



The Power of Three

Set the Course for Progress

This exercise will help to understand our own ideas and behaviour as part of our common future. Develop 3 actions that could lead to a preferred change in the future.

	40–60 min	★☆☆	introductory
	alone or in groups of 3–5		pens and paper

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**“The future is a verb, not a noun.
 Our minds may reach the ends of their
 tethers, but we’ll never stop futuring.”**

Sterling, B. (2004) *Long Now Seminars.*


The future is a quantity that has not yet occurred. There are different layers of the future; the unpredictable reality in a few hours, days, weeks, years and decades.



In future studies there is a saying: The future is a verb, not a noun. It refers to the active moment in dealing with the future(s). Our actions, ideas and innovations have a direct impact on the future(s). Thus, the future remains an unknown quantity, but not one that cannot be actively influenced.

A distinction must be made between individual, practical and structural levels. While it may seem difficult to imagine, our individual behaviour influences the big picture. Social and political decisions and instructions for action, on the other hand, give structure and guidelines to our lives.

All three levels – **practical, personal and structural** – are related and influence each other.

ASSIGNMENT	In this exercise you will develop 3 actions that could lead to a preferred change in the future. This will help identify different influences on our future and evaluate their interaction.
LEARNING GOAL	The exercise will help us understand our own ideas and behaviour as part of our common future. It is a motivational tool.
PREPARATION	No preparation is necessary.

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LET'S START	<p>This exercise is about a desirable future in 2040. Three levels of change are to be anticipated in relation to this temporal anchor.</p> <p>Three levels of change</p> <p>I: How should our behaviour or actions change (the practical level)?</p> <p>Could a new service, technology or invention have the desired effect on people's behaviour? For example, what would make it easier (e.g. nutrition, mobility or consumption) for people to live more sustainably?</p> <p>II: How should our thinking, beliefs and actions change (the personal level)?</p> <p>The most significant change is at the level of values, ideals, worldviews and ways of thinking. What is our relationship to nature? Do we see it as a value in itself or as a human resource? What do we think about consumption and lifestyles? What kind of actions influence the way we think?</p> <p>III: What structural changes (at the political or administrative level) are required?</p> <p>Society can control people's behaviour and actions, e.g., through laws and regulations in taxes, consumer protection, energy policy and health care.</p>	
STEP 1	<p>Pick an overarching topic and develop actions that influence all three levels – practical, personal and structural:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An action that influences our behaviour or actions ▪ An action that impacts our attitude and the way we think ▪ An action that influences structures of society and how we live together 	
<div data-bbox="379 1518 491 1630" style="background-color: #e0f0e0; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">  </div>	<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p>Topic: Racism on digital platforms and social networks</p> <p>Practical level: Global collaboration gives rise to an open source content moderation algorithm that operates across all social online platforms. It has an open programming interface and is coded by representatives of various communities and interest groups governed by an independent council consisting of academics, civil society, public actors and government representatives.</p> <p>Personal level: We begin to think more inclusively, viewing our world in an increasingly intersectional way. We learn to understand power structures and recognise our own privileges. We internalise that our own actions,</p>	

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	<p>statements and ways of thinking may discriminate against other people. Eventually, we understand that we can only live together peacefully as a society through dialogue and listening.</p> <p>Structural level: Extensive global laws are passed that encompass content moderation, internal regulations based on human rights, and transparency obligations for companies.</p>	
	<p>Think about how your ideas could be implemented at all three levels and what effects they would have.</p>	
STEP 2	<p>Organise your ideas in mind maps, drawings or notes and discuss them.</p>	
	<p> GUIDING QUESTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How are the levels related in your example? ▪ Can your ideas be combined? ▪ How would your ideas affect each other? ▪ What would it take for us to realise our ideas tomorrow? ▪ Do you find it easier to develop ideas on a practical, structural or personal level? 	
	<p> CONTINUE WITH OUR TOOLBOX</p> <p>For a different take on digital futures, try the tool: Criticise your utopia</p>	

EXTRAS	The Power of Three	5
SOURCES	<p>Levels of Change Exercise ^{ENG} Sitra, Levels of Change, https://www.sitra.fi/en/cases/levels-of-change/</p> <p>Spheres of Transformation ^{ENG} Sharma, M. (2007) Personal to planetary transformation. Kosmos Journal. Accessible at https://www.kosmosjournal.org/article/personal-to-planetary-transformation/</p>	
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