



Invitation to a revolution

A new book asks South Africans to imagine a better way of living and a more just economic system, writes **Sanet Oberholzer**

If there's one question that's been biting at humanity since the Covid-19 pandemic hit, it's probably "How will this change the way we live?"

"The new normal" is a phrase that's been touted – much to the annoyance of some – with the idea of urging people to adapt, to change and to embrace a new way of moving forward in a conscious way.

But what does this mean and how do we begin to grapple with it?

John Sanei, futurist and author of SA's Covid-focussed *Future* paperback series, has co-authored the third book of the series, *FutureNEXT*, with economist Dr Iraj Abedian.

Launched last month, the book aims to give readers the right mindset and the tools needed to approach the future with confidence and clarity, and in so doing, forge a new reality that's just, sustainable and prosperous.

As Sanei started writing the second book in the series, *FutureNOW*, which followed on from *FutureHOW*, he realised he needed an economist's perspective and decided to collaborate with Abedian.

"I got clients asking me to help them go back to normal and I kept telling my clients I don't think you should be asking to go back to normal. I think you should be trying to figure out what we can do next. Because going back to normal is just going back to something familiar – it's not something better," Sanei says.

"Normal was actually quite shitty," he elaborates. "We were killing the earth, we were killing ourselves, none of us were spending enough time with our families. The best way to describe it is that pharmaceuticals are selling more mood-stabilising drugs than ever before – and that's normal and we want to run back there? We think it's time to re-imagine."

Using this as a point of departure, in the



Illustration: 123rf.com/balabolka

book the authors urge readers to get rid of familiarity and re-imagine a new socioeconomic system that we can help rebuild our society with. Posing 10 questions, or conversation starters, the book encourages readers to think about what they can do.

Approaching the idea of re-imagining the future from an economist's point of view, Abedian says it's time for us to rethink our economic systems. "For at least 10 years I've been writing and giving presentations and lectures arguing that the system was deficient. Whether it was a

communistic, capitalist, socialist or whatever label you put on it, the system has been ineffective and going forward not fit for purpose.

"Covid-19 and the crisis of public health has essentially put a spotlight on the fault lines of this system. If you can reverse 20, 25 years of gain in less than a year you know that system is not stable."

Abedian says the problems the world has faced this past year aren't new – Covid has simply highlighted them. "Disparities of income are not new, minority problems are not new, the plight of women is not

new, which means we have left the system vulnerable to these sudden implosions.

"Covid-19 has put bright lights on these fault lines, hopefully convincing everybody now that this is no longer a debate between the capitalists and the socialists, it's about the future of humankind and we all have to go back to the drawing board."

As for Sanei, he likens Covid-19 to a gift wrapped in sandpaper. "I think we are in the process of unpacking the sandpaper to try and figure out what this new world looks like and not go back to the world that was. On a global scale we needed to, somehow, get off the bloated, overheated, smelly, dirty industrial evolution train. We just didn't know how to get off it."

He wants to remind people that we have changed many things in the past – slavery, apartheid, women being denied the vote – that were simply done because it was the way it was. "We mustn't think that we are powerless," he urges, encouraging people to not sit on the sidelines, blaming the government and socioeconomic system.

Sanei and Abedian want to equip readers with guidelines to approach a post-pandemic society in a more responsible, less anxious, more practical, less angry and more curious way.

Urging readers to embrace this change, Abedian says: "We've been socialised to accept that as individuals we have no power. We argue that each one of us, irrespective of what role we play in the socioeconomic landscape, we do have the power and we invite everybody to recognise that, honour that and apply it. Be active in whatever corner or neck of the woods that you are."

FutureNEXT is available from Takealot, R269. takealot.com

Your Stars

By Linda Shaw

THANDOKAZI MTOTYWA

March 17 1979, King William's Town, 13h00

Sun sign: Pisces

Moon sign: Scorpio

Rising sign: Gemini

You've always longed for adventure, and now that your mid-life cycle has kicked in, you're really keen. Travel – even if it's just local – is a guaranteed part of next year. You're looking for a new life and a new self-image. Your relationships have been through the mill this year, and you're wondering whether it's time for a change. The point is, the mid-life cycle is about dramatic shifts and new life choices. Plus, your Gemini personality tells you there are more adventures to be had. The career is looking fairly prosperous in the coming year. You're wondering whether you're doing the work you were born for. But for now you need to stay where you are. Finances will improve over the next few years and your life plans will adjust accordingly. Take your time with big decisions. Give yourself a few months to calm down. Then choose.

Want your chart read?
E-mail linda@hixnet.co.za



CAPRICORN

Dec 22 - Jan 20

If it's a change of direction you're after, get going. The sun is sending special rays to help you along. Take note of all budgets and get receipts. In this mood, you'll easily overspend, and even more easily take on everyone else's problems because you're feeling so invincible. Hold that thought. One thing at a time. Your new year starts with a new understanding of power. Let yourself grow into it.



AQUARIUS

Jan 20 - Feb 18

It's not that there's no fun available. It's that you've never been sure what the word actually means. Now the planets are telling you to stop talking about it and start doing it. The question is, what would it take to make you happy? Once you know that, you'll have everything you need to get it. List your secret desires. You've forgotten them.



PISCES

Feb 19 - Mar 20

The planets are mostly back on track and the lessons have been learnt. If not learnt, at least heard. Last month's wild planetary shifts unearthed all the parts of your life that need work. This week asks for solutions. In your case, health is the great indicator. If you're sick, you're focusing in the wrong direction. If you're well, celebrate. Adventures are on the way. You'll need to be in excellent shape to enjoy them.



ARIES

Mar 21 - April 19

Take your partner with you when you're out there. That way you'll avoid the jealous tantrums and boring interrogations. If there's no partner, put yourself out there. Someone is waiting for just such a connection. Not that you're overly concerned with love right now, unless it's a love for what you do. There are new business projects on offer and a creative diversion for the easily bored.



TAURUS

Apr 20 - May 20

Your year begins peacefully. That frantic determination to get "results" has finally moved on, leaving you with a powerful sense of achievement. You're beginning to understand how difficult it was to get through the past year, and you're learning to appreciate your strength. Watch your health. Last year's stresses have left you weaker.



GEMINI

May 21 - June 20

Experimentation is your word for the new year. You're exploring career options, new technology and alternative thinking. You're examining your dreams for messages and clues. You're moving towards a new life and, for now, you're willing to try it all. Pay no attention to friends who are trying to control you. Their insecurities are not your problem. Get a professional to check your finances. You need help with those.



CANCER

June 21 - Jul 22

Kittens or dogs turning up on your doorstep? Let them in. They've come to help. You spent last year giving to everyone else – and now you need some attention for yourself. Thankfully, you're paying more attention to your health now, and to the details of your working life. Contracts need revision. Working conditions need another look. And most of all, you need time for yourself.



LEO

Jul 23 - Aug 22

The plans are kicking in, or will once the occasional curveball has been dealt with. This leaves you with a couple of free moments to spare for a desultory love life. Check that wish list again. And remember that it's your job to make yourself happy – in every way you can. When you're happy, so are they. Next week brings fascinating new ideas for making money. Meanwhile, relax.



VIRGO

Aug 23 - Sep 22

Your access to other people's money is greatly increased, as is your ability to borrow. So if you need a loan, ask. You might find yourself handling someone else's finances, so take care not to abuse their trust. It's unlikely you would. There's a new clarity and brilliance to your thinking. You can afford to be picky about how to use your gifts. Save some energy for a new love.



LIBRA

Sep 23 - Oct 22

An old flame could re-ignite the fire, sending you into a frenzy. Truth is, your Libra heart loves a little melodrama now and then. Still, don't make your choices yet. The planets have other plans, pulling you this way and that as the energies of love and confusion force you to uncover secrets you'd forgotten were there. Wonderful stuff. This is all to awaken your creative powers. Use them for something exciting.



SCORPIO

Oct 23 - Nov 21

The planets have tuned into your career and there will be a change in focus. Until now, you've been aggressive and demanding – determined to get what you want. A new sensitivity has crept in, allowing you to charm your way into people's hearts instead of beating them into submission. Enjoy being liked for who you really are. Your life will be so much easier when you do.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22 - Dec 21

Slowly your dreams are changing. Exciting, but deeply confusing. Remember, the mind and heart take longer to adjust than the soul. Slow down until you're more in sync with yourself, or you'll be manifesting old dreams in an attempt to hang on to worn-out comfort zones. That's the last thing you need. Besides, you're unearthing new powers now.