

THE GLOBAL COSMOPOLITAN MINDSET

Lessons from the New Global Leaders

Linda Brimm



The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset

“At the heart of globalization are people rather than products or corporations. Globalization is changing how people behave, how they relate to each other, what they dream of and how they live and work. Linda Brimm is the foremost chronicler of the new global cosmopolitan reality which is shaping and re-creating the worlds of work and home. Her latest thinking provides a compelling and humane take on the new globalized world order.”

—Stuart Crainer and Des Dearlove, *founders, Thinkers* 50

“Linda Brimm has captured the essence of a new breed of Global Cosmopolitans that will provide key leadership in tomorrow’s world. Many of her insights are drawn from her teaching and research at INSEAD which attracts these future leaders because of its global orientation and aspires to prepare them for effective and responsible leadership in tomorrow’s organizations.”

—Ilian Mihov, *INSEAD Dean and the Rausing Chaired Professor of Business and Economic Transformation*

“More and more people are living global lives, or aspire to do so. Based on a treasure trove of interviews with global cosmopolitans Linda Brimm’s wonderful new book describes the challenges, identity dilemmas, and mindsets needed to work and thrive in this multinational and multicultural landscape.”

—Herminia Ibarra, *The Charles Handy Professor of Organizational Behavior, London Business School*

“*The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset* provides a penetrating insight into the issues and dilemmas involved in the human side of global living and working. *The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset* by Linda Brimm is a must-read for leaders at all levels of society interested in leading a meaningful and successful global life.”

—W. Chan Kim, *The BCG Professor of Strategy, INSEAD and New York Times bestselling author of Blue Ocean Shift*

“Linda Brimm’s message spoke to thousands when, in her first book, she coined the now wildly popular term Global Cosmopolitans. Join her in her second book, *The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset*, for a fascinating journey into the skills necessary to succeed in today’s multi-cultural world. If your mother is from Pakistan, your father from Peru and you’ve spent the last decades living in Abu Dhabi, Amsterdam, Anchorage and Amman this book is for you. While many have written about how to help people from different cultures collaborate, Linda explores what it means to have all those cultural differences right inside yourself.”

—Erin Meyer, *Senior Affiliate Professor, INSEAD and author of The Culture Map*

“Globalism and multiculturalism are growing steadily so it is really helpful to have some meaningful research results from this study of global cosmopolitans, the cohort who are exploring what it takes to manage multiple cultures as a life style not just as a tourist. This book explores through multiples cases the mindset and skill set of this group of people and illuminates, thereby, some of the important characteristics of being able to live in our interconnected world.”

—Edgar H. Schein, *Professor Emeritus, MIT Sloan School and author of Organizational Culture and Leadership, 5th Ed. (2017)*

“Linda Brimm teaches us a new ‘way of life’ in this world of escalating complexity and change using ‘stories.’ Her stories are about the whole person and what it is like to be a person from a different culture, gender, religion, or personality type. Welcome to the modern-day global world of Jane Austen.”

—Hirotaka Takeuchi, *Professor of Management Practice, Harvard Business School*

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The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset

Lessons from the New Global Leaders

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Preface

My journey continues...

I have been immersed in the world of Global Cosmopolitans of late. More specifically, I have been looking for a way to tell their story from the point of view of more seasoned travelers than I studied for my initial book on the subject, *Global Cosmopolitans: The Creative Edge of Difference*. The stories told by people with significant life and professional experience help us understand how they have developed their minds and their skills over time.

The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset: Lessons from the New Global Leaders gives the reader the opportunity to learn from anecdotes and stories shared by leaders of both organizations and change. By understanding how they have created their own career paths and built lives that they never could have imagined when they first started their journeys, many others can benefit.

Living globally sounds like some sort of peripatetic paradise. For some, it is. But it also raises many fundamental social and psychological issues. Where is home, if you were born in one country, live in another, and work worldwide? What is it like to spend your working life in one country and then return to where you grew up? What nationality should your children be? Does it matter?

These issues—the human side of global living—are the subjects of this book, which attempts to answer some increasingly relevant questions. What attitudes do people need to work successfully in an international landscape? What knowledge and skills do they acquire from the day-to-day reality of coming face-to-face with difference? How do they re-interpret their own

values and traits? What is the nature of the challenges and opportunities they face as they develop on their global adventures?

The first part of the book presents the Global Cosmopolitan Mindset and Skillset. These two chapters introduce the lenses and some of the skills that Global Cosmopolitans use to navigate the challenges that they so often transform into personal and professional opportunities. Given their lifestyle and the nature of the challenges they face, they develop the very attitudes, knowledge, and skills that global leaders need.

The second part of the book gives the reader an opportunity to look in more depth at the nature of the challenges that they face as they compose their lives around the world. While these are similar to issues encountered by all human beings, including those who live local lives, there is no doubt that they are made more complex by global mobility.

The last part of the book gives the reader an opportunity to see how Global Cosmopolitans continue to compose chapters to their lives as they mature. There is no set pathway for people who live globally. While they understand the tension of finding a balance between being rooted and staying cosmopolitan, each new adventure is an opportunity to reflect on what gives meaning and value to their lives.

Every chapter could be a book on its own. I decided not to cover every possible subtopic, but to share stories that exemplified aspects of the issues, such as identity, that Global Cosmopolitans frequently raise. I have simply tried to give the reader a flavor of what people describe as relevant. Given that no two lives are ever the same, the stories do not provide formulas or solutions, but exemplify what people have a tendency to share.

The book should help the reader gain insight into how people develop lives over time, and how they benefit from their knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Whether you are considering starting a global move or wondering whether to continue your journey, their insights should be useful. If, on the other hand, you are trying to create or develop a global organization, this is the population that you need to learn from and work with. Global Cosmopolitans have been learning life skills and appropriate lessons that have contributed to their success. Their stories can also boost your success.

For global organizations looking for the most appropriate hire, I will not present a checklist of character traits that a person should have to work and lead across borders or cultures. Instead, I invite you to get to know this population and to understand what they have learned—and are continuing to learn—from their personal and professional experiences. The lessons from life are not universal, yet the potential for skills that can lead to success is always worth considering. While there are many ways to look at what it

takes to be successful and many theories of leadership, this book turns the focus onto what can be learned from life and, in particular, a global life.

As I listened to Global Cosmopolitans and read the literature about learning and growth, it became clear to me that there was something magic about the combination of the need to learn—and to be flexible about what and how you learn—and the desire to understand the world from both a global and local point of view. These, together, are what I call the Global Cosmopolitan Mindset. It is the base upon which Global Cosmopolitans' learning about themselves and the world is built on. The little acts of creativity, which people often need to make such complicated lives work, complement the motivation to learn, to grow, and to develop global minds.

My own journey since I wrote *Global Cosmopolitans: The Creative Edge of Difference* has been filled with opportunities to learn about people living global lives, expanding my sample and expanding my ideas.

More and more people are living global lives. I meet them in my classroom—twenty- or thirty-somethings, possibly with parents from different cultures, who have already worked in two continents and speak multiple languages—and through my work with organizations and individuals. This is the new reality. Technology is also reshaping our world. With all of the questions currently raised about the impact of globalization, we now have an opportunity to address the inequities in our global village and to work toward more sustainable solutions.

At INSEAD, where I have been a Professor of Organizational Behavior, I have had the opportunity to work with and teach people from all over the world. Along with my own personal journey and a need for reflection, their stories were the basis of my desire to understand the impact of global living and globalization on the minds of people who are at the forefront of this experience. My work as a professor at INSEAD has given me the opportunity to travel and learn extensively throughout the world. For me, both teaching and writing are opportunities to learn, as well as to share what I have discovered along the way.

My work as a clinical psychologist in Paris has given me the opportunity to help people explore their inner worlds and great insight into how people put together their own very personal stories. Since many of my clients are living in Paris, but are not of French origin, they have contributed to my understanding of how the minds of Global Cosmopolitans work.

At the same time as I am learning about the lives of seasoned Global Cosmopolitans, I am following my own journey and acquiring a wonderful perspective on new beginnings.

Moving from Boston to Lourmarin, a small village in southern France, changed everything for me and for my family. While I had been raised to have a global perspective on life, my entire world changed when I actually started living a global life. Although I have not traveled as much as most of the people I interviewed for this book, we also lived in Jerusalem for three years, which changed my outlook on so many issues. There, even the maps were different and continued questioning the way of thinking that put America first. However, that did not stop me eventually establishing a second home in Wellfleet, Massachusetts.

I have to say, I am most at home when I have my family surrounding me, wherever we happen to be in the world. There is nothing like being a grandmother and having the opportunity to observe my own children parent their kids. A morning with one of my grandchildren not only gives me pleasure, but also provides me with deeper understanding of how the global mind develops. It was a fascinating journey watching my children mature with their Global Cosmopolitan minds; now I am enjoying watching the lives of their children unfold. Seeing my children raise their children has given me insights that I never had time to enjoy to their full extent as a parent. I promised that I would not write this book about them, but I could have.

I am also getting an insider's chance to appreciate how children and grandchildren learn when they speak multiple languages and meet people from very different cultural backgrounds on a daily basis. Observing their ease with difference and their initial strategies for connecting has been fascinating. Changing landscapes and languages is normal for them. They also know at some level what it means to have to leave—to be far away from the people that you love.

Chloé, my granddaughter, is a frequent traveler on the Eurostar train between London and Paris. At four, she is already trying to understand how she can love being in two cities at the same time. She has attachments and wants to have a home in both places. And she already understands that they would have different connections and people in them. We can already have interesting conversations about the differences between languages—and the frustrations of being more articulate in one than another. These are issues that Global Cosmopolitans work on their whole lives.

Julien is younger, just three at the time I am writing this, but he is learning three languages: French, Spanish, and English (or should I say American?). If he knows a word in one language, he is quick to find it in another. He understands, who can speak all three languages and who will speak to him in only one. Meanwhile, Luca, who will be one when this book is published, is already being exposed to three languages, but for the time

being his beautiful smile his best way of communicating how happy he is to see someone.

Chloé and Julien know that family and friends live in different countries. They can identify places around the globe where they already know people or where they have been. Video technology allows them to feel connected with people living everywhere. They can see that movies, TV shows, or songs can be seen or heard in multiple languages.

Their experience is not exceptional, but part of a new normal in many metropolitan communities. While we cannot predict what this will mean for them in the future, there are more and more children growing up with sophisticated concepts of culture, language, difference, and beyond.

Change is just a part of life, but it is a given for Global Cosmopolitans, and the changes in my family have opened new doors for me. They give me great stories, push my thinking, and, yes, challenge me on a very personal level. Just listening to my grown children attempt to plan global continuity for their children has opened my eyes to the possibilities of global living. Languages, schools, friends, Skype, iPads... have changed their lives.

Learning through the sharing of stories

As you can well imagine, I learn from the stories people tell. While my colleagues might look at other ways to uncover the 'truth,' I believe that stories capture important narrative truths about life experiences. Collectively, they reveal patterns or questions that need answers.

Conversations about living globally are part of my everyday life. Colleagues, over coffee or lunch, have plenty of stories to share.

Past students and co-workers continue to send me anecdotes about the development of their lives.

While some of the chapters of this book could be filled with facts and figures, I have chosen to help the reader understand the issues through brief anecdotes or stories. Each chapter is not a definite statement about the relevance of the issues it covers but an opportunity to understand what questions are frequently raised and in what manner.

I want to emphasize that people do not need to lead a global life to have a creative mind, an inquisitive mind, or a global mind. While many of my friends have stayed in one place, they are as interested as ever in the world around them. While they might not have experienced some of the major choices that come with global living in such an intense way, their desire to learn and their global perspectives are what has cemented our continued friendships over time.

The political and economic atmosphere has had a huge impact on the telling of the stories in this book. While I was writing it, serious questions were raised about the impact of globalization. Major policy changes have already affected the lives of people building their lives and careers globally. Local versus global perspectives can seem polarized. However, if we can only use *both* lenses, we have the opportunity to use globalization for the greater good. This, above all, is the beauty and the power of the Global Cosmopolitan Mindset.

Paris, France

Linda Brimm

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1

Introduction: Welcome to the Age of the Global Cosmopolitan

Will Elise's¹ life ever look normal, whatever that might mean? Does she even want it to be?

She is currently the Managing Director of a consulting company in the UK. She has set up and managed hotels all over the world, but her global experience started at birth, since her father was Norwegian and her mother was Indian. She appreciated her cross-cultural childhood and what she learned along the way. Educated in Europe and the US, she chose to work in the hotel industry, which allowed her to continue her global adventure, and gained a reputation for excellence that gave her exciting projects. Her last luxury hotel in Asia was perfect in many ways, since she knew it was a great place to live, to work and to raise her two children.

Elise fell in love again with an Englishman, and they decided to get married and move to England. Now, she is in the midst of another chapter in her life.

Elise does not focus on what is, but on what can be. For her, life as an opportunity to learn and to grow and to contribute to a better world, which has helped her navigate the many challenges and opportunities she has experienced. She exemplifies the Global Cosmopolitan Mindset in both her openness to and consciousness of diversity across cultures and markets.

Over the years, Elise has offered me the opportunity to look at the complex process of composing a life in circumstances that keep changing and a global context that keeps shifting. She is one of a new breed of individuals that I described in my previous book, *Global Cosmopolitans: The Creative Edge of Difference*.² Global Cosmopolitans are the rapidly expanding population of highly educated, multilingual people who have lived, worked, and studied for extensive periods in different cultures. Extremely talented, they have grown up

in an ever-changing political/economic context and technological reality that has significantly impacted their worldview and skill set. Their backgrounds and their life histories make them particularly suited to working and leading in the global economy. And today, they are not only growing up but also maturing into global leaders with a distinctive mindset that others can learn from.

Global Cosmopolitans are the talented population of highly educated, multilingual people who have lived, worked, and studied for extensive periods in different cultures.

The seeds for this book, *The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset: Lessons from the New Global Leaders*, were sown by people from all over the world who engaged me in similar conversations to those I have had with Elise over the years and told me about their developmental journeys as Global Cosmopolitans.

Whether I was in Buenos Aires or Hong Kong, people were describing the varied but similar experiences of living and working globally. The world of Global Cosmopolitans was immense, yet the distance among the individuals seemed to disappear. Beyond differences based on multiple factors in an individual's personal history and career story, people talked about navigating similar challenges and opportunities, and discovering and creating new life chapters for personal and professional growth over time. Their stories gave me a greater understanding of the complexity of the topic, the concept of Global Cosmopolitans was validated, and my earlier messages were reinforced.

This book expands the circle. It deepens and improves the understanding of what it is like to lead a global life. Whether you are a so-called Millennial³ or mid-life newcomer to Global Cosmopolitanism, an existing Global Cosmopolitan reflecting on what next, or part of an organization trying to develop its responses to an internationally mobile workforce, this guidebook to global living and working offers essential insights.

The stories that I am using to describe the characteristics and skills of the new global leaders are based on individuals already living in and contributing to the creation of this new global reality. Their experiences illustrate the challenges they have encountered and the opportunities they have pursued, as well as the possibilities they have explored as they added new chapters to their lives. In finding the words to describe the life skills that people have learned from living, studying, and working abroad, and in sharing this aspect of their learning curve, I hope I can encourage organizations going global to provide experiences that will prepare their employees to become better leaders in the future. I hope too that I can help individuals develop themselves into leaders with a truly global mindset.

The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset: Lessons from the New Global Leaders proves that globalization is not simply about economics, politics, free trade, or international brands, but about people combining a growth mindset with a global mindset and a creative mindset, choosing to compose a life outside of conventional scripts, and experiencing global citizenship first hand.

What can Global Cosmopolitans teach us about personal development and professional effectiveness? How do their stories provide a map for navigating the challenges and opportunities of a global life? How do people leading change at work continue to drive change in their already very interesting lives? Answering these questions means looking beyond the résumé that typically serves to define an individual's worth and identity. Most people who seek explanations of Global Cosmopolitans' strengths and dynamic resilience are drawn to the outer journeys, such as the development of cultural and linguistic knowledge. But the real learning lies in the invisible inner journey and the uncommon obstacles found along the way.

Three core truths emerge as underpinning the Global Cosmopolitan experience: First the fact that Global Cosmopolitans are an ever-expanding group to be reckoned with; second that developing a Global Cosmopolitan Mindset is essential to survive and thrive in this brave new world; and third that learning from life experiences, both personal and professional, is mandatory for maximization of potential.

Truth 1: The Rise of the Global Cosmopolitan Continues

'Being a Global Cosmopolitan, it's not a question, it's just a part of who we are,'
A Dutch consultant who grew up in a family that lived around the world and is currently working in Australia.

Millions of people are now living truly global lives.⁴ These are the people I have labeled 'Global Cosmopolitans.' And they form one of the fastest growing clubs in the world. Every club has its rules, but the rules for membership of this particular club are changing. No longer identified with an elitist background, its members are united by the common bond of global experience that has significantly changed their lives.

They might be young professionals beginning their global journey with few responsibilities to hold them back. They might be joining the Global Cosmopolitan Club mid-career, uprooting families, and making a dramatic change in their personal and professional lives. Or they might be returnees,

going back to their country of origin but taking their Global Cosmopolitan Mindset with them and applying it with a local perspective.

It is not unusual in many major world business cities to have colleagues or friends with multiple passports and fluency in more than one language. The number of such people is going to increase rapidly as we become ever more mobile: Residing, marrying, and having children in multiple countries over the course of our lives. Despite the rise of nationalism in many parts of the world, today nearly 90 countries allow some form of dual or multiple citizenships than ever before. This is just one indicator that Global Cosmopolitans are on the rise. And, as these people move through their lifecycle and have families, new generations are growing up as Global Cosmopolitans from birth.

But what does living a global life really involve, and what are the implications for individuals, families, and organizations? Are the next generations ready to write new life chapters across different cultural backdrops and ready to create organizations that deal with the new global reality? What are the challenges for CEOs seeking leadership for new models of cross-border organizations and looking to build a workforce that can think and act both globally and locally? Are organizations overlooking potential employees from diverse cultural backgrounds as potential candidates for global training and leadership? How can we prepare people to be the rising stars of our globalized world? How can we benefit from their experience and skill base to create organizations that sustain society?

Today's global, economic, and political landscape is in a state of constant flux. It is against this backdrop that the rise of Global Cosmopolitans and their contribution to the modern world can best be understood.

Truth 2: A Global Cosmopolitan Mindset Is Essential for Twenty-First Century Success

‘What is it that makes me feel so comfortable, sitting in this group of people who have lived and worked all over the world? What is it about the way we think and the ways we use our minds that is different and makes me feel so much a part of this group?’ An American entrepreneur in Hong Kong, discussing the concept and feeling of being at home with other Global Cosmopolitans.

This book provides a framework for understanding the mindset of Global Cosmopolitans. Given the additional complexity of their lives and the resilience that they need to deal with multiple levels of change, how do their

minds work? What is it about the way they think that contributes to their identity as Global Cosmopolitans and, increasingly, as global leaders.

The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset evolved out of an attempt to articulate answers to these questions and to define what such diverse individuals have in common. I concluded that the Global Cosmopolitan Mindset (or GCM) is a hybrid of a Growth Mindset, a Global Mindset, and a Creative Mindset: A combination that helps us understand the motivation, skills, and potential of a new breed of global leaders who will help organizations face the ever-evolving complexities of the twenty-first century.

$$\text{Global Cosmopolitan Mindset} = \\ \text{Growth Mindset} + \text{Global Mindset} + \text{Creative Mindset}$$

Each of these three elements is crucial and challenging. Usually, people begin by describing the opportunity that living a global life offers to grow and develop over time. By definition, this Growth Mindset represents a challenge. Working in a new country is as much about an opportunity to learn as it is about the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge developed previously.

A Global Mindset is defined by the belief that both local and global orientations are needed to make sense of the world. For many people, their understanding of life and work, their attitude to building networks, and their perspective on finding solutions can be based locally. Global Cosmopolitans, on the other hand, can understand a local orientation—and often have to build bridges to it—but are globally minded.

Finding solutions for the challenges that Global Cosmopolitans face—from the mundane to the complex—often requires what I refer to as a Creativity Mindset. While not without its own difficulties, living in one place can provide familiar structures that help people build and sustain lives. Moving away from these known structures means creating new ways of living and an inventive approach to meeting life's needs.

The equation above will be developed in the first part of the book to provide a framework for understanding what people are learning as they face life challenges and plot interesting global trajectories. Some people with a Global Cosmopolitan Mindset have had lives where global moves were central, while others will identify with the mindset through understanding, experiencing, and acting in the world from a limited number of locations.

Presenting descriptions of Global Cosmopolitans in a variety of settings all around the world has given rise to lively discussions. Gathered together,

people who identified in some way as Global Cosmopolitans explained to me how they felt that they were different, and that they often lived in a space in between cultures—and not necessarily the culture they currently lived or worked in. They found it easy to share what they had learned from their global journeys with other Global Cosmopolitans without much explaining, because they had a similar outlook.

Their stories illustrate the attitudes, knowledge, and skills they have developed as a result of their experiences and define a mindset that we all can learn from. Globalization is here to stay. Developing a GCM is essential to survive and thrive in this brave new world.

Truth 3: Learning from Life Is Mandatory for Maximizing Potential

‘This voyage has helped me learn about who I am. It is a process. I am not finished and would not want to be, since a key aspect of who I am is always learning and always growing.’ A managing director who started life in Canada commenting on what defines him.

As we have already seen, an important element of the Global Cosmopolitan Mindset is a Growth Mindset: The belief that it is possible to develop as a person and to improve skills through learning. Listening to Global Cosmopolitan stories over the years, I have been fascinated by the power of the learning experience and the personal resilience that it fosters. When I first wrote about Global Cosmopolitans, I highlighted certain commonalities around the challenges that they faced and the patterns of skills that they developed as a result. Expanding the range of my work to explore different ages and life stages, from Millennials to those facing retirement and beyond, has underscored the importance of continuing to learn from, and reflect on, experience over time.

While each individual has a story, there are certain patterns to the possibilities for learning on a global life journey. Individuals who remain local and prefer to develop their influence from a home base can also be on an exciting learning curve, but what tends to differentiate Global Cosmopolitans is the impact of their experience on their mindset, particularly on the skills that the complexity of their lives requires.

In general, we learn who we are through the challenges we face. Through a process that is often invisible, we convert the obstacles that stand on our path through life into learning opportunities to find our strengths and

change our perceptions of what we are capable of in the future. Because Global Cosmopolitans encounter more challenges than most of us, they also tend to learn more.

The backdrop of a global life is one of exceptional complexity and change, and Global Cosmopolitans often perceive change as an opportunity. Given the multiplicity of changes that they encounter, reflecting on what they need, how they handle major dilemmas, and how they preserve a sense of motivation and excitement about what life has to offer and what they can learn over time becomes increasingly important.

I have attempted to identify a cluster of common challenges that provides a window into the world of this group. These challenges include identity development and being different—and of managing difference for other people.

Ultimately, the lessons that Global Cosmopolitans learn from their ever-shifting experiences contribute not only to their personal development but also to their effectiveness in professional environments, where they are often driving change. While it is not desirable to be formulaic about how to develop a strong personal life, we can all learn from the way Global Cosmopolitans are framing challenges and opportunities. This group offers us all hope that we can forge exciting and meaningful lives and build organizations that are able to meet the needs of an increasingly global and volatile context.

The Importance of Stories⁵

Global Cosmopolitans find that they frequently need to explain who they really are, where they are from, where they have been, what they have learned from the complexity of their lives, what they can do, and what they can learn to do. With experience, they can become highly articulate and create meaningful dialogue with key players in their lives. The most skillful storytellers have learned how to use their self-reflection in a motivating and instructive manner.

The stories of strengths, skills, and attitudes that Global Cosmopolitans use to describe themselves are analogous to those that the best leaders tell. Leadership experts have identified stories as one of the tools that characterize—or facilitate the development of—outstanding managers and entrepreneurs. The process of storytelling also models the importance of a lifetime of learning about who you are and who you can be.⁶

A Geography of Ideas About Globalization

Geographical location does not matter for some people. They rely on news, especially via the Internet, to form their opinions about the world without ever stepping out of their familiar geographical and relational environments. However, for others, there is a growing acceptance that geography can impact people's perspectives on the meaning of globalization and how it might (or might not) affect their lives. Even within the same country, people living in the same economic conditions and listening to the same news can value or reject globalization, depending on where they live.

Living and working with people from very different geographical regions can open the door to different ways of understanding globalization. People who have lived in multiple parts of the world and in varied cultural contexts have experienced the impact of language and culture on how they understand the world and explain it to others. Discussions with Global Cosmopolitans are enriched by their understanding of regional politics and cultural or regional identification on the potential for developing networks, projects and leadership.

They understand that we can no longer predict who someone is and how he or she will react based on assumptions about their identity groups or perceived cultural background alone. They recognize that putting people in categories such as 'Asian' or 'European' can easily miss the long history of differences among people from different nations, and listening to the subtleties of difference within perceived identity groups becomes a very useful skill.

A Life Span Perspective

My first book focused on the younger cohort of Global Cosmopolitans, many of whom were starting out on their global journey with open minds, few ties, and a strong sense of adventure. But since I started studying the phenomenon of Global Cosmopolitans, life span perspectives have shifted.

Life expectancy is increasing. Not everyone wants or is able to retire from their professional responsibilities, and writing new chapters of their lives will become increasingly significant for people as they move through the life cycles. While we always need to meet the more basic human needs, such as health and financial security, rather than focusing on self-actualization, we

are now faced with deciding where to go and what to do next at an age when the choices of previous generations were limited. The fortunate ones will have the health, resources, and motivation to find new directions. Recognition of this reality and finding new ways to define new stages is both daunting and exciting.

The issue of what changes over time as we compose our lives offers a fascinating lens through which to examine how people address major questions and decision points. Using a life-development perspective, this book highlights the movement over time from learning to articulate, develop, and share decision-making skills to understanding how they can be used to create new projects, whether career- or life-related. In particular, this whole-life approach offers a fresh angle on the skills that people need to work globally. The stories in this book reveal the existence of a group of people taking a new kind of responsibility for what is possible and making it happen. This circle is rapidly expanding, and societies, organizations, and individuals are starting to break out of traditional viewpoints of what a life should look like. When the mindsets open up, so do the possibilities.

In *The Global Cosmopolitan Mindset*, I have tried to capture stories that show how people maintain holding onto a sense of who they are, while also allowing room for who they can be as a result of certain choices and experiences. Their decisions often turn out to be based on different ways of seeing themselves in relation to people, career, and environment at different stages in their lives. Life-stage realities include: committing to relationships, children, success, or aging parents; confronting ill health; and needing a greater sense of purpose or meaning. There are inevitably bumps along the road that people need to address. How they do this can have significant implications for their lives. What might have been a distant concern at one stage can become a painful or joyful reality at another.

What becomes apparent, through having people tell their stories, is that career identity, while ever important, is only one aspect of a person. People interviewed at different life stages increasingly emphasize the importance of the whole person when looking at trying to enjoy a relatively successful life.

Some questions are particular to different ages. For instance, do Millennials—and eventually Generation Z—want to join the Global Cosmopolitan Club? What is different about today's worldwide population of young people and the perspectives that they have about their voyage through life, compared to their parents and grandparents? Are they looking at global options in the same way as previous generations?

Joining the Global Cosmopolitan Club mid-career raises other questions around opportunities, challenges, professional choices, and the potential impact on families. And those who choose to remain in one place for an extended period of time, or to return home, must question whether this means losing club ‘membership’ or indeed the skills and the mindset that went with being a Global Cosmopolitan. Will they now be a ‘local cosmopolitan,’ or can they still have a global outlook?

Certain Characteristics Hold True Across the Life Stages and Generations

As the world continues to change, and the controversies and conflicts around those changes continue to evolve, every generation will have its perspective on being a Global Cosmopolitan.⁷ However, along the age continuum, certain characteristics of Global Cosmopolitans hold true:

- They consider change as normal, positive, and a source of opportunity;
- As outsiders to any one set of fixed cultural rules, they rely on creative thinking and adaptation to confront new situations;
- They are able to reinvent themselves and experiment with new identities as they move into new settings;
- They become experts at the subtle and emotional aspects of transition;
- They easily learn and use new ways of thinking; and
- They have learned how to take risks that lead to self-efficacy.

Lessons from the New Global Leaders

This book builds on the concept of Global Cosmopolitans and follows their experiences over time. It is designed to help readers understand this complex, fast-growing, and influential group as they compose their lives in a changing world. It offers the reader an opportunity to understand how Global Cosmopolitans learn from their both personal and professional experiences, and how this contributes to their ability to lead in the emerging global environment with reflective knowledge—using their difference to make a difference.

Full of personal stories from around the world (but with names and certain details changed to protect identities), the book explains how Global Cosmopolitans develop the skills and knowledge that make them so