

## The Mystery Of The Future Revealed

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If the future seems terrifying, a mystery so dark you don't want to think about it, read this article. Find the home site of author Bill Allin at <http://billallin.com>

As people used to be wrong about the motion of the sun, so they are still wrong about the motion of the future. The future stands still; it is we who move in infinite space.

- Rainer Maria Rilke, German poet (1875-1926)

This quote struck me because it turns backwards our thinking about the future.

The way we think of the future, most of us believe that it must bounce around as if trying to avoid us and detection. To many of us, the future is unknown, a mystery that will unfold in some fashion in ways we can't imagine at this time.

Not so. Rilke says it's not that way at all.

We are the ones who bounce around, not knowing where we are going.

Our governments seldom have long term plans for the future. As they are elected for relatively short terms, they focus on the duration of their terms, plus a couple of years more. Most give little thought to what they want for their country 25 or 50 years in the future.

They can't set policies to prepare for a future 50 years hence because they don't think about it. They only set policies they hope will get them elected next time.

Businesses, especially large ones, set long term objectives. They want to think their way into the future to be prepared for what they will face then. However, their long term plans can turn on a dime when their financial fortunes hit rough patches. In effect, they plan for the long term future, but act in their own best interests in the immediate future. Profit today, not prospects tomorrow, are what counts for them.

As individuals, most of us go through our lives as if we don't know what to expect of tomorrow, let alone what our lives might be like in ten or 20 years time. Planning might come in the form of retirement investments.

As of this writing, I recently passed my 65th birthday. I have reached the age when traditionally, in western countries, people retire. Then, going by historical records, I could be expected to die within the next decade. But it's highly unlikely that will happen.

I could easily live for another 30 or 40 years, as my ancestors lived well past the age when their own peers were dying off. I eat healthy, try to exercise enough. I make long term plans because I expect to be able to fulfill them.

Should a person of 65 years have plans for what they might be doing at age 90 or 95? To a younger person, that might seem silly. But unless my peers and I make plans for our future, we may find ourselves in wheelchairs, sitting in hallways of nursing homes for our final two decades of life. That's not my idea of Golden Years.

The future begins tomorrow. The future 25 or 50 years from now will depend entirely on what you and I and others around us plan tomorrow. We will meet the future knowing what it's like because we will have planned it. If we plan it.

My wife and I will move to a different home in a different Canadian province within the next two months. Everything will be new to us, except our citizenship. One of the first tasks we plan for our new property will be to plant trees where we want them.

We will plant spindly young trees no taller than ourselves. We plan to sit in their shade for years after they have reached their full height.

Will we do little more than to sit in the shade on a summer's day? Not at all. Chances are we will plan how to take

the world by storm with our new ideas on those future days. As usual, those ideas will be rejected by the majority of people when posed, then be adopted heartily by the same people a few years later when they realize they are better than what they have.

We make our own future by building it, day by day, thought by thought, one daringly new action after another.

The future is nothing to be frightened about. We will build it ourselves, by our actions and sometimes by our inaction.

Bill Allin

***Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems***, a guidebook for parents and teachers who want to teach their children how to prepare for the future, how to cope with it and to build it to their own satisfaction instead of just surviving it.

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