

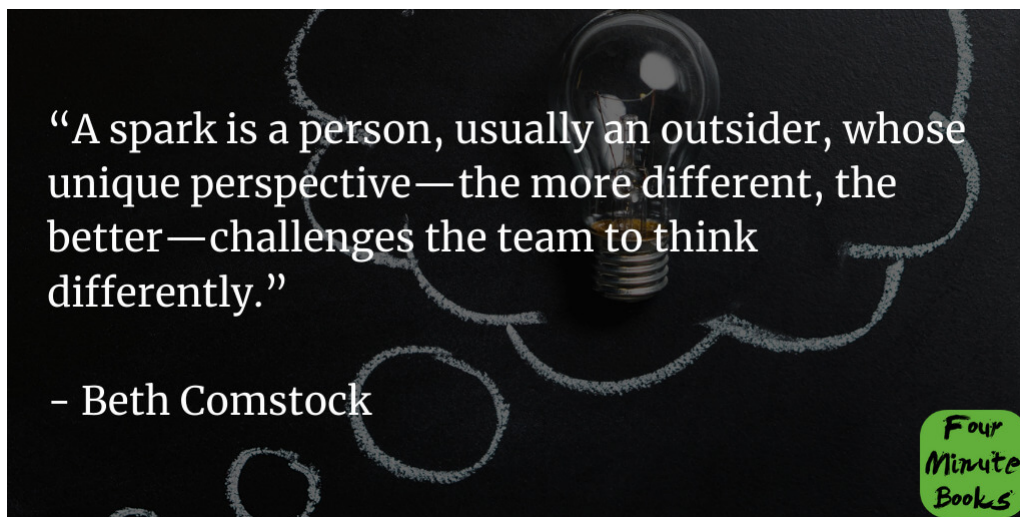
Imagine It Forward Summary



1-Sentence-Summary: *Imagine It Forward* inspires businesses and individuals to challenge outdated thinking and ways of doing work by sharing the life and business experiences of Beth Comstock, one of America's most innovative businesswomen.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



It's no secret that our world is a busy one. We experience the effects of this daily, and it's only accelerating. Whether in our personal or business lives, we always have to stay on top of things, innovating along the way, to reach our goals.

You might have a hard time keeping up with these constant advancements in society. But you don't have to be afraid of it. You can shine through and win, even when it seems like the ground from underneath your feet is crumbling away, forcing you to take yet another step forward. Even when you don't feel ready for it.

This is what you'll learn how to do in Beth Comstock's book *Imagine it Forward: Courage, Creativity, and the Power of Change*. You will be inspired by stories from her successful career as the vice-chair of General Electric and how she helped the company navigate incredible changes.

Just 3 of the many lessons I learned from Comstock's life are:

1. Sexism is still rampant in the business world, but you can beat it if you look to your natural strengths.
2. Daring innovation can help you get through difficult events.

3. When things are uncertain, get clarity and point yourself to a better future by creating a meaningful story about it.

Let's dive right in and get some inspiration from the life of Beth Comstock!

Lesson 1: Comstock overcame sexism in the workplace by utilizing her strengths.

It's 1998 and Comstock's career is booming forward. She's already helped NBC News become a major media player and is only 38-years-old.

Things were about to get even crazier when Jack Welch, the CEO of GE, invited her to become the company's vice president of corporate communications. Not anticipating this would be her toughest position yet, Comstock accepted.

She did know that it wouldn't be easy, but she hadn't realized how much intense sexism she would have to deal with.

GE was mostly men in the late 90s. **It was so bad that when the company had a conference at a hotel, they converted the women's restroom into a men's.** Comstock and the few other women had to use a makeshift bathroom near the kitchen.

Things were no better at headquarters where she didn't get invites to vital meetings. Sometimes, the men even told Comstock how much they hated the idea of a woman in their realm.

Using her strengths proved useful, however, when she realized her introvertedness was an advantage. She could easily listen and observe, intelligently considering the conversations that the men wouldn't let her participate in.

This made it possible for her to think more about the ideas and plans that they were throwing around than the men themselves. This distinction helped her not take it personally and instead focus on the topics they were discussing.

Lesson 2: Adversity is inevitable, but you can lead yourself and others through it with daring innovation.

It's easier to put our heads down and try to wait it out when tragedy strikes the world. We want to rely on what we know instead of trying new things. Sometimes, though, there are opportunities to shine and lift others hidden within the horrors.

Just like for everyone else, September 11, 2001 began as a regular day for Comstock. Within the first few hours of the day, however, everybody, including the offices at GE was in crisis mode.

Comstock realized that rather than sticking to what was familiar, what GE and the country needed was a beacon of hope.

Not only were the company's employees deeply shaken by the events, but their finances were as well. Comstock knew that an uplifting message was vital to the health of the entire workforce.

Although almost everyone thought she was crazy, she pushed forward to put a full-page ad in print media. It depicted the Statue of Liberty with rolled-up sleeves stepping off her pedestal. The text outlined how America would stand unified to move ahead and never forget.

It was just the message of hope that people needed, many of whom cut it out and put it on the walls of their businesses. This was her way of using bold innovation to imagine things forward to a better future for all.

Lesson 3: Amid uncertainty, craft a meaningful story about your circumstances to get clarity and focus on a brighter future.

We cannot escape change. This is especially true in this age of technological advancements and new businesses emerging constantly. In the words of economists describing this constant flux, it's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

Comstock hasn't been safe from these disruptions in her time at GE. Sometimes, the company has had to struggle through it.

With a stock price as high as \$60 in the early 2000s, things were looking good for the company. But the finance department began finding places where the numbers didn't add up. Even strategy consultants the company had hired said everything was fine.

But it wasn't.

A year afterward, the great recession began with the subprime mortgage crisis. GE had investments in these and was hit so hard it got to the brink of financial failure. It would have been the end if it weren't for the government bailing the company out.

Looking back, Comstock realizes that an important lesson came out of the turmoil of this time. **Every uncertainty has opportunity baked into it.** Taking advantage of that is only a matter of telling the right story about what's happened.

It's easy when times get tough to lose your sense of purpose. This was especially true for GE's employees in the wake of the financial crisis. They just didn't see how their work mattered anymore.

But after coming up with a powerful story of where the company was, why the struggle was happening, and what hope it had for the future, Comstock was able to get things moving forward again.

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Imagine It Forward Review

I wasn't hooked on *Imagine It Forward* at first, but by the end, I had learned a lot. Comstock's story is inspiring and I think of it as a great example of using innovative methods to combat outdated thinking. Whether you're a business or just an individual looking to succeed, you're going to get some great ideas from this book!

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Who would I recommend the Imagine It Forward summary to?

The 37-year-old woman who wants to live her dreams but is afraid of competing in a male-dominated world, the 58-year-old business executive who wants to see how they can be more open to new ideas, and anyone that wants to hear an inspirational story.