



MINI BOOK • LIFE SKILLS & FUTURE-READINESS

THE SKILLS THAT SURVIVE

Why genuinely human skills become more valuable as AI grows more capable — and how to build future-readiness deliberately, person by person.

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THE PARADOX

1

THE ACCELERATION PARADOX

The faster AI improves, the more valuable the skills it cannot replicate. That is the paradox this book is built on.

Every previous technology wave gave societies decades to adjust. This one is measured in months: knowledge-work productivity with AI assistance has already multiplied, model capabilities compound quarterly, and worker anxiety is rising in step. The instinctive response — learn the newest tool — is also the most perishable one: tools expire faster than the time it takes to master them.

Framing: GMB, *Life Skills in the AGI Era* (2026): as AI capability grows, genuinely human skills become *more* valuable, not less — and the leaders' stance has shifted from “AI complements workers” to “workers must transform fundamentally”.

The durable response is to invest in what compounds instead of what expires: the human capabilities that every tool generation amplifies rather than obsoletes. The rest of this book maps them, measures them and builds them.

“In a world of expiring tools, the only compounding asset is the human holding them.”

UPDATE 2026

METR (2026): the length of tasks frontier AI agents can complete is **doubling roughly every seven months long-run — and closer to every 3–4 months in the last two years**; the latest 50 %-success horizon is ≈ 17 expert-hours (May 2026, metr.org/time-horizons). The acceleration is no longer a metaphor; it is a measured curve — and it is the strongest argument for investing in what compounds.

THE ECONOMICS

2

WHAT THE LABOR MARKET ALREADY PAYS FOR

This is not motivational talk — it is measured economics, and the trend started before ChatGPT.

David Deming showed that between 1980 and 2012, jobs requiring high social skills grew nearly 12 percentage points as a share of the US labor force, while routine-intensive work — including many cognitive tasks — shrank. James Heckman's lifetime of research shows non-cognitive skills predict life outcomes as strongly as IQ, and remain malleable far longer.

Theory: Deming (2017, QJE): the labor market increasingly rewards social skills — coordination, empathy, teamwork. Heckman & Kautz (2012): “soft” skills are hard economics — measurable, developable, and rewarded.

RECENT EVIDENCE

WEF Future of Jobs (2025): employers expect ~39 % of core skills to change by 2030; analytical thinking is the single most-required core skill (~7 in 10 employers), and resilience, flexibility and lifelong learning are among the fastest-rising human skills.

Brynjolfsson et al. (2025): AI lifts novices most — which raises, not lowers, the premium on the judgement that separates seniors.

UPDATE 2026

PwC Global AI Jobs Barometer (2026): uniquely human capabilities — judgement, creativity, leadership — are rising in value as AI reshapes work; roles that AI *professionalises* are growing at twice the rate of roles it merely democratises, and the top 20 % of AI-exposed firms show ~163 % labour-productivity growth vs 2018. **IMF (Jan 2026):** one in ten postings in advanced economies now requires at least one new skill — and pays ~3 % more. PwC also measures a **62 % wage premium** for workers with AI skills.

THE MAP

3

SIX CATEGORIES OF DURABLE SKILLS

The GMB Life Skills Framework organises 145+ skills into six categories — each one amplified, not replaced, by AI.

Category	Core of it	Why AI amplifies it
Thinking	Critical, creative, systems thinking	AI floods options; judgement selects
Learning	Curiosity, meta-learning, adaptability	Fast learners capture each tool wave
Social	Empathy, communication, collaboration	Trust cannot be generated
Self	Self-awareness, discipline, resilience	Autonomy rises as routine falls
Meaning	Purpose, ethics, value judgement	Someone must decide what is worth doing
Future	Foresight, AI literacy, agency	The meta-skill of riding the wave itself

The categories align with the WEF's 2025–2030 top competencies and UNESCO's AI competency frameworks — which matters for one practical reason: **development investments made on this map stay valid across tool generations.**

THE ANCHOR

4

ANCHOR EVERY TECH SKILL TO A HUMAN ONE

The framework's quiet superpower: no skill floats free — every AI-era capability is rooted in a timeless human one.

Prompting well is anchored in clear thinking and communication. Evaluating AI output is anchored in critical thinking and domain judgement. Orchestrating agents is anchored in delegation and systems thinking. This anchoring is why a skills framework survives the next tool cycle: **tools change the surface skill; the anchor skill persists and transfers.**

Theory: transfer of learning research: skills transfer when the underlying capability, not the surface procedure, is trained. Polanyi (1966): the tacit core of skilled performance is exactly what survives tool changes.

For organisations the implication is direct: train the anchor and the surface together. A prompt workshop without a thinking workshop produces prompt-copyers; together they produce people who can re-derive the skill when the tool changes — which it will.

“Train the tool and you get this year's productivity. Train the anchor and you get every year's.”

MEASUREMENT

5

SKILLS DNA: MEASURE BEFORE YOU DEVELOP

Development without assessment is a course catalogue. Assessment turns it into a strategy.

The GMB **Skills DNA** profile assesses a person across eight dimensions and places each skill on a five-phase progression — from awareness to mastery. No fabricated scores: the profile is built from self-assessment, evidence of real work, and (where available) peer input. The output is not a grade but a **map**: strengths to leverage, gaps that matter for this person's role, and the two or three skills where 90 days of focus moves the needle most.

Method: 145+ skill definitions with observable behaviours per phase — “what good looks like” — so progress is visible and defensible rather than felt. The same instrument re-run after each cycle turns development into a measured trend.

At team level, aggregated profiles reveal the organisation's readiness posture: where the collective gaps are, who the internal teachers could be, and which capabilities to hire versus grow.

THE LOOP

6

THE 90-DAY DEVELOPMENT LOOP

Future-readiness is built the way fitness is: in cycles, on real work, with visible progress.

The loop has four beats. **Assess** (Skills DNA baseline). **Focus** (choose 2–3 skills that matter for the person's actual role — not a generic curriculum). **Practice in real work** (weekly micro-practices embedded in existing tasks, AI as sparring partner, not as the subject). **Re-assess and celebrate** (the same instrument, the visible delta, the next focus).

RECENT EVIDENCE

Yeager, Dweck et al. (2019, Nature): a national experiment showed that even a short, well-designed mindset intervention improves outcomes — when the surrounding culture supports it. Design and context beat volume of training hours.

The AI-era twist: the assistant that knows a person's profile can coach daily — suggesting the day's micro-practice, spotting evidence of progress in real work, and keeping the loop alive between sessions. Development stops being an event and becomes a rhythm.

ORGANISATION

7

READINESS AS AN ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

Individual growth compounds into strategy only if the organisation is built to receive it.

Three structures make the difference. **A shared language:** when everyone names skills the same way, development becomes coordinated rather than private. **A shared memory:** profiles, practices and learnings live in a common knowledge base — so capability survives turnover. **A safe culture:** people only show their gaps where gaps lead to investment, not judgement.

RECENT EVIDENCE

MIT NANDA (2025): the ~95 % failure rate of GenAI pilots traces to a learning gap — organisations that cannot absorb capability. **Kim et al. (2025, Nature HSSC):** psychological safety mediates whether AI adoption helps or harms wellbeing. Readiness is a property of the system, not only the person.

“A future-ready organisation is one where every individual's growth makes everyone else more capable.”

PROCESS

8

BUILDING THE PROGRAM IN SIX STEPS



From first assessment to an annual rhythm — recommendation: one pilot cohort, then scale on evidence.

1

Kickoff & framing

WEEK 0

Why durable skills, why now — the acceleration paradox made personal. Ground rules: profiles belong to people.

2

Skills DNA baseline

WEEK 1–2

Individual profiles across eight dimensions; team-level aggregate for leadership.

3

Focus choices

WEEK 3

Each person picks 2–3 skills with their lead — anchored to real role demands, not fashion.

4

90-day practice loop

MO 1–3

Weekly micro-practices in real work; AI coach keeps the rhythm; monthly group session shares evidence.

5

Re-assessment & showcase

MO 3

Same instrument, visible deltas, public celebration — growth made undeniable.

6

Scale & annual rhythm

ONGOING

Next cohorts launch on pilot evidence; profiles and practices accumulate in the shared memory.

SUMMARY

SEVEN PRINCIPLES

1. **Bet on durable skills.** Tools expire; curiosity, empathy and judgement compound.
(Deming)
2. **Skills are learnable.** Non-cognitive capabilities respond to deliberate practice at every age. (Heckman)
3. **Anchor every tech skill to a human one.** That is why frameworks survive tool cycles.
4. **Measure before you develop.** A skills profile beats a course catalogue.
5. **Develop in 90-day loops.** Assessment → focus → practice in real work → re-assessment.
6. **Make growth visible.** Progress people can see is progress that continues.
(Dweck)
7. **Treat readiness as strategy.** A workforce's adaptability is now a balance-sheet item. (WEF)



“Future-readiness is not predicting the future. It is being worth more in every version of it.”

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REFERENCES

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Added 16 July 2026: PwC (2026). Global AI Jobs Barometer — human skills premium; professionalised vs democratised roles; +163 % productivity in most-exposed firms · IMF (14 Jan 2026). New Skills and AI Are Reshaping the Future of Work, imf.org/en/blogs · Anthropic Economic Index (Jan/June 2026) — complex-task gains, observed exposure.

Note: This mini book is the master version in the GMB product series. Theory references are real sources. Illustrations: Gemini & FAL.AI, GMB style lock. Client versions are tailored separately (gmb-minikirja skill).

The more capable the machines, the more valuable the skills that make us human.

Eight chapters on future-readiness: the acceleration paradox, the durable human skills the labor market already pays a premium for, a framework of 145+ life skills — and a 90-day loop that turns assessment into growth.



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SAMPLE DELIVERABLE (demo) · 2026

About This Material

WHAT THIS IS

This material is part of the Skills Pathfinder learning ecosystem developed by GrowthMindsetBuilder. It presents one or more human skills in a concise, practical format for learning, reflection and training.

It may be used as a standalone learning resource, but it is not a complete course. The broader learning experience—including facilitated activities, practice, feedback and progression—lives within the programmes and client projects from which this material was developed.

RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Skills Pathfinder profiles and frameworks synthesize extensive research, international models and established good practices. They bring together multiple perspectives to make complex ideas accessible and useful in real-life learning and development.

No individual model or study provides a complete answer. Skills Pathfinder should therefore be understood as an evidence-informed framework for reflection and growth—not as a universal or final definition of human capability.

RESEARCH NOTES AND SOURCES

Where used, research callouts marked [R1], [R2] and so on provide short summaries of published studies. Each callout identifies the authors and publication so that you can find and examine the original research.

Research on human skills, AI capabilities and future readiness is developing quickly. Findings may differ across people, tasks, technologies and settings—and conclusions that appear settled today may change as new evidence emerges.

Treat each study as one contribution to the evidence rather than a final verdict. Compare perspectives, explore the original sources and form your own view. Where a source is cited, the original publication—not this summary—should be treated as authoritative.

CONTEXTUAL USE

Every skill profile is contextual. Language, terminology, emphasis and interpretation should be adapted to the cultural, educational, professional and organizational setting in which the material is used.

Local knowledge—and the experience of the people using the framework—is essential for making the material relevant, inclusive and effective.

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