

2021 will bring the Great American Pivoting

In 2021, with a newly empowered and decidedly more coherent political leadership, America will make an astonishing turnaround.

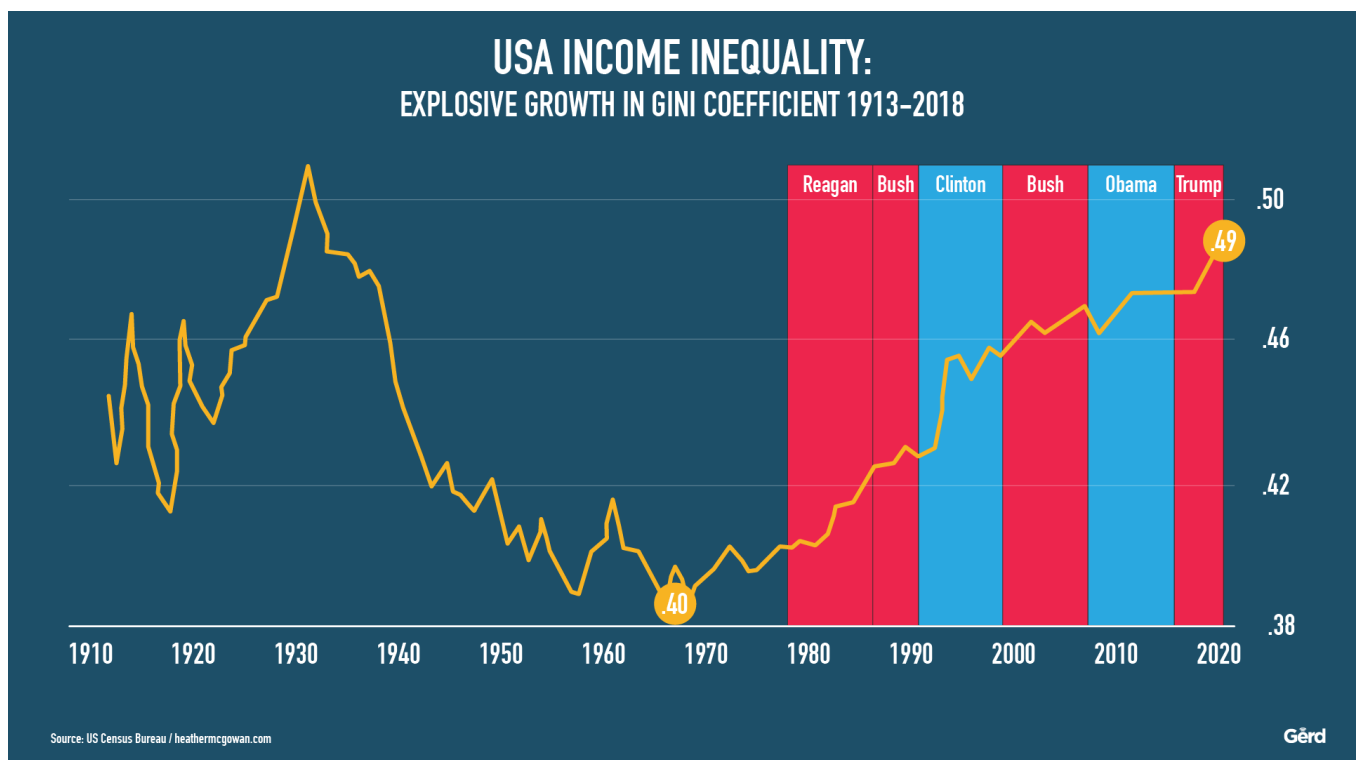
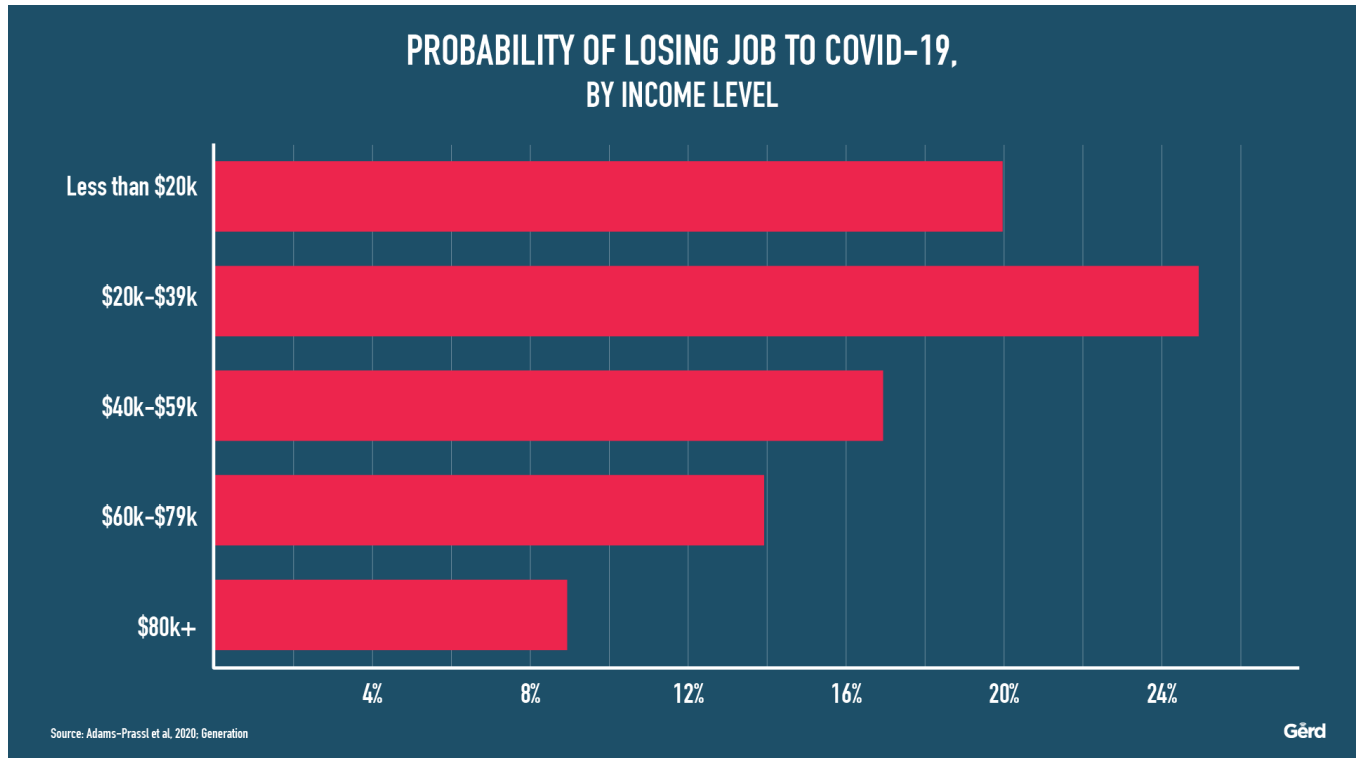


Winston Churchill is often quoted as saying *"You can always count on the United States to do the right thing – after they have tried everything else"*.

The last 4 years in the United States: a certifiable nightmare

It's safe to say that in the past 4 years the United States under the 'leadership' of President Trump have indeed [tried pretty much any and all wrong options](#), with disastrous consequences nationally, regionally and globally – many of which have recently been brought into sharp focus by the [Covid-19 crisis](#). What was already a tough challenge before this crisis (such as access to affordable healthcare for low-income groups, or the brutal economic inequality that has ballooned in the last 20 years, see the stats below), has become glaringly obvious now.

The Corona crisis is [bringing out the best in us and the worst in us](#) – and in the U.S. the worst has long been the seriously underfunded and fragmented public healthcare system, rampant inequality (economically, socially and racially), the dismissive attitude and incoherent action on global warming, and a savage form of [corporate capitalism](#) that is corroding civil society and will clearly be utterly ill-suited for the future.



The world's 2,153 billionaires hold more wealth than poorest 4.6 billion combined
(Oxfam, 2020)



Dramatically accelerated by covid-19, the U.S. is at a pivot point

As the breaking-point is being reached and an [ever-deepening crisis](#) ensues, I believe the U.S. is at a unique-in-its-entire-history pivot point where some fundamental change becomes possible (and very likely, as well).

*For some more context on these observations, be sure read my ['12 bullets' post](#) from April 4, 2020: *"Post-Corona, 'strong-man' and populist politicians harking back to a vanished past will be ousted or simply ignored, and a new generation of foresightful leaders (millennials and [women](#)) will take their place"*



The U.S. is now entering a phase of dramatic PIVOTING; an utter change of direction that will define its future for the next decades to come, and that will quickly impact the global world order.

The primary trigger of this coming existential pivot is, beyond any doubt, [the disastrous handling of the covid-19 crisis by President Trump and his administration](#). Secondary triggers include climate change, [inequality](#) and the emergence of a new form of capitalism and a new economic [‘stakeholders not just shareholders’](#) – logic.

Despite (or even because?) of the misery of the past 4 years, the U.S. still has what it takes to make an astonishing comeback after the 2020 election – which I believe will result in a Democrat as U.S. President (with a crafty female vice-president, no less!) as well as a democratic-party-led U.S. Congress. Let’s not forget that more than any other nation in the world (yes, including China) **America is still all about The Future**, and much of that future is still mostly about Technology (but read more on

the coming shift to [re-humanization](#) below).

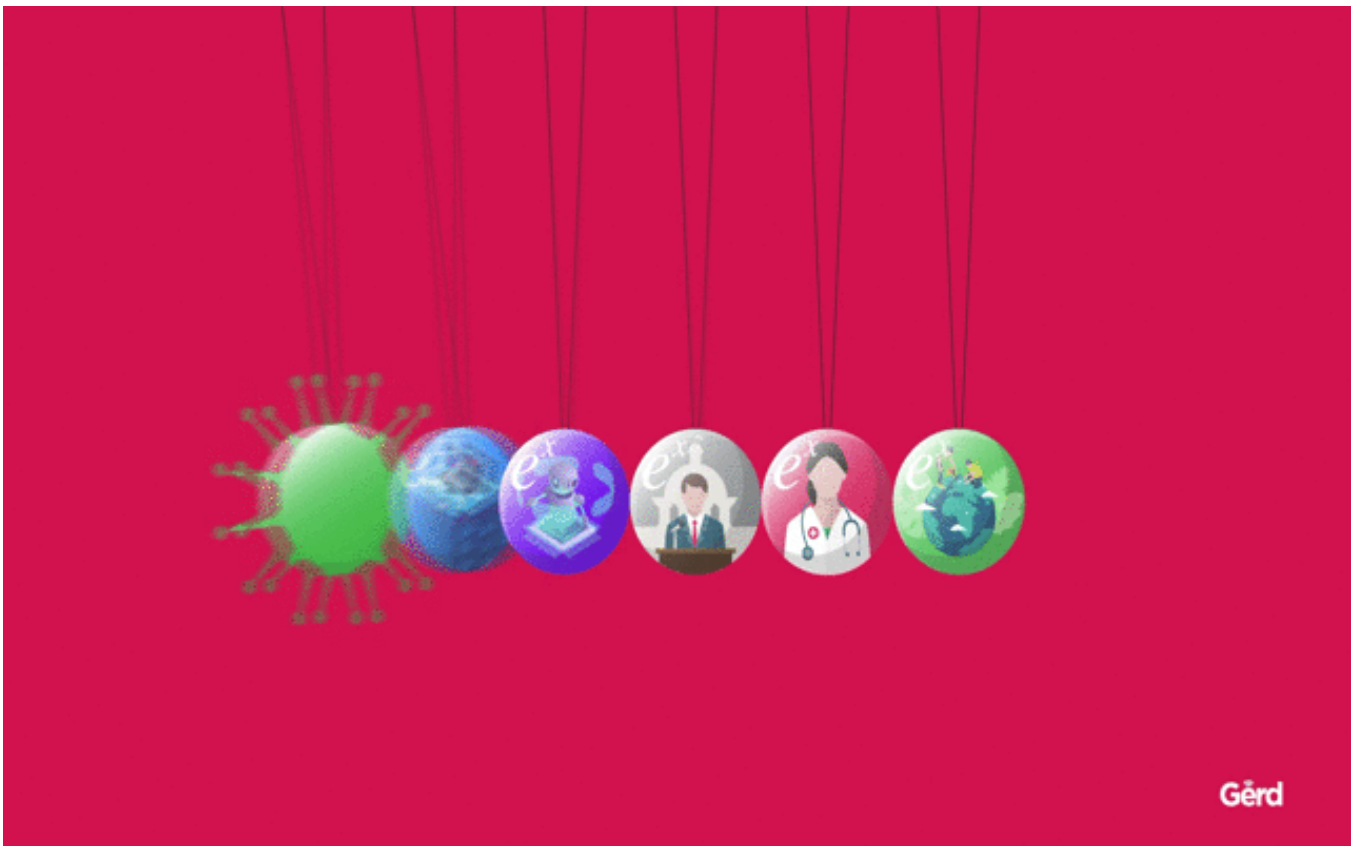
It is impossible as well as ill-advised to ignore the tremendous pioneering spirit and entrepreneurial energy that still prevails in the U.S., and to forget the astounding capacity of the American people to very quickly overcome serious setbacks and wicked challenges while reinventing themselves. My personal experience after 15 years of living in the U.S. (see below) and my countless keynote appearances there, after I moved back to Europe, have taught me again and again that Americans will always pioneer at pretty much any cost; they will always look for something newer, faster and better, and they will probably never cease to 'explore new frontiers'. We should never underestimate American ingenuity.

The 'Future Mindset'

This 'American Mindset' is also [a Future Mindset](#) that us Europeans still cannot really fathom: we are all about the past and maybe even the present, but the Future....? Looking at the future is just too audacious, too dashing and too risky. In 2011, the German chancellor Helmut Schmidt was famously quoted as saying that "*people with visions should go and see their doctor*" (*sure, this has changed a lot in the past decade, and yes I have great hopes that '[The United States of Europe](#)' will become more future-ready).

But VISION and [IMAGINATION](#) is precisely where America excels and what will drive this **Great American Pivoting** in 2021. And in America, vision is usually expressed in technological shapes.

Big Tech | Big Media | Big State | Big Health | Big Green



The covid-19 crisis has already brought us 'Big Tech, [Big State](#) and Big Health', to which we will soon add 'Big Media and [Big Green](#)' (and some would argue, [Big Debt](#)).

In every single one of the 5 'Big's', American companies enterprises keep dominating, and American investors keep funding startups that people from all over the globe keep wishing to work for. *Yes, [China is](#) increasingly a force to be reckoned with, as well. One could argue it will eventually be a case of state capitalism vs corporate / venture capitalism...but more about that in another piece 😊

BUT: To really matter in the future, America must also go beyond technology – and start to embrace Humanity

Imho, America will not rise again if it only banks on technology (specifically, [artificial intelligence](#)). Rather, it must also start investing in **Humanity** in order to contribute to tackling the *human issues* that deeply concern everybody on this planet – because even the most amazing technology will never solve social, cultural or political challenges. Humans are NOT algorithms, trust is the currency (not data), and

happiness is not a download.

In fact, great technology often makes human challenges worse because technology is a driver of ruthless (and mindless) efficiency. As evidenced in so-called [social media](#), technology can make things extremely efficient, yet without a constant human fine-tuning of purpose, values and ethics (i.e the *why not the how*) it can also go terribly wrong. The textbook example is [Facebook](#) of course.

Social media has morphed from a blessing (some would still say) to a curse in less than 10 years – not because the algorithms weren't good enough, but because they have become TOO GOOD. [Too much of a good thing can be a very bad thing](#), indeed, and 'too much technology' is now a [constant theme around the globe](#). As I like to say "[Technology is not what we seek but how we seek](#)".

⚡ A "Pivoting America" will need to invest equally in humanity than it does in technology, and it must embrace sustainable capitalism

Here is what that would mean:

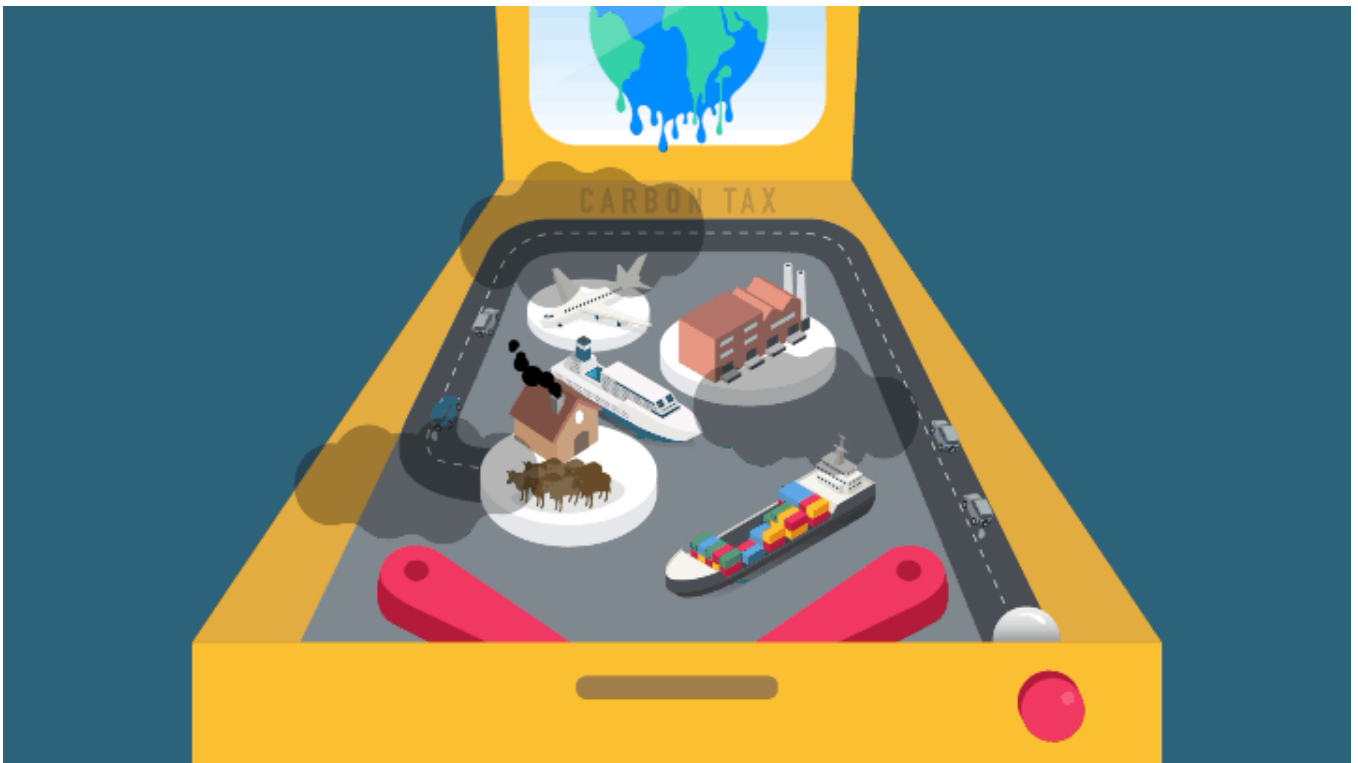
1) Rebooting the public healthcare system so that it is sufficiently funded, and can deal with current and future healthcare crises. Finally and irrevocably provide affordable healthcare to everyone. Divert funding from military and defence, fairly tax the super-earners, billionaires and the technology giants. Fund many new jobs in public health, social work and of course in science and research. Make sure the corona vaccine (whenever that will be a reality) is not just going to be a gold-rush for big pharma but a public good available to everyone. Remember that the coming convergence of [technology and biology \(biotech\)](#) will super-charge economic progress in the next 2 decades – this opportunity should not be left to China.

2) Realising that covid-19 is only a test-run for climate change and effective measures on global warming. The U.S. could catalyse the creation of millions of new jobs (and 1000s of startups) by relentlessly

shifting to renewable energy and implementing a [Green Deal](#). A Green Deal (however [you define it](#)) is not only imperative for our survival, it could also create [Millions of new jobs](#), as well. Keep in mind that many things that we thought were 'impossible' before (such as the government telling us to stay at home, or paying us a kind of [basic income](#) during this crisis) have already become the new normal. So why not tackle other seemingly 'impossible' concepts such as [carbon taxes](#) (for airline travel, and [meat](#)) and mandatory climate emergency measures right now, as well? Tough problems are calling for tough solutions.



The End of Oil is a certainty



The Carbon Tax is coming

3) Rethinking education. America doesn't (just) need more STEM graduates, technological geniuses or savvy entrepreneurs: it needs more [HECI](#)-centric leaders – humans that are steeped in humanity, ethics, creativity and imagination. It needs more 'experts in humanity', more emotional intelligence and above all more '[Menschlichkeit](#)' (מענטש, *mentsh*, *mensch*, 'human being' means "a person of integrity and honour). To be ready for the future, America's kids and students need to learn how to be [better humans](#), first and foremost. *Well, of course, that's not just true for America.

As computers become increasingly smart or 'artificially intelligent' or 'powered by AI', American schools, colleges and universities must strengthen their students' **HI** ([human intelligence](#)). For it is those [human-only tasks](#) that will be at the core of our future jobs. Our ultimate job... is to be HUMAN! *Watch my latest film on [HowTheFutureWorks](#) for more on this topic.

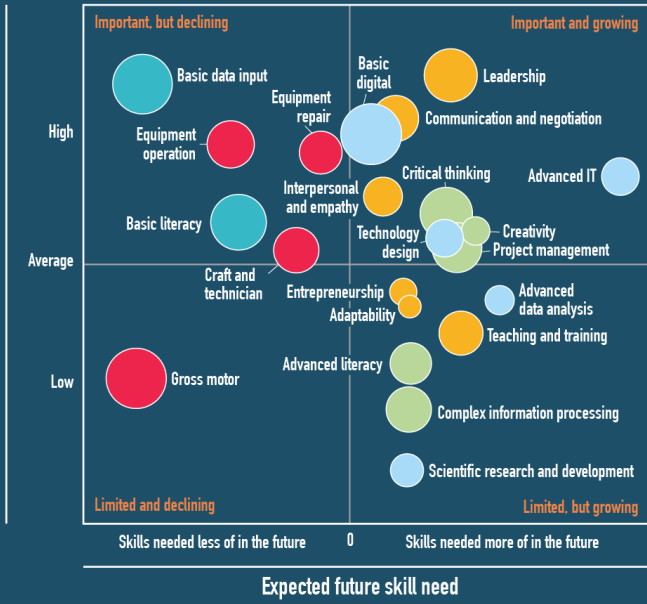
SKILLS OF TODAY VS SKILLS OF TOMORROW: TECHNOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS WILL BECOME EVEN MORE IMPORTANT

- Skills**
- Physical and manual
 - Basic cognitive
 - Higher cognitive
 - Social and emotional
 - Technological

Bubble size=
hours worked in 2016, billion



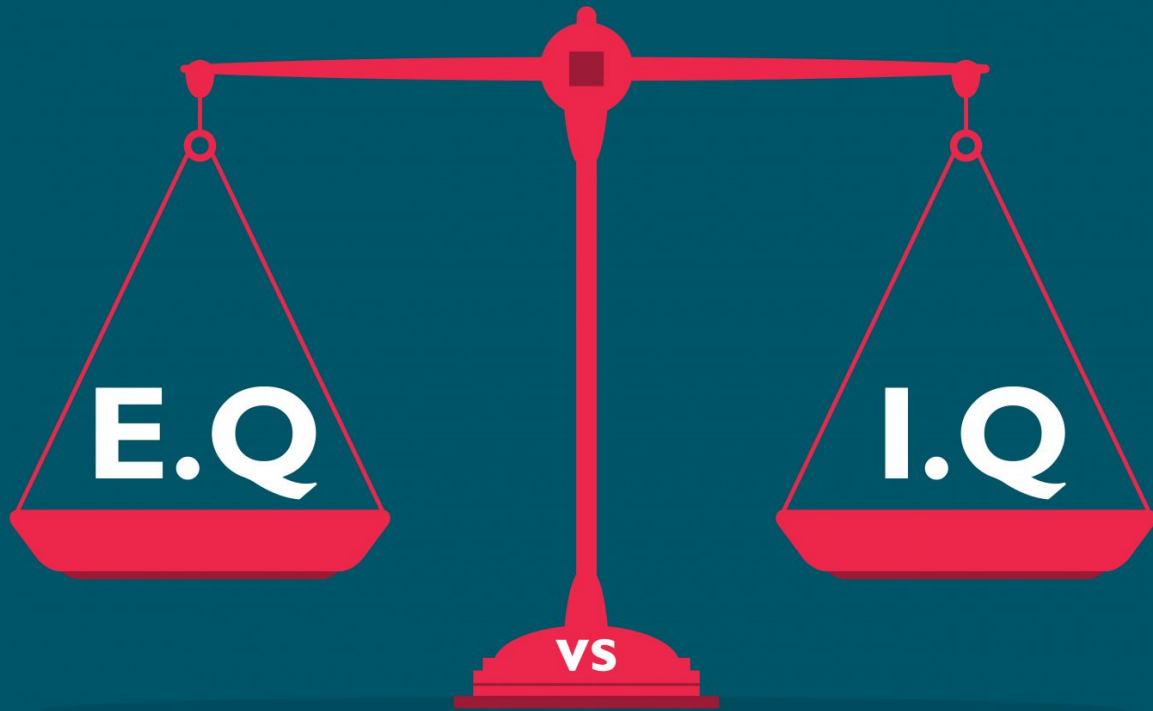
Perceived importance of skills today



Source: McKinsey Global Institute workforce skills executive survey, March 2018; McKinsey Global Institute analysis

Expected future skill need

Gerd





4) Governing and regulating exponential technological progress (and the companies that are fuelling it) in order to protect what I like to call the ['androrithms'](#), those inherently human traits that algorithms will and probably should never understand: emotions, agency and consciousness, privacy, mystery, serendipity, creativity, intuition, imagination. The recent U.S. congressional hearings ([watch this](#) video, and [this one](#), as well, for some good chuckles:;) questioning the CEOs of Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Google have shown that maybe, finally, some law-makers are waking up to the fact that 'this can not continue' (verbatim quote from Chairman Cicilline) and that a balance of power between the tech companies and the public is urgently needed.

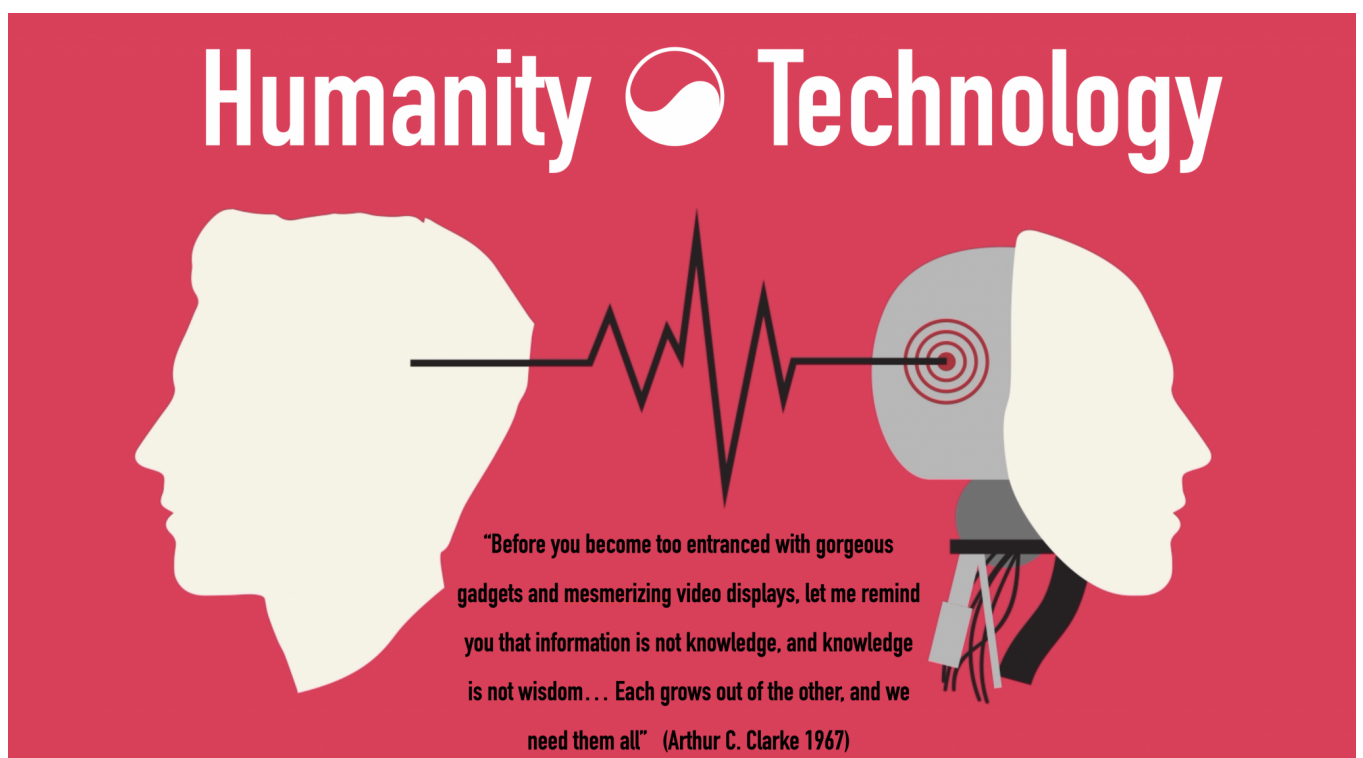
5) Redesigning capitalism to encompass 4 dimensions: [people, planet, purpose and prosperity](#). A new stock market (let's call it 'SUSDAQ' ...akin to NASDAQ) could be created where companies and 'brands with purpose' that follow this quadruple bottom-line would be listed (including those that are already on a similar agenda, today, such as Patagonia, Zappos and Unilever). Al Gore called this ['sustainable capitalism'](#) in 2011 and I think this meme remains suitable. What if every American CEO would be compensated based on his/her performance in these 4 categories ?



People Planet Purpose Prosperity – watch [this keynote talk on 'new paradigms'](#)

I believe that a new 2021 U.S. administration would be well advised to embrace the duality of Technology and Humanity, and to set an entirely new agenda for the future of America – and my gut feel is that this is already percolating.

[The Future is better than we think.](#)



[Oh yes... don't forget to have a look at my book on this topic:\)\)](#)

Some personal context: Gerd and America

I studied in the US (Berklee College of Music, Boston, 1985-87), and lived in the Bay Area for more than 15 years, both of my kids are American citizens, and (before covid-19 grounded me, and catapulted me into a [new virtual world](#)) many of my [biggest speaking engagements](#) were in the US or for US companies. In fact, I have to admit that even after 18 years in Switzerland I often still feel more 'American' than Swiss or German.

