

How about voicing one of our key ongoing realities? Here goes. *The first couple of decades of the 21st century has been an astounding blur of warp-speed change in so many ways!* So then let's take a look at just two brief contrasts—one that's broadly cultural and political...and the other digital-business-related.

In the year 2001, the seeming invulnerability of America for a full decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall was shattered by outsiders with the vicious 9/11 attacks in New York City and Washington. And right away, American vigilance about protecting citizens from terrorists from faraway places increased a whole lot! But nowadays, the freshest threat to Americans' personal liberties is actually quite embedded in many a neighborhood, not just descending from the air on NYC. And this time, the threat is often coming from the very workers paid by freedom-loving Americans to supposedly help preserve their freedoms.

Yes, it's big-city mayors and city councils radically abandoning property protections, safety laws and police enforcement...and then there's law-enforcement and homeland security officials' irresponsible approach to millions of unscreened border-crossers...and then there's those health and climate-change bureaucrats heavily-handedly wielding their latest assertions of "science"—assertions often, in reality, ideologically-saturated opinions...and don't forget some 2nd grade teachers working to secretly help kids "change their gender"—yeah, without their parents knowing! It's a wild kaleidoscope of culture-shocks, until many have become wearily resigned to expecting the worst. Yes, twenty years can bring a whole lot of change!

Now let's shift gears...how about some digital-business-related trends? So, re-visiting that year 2001—just over a couple of decades ago—Apple's very first earbuds were shipped with the original iPod, and the iPhone was still a just a glimmer in Steve Jobs' eye...and most everybody hadn't even heard of the newbie company Google...and back then seven-year-old Amazon was pretty much shipping just a relatively few books....and America was relieved it had just survived the false-alarm scare about the Y2K threat.

In contrast to that, nowadays Grandma is casually camping out on her iPhone, alternating her screen between FaceTime, posting photos on Facebook, doing searches, and buying all kinds of products and services. And, beyond that, lots of remote workers can be found zooming in on corporate meetings while sharing their personal living space with the pervasive presence of Alexa, all the while wondering just how AI is going to be messing around with their career. And, of course, Apple, Google and Amazon are just rolling on...worth well over a trillion dollars each! Yeah, twenty years can bring a whole lot of change!

And all that radical change in culture-changing expectations...and political power...and business focus...and technological innovation has happened at warp speed—yeah, so rapidly and often so very deeply challenging to the proven, successful ways of the past. So, what are some keys...some essentials...to succeeding afresh in this era of warp-speed change...? Let's take a look at seven keys.

First, *doggedly keep fulfilling your key stewardships*. Here's the deal: every leader *should know* their enterprise's key stewardships and *should expect to live out* how those stewardships interrelate and align with each other. As you may know from seeing my *Lasting Greatness* video seminar you can view for free at whitestone.org, overarching stewardship for every organization relates to *customers, employees, and owners*—and long-term, sustained success requires that all three groups are ultimately served well.

Hey, the truth is, if and when you lapse in sustaining long-term stewardship value for any one of these three, your enterprise's very existence is in jeopardy. And that lapse is just what trends like tech change and shifting cultural foundations can precipitate. So, here's the point: *never relinquish doggedly fulfilling your key stewardships*—even if you must clearly...maybe even *dramatically*...change *how* you do so! Yes, *in an era of warp-speed change, doggedly fulfilling your key stewardships is a vital, others-centric mindset!*

Second, *humbly proceed as if you're truly not the smartest person in the room*...and if you're already doing that, double down! You know, there's a saying that floats around about someone being "the smartest person in the room." But if you think that's who you are, then you're tempted to stop learning from others. So, what's the benefit of *that* mindset...for you *and* for others? It's counter-productive, actually self-defeating, self-diminishing. Hey, you actually may be thought of by some as the smartest store owner in

town—until Walmart comes to town. Your grandkid might think you're the smartest person on the planet—until she spends some discerning time on the internet. And a very popular theologian may seem like a genius to millions—until people read and compare his thinking to some essential Bible truths!

Look, think of Albert Einstein, a dominant genius in the 20th century. But beyond his stunning discoveries in theoretical physics—yes, when it comes to countless other topics—Einstein was simply not the wisest person in the room. Exhibit A: while unlocking truths of physics, Einstein never reconciled to God, *the very author of physics!* Yes, complex warp-speed change should foster humility in us—it simply isn't fruitful to think we're the smartest. *In this era of warp-speed change, real humility is a vital, others-centric mindset!*

Third, *as a consummate knowledge worker, double down on your flexibility.* Right off the bat, are you the “knowledge worker” you need to be to steward your roles well? I relentlessly drum the pursuit of being a top knowledge worker into the brains and hearts of college students—yeah, that's a person who constantly pursues acquiring and integrating the best knowledge and true wisdom into their toolkit. And that only happens when a person is very intentional in doing so. And that means we all must be ready to discard *today* what we might have considered “tried and true” *yesterday*. No, *not* discarding Bible truth here—God forbid! But the fact is, many folks who are serious-Bible-folks often hold opinions they consider to be Bible-truth that are not actually Bible-truth at all! Think I'm kidding? How about this one? How many Christians think *the law actually decreases sin when it's exactly the opposite!* Yes, go read Romans 5:20!

Here's an overarching truth: the Christian who's a true knowledge worker is flexible, relying on the Holy Spirit who teaches all things (John 14:26) to guide appropriate flexibility. And that need for flexibility is all the more true in this era! *Yes, in this era of warp-speed change, flexibility is a vital, others-centric mindset!*

Fourth, *you need not personally know some of your best advisors.* With the digital explosion of data, avenues for learning are not close to being confined to your boss or your pastor or your professors. Nowadays we can quite easily access the thinking of many fabulous doers, even when it's often compartmentalized to their special expertise...you know, like Einstein. But the trouble is, the vast majority of opinions are second-rate or worse. Still, the good news is, with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, you can find the right advisors with savvy thinking online or in books and integrate all that into a cohesive whole. *Yes, in this era of warp-speed change, integrating remote advisors is a vital, others-centric mindset!*

Fifth, *you must be a discerning adopter and astute integrator of extraordinary technology.* Hey, do I really need to say anything more than that in this era of radical digitalization and AI? Of course, you may need to rely on those advisors we just mentioned to help with that! *Yes, in this era of warp-speed change, you must be a discerning adopter and astute integrator of the extraordinary technology emerging from others!*

Sixth, *the key people you rely on and team with the most have never been more important.* Well, duh, you might say...and you would be right! Even so...truly, are the leaders in the supply chain critical to your success *really world-class?* How about the quality of *your team in your enterprise...* or is your affection for your long-time colleagues maybe clouding your assessment? Your stewardship-fulfilling team is critical to your success. And two persons should be at the top of your list: Jesus and the Holy Spirit. *Yes, in this era of warp-speed change, forging the key team members you most rely on is a vital, others-centric mindset!*

Seventh, *the big-picture path to victory is chock-full of false reports, false politics, false prophets, and false summits.* Every day, it's easy to wake up and quickly get demoralized by false reports from media outlets... by false politics of “the princes of this world” ...by false prophets of doom claiming to know far more than they do...and false summits that you climb, only to rediscover once more that “final” victory is never really final 'til Jesus comes. *Nevertheless*, distinct, key wins along the way are perfectly fitting to honor God! *Yes, in this era of warp-speed change, the big-picture path to victory is chock-full of false reports, false politics, false prophets, and false summits—but you can still be consistently right on target in serving God!*

Hey, we can't be immune to warp-speed change...but we can lead through the chaos! God is not surprised by chaos in the least, and *He's equipped you to steward like a champion in your era!* So, warp-speed ahead!

A&A: Application & Action

1. Would you describe yourself as a “net winner” or a “net loser” when it comes to the significant cultural and political change in the first couple of decades or so of the 21st century? How about the amazing digital and technological change during that period, too? What are the underlying reasons you reached those conclusions? Discuss.
2. What are the top three mechanisms or strategies you have used to thrive in this era of warp-speed change? Discuss.
3. Are you as hope-filled now as you were before all the radical changes of this era have occurred... for yourself...for your family...for your workplace? Why or why not?