

Welcome to the second week of our class on shaping the future of work. We got off to a great start last week with lots of good discussions on the future of work, on your hopes, your aspirations. A lot of discussion about the future of technology and how it's going to affect work and some of the worries that many of you have about this. So we'll continue these discussions we'll go into more depth on technology and work down the way in about the fourth week of class.

But to give you a preview, I posted a new note on the discussion board about a big new MIT project on the future of the technology in textiles, of all industries. We are about to start a big project to see if we can put some of the ideas of this course to work in practice, where we shape the future of the textile and fabric industry with high technology jobs, hopefully, good quality jobs, with new training programs. So take a look at that post. See if you have thoughts on how we can shape the future of work in that particular sector.

But this week, we'll do three things. First, the videos that are posted for this week will give you a bit of a history of how the social contract played out and worked well in the United States and, in fact, in some other countries around the world in the past. We do this not to try to repeat history but to spring forward on the basis of a good understanding of where we've come from and what we need to do to build a new social contract-- a good foundation for building a new social contract in the future.

Second, this week we're going to introduce some new regional discussion facilitators. Our MBAs from the class I'm teaching here on campus are from all over the world. From China, from South Asia, from Africa, from northern Europe, from Brazil. They will host discussions about how the issues we're talking about play out in your regions of the world, and we ask those of you who are from those areas to join that conversation.

We'll even have some new experts from Australia. Some colleagues of mine in the universities over there who study and work on these issues. So I think we'll have a full body discussion about how the changing nature of work is playing out in different parts of our planet.

To get things started on your personal career process, this week, there's an assignment that will take you step by step through a process of identifying the kinds of issues that you're interested in, you have some aptitude toward, and then the kind of educational levels that are available to get access to the jobs in fields of interest to you. So get started by going to the assignment page, start that process. It'll carry through over the next several weeks, and it's accompanied by several videos around the role of education, it's changing role in lifelong learning, and a special video by our colleague, Lee Dyer, who talks about the skills and competencies needed for the jobs of the future.

So that's what we'll do this week. But before we finish here, let's take a look at what you told us last week about your goals and your aspirations for work. Here's the results of the poll that you filled in about your top priority for your work and your career. Notice that the top item comes out to be having a good work life balance, followed very closely by having a big impact on problems that are important to you and to society. And then in third place but not too far behind is the desire to have a good living from your work experiences.

These are the same top three items that your colleagues last year indicated were their top priorities, although this year, the work life balance became a little bit higher in the ranking. So it's very clear that you want many things out of your jobs and your careers. Unlike your parents, as many of you told us who focused over here on earning a good living and having a stable job, you want to be able to both have a big impact on work. You want to have a good work life balance so you can have a good opportunity to raise your children and be a good spouse at home or a partner at home and also earn a good living.

So let's focus on how we do that. Let me give you a couple of examples of the rich way in which you embodied these rankings in the range of comments in the exercise around comparing your goals with those of your parents. This one, I think, captures the essence of what the poll told us. As one of you said, "I dream of a well-balanced work family environment, where I can develop my skills put them to service for my community, and as well get a wage that allows me to have a decent life so that I can provide for my family and my offspring." Or this one, "My dream is to change the world by contributing something meaningful to it. While maintaining a balanced lifestyle, I consider myself a global citizen."

This is something that a number of you mentioned. That you wanted to work and live in a culturally diverse yet an integrated workplace and lifestyle, and that you want to push your children to be curious about their world and to push the limits of what they can do as they grow up. Here's another one that says, particularly about young millennials and their interest in working with the digital revolution. "My dream is to be part of the digital revolution driven by millennials working at innovative companies," and "to make the world a better place to live and work." That theme comes through again. And then finally, "I want to earn a living wage and not have to miss my children growing up."

This is the world of work that you aspire to. This is the world of work that we have to create moving forward. So let's get on with the task. This week, we'll focus on your responsibilities to make sure that you are prepared to have the right educational levels to achieve your goals and your aspirations, and then we'll also look at what made the world of work more effective in sometimes in the past in our countries so that we can spring forward to think about how we build a new foundation for the future of work.