Big, Hairy Challenges

**Big learning challenges: civil discourse, expertise,
fact and opinion, science, global stewardship.**

Evolution is not kind.

Adapting to a world of AI and VR.

Re-aligning assessment with intrinsic motivation.

**Finding differentiated value
at the margins of our experience**

Deep Dive

Select a theme:

Mission

People

Learning Experience

Operations and Facilities

Use the ideas generated during Rounds 1-3

What are some bold ideas that stand out that might be worth further ideation as we look out 20+ years?

How to Lead These Discussions at Your School

SHIFT BIG THINKING

FROM

INWARD

BACKWARD

EPISODIC

MEDIUM TERM

TACTICAL

TO

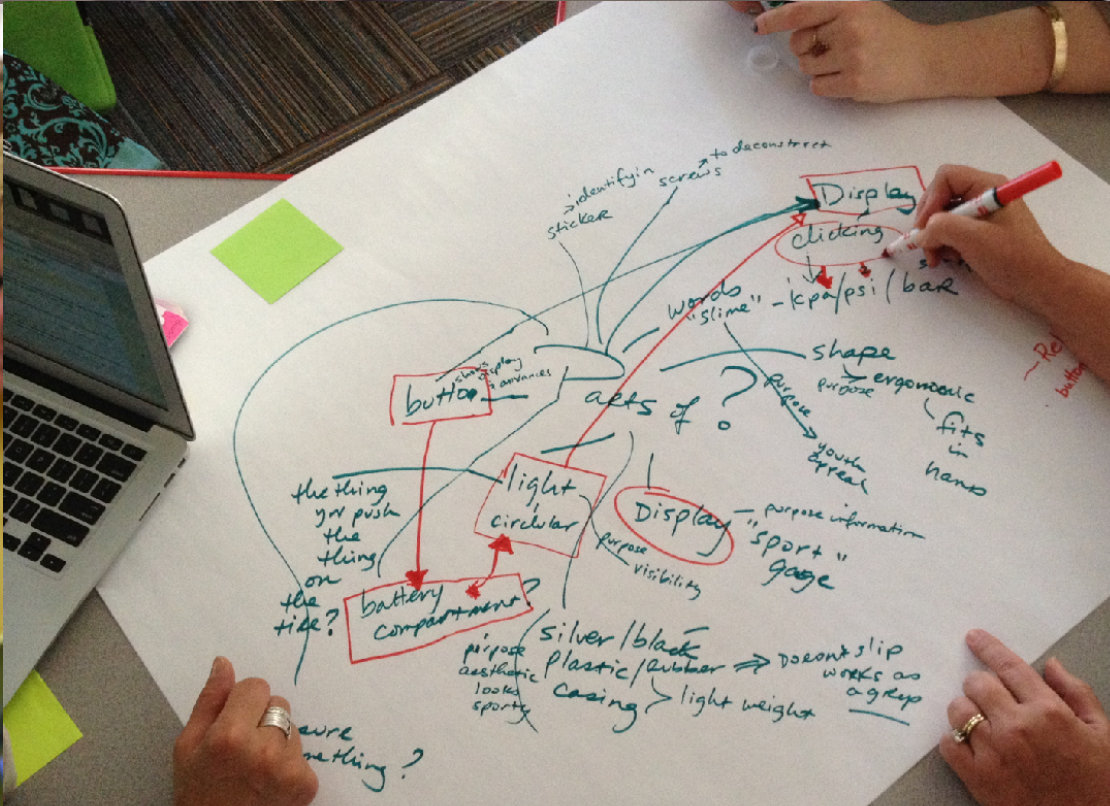
OUTWARD

FORWARD

ONGOING

LONG RANGE

STRATEGIC



expansive...transparent...inclusive...systemic...ongoing...messy

steps

- **Create a sense of urgency around a big opportunity**
- **Unwrap and articulate a North Star**
- **Attract a growing volunteer army**
- **Accelerate movement by removing barriers**
- **Design and test**
- **Visibly celebrate significant early wins**
- **Institutionalize changes in culture**

Modified from Kotter, HBR 2012

Getting Started

- **Community discussion: What is great learning?**
- **What if?**
- **Ask the big questions**
- **Frequency, inclusion, listening**



LOGIC MODEL

INPUTS

ACTIVITIES

OUTCOMES

IMPACTS

**WHAT
RESOURCES
DO YOU
NEED?**

**WHAT WILL
YOU DO?

HOW WILL
YOU APPLY
THESE
RESOURCES?**

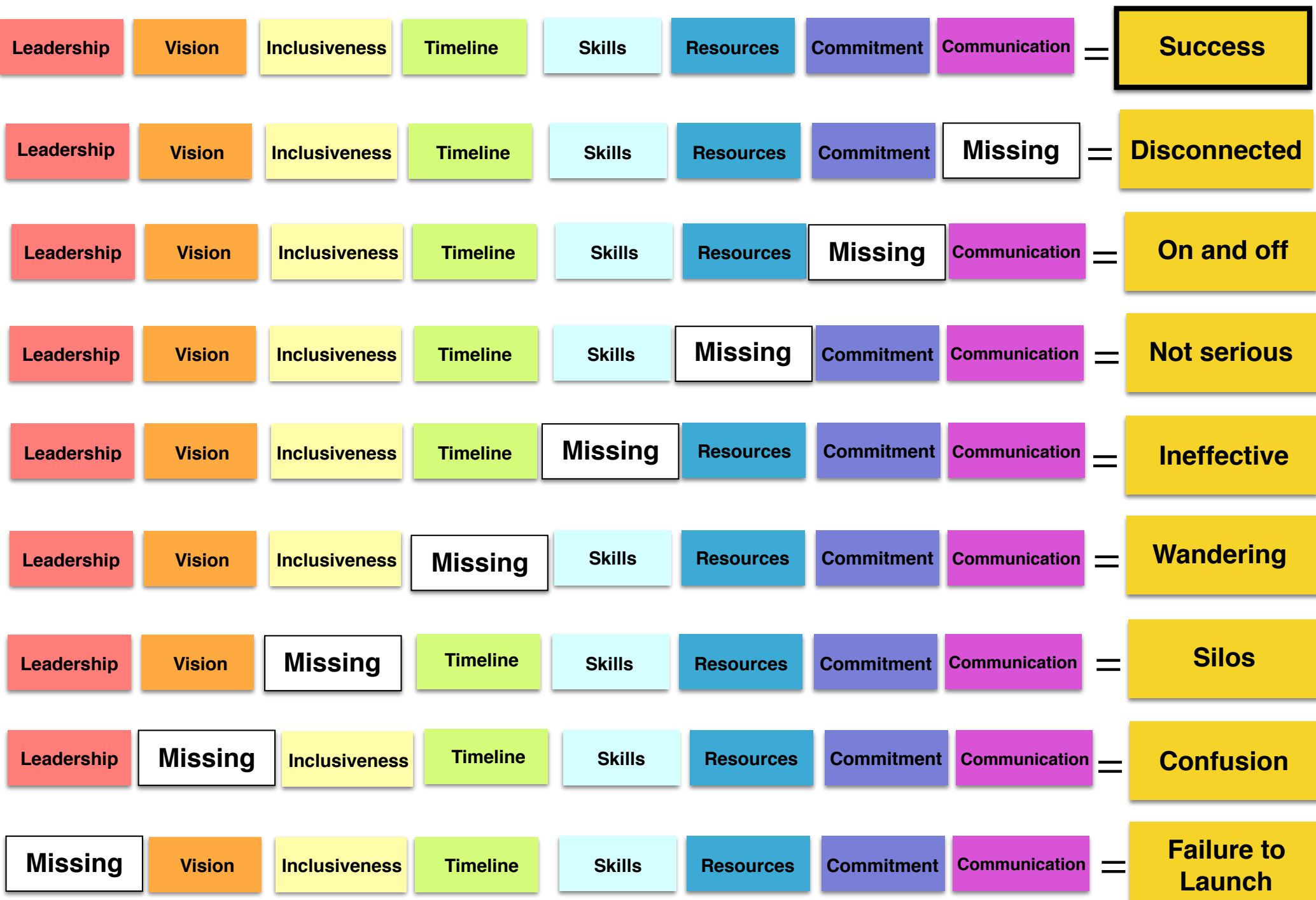
**HOW WILL
STUDENTS
AND
TEACHERS
BENEFIT?**

**WHAT
CHANGES IN
THE SCHOOL
OR
COMMUNITY
DO YOU WANT
TO SEE?**

YOUR PLANNED WORK

YOUR INTENDED RESULTS

Stairway of Successful Innovation



Grant Lichtman, 2014; *(expanded from M. Lippett, 1987 and T. Knoster, 1991)*