

# Vigilant Leadership: Futuring, Anticipation, & Action

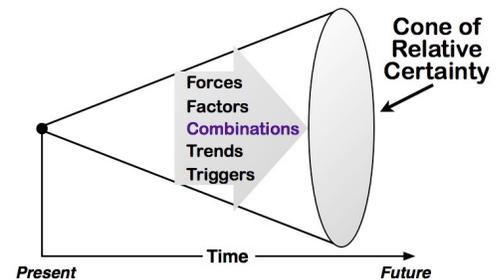
## Seeing the Big Picture

Don't predict. Instead, forecast!

"Foresight that takes uncertainty into account and adjusts with time and new information."

### Principles

1. **Habit** - A prepared mind, an ability to focus on key signals, and implications.
2. **Teams** - See the future more broadly, more inclusively, and more successfully.
3. **Open-mindedness** - New evidence, new information, willingness to change direction.



## Staying Broadly & Forward-Informed

How can a leader stay well-informed in a hyper-busy work environment? Through the sensible and flexible use of tools, assets, and collaboration. These are free, time-saving web-based components with broad focus, excellent editing, and eclectic exposure. [Recommendations in Scanning on page 8.](#)

## Seeing Around Corners

A quick quiz to demonstrate how to see ahead using your ability to observe, analyze, and anticipate. [Technique Table on page 8.](#)

## Group Scan/Discussion

Your institutions and companies will be shaped by forces, trends, and events/developments that are in sight and identifiable. Discuss, determine, and choose at least **5 specific** trends, conditions, trigger events, or situations that are ahead of us in the 5-10 year timeframe that will deeply affect **agriculture, food systems, and especially tertiary education in the field.** We'll compile a list as a tool for further work.



## **Implication Thinking**

### **Understanding meaning and your options for the path forward.**

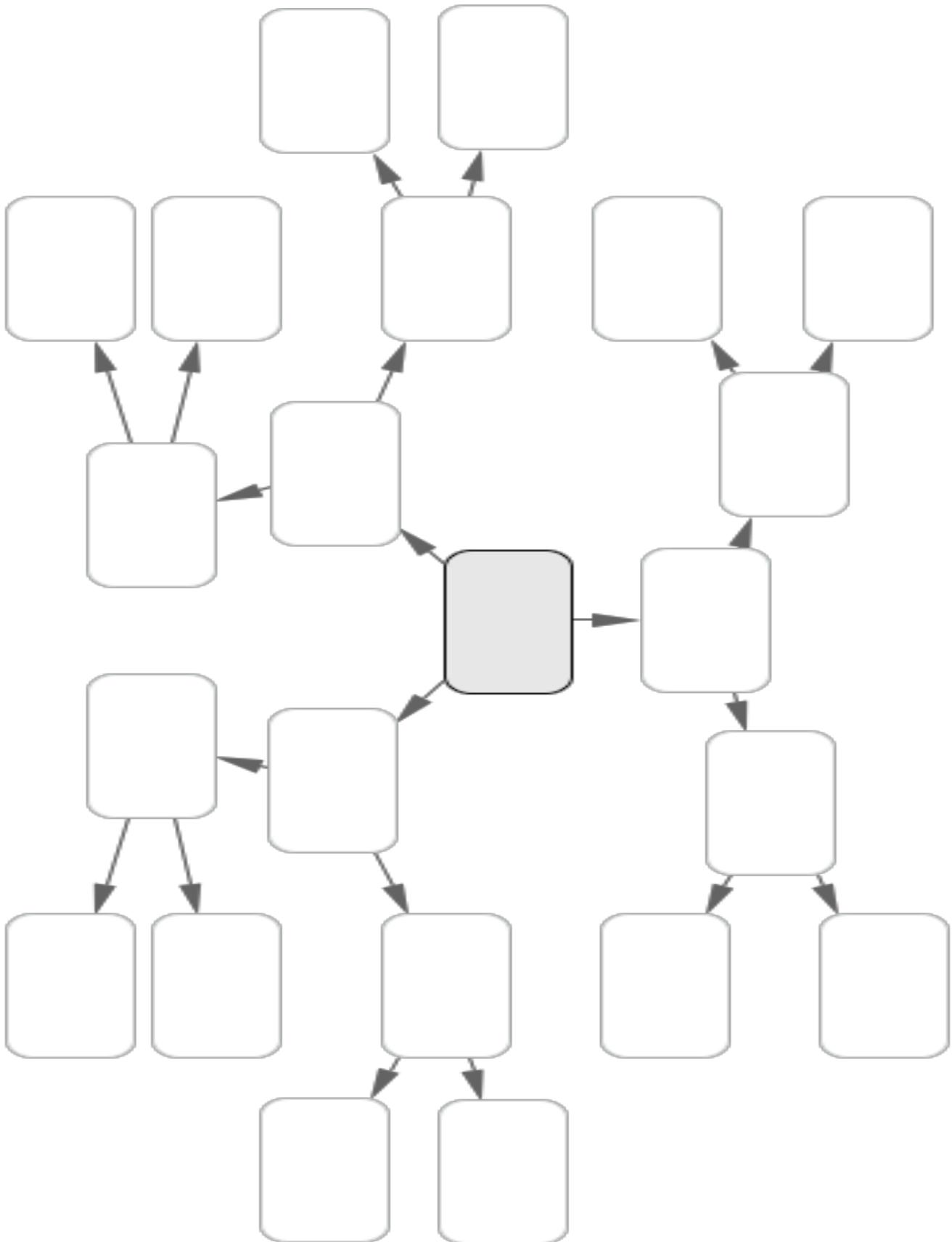
Implications are the after-effects, consequences, results, or impacts of what we've noticed. These are the answers to, "So what?" Implication-thinking is an ability to quickly and easily identify those answers and not in a one-off manner, but in **layers of implications**.

- **Choose** an example. Use our "scan" or propose one of your own. Jot down the item in the shaded box in the diagram on the next page. Ask "So what?" What will result from this situation, condition, or trigger? How does this factor, force, trend play out in the future? When this situation arises, "what happens next?"
- Discuss and fill in **three distinct, independent** results, consequences, or after-effects in the diagram's first level.
- Then develop 1-2 "implications of implications." Asking, "Then what?" and "What else will happen." Develop 2-3 "layers" for the diagram. Work with your team. Feel free to alter the diagram.
- Look at your work. What surprised you? What actions are indicated? What strategies are shown? How could you use this thinking to persuade, lead, plan, develop more options, or convince?

## **The Payoff**

### **Uses**

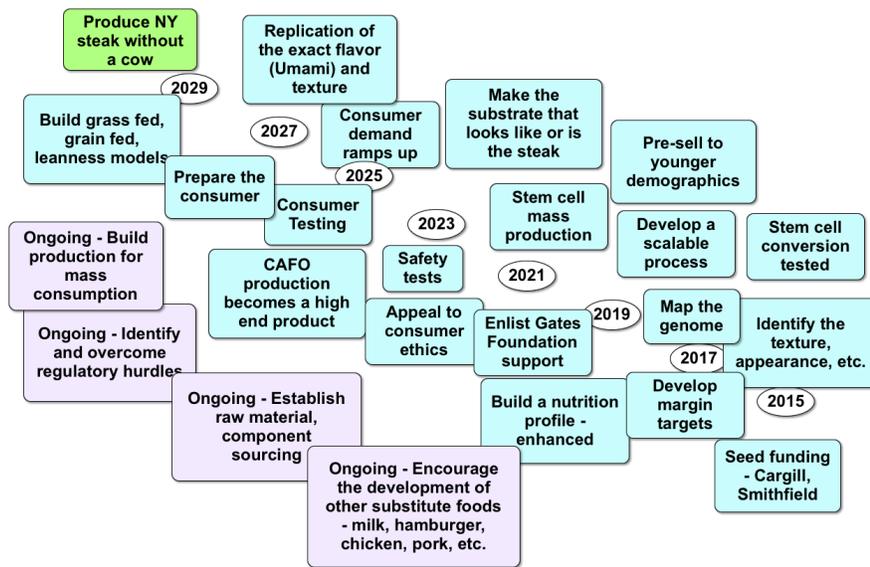
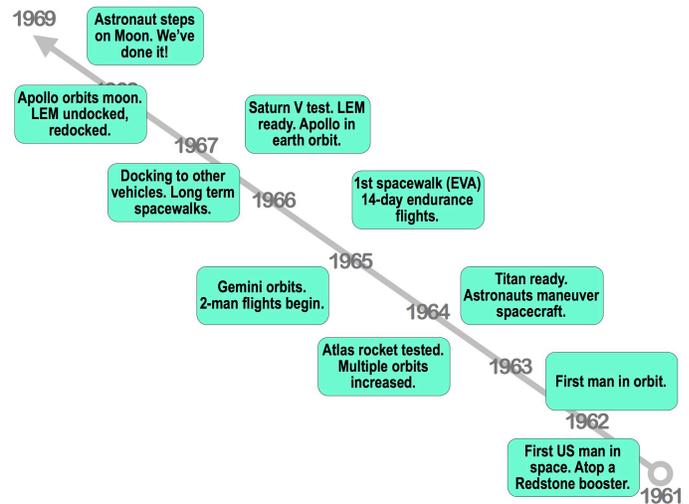
- Strategy or action generator. The more you see how events could unfold, the clearer are needed actions and even an overall strategy.
- Decision aid - test choices by subjecting them to an implication analysis.
- Persuader - Face to face with legislators, regulators, allies, opponents.
- Plan B, C, D stimulator - often a response will point to alternative strategies & tactics.



**Achieving Seemingly Unreachable Goals in the Future**

**The Moon Shot “Back-Cast”**

In 1961 John F. Kennedy proposed a visionary long term goal of “within this decade putting a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth.” It was seemingly unreachable because the US had not even successfully launched a satellite into orbit.



A simplified example of the process is above right. An earlier cohort in this program executed the other example at left that addressed their goal of “Produce a NY Steak Without a Cow.”

**How to Build Your “Back-cast”**

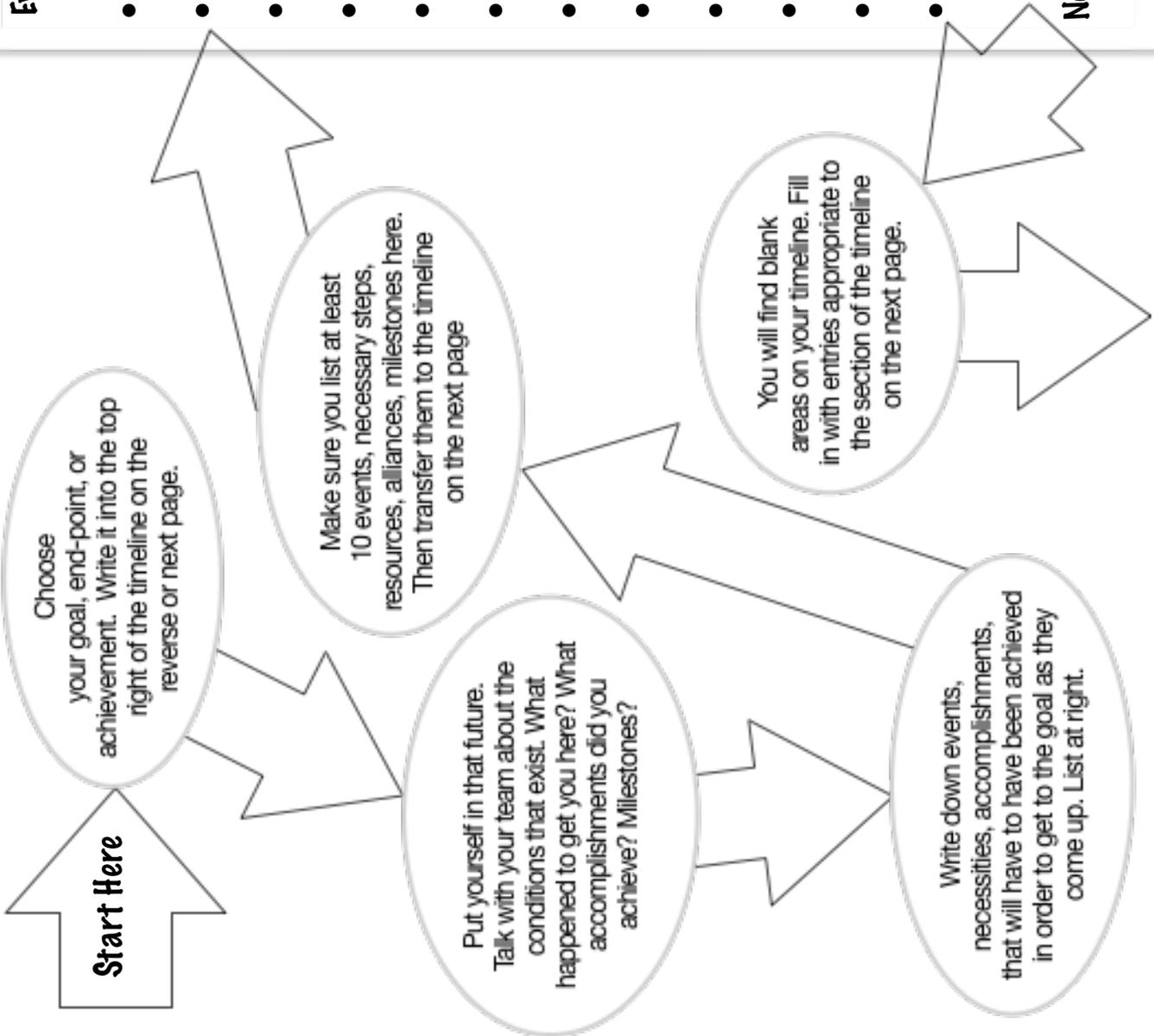
Choose a “desired future”. Set it in a future year - then “back-cast” to the present with a significant achievement or goal moving backward a year or two at a time, skipping around if necessary, to map a path to the future. Take time, use imagination and combined intelligence.

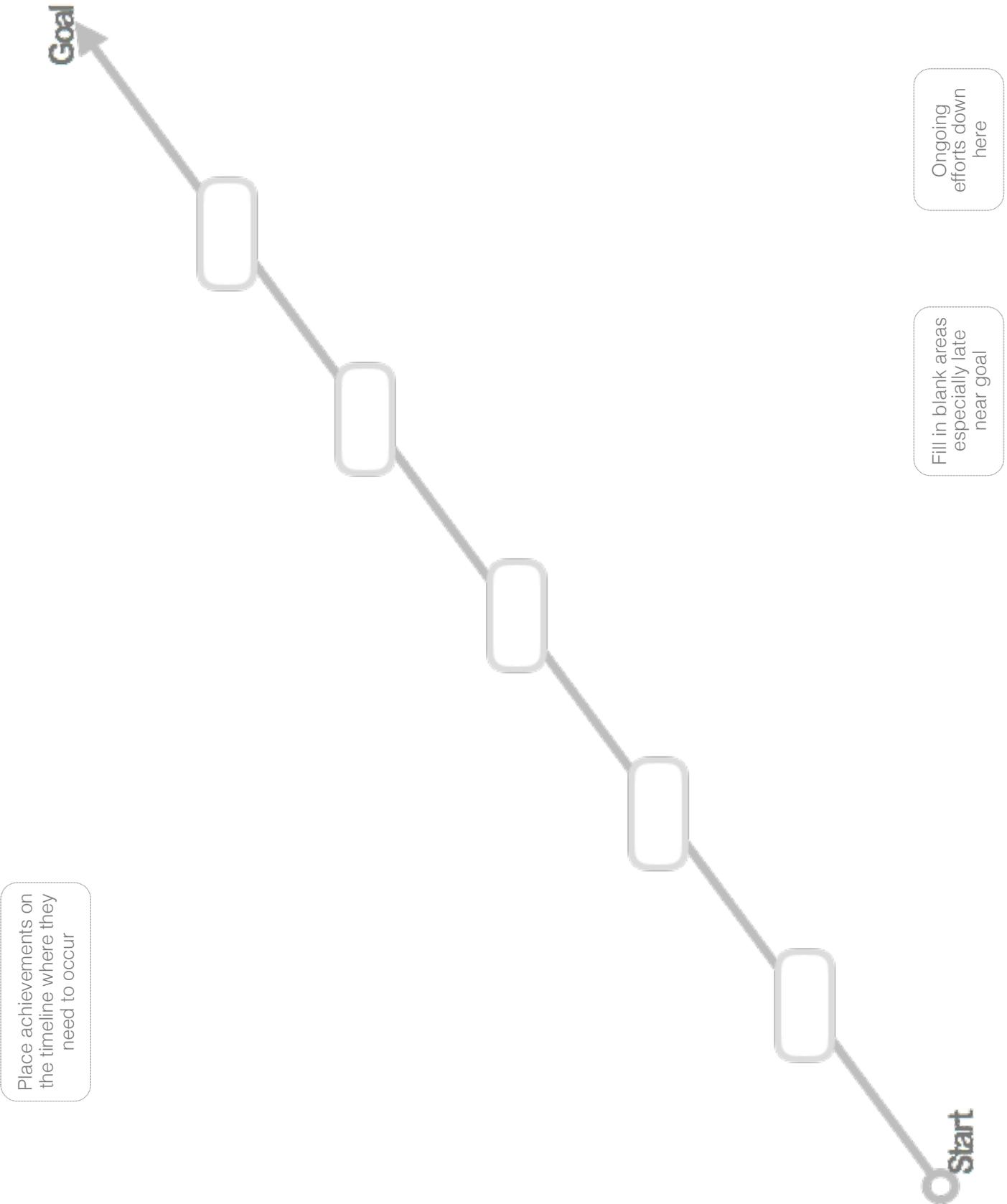
You’ll find a worksheet on the next page. Begin at the “**Start Here**” point and follow directions. Make sure to transfer the items on the list to the timeline after you’ve got 10 or more. If you see blank spots on the timeline, brainstorm how to fill those in. Use the lower right area to park “ongoing efforts” - research, funding, asset-building, and other activities that will provide needed input for the effort.

Events, Accomplishments, Milestones,  
Necessities (10+)

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Now, transfer to the timeline on next page.





Place achievements on the timeline where they need to occur

Ongoing efforts down here

Fill in blank areas especially late near goal

## Resources

### Referenced Reading

Diamond, Jared; *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*; WW Norton, 2005

“Super-Forecasters”: <http://superforecasting.goodjudgment.com>

Duke, Annie; *Thinking in Bets: Making Smarter Decisions When You Don't Have All the Facts*; Portfolio (Penguin), 2018

### Leadership Scanning 3.0

- Daily Summaries: **Quartz**. [qz.com](http://qz.com) Daily free e-mail summary. Free. Arrives in morning. Different global editions. Editors with WSJ, NYT, international experience. Forward-looking.
- **Morning Brew**. My newest recommendation. Free. Great dashboard. Curated content. Use this link: [morningbrew.com/daily/r/?kid=ee9dc2](http://morningbrew.com/daily/r/?kid=ee9dc2)
- **Economist** - economist.com Best global business publication. Subscription. Electronic version preferable. Forward-looking, conservative, top journalism.
- **Twitter** (optional) - **not** as a posting function but following different sources in order to form a newsfeed. Publications, blogs, individuals, sources, to be looked at 1-2 times/day.
- **Sharing System**: I like **Flipboard**. Follow this link to a set of articles specific to the future of agriculture, related fields, and developing trends. <http://flip.it/43QZw>
- **News Clipping or “Feed”**: Google news alerts with daily or weekly e-mails. You choose keywords. Free. [google.com/alerts](http://google.com/alerts)
- **Wildcard Summary** [nextdraft.com](http://nextdraft.com) Free. Dave Pell, a venture capitalist opens 70-90 web tabs every day M-F and sends you a “Best of Web” top 10 with witty text. Consider it a guilty pleasure or the source that tells you stuff you wouldn't see any other way. Liberal. Engaging.

### Round the Corner Techniques

Technique	Makeup	Examples
Harbinger Zones	Bellwethers, early adopters, bleeding edges	Coasts, N. Europe: social change. Youth: tech adoption. Experimental industries.
Micro-Indicators	Small pieces that move with the mean/whole system or network	Grocery indicator from our puzzlers. Predictive analytic signals. Egg sales in Indonesia.
Upstream Look	Moving up 2-3 steps on the cause-effect timeline	Light rail usage near shopping - tax revenue. Architectural Billings Index. Craigslist.
Weak Signals	At the edge of the cone, early, unnoticed	Russian origination of GMO stories. Frey & Osborne's Oxford Computerisation of Jobs.