

Eight Shocking Quotes from 2012 that will Redefine Our Future

Posted on December 14, 2012



When is the last time you heard a statement that caused you to stop dead in your tracks?

It doesn't happen very often, but for each of us, there are a few unusual sound bites that will permeate our senses and sway our thinking.

On these rare occasions, it's usually a statement by someone we trust, with the power, authority, and credibility to make such a declaration.

However, inside all of the statements the world finds important are the crème de la crème, the Richter scale shifting assertions that really stand out. These are statements so insightful and memorable that they have the power to change the course of history.

For this reason, I wanted to focus on eight shocking statements made in 2012, and discuss briefly how they will invariably shift our outlook on the future.

Here are the eight statements we've judged to be trend-setters for 2013 and beyond.



1.) “When you come to the end of the innovations that business and government are willing to invest in, you still find a vast, unexplored space of innovation where the returns can be fantastic. This space is a fertile area for what I call ‘Catalytic Philanthropy.’” – Bill Gates

People donating money to charities are often frustrated by the results, but none more so than the king of philanthropy himself, Bill Gates.

For this reason, Bill has spent considerable time and energy rethinking how to make his charity count, and in doing so he's hit upon a novel approach. Catalytic Philanthropy is a collaborative effort between funders working together with service organizations, governments, and corporations to solve large, societal issues.

According to Gates, “Catalytic Philanthropy has the high-stakes feel of the private market but can transcend the key market limitations because investor don't need a share of the benefits—

those go to poor people or sick people or society generally, all of whom stand to gain earth-shaking returns from the kind of innovations that business and government likely won't pursue unless philanthropy goes first. And once you've found a solution that works, catalytic philanthropy can harness political and market forces to get those innovations to the people who need them most."



**2.) "We have ability to solve almost all of man's grand challenges within the next 30 years."
– Peter Diamandis, Founder of the X-Prize Foundation.**

In his recent book *Abundance – the Future is Better Than You Think*, Diamandis explains, "Our brains have been conditioned to think in linear terms. Most of us only see the future as linear extrapolations, but technology often surprises us with exponential growth curves."

Scarcity is nearly always relative, but there is an unlimited supply of creativity, ideas, and solutions to today's problems given enough time, proper focus, and the right kind of competition.

With his research, Diamandis concludes that many new technologies are already helping to mitigate challenges related to health, education, and food. He goes on to explain how small teams, prizes, and incentive-based competitions can quickly provide solutions to some of the world's greatest problems.



3.) “Big data will replace the need for 80% of all doctors” – Vinod Khosla, Co-founder of Sun Microsystems and VC at Kleiner Perkins

Khosla made this statement at the Health Innovation Summit hosted by Rock Health in San Francisco.

Never one to mince words, he started by sharing his dim view of the industry. “Health care is like witchcraft and based largely on tradition. Entrepreneurs need to develop technologies that enable doctors to move away from practicing like ‘voodoo doctors’ and act more like scientists.”

He went on to say, “Health care must be more data driven and about wellness, not sick care. Over time, eighty percent of all doctors will be replaced by machines.”

Khosla believes that being part of the health care system is a huge disadvantage. To disrupt an industry like this, entrepreneurs need to attack it from outside the current status quo.

Even though his caustic remarks yielded a firestorm of controversy, for the most part, the reactions failed to refute Khosla’s main point about big-data dramatically changing healthcare.



4.) “Software is eating the world.” – Marc Andreessen, Inventor of the Browser, Co-founder of Netscape and the VC firm, Andreessen Horowitz

We all know about the growing demands of the online world, but creating a visual image of the software industry eating the world adds a new dimension to this pronouncement.

According to Andreessen, “More and more major industries are being run on software and delivered as online services—from movies to agriculture to national defense. Many of the winners are Silicon Valley-style entrepreneurial technology companies that are invading and overturning established industry structures. Over the next 10 years, I expect many more industries to be disrupted by software, with new world-beating Silicon Valley companies doing the disruption in more cases than not.”

Why is this happening now?

Over two billion people now use the broadband Internet, up from perhaps 50 million a decade ago. Software programming tools and Internet-based services make it easy to launch new global software-powered start-ups in many industries—without the need to invest in infrastructure and train new employees.

With lower start-up costs and a vastly expanded market for online services, the result is a global economy that for the first time can be fully wired digitally.



5.) “3D printing will be bigger than the Internet.” – Chris Anderson, Former Managing Editor, WIRED Magazine and author of Makers: The New Industrial Revolution

With 3D printing still mostly happening in the hacker fringes, few in the general public are grasping the true level of innovation happening in this space. Entire car bodies, fully functional bicycles and even perfectly flyable drone airplanes have all been brought to life with 3D printers.

The fact that the revolution is physical puts it directly into the ‘bigger than the internet’ category. While the web has had an enormous impact, it’s primarily focused the digital end of the spectrum. But once we change the way everything is made, it begins to impact our lives as much as the Industrial Revolution did.

Yes, the Maker Movement is far more than 3D printing, but over time, the printers have the power to dwarf all other aspects of it.

According to Anderson, “The world’s factories are now increasingly open to anyone via the web, creating what amounts to ‘cloud manufacturing.’ And huge Maker communities have grown around sites such as Kickstarter and Etsy. In Silicon Valley, the latest mantra is that “hardware is the new software.”

The power of the web can now be applied to making real stuff. As a result, we’re going from the “tinkerer” phase of this movement to entrepreneurship.



6.) “Denser cities are smarter and more productive” – Richard Florida, author of the landmark book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

“In general, more productive people are attracted to more productive places,” says Florida.

Density plays an important role in economic growth. Density brings people and firms closer together which makes it easier to share and exchange information, invent new technologies, and launch new firms.

However, increasing population density is not always beneficial. With his research, Florida draws three important conclusions:

- Density plays a considerable role in the productivity of metro areas. Specifically, doubling density increases productivity by an average of two to four percent.
- Density plays a bigger role in cities with higher-level skills and superior human capital.
- The effects of density are greatest in industries like information, finance, arts and entertainment, and professional services—sectors that place a high premium on creativity and sharing of ideas.

<http://www.vimeo.com/37164389>

7.) “By 2030 over 2 billion jobs will disappear.” – Futurist Thomas Frey, author of *Communicating with the Future*

Whatever you may be thinking when you apply for a job today, you can be sure your prospective employer is thinking, “Will this person add more value than a robot, a computer, or a worker in India?”

We all know that jobs are disappearing. In fact the newspaper headlines are full of downsizing companies and the toll it’s taking on society. But no one attempted to quantify the looming size of this problem until my keynote at TEDxRESET in Istanbul in Feb 2012.

The prediction of 2 billion jobs disappearing wasn’t intended to be a doom and gloom prediction. Rather, it was intended as a wakeup call, letting the world know how quickly things are changing, and letting academia know that much of the battle ahead will be taking place on their doorsteps.



8.) “Not only can anyone be an entrepreneur, but they must be.” – Reid Hoffman, cofounder and executive chairman of LinkedIn Corporation, and author of The Startup of You.

All of us are entrepreneurs of our own lives. We must act as CEO of our careers, take control of our professional future, and become globally competitive.

“The Startup of You” identifies three steps to expand your strategies for this new world of entrepreneurship.

- Plan to Adapt – Plan ABZ – Plan A is the current implementation of your competitive advantage. Plan B runs in tandem, and if plan A is no longer working, then a pivot to Plan B can be relatively painless. Plan Z is the “lifeboat” option for when neither A or B are working.
- Nurture your networks and relationships – The best way to strengthen your network is to keep a robust mix of collaborative partners, alliances, likeminded individuals, but also, loose acquaintances.
- Take intelligent risks – This doesn’t mean you should turn every decision into a life-or-death situation. Rather, the idea of intelligent risk-taking has more to do with “leaning into” risks to better yourself and your career.

Final Thoughts

Yes, I’ll admit it was a bit self-serving to add my own quote to this list, but it ends up being an important statement, and it ties in nicely with Reid Hoffman’s thinking about everyone needing to entrepreneurialize their life.

It’s important to understand that there is a constant battle being waged over the needs of the present vs. the needs of the future. It’s very easy to place short-term profitability ahead of long-term strategies.

At the same time, the future cannot be our only priority otherwise we lose our ability to function in the present.

It’s easy to look around us and see what exists today, but the true visionaries are looking for what’s missing.

The voids and empty spaces around us will have people stampeding to fill these vacuums once they can be defined and understood. Shocking statements like these do exactly that.

About the author:

Thomas Frey is the innovation editor of THE FUTURIST magazine. This piece was originally posted on his Website, Futuristspeaker.com