

The Future of Work podcast is a weekly show where Jacob has in-depth conversations with senior level executives, business leaders, and bestselling authors around the world on the future of work and the future in general. Topics cover everything from AI and automation to the gig economy to big data to the future of learning and everything in between. Each episode explores a new topic and features a special guest.

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**Jacob 03:57**

Welcome everyone to another episode of the future of work with Jacob Morgan, my guest today, Lynda Gratton, Professor of Management Practice at London Business School and author, most recent book is The New Long Life a Framework for Flourishing in a Changing World. Linda, thank you for joining me today.

**Lynda 04:12**

Oh my pleasure, Jacob. Thank you for inviting me.

**Jacob 04:16**

Well, first very obvious question for you. Why did you write this book?

**Lynda 04:21**

Well, thanks, Jacob. Well, I've been studying the future of work for more than a decade. In fact, I have this marvelous consortium of companies from all over the world who co- create with me and I've written, I started off actually with a book called The Shift, which really said, you know, what are the what are the what are the things around us that are changing the way that we work? And I looked at, you know, all sorts of aspects, demography, technology. And then Andrew Scott, who was a colleague of mine at the London Business School, and an economist, he and I got to really talk about the future of work.

**Lynda 04:58**

In fact, we were doing a presentation In China, and what we realized is that that whole issue of demography just really hadn't been covered enough. You know, what happens when everybody lives to 100. And we wrote a book called The 100 Year Life. And then we came back and said but of course, demography isn't the only thing that shaping organizations and shaping the way we live. It's also social change, you know, the way our families are structured. And indeed, it's technology. So we came back again. And a new long life basically says, you know, how should we live, and be prepared to live in a world which is changing so profoundly. And of course, the book came out just as COVID hit, so it changed even more than we thought.

**Jacob 05:43**

Yeah, no my book came out in March, like literally right when it was announced that everything was a pandemic, and all the madness was happening. So yeah, yeah, I know, I know what it's like to have a

book coming out right in the middle of a pandemic. So I mean, the first question that I'm sure a lot of people are thinking of, are we going to live to be 100 years old?

**Lynda 06:04**

Well, certainly every year, we live longer. And that's prime, possibly, in part because we live more healthily, we know how to live more healthily. And it's part because of all the extraordinary technologies that are helping us to live longer. So yes, right now, some of us, and certainly our children could be prepared to live to 100 years old. Yeah.

**Jacob 06:33**

Yeah, it's quite an interesting thought to think about living to 100. Which, yeah, I mean

**Lynda 06:41**

How about yourself, Jacob, would you like to live to 100?

**Jacob 06:47**

Um, yeah, I mean, assuming that my wife and those around me can continue to live longer lives? Yes. It's sort of like that question that people always ask, right? If you could live forever, would you? And well, if you could, if you could live forever, and everybody else around you ends up passing away. That's kind of a depressing life. So if I'm living to 100, and people around me can also live longer lives. I'm all for that. Definitely. And so, before we talk about what that means, for work, I think it would be really important for people to get a little bit of context just around how work has changed. So, I mean, if we were to go back 30-40-50 years ago, we had one idea and assumption about work in one kind of social contract, and now it's changing. So can you talk a little bit about how that idea that concept of work is shifting?

**Lynda 07:36**

Yeah, well, you know, in many ways, the way that we work was really began to be set by the Industrial Revolution. And at that stage, people moved from the fields into factories. And as such, they began to live, what really was automated lives. You know, the factory started at eight o'clock, so they need to be there at eight o'clock. The factory closed, so they stayed until it was closed, and they did repetitive work. And interestingly, when we then when more of our work was cognitive, and we moved into offices, we replicated exactly the same aspects, you know, the idea that you could come in at a certain time you left at a certain time. And because these were places where you went to work, and even the prior to the pandemic, we could work wherever we wanted to, because of technologies, the truth was that most people didn't, they still went into the office, and they still work till nine to five.

**Lynda 08:39**

So then sort of nine to five office was really, certainly how most cognitive work took place. And that had a couple of implications. One is, it wasn't very flexible, because it was nine to five, and you're in an office. And in fact, it became a lot longer than nine to five, because, you know, the technologies you carried your iPhone and so on, meant that you could work a lot longer than five o'clock in the afternoon. And secondly, there was a whole sort of set of assumptions about what families did. And in many ways,

you know, as what developed in the 1950s, and 1960s, you know, you could probably earn enough as a man to support your family.

**Lynda** 09:24

But then a couple of things happened. One is that women went to university and became highly educated and wanted to work just as the way that men did. And secondly, a combination of factors meant that most families needed two incomes. And so women moved into the workforce. And that also really changed the way things are Jacob. So in many ways, pre the pandemic, we were really ready for change in my view we needed and this is really what we talked about in the new long life that actually, you know, the way that technology was developed, the way that process social fabric was developing the way that we were aging are living longer and societies were aging, we were living longer meant that we needed a new way of thinking about work.

**Jacob** 10:11

Yeah. And it's interesting, because a lot of companies that did have flexible work programs, people, I think there was a little bit of a stigma around the taking advantage of flexible work programs, where if your company offered it, and you did it, people would say, oh, and so and so's like not coming into the office or someone says I'm gonna lazy. Yeah. And now, it's sort of I mean, it's, it's the standard, everybody's working that way. So I think there's also there's been this really interesting shift in perception around what flexible work is, and being able to use it, which I think has been great.

**Jacob** 10:45

My, my dad works in the aerospace industry, and he has never in his entire life had a flexible work arrangement up until now we're talking, you know, 50 plus years in the workforce never, never had this idea of flexible work. Now, all of a sudden, he's working at home in his sweat pants. And I'm like, yeah, this is this is what I've been doing for for a long time. Now you get a taste of it.

**Lynda** 11:09

Now both you and your dad are in sweatpants, Jacob, is that what you're saying?

**Jacob** 11:14

Pretty much, pretty much. Yes.

**Lynda** 11:16

I am sitting here in what looks like pajamas, but is actually a very nice silk top. A very lovely velvet. And I only purchased these yesterday. velvet slippers.

**Jacob** 11:30

Oh, my goodness. You know who else likes velvet? George Costanza from Seinfeld loves velvet.

**Lynda** 11:40

Oh yeah, I'm a big fan. But the interesting thing about work Jacob has it isn't just about the day, what really came out from both The 100 Year Life, and The New Long Life is a sort of fundamental restructuring of your working life. I mean, that for me was the big aha moment. Is that you say, if you're

going to live to 100 years, how long do you have to work? Well, I was lucky because I work I write with an economist. So he could you could work that out in about four nanoseconds? The answer was late 70s.

**Jacob 12:20**

Wow

**Lynda 12:20**

Yes, I know. And then you said, Well, unless you saved a lot, which nobody does. Unless you're in some countries, but mostly people don't. So then the question was, well, my God, how could you somebody like your dad, or even you, Jacob, or particularly your dad, actually what like he's doing until he's 75, you know, 75. And that's when we began to realize, and it was a fundamental insight for us, for Andrew, Scott and I is that this idea of the three stage life, which was full time, education, full time, work full time, retirement, was just not going to hold. And that's when we started talking about the multistage life, where you come in and out of each of those areas.

**Lynda 13:03**

So education, you come in and out of work, you come in and out of retirement, which we call leisure, you come in and out of, and then suddenly, you know, you get a whole lot of possibilities. And really, the new long life was just was to invite the reader, you, the reader to understand what could those possibilities be? And that was really exciting.

**Jacob 13:26**

So instead of those kind of stages that you said, right, you go to school, you get a job and you retire. It seems like now it's all just kind of mushed together, you know, you might retire for a little bit, you go back to school, in and out. So if it's not a linear path anymore, is it just what, like a bunch of just squiggles all over the place?

**Lynda 13:47**

Well, yeah, I mean, it is sort of a bunch of squiggles. And one of the things I teach a class at London Business School for second year MBA students, which is about the future of work is one of our most successful, and popular electives, actually, because it turns out Jacob, a lot of people, want to know about the future of work. And one of the things I asked them to do there is to given all we talk about so we talk about, you know, technology, social trends, demographic trends, but also resource trends, you know, climate change, and so on.

**Lynda 14:19**

And for the first half of the semester, that's what we talk about, and I get amazing people in to teach those topics. But then I say, well, knowing all you do about the world, and how it's going to change, what does it mean for you and how they work the way that you manage your life. And then as part of the exam, I asked each one of them to write their life narrative. And what's really fascinating about that, Jacob is how different they each are.

**Lynda 14:46**

So, you know, we use the concept I use in the book, in the book and indeed in my class, this concept of possible selves, you know, the idea that any point in time you could be something different and the invitation really from the Book and from the classes, what would that be? What would that different thing person be? And actually people had a lot of fun working out, you know, how do you build a life that's exciting, you know. And that's really, that was really the basis of the book.

**Lynda 15:18**

Because what we set what we talked about in the new long life was saying, you know, if you want to actually build your own life, where you can't just simply look at everybody around you and say, Well, what, what are they doing, I need to do the same thing, which is what your dad would have done. I mean, your dad and my dad, actually, they didn't really have to think about the transitions they were going through, because everybody of the same age as them, left college at the same time, went into, into companies at the same time and are going to retire at the same time. But actually, once you break that three stage life, what you also break is the fact that everybody's doing the stuff at the same time. So you've got to be much more cognizant of what it is you can be.

**Lynda 16:02**

And that's why in the book, we talk about three things, we talk about narrative, which is, what is my life? How am I going to narrate my life? What is it? The second is explore, which is, you know, if I could be many different things in my life, well, how do I find out what those are, and how to give, give myself the resources that are able to do that. And then the third is relate, which was really about a topic I've come back to a lot in my books, which is families, communities, neighborhoods, you know, how do you strengthen those? And how do you strengthen your connectivity? And those three aspects of narrate, explore, relate, became really the foundations for the whole book.

**Jacob 16:48**

So I thought we could talk a little bit more about those three, those three areas. Because I love that that's how you structured the book. So let's start off with so we have narrate, explore, relate. So for people who are listening or watching to this, how can we walk them through this? So let's say you were I don't know, everybody watching and listening as part of your MBA class. They're starting off with this narrate section. What's, what's the action that they need to do? What should they be thinking about?

**Lynda 17:16**

Well, I'd say, you know, two things, Jacob, the first is they need to think about, they need to realize that as they look forward, there are possible selves. And actually, in the book, I'm a great Scribbler. So in the book, you know, we've sort of scribbled the idea that any point in time, the path in front of you could fall, you could follow a number of different paths. And I think that's a mindset shift, really. The idea that at any point in time, you could, you could plan to be something different. Okay, that's the first action. So, you know, let your imagination go in terms of thinking about what, what could it could I be?

**Lynda 17:59**

The second action that comes from narrate is the idea that, to do that, you need to build what we call in the book platforms, which is to say set a platform is think about it as a, as a springboard, that that's the

thing that you can jump off, and spring off. And that platform, and it comes back to something we wrote about in the 100 year life is made up of, you know, the skills that you've got, the social capital you have with regard to networks, and so on. And also your capacity to sort of move into action to, you know, to make things happen. So those intangible assets, which actually, by the way, also include that the money that you've got your tangible assets, but your intangible assets, you know, your reputation, your brand, the skills, you've got, the networks, you've got, the friends you've got. They give you a platform that help you to explore the next stage of your life.

**Lynda** 19:07

And so, you know, that's why the second is about exploration. Because if you want to, if I say to you, Jacob, you could from now on be three have three different types of lives ahead of you. You'd have to say, Well, how do I know if any of those are going to work for me? And that's, that's how we pretty naturally got onto the second piece, which was about exploration.

**Jacob** 19:33

So even before we jump to exploration, so when you think about these potential lives, how, I mean, are these things that need to be related to what you're doing now, for example, I mean, maybe I want to say I want to be a chess player or an astronaut, like how do they need to be tangentially related to the things that you're focusing on? Obviously, you're not just kind of randomly throwing things out there, right. But how do you make it something that's actually has some potential,

**Lynda** 20:01

I think, you know, and I don't think they're just about the jobs that you do. They're more about your ways of living. So, you know, I, one of the things I do is I help companies think about the future of work, and I, I often to help them do that, but help them build what I call a persona. And a persona is a total description of somebody's life, it isn't just about what job but you know, how would you relate to your family? You know, what, what, what's your family situation? Like? I mean, how are you spending your time?

**Lynda** 20:35

So in a way, what you could think about is rather than thinking about it as individual jobs, but rather to say, what's the persona that you could use to describe who you who you would, who you could be, or who you would like me. And so, it might be that, so we're giving the book quite a lot of examples of this. So for example, one of the people we talk about is a Japanese, relatively young Japanese guy. And and the reason we use that, by the way, is that my books, the major that the major market for my books is Japan, which is sort of extraordinary, really, but it is.

**Jacob** 21:18

Wow

**Lynda** 21:18

Our last, 100 year life became the best selling book in Japan, it was made into a manga. And so we wanted to help Japanese people think about what how did you? How did you get away from your parents expectations? Because if you're, if you're a 30 year old in Japan, your parental expectations

weigh very heavily on you. And so the question we asked of this, this character in the book was, how could you imagine another way? Another thing that you could be and? And then and then the question is, what would it take for you to explore what that other piece could be, which then leads to the sort of second major, well, the third major action about narrative, which is about transitions, which is to say, how do you manage the transitions from where you are now to what you could have or would be want to be in the future.

**Lynda 22:11**

And what we've learned about transitions, is they take a very predictable sequence and the sequences in terms of transitions that you, you begin to, to think about being something different than you are now. And you do that, by going into actually exploring that possible self. Let's say, for example, Jacob, you say, I'd really like to be an entrepreneur, next, you know, really start really build my own business? Well, you know, one thing you do is you start changing your network. So you spend more time with other entrepreneurs. So you learnt how they interact. And then you start, you know, using their identity. So when people said to you, Jacob, what do you do? You'd say, Oh, I'm an entrepreneur, I build businesses. So your identity changes and your networks change.

**Lynda 23:07**

And that's a really important part of your narrative. Because, in the end, how you describe yourself to yourself as is, is what you know, what do you tell others about who you are? And how does your network and friendships, how does that also shape who you are and who you become. And so you start then moving, you know, into side, you do projects that allow you to almost pretend to be an entrepreneur and say, Well, how does that feel so it is that you've suddenly changed yourself, it's rather that you realize through the this power of narrative, that you could be something different, you don't have to be what your parents want you to be, or what you think society wants you to be, you have a possibility, particularly at this time, in the history of the world, to become a social, you know, to actually to narrate a different way of being, you know, and we use it in the book, you know, we talk about how important this process of reinvention is, and how important it is for you to be sort of ingenious, really, about what you could be to actually explore the various options that you have in front of you.

**Lynda 24:24**

And that for me, is one of the most exciting aspects about where we are now is that we do have an opportunity to explore what we want to be and to change our narrative.

**Jacob 24:43**

So my mom actually went through a, I'd say process of reinvention because she used to be a computer programmer. And then she I remember her coming home from work many, many nights, she was just so unhappy with her job, she was crying, and she was very, very upset. And finally, my dad was like, Look, there's no amount of money is worth this level of stress and unhappiness. And so she went back to school, and she became a marriage and family therapist. So she in the middle of her life made a made a career a pivot change from being a computer programmer to a therapist.

**Jacob 25:30**

And I've actually talked to a lot of people even here in the Bay Area. One lady who used to have a mobile dog grooming service used to come to our house and shave our little dogs, started talking to her one day and say, Hey, how'd you get into this? And she said, Well, I used to be a high level corporate attorney.

**Lynda 25:47**

Wow.

**Jacob 25:48**

And she went from being a corporate attorney to having a mobile dog grooming service, I was just like, wow. And so many times when I talk to entrepreneurs, whether they have pastry shops, or whether they are, you know, creating products or services, they they have done different things. And it's just so fascinating to see these pivots that people have had, I've even talked to Uber drivers in the Bay Area, and you start talking to them, and they say, Oh, yeah, you know, I used to be a program manager, or used to be a leader at this company, and it was too much. Now I'm building my own business, and I'm driving on the side. So it's the stories that people have, it's just really fascinating.

**Lynda 26:26**

Well actually check if those the stories you've told, have a lot of resonance to the sort of research that we've done about how people change. So one is the side hustle. You know, very often, where people are in transitions, their side hustle, provides them with cash, but also maybe opportunities to explore what that might be like. And the second is about, you know, you've talked about your mom and dad, and it was your dad, who said to your mom, you know, we need to think about this.

**Lynda 26:59**

And the third area that I talked about, which is relate, it really is about this, because very often when we've talked about people's lives, we've somehow seen them as being completely independent or autonomous from their family structures, but most of us are in some sort of a family structure. And certainly, when I teach my MBAs one of the things they're thinking about is they're saying, well, in fact, some of them have already been in situations where their partner has said to them, You do the MBA, I work and then you know, we'll swap as it was. So, very often, you see that when people are doing, thinking about them, that their futures, they're not thinking about themselves as an individual, they're actually thinking of themselves of themselves within a partnership.

**Lynda 27:48**

And I feel that we've really got to acknowledge that, and also acknowledge the fact that women are playing a very crucial role in those partnerships. And one of the things that I've talked about quite a lot through my own writing a Jacob is just how important it is for men to step up within within the family. And that's, that's, that's been a recurring theme. And it actually comes out in the new long life as well, which is to say, How can we, you know, if, if you say you're going, if you think you're going to live to 100. And you're already going to have, let's say, two kids, I'm already going to be, you know, young for maybe five years, that's a very small proportion of your whole life, you know, and one of the things I'm saying to dance in the book, and as I talk about the book is, you know, you could easily reallocate time.

**Lynda 28:53**

So one of the aspects of the chapter on narrative is the reallocation of time. You know, if you have a multistage life, then it means that the time that you would have retired, you can now think about that, move it forward, you know, why don't So, if you spent two years, let's say, doing a job where you could spend more time with your kids, that's a wonderful thing to do. And, you know, it builds an asset, a family asset, that is really, really important to you going forward, you know, you're more likely to have a better relationship with your children right the way through the whole of your life. So, part of what we've said about the narrative of your life is, don't just think about where you are now think, but, you know, what would your 80 year old self ask of you?

**Lynda 29:46**

You know, and I guess that you know, one of the things that your 80 year old self might say to you as a dad is I wish you'd spent more time with the kids when they were young because that was a very short period of time. We shall never get back again. And part of what we're talking about in the writers, things that happen, you know, things you can do over and over again, like, you know, working really hard, you can honestly do that at any time in your life, looking after, you know, a kid, when they're one year old, you've only got one year to do that it doesn't happen again. So these are sort of like, really important questions that where we ask people really to think about through the book, but also through the teaching we do at London Business School.

**Jacob 30:32**

I have a nine month old and a four and a half year old and sometimes. Yeah, sometimes even I struggle with that. It's like, especially as an entrepreneur, my wife and I are both entrepreneurs. And sometimes there's this issue, should I answer that last email or close the computer and spend time with the kids and we, I like to think we do a pretty good job of, you know, at the end of each day, we try to put things away and spend time with our kids. And we're constantly if we're not doing that, either, I'll remind my wife, or she'll remind me and she'll say, hey, close the computer time for family. But it's, it's hard. You know, we're constantly distracted by technology and pulled in so many different directions. So I love that visual of giving your 80 year old self, you know, asking what they would want, because you're right. I mean, when I think of my 80 year old self, my 80 year old self isn't gonna say, Hey, are you glad you respond to that email? No, it's probably going to be exactly like you said, did you spend more time with your kids and have fun with them?

**Lynda 31:30**

So it I didn't mean in the book, or even in my conversation with you, Jake, for to, to really, you know, to say to people, this is an easy thing, because it you know, I'm I, I have children of my own. And I know how tough it is. But I think one thing that you've just talked about Jacob now, which is really important is that you and your wife talked about it in the sense that you were thoughtful. And I think that that's, that's all we can ask of ourselves. And in the program. I do love the business school with my MBA students, you know, that the request from me is not that they live, you know, the life that I think they should live in terms of multistage, but actually, that they look at their options, and they look at their consequences.

**Lynda 32:18**

And that's, you know, in terms of narrative, this, this idea of options and consequences, is really, really important. And, yes, you know, there will be times when you have to work really hard. But there are consequences to that, in terms of your relationship with your kids and your relationship to yourself and your relationship to others. So helping them frame in terms of Options, Options and consequences. The other thing we talked about not so much in the new long life, but in the 100 year life is the idea that these intangible assets in the in the website for the for the 100 year life, there's a you can go in and fill in a survey, which tells you what your intangible assets are at any point in time, and I get my MBA students to do that, in fact, you know, anyone can do it, it simply sits there for free.

**Lynda 33:08**

But what's really interesting about that is to say, look, it's okay, if at a certain point in your talk in your life, you realize that you're letting things go, that that's okay. But just don't let it continue too long. You know, that's the point. You know, when I when I wrote the 100 year life, and then the new long life, and asked myself, What would my 80 year old self say to me right now, what my 80 year old self would say, you need to get more healthy. You've absolutely got I mean, Jacob, you look like the master of healthy living. So I can see that.

**Jacob 33:45**

We try. My wife and I that's kind of exactly like you said, because we, you know, we try to eat healthy, we try to exercise we both had family members and friends who have, you know, passed away earlier than they should have because they weren't being healthy. I'm constantly trying to get my dad to eat healthy. And so it's Yeah, I mean, it's health is like the number one thing, right?

**Lynda 34:09**

It really is and that's, you know, so when people said to me, Lynda, what did you change? The most, the most drastic thing that I changed is I started to do Pilates. Seriously. I lost weight. And I walk for six kilometers a day. I didn't today, because a and b I've been on webinars all day, started with Australia this morning 12 hours ago. So, it's a long day. But I prefer to package things together. This is my own way. And then so Friday, for example, I'm not doing anything so I'd rather just go straight through and and then and then take time out but that was that was a really big, big takeaway for me.

**Lynda 34:54**

And by the way, you know, one of the reasons then the rate the section in the book, is a lot about the way that you use time. And you know, staying healthy is very time consuming. You know, wouldn't it be great if we could just eat a pill and be healthy, but actually, you know, walking six kilometers a day takes me because I'm really slow, more than an hour, preparing nutritious food is very time consuming. So, you're setting aside, I probably set aside two hours a day to stay healthy. So that's a lot about. But the good news is, if I live to 100, I got plenty of time, you know, so, I've got plenty of time. I've got many hours ahead of me to stay healthy.

**Jacob 35:40**

Yeah. Well, I know, we spent a lot of time talking about narrate. So maybe we could touch on the last two, which are exploring relate, I'm assuming explore is actually taking steps to do those things. Like

you said, if you want to be an entrepreneur, you change your network. If you want to switch careers, you enroll in those programs, right? Is it more about taking those steps?

**Lynda 36:02**

Yeah, it is. It is a lot about that. But it's actually also about learning. And one of the areas that I think about right about quite a lot is, is skills and the development of skills. And, you know, Jacob, one of the aspects of our lives, is that technology, and we talk about this quite a lot in the book, technology will change the jobs that we do. And I don't, I'm not an advocate of saying that all our jobs will disappear. And technology will destroy all our jobs, they won't.

**Lynda 36:35**

But what technology will do, and that will be robotics, or artificial intelligence, machine learning is that it will, they will, it will substitute for the tasks, some of the tasks that we do, and in some case, in some jobs, they substitute for a lot of the tasks and in other jobs, that they substitute for some of the tasks, but all of us will, our jobs will change. And, and that will accelerate over time. So that means that we have to be always sort of one step ahead of technology.

**Lynda 37:10**

And that's why explore is so important, because explore has, in my view, two aspects to it. One is the future view, which is to say, where should I place my bets? You know, what, what are the some of the jobs I think are going to grow, and some of the jobs I think are going to go, you know, will will be affected by technology greater? And secondly, what sort of skills I've got to do. So that's the sort of the foresight part of exploration. And then secondly, how do I learn these skills? But you know, what, how do I give myself time to do that.

**Lynda 37:48**

And in a multi stage life, as I described earlier, you have to put time aside to either upskill so that in your current job, you learn new things in your current job, or to re skill where you you actually learn something completely different. And we have to do that right the way through our lives. Because if we don't, you know, one of the other things that your 80 year old self well no, your 60 year old self is going to say to you, Jacob is why didn't you carry on learning because I'm now 60 years old, I desperately want to carry on working, and nobody will give me a job because I haven't got the right skills. So that's the other thing. I don't think your 80 year old will say that to you, but your 60 year old self. And the reason they'll say to you is right now, if you're 60 years old, and you lose your job, it's really difficult to get another job. Really.

**Lynda 38:47**

And so you've got to be always moving forward. So the question of how do you learn becomes really important. And I have to say, and you sit in the Bay Area, I'm very optimistic about that. Because right across the bay area, fact, I'm doing something tomorrow with a whole bunch of people in the Bay Area, you know, you are investing in learning technologies. I mean, there's some amazing businesses being built at the moment, who do extraordinary things to credentialize learning to, you know, modulate programs so that people, people can learn amazing stuff that helps you to understand what's happening in the labor market that connects you to jobs. I mean, this is a technology will play an

enormously important role in the labor market and in the flexible labor market. So I feel very excited about what's coming down the line in terms of digital learning in terms of, you know, the landscape of skills in terms of how you, you develop yourself.

**Jacob 39:55**

Yeah, I mean, the theme of perpetual learning is something that even I've talked about. For a while I use my dad as an example, because he was an immigrant from the Republic of Georgia. And when he came to America, he didn't speak any English. And he learned how to speak English by watching. The Johnny Carson and Merv Griffin shows with an English to Russian translation dictionary. So he's constantly he still has the dictionary that he that he keeps it as desk. So whenever you hears a new word, he looks it up. And you know, I hear stories like that of people who had to learn new things, there was no YouTube, there was no technology, like you're, it's like, how do you even learn in that kind of environment.

**Jacob 40:32**

And today, we have access to so many tools and resources, you could learn anything, literally anything that you can think of, by just typing it into a browser. So there's really no excuse for why you can't be leveling up constantly. It's sort of like, like a video game or thinking of yourself as like an app on your phone, or the apps on your phone. They constantly get updates, right? Every week, or every month, there's a feature update, a bug fix. And we need to think of ourselves as apps as well, we have to update ourselves on a regular basis. And sometimes we assume that whatever you learned in school is going to last with you forever. And if you need to learn something new, your company is going to teach it to you. But we need you talk about this in your book, more agency, more accountability, more responsibility. And I think that's a very, very important message for people to remember. Because we, I think a lot of people just assume that if you need to learn something, it'll come your way instead of you going after it.

**Lynda 41:29**

Yeah, it's a much more proactive way of thinking about it. But actually, you know, one of the things we've done in the book is we build a series of personas, you know, and say, what would happen to this person, and one of the personas I build is a woman who's a single mom, got a couple of kids really trying to make things work, you know, working, doing three jobs, which of course, is very common in the US. And I asked my MBA students, if you were her, what would you do now?

**Lynda 42:00**

That's, that's an old philosophy story, actually, what could you do, and that's really important for agency, Jacob, because one of the things that we have to remember is, agency is really easy for you and I, your dad was sounded like an amazing, an amazing person. But actually, you know, the Uber driver that you that you met, they probably work really long hours on zero contracts. And so we have to, and this is actually, you know, the work that I'm doing now, particularly for the World Economic Forum, where I serve as a, as a co chair of one of their councils is about inequality in these sorts of opportunities. And so, you know, it isn't enough either thing for me as an MBA professor, to say to help, just help my MBA students, because honestly, Jacob, they really don't need me to help them. They're already at London Business School, or Stanford or Harvard, they're gonna be just fine.

**Lynda 42:57**

It's actually the guy, you spoke to the Uber driver that needs our help. And so one of the bigger questions I think we're facing, which we address later on in the book, when we talk about what should governments do, particularly, if governments have to play a role here to help your Uber driver, you know, who's going to pay for your Uber driver to be upskilled and reskilled. He's working really long hours already. So the safety nets are become really important. And we haven't spoken about the pandemic, but the, you know, the pandemic is making that even more importantly. So, I suppose for me, you know, part of the story of the new long life isn't just the story of people who are fortunate. But it's also the story of people who have a more difficult time of it, and how do they upskill and reskill.

**Lynda 43:48**

And I think one of the, there's a couple of things that I find really exciting about this one is that quite a lot of the digital stuff that helps them upskill and reskill, is either free, or it's very low cost. And that's, you know, that's really wonderful that they have those opportunities. And I think the second thing is that, you know, governments are beginning to realize they have a role to play here to help to help people who haven't had some of the opportunities that you and I have had. So I think that's a really important part of the new long life. It isn't just about MBA students, and Jacob Morgan and Lynda Gratton, it's actually about a whole bunch of people who find these transitions a lot more difficult.

**Jacob 44:34**

Well, maybe in our last few minutes, we can talk about the last one, which is relate as the final stage in there. So can you give a little bit of context around that stage?

**Lynda 44:44**

Yeah. Well, so relate is really about your relationships with other people. I think, you know, when people have looked at books about you know, how to manage my career or whatever, they tend to look at the individual, as if they were completely autonomous, you know, as if they would, it was just their career. But actually, for most of us, you know, our life is led in with others around us, you know, be that the people be our, you know, our parents, you've talked about your mom and dad, be our, our children, our partners, our very closest friends, and their relationships with them, is a really important part of the new long life.

**Lynda 45:28**

And, you know, we start off one of the, one of the parts of that book with a very old piece of research, but I absolutely love it, which was the Harvard research that followed a group of people right the way through their lives, you know, beginning to add wealth from going to university, right the way through. And one of the questions they asked was, if you saw their whole life, what what aspects of their life would help you to predict their feelings of happiness and satisfaction later on in their lives. And what they found is that money was important. So anybody who says, you know, it's great to be poor, it's not because being poor reduces your options. And actually, a great life is about having options.

**Lynda 46:16**

But of course, what they found with money is that after a certain period taught that certain amount of money having more doesn't necessarily make you more, either more happy or more satisfied, that was the first thing they found, which actually is a big point, I think, for MBA students, because quite often, they're thinking, if only I could become a billionaire, a millionaire, then it would be amazing. It might be amazing, but it actually might not.

**Lynda 46:42**

But what really made a difference to their luck to the quality of their life, right, the way through, particularly in the latest stages of their life, was their friendships. And so, you know, in relate, we talk a lot about, you know, the the nature of friendships, the nature of families, and how they need time, you know, again, I think, Jacob, through this conversation, we're going back to this notion of the allocation of time, you know, you're not going to be able to build a great relationship with your family, or a great relationship with your friends, unless you give them time. And while the thing about the 100 year life is you have a lot of time, there's a lot of hours. So the question is, how do you allocate your hours and giving yourself time with your friends, is enormously important. And that's what that was, the big insight from the Harvard case was that actually, the people who were happiest and most satisfied in their lives, were people who had great friends.

**Lynda 47:46**

And I talked to my MBA group about my friend, Shirley. So when I was 10 years old, Shirley and I were in the same school together, and we're now 66. So we've had 50 years, more than 50 years of friendship. And actually, that's an enormously precious gift to me, you know, like, I can talk to Shirley. And she reminds me of, you know, the, the first person I kissed, surely I've sort of forgotten that surely can tell you it was or, and we were having, we were having supper together a couple of years ago, and the people from the next door came to our table, as they were leaving, they said, they said, We hope you don't mind us saying this, but we've never seen two people have so much fun together.

**Jacob 48:29**

Sounds like we need to have Shirley on this podcast.

**Lynda 48:32**

Shirley's amazing. And, you know, she like to took took different paths, she actually moved to the states and, you know, worked in the states for years. But But nevertheless, that and the point I make, and you can imagine the point I make to my MBA students is you could be the richest person in the world and not have surely and that's really the point and you can't buy Shirley that mean, I know I'm not the first person to make the question what money can buy, but Shirley cannot be bought and my relationship with Shirley can't be bought. So that's a really important point, particularly for people like maybe the those who are listening to your podcast or my MBA students where, you know, money does that, you know, you can think that if only if only I could do x, then I could be happy. And and actually, I'm not suggesting that, you know, making money isn't a wonderful thing. You know, I'm very fortunate, I made money, I had a, I have a wonderful life. But actually, that's never going to be enough.

**Lynda 49:32**

And actually giving yourself time and into invest in other parts of your life in the way that you learn in the way that you relate to your kids in the way that you relate to your to your family and friends, is just an enormously important investment. And I'm sure that when my 80 year old self talks to me, if I was talking to my eight year old self, they would they would say to me, thank goodness you've stayed friends with Shirley because We've known each other for 70 years.

**Jacob 50:03**

Wow. Well, to wrap up, I know we only have a couple minutes left, maybe we could end on some some advice for people who are watching or listening to this, what they should know as far as how to live and how to work in this new world where we're potentially living to 100 years old, where we potentially have to reinvent ourselves many times, what should we do?

**Lynda 50:24**

Well, I'm really positive about the future, Jacob. So I would say to those of you who are listening, be positive, you know, there's enormous opportunities out there. But actually, you need to grab them, you know, you need to become the person you want to beat you, you have to drive yourself towards that, towards that. But in doing so, be sure that you're also investing in your health. You're also investing in your learning. And you're also investing in your family and friends.

**Jacob 50:54**

Yeah, I love that advice. Sometimes we forget about the things in life that really matter. So I love the message. to not forget about those things. Well, Lynda, where can people go to learn more about you your book, anything that you want to mention for people to check out?

**Lynda 51:12**

Okay, well, obviously, there's, there's my modest new book, the new long life and the 100 year life, both of which you can get in any store. But they've also you can also listen to them. So if you prefer listening books, which actually I must say I do, you can, you can listen, you can download them, and you can listen to them. My website, [www.Lyndagrattton.com](http://www.Lyndagrattton.com) is, is actually at this moment, being redesigned. It's still there, it looks great, but it's gonna be even better. Right in it. And you can click on to almost everything I've ever written. So we've we've we're spending a bit of time it's, it's we'll be ready by mid April 20. Where are we? 2021? Yeah, so if you're listening after April, it's already ready, go and have a look at it is fabulous. And the consulting practice I I run is called HSM. So you can if you go to HSM, then you'll find it there. And the best way really is to connect to me on LinkedIn. I have a very active LinkedIn profile and a very active Twitter profile.

**Jacob 52:28**

LinkedIn and Twitter. Very good. Well, Lynda, thank you so much for taking time out of your day to join me today. It was a lot of fun speaking with you.

**Lynda 52:36**

Great, thank you so much, Jacob, lovely to speak with you.

**Jacob 52:40**

Likewise, and thanks, everyone, again for tuning in. My guest again, has been Lynda Gratton, make sure to check out her book again. It is called the new long life, a framework for flourishing in a changing world and I will see all of you next time.