

“How to Fall in Love with the Future: A Time Traveller's Guide to Changing the World” **by Rob Hopkins**

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Rob Hopkins is a writer, educator and an activist. He is best known as the founder of the global Transition Movement and the co-founder of Transition Town Totnes¹.

His work can be categorised into three main areas: The Transition Movement, his work as a public speaker and his work as an author.



His work in the Transition Movement

The transition movement is a grassroots, community led movement that aims to tackle environmental issues through practical local action. The movement aims to create economic ecological resilience, reduce fossil fuel dependence, and work on climate change.

The core principles of Rob Hopkins' transition movement can be identified as follows;

- Localization – community based local food networks and community owned energy grids
- Resilience – strengthening the town's capacity to withstand external environmental, financial and energy shocks
- Optimism – can do attitude to find solutions and community connection
- Activities – self organization communities form independent 'transition initiatives'
- Practical projects - practical solutions to emerging problems
- Cultural shift – cultivating collective imagination

Rob Hopkins' work as a Public Speaker

As a public speaker Rob Hopkins main role was discussing the solutions for environmental issues through a series of Podcasts.

During the period from 2022-2024 Rob Hopkins created a series of podcasts called “*What is to what next*”. There were 100 episodes where he invited guests from various disciplines to the programme as guests.

The guests included Rutger Bregmen², Walidah Imarisha³, Brian Eno⁴, Adrienne Maree Brown⁵, Dr. Lyla June Johnstone⁶ and many more activists and thinkers.

¹ Rob Hopkins moved to Totnes, Devon later in life (around 2005) after living in Ireland. Totnes is the location where he co-founded the very first Transition Town initiative.

² Rutger Bregman is a Dutch historian, author, and journalist born in 1988. He became internationally known for writing about economics, history, human behaviour, inequality, and how societies could be organized differently.

³ Walida Imarisha is an American writer, educator, public scholar, poet, and activist whose work connects Black history, criminal justice, prison abolition, social movements, and speculative fiction.

⁴ Brian Eno is a hugely influential British musician, producer, visual artist and thinker, born in 1948.

⁵ Adrienne Brown is an American writer, facilitator, activist, and thinker whose work focuses on social change, collective organizing, imagination, relationships, and creating alternative futures.

⁶ Dr. Lyla June is an Indigenous scholar, musician, poet, educator and community organizer.

In his programme titled “*Ministry of Imagination*” guests were asked to suggest policy ideas that could rapidly accelerate the journey of humanity towards a much better world. There was a suggestion to create a Ministry of Imagination Manifesto with all the policy ideas that were suggested by the guests.

Rob Hopkins’ work as an author

His written work focused on permaculture⁷, local resilience and climate optimism⁸. These written works provided practical tool kits and attempted to create an evolutionary mind set of transition movement.

His works included

- **Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience (2008)**

This is considered one of his most important works. The book discussed and laid down methods and means or maps for how communities can transition from fossil fuel resilience toward localization.

- **Transition Companion - Making your community more resilient in uncertain times (2011)**

This provided tool kits for transition and a step-by-step guide and examples from early transition towns. While getting lessons from the past it identified patterns for the future.

- **The Power of Just Doing Stuff: How local action can just change the world (2013)**

This is a short work on economic democracy and how ordinary citizens can initiate local enterprises to keep wealth within communities.

- **21 Stories of Transition (2015) 21 success stories**

Explains about unleashing the power of imagination and creating a future we want. It stresses that there is a decline in human imagination blocking climate action and addresses how that can be solved. It also discusses how to revive the imaginative power of humans.

- **How to fall in love with the future: A time travellers guide to changing the world**

This is Hopkins’ recent major release. This work was born out of his podcast “from what is to what next”. This work explores the neuroscience of mental time travel and pushes the reader to imagine a positive 2030 to trigger positive real changes.

Jeremey Williams in his book review⁹ states that there is “playful futurism in all his works”. Hopkins works are, according to Jeremey a “hopeful imagination of the future which is vital to activism”. Jeremey states that, according to Rob Hopkins, the current system of looking at the negative side of the situation is “like waking up in the night, smelling smoke and calling the insurance company rather than the fire brigade”.

Jeremy Williams in his review, further states that through his work Hopkins is looking for an appealing future that people want to create and want to look forward to.

According to Jeremy Williams, Rob Hopkins takes communities hosting themed sun powered restaurants, fictional encyclopedias as examples.

The book focuses on the author’s experience in imaginative futurism.

⁷ a design system for sustainable living and land use. It mimics the patterns and features of natural ecosystems to create productive spaces that supply food, energy, and shelter while healing the environment.

⁸ Climate optimism refers to a hopeful and constructive outlook on addressing climate change, emphasizing the possibility of meaningful progress through collective action, innovation, and effective policies.

⁹ Williams, J., 2025. Book review: How to fall in love with the future by Rob Hopkins. *The Earthbound Report*, [online] 14 October. Available at: earthbound.report [Accessed 3 October 2026].

Rob Hopkins' idea of imagining the future is similar to time travel. He discusses the events as if they were events from the future that he travelled to and experienced and invites the readers also to go to that wonderfully imagined future in which most of the current problems have been solved by creative and imaginative methods. He invites people to dream and hope.

He dispenses negativity about the future claiming "***We are done with dystopias ... They paralyze us. We have had enough. Cast them from our cinemas and toss them from our bookshelves***"¹⁰.

He invites and urges the readers to dream of a better future and act to create it by themselves.

Through all his works which includes movements, writings and discussions Rob Hopkins presents a unique idea or a perspective to solve current global environmental, economic and social issues. His method is unique as it presents a positive attitude in looking at the issues rather than looking at the problems as unsolvable, negative matters.

Conclusion

The solutions proposed by Rob Hopkins for numerous issues faced by the world are unique and more importantly people/community oriented. Rather than putting the state or the government authorities as responsible parties to combat or resolve environmental and economic issues, he proposes community-oriented programs and urges the ideas to come from people themselves which makes these solutions more sustainable. One might feel that his futuristic ideas are just what they are - just figments of his imagination that cannot be implemented in reality. However, it is also reasonable to think that long lasting solutions for the environmental and economic issues that the world is facing in recent decades are not problems that governments alone can solve. It does indeed require the general public to be a part and following Rob Hopkins imaginative path may be the way to achieve this.

¹⁰ Rob Hopkins, *How to Fall in Love with the Future: A History of the Future and Why It Matters* at page 160