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# CAREER AHEAD

LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE

## THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS BELONGS TO THE YOUTH

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Global Business Leader and Sustainability Champion

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EazyDiner

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Ex-CEO Balaji Telefilms

### FINDING THE ZONE

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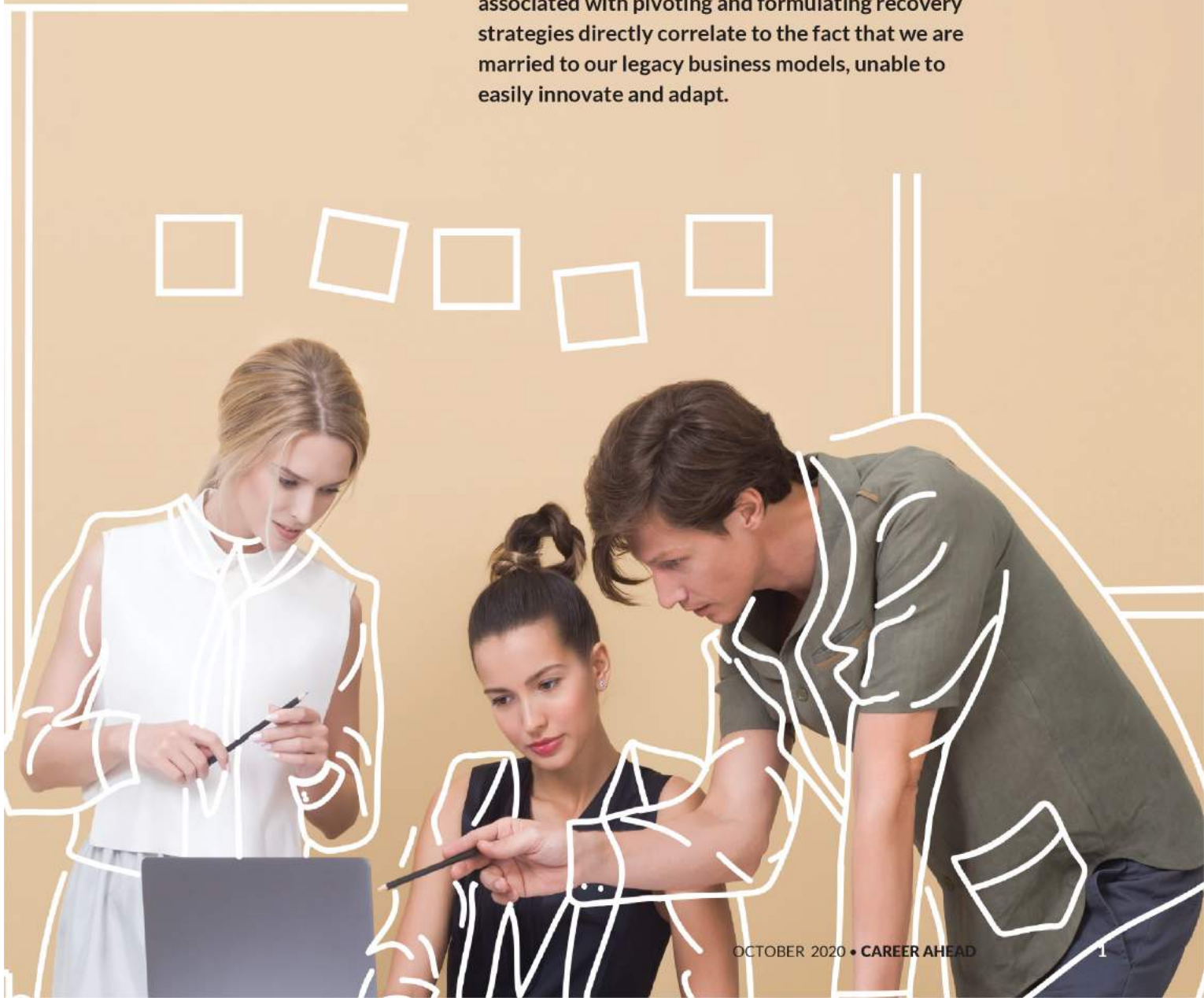
Shalini Passi



# THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS BELONGS TO THE YOUTH

Larisa Miller

As we see the disruptive environment that Covid has thrust on us as business owners, leaders and professionals, one must wonder if the challenges associated with pivoting and formulating recovery strategies directly correlate to the fact that we are married to our legacy business models, unable to easily innovate and adapt.





**How can the 'old guard' empower the next generation of entrepreneurs, business leaders and professionals to achieve the full measure of their potential?**

On the other hand, our youth have been reared in an era of hyperconnectivity, global connectiveness and digital transformation; allowing them to take these cataclysmic business shifts in stride. Our youth recognize that we are stakeholders of the planet – mandating sustainability and social inclusiveness, allowing businesses to truly embrace the world as a global marketplace.

So, how can the 'old guard' empower the next generation of entrepreneurs, business leaders and professionals to achieve the full measure of their potential? Incorporating disruptive, rapidly progressing technologies with the wisdom and lessons-learned through years of experience? For the youth, as they prepare to step into life, moving toward a future of decision-making, responsibility and adventure, I have a few suggestions which I hope will allow them to be the change-makers of the future, healing our badly damaged planet, incorporating technological innovation with the established business methodologies of the past.

**Do not say goodbye to education.**

Your education is only just beginning. Life never stops teaching, so you should never stop learning. As President John F. Kennedy said, 'Leadership and learning are indispensable to one another'. To be a great leader, continue to adjust your perspective, refine your skills, enhance your knowledge and recognize that experience, while important, represents the past, but education empowers the future.

**Be ethical and altruistic leaders, building a legacy along with a career.**

Make 'giving back' an integral part of your ethos, weaving it into your business model from the very first day. Embrace sustainability as our collective mandate for the future. We did not inherit the planet from the past; we are borrowing it from the future. So far, we have done a horrible job of preparing the future for the next generation. We recognize that we have a responsibility to prepare you



Larisa at an orphanage in Tamsloht, Morocco



for our collective future now; therefore, as we give you the tools on which to build this future, recognize the gift you have in the Sustainable Development Goals\*. Select one or two of these Goals, which are a blueprint to the future. Your impact on one goal will have an ancillary impact on many others. Perhaps the most important goal is number 17: Partnerships for the Goals; recognizing that we are stronger together. We have no 'Planet B'. We can only heal our troubled world if we work together. It can no longer be us against each other; it must be us together for a solution.

### You must find ways to differentiate yourselves.

These are the times when fortunes are made and fortunes are lost. To be the former, don't be afraid to throw away 'the way it's always been done' and write a new way-forward. Recognize the value in the word 'team'. As Phil Jackson said, 'The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team'. When great minds come together with purpose, commitment and vision, the results can be transformational. As a business owner or leader, trust in the value of your employees, making them stakeholders in your company's future. Delegate responsibility giving your employees the freedom and confidence to develop and refine their skills, and count on the diversity of their perspective when the chips are down and your company needs to pivot. As leaders, we often get trapped in the cattle chutes of worry, burdened with solving problems without sharing that burden with our team. Use your team to help 'hack' apart the problem and brainstorm the solution, and you will have a company that will always be the industry or sector leader. YOU have the power to define the future. Your personal and professional success or failure is not predestined, arbitrary or accidental. You cannot attach blame or pass away the accountability. When adversity

becomes a chapter in the handbook of your business, YOU have the power to decide how that chapter is written. It begins by making a commitment to persevere in the face of adversity and the determination to stay the course.

### Take risks.

To quote William Shedd, 'A ship is safe in the harbor, but that's not what a ship was built for'. Greatness doesn't come from comfort zones. Dream big, work hard, and don't give up. You may have to try 1,000 keys before you can find the one that opens the door, but if you quit, that door will stay shut forever.

**To be a great leader, continue to adjust your perspective, refine your skills, enhance your knowledge and recognize that experience, while important, represents the past, but education empowers the future.**



Larisa and Akon, Dubai, UAE



**Be open to adjusting your route and relishing the unexpected detours that life bestows.**

What you expect to be, the life plan that you've drawn for yourself, will be as ever-changing as a Dubai street map. The detours will lead you to unimaginable experiences, destinations and people, often missed by those who are too inflexible, fearful or distracted to see these diversions as opportunities. Put down your phone. Look up. SEE the world. Destiny will walk right by those who are too busy taking selfies.

**Be strong in your convictions, even if those convictions are contrary to popular opinion.**

With each juncture in life, you will need to make a decision. Do not be afraid to swim against the current. Make your decision, believe in that decision, and follow it through to the end – regardless of the outcome. Do not doubt yourself. YOU are the one person with whom you can have complete trust. Make mistakes. Mistakes are as much a part of life as successes, and they often teach you the largest, most important lessons. Do not be afraid to fail. Failure is one of the necessary stepping-stones of life.

Follow your endeavors through to the end – sometimes the end is bitter, and sometimes sweet, but each conclusion you reach will leave you stronger than you were at inception. There will always be people who tell you 'it can't be done'. Remember, people say you can't because they are afraid you WILL.

**Follow your dreams, but do not be afraid to change those dreams.**

As you grow and evolve, so will your hopes, goals and aspirations. Life is unpredictable, and ever changing. Be brave enough to change with it. As Darwin said, 'It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one most adaptable to change'. Do not be afraid to embrace change. The ones who are crazy enough to believe they can change the world, are the ones who do.

**YOU have the power to define the future. Your personal and professional success or failure is not predestined, arbitrary or accidental. You cannot attach blame or pass away the accountability. When adversity becomes a chapter in the handbook of your business, YOU have the power to decide how that chapter is written.**





Larisa Miller

**While it is never good to judge a book by its cover, learn to trust your instincts.**

They rarely steer you wrong. Always treat others with dignity and compassion. Be helpful, not hurtful. You may never know how deeply an unkind word will affect someone. Be empathetic. Compassion, honesty, commitment and humor are necessary qualities found in all great leaders. Believe that YOU have what it takes to be a great leader. If you believe it, you will achieve it.

You never know how strong you are until being strong is your only option. Do not hold on to the past. Do not be afraid of the future. Enjoy today and learn from it. If you make a mess of today, forgive yourself, and start fresh with the sunrise. Each day is a clean slate. Each path you take will be an adventure, and remember, the greatest surprises and joys will be found on those unexpected detours. 🏹

**Believe that YOU have what it takes to be a great leader. If you believe it, you will achieve it.**

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Larisa Miller is CEO of Phoenix Global, an award-winning global boutique consulting and investment firm based in Miami. With over two decades of experience working with heads of governments and business leaders in the US and across the globe, Larisa has the exceptional talent of developing mutually beneficial partnerships spanning cultures, countries, and industries. She started her career working for the Secretary of Agriculture in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and went on to work in the office of public policy with the Governor of Pennsylvania. Larisa later worked with the Royal Family in Abu Dhabi, UAE, as their business development manager, with a focus on sustainable development, and also as head of their large non-profit foundation, which focused on women, youth, literacy and education. Larisa is an award-winning keynote speaker, and sits on several global boards. She is also Managing Partner of Akon Global, developing and facilitating Smart Cities, affordable housing and technology investments with Akon, multi-Grammy award nominated recording star, businessman, philanthropist and change-maker.



## RECENT RECOGNITIONS

- Top 100 People in Finance by The Top 100 Magazine
- Top 10 Most Influential Friends of Africa by For Business in Africa Magazine
- 100 Global Women of Excellence by Sovereign Magazine
- 10 Most Influential Business Leaders of 2020 by Exeleon Magazine



Refugee camp in Mosul, Iraq

## \* SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – also known as Global Goals – were set by the UN General Assembly in 2015 as a part of the UN Resolution called ‘The 2030 Agenda’. There are a total of 17 SDGs, each set with the intention of achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. The SDGs are integrated and interdependent, and have the definitive purpose of balancing development with social, economic and environmental sustainability.

### THE 17 SDGs ARE :

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reducing Inequality
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life On Land
16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals

Scan the QR code to learn more

