PREPARING FOR FUTURE CONFLICT

Leadership and Threatcasting

Brian David Johnson, Arizona State University

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: Thank you for your time today I know you are pretty busy.

Johnson: As you can imagine, being a person who does threatcasting during a pandemic makes you pretty popular.

Lindsay: I would imagine that when things are stable and you are thinking about the future and doing threatcasting, that is one thing, but to do it real time as the event is unfolding, that is a little different.

Johnson: It is interesting. As you know, I have a private practice where I work with a lot of people who I have worked over the years and they really understand threatcasting. Recently, we have done a shorter version of the process where we do more of a tactical deployment. We come in and do threatcasting in a problem space in about a week or a week and a half. Normally, when I do this with a large organization like the U.S. Army, it is a three to six month process. That is because it is quite big, there is a large report, and there are hundreds of pages of raw data that must be analyzed. Here, you can do this more tactical approach where you look at the pandemic and ask, "What is the fight that is going to come after the fight we are fighting right now?" What is the next two, three, or six months

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As an applied futurist, **Brian David Johnson** works with governments, trade organizations, start-ups, and multinational corporations to not only help envision their future but specify the steps needed to get there. Johnson is currently the Futurist in Residence at Arizona State University's Center for Science and the Imagination, a professor in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society and the Director of the ASU Threatcasting Lab. Johnson holds over 40 patents and is the best-selling author of both science fiction and fact books (*WaR: Wizards and Robots, 21st Century Robot and Science Fiction Prototyping*). He was appointed the first futurist ever at the Intel Corporation in 2009 where he worked for over a decade helping to design over 2 billion microprocessors. Johnson appears regularly on Bloomberg TV, PBS, FOX News, and the Discovery Channel and has been featured in *Scientific American, The Technology Review, Forbes* and *Popular Science*.

from now when there might be a second wave and start getting into that space. It is really about giving leaders in a crisis a moment to breathe and reflect. That is so incredibly important and that is a part of threatcasting. To give leaders who are often times literally putting out fires a time to pause. Over that week, since they are senior in their organizations I may only have three hours of their time. So I try to utilize that time where they can get with their colleagues and do this work together. In that way, it is fascinating because you can really be of use. It is always good in a time of crisis to be of use to somebody.

Lindsay: Speaking of your work, do you mind sharing a little bit about your background and how you got to where you are today?

Johnson: Let's start with where I am now and then a bit about how I got here. I am a futurist. I work with organizations to look 10 years into the future. I model both positive and negative futures. Then, as an applied futurist, I turn around and look backwards and ask what do we need to do tomorrow and even five years from now to move toward that positive future and move away from the negative? I have been doing this for about 25 years.

Probably the best example of where I have done this is I was the Chief Futurist at the Intel Corporation. It takes them 10 years to design, develop, and deploy a chip. That includes actually building a factory to make that chip. So, it was of vital business importance for them to know 10 years in the future what people would want to do with computers. That was my job. I am an engineer and designer by training. I would write a spec that says this is how people would want to act and interact with technology, and that would become a requirements document that would then feed into the chip itself.

I am an applied futurist. It means that I not only model the future, but I also spend time with organizations doing something about it and making it actionable. That is the work that I do, futurecasting, on the positive side. About 10 years ago, I actually started at the United States Air Force Academy doing threatcasting, which is as it sounds. Looking at possible and potential threats 10 years in the future and then turning around and looking at how we can disrupt, mitigate, and recover from those threats at a very tactical level.

I am also a writer - a science fiction and non-fiction author. My background has always been quite interdisciplinary. I do a lot of work with social scientists, economists, people who are researchers, as well as engineers and business leaders. Who I generally work with are people who are leaders of organizations. So, if I am working with a bank, I tell them that I am not an expert in banking. If I work with the military, they know I am not an expert in conflict. What I am good at is the future and that is where my expertise is at. Specifically, my expertise is in working with people to model those futures, and then to give people very actionable steps that they can take.

To go a little farther back, in the 90's, I did set top boxes. In the early days of the internet, you could plug a phone line into the back of a cable box and it made it interactive. I was able to design that because I knew hardware and software. I knew entertainment and regulatory issues and I understood the business issues behind it. It took us four to five years to design and deploy those. Then, in the early 2000's the Intel Corporation came to me and asked, "Can you do that 10 years in the future?" I said, "Yes." I reported to the Chief Technology Officer and subsequently, they appointed me their first and Chief Futurist.

Along with that, I have always been writing and teaching. I started college when I was 10 years old learning how to program. Both my parents are engineers and I wanted to learn Fortran (a computer language). So, my mom told me I needed to start taking classes. As I was at college taking classes, I got a job in the computer lab. This was in the early days of the personal computer (PC) revolution back in the early 80's and I spoke computer. I taught economics students how to use these things called personal computers. To me, I thought that was normal. I thought all 10 year olds did that. Turns out that is not true. Even back then, I kind of balanced teaching and communicating along with engineering. In 2016, I stepped down as the Chief Futurist at Intel because I wanted to start a threatcasting lab. I saw some areas of threat and the need to bring together government, military, private industry, trade associations, and academia to work on the hard problems that we were seeing coming in the next five to 10 years. So, I have a private practice where I still work with corporations, but I am now the Futurist in Residence at Arizona State University. I am also a Professor as well as the Director of their Threatcasting Lab.

Lindsay: What was it about the futurist space that shifted you away from engineering and what you were doing? When did you realize that was something that you wanted to do?

Johnson: I think I was born into it. My dad was an electrical engineer with the Army, and then with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a radar tracking technician. My mom was an information technology (IT) specialist. I grew up around technology. Back in the 1970's I thought everyone had a large screen TV in the wall of their basement that they built with their dad on the weekends. That is

just what we did. I grew up with a soldering iron in my hand. My dad would explain the electrical engineering to me as we built the television. Also, my dad could fix microwaves which basically made him a super hero. Back in the 1970's, microwaves were scary things. They were like nuclear reactors and my dad could fix them. So, I always thought my dad was amazing.

I grew up in that world and for me, there was no difference between engineering and imagination. I think this is important and especially as we starting to talk about innovation and the role that imagination and innovation play. For me there were no bounds of being able to explain how the schematic worked on the television that we built. Or, how to explain how a personal computer worked. That was the language I grew up with. So, I was always a nontraditional engineer. It was always what I did. One of my first jobs when I was out of college was doing work for the U.S. military as a contractor where we were setting up computer networks on personal computers. It was very new at the time. I was trouble shooting and I was a system architect. That was my training. I was troubleshooting them and we were trying to figure out hard problems. One of the things that we work on was trying to figure out why computers couldn't keep time. We would synch multiple computers for say 10:00 am and then you come back the next morning and they were drifting where one might say 10:00 but another would be 10:05 and another 9:35. As we know, in the military, keeping time is incredibly important. So, we had to troubleshoot that. Why couldn't the computers keep time? It was really where I got to see that I could use my imagination to figure out problems from a systems architecture standpoint, to see what was going on. Where was the failure point? Then, to be able to apply the engineering. Once I did that, and I was fortunate that was my first job, I got to see

that imagination and technical proficiency went hand in hand.

Lindsay: As I hear you talk about that, it's apparent that you enjoy what you do.

Johnson: I do. I enjoy what I do to the point that it is who I am. I have always done this, and I continue to do it. My wife likes to joke that I live my life 10 years in the future and I commute home on the weekends. It is that type of thing. It is work that I enjoy, but think it is important work. Not only working with the military, government and organizations doing this, but also my work as a professor and getting other people to imagine, design, and build their future. Whether it is in their personal or professional life. It is something

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that I have been doing really specifically for the last 10 to 15 years in training people to do this. I have futurists that I have trained that are now out in the world and they are doing great. One is a Futurist at a large bank and others are Futurists at companies in Silicon Valley. I think that is critically important because this way of thinking, and I am biased, but this way of thinking is really important when we think about leadership.

Lindsay: I agree and that ties back to something you said earlier. You mentioned that when you go to work with a bank, that you are not an expert on banking. It seems to me that a lot of what you do is to help leaders shift their mental models as to how they think about the future. Leaders often think what we refer to as strategically, but it seems like what you are suggesting is something different and it refers to how we think about how we think about the future.

Johnson: That is exactly right. Having that presence of mind to be thinking about how to think about the future. As a leader, it allows you to look at your bias and other people's bias. To look at who is not in the room that should be in the room. What information do you not have that you should have? It is that constant interrogation of yourself and your own thinking and the process of thinking. Really, it is thinking about thinking and that is incredibly important. I know how to work with people to model the future. Let's be clear. These are effects based models. What is the effect you want to have and then you reverse engineer how to get there. That is why I did so much work with USAFA and the Air Force, and now all service academies. It all ties very much into the military way of thinking and getting things done. It is my job to enable people to think in this way. To give them the tools. To give them the training so that they can go out and think this way. But also begin to find the pieces of information that they need so they can begin to interrogate themselves. To have them ask, "Who am I not talking to that I should be talking to?" That is often what I am doing with people. The modelling of the future itself, is not easy, but the harder part is to get your brain to think in that way. Then, you need to get really specific about it.

Lindsay: You are dealing with the top levels of leaders in organizations. Do you find it hard to convince them to understand the importance of that or do they kind of get it, but they don't know how? What are the challenges you see?

Johnson: I'll tell you something that won't surprise you or any of your readers. When it comes to a person who is at a high level, you can't convince them of anything. It doesn't work that way. All kidding aside, you really can't convince anyone of anything. It is what I tell my students all the time. You just can't and you shouldn't. That generally isn't your job. What you can do is present them the facts and how you got to a certain decision. You can give them the background and you can make it actionable. You can make it 100% transparent so you can say here is what I think, why I think it, and what I expect.

Oftentimes, when I walk in the room, people don't want me there. Generally, I am brought in when things are going poorly. Especially when I am doing threatcasting. Number 1, I am there to help. Number 2, I am trying to make it very actionable. For example, I was working with an Army General (now retired), who is now a big supporter of this work. We had done some work related to some possible threats five to 10 years out. We talked about some external indicators that they could watch to see if things were coming. It was very actionable information that they could start watching for right away. One of those indicators happened about three to four months after we had done this threatcasting together. He called me, and said, "We had talked about this thing, and it happened." I said, "Yes sir. That's our job to show external indicators that the threat is coming." He was, "But, it happened! And, I know what to do." I told him that is my job and that's when he really got it. That, typically, is what happens.

People come with skepticism. Which I embrace. I'm an engineer. I don't want you to just agree with me. I tell my students that we can all get together and agree and that is a great dinner party, but you don't get anything done. The conflict is very important. It is skepticism and challenging with respect. A ruthless interrogation of what is going on. I don't mind that. If you can show your work, be actionable, and you can explain it to people, generally the work itself will start to bring people around. If you have a shared goal, you are all trying to get to the same point. If you can help someone get there faster, then typically they will come around.

Lindsay: I like that phrase you used about a ruthless examination. That is important because some people think that leader development is a passive activity and you just kind of learn it as you go. What you are suggesting is to aggressively challenge and be invested in an intentional way how you are thinking and what you are bringing to the situation.

Johnson: And also what you are not bringing. Understanding where you are deficient. To understand that deficiencies are a part of being human and that they are a fact. You can't be proficient in everything. Everybody has bias and everyone has deficiencies. When I am doing this, I don't walk in thinking that I am the smartest person in the room. That is not my job. I walk in and say, here is what I know and here is what I don't know. Often, when I am teaching this to students, I tell them that their job is not to be right. They aren't supposed to be the one who says this is going to happen or this is what you need to do and then when it is over, they say, I was right. For me as a futurist, when we are one, three, five, or 10 years in the future and we have worked on a certain problem so that when the organization gets there, they have what they need, that means we have gotten it right. So, in that way, it is

not about you. There is a humility. That is one of the things that when you do the type of work that I do, and what I teach my students early on, is that the first step of doing work as a futurist is that you have to step forward with humility. You have to understand that you need to be humble. That you are not always going to be right. That is okay. I tell the people that I am training, that if you can be wrong and know that you are wrong first, you win. Because if you can get it wrong before anyone else gets it wrong, you'll be getting it right while others are getting it wrong. The key is to embrace that type of thinking. Understand what you bring but also what you don't bring. Then, actively find people to help with that. That will also attract people to you and I think that is a true quality of a leader. Being able to go in and show that vulnerability. Certainly you need to show strength, authority, and proficiency, but being able to be inclusive in that way is important. It is tough and a lot of young leaders find it really hard to do.

> *Talking to people about failure is tough. It is something that I don't couch it in that language but it is something that has come up multiple times in work that I have done in Silicon Valley and the military. Failure is such a hard word for people. Especially for those becoming leaders in the military where your job is to win.*

Lindsay: Especially in the area of innovation, because for younger leaders there is often a strong orientation toward performance and results. With innovation, you are going to have things that don't work out and some failures. Do you find that to be a challenge with leaders to understand that in order to be innovative, head off threats, to adapt to the environment that they have to accept some level of failure within their processes? Or, do they kind of get that?

Johnson: No, they don't get that. Talking to people about failure is tough. It is something that I don't couch it in that language but it is something that has come up multiple times in work that I have done in Silicon Valley and the military. Failure is such a hard word for people. Especially for those becoming leaders in the military where your job is to win. Your job is to be right. That is why you are there. So, the idea of getting it wrong, that language is really hard for people. I have tried many different ways with many different organizations to come up with ways of framing that.

A while back I found another way of couching it. Now, go with me here. This is kind of a thought experiment I do with people. I tell people that imagination is the number one most underutilized tool in business and leadership. Nothing great was ever created by humans that wasn't imagined first. So imagination and innovation are very important. We need to understand that our imagination really drives everything that we do. You have to see it first. Let's say I am working with a senior level leadership team (a C-Suite). Everyone is listening to me and I say, "Imagination is really underutilized. So, let me ask you this. Are you an organization that values imagination and innovation?" They generally say, "Yes. Of course." Then, I ask, "Do you value really good ideas and when people bring really good ideas to you?" Again, they say, "Oh yes, of course we do." Now,

that is silly because that is like asking someone if they value puppies and kittens? No one is going to say they hate puppies and kittens. So, of course they are going to say they value innovation. Here is the test though. I say, "You say you value good ideas. But, do you value stupid ideas? Do you value really dumb ideas?" And then they look at me like I am crazy. I then ask, if they are an organization that says, "Hey Tim, that was a really dumb idea. Let me go by you a coffee." And they still look at me like I am crazy. So I say, "Because really, a dumb idea is only dumb until someone figures out it is genius." Being able to create a culture, and this is something for leadership to understand, creating culture is both simple and hard. The simple part of it is that you need to identify what you value and then you have to reward it in the group you are trying to create the culture in. It is easy to say and hard to do. But by going to people and letting them create it allows them to come up with dumb ideas or be wrong. Every now and again, you will be right. Oftentimes, that approach creates the right kind of culture.

When I was at the Intel Corporation, I was a manager of a very large team. We actually rewarded people with gift cards when they came up with dumb ideas. It was the dumb idea fund. It's fun that way because then it isn't a bad thing. You don't always have to be a genius. You don't always have to be right. Creating that kind of culture allows for what some people would call failure, but it isn't couched that way. Often what will happen is someone will have an idea and it really is kind of crazy. Then, someone else hears it and says that is kind of crazy, but you know what, if we just did this, then that would actually be something. It is in that space where you really start to get some interesting coordination and collaboration between team members.

Lindsay: The effective leader in that situation sees the value in that process and wants to bring that culture of innovation in there. To create that sandbox, if you will, where things can be manipulated in different ways. The process worked and was a win for the team in that they were able to think about it in a new way, right?

Johnson: Thinking of something in a new way but it also puts it out there so that somebody else can take that novel idea which might be crazy, but can take that idea and then they can modify it. Then, maybe, it isn't crazy anymore and can become something that is actionable. So, that barrier to entry and to collaboration has been pulled down a little bit. It becomes safe. You are just talking.

I come from engineering and engineers like to interrupt each other. It is really a compliment because it is a yes...and. I understand what you are saying, and now this. So, I like to say that if you want me to know that you are engaged, then interrupt me and ask me a question. Or, if you really want me to like you and know you like me, tell me I'm wrong. Because, then I want to know why. It is ultimately about getting it right and not about being right. That whole idea of, "I think you are wrong." And to respond with, "Oh, why?" This really bothers people. So, when I am leading teams, the worst thing you can tell a high performing team member is that they are right. Especially in conflict. I like to tell people that I lead that I have really strong opinions and they are very loosely held. It really unnerves people. For example, I will be arguing with someone, and it may be a big point or a small point, and I will pause and say, "Nope, you know what, you are right." Then, they will keep trying to convince me. I keep telling them, there are only so many times I can tell you that you are right. I'm in, let's go. But a lot of people aren't used to that and expect a fight. That is another way of always being open to a lot of those ideas.

Lindsay: That's good advice for what a leader can do. To continue that discussion, and based on your experience, can you talk a little bit more about other things that good leaders do?

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Johnson: Part of this is my bias of being a futurist, but based on my experience, I think leaders need to have a vision for the future. It sounds quite simple, but they need to be able to see it. They don't have to be 100% right, but they have to be able to see where they want to go. This is where we are going and this is why we are going. Having that vision, and then being able to communicate it. This is one of those things that I see a lot of people not excelling at. I tell those that I work with as well as my students, that you can have a great vision, but if you can't communicated it to people, it is useless. To be able to communicate it all the way from the C-Suite to the mail room. From the Generals to the cadets. You have to realize who your audience is and connect with them. That is hard and the way you learn to do that by doing it.

I spend a fair amount of time travelling and a fair amount of time on stage. I'm the same on the phone here as I am on stage. I laugh and tell jokes. People say, "Oh, you are so comfortable," because I can stand up and just start talking. They ask me how I get comfortable in front of a room of 500 people? I tell them "That is easy. Speak in front of 5000 people." 500 seems like a bunch of friends compared to that. The way you get good at public speaking is speaking publically a lot. It's the only way to do it. It's the way it is with a lot of things when it comes to leadership. You hear people talking about here are the traits of a leader or here are some of the things you can do. Much like when I talked about creating a culture around imagination and innovation. The only way to do it is to just do it. And in doing it, you are going to fail sometimes but you are going to get it right more often times than not, and you will keep going.

So, having that vision and being able to communicate it and getting good at it is really important. That is what draws people to you. When I do work with organizations on leadership, I tell them that having a vision of the future, regardless of what it is, has mass. It has a density. It starts to draw people to it. It has gravity. People like visions of the future. People like people who have vision. It is key for a leader. People need something to believe in and to see. It doesn't' have to be lofty. It could be that you are going to build that bridge or that you are going to get over that wall. But having that vision and being able to communicate it is critical.

Then, as a leader, the success of your team is your job. That's it. Being able to have a vision for the future, be able to communicate it, and then enable them to do it. Because you are not going to do it by yourself. You can't. That is the thing about leadership. You are the least

important person because the people that are going to get it done, are the people that are on your team. I live that in my academic life. If you come and take one of my classes at Arizona State University or if I lecture at USAFA or West Point, I come in as a futurist. I've been doing this for 25 years and have some grey in my beard. I say, "Look, you need to understand. I know for a fact that intelligence, creativity, and aptitude knows no age...knows no gender...knows no socioeconomic background...knows no race. I realize that standing in front of this group of students, that the majority of you are smarter than I am. You are. That is just the math. There is only one thing that I have over you... experience. I've done this before and I can help you. The other thing that I have over you is that I know people. You can ask me a question or need some help and I may not know the answer, but I know who to call and connect you with." That's it. If you can do those things as a leader, you will be hugely successful. By the way, everybody will like you because everyone will be successful.

Lindsay: What you talked about there is what I think trips up a lot of people. Leaders generally start out in roles because of their technical competence, proficiency and what they can do. They may be the most technically competent. Especially as junior leaders in organizations. They may have even been selected for leadership based on that proficiency. What you are talking about is that when they move up in the organization, there is a shift away from themselves to what they can enable, communicate, and support. Some people struggle with that shift.

Johnson: It's good for you to call that out. We have talked about it a little bit, but I want to be very clear on that. Technical proficiency, or any type of proficiency is incredibly important. For example, my background

is engineering and you have to be able to do the math. There is no way around that. By the way, I was terrible at math. It was hard, but I did it and got to the other side. Proficiency is incredibly important. But, there is a toggle point where proficiency is the table stakes. Proficiency is the cost of the ticket to get through the door. Now, once you are through the door, you need to continue to have that. The next step is stepping into the role of a leader and understanding that not only are you not the most important or smartest person in the room, but that you don't want to be. To have a really strong and high performing team means you want people who are better than you. You have the experience and proficiency, but you want people who are better engineers than you. I've worked with a lot of them and they can engineer circles around me. But I have experience. That is what leaders bring. That goes back to our discussion about who is not in the room, the ruthless interrogation of yourself and understanding what you don't know. That is what propels you as a leader. You are not just thinking about end strength. You are not just thinking about the thing that you came from that got you in the room. Now, you need to think very differently.

Lindsay: I think there is something else that goes along with that which is really important. To have some accountability structures in place to help leaders stay true to that. To make sure that they don't drift back to trying to be the smartest person in the room. Something in place to hold the leader accountable to that.

Johnson: Yes, and we even build those in. Something that I build in with my teams is that you want to find people who don't agree with you. That goes back to that point about finding someone who will tell you that you are wrong and to listen to them because maybe you

are. There is a chance you may be. Since the goal is not to be the smartest or to be right, it is to succeed. Have the team succeed. Being able to have that presence of mind. There are even ways to operationalize that. When I am doing a report around the future. It could be threatcasting or a future product, but I always write a minority report. In the minority report, it says, here is the thing that we as a team agree on and that we will all move toward. The value of the minority report is that it also tells you all the ways that you are destined to fail. Typically what I do is find the person that is the biggest supporter, who says that this is the way we should go and this is what we should do, and then have them write it. It forces them to interrogate it and look at it from all different perspectives. But you also have to support that process. It is critical to have that naysayer. And not a naysayer who just says this isn't going to work, but to be constructive in that process. To be able to take that into the culture of the team to be successful.

Lindsay: Then, as the leader, have enough humility to accept that feedback when it comes back to you.

Johnson: And you have encouraged it. That is one of the things that other team members see is that you embody that culture. Other team members see that the person who is leads us really does believe that. It has a really large effect and there is a level of respect there. If you have built it into the culture and the way that you are leading, it isn't a bad thing. As an example, let's say you are doing a project and somebody goes, "Ma'am or Sir, I think that is wrong because of this," everyone doesn't freeze and go, this is terrible. You are used to it. You ask why and find out what they are thinking. That is a way to prepare for when you are in stressful situations, if you have that culture around it, it won't be so stressful.

Lindsay: It creates a supportive environment since everyone is headed in the same direction to follow the vision that you set.

Johnson: Yes, and anyone who has been to the service academies or is in the military knows, that you train your body to do things, you train your instincts to react a certain way. You go through training. You also think about the training that you go through, and then you do it multiple times. You are training your body and mind. It is a similar thing in that you are training the team that having a minority report or having an orthogonal idea is okay and that is normal. You are training to be a leader.

Lindsay: Along that idea of training, and thinking about your futurist perspective, what advice to you have for people in that leader development space as they are preparing leaders for the future?

Johnson: I think it is important to have a culture and organization that are identifying things early on and talking about them. Bringing in different perspectives. I'll give you an example from my private practice. CEOs come to me all the time and ask me, "How do I prepare for the future?" I tell them, "That that is easy. Get yourself a 13 year old mentor." I think we often lose sight of mentoring up. The people who are training leaders have experience and know people, but they need to remember the value of mentoring up. If you are mentoring and shaping someone to be a leader, you could bring someone who has a different perspective. For example, one of the things that is a very big deal with a lot of corporations is that we know that in the next five to 10 years that 75% of the global workforce is either going to be Millennials or Gen Z. This is really significant because the majority of C-Suites do not have any Millennials or Gen Z's. The majority of management in industry does not have

them. What I tell them is that they shouldn't be talking about them, they should be talking to them. They need to be sitting at the table. That is one of the things that I have done with several Boards of Directors, where I tell them that they need to have the next generation sitting at the Board. They aren't going to be making decisions about the organization or policies, but it gives them a voice and a way to contribute. Having that perspective of the ones that are coming up is so important. Doing it in a way that they are equal. In the landscape of ideas, everyone is equal. Now, when you are in execution or education, it is not. But, in that mindspace around ideas where you are trying to come up with innovation, everyone is an equal and needs to be treated like an equal. It is not going to them and saying, "Okay Millennial or Gen Z, you are the next generation, tell us what you think." It's not that. They need to be involved in the conversation. That is also something that is hard for people to do because it means you have to navigate some different waters, language, and generational gaps that some people are uncomfortable with.

Lindsay: So, to flip the question a bit. If you were to provide advice to new leaders who were just starting their leadership journey, what advice would you have for them? You have already provided some great advice, but anything specific for them?

Johnson: First, you have to start with humility. The reason why you are a leader doesn't make you the top person. Your success is judged by the people you are leading - that is your job. Next you have to always be curious. I think this is something that is incredibly important to always be curious. Not just when it comes to studying or learning, but to always be curious even

about the things that upset you. Here's an example. You might meet somebody that you just don't like. You don't get along with them. That happens. Not everyone gets along. You learn that as a leader that you are there to be a leader and not be friends with everyone. There could just be people that rub you the wrong way and you don't get along with. What I encourage people to do is say, "Okay, why?" Actually dig into that a little bit. To say, "That's fascinating, I don't get along with you. Let's talk." To be curious and always push yourself because you will discover things, you will discover collaborators, and you will discover new pieces of knowledge.

> *The final bit is to always be conscious of who is not in the room. Always be conscious of who is not being included. As a leader, you are leading human beings. People are complicated, weird, funny, amazing, and tricky, but they are human and humans are the most valuable things that we have. Everything we do is about humans. It begins with people and it ends with people.*

The final bit is to always be conscious of who is not in the room. Always be conscious of who is not being included. As a leader, you are leading human beings. People are complicated, weird, funny, amazing, and tricky, but they are human and humans are the most valuable things that we have. Everything we do is about humans. It begins with people and it ends with people. There might be a lot of processes, procedures and technology but everything that we do is about people. Having that inherent value of people and humanity is

incredibly important.

Lindsay: While we haven't really gotten into current events and what is going on, what you have talked about is incredibly important to what we are seeing right now. So, while we didn't address them specifically, they are all throughout your comments.

Johnson: The interesting thing is that with this way of thinking, what I think is a futurist way of thinking, it doesn't matter what is going on. You can apply it now, you could apply it 10 years ago. That mindset is the way to be successful.

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