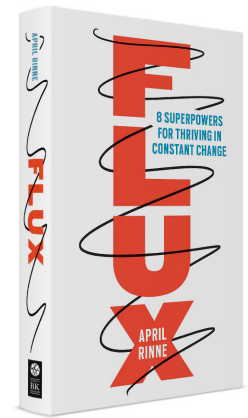


Flux

8 Superpowers for Thriving in Constant Change

by **April Rinne**



Contents

Introduction:
Who Moved My Future?

Page 2

See What's Invisible

Page 3

Start With Trust

Page 4

Know Your 'Enough'

Page 5

Create Your
Portfolio Career

Page 6

Be All the More Human
(and Serve Other Humans)

Page 7

Let Go of the Future

Page 7

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Being adaptable and flexible have always been hallmarks of effective leadership and a fulfilling life. But in a world of so much change and an ever-faster pace of change, flexibility and resilience can be stretched to their breaking points.

A world in flux calls for a new mindset, one that treats constant change and uncertainty as a feature, not a bug. *Flux* helps readers open this mindset—a flux mindset—and develop eight flux superpowers that flip conventional ideas about leadership, success, and well-being on their heads. They empower people to see change in new ways, craft new responses, and ultimately reshape their relationship to change from the inside out.

Whether readers are sizing up their career, reassessing their values, designing a product, building an organization, trying to inspire their colleagues, or simply showing up more fully in the world, enjoying a flux mindset and activating their flux superpowers will keep readers grounded even when the ground is too often shifting beneath them.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The three key steps in the Theory of Flux.
- The eight flux superpowers and how to use them.
- What it means to lead with trust.
- To boost your digital intelligence.

Introduction: Who Moved My Future?

At home and around the world, it's an era to remember. Globally, we've witnessed the worst pandemic since 1918, some of the worst economic straits since the early 1930s, the greatest food insecurity in decades, and a climate catastrophe unprecedented in modern human history.

In the United States, this is compounded by social tensions on a scale not seen since 1968. Any one of these crises is enough to shake things up. All of them happening at the same time . . . is something else entirely.

We're living in a world in flux. The workplace is in flux. Climate is in flux. Organizations are in flux. Careers are in flux. Education, learning, and schools are in flux. Public health is in flux. Planetary health is in flux. Social cohesion is in flux. Financial markets are in flux.

And it's not just what is changing; it's how fast the world we've known is evolving. The pace of change has never been as fast as it is today, and yet, it is likely to never again be this slow.

Humans are not accustomed to this degree of upside-down-ness. We can be incredibly adaptable when we're forced to be, but on the whole, we much prefer stability and familiarity. Yet, if flux is our "new-now-next-never normal," then we need to be ready for—and have the tools to flourish in—this new reality.

What the Flux?!

Flux is both a noun and a verb. As a noun, its most common contemporary definition is "continuous change." As a verb, to flux means "to cause or learn to become fluid." Hence, we're living in a world of flux (noun), and we'd do well not merely to flex our mental muscles but to flux (verb) them, too.

In a world in flux, we must learn to be comfortable with the reality that around the next corner is more change, much of which is unexpected, beyond our power to choose, or both. It's about a shift: from struggling with such change to harnessing and developing an eagerness to use it well.

Each and every one of us, for our entire lives, in some way has been following a script. Although each person's script is different, everyone's script is shaped by the same forces unfurling and the universal experience of being human. And with rare exceptions, your script is clear.

For many people, your script tells you to work hard and stay the course—whatever that course may be. It probably tells you to get good grades, go to a prestigious university, and

get hired by a prestigious company. It may tell you to follow in your parents' footsteps. For a big subset of people, your script tells you that success is at the top of a corporate ladder, so you should climb it rung by rung and become CEO.

But many people's scripts are no longer fit for today's world—or one could say, they are fit for a world that's no longer there. And this is where Flux comes in. Individually and collectively, we are in the early stages of writing new scripts that are fit for a world in flux.

The Theory of Flux reveals the relationships between your old and new scripts, specifically how to transform an old script into a new script that's fit for today's world of constant change. This theory can be summarized in three steps:

- **Step 1: Open a Flux Mindset.**
- **Step 2: Use your Flux Mindset to unlock the eight Flux Superpowers:** run slower, see what's invisible, get lost, start with trust, know your "enough," create your portfolio career, be all the more human (and serve other humans), and let go of the future.
- **Step 3: Apply your Flux Superpowers to write your New Script.**

The relationship between the Flux Superpowers and Flux Mindset is similar to a hub-and-spoke structure: the Flux Mindset is the hub, and the eight Flux Superpowers radiate from it. When your Flux Mindset is opened, the Flux Superpowers can get to work.

Run Slower

Take your pick of reasons to run. New and unexpected change happens every week, if not multiple times a day. It could be a new schedule that disrupts a routine that took ages to get right. Or a team that's behind schedule. Or a time-sensitive opportunity on the horizon.

The old script says we must run faster to keep up. But a world in flux has different race conditions because the finish line keeps shifting. Whether it's business demands, home and family priorities, responsibilities to juggle, relationships to nurture, or relentless uncertainty to decipher: The faster we run, and the more we run without resting or reflecting or even paying attention, the worse our results will be over time.

In an upside-down world that coaxes, cajoles, and coerces you to run ever faster, your key to true success and growth is to do the opposite: learn how to run slower. To thrive in a fast-paced world, slow your own pace.

Imagine for a moment that rather than optimizing for productivity, we optimized for presence.

In reality, running slower means plenty of motion and inquiry—at a sustainable pace. It means caring enough to quiet the mind and focus on what really matters.

Instead of Productivity, Optimize for Presence

There is a better way to rethink our relationship to productivity, sustainability, and a world in flux. And guess what? It's right in front of us, and it's part of the new script.

For starters: Imagine for a moment that rather than optimizing for productivity, we optimized for presence. With the new script, rather than measure meetings, you can gauge presence: your ability to be fully in a moment, experience, or decision. One meeting in which everyone is fully present is worth more than a thousand meetings in which people are distracted.

So how does one learn to optimize for presence? Fortunately, there are many ways to begin.

Stillness practice. Start with 30 seconds, then one minute, two minutes, up to five minutes (or longer) of utter stillness. This is not meditation; it is even simpler. It's sitting, stilling your mind, and seeing where it wanders. Don't judge; just notice. Is your mind able to unwind, or does it speed up?

Patience practice. Cultivating patience is one of the most difficult yet most powerful ways to run slower. Pick something that you know will take time—say, waiting for an appointment—and deliberately don't fill that waiting time with social media apps, calls, word games, or whatever else. Just be . . . and wait. Do you feel tested or freed?

Technology Shabbat: Once a week, disconnect from the use of all technology with screens: smartphones, computers, tablets, and television. If that feels like too much, start with a few hours and build up to a day. Use the time for quiet personal reflection.

See What's Invisible

Each of us is inspired by what we see. But in a world of constant change, that principle only gets us so far. How do we move beyond what we can see and find inspiration

in what we can't? How do we learn to see differently and make the invisible, visible? This is all directly tied to writing your new script.

Learning to see what's invisible doesn't mean losing focus or ignoring what's visible. Quite the opposite, in fact: It's the ability to adjust your gaze, see the full picture, and really understand what's what. When you learn to see what's invisible, it becomes easier to embrace change today and a future chock-full of unknowns.

You deserve to see everything: what's visible and invisible. Tangible and intangible. What's right in front of you and what you can barely imagine. Why? Because the broader your vision, the more potential solutions you have at hand. The more holistic your worldview, the greater your capacity to help, to serve, to innovate . . . and to thrive.

How Do You See Others? Consumer vs. Citizen

In today's world, we're seen first and foremost as consumers, or as futurist Jerry Michalski says, as “gullets with eyeballs and wallets.” So long as we continue to consume, we're told, all will be well in the world.

But all is not well whatsoever. When we're treated as mere consumers for long enough, it affects how we think and behave, which also affects how we see. For example, we see our purchases as more important than our votes and what defines our self-worth.

At the societal level, we chase metrics like GDP that measure only economic activity “seen” as dollars and cents. GDP does not “see” a wide range of extremely valuable activities that underpin our economy and well-being, such as the invisible labor of parenting and volunteering, and the invisible value of shared (rather than owned) resources.

When we follow the consumer script, we also train our eyes to not see: to not see the full effects of what we buy, to not see those who are struggling. We even stop seeing when there are better paths forward.

One way out of this mess is to start seeing one another—and treating one another—as citizens and humans, rather

than as consumers (citizens not in terms of passports and borders but as participants and change agents in society).

This is a new script with a subtle yet profound shift: No longer merely passive purchasers and clickbait targets, we become proactive contributors. Together, we lead responsibly rather than follow blindly. We open our Flux Mindsets to develop this superpower and write our own new scripts.

In your new script, start by asking, Would you prefer to be seen by others as a consumer or as a citizen and catalyst for good? Beyond “buying stuff,” what would you like your legacy to be?

Often times, whether you see or don’t see something depends on your intention as you look. For example, whether we see people—and treat people—as consumers or citizens boils down to intention: If you want people to buy your products or click on your ads, that’s seeing them as consumers. If you want to help, create, be of service, and help others reach their potential, that’s seeing them as citizens and collaborators.

Get Lost

Although many people would agree that getting lost is half the fun of life, the old script sees it as failure. Getting lost is a liability that’s perceived to involve loss of some kind: “I’ve done something wrong, I’ve fumbled, and life will somehow be less as a result.”

But in an upside-down world in which new changes hit every day—when familiarity is itself in flux—getting lost is part of a new script. In this world we are uprooted, disoriented, and unmoored constantly. Whatever compass you’re using has gone kaput. What’s more, this new landscape of change isn’t something you or anyone gets to choose. Flux just is.

Once you’ve opened a Flux Mindset, getting lost becomes a virtue: a secret weapon and stroke of genius not only to embrace being lost but to actively seek out the unfamiliar and stretch beyond your comfort zone as well. Getting lost doesn’t mean lacking direction or being foolish—that’s just the old script at work again. Rather, it means being completely comfortable with what you don’t (and may never) know. In the landscape of change, getting lost is how you find your way.

Fundamentally, this superpower boils down to your response: Does getting lost make you feel comfortable or distressed? Curious or anxious? Can you get out of your own way, or do you trip over your own feet?

When you open a Flux Mindset and learn to celebrate getting lost, this celebration becomes a piece of your new script. Until then, it may torment you: keeping you from making wise decisions, opening up to new opportunities, or being fully yourself.

Cultures that normalize getting lost are far better placed at navigating a world in flux, with or without GPS.

Lady, Are You Lost?

On any given day, everyone is lost in some way. Yet when change hits, feeling lost can shift to feeling unmoored. Opening a Flux Mindset helps you regain your bearings while harnessing the strength that comes from getting lost.

There are many more ways you can get lost proactively in your daily life:

- Adopt the mindset of a traveler. Even if your adventures are limited to one room, your backyard, or your neighborhood: What do you carry with you? What do you really know (versus think you know or wish you knew about your environs)? What do you not know but could benefit from learning or exploring?
- Notice the first emotion triggered when unexpected change arrives. Do you see a crisis or an opening? Do you see an apocalypse or a bardo? Spend time with these feelings, and consider why they are your default. What happens if you try an alternative?
- Turn off your GPS. Orient yourself with your surroundings, as a human.

Start With Trust

Today’s global trust crisis makes headlines so often it’s almost cliché. A global trust barometer has fallen to its lowest levels ever. Our trust in corporations, government, media, and academe seems fundamentally broken. Worse, we increasingly mistrust one another.

We’ve lost our bearings and urgently need to reestablish trust as our North Star: individually, organizationally, and societally. Without it, the future is beyond bleak.

When fully expressed, trust is an invitation to repair and strengthen relationships, an invitation to express your credibility, your reliability, your authenticity, and your values.

When Trust Seems Broken, Assume Good Intent

In a world in flux, it becomes glaringly clear that trust is the

glue that holds relationships, organizations, and cultures together. When the world flips upside down, trust is how you anchor and right yourself. Trusted relationships help you ride the rapids of change with confidence. Mistrust surrounds you with fear and cuts you off from others.

Starting with trust doesn't mean being naive (again, this is the old script at work). Nor does it mean there aren't bad apples in society. The brilliant twist of this superpower is quite simple: Treat untrustworthiness as the exception rather than the norm. The effect is astonishing.

When it comes to trust, the new script isn't actually that new. In reality, it's timeless. It draws from universal human consciousness and indigenous wisdom that have been passed down for millennia. It's time to change the script back, starting with a few observations:

- Humans are naturally creative, curious, and trustworthy.
- Hamster wheels are not only not designed for humans, they are harmful to humans.
- Plundering natural resources is not okay.
- Trust is not built by marketing campaigns. Trust happens when we care for one another, look out for one another, and celebrate one another.

The New Script: Lead With Trust

You might say, "I get the concept. But as a leader, really, what does it look like to start with and design from trust?" Here's a snapshot of what to do, where to begin, and what to aim for on the horizon.

It sucks to hide everything. When you design from mistrust, you have to hide information: from employees, from customers, from friends, ironically from whomever you wish to placate (or, in less-inspiring terms, from whomever you wish to co-opt).

For starters, err on the side of openness. Think open books: Let all employees see budgets, salaries, and metrics.

Then, go further: Let employees set salaries and bonuses, working together. Trust that if you delegate down and provide enough information, they'll get the job done well—and reciprocate the trust. You've just freed their genius and turned scarcity into abundance: When people feel trusted, they're not only more creative but more positively productive as well.

Treat untrustworthiness as the exception rather than the norm. The effect is astonishing.

Know Your 'Enough'

In today's consumer-driven world, we are plagued by a stubborn script that proclaims "More is better" and taunts you for never doing, earning, or achieving enough. This script is old and crusty, but it remains very much alive.

Among its more popular manifestations is that you will never have enough: power to make a difference; prestige to feel important; money to be rich; choice to be satisfied; new toys to outshine your peers or neighbors; success, period.

And as we race to acquire more stuff, we leave essential priorities on the table such as:

- What is enough equality?
- What is enough integrity?
- What is enough well-being?

With your Flux Mindset opened, you can begin to reset your metrics and write a new script. This shift—from an interminable quest for more to a clear understanding of your enough—is simple yet profound.

Knowing your enough does not mean being miserly, uncharitable, or living in scarcity. Knowing your enough brings clarity about what really matters. When you know your enough, you have less anxiety and your ability to thrive expands a lot. Honing this superpower unleashes your full potential to the world.

Leading With Enough

You're a leader and a seeker, but what does leadership in a world of enough look like? This superpower goes beyond dismantling hierarchies or establishing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. It has implications for responsible leadership and longevity, as well as sustainability and trust.

Ask yourself, and then ask your colleagues: Are you more likely to trust a CEO whose salary is in line with his team, or one whose salary is vastly greater? Why?

Next, consider your legacy. What do you want to be remembered for? Why do you do what you do?

Leading with the old script in hand, you might answer this question in terms of more: maximize profits, create a bigger company, have a bigger house, or build a big yacht.

Leadership with the new script and a Flux Mindset would answer in terms of paying everyone enough, ensuring everyone feels safe and valued, and treating others as peers rather than subordinates. Go back to your legacy. When you're gone, people won't remember whether you had "more." They will remember how you treated them.

In addition, if you're not having a conversation about enough, then you're leaving value (including money!) on the table. And here's why:

Conversations about more tend to focus on transactions: how to do more deals, monetize more interactions, and make more money. The time frame is short: The sooner money can be made, the faster you can cash out. In this world, people are consumers: They are mere means to a monetized end. There is no genuine care for their well-being beyond their ability to pay.

Conversations about enough, on the other hand, center on relationships: how to cultivate lifelong friendships, build sustainable and human-centric enterprise, and nourish the planet. The time frame is long: This is about lifetime leadership and evergreen legacies, with humanity at the core.

Relationships endure and sustain; deals are done and put on a shelf. Which do you want to be remembered for?

At the end of the day, knowing your enough means also fundamentally knowing that you are enough, just as you are, right here and right now. (It's not a typo. Both "your" and "you're" matter.) A Flux Mindset understands this intuitively. You are not defined by your purchases or stuck chasing ever more. Your worth comes from within.

Create Your Portfolio Career

The coronavirus pandemic made it clear that the future of work isn't in the future: It is now. We blew through 10-year forecasts for remote work and "work from anywhere" in two quarters. Now each of us must write a new script for our

careers, livelihoods, and professional purpose. Yours may have been in draft mode already, and with a Flux Mindset, it can get the kind of attention it deserves.

A Flux Mindset knows that the career of the future looks more like a portfolio: a diversified professional identity, with resilient roots and customized to you. For success and satisfaction in a world in flux, treat your career as a portfolio to curate rather than a path to pursue.

One's portfolio isn't limited to only professional roles; it includes capabilities that are customarily left off your résumé yet fundamentally make you, you.

For example, Binta Brown left a successful legal career advising Fortune 100 companies to launch her own firm representing musical artists, while she plays the saxophone and produces documentaries along the way.

Mari Nakama is a project manager and trainer at a scientific research company. She's also a fitness instructor, designs her own clothes, and co-runs a pottery studio with her partner. Each role nurtures her in a different way.

Building Your Portfolio

Developing a portfolio career involves two phases: creation and curation.

Step 1: What's already in it? Whether or not you realize it, you already have a portfolio career. You just haven't necessarily been strategic about it. Pull out a piece of paper (or a blank Google document) and into it put things like, every role you've ever had, paid or unpaid; every skill you have that helps others; every topic you know comfortably more about than other people do; your superpowers, according to you; your superpowers, according to others; any new skills you've learned in the past six months, and so forth.

Step 2: Be(come) the only. Go back to Jerry Garcia. Don't be the best; be the only. What is your only? The key to one's "only" is that it's not about one skill. It's about your unique combination of skills, capabilities, interests, and dreams. This is your unique new script.

Step 3: Cross-pollinate. With a portfolio career, you rarely stay in your own lane. You're a cross-pollinator. You take a useful skill or expertise and parlay it into opportunities elsewhere, often in a completely unexpected arena. You translate across problems, roles, teams, and industries. You use your compass's orientation to discover new insights. In the process, you create new value, help others level up, and inspire them to write their own new scripts, too.

In a world with more robots, your key to thrive is to be all the more human—and to use your humanity to help others.

Step 4: Redefine your identity. With a Flux Mindset and a portfolio career, you are no longer defined by “what” you do. You are not defined by one profession. While you have many skills, you are not defined by them. Rather, you harness all of your capabilities and continuously reimagine how they can be combined and offered in new ways, creating new value and opening new doors.

Step 5: Curate, forever. Once your portfolio is sufficiently established, you can shift to curation mode. This is your ongoing, evergreen career: It is the script that, so long as you are breathing and thinking, you will continue to write. The essential point of portfolio curation is that it mirrors your growth, so long as you proactively take care of it.

Be All the More Human (And Serve Other Humans)

In China, pedestrian lanes specifically for mobile phone users have been established, along with a new term to describe the phenomenon: “heads-down society.” In 2019, teenagers spent an average of six hours and 40 minutes per day on their mobile, tablet, and TV screens. Assuming they sleep, that’s more than 40 percent of their waking hours.

Automation is also proceeding at a breakneck pace. From e-commerce and driverless vehicles to text recognition and disease diagnosis, increasingly a wide range of activities and expertise that used to take intensive labor or many steps can now be done quickly, efficiently, and on almost any schedule by automated technology.

At the same time that we can connect with more people and learn more things than ever before in human history—with a mere click, swipe, or touch of a button—we are more divided and disconnected: from one another and often from our very own selves. We are alone, together.

In a world with more robots, your key to thrive is to be all the more human—and to use your humanity to help others. As you develop this Flux Superpower, your relationship to technology is reset. You harness the positive power of

today’s new technologies with the inner wisdom that none of them are as powerful as the “technology” of awakened human consciousness.

Being fully human means being wholly aware of your senses and your humanity: fully present and thoroughly, unabashedly yourself. This includes being comfortable with your discomfort (and occasionally being public about this) to harness it for greater growth.

Being fully human is also about showing up for others. When you’re able to help others, you put interdependence into action. When you manifest a shift in awareness “from me to we,” you unleash your individual capacity and our collective potential and make it easier to respond mindfully to change.

Boost Your DQ

Digital intelligence, or DQ, is part of the new script. To truly succeed in the 21st century—and a world in flux—humans need to boost their DQ.

DQ is an overarching concept that encompasses a range of competencies to engage responsibly in the digital world. DQ includes skills related to digital safety, digital identity, digital literacy, digital rights, and digital communications. Having a high DQ means, for example, that you know when and how to put your device down and have a face-to-face conversation. It means responsibly managing your screen time, calling out cyberbullying, and knowing when you may be at risk of digital identity theft.

Fundamentally, having a high DQ means knowing that technology is only a means; it is neither a solution nor an end in itself. DQ is a human-centric compass for the digital world. It is an essential pillar of your new script.

Let Go of the Future

From a young age, many people are led to believe that humans can predict and control the future. The messaging goes, work hard and you’ll get a good job. Jump through the right hoops and the right doors will open. Make plans that will go as expected.

These instructions aren't bad, but each one assumes a predictable, controllable world . . . which couldn't be further from reality today. Today's world in flux demands a new script that understands, the ability to let go of your perception of control is where real control is to be found.

Letting go gives you control of what really matters, empowers you to move forward, and reminds you to live fully right now. With a Flux Mindset, you turn fear and frustration about tomorrow into fuel for your purpose, potential, and inner peace today.

The New Script: 3 Shifts to Flux

Letting go of the future doesn't mean dropping it like a hot potato. Rather, it means reframing your relationship to the future and whatever change may come. There are three main ways this new script can be written:

1. A mindset shift: from predict to prepare. This shift recognizes that it's impossible to predict the future, nor is any one future guaranteed to play out. Rather, a whole bunch of different futures are possible, and your best approach is to be as prepared as possible for the prospects coming your way. Resist the urge to predict what "will" happen, and invest your energy in crafting initial responses to what "could" happen instead.

2. An expectations shift: from "things will go to plan" to "plans will change." Flipping your mental switch to treat change as the general rule, rather than the exception, improves everything: your ability to pivot, your foresight, and your compassion towards others as we all navigate today's landscape of uncertainty.

3. A shift in focus: from known to unknown. All too

often, when solving problems or navigating change, people look to be better prepared should the same thing happen again. This isn't a bad strategy per se, but it's incomplete. What about things that haven't happened yet?

The future is only a concept; we can never truly know what it will be. When you shift to being in awe of life's mysteries, rather than expecting the past to repeat itself, your horizon literally and figuratively expands.

Absolutely everything that you do affects how you navigate change. You get better at whatever you practice. If you practice fear, you get better at being fearful. If you practice flexibility, you become more flexible. If you practice hope, you invigorate your capacity for hope.

Part of "what's next" is seeing flux as a practice. Being truly fluxy is a lifelong endeavor: It requires practice, practice, and more practice. The goal is improvement, not perfection.

And the upshot? Every day (and especially today!) gives you plenty of opportunities to do so.

IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- *The Reinventionist Mindset: Learning to Love Change and the Human How of Doing It Brilliantly* by Joe Jackman
- *The Changemaker Mindset: How Innovation and Change Start with Inner Transformation* by Ilja Grzeskowitz



April Rinne has been weaving a story about how to navigate change, personally and professionally, for as long as she can remember. She is an acclaimed futurist, sought-after speaker, and trusted adviser, especially known for her role as a bridge: between startups and governments, between executives and customers, between financial and social returns, between for-profit and for-benefit business models, between developed and developing countries, and between those excited about change and those resistant to it. In 2011, the World Economic Forum named her a Young Global Leader.

From *Flux: 8 Superpowers for Thriving in Constant Change* by April Rinne. Copyright © 2021 April Rinne, with permission granted to Soundview, Inc. specifically for purposes of this summary. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. 216 pages. ISBN 978-1-5230-9359-5. Summary copyright © 2021 by Soundview Book Summaries® www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY.