

The 4th Industrial Revolution is a time in our history that has crept up on us very quickly. It didn't come without warning, but the speed at which it has taken root in the workplace is astounding. Throw in COVID19 and we now are faced with a new unrecognizable world and the old one is not coming back. *Proverbs 18:15* says, "The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out." It is up to us to adapt and change to be able to not just cope but thrive in the new normal. The only real constant we have, is being reassured in Hebrews 13:8, that our saviour "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Alvin Toffler, author of *Future Shock* said, "The illiterate of the future will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." Human beings have an amazing capacity to learn new skills and adapt to new environments. This is true not only in early life, but throughout our lives. As the nature of work evolves, employees and entrepreneurs will need to adapt their mix of skills and knowledge to embrace new challenges and stay relevant.

Through all their research, Accenture identified critical skills they called 'New Skills Now,' and although there are six skills in the new skills family, I want to briefly touch on just four that are identified in the research. These skills comprise the cognitive abilities, aptitudes and dispositions needed to stay relevant and thrive in the fast-evolving digital economy.

1. Learn to Earn

Learn to Earn skills include literacy, numeracy and digital literacy—the minimum competencies required to locate, evaluate, create, transact and share content digitally. It also includes basic employability skills, such as conduct and work protocols.

2. Apply We'Q

As work becomes increasingly collaborative and task-based, social and relationship-building skills are gaining importance. Apply We'Q skills include teamwork, collaboration, communication, social and emotional intelligence, and the ability to manage others.

3. Create and Solve

Create and Solve skills include creative problem solving, critical thinking, reason and logic to assess and analyse problems, and an entrepreneurial mindset. This skills family also includes cognitive functions such as decision-making and the ability to plan and execute a goal.

4. Cultivate a Growth Mindset

This includes the ability to cultivate curiosity, openness, a growth mindset and the capacity for lifelong learning. Underpinned by the cognitive function of flexibility, these skills are building blocks for personal resilience and the ability to cope with and adapt to change.

In closing, the message to you and me is clear. There is no longer anything called job-security and business safety. We all must adapt and develop the skills required to not just survive but to be successful in the 4IR modern workplace. Life-long learning must be a part of our lives. We do have the ability to be able to future-proof our careers. As believers, we can also take encouragement from Deuteronomy 31:6 which says, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

The future does not need to be bleak. It can be the start of a new exciting journey!