

GLOBAL BOOK REVIEW

FROM GLOOM TO BOOM: BUILDING RESILIENCE

BY CLAIRE WYSZYNSKI .

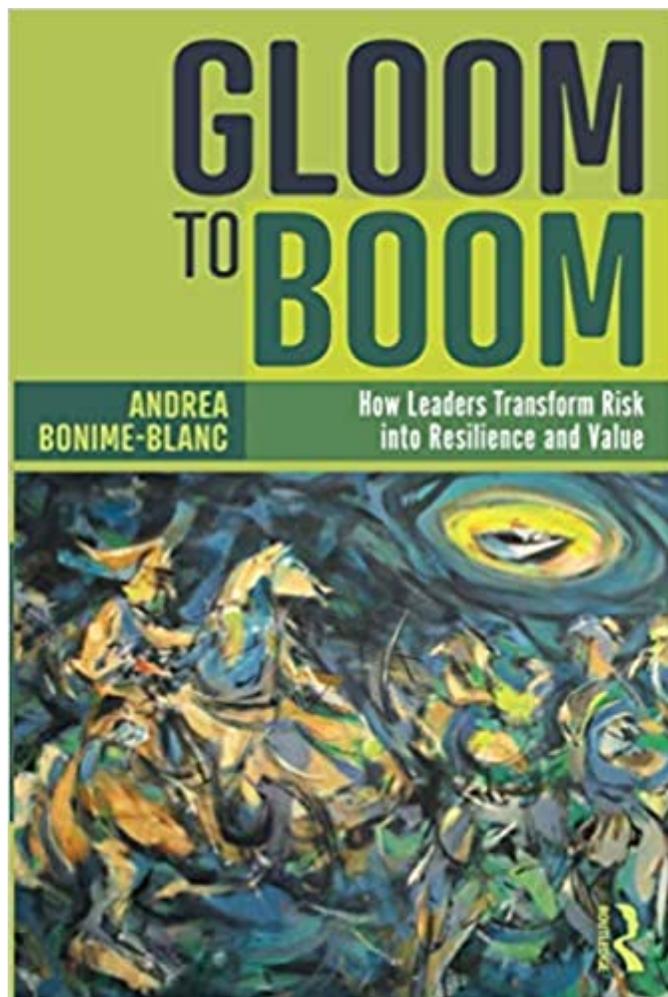


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Gloom to Boom: How Leaders Transform Risk into Resilience and Value | By Andrea Bonime-Blanc | Routledge.

2020 has presented some of the greatest challenges in modern history. Political populism and the advent of a “post-truth” era paired with digital disinformation leaves individuals in developed democracies questioning the existence of objective truth. The COVID-19 pandemic is challenging leaders at all levels—from public health representatives to teachers and local business owners—to learn to live with the coronavirus and to cope with the associated risks.



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In the United States, the poor response to the pandemic coupled with the prevalence of police brutality against Black Americans has disillusioned citizens and onlookers alike about American leadership. Further complicating matters are environmental, social, governance, and technology (ESGT) issues, including climate change and human rights violations, that continue to plague the globe. Glancing at the year’s significant headlines, it’s easy to frame 2020 as bleak and hopeless.

Andrea Bonime-Blanc, author of *“Gloom to Boom: How Leaders Transform Risk into Resilience and Value”* will not allow these failures to define the future. In her book, Bonime-Blanc argues that every setback is an opportunity to strengthen an organization (or country) when tackled with ethics-guided leadership. Published in 2019, *Gloom to Boom’s* strategies for implementing values-based leadership in organizations and responding to global crises could not be more pertinent today. At the time of writing, the author described 2019 as “turbulent times” and the “fastest period of change” that mankind has ever experienced. Undoubtedly, addressing the global pandemic and ESGT issues in 2020 will require

the strong moral leadership Bonime-Blanc champions, to rekindle individual trust in institutions.

Gloom to Boom navigates organizations’ responses to the global problems 2019 posed with clear road-mapping. The broad range of evidence, spanning the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the author’s own anecdotes about growing up under an authoritarian leader, and recent corporate failures in the auto industry, support the book’s thesis that modern problems require multidisciplinary approaches to leadership challenges.

Bonime-Blanc’s analysis of various companies’ successes and scandals hinge on the idea that values create value. Corrupt organizations, the author writes, operate on the misconception that to be good is to sacrifice potential profits. In many cases, companies willing to innovate to answer a demand for ethical practices can

create new products and plans that benefit the organization more in the long-term. Among others, Bonime-Blanc identifies the skincare company L'Oréal as one organization that profited from striving to be more moral. After receiving criticism that its products only accommodated light-skinned people, the company not only expanded its offerings of skincare products but also committed to hiring leaders of different genders, ages, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds. By committing to inclusiveness, L'Oréal both expanded the potential audience for its products and improved the culture of its own organization.

Set against the evils of money laundering, corruption, and crime, examples of change that are positive and profitable may seem idealistic, or even utopian. What makes Bonime-Blanc's guidebook effective is her acknowledgement that our world is imperfect, even rife with these temptations, and her willingness to tackle solutions regardless. Gloom to Boom offers actionable advice for uncomfortable situations, including CEO impropriety and safeguarding employee safety during natural disasters. From the beginning, this book accepts that megatrends in international relations will impact the output of organizations.

The most worrisome of these complications, what Bonime-Blanc describes as the rise of a "purple technoswan," are so advanced that we have not yet identified them. As a result, the path from "gloom" to "boom" is a non-linear one, complicated by the circumstances of the time. Many businesses exist on a spectrum between corrupt and transformational. But even companies that suffer from an imperfect image can become more responsible and recover by defining their values, promoting an open company culture, engaging in evaluations, practicing resilience, and creating plans that mitigate risks.

The author concludes by encouraging readers to pursue their "Ikigai"—a Japanese word for purpose. Similar to the Hedgehog Concept created by business researcher Jim Collins, Bonime-Blanc describes finding ikigai as discovering the intersection between passion and career. Ultimately, Gloom to Boom's wealth of resources point toward self-reflection and organizational awareness: if leaders can recall what values initially inspired their work, perhaps they can maintain the perspective to act morally, even when the alternative seems easier.

About *Claire Wyszynski* :

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The views presented in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the views of any other organization.