



The Time Lens: Leading for the Future That Will Forget Us

Why stewardship in the 21st century must be measured in generations, not quarters

By MARTIN STUDER — August 2025

We rarely pause to ask: Who are we actually building for?

Shareholders? Clients? Our children? An algorithmic version of ourselves?

Most systems today are measured in weeks. Outcomes in quarters. Legacies in annual reports. Yet the consequences of our actions ripple far beyond those horizons. The forests we cut, the platforms we train, the policies we delay — all shape a world that may not remember us, but will live inside the structures we leave behind.

“We are not the end point of history,” writes Roman Krznaric in *The Good Ancestor*. “We are the bridge between ancestors and descendants.” This essay

is about that bridge — and why leaders today must reclaim time itself as a design material.

When time became transactional

Industrial capitalism taught us to treat time as a unit: hours worked, seconds shaved, quarters closed. Faster was better, and short-term returns were assumed to guarantee long-term value.

But the cracks are obvious:

- Ecosystems collapse while stock indices rise.
- Young people burn out before age 30.
- Capital outpaces care; velocity outpaces vision.

We have built systems incoherent with time. They reward those who act quickly, even when wisdom would demand slowness. The Earth does not regenerate on quarterly cycles. Societies do not heal or innovate on the schedule of board meetings.

What we need now is a shift from time as currency to time as responsibility.

Designing for generations

In governance, design, and capital allocation, intergenerationality must move from rhetoric to structuring principle.

This means:

- Land use policies measured not just by 2030 targets, but by biodiversity restored in 2080.
- Ventures that treat “exit” not as finality, but as hand-off to future stewards.
- Leadership pipelines that grow roots, not résumés.
- Financial models that account for natural capital and relational wealth alongside quarterly earnings.

At Bluerain, our lens is 50–100 years. We ask not just Does this work now? but Would this still make sense if my great-grandchild had to live inside it? That reframing does not neglect the present — it stewards the present in dialogue with the future.

The paradox of legacy

True long-term leadership contains a paradox: you must invest in outcomes you will never see, and derive meaning from knowing you contributed anyway.

This is countercultural in an era of personal branding and social proof, where legacy is reduced to monuments or metrics. Yet real legacy is often invisible: a restored wetland, a mentored student, a policy that prevents suffering decades hence.

“Society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.” The proverb carries a modern urgency.

Time as a leadership practice

Leadership today is not only strategic, but temporal. It requires understanding the deep implications of delay, the cost of premature scaling, the risks of neglecting context. It demands judgment about:

- When to go slow in order to go far.
- When to preserve instead of produce.
- When to say no — not because it is safe, but because it is sacred.

This is not clairvoyance. It is coherence with planetary and human rhythms. It is courage to act in service of futures that will not write you footnotes.

“The Earth does not regenerate on quarterly cycles. Stewardship means leading as if the seventh generation is watching.”

Becoming good ancestors

Every decision leaves a trace — in soil, in minds, in systems. To lead with that awareness is not nostalgic, but regenerative.

Japan has experimented with “future design” councils, where citizens are asked to imagine themselves as residents of 2060 before making policy choices. The results: decisions more generous, more sustainable, more future-oriented. Experiments like these show that intergenerational integrity can be practiced.

What if every board meeting, investment committee, or government session included an empty chair for the unborn? What if policies were explicitly stress-tested against their 2075 implications?

This is what deep-time leadership requires: humility, patience, and foresight. While our names may fade, the structures we help shape — rivers restored, institutions strengthened, cultures of stewardship — will not.

Toward intergenerational coherence

The work of coherence — aligning ecology, integrity, and generativity — is never finished. But it begins with a shift in perspective. From time as transaction to time as trust. From performance for applause to service to descendants.

Long-term stewardship will often be quiet, unseen, and unrewarded. But it is precisely this hidden architecture that will decide whether the future thrives or forgets us.



The choice is ours: short-term optics, or long-term coherence.

About Bluerain *Coherence* Series

This essay is part of a broader collection exploring how valuation, healthspan, collaboration, longevity, and biodiversity can be re-aligned with the rhythms of life — at a pace that enables regeneration rather than exhaustion.

The purpose of this compendium is to:

- Contribute meaningfully to public discourse on systems change and intergenerational strategy
- Offer fresh language and framing for leaders navigating complexity
- Share what we are learning, unlearning, and building in real time

We welcome dialogue, respectful critique, and collaboration — to deepen a shared understanding of what it means to steward coherence in a time of disruption.

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About the Author

Martin Studer is an entrepreneur and impact investor focused on sustainability and longevity. Trained as an economist and certified public accountant, he brings decades of leadership experience in finance, governance, and executive management. As founder of Bluerain Partners, a Swiss family office, he works globally on projects spanning climate resilience, healthspan innovation, and intergenerational stewardship.

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Bluerain Partners Group AG is a privately held, multi-generation family office headquartered in Switzerland. We do not offer commercial services or raise external capital, while some of our subsidiaries may do.

Our work is anchored in long-term purpose, driven by the belief that meaningful progress requires curiosity, collaboration, and courage.

We engage globally in projects that span climate resilience, health span and longevity, and the evolving nature of work and technology. We do so through investing, advising, governance, and venture development — always with an emphasis on coherence across generations, disciplines, and geographies.

These essays are authored by Martin Studer in a personal capacity. They reflect his experience, reflections, and aspirations — and may not necessarily represent the formal positions of Bluerain Partners Group AG, its subsidiaries, affiliated projects, or partners.

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