

FUTURE THINKING 2026 – 2027

What you don't change, you accept.

Table of Contents.

1. PRELUDE. It's good to get an introduction.
2. MAYBE I LIED? A macro-overview of absolutely everything.
3. MZANZIS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MANUAL. All about AI and you.
4. LOTS OF SPACE TO MINE. Our future is Space.
5. TRAFFIC HAS GOTTEN SO BAD! The future of website marketing.
6. HOW TO END WAR. Working out why we war and how to end it.
7. INSURING THE FUTURE. Some industry specific insights.
8. WHAT IS 50 RAND TO YOU? A social experiment on bad behaviour online.
9. THE FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT. To taxi or not to taxi?
10. AFRICA COLONIZED THE WORLD. Debunking a narrative.
11. THERE IS NO VACCINE FOR JOHANNESBURG. How to fix Jozi.
12. CAN I OFFER YOU MONEY FOR YOUR PEE? A new perspective on things we don't want.
13. ALKEBULAN. A chapter for nature.
14. WHO IS. About the author. (Perhaps curious?)

In tradition, I dedicate each book to a positive influence in my life. This book is dedicated to Mr Clem Sunter, an industry colleague of mine and personal inspiration to me in ways I have yet to find words to describe. Unfortunately, this change champion and future thinker passed away the month I completed writing this book. Clem, until we meet again some day in the future!

sample

PRELUDE.

Last night I tried to fall asleep knowing that the very next day I'd start compiling this book. A book about you, and what could be more important than that? So, no pressure there for me? Now sitting down in a barn, hidden in a beautiful, peaceful lush forest in the Wilderness area in the Western Cape, I start my work.

What is actually in this book? Excellent question! Let me do what my teacher once did: answer a question with a question. I found that infuriating then, but I understand the logic now. Will you find the answer to all your pressing questions in this book? Within its easy-to-consume chapters, will you stumble on the solution to all your worries, solve job security, and find eternal youth? Within one of these paragraphs do we resolve climate change and South Africa's failed land redistribution program? Do we fix the water crisis, stop corruption and gender-based violence, boost our economy, and while we're at it why not end racism and human trafficking? So many questions and, as Arthur Goldstuck will confirm, the answer is not 42.

Any reasonable person will accept we cannot solve all problems, and therefore the only remaining logical question is, "How do we navigate and still thrive in the current environment?" This book proposes ideas for that!

Is this book for you? In my opinion, there are two types of people when it comes to tackling what lies ahead. The first type is the person who uncomfortably averts their gaze when subjects like politics and the economy are mentioned, like our eyes when the waiter puts the bill on the table. They also tend not to be particularly interested in new tech and, in my personal opinion and experience, are also those who wear Crocs. They are the "gatherers" of our modern society. These people get rudely told they've been hiding under a rock when they admit they have never heard of the Zondo Commission. In their defence, it's actually hard to keep track of all the commissions South Africa launches, and an accurate account of that would require yet another formal inquiry and report – which will probably then be ignored in spite the millions spent on it. Gatherers have wonderful souls and are genuinely decent to their core. I know many personally. Most do wonderful things and add tremendous value where they live and work. But...

In our democratic and somewhat capitalist-socialist country, a lack of education on topics of major influence causes major problems down the line for us all and I do mean all of us. For example, voter and democratic education in high school could go a very long way toward empowering and inspiring an active citizenry, don't you think, awucingi?

The second type of person is the hunter. This person seeks out information and authentic engagement on critical subjects with as much energy as they can muster and would never be caught with their toes exposed in a mall.

Hunter, Gather or Prey? South Africans are subjected to award-winning levels of shenanigans, abuse, and neglect from every imaginable angle; therefore, a calculated period of constructive exposure is critical to keep oneself sane and to avoid burnout, or worse, becoming prey of those who take advantage of the ignorant amongst us. Attending a select few conferences each year, listening to talk radio a few days a week, reading a variety of newspapers each month and then sparking a few good-will debates in social gatherings over the weekend is a responsible and sustainable way to participate in the due diligence required to navigate our present and plan for our future and the only way to 'be inside the tent'. Reading this book is another.

What sets this book apart? There are many economists, futurists, journalists and industry experts with brilliant books. Unfortunately, in this tech infatuated day and age, tactile mediums like books are not as popular a choice for a source of information as they once were, am I right Mr Grattan Kirk? Today, many people prefer to get their nuggets of information from self-proclaimed experts on social media offering insights ad nauseam. Mzansi also has some very unique commentators sharing strong opinions, like a political puppet saying voetsek, or the very young blonde guy travelling to war zones and discussing racial narratives and we also have a man with his own TV show and wearing 3 beanies. We are also treated to a lot of media bias, fake news, and even the occasional sports champion wearing political t-shirts sponsored by a very orange president.

What sets this book apart from my peers' points of view is my broader spectrum of subjects. To explain in another way, and also avoiding sports analogy (which my peers love to use), I will explain with a food equivalent. While many specialists focus on one particular ingredient that goes into baking the perfect cake, I learn a little about every ingredient, and also the oven, the kitchen, and the chef. Dawie Roodt is an expert in our economy, Professor Thuli Madonsela on social injustice, Justice Malala on politics, and Chantell Ilbury on strategy, all exceptional in their respective fields. I have taken a dip in every one of their fire pools and these are just a few of the people I have worked with through some of my own businesses.

I am a 'student of all' and an 'expert of none', sort of like ChatGPT! I have curated information and offer a bigger picture which is far easier to appreciate, prepared for you by drawing on my research of over 18 subjects covering four categories: technology, environmentalism, business and society, my experience in writing several books and many articles,

concluding many projects, keynote talks and, of course, all the businesses I have worked on and for.

In the first chapter, I will treat you to a summarized overview of our complex present and then in all the subsequent chapters share a variety of influences and trends affecting the trajectory of our communities and places of work. My wish for you is that somewhere on one of these pages there is an idea that sparks a thought for you to pursue a future opportunity. The Future waits for no one. Yebo.

sample



MAYBE I LIED?

In 2025, the Adam Raine Case was the first of a number of legal cases pursued for alleged loss of life involving a certain large AI language model. Yes, it has started to happen, people are accusing AI of causing grievously bodily harm. My concern now is that at the very start of this book I promised I would treat you to a summarized overview of our complex present. The operative word here 'treat'.

What is about to follow could be described by some as the total opposite of a treat. In fact some of this content might develop feelings of dread and anxiety! So let's call this a mistreat instead because I don't want anyone consuming my work and feeling depressed and, in light of the legal actions underway against content creators (human and artificial), here is my disclaimer.

As you read the following chapter and if you start to experience severe mental distress or depression please bear in mind I am merely offering an account of facts.

I acknowledge that sometimes the severity and volume of issues in South Africa are overwhelming; however, as you make your way through the balance of this book, you will see that the overall tone will be that of positivity

and not because I am trying to offset my legal risks and avoid the same fate as that AI language model in the Adam Raine Case.

I truly believe South Africa is indeed on a gradual positive trajectory and we are heading in the right direction and I share many points to support this opinion throughout this book. It is important for me to be authentic and real with you. I am not writing this book to make millions (my sincere apology to my publisher). I am not here to appease the masses, gain millions of social media followers or redefine Wokeness. My agenda is to help you identify future opportunities and part of that process is mapping out our current environment which, unfortunately, is littered with quite a lot of trash! Both figuratively and literally.

Kimberlé Crenshaw and I do not believe you can fix a problem until you have named it and this chapter serves that purpose. Let's get a baseline on what might a well-functioning society have and how on earth would that look?

I have travelled extensively (to almost 180 cities and towns around the World now) and, from my experience, I can share that every place I have visited has challenges. Every single one of them! If there is an Eden and its citizens, it would be an extreme rarity and yet a place I am to visit.

Let me rather then hypothesize, or better yet, imagine some of the characteristics a stable and prosperous society might include. From that, we can then draw comparisons on the pillars of excellence and positive attributes South Africa is missing and hindering its people from living in peaceful neighbourhoods, working in a flourishing economy and, at the same time, experiencing true freedom to pursue creative expression and personal passions. (Although, right now, some of us would settle with running water and smart meters that actually lived up to that name).

One characteristic, many people would agree, would be good governance and the rule of law which offers clear and reasonable rules applied equally to all. Viva! Having independent courts, accountable institutions and transparent decision-making, would be blatantly evident, in our face and all inspiring and the general citizenry would have trust and want to protect rights and resolve disputes without violence. Having read this paragraph, I assume some red flags have already gone up for you because many of these qualities I have mentioned are either missing entirely or being degraded in South Africa today.

Next, we would hope to find an economy and productive work environment that is exciting, charged, dynamic, agile and robust. It would have business zones where ideas can be transformed into tangible trade and resources diverted into channels of income for everyone's livelihoods. Moola for everyone! Such a workspace would embrace and not hinder competitive markets, support entrepreneurship, navigate the fine line of fair taxation and

rest on a solid foundation of sound monetary and fiscal policy, with everyone hustling together for business growth. Afterall, a country really is, in many ways, an independent business.

Inclusive access to opportunities would be imperative and, of course, this is the main red flag for me in South Africa today. There is not enough butter for our slice of toast and we need to create more butter very quickly because spreading what little there is still won't help. There is simply not enough butter.

True wisdom is not the pursuit of the accumulation of masses of knowledge; it's about critical thinking. Education in a thriving society would be a staple, starting from early childhood and embracing lifelong learning. Education is the foundation all else is built upon. Equipping citizens of all ages with literacy, numeracy and even modern skills like digital fluency would be the standard. In this day and age, environmental and political literacy are also imperative. A successful nation would have strong schools, universities and vocational systems expanding opportunity, fostering innovation and enabling its people of all varieties to participate fully in civic and economic life. Customized syllabuses would be the order of the day.

A country would need affordable, accessible and modern health and wellbeing public systems covering not only primary care but also mental health services. Preventative care would be given as much attention as responsive. True Health and Wellbeing does not come from a clinic or hospital; people would understand and work hard on ensuring a healthy environment knowing that it plays a massive role in extending quality of life and life expectancy. Health is about building good habits. There would also be health data systems and formidable policies in place to support pandemics and chronic diseases.

Finally, a nation would have a variety of infrastructure, personnel, technologies and policies for preventative and responsive security and defence, caring for and protecting people, assets and intellectual property from human and non-human risks and threats.

Perhaps you could paint a more picturesque visual of a wonderful nation? I encourage you to do that! Never stop dreaming, have as many dreams as you can! But, for the purpose of this book, my overview above, combined with your imagination, will be perfect to give us context, and context is extremely important because theories cannot be applied equally across the board – and this is why our efforts sometimes fail.

Is there even one city or nation that fits our perfect vision of an Eden? Canada or Sweden, or perhaps Rwanda? Nope, even they don't tick all those boxes.

Let's talk about home. While I was writing this paragraph, a marathon of cleaners was sweeping (excuse the pun) across the city of Johannesburg with unprecedented vigour, swishing their brooms about, leaving some Joburgers very perplexed, some stunned. What was going on?

The 'Hunters' amongst us know exactly what the catalyst for this strange behaviour was as well as the emergency work being done with frantic pothole repairs on main freeways. The reason for this patch work and attempted beautification of our city was for the exclusive benefit of world leaders participating in G20.

PJ Powers received criticism for performing at one of the events from some of her own followers on social media and I can understand why. The entire situation reminded me just how easy it is for people to get excited about these big fancy events and Jols. All that effort for what, considering we not even attending the next one? These gatherings are necessary on a global scale, but they do not disseminate any significant good to the average person in South Africa. None. Niks.

What they do offer is the opportunity for some to pursue political agendas and highlight certain select causes, often at the expense of the host and on the taxpayer's account. No real work is done at these conferences; I best describe them as shindigs and I attended one! Do not forget South Africa has hosted and participated in many shindigs: social, political, economic and even sporting events, all ramped with pledges and speeches, handshakes and performances of all varieties. Humans love posturing, but the hardest-working people at these get-togethers are probably the cleaning staff and catering crew.

As for artists and entertainers, like PJ, they are not really in a position to reject any work, many are still suffering from the financial ramifications of the global lockdown declared or supported by many of the 'leaders' in those event and conference rooms having a good old time.

Our SONA is one of the most comical and, at the same time, depressing Government events to observe. Environmental and technological issues, social and civil society challenges, political and economic influences, we have a love-hate relationship, a web of deception intertwined with goodwill and people's hopes and aspirations. We have a complicated state of affairs.

Let's start with the most reported genre: political and economic issues. South Africa is at a crossroads, a dilemma of sorts, grappling with a multitude of challenges that intersect and influence its current state and, frankly, there is no general consensus on what on earth is going to happen politically or economically. Our journey has, for as long as history has recorded, been turbulent, with social upheaval and political uncertainty painting a picture of

a country in need of strategic and informed interventions. It's like we have a split personality.

Holding us all down has been South Africa's economic slowdown, which started during the Zuma administration and well into Cyril's presidency and collapsing entirely during the COVID lockdown. Over the past decade, GDP growth has lingered around a meagre 0.7%, give or take a fraction. This will improve and in the next few years I believe we might hit a 2% or perhaps even 3%. However, the bigger picture is that up and until now, we have been in a recession at worse, or stagnation at best – and it will take years to reverse the damage. It's been a period of time coupled with increased lending (Sjoe, we love them loans!), and our public debt is expected to reach around 77.9% of GDP by the end of 2026. 30 years ago, it was about 44.2%. South Africa's national advancement, if it was a person, would be one wearing a straitjacket, running a race with no shoes, only have one eye and blowing on a vuvuzela.

Unemployment adds another layer of tremendous stress and social friction for us, with the official rate being 31.9%ish at the time of writing this chapter and most of these unemployed are the youth. As the government stops handing out jobs (which is a trend underway) and automation rolls out (also underway), I expect this number to increase. These forces are going to have dire consequences which our society is struggling to fathom.

Our patchy status of the 'haves' and 'have-nots' fuels tensions and amplifies the deep-rooted inequity that has characterized our country for as long as I can remember. It has also fuelled hate.

On the subject of hate, few can say they have much love for SARS, but this office is 'apparently' working really well. Still, our fiscal governance poses hurdles. The burden of increasing debt-servicing costs restrains our government's ability to fund the drastically needed essential services and issues of public mismanagement and corruption only add buckets of salt to the gaping wound full of pus and ooze, especially with shenanigans around and within State-Owned Enterprises and I think, at this point, out of their management teams, there may be fewer ANC officials not implicated than those who are. Everyone is asking "How did we get here".

Our 'eina' situation is further complicated by the ongoing service crises from electricity supply to water. Persistent electricity shortages obviously hamper our economic efforts and activities, scare away investment and employment opportunities, making private sector participation almost essential rather than an added benefit.