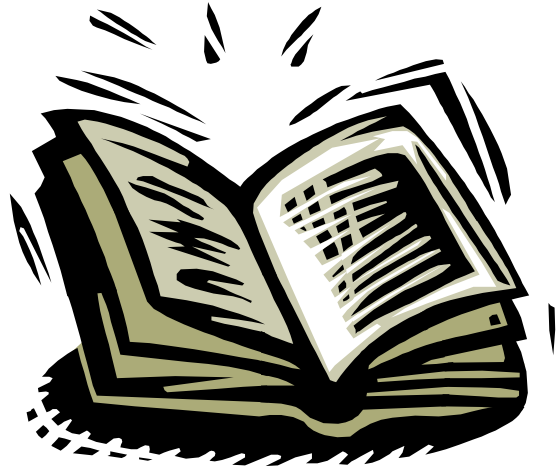


# From Foresight Foreplay to Corporate Consummation

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## A literary journey through futures

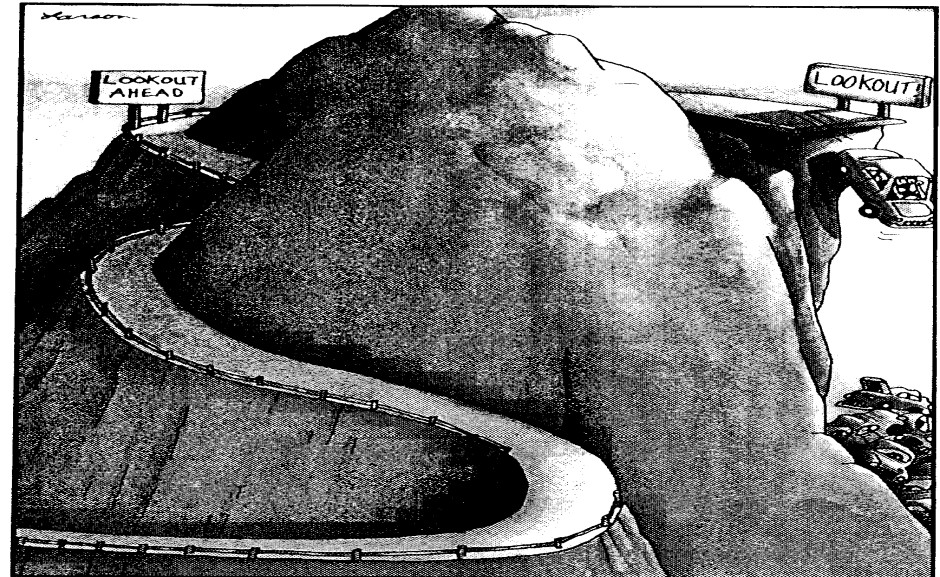
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## Today's purpose

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- A look back at the relationship between foresight and corporations, intertwined with some *classic* futures novels
- A chance to share *war stories*, to create a shared understanding around where we have come from, where we are at, and where we want to go
- An opportunity to *learn* from each other's experiences

# The Three Orphans

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## *It's the 1950's...*

The times were far more conservative than today but there was a blossoming of interest in learning, experimenting and discovering.

In many small towns the annual dance was the way that the parents and communities controlled the development of relationships. The boys groomed and the girls preened to ensure they made the best possible impression because the goal was to 'dance'.

Everyone knew what the dance was really for but times being what they were, people were far too polite and good mannered to mention anything other than dancing. At the Town Hall girls stood on one side of the room and the boys stood on the other side, each side eyeing the other nervously.

## The Three Orphans

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For some just the thought of dancing caused deliriousness. They never learned to understand what dancing was all about and let others do the dancing for them.

Others spent plenty of time talking with their friends about dancing but someone else had to make the first move. They never learned to do anything but talk about dancing and became experts at talking about dancing.

And then there were the rare few who actually danced – all the way. In one small town 9 months after the annual Town Hall Dance, Three children were born and quickly sent out for adoption.

Their names were... ***'Strategy', 'Marketing' and 'Foresight'***



## The Three Orphans

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Each of the three orphans had dreams of working in big business, and over the years they worked towards their goal of making an impact... with varying degrees of success...

With his grand vision, **'Strategy'** graduated from Harvard and found a role with a major firm in the Big Apple.



With his good looks and smooth talking, **'Marketing'** also proved a winner with firms all around the world.



So, whatever happened to **'Foresight'**?



## Pierre Wack – Head of Scenario Planning @ Shell: 1970-1982

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When we presented the scenarios to the second layer in Shell, to what we call Co-ordinators. Co-ordinator of Exploration, Production and their team, Co-ordinator of Manufacturing and their team, we get an unusual degree of interest. And we have long session and even sometimes enthusiasm. People really were quite pleased by this new approach compared to the previous UPM which was characterised by an abundance of figures and number crunching. So they really seemed to like it. And we got maybe the impression that they would really act on it.

When it came down to it a very small fraction only of the critical decision-makers were really acting on those scenarios. They were capable of generating an intellectual interest but not really action.

Now, I'm sure what I'm going to say now does not apply to your company but I can tell you it applies in all other companies. **Usually future-oriented studies have a very low effectiveness. In fact I have difficulty to see any other example of studies which have a form of effectiveness as low as future-oriented studies.** And then sometimes a study which is not even good, which is quite mediocre in substance, has an out of proportion effectiveness.

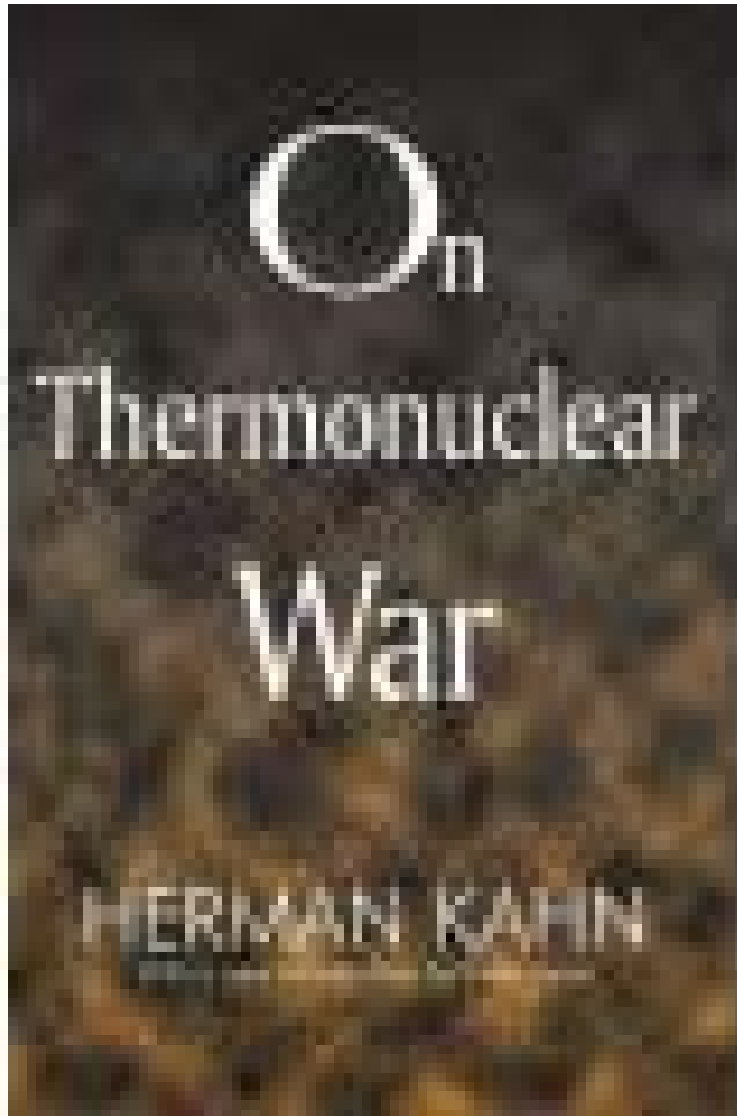
# Some Questions for Today

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- Is this an accurate or even reasonable reflection of our 'profession'?
- If so, What actions are causing it?
- What can we learn from it?
- What can we do better for next time?

# Thinking the Unthinkable

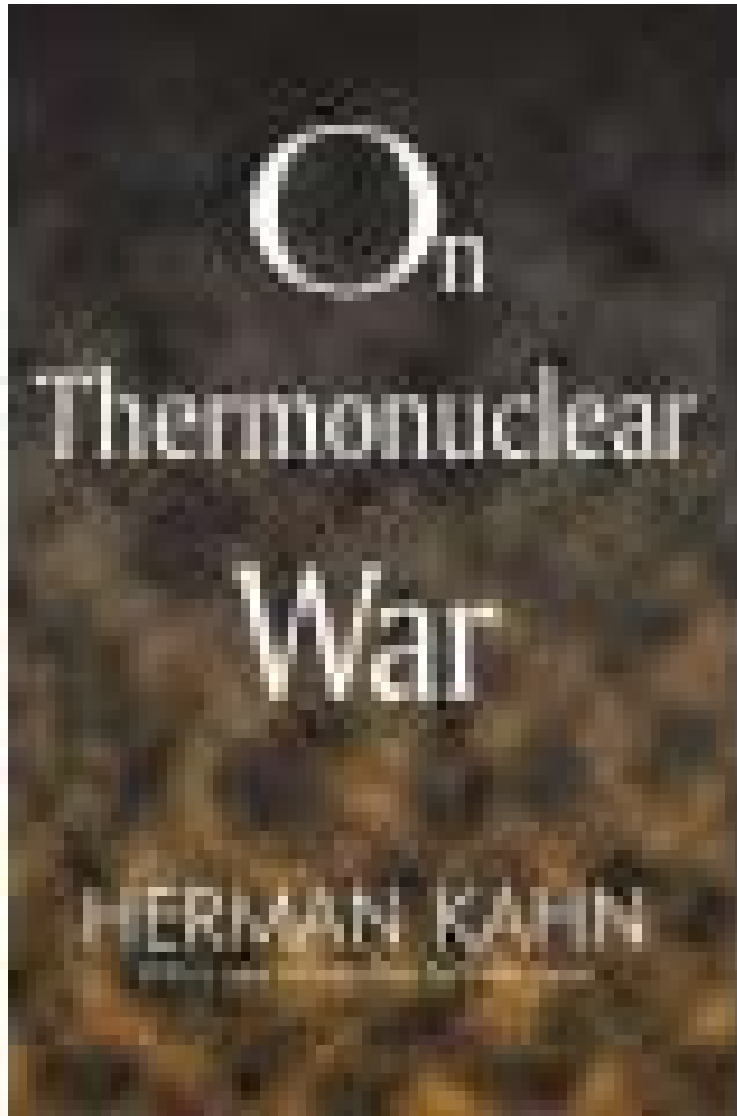
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- Herman Kahn, 1960
- That it is possible to win a Thermo-nuclear war
- Conditions for victory given constant destructive elements

# Thinking the Unthinkable

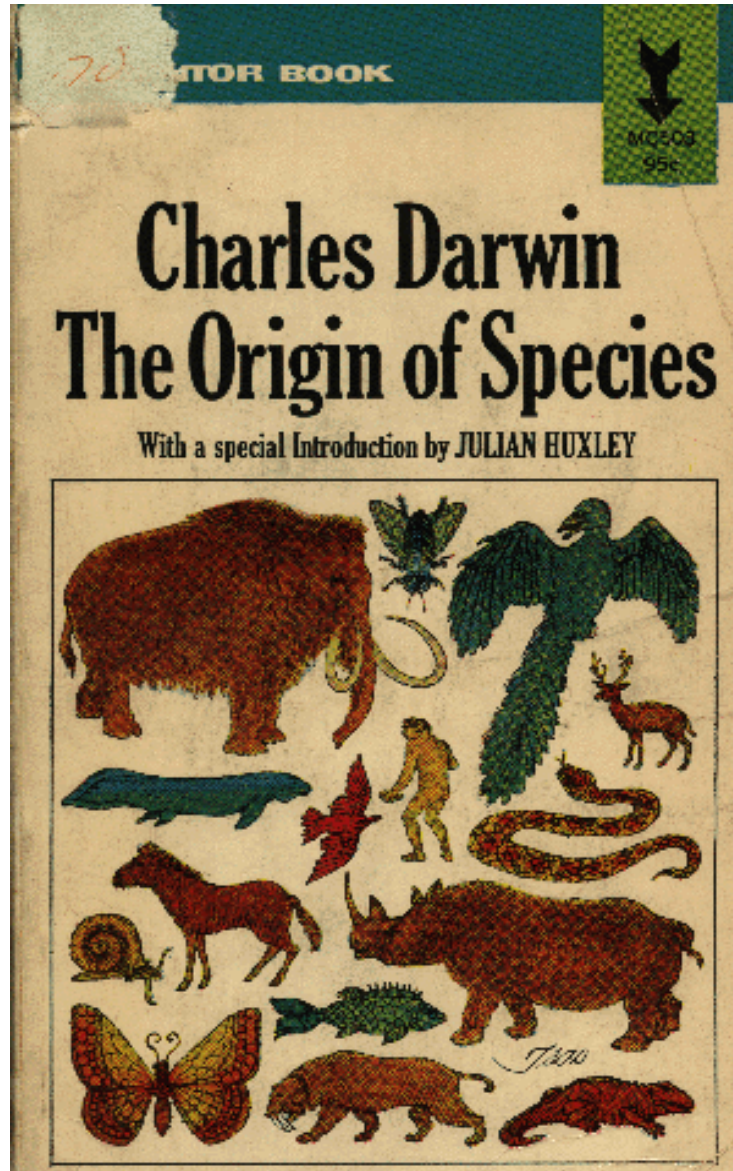
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- What does it mean for us?
- What are the challenges we have faced?
- The bombs we have survived?

# The Origin of Species

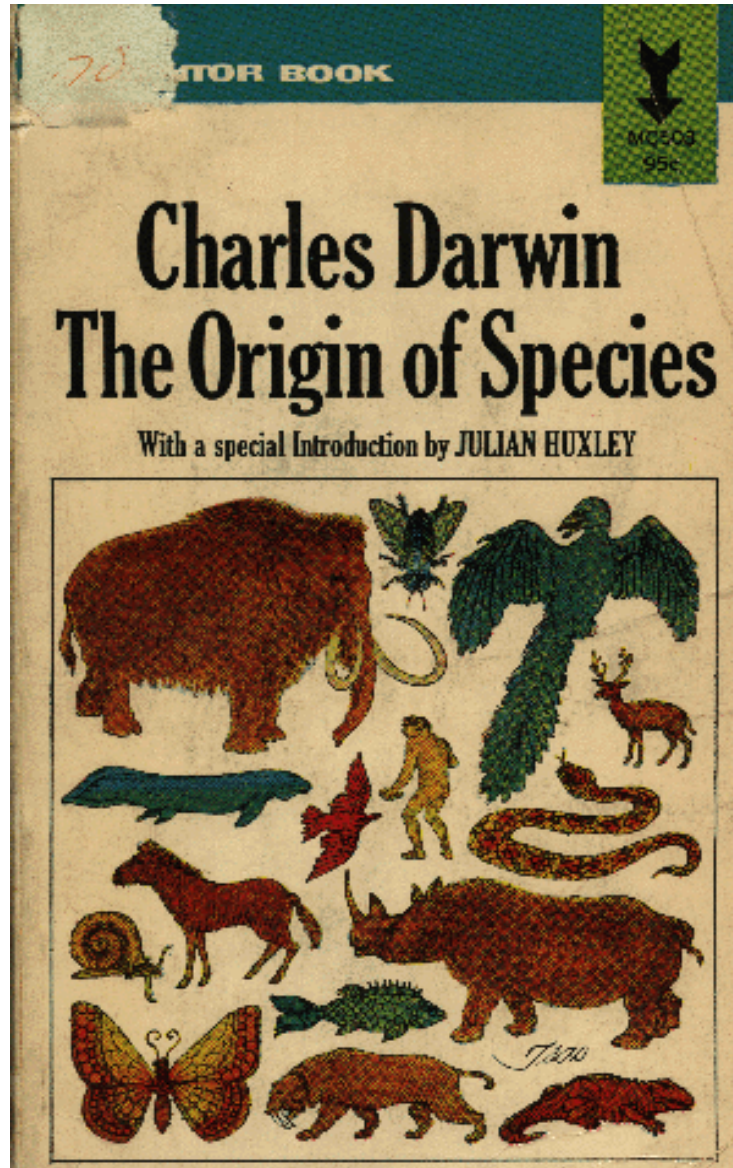
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- Charles Darwin, 1859
- That the fundamental driver of survival is the ability to adapt to the life conditions
- That those with the best 'fit' for those life conditions are the ones most likely to survive

# The Origin of Species

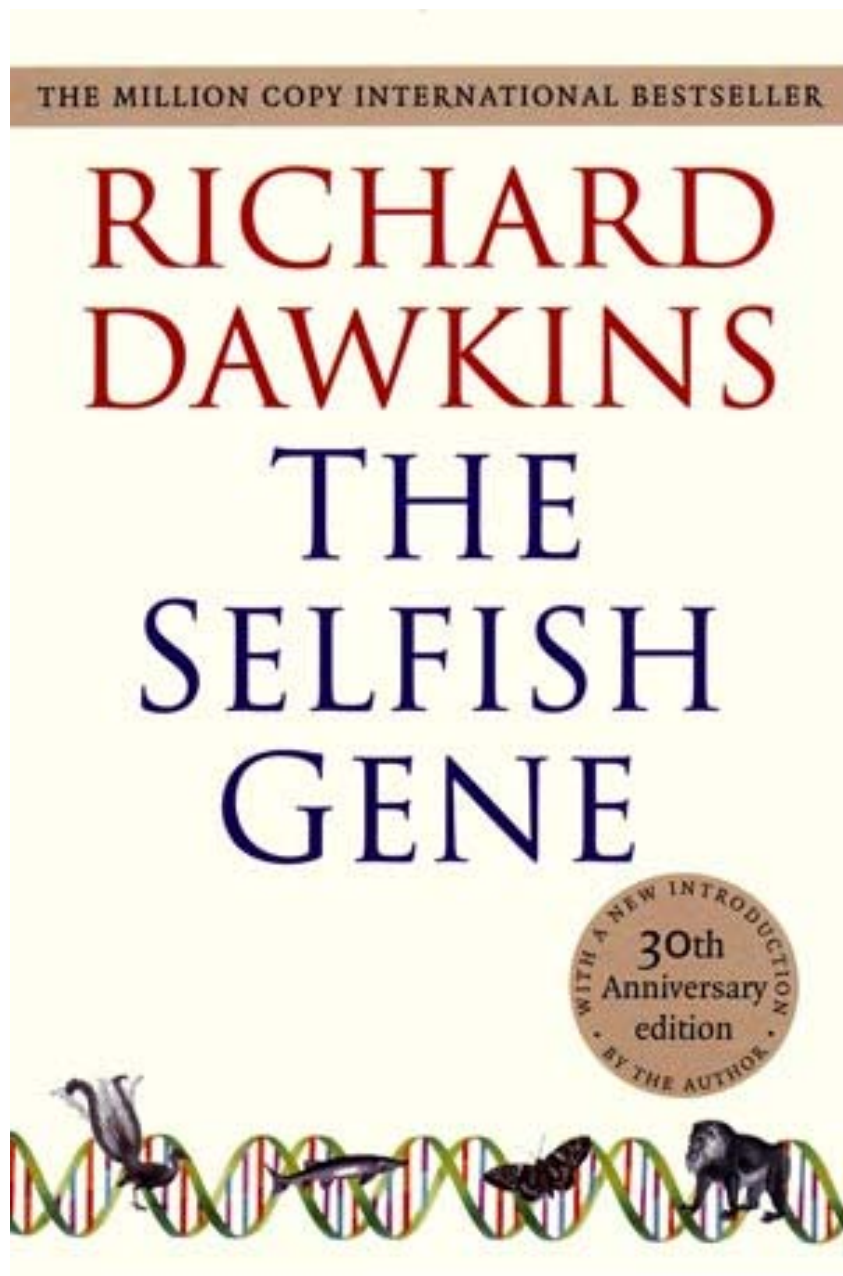
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- How can we as futurists, create a better *fit* with our environment?
- In what areas do we currently not *fit* the corporate environment?

# The Selfish Gene

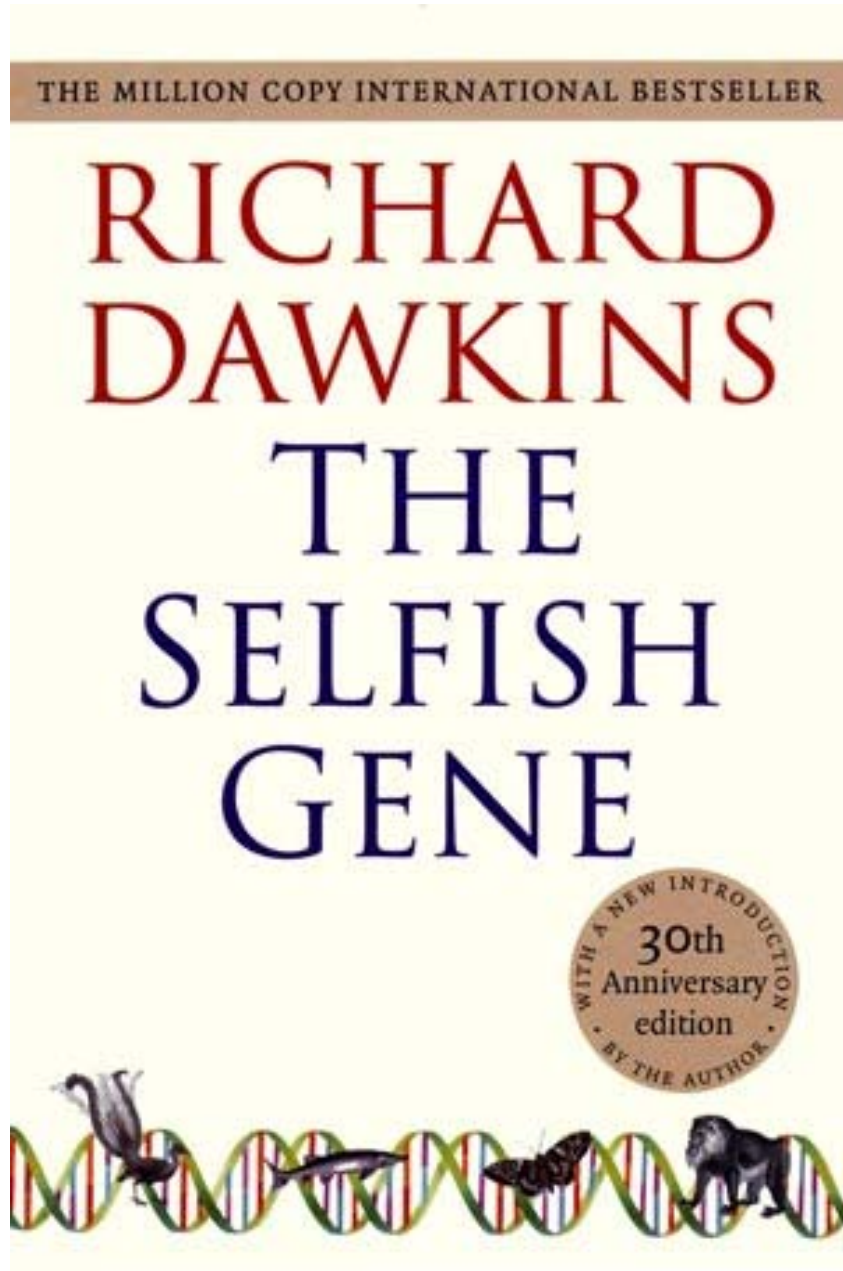
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- Richard Dawkins, 1976
- The single vision for every individual gene is to survive into the future through propagation of itself (maximise 'inclusive fitness')

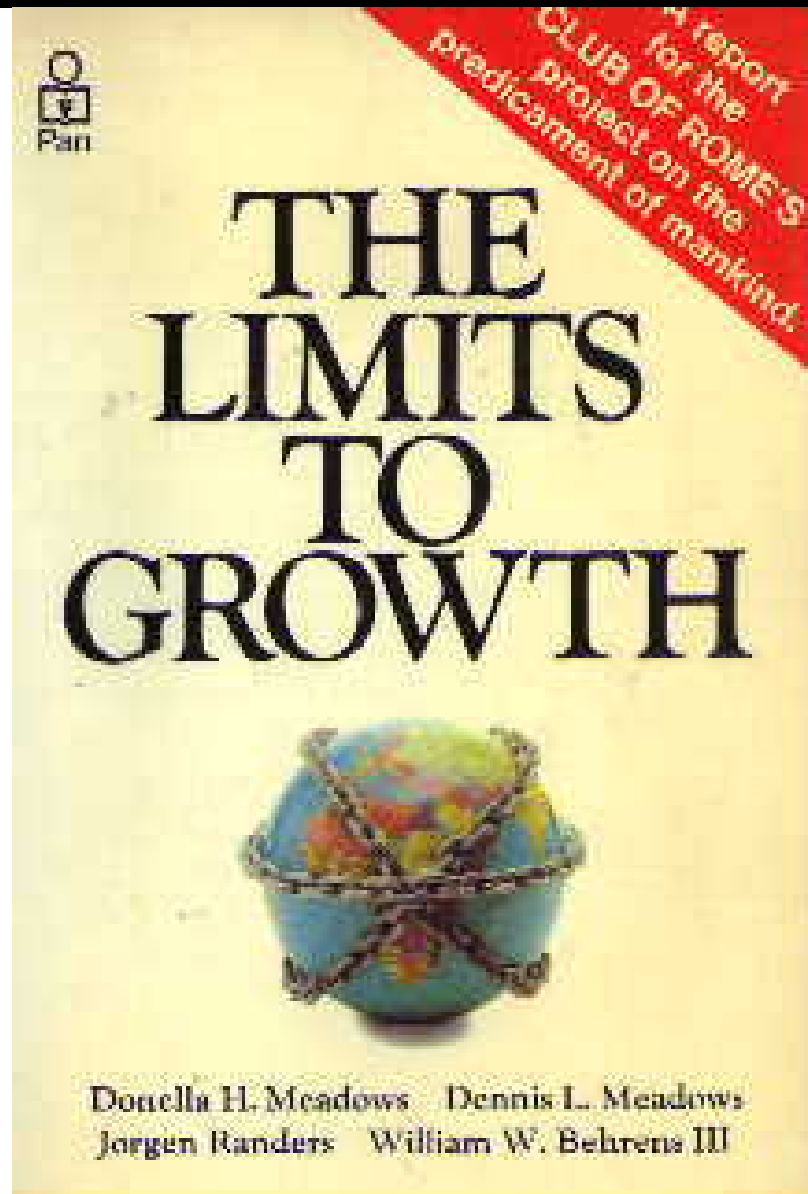
# The Selfish Gene

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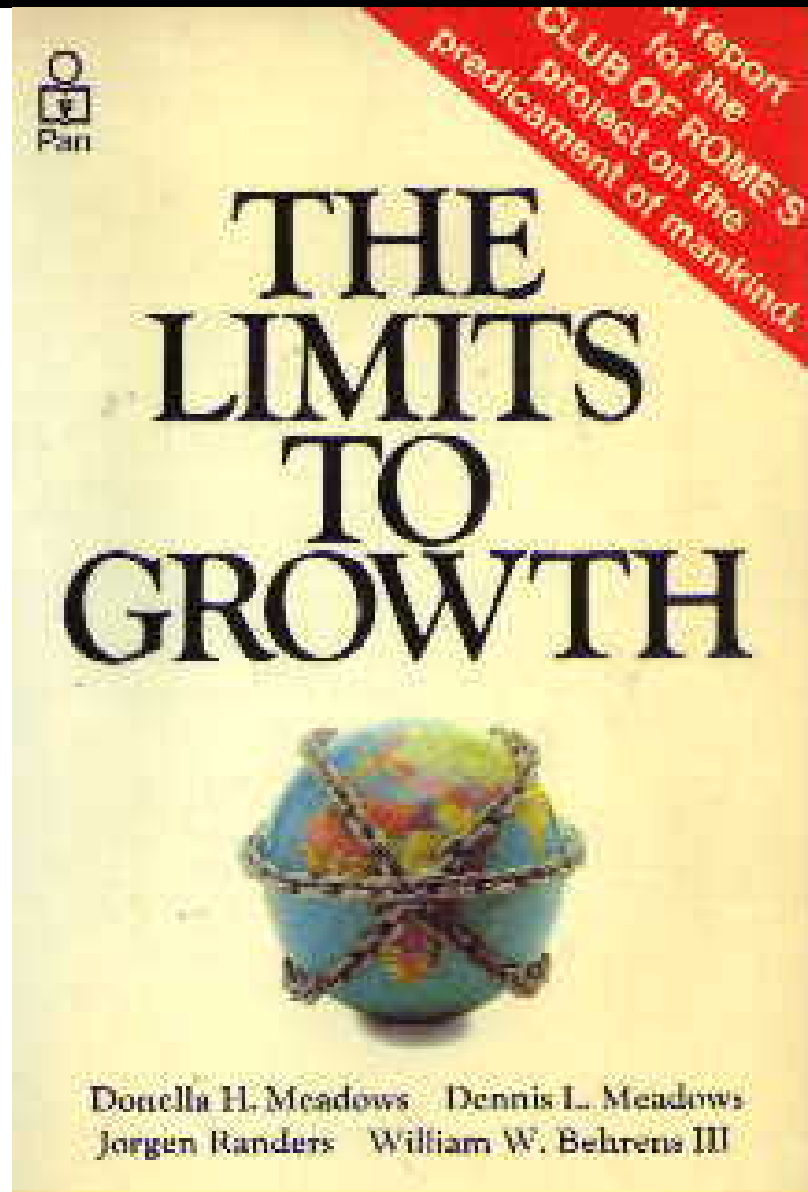
- What actions are we currently undertaking to propagate the futures gene into the corporate community?

# The Limits to Growth



- Meadows et al, 1972
- That we have a certain level of growth achievable within existing systemic constraints

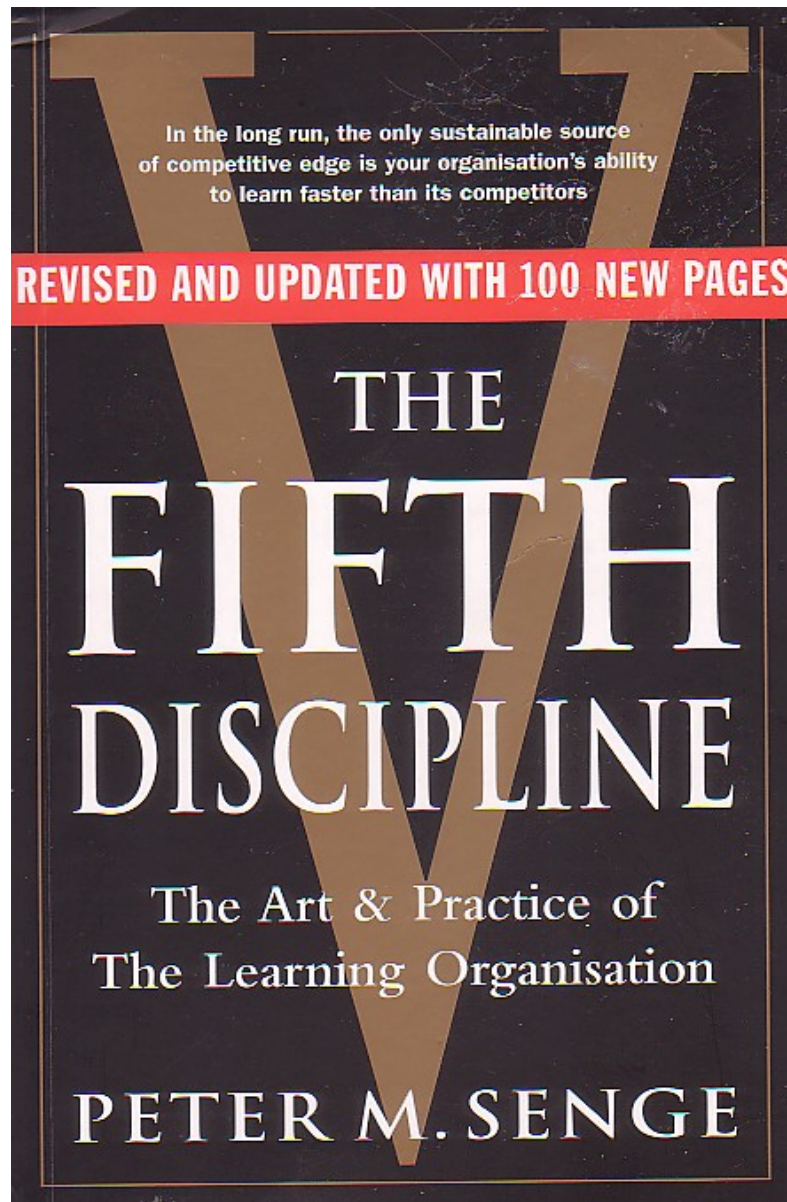
# The Limits to Growth



- What do we perceive to be the causes of our current level of growth?
- Is the system 'fixed'?
- What are the main variables?

# The 5<sup>th</sup> Discipline

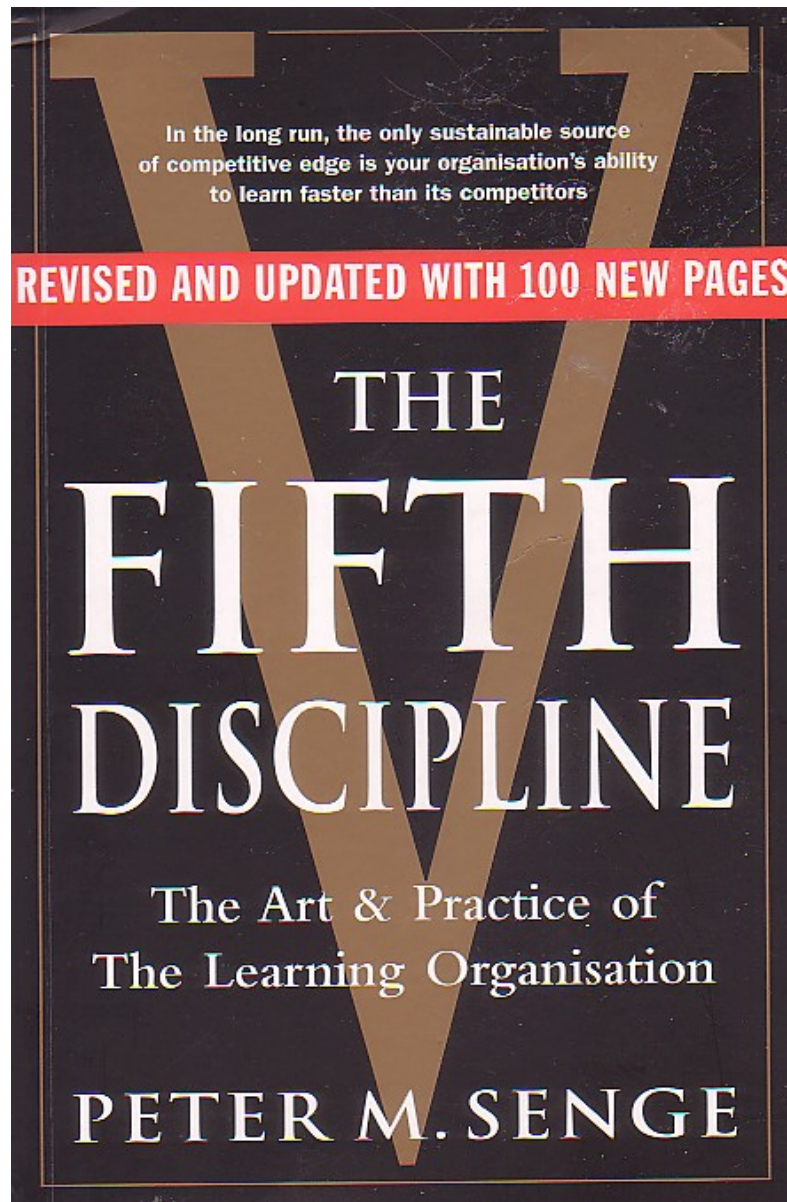
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- Peter Senge, 1990
- That the critical requirement to obtain ongoing organisational advantage is to develop the 'learning' culture within the business

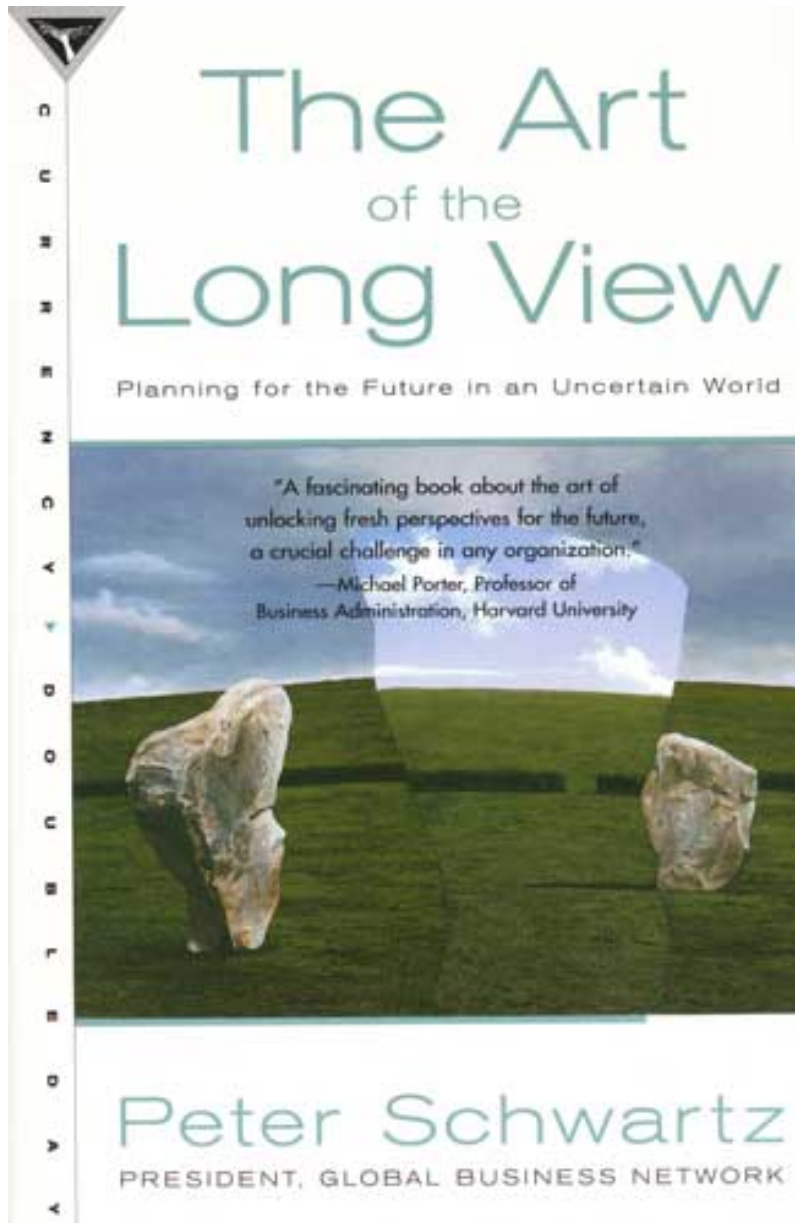
# The 5<sup>th</sup> Discipline

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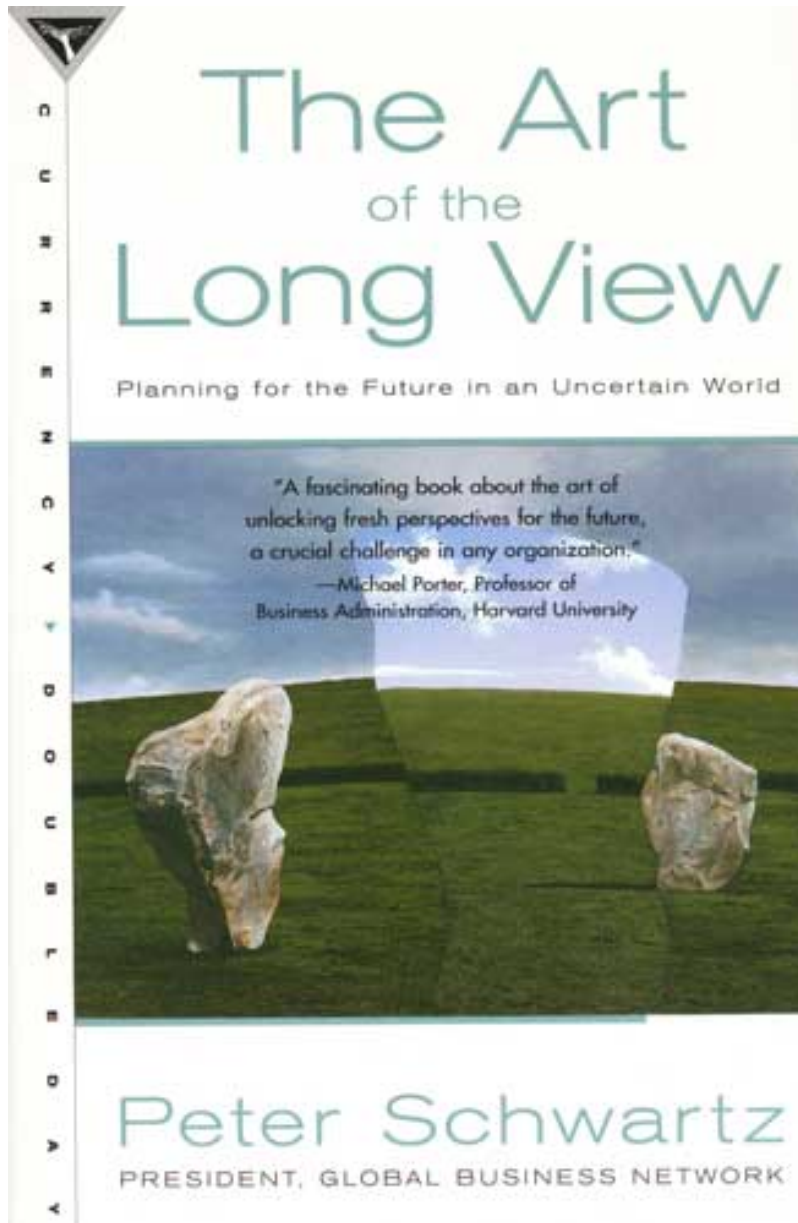
- What can we 'learn' from ourselves about our inability to be adopted out of the system?
- Why do so many who are adopted, get returned with the '*mine's broken*' mentality?

# The Art of the Long View



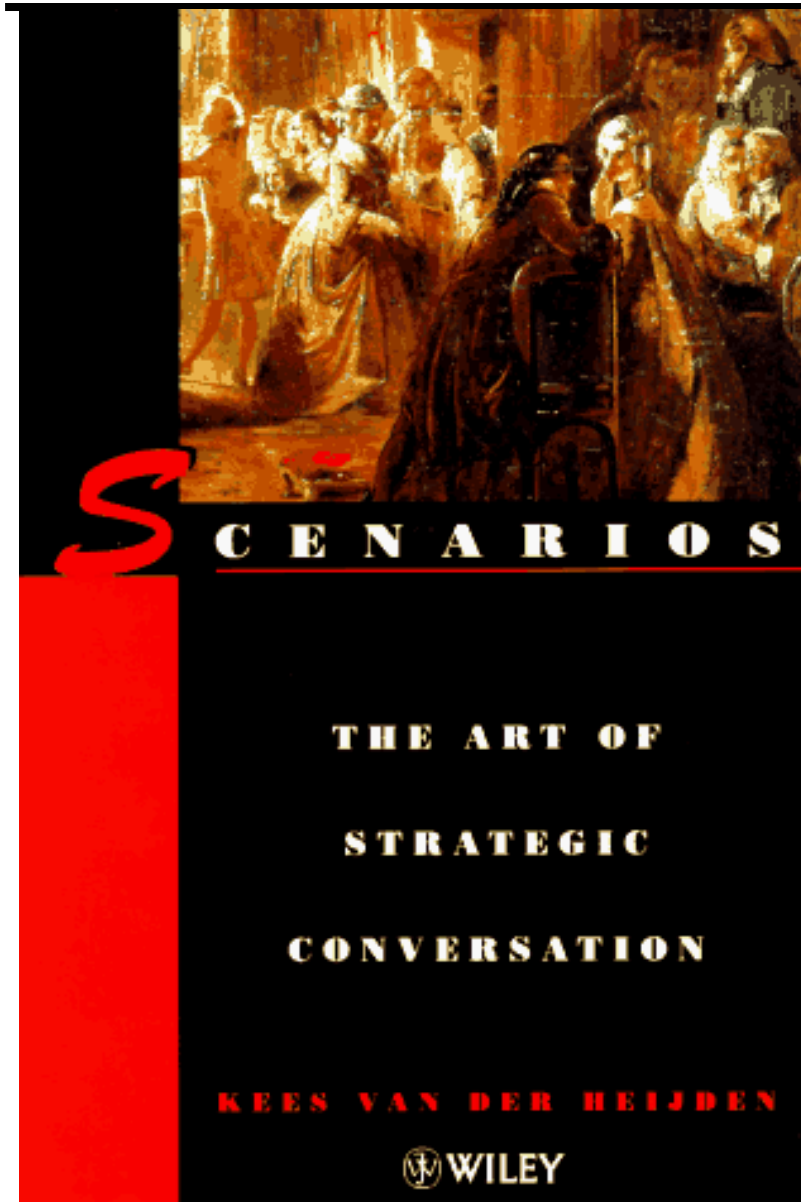
- Peter Schwarz, 1990
- Schwarz view on How to 'do' scenarios.
- 8 Step guide to scenario planning

# The Art of the Long View



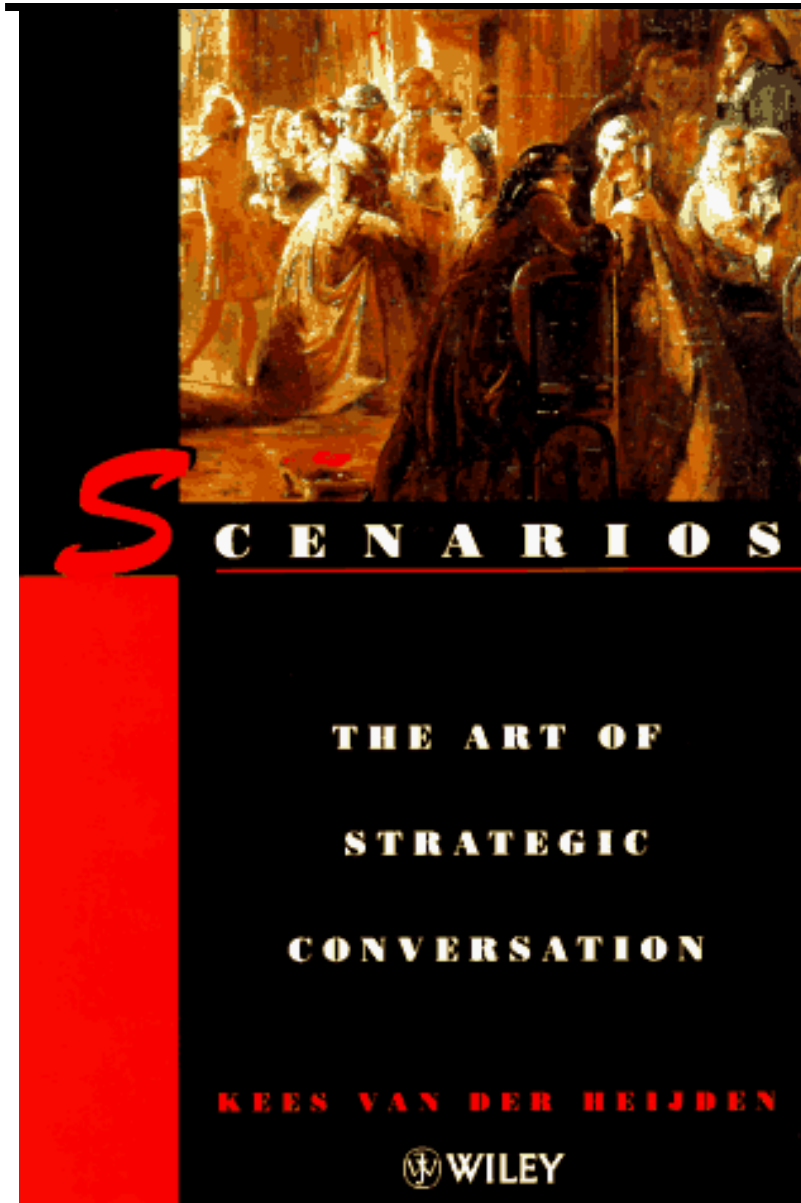
- Is there a disconnect between our long view and the corporate needs for action & NOW?
- How do we bridge the 'alleged' disconnect between a client's drive for 'now' and the benefits that accrue through a longer view?

# The Art of Strategic Conversation



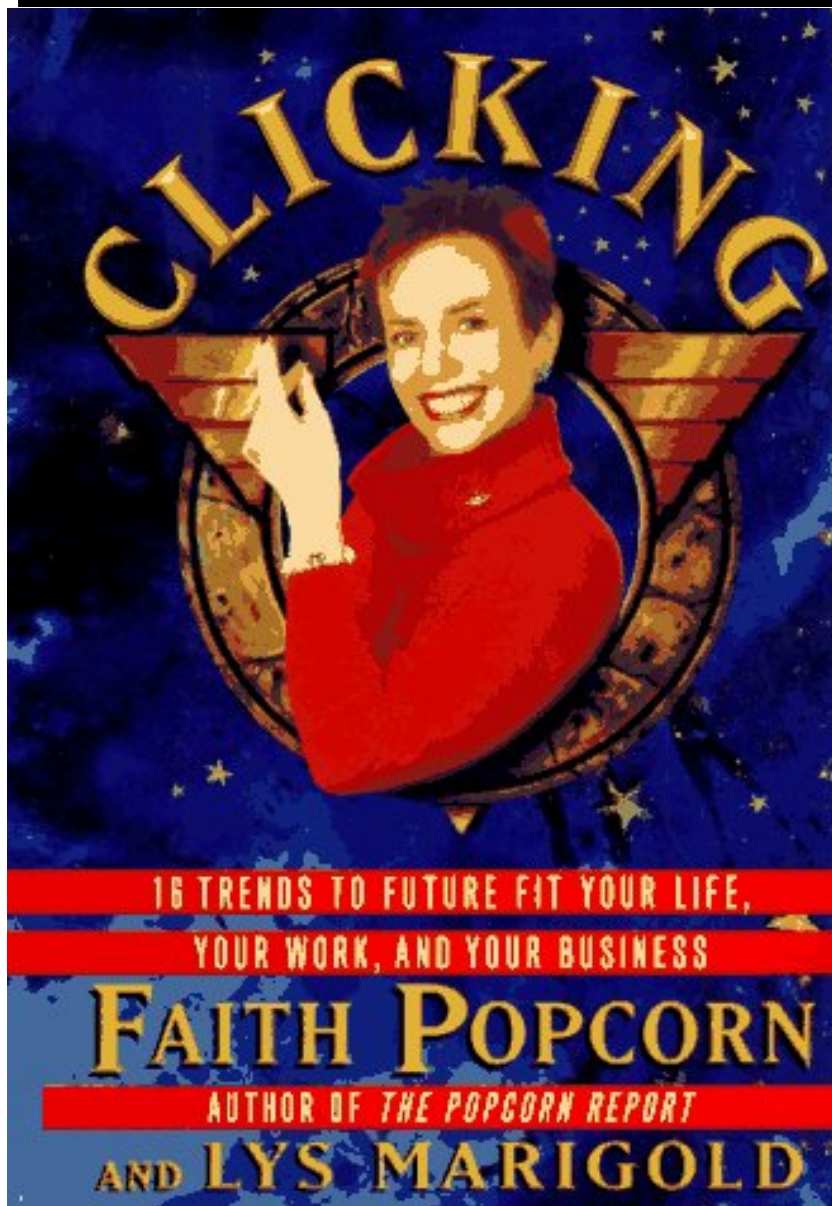
- Kees Van Der Heijden, 1996
- Know your client!!
- Build the conversation

# The Art of Strategic Conversation



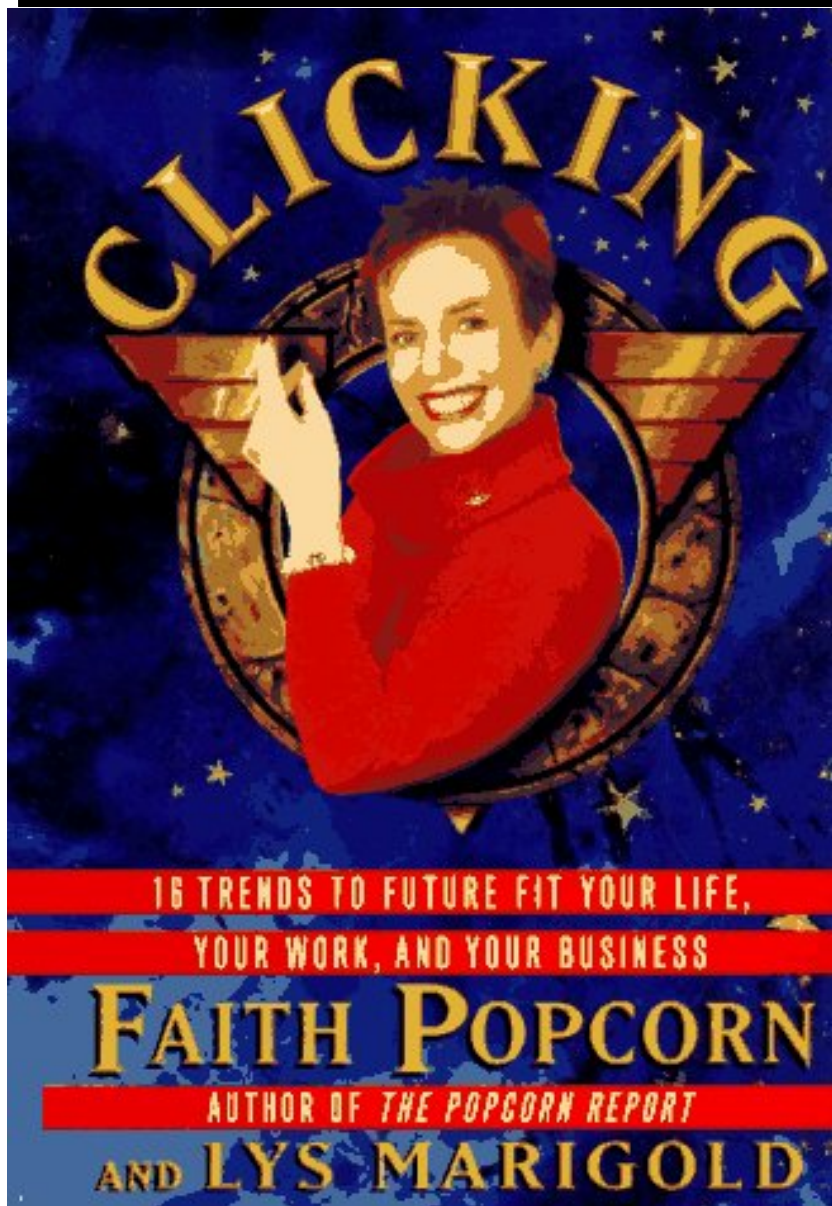
- How are we currently building the ‘futures’ conversations with the wider community?
- And with each other?
- Alternatively could it be that we are just too good at conversing?

# Clicking



- Faith Popcorn, 1996
- Spot a Trend and then Ride the guaranteed wave to success!

# Clicking



- Let's use the idea of 'clicking' with clients.
- If they speak 'trends', how do we still click with them and yet extend their understanding, breadth, depth and distance?

# Out of the Blue



- John L Peterson, 1997
- Wildcards are:
  - ‘...low probability, high impact events that, were they to occur, would severely impact the human condition’

# Out of the Blue

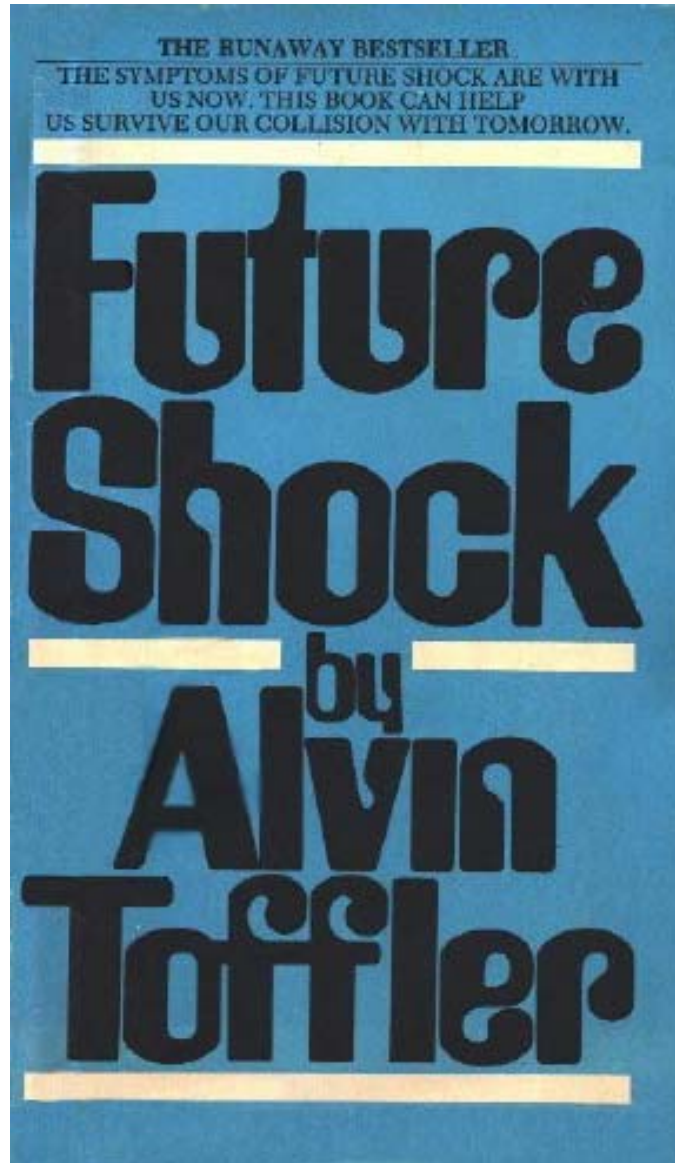
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- How about we create a few of our own  
Such as...???

# Future Shock

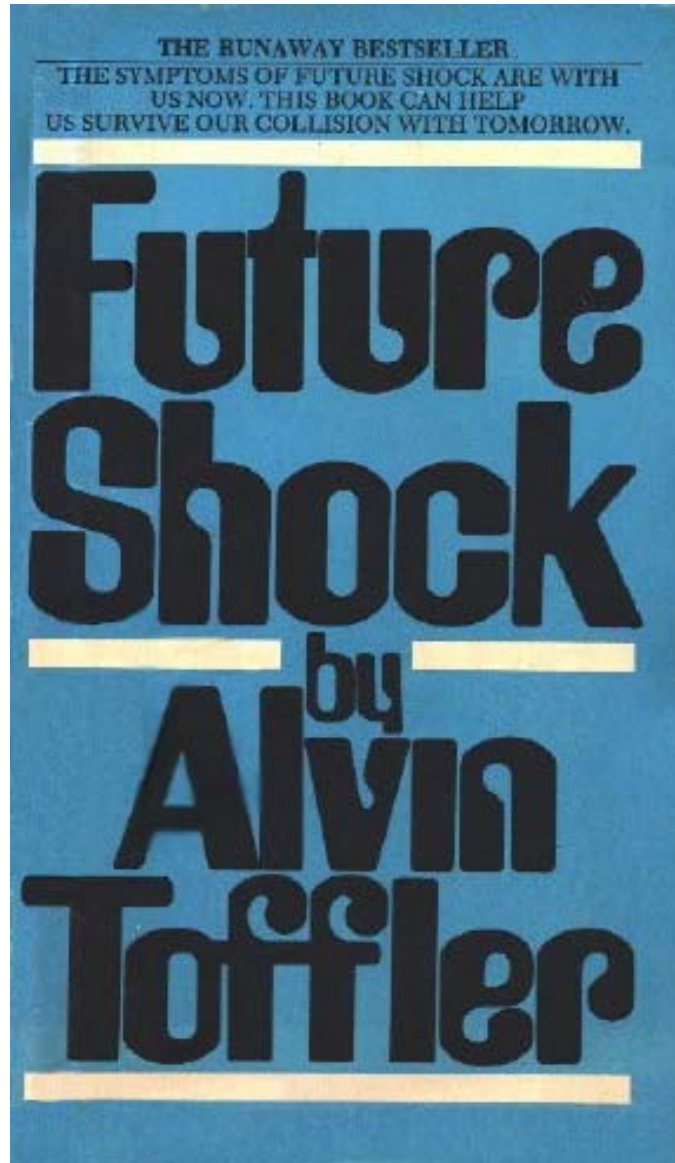
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- Alvin Toffler, 1970
- Emerging (Technological) changes would create an emotional state referred to as 'Future Shock' in which many people would struggle to cope

# Future Shock

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- What might be our Future Shock?
- What would happen if we actually get what we are asking for as a futures community?
- VAKAdOG

## From Foreplay to Consummation

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- More than 'Just Looking' - Eyeing each other off is not enough
- Use more than just your tongue – whilst tongue work can be great, talking about dancing is not enough
- Dancing is great and can be lots of fun but Corporations love getting down and dirty with experts who are prepared to show them how to use the moves in their worlds
- We have to consummate our relationships and the only way to do that is to get in bed and get dirty – to give them what they want – to be bumped, thumped and jumped!.
- So far we've been clinicians

Good luck in YOUR future!!

CUSTOMER



"SO TELL ME, CAN YOU PREDICT THE FUTURE?"

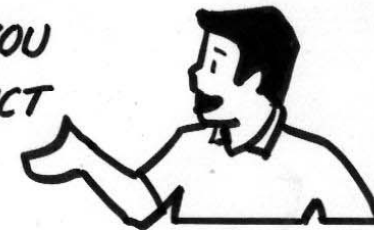
"NO"

FUTURIST



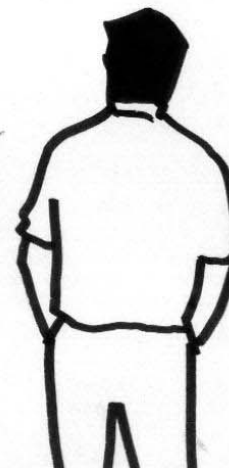
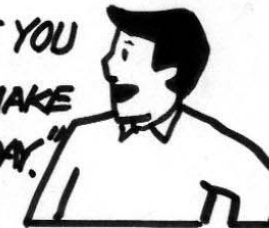
"THEN HOW CAN YOU HELP ME?"

"WELL WHY DO YOU WANT TO PREDICT THE FUTURE."



"BECAUSE IF I CAN PREDICT THE FUTURE I CAN MAKE BETTER DECISIONS TODAY."

"AHH, I SEE. SO WHAT YOU REALLY WANT IS TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS TODAY."



..... "COME THIS WAY."