

Thomas Frey Biography: World Futures Day 2023

An American futurist and in-demand speaker, Frey is the founder and executive director of the DaVinci Institute in Westminster, Colorado, where he works to develop original research studies in areas not normally addressed by futurists. Working with his “Board of Visionaries,” he seeks to translate trends into opportunities.

Frey was born in 1944 on a grain farm in South Dakota but, by his own admission, he was a terrible farmer. In fact, his mother placed him on a tractor at age 11 to get him away from the TV. His mind was always elsewhere, he explains; he thought about the future even as a child. Frey is a former member of the Triple Nine Society, for those with an IQ in the 99.9 percentile.

Before founding the DaVinci Institute, Frey spent 15 years as an engineer at IBM, where he received 270 awards. He has, personally, started 17 businesses and has *helped* start hundreds of others. Said to possess a rare blend of reality-based thinking coupled with a clear visualization of the world ahead, he has been invited to speak in numerous foreign countries.

Frey often talks about extreme futures, hoping to challenge current thinking. His insights are original, viewing every problem as an opportunity. Audiences report that he creates fascinating images of the world to come. He’s been a keynote speaker for NASA, IBM, AT&T, Hewlett-Packard, Lucent Technologies, Boeing, Visa, Hunter Douglas, Times of India, and many more.

In “Building a More Valuable Human” (November 2020), Frey identifies the global shifts driving the calculation of the value of a human life:

- **Declining birth rates**, with 20+ countries losing half their population by 2100: The future, he says, is now happening in these six countries: Nigeria, Congo, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Angola and Pakistan. They’ll account for half of the world’s population, but, currently, 20% of their children do not attend school of any kind.
- **Improving global connectedness**: It’s all about relationships, and digital communication (social media) has exponentially increased the growth curve of our value as “relatable” human beings.
- **Improving our base of skills**: Our ability to assess macro and micro skills will demonstrate that the value of human life is snowballing. Automation simply *readjusts* our capabilities. We’ll see its results within a decade.
- **Increasing life expectancy**: Average life span, worldwide, is now double what it was 200 years ago, and each decade it increases by two years. It is possible human beings will live to age 250, further increasing the value of human life.

Other interesting papers by Frey, published on the DaVinci Institute site, include *Will AI Replace Humans?*, *Just-in-Case Learning versus Just-in-Time Learning*, and more. Frey is also the author of *Epiphany Z: 8 Radical Visions for Transforming your Future* and *Communicating with the Future: How Re-Engineering Intentions will Alter the Master Code of our Future*.