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# Aaron Bare

STRATEGIC INNOVATION FACILITATOR, FUTURIST, STORYTELLER, AND AUTHOR

## FACILITATING SUCCESS

April 2023







COVER STORY

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## FACILITATING SUCCESS

*Aaron Bare is a leading strategic facilitator (IAF Endorsed Facilitator - top 1%), futurist, storyteller, and author of a Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and #1 Amazon Bestselling book, "Exponential Theory, the Power of Thinking Big." Aaron's career has made him the sage on the stage and the guide on the side to some of the top exponential thinkers. He is a results-focused conscious leader that understands how to create a high-performing organization, deliver a message to the masses, and cultivate trust to solve any issue, in any room, anywhere, anytime.*

*Through his facilitation work, Aaron has generated over \$4 billion in documented results for his corporate clients and generational impact with his community facilitation. Aaron has facilitated corporate strategy and innovation at NASA, Stanford, MIT Media Lab, Daimler, Coca-Cola, Google, Facebook, Adobe, Amazon, and Belfius Bank. He works directly in the Board Room and throughout the Executive ranks, putting on Innovation Workshops, Leadership Retreats, and Strategic Planning Sessions.*

*Aaron co-created the Bridge Forum in his community facilitation initiatives, a national community-focused forum bridging the gap between police and the communities they serve. Through this, Aaron has helped facilitate the conversation to help both sides create new meaning and build a metaphorical bridge and process to communicate. Beyond the Bridge Forum, Aaron continues to impact the world with a massive transformative purpose of creating one million exponential leaders. To do this, Aaron has also led facilitations for Oxford Leadership, Hyper Island, WDHB, Wizard Academy, Flow Research Collective, Conscious Capitalism, and Kaos Pilot.*

*In addition to his recognition as one of the top facilitators in the world, Aaron is a serial entrepreneur and company builder. He's launched and sold 12 companies, three scalable educational programs (each impacting over one million people), three non-profits, and three accelerators. He is also a venture partner and scout at a venture capital firm and a venture studio. Aaron started his career as a strategist turned full-stack developer at Accenture, where he fostered his standards of excellence and deep strategic and technical knowledge.*

*Aaron Bare holds an MBA in Global Management from Thunderbird School of Global Management, an MA in International Studies from Indiana University, and a BS (Honors) in Business from Indiana Institute of Technology. He has two kids (Bali + Maverick) who drive him to improve the world, and he makes his home in Scottsdale, Arizona.*

*In a conversation with CXO Magazine, Aron talks about his career, his role as a strategic facilitator, his book Exponential Theory: The Power of Thinking Big, and much more.*



**How has your life experience made you the leader you are today? Tell us about your career so far.**

I'm Aaron Bare, the author of the Wall Street Journal and USA Today Bestseller Exponential Theory and the creator of the XMBA: The Last Course You'll Ever Need to Take. My passion is to help the world think bigger with my book

Exponential Theory and the XMBA. I help leaders create eXponential Mindsets Beliefs and Attitudes. We have created a program combining modern neuroscience and ancient philosophy. We're currently enrolling in the XMBA.

Some of my work to make the world thinks bigger has been through facilitating strategic discussions on innovation and leadership at

some of the biggest companies in the world, including Coca-Cola, Daimler, and Belfius Bank, the national bank of Belgium.

With this experience, I wrote my book, Exponential Theory: The Power of Thinking Big. This book outlines how we can all think and grow exponentially on a personal, professional, and organizational level. The XMBA is built to

grow our mindsets, think bigger, and transform ourselves and the world.

I've always been fascinated with building things, and when I got older, I fell in love with the computer's power and the ability to make stuff digitally. At Accenture, I was able to code the first website for Culligan and build the CRM for Walgreens. From there, I spent most of my



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career working on digital projects and launching exponential digital companies.

**In today’s market scenarios, what is exactly the role of a strategic facilitator? How do you help organizations to be successful and future-proof?**

While I became a serial entrepreneur after I left Accenture, my passion for helping others think bigger led to my present as a facilitator and a storyteller. Some of the companies I have facilitated strategic innovation discussions. Ultimately, I apply the principles behind Exponential Theory and the XMBA to help their teams find solutions to the most complex problems facing their businesses. I’ve built



XMBA to be a scalable learning management platform for onboarding and for high-performance leadership for companies from startups to Global 100 companies.

**As a change agent, what challenges do you face while working with the most powerful people on the planet?**

I’m grateful when I sit back and reflect on some of the people asking me to help them and what

they want me to help them with. My work is very meaningful and purposeful. I take my direct contact with CEOs of global 100 companies to some of the most exponential startups very seriously. Mostly, I help those paralyzed by complexity understand the unintended consequences behind every decision or indecision.

From easing leadership to making multi-billion-dollar decisions to helping CEOs overcome childhood trauma, I do whatever it takes to ensure



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a better future for all stakeholders. This is what being a Change Agent is all about - stepping into tough conversations.

**How do you convince business leaders to make the most difficult, confounding, and courageous decisions they need to change for the better?**

The great part about my role is that leaders have the answer to their own problems; they need

somebody outside to ask the right questions to make them step back, so they can see the solutions for themselves. I help them do that with a few of my mental models in Exponential Theory, like the Rhodium Rule and Mars Shots. "Mars Shots" encourages leaders to set unfathomable goals. The Rhodium Rule argues that future leaders must consider the entire ecosystem every time they make a decision. In the future, it's not enough for just



I am living a self-fulfilling prophecy creating exponential leaders whenever I facilitate, speak, coach, advise, or get someone to read my book. I'm in a good place to make an exponential impact



shareholders to win. Leaders in the future will have to consider all stakeholders – employees, suppliers, consumers, and the planet to win.

**What differentiates facilitation from training? Take us through the process of customizing facilitation programs for each client.**

Facilitation is what improv is to comedy. It's taking what the room gives you and crafting a lesson through the inputs and stories of everyone

in the room. It's asking the right questions and bringing the message from the group, not lecturing or presenting a PowerPoint.

**How do you structure the contents of a coaching program? What methodologies do you employ as a mentor?**

Our XMBA is facilitated. We have some lessons to share knowledge, yet we bring the group together to learn through a facilitated conversation. We assign everyone mentors and







My book took 15 years of research, over 500 companies, 100 countries, all 50 States, and 1,200 pages of notes to start and then 100's of iterations to refine the message to something I wanted to share

buddies to create unique ways to engage with new material and test your wisdom through continual practice and teaching others.

**Describe your most successful coaching/facilitating initiative. How do you know if your facilitation was successful?**

I know that I resonate with somebody when I meet them, and they immediately turn around and plug me into the most important parts of their network. I am living a self-fulfilling prophecy creating exponential leaders whenever I facilitate, speak,

coach, advise, or get someone to read my book. I'm in a good place to make an exponential impact.

**What inspired you to write the book, "Exponential Theory"?**

I've been working on Exponential Theory: The Power of Thinking Big for over fifteen years! I've always been a storyteller, and it was natural for me to want to create something that would help others think bigger. I'm on a mission to impact as many people as possible with the stories, mindsets,

beliefs, and attitudes outlined in the book. The XMBA Massive Transformative Purpose is to help 1,000,000 think exponentially. #1mxl – 1 million exponential leaders.

**Can you share something about the book that isn't in the blurb? What do you hope your readers take away from the book, Exponential Theory?**

Thrivability is a term I coined to describe a new mental model for building a future in which we







At X3 Capital, we believe that technology can solve some of the world's biggest challenges, and we invest in companies that positively impact people and the planet

all thrive. The idea behind thrivability is that we must go beyond survivability, maintainability, and sustainability, and strive to create a thriving world, not just survive. Thriving is helping everyone around you find their passion and purpose. It's making every room you walk into better and growing the mindset. The leaders of my organization's only goal is to help people thrive, people first. Second, no impact on the planet, zero. We must think bigger and always help others think bigger about their purpose.

Thrivability is about creating an abundant, resilient, and regenerative future. It's about designing systems, products, and services that meet our basic needs and support our growth, well-being, and happiness. Thrivability is about creating a world where everyone has the opportunity to flourish and reach their full potential.

Leaders today must embrace the concept of thrivability and work towards creating a future that is not just sustainable but truly thriving. This requires a shift in mindset from focusing on minimizing harm to maximizing positive impact.

By embracing thrivability, leaders can create a better future for everyone and ensure that the world we build is abundant, resilient, anti-fragile, and regenerative.

**What is the most challenging part about writing for you? What is your work schedule like when you are writing?**

Writing is a natural way to work out my thoughts, continually refining my point of view and simplifying complex things. My book took 15 years of research, over 500 companies, 100 countries, all 50 States, and 1,200 pages of notes to start and then 100's of iterations to refine the message to something I wanted to share. I'm proud of the output and clarity of my thinking, yet once published, I already see how to say it even better. Continuous iteration is part of learning today, and writing is no different. With ChatGPT, knowledge is abundant, yet refining that within your mindset, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences will bring real wisdom to the world.







**Are you working on anything you would like to share with your readers?**

The XMBA is my magnum opus and stands for eXponential Mindset, Beliefs, and Attitudes. It is a talent and leadership accelerator that I created to help leaders reach their full potential. The XMBA is a course, habitual framework, and learning community that gives the exponential mindset and provides them with the tools and techniques they need to succeed in today's rapidly changing world.

The XMBA is designed to help leaders develop the skills and attitudes to embrace change, take calculated risks, and think big. It covers topics such as exponential thinking, innovation, and leadership and provides participants with a comprehensive understanding of applying these concepts in their personal and professional lives.

I've also started X3 Capital. X3 Capital is a venture studio that invests in sustainable exponential AI and web3 solutions. As the Managing Director, I lead the investment strategy and work closely with our portfolio companies to help them achieve their full potential. At X3 Capital, we believe that technology can solve some of the world's biggest challenges, and we invest in companies that positively impact people and the planet.

The XMBA is a key asset to X3 Capital as we source talent and leaders for ventures in our portfolio. It also works inside enterprises, where it can be used to help entire teams, such as a sales team, reach their full potential. Additionally, the XMBA is available to individuals who can use it to develop their leadership skills and achieve their personal and professional goals.



I am writing a second book around the XMBA and how people can practice Exponential Theory. The goal is to help 1 million people get to an exponential mindset

**Tell us a little bit about your education and life as a student. What lessons have you learned in your childhood/college days that helped you become the leader you are today?**

I continually put myself outside my comfort zone. Traveling is a big part of thinking bigger for me. Seeing the world from others' point of view provides depth and wisdom you just cannot read. As a voracious reader, it's great when others share emotions and feelings they experience to start to paint new pictures of knowledge and learning. All of this is beyond the comfort and fear zones and into learning and growth zones.

**What does your typical working day look like? How do you handle pressure, stay calm all day, and unplug from work?**

I'd describe myself as an educated minimalist. Every day I choose to be the hero of my own journey. I'm deliberate with how I use my time. A day in my life consists of eating a healthy breakfast with friends and colleagues after 4 hours of deep work, religiously working out at F45, and then recovering in a cold plunge and then the sauna on the roof of my building. I then have another 4-hours of deep work before hosting a dinner party or attending a charity event. I'm a minimalist just by how I typically leave my home – with just





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my iPhone. I surround myself with minimal distractions to find flow in everything I set my mind to. Through these educated minimalist character traits, the simplicity focuses me on the long-term, and I complete more every day by noon than most accomplish in a week.

**As a technologist, futurist and bestselling author, what change do you want to bring into people's lives to help their families and communities?**

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**Do you have any thoughts you would like to share about being a leader or advice for individuals looking for a successful life?**

The mindset is the one key factor in every successful leader. Helping leaders be in the moment, listen, channel their thoughts, stop overthinking, make decisions, create shared visions, and execute a massive transformative purpose that others can get behind is key to all the successful exponential leaders I have researched.

**What projects or goals are you working on or leading currently?**

I am leading global digital transformation projects, investing in Web3 and AI Sustainability, and my massive transformative purpose is 1 million exponential leaders. I have a lot to be thankful for, and honored to share my wisdom with those seeking to step into their leadership. ■