

# Elon Musk & the Star Trek Future

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Image 1: Generated with midjourneyai.ai.

*“You want to wake up in the morning and think the future is going to be great - and that’s what being a spacefaring civilization is all about. It’s about believing in the future and thinking that the future will be better than the past. And I can’t think of anything more exciting than going out there and being among the stars.” -Elon Musk<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> SpaceX. (n.d.). SpaceX. <https://www.spacex.com/mission/>

Elon Musk deserves to be recognized as a Leadership role model because his transformative and authentic style is realizing the Star Trek future. In the 1960's, Gene Roddenberry could only imagine a technologically driven, post-scarcity future. The Star Trek world is one where humanity resolved superficial conflict in favor of personal development and the advancement of the collective culture into the cosmos. There is no limit to that vision of the future. The franchise still captures imaginations 60 years later. However, where popular culture wins hearts and minds, Elon Musk is making that world a reality.



Image 2: Generated with midjourneyai.ai.

The leadership traits of 'curiosity' and 'passion' certainly played a role when Musk founded Space X in 2002. After decades of publicly funded space programs, Space X has aimed at the development of a viable business case for humanity to become a space fairing civilization. On the surface, space travel is an obvious realization of the Star Trek future. A more subtle parallel can be found of the Space X mission statement (above), which features a simple quote by Musk about being optimistic for the future. Star Trek continues to be a powerful pop culture artifact because it depicts good and exciting outcomes for the human race. Musk is certainly a leadership role model for pursuing his passion and actualizing the vision of a bright future for humanity.



Image 3: Generated with midjourneyai.ai.

Integrity is another leadership trait displayed by Musk that is worthy of emulation. In 2004, Musk was one of the initial investors in Tesla motors. He later became CEO. The development of electric vehicle (EV) technology and its popularization by Tesla is arguably one of the most effective efforts to move towards the Star Trek vision of an ecologically sustainable utopia. Tesla (the company) is an example of Musk's integrity because he has stayed true to his values of technological innovation over the sole pursuit of profit. Moreover, the success of EVs has been at odds with the established automotive and petrochemical industries. It takes great integrity for a leader to challenge the status quo. Integrity is a common theme in the Star Trek world. The stories typically revolve around choosing morality over convenience. That type of choice requires courage. Any leader blazing the trail towards innovation, against powerful opposition, is worthy of being a role model.



Image 4: Generated with midjourneyai.ai.

Finally, Musk's transformational leadership style is shaping a culture of diverse, independent leaders. Musk's vision for humanity is aiming for the stars. Leadership goals of that magnitude require buy-in from vast groups of followers who are willing to participate in the shared vision for the future. This level of leadership might be described as cultural trend setting. Musk's acquisition of the 'X' social media app (formerly Twitter) demonstrated his willingness to participate in the direction of popular culture. Engagement with the public through social media is a modern and growing leadership approach. In the past, pop culture audiences were limited to the consumption of content from a small number of television or radio stations. The modern content bandwidth, available through social media, is overflowing with creators, followers and everything in between. Pop culture in 2024, includes everyone. All participants in a thriving society are encouraged to share and debate their perspectives – the best ideas rise to the top. Enthusiastic exchange of experiences is the essence of the Star Trek world. That fictional universe includes a 'Federation' of cultures and civilizations which celebrate each other's variety. The characters in Star Trek are themselves accomplished, diverse, level 5 leaders. The citizens of that imaginary world selflessly collaborate to achieve whatever enterprise they choose to pursue. Musk's foray into social media is creating and protecting the forum for the mass exchange of ideas. A culture that celebrates the free sharing of ideas needs a place for its people to communicate. A society of individuals who are transformed into active participants and leaders is needed to realize the optimistic dream depicted in Star Trek.

There is no leader in 2024 more worthy of role-model status than Elon Musk. His leadership traits are ambitious and effective. Musk's quality as a leader will be increasingly evident as his actions materialize the imaginings of the past into the realities of the future.



Image 5: Generated with midjourneyai.ai.