

# Future Proof Yourself

How to keep yourself employable for the rest  
of your working career

by  
David Yeabsley

Published by:  
The Endless Bookcase  
71 Castle Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire,  
England UK, AL1 5DQ

Edited by:  
Matt Noble Wright

Available from:  
[www.theendlessbookcase.com](http://www.theendlessbookcase.com)  
Amazon, Kobo, Google and Nook.

E-Edition:  
Available in multiple e-book formats.

Copyright © 2019 David Yeabsley  
All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-1-912243-80-8

## About David Yeabsley

David left school at 16 years old. His teachers never said about him, “He could try harder.” He did try hard, very hard indeed, it’s just that he wasn’t very academic at school. Apart from sport that is — he was above average there, but he tried very hard at that too! If only he had had the skill to match his effort and enthusiasm, he could have been a professional sportsman.

Unfortunately, university wasn’t an option for David, which was a shame — he would have loved to have gone; all that sport, that fun and all those experiences.

So, David went through several jobs after school and he always tried really hard. Some jobs he just didn’t enjoy and some he just wasn’t suited to, but he loved the experiences, the people and the challenges all the same.

Inspired by his grandmother (whom he firmly believes left this world with absolutely no regrets) he made a key decision and followed his passions. He set up his own training and coaching company helping people in businesses to maximise their potential. He has loved every minute of it and, over time, has become rather good at it.

He still prefers hands-on experience to academia and learning from life’s experiences, and loves reading lots of books, attending numerous conferences and watching countless videos on self development and motivation.

David is great at learning from his own experiences and from those of other people whom he encounters. He puts maximum effort and enthusiasm into what he does and is extremely focused on making the right things happen.

*Future Proof Yourself*

This book is a reflection of his own learnings, thoughts, experiences and ideas and how David is working toward his own Future Proofing Journey.

Enjoy the journey of Future Proofing Yourself.



For more on David please see his:

Youtube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/MrYeabsley>

LinkedIn Page

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/davidyeabsley/>

Websites

<http://www.davidyeabsley.co.uk/>

<https://www.thepeopleanimators.com/>

# Contents

<b>About David Yeabsley</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Woody and Buzz.....	4
<b>CHAPTER ONE: A TIME TO REFLECT?</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Dad’s story</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Have you ever seen your Dad cry? .....	8
<b>Future Proofing Yourself</b> .....	<b>10</b>
What is it? .....	10
Who is this book for? .....	11
<b>Challenging and Uncomfortable</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Your Working World</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Go and Reflect</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Where to reflect? .....	15
Who to reflect with? .....	16
Turn your phone and devices off .....	16
The Art of Reflection – Use a notebook .....	16
<b>Life is about Choices</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Do you have a clear idea of how you want your career to plan out? ....	18
<b>No more <i>Them</i> and <i>They</i> - it is down to <i>Me</i> now</b> .....	<b>19</b>
But I don’t have time.....	20
A good starting point.....	20
Great questions to reflect on when <i>Future Proofing Yourself</i> .....	21

<b>Inside Me.....</b>	<b>22</b>
What are my passions? .....	22
Get some feedback.....	24
Honest feedback can be life-changing .....	26

**CHAPTER TWO: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND  
MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES..... 29**

<b>Life is a journey .....</b>	<b>30</b>
--------------------------------	-----------

<b>The Art of Reflection.....</b>	<b>34</b>
Not taking the phone to London .....	34
Using a notebook .....	35
Opportunities to Learn and Develop.....	45

**CHAPTER THREE: ANTICIPATING CHANGE IN YOUR  
WORKING WORLD..... 57**

<b>Anticipating Change in your Working World.....</b>	<b>60</b>
Disaster Companies .....	61
Raising your profile – Personal Impact.....	62
Other ways to improve your profile .....	64
“I don’t like what you’re telling me” .....	65
Professional going to the theatre.....	66
Professional Responsibility.....	66
Career Changes .....	67
What don’t I want to do? .....	68
What do I want to do?.....	69
Do I just want a job?.....	70
Welcome to the next 50 years of your life .....	70
We are a Limited Company .....	73
Think about what you want to achieve in your career.....	74
Should I stay or should I go?.....	77
Professional Qualifications .....	78
Dealing with recruitment consultants.....	79

An HR manager in Heaven.....	81
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: MANAGING YOUR KEY SKILL SETS.....</b>	<b>83</b>
Networking skills .....	86
Networking opportunities .....	87
Take opportunities to speak at conferences and other networking events.....	89
Strategic thinking .....	90
<b>Influencing and communicating at all levels .....</b>	<b>92</b>
Understanding others .....	92
Would you want to work with 'you'? .....	95
Treat your boss like a client.....	96
Assertive Communication .....	97
Making an impact through your career.....	98
Patience and Tolerance .....	98
Personality Profiles – Behavioural Styles .....	99
Getting on other people’s levels .....	101
Presenting yourself – Selling yourself – The value you bring .....	102
Brand ‘you’ .....	102
Being clear on your value is important .....	104
Creativity – being inquisitive .....	105
Notebook page – my great ideas .....	106
From a Listener to an Understander .....	107
Being Present in a conversation .....	108
Key skills and competences for your future .....	109
From Expert to Professional .....	110
Technology .....	112
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: PROACTIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>115</b>
Treat your business like a sport.....	116
<b>Organising myself to make it happen .....</b>	<b>118</b>
Personal Self-Management: set & manage both Personal & Career goals .....	118

Being organised just makes life easier .....	123
Silly hours – do you really have to work them? .....	125
What is the Purpose of your Life? .....	134
<b>CHAPTER SIX: DEVELOPING A CLEVER WAY OF THINKING.....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Thinking differently .....</b>	<b>148</b>
‘Who’ makes you think differently? .....	148
Controlling the Controllable .....	149
When the going gets tough .....	151
Flip it or Reframe it.....	151
Focus upon what is important to you .....	154
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: BEING IN CONTROL OF YOUR WELL- BEING.....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Well-being...or what really matters in life – Getting the balance right..</b>	<b>165</b>
Health .....	165
Sleep .....	165
<b>Enjoy what you have got .....</b>	<b>174</b>
What really matters in life? .....	174
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT: NEXT STEPS FORWARD .....</b>	<b>183</b>
Key principles behind ‘Giving it a Go’ .....	185
<b>Creating work ideas .....</b>	<b>186</b>
Wouldn’t it be great if I could...? Well, why don’t I?!.....	186
Working for myself .....	187
<b>Future Proofing Yourself.....</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Reflections Document .....</b>	<b>194</b>
REFLECTIONS, CHAPTER ONE: A TIME TO REFLECT? .....	195

REFLECTIONS, CHAPTER TWO: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND  
MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES ..... 196

REFLECTIONS, CHAPTER THREE: ANTICIPATING CHANGE IN YOUR  
WORKING WORLD ..... 197

REFLECTIONS, CHAPTER FOUR: MANAGING YOUR KEY SKILL SETS..... 198

REFLECTIONS, CHAPTER FIVE: PROACTIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT ..... 200

REFLECTIONS, CHAPTER SIX: DEVELOPING A CLEVER WAY OF  
THINKING..... 202

REFLECTIONS, CHAPTER SEVEN: BEING IN CONTROL OF YOUR  
WELL-BEING ..... 203

REFLECTIONS, CHAPTER EIGHT: NEXT STEPS FORWARD..... 204



# Introduction

This book is all about *you*. There is no *them* or *they* in this book. It's all about how *you* are going to look after *yourself* for the rest of your working career. Along the way, you will come to recognise your strengths. You will have honest conversations with yourself about the areas for personal improvement and development in order to keep yourself employable for the rest of your career.

So, ask yourself the question: "Do I invest enough time in my self-development?" Most of us will say "Not enough", and come up with various excuses and reasons as to why not.

These include excuses such as:

- I don't have time;
- I'm far too busy;
- My boss or company won't invest in me;
- I was going to but...

Today's working environment is becoming increasingly challenging and competitive. New technologies are being introduced so quickly into our working environments and daily lives, that by the time you will have read this page, somebody will have invented a new technology to make everything quicker and easier. So, are you keeping yourself up-to-date or are you being left behind?

Take a minute to reflect:

- What will your business and industry look like in the **next two to five years**? You may have plenty of skills and experience

that you have gained over recent years, but will those skills still be relevant over the coming years?

- Are you able to **keep pace** with the relentless change in technology or are you already being left behind?
- Can you **remain relevant** to the younger generation? They think more than one step ahead and are full of new and innovative ideas to make our world turn faster and faster.

Like it or not, it's the new reality.

You need to ensure that you have the right skills, attributes, and mindset to keep yourself employable for however many working years you have left before retirement.

Whatever your dreams and aspirations are now, how are you going to pay for them all? The greatest investment you can make is in you. Your personal development, your skills and your mindset. You have made a great start in buying this book!

It is tough out there, but don't despair, help is at hand as long as you:

- Have a plan
- Can be honest with yourself
- Work hard
- Are totally motivated and organised
- Constantly learn and develop yourself
- Seek out new experiences and challenges
- Make the right decisions and choices
- Create the right future that best serves you

Procrastination is not an option though!

The greatest investment you can make is in you...in your personal development, your skills, and your mindset.

This book will help you develop all of those things.

**Have you ever done any of the following?**

Decided to be careful of what you eat or even decided to go on a diet?

Decided to do some exercise and get yourself fit by going to the gym, running, walking or fitness classes?

Tidied up or cleared out certain rooms in your house or undertaken a complete spring clean?

Decided it was time to get some financial planning advice, pensions, mortgages or decide to start budgeting?

Cleared out your old clothes and invested in a new wardrobe?

However, when was the last time that you sat down and thought about your self-development ? When was the last time you thought about how you are going to keep yourself employable and enjoy the rest of your working career?

Well, now is the time.

## **Woody and Buzz**

The concept of 'Future Proofing Yourself' can be nicely demonstrated by the characters of the childrens' animation film *Toy Story* with the help of two of the key members of the cast, Woody and Buzz.

Woody was cast as the leading character... or so he thought. He was the best friend and trusted toy of a young boy called Andy. Woody was Andy's hero. They went everywhere together, fought battles together, travelled together on family outings; wherever Andy went, Woody also went. Woody would be by Andy's side whenever he needed him, for play or for comfort.

You could describe Woody's attributes as reliable, dependable and trustworthy, although he did have limited technical skills and his vocabulary wasn't much to shout about!

Andy had other toys, but they knew their place. Woody was Number One and all the other toys held him in high-esteem. They followed Woody and he was the leader and organiser in Andy's games. They were a great double act and partnership - Happy days!

Then suddenly one hot and sunny day, Woody's world fell apart. It was Andy's birthday and out of nowhere came a new toy called 'Buzz Lightyear'. Andy had never seen anything quite like Buzz before. It was love at first sight. Buzz was dynamic with new concepts and features like no other toy Andy possessed. With flashing lights and moveable parts, Buzz would take control of all situations with his commanding and self-assured presence. Plus, Buzz could shout, "To infinity and beyond". Andy didn't know where that was, but it sounded exciting and he was soon to find out. Buzz brought Andy new beginnings, new adventures and opportunities of excitement and fun.

But what about poor Woody? He had always been there for Andy, through thick and thin, but now he wasn't wanted, needed or desired anymore. His skills and attributes had become out-of-date, by just doing the same things he had become the 'same old, same old' Woody — he had become a routine in Andy's life.

By now Andy loved his new partner Buzz and they started out on new adventures; they went into space and of course, to infinity and beyond! Buzz could do anything and take Andy and his imagination anywhere they wanted to go.

Woody was reduced to just another toy in the playroom along with all the other toys. Then, as Andy became older, there was a real threat that they would all become redundant and disregarded. Packed off in boxes to charity shops or worse still to the dump! Something which they all worried about.

The truth is that, unfortunately, Woody hadn't 'Future Proofed' himself. He hadn't seen the day coming when his attributes and skills could become out-of-date. Woody's thinking, the way he communicated, the way he functioned and the way he worked had not moved with the times. He had become stale. He hadn't looked after himself — he was no longer needed and was of no value to Andy.

So, the serious point to this story is, "Are we all being pro-active and 'Future Proofing Ourselves'?"

Looking forwards, we will all probably have to keep working until we are older than our parent's generation, given the increased competition for our services, the squeeze on pensions and the happy prospect of increased life expectancy. So, there will still be time after retirement for cruises around the world and our own new adventures... but we will need to pay for it!

So how can we continue to represent an attractive proposition and a good investment for our clients and our employers?

We might have a wealth of experience and knowledge, but is it the right experience and knowledge our client's futures? Will people still want us around their businesses?

So, come on, let's all be Buzz Lightyears! Full of Buzz, let's inspire our own imagination and the imaginations of others... create new beginnings, take our clients on new adventures 'To Infinity and Beyond'... let's all go and Future Proof Ourselves with new skills and thinking.

Remember: if you don't look after yourself, who's going to do it for you?

We wouldn't want to all end up like Woody, would we?

Thank you – Have fun and enjoy the journey.

# Chapter One: A Time to Reflect?

How will you make yourself employable and valuable to businesses for the rest of your career?

Will you have what they need?

## Dad's story

### **Have you ever seen your Dad cry?**

*Have you ever seen your dad cry? Unfortunately, yes, I once did, and it had a huge impact upon my life.*

*I was sixteen and I was in the process of leaving school after completing my final GCSE exams. Arriving home from school one afternoon, I realised that my dad's car was parked in the driveway. This was strange, as he normally didn't arrive home from work until at least 6.30 pm. I went inside and my dad was sat in his chair, crying. Something was very wrong; my dad was my rock – he never cried. I asked what was wrong?*

*He replied: "They don't need me anymore." "What do you mean?", I asked. "They don't need me anymore...they've made me redundant."*

*My dad was a very clever man and had worked as a scientist in the specialist metals industry since his apprenticeship almost 35 years ago. However, his position had become out-of-date and he never noticed the situation coming. Unfortunately, his skill set wasn't easily transferrable in such a specialist industry.*

*Straight after leaving school, I joined a large insurance company. It was like swapping one institution for another. I noticed that a lot of people had been there for years and years, doing the same job, day in and day out. I could see what would happen to them, and in a few years, it did – the business relocated with wholesale redundancies. Many of the people I worked with ended up in a similar situation to my father, as they sought alternative employment with limited transferable skills.*

*Fortunately, with my dad's story very much in my mind, I had already left the insurance company by then, but I vowed that I would never let myself sleepwalk into the same predicament.*

*It took me several attempts to find the right job, and it wasn't until I turned 29 that I started working in business and skills training for motor and finance companies.*

*I soon realised that I was the only one who could look after my self-development, that only I could be responsible for my self-management, my future learning and my career development.*

*So, my question to everyone is: "What are you doing to manage your self-development?"*

*Will you look after you and invest in you? Please don't leave it to chance — constantly reflect, learn, and develop your skillset, your experiences and your knowledge.*

*Only **you** can manage how to Future Proof Yourself.*

# Future Proofing Yourself

## **What is it?**

We are all individual commercial entities. We sell our knowledge, skills, ideas, time, expertise and wisdom to our employers in return for a salary and various other benefits.

We give up our personal time and sometimes put our general health and well-being to the test by working long hours in pressurised environments, trying to achieve corporate results.

However, all successful companies constantly develop new ideas, products and services for their customers. They employ people with the right skill sets and attributes to suit their objectives and to invest in new technologies and skills. They diversify before the market changes, remaining one step ahead (or if they are really good, two steps ahead) of the game with strategic thinking and excellent planning.

As individuals, do we do the same? Do we look after ourselves? Are our skills, experience, knowledge and thinking up-to-date? Do we sit back and analyse what our employers might demand in the future from us? Do we consider how the skills market is changing and what might be needed in the next 5 to 10 years?

Do we treat our employers and managers as customers and consider what do they need from us, now and in the future as their markets change?

Are we looking after ourselves, so that we are fit and strong enough to still be of value to our employers in the future and, in return, making ourselves employable for the rest of our careers?

If we don't look after ourselves, who is going to do it for us?

## **Welcome to Future Proofing Yourself**

### **Who is this book for?**

This book is for everyone. We are all going to feel vulnerable, in one way or another, at some time during our working careers. We might worry about the future of our company and our roles within them, or we might feel out of our depth and lacking in confidence. All these fears can now be managed — although everything might not always go the way we want, we can take control of our reaction to situations and make the right choices for us.

It is all about choices. However, we must make sure we put ourselves in the right position to manage those choices.

Ask yourself:

- If you are starting out in the big wide world or if you have been in the working environment for a few years: “What are your plans and aspirations?”
- If you have settled into your career and it is going well: “How are you going to keep on track...what’s your plan?”
- If you encounter an unexpected nasty surprise or can foresee one on the horizon: “How will you bounce back... what’s your plan?”

After all, if you don’t look after yourself, who is going to do it for you?

## Challenging and Uncomfortable

Future Proofing Yourself can be challenging and feel uncomfortable. However, now is not the time to put your head in the sand and hope it will all go away. Now is not the time to rely upon winning the lottery. This is a real issue.

There is no magic formula to Future Proofing Yourself – it is called self-management and professionalism.

Take somebody like Roger Federer, a tennis legend. He is a great professional who knows why he is so good so he can constantly perform to the best of his abilities. He gets paid lots of money so he should be professional and know what he is good at, shouldn't he? Well, we all think we are professional, so shouldn't we know what we are good at...shouldn't we be able to promote ourselves and constantly perform to the best of our abilities?

We will all have to operate outside of our comfort zone from time to time, to become involved in challenging and uncomfortable discussions which will require us to remain calm under pressure. We will need to learn new skills along the way which will not be natural to us and we will often feel out of our depth.

Future Proofing Yourself should be fun and involve new experiences, new people to talk with, new learning opportunities. It will help to develop your confidence, help you to achieve the right balance in life, help you to create new ways of thinking.

We may see people progressing quicker than us. Accept it all, embrace the challenge.

And above all help yourself to enjoy and feel valued and fulfilled in your journey.

Are you ready?

## Your Working World

Let's take time to consider your working world and your long-term ambitions. What do you want to do and where do you want to go with it? Naturally, many of us will say 'Retire please', but that's not often a realistic option.

- Do we want to remain where we are, doing what we are currently doing — if so, do we have the right skill set and how might the market be changing?
- Do we want to progress in the role, develop in the business and move up a level — if so, what's our plan and how do we position ourselves? Plus, do we have the right skills and abilities?
- Do we want to change and do something completely different — if so, what? Do we want to retrain or just take our current skills and abilities and apply them elsewhere?
- Is going part-time or dropping down a level a possibility?

Do you have other things in life that you would like to do rather than just work? Ask yourself, realistically and financially, whether you are able to spend less time at work to do other purposeful, meaningful things in your life?

### **Celebrities and Sportspeople**

We often hear stories of sportspeople who, as they approach the end of their careers, struggle with the fact they are no longer number one or the first choice on the team sheet. They miss the adulation, the crowds, the excitement, and the buzz of competition. The transition to normal life can be very challenging.

Actors also frequently struggle as they become of a mature age, with fewer roles on offer. Their past experiences and successes often count for nothing as they seek new parts in plays and films. Their agent stops phoning them. It can be a frustrating time.

Some are better than others in finding new ventures and careers, be it coaching/media within their sporting/acting world or something in a completely different industry altogether. Or they could just settle for a part on a reality television programme, often to the amusement of the general public!

Could you potentially suffer the same fate? Are your skills up-to-date? Do businesses value your knowledge, skills, ways of thinking and experiences? Do you, like the sports personalities and actors need to think about your future and focus upon how you can Future Proof Yourself?

## Go and Reflect

Spend time talking to people you know. Sit down, reflect with a notebook and jot down all your ideas and thoughts. Then look back and reflect upon what you have written.

Who can you talk to?

- Go to Trade Shows; identify what type of work is out there.
- Talk to business contacts; go and visit their places of work.
- If you deal with customers, spend some more time understanding their business.

If you work in a large organisation:

- How do the different departments work?