

THE HUMAN RACE

A Framework for Hope

A synopsis for anyone who wants to know what the book is about



Start with a phone.

If you are twelve, the phone in your pocket beats the best computer on earth from the year your parents were born.

If you are eighty, you began with letters and a party line. Today you take video calls from great-grandchildren on a device that knows where it is by satellite. Not to mention the history of everything at the touch of a button.

We call this the Innovation of Things: chips, algorithms, and networks, improving on a curve, each generation building the next faster than the last. It is magnificent.

There is another, slower, kind of invention. One that creates new learning, agreements, treaties and social infrastructure. It deals with new forms of governance and human systems. We call this slower invention, the *Innovation of Ways*, and it has not kept pace with the Things.

This book addresses that imbalance. It recognises that Things compound like interest – doubling and doubling again, while the Ways move at the slower pace of committees and out of date systems. The gap between these is an increasingly dangerous place.

FIVE SYMPTOMS

The book opens with five converging crises – the Five Horsemen. A planet already past seven of the nine limits that keep it stable. Thirty million dollars an hour flowing from the world's poorer regions to its richest one per cent. A public that can no longer agree on what is true. Machine intelligence arriving faster than the rules to govern it. And the institutions built for shared problems failing just as those problems compound.

Five crises that look unrelated. They are not. Each is a symptom of the same failure: our tools raced ahead of our agreements about how to use them. A problem of our own making, in systems we built. But, what we built, we can rebuild.

SIX AXIOMS OF WAYS

The answer is not to slow Things down. It is time to upgrade the Ways – through six working principles the book calls the *Axioms of Ways*, each asking something of you:

See: *Other Ways of Knowing* – widen whose knowledge counts, the ancients, the navigators and the machines, and admit that no single lens is complete

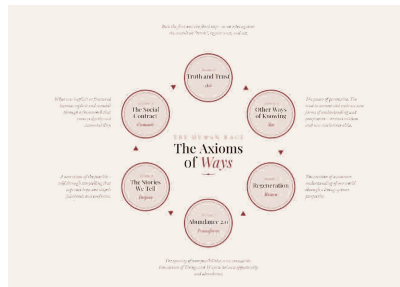
Renew: *Regeneration* – move past extraction, and past mere sustainability, to restore what we have damaged

Transform: *Abundance 2.0* – design how we create and distribute plenty to benefit more than the few

Inspire: *The Stories We Tell* – treat narrative as part of the solution, and use it to increase engagement and understanding

Commit: *The Social Contract* – make our implicit obligations to one another explicit and binding

Act: *Truth and Trust* – rebuild trust as civic and social infrastructure, the ground every other repair stands on



AXIOMS AT WORK

Other Ways of Knowing is active where authorities reach back to indigenous practices and combine them with satellite fire-mapping, aerial ignition, and a carbon methodology to control wildfires and measure impact.

Regeneration is already saving agriculture where farmers have learned to regreen land that had been written off as dead. *Abundance 2.0* is now evident in medicine, where a treatment that once cost more than most people could afford keeps tens of millions alive because someone decided that plenty should be shared.

An inspirational photograph – Earthrise – recruited a superpower’s legislature to change the way it thought about its responsibility on earth: *The Stories We Tell* at work. *The Social Contract* is recognised every time you send your child to school and trust that they will be safe, or deposit your savings and believe the bank will still be there tomorrow. *Truth and Trust* is developed in a country where citizens can open a log and see which official looked at their file, and why.

SO WHAT, NOW WHAT

After defining and identifying the Axioms, the book takes them into the four key arenas of education and knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurship, capital and economy, and policy and governance. There it makes the case for how the Axioms can and should be applied. And finally, it addresses the question of governance and the changing international order, and it looks towards a new operating system.

The book is written for anyone trying to make sense of the world. And especially for those who are making decisions with long time horizons, multiple stakeholders, or concentration risk. That applies equally to the boardroom, a policy table, a founding team or a classroom.

The Human Race is not about a race between people and machines. It asks that we allow wisdom to race alongside cleverness, or as it says in its closing lines:

“The race was never against one another.

It was always a race between what we have built and what we can become.”

FROM THE BOOK

In the spring of 1980, a twenty-seven-year-old Hawaiian named Nainoa Thompson stood on the deck of a double-bulled voyaging canoe called Hōkūle‘a and pointed her south, towards Tahiti – more than two thousand miles of open Pacific Ocean away.

He carried no compass, no sextant, no charts, and no electronics he was permitted to consult. What he carried was in his head: the rising and setting points of the stars, the feel of the long ocean swells against the hull, the flight lines of birds that sleep ashore, the colour the underside of a cloud turns when there is land beneath it.

– from *The First Axiom: Other Ways of Knowing*

Jim Gibson builds, funds and mentors technology companies and their leaders, and wrote Tip of the Spear (2017).

Laura Haynes is a global strategist and advisor to leaders. They have been debating this out for nine years.

The full argument, with the receipts, is the book.