

A Future So Bright

How Strategic Optimism and
Meaningful Innovation Can Restore
Our Humanity and Save The World

by Kate O'Neill

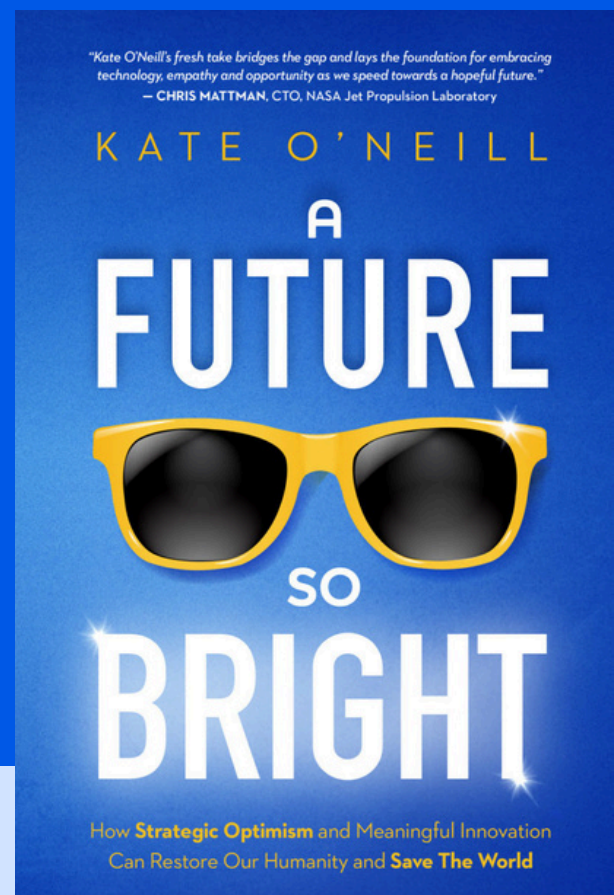


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About the book

We have been underselling the future. In fact, the future will be neither dystopia nor utopia (which is an actively harmful dichotomy)—it will be what we do the work to make it. And the best way to the brightest future is to focus on what we CAN do, and make sure we are working to get there.

Between climate change, the impact on the future of work by intelligent automation, misinformation, and more, humanity faces several exponential changes and existential threats simultaneously. Yet there are reasons to lean into hope: emerging technology, for example, also brings with it tremendous power and offers the potential to solve human problems at scale.

Achieving the best outcomes possible now is largely a matter of collective action and political will. The best way—indeed perhaps the only way—to confront the challenges we face and build a better tomorrow is to allow ourselves to envision the brightest future possible, while at the same time acknowledging the ways the future could go dark and working to prevent them from happening.

Kate O'Neill, author of *Tech Humanist* and *Pixels and Place*, explores the ways we have already begun to solve human problems at scale, and makes the case for an approach that's both hopeful and strategic as our best chance at a truly bright future.



Key discussion topics

1. Strategic Optimism

Core Concept	A powerful approach combining positive outlook with strategic thinking to create meaningful change, acknowledging current challenges while working towards better outcomes
Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moving beyond dystopia/utopia binary to focus on both mitigating risks and creating positive outcomes• Combining optimistic vision with rigorous strategic planning• Using fears and hopes to inform strategic planning

2. Future Readiness

Core Concept	Developing flexibility and adaptability rather than trying to predict or prevent the future
Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fostering an adaptive mindset that embraces change as constant• Balancing immediate needs with long-term impact• Supporting teams of empowered future-ready thinkers

The most human-centric way to think about innovation is to ask, "What is going to matter?"

Key discussion topics

3. Business and Social Progress Integration

Core Concept Demonstrating how business success and societal progress are intertwined rather than mutually exclusive

Discussion Points

- Aligning business success with sustainable development goals
- Adopting sustainable practices and examining supply chains
- Using technology to drive positive change beyond profits

4. Future-Shaping Actions

Core Concept Understanding that the future is shaped by decisions and actions taken today

Discussion Points

- Viewing the future as multiple possible outcomes rather than a fixed path
- Taking responsibility for shaping future outcomes through present decisions
- Creating conditions for best possible outcomes to flourish

Quotable insights

“When you accept optimism as a default, you can assess your circumstances quite candidly and work toward the best outcome. Pessimism, after all, is no more than acceptance of the worst. Optimism means you have to work for the best.”

“Many of the reasons why digital transformations, strategic transformations, and cultural transformations sputter, stall, or fail entirely is because they meet with human resistance to change on a personal level.”

“The most human-centric way to think about innovation is to ask, “What is going to matter?”

“Aim to be on the right side of history. Years in the future, when people look back on the defining moments of our present era, make sure your leadership counted for something.”

“Can we do a better job of solving the problems that humanity faces if we behave as though—not wondering if—we can?”

Quotable insights

"The best results come about when we not only visualize the best possible future but also make a plan to commit ourselves to achieving it."

"Strategic Optimism is not about ignoring the limitations, risks, or harms that do exist; in fact, it's about acknowledging the full reality of the current situation and the full range of possible outcomes, mitigating the worst outcomes, and working diligently toward achieving the best."



Testimonials



*“So much of the future is painted in polarized views. Kate O’Neill’s fresh take bridges the gap and lays the foundation for **embracing technology, empathy, and opportunity** as we speed towards a hopeful future.”*

— Chris Mattmann, Chief Technology and Innovation Officer at NASA JPL, Professor, Author



*“Kate O’Neill has stumbled upon an insight that is incredibly important for those of us who haven’t given up on the future. She weaves her expertise and direct experience working with tech companies with an infectious optimism, **helping us see our role in solving some of our most important problems**. A Future So Bright helps us understand that we’ll get the kind of disruption we’re willing to fight for.”*

— Caleb Gardner, founding partner at 18 Coffees, and former digital director at OFA (BarackObama.com)



*“Kate has done it again, she’s written a book that makes us rethink our relationship with technology and she does it in a way that gives us **the insight we need to embrace our future**.”*

— Jeanette Bronée, Keynote & TEDx Speaker on Rethinking SelfCare At Work



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