

Why the Hell Do We Have to Choose Sides All the Time?

The High Cost of Either/Or Thinking—and How to Reclaim the Power of the Middle



“Whose Side Are You On?”

You’ve probably felt it. That unspoken pressure to pick a side. Whether it’s politics, climate change, work culture, or even how you take your fucking coffee—there’s this growing expectation that you need to plant your flag, draw a line in the sand, and commit.

You're either pro-this or anti-that. You're either red or blue, woke or asleep, corporate or anti-capitalist, vegan or barbecue-pitmaster-from-Texas. And God forbid you say, "Well, it's complicated..."

When did nuance become treason?

The False Comfort of Extremes

Here's the ugly truth: binary thinking feels good. It's clean. It's comforting. It reduces the chaos of reality into a simple fight—us vs. them. And when you're scared, angry, or just plain overwhelmed, that simplicity becomes seductive.

But seductive doesn't mean useful.

When we reduce everything to black or white, we lose color. We erase the middle—the space where growth, creativity, and real fucking progress live. And we start demonizing people instead of debating ideas.

Want proof? Look at any comment section.

7 Powerful Reasons Why Balance Beats Extremism Every Time

1. Most People Already Live in the Gray

Let's be honest, very few of us are living pure ideological lives.

The eco-activist who flies cross-country to climate conferences.

The libertarian who still wants roads, clean water, and public libraries.

The entrepreneur who loves capitalism but thinks healthcare shouldn't bankrupt people.

We're walking contradictions. And that's not a weakness. That's being human.

2. Complex Problems Need Complex Thinking

Climate change isn't just "ban oil" or "drill, baby, drill." It's about redesigning systems. Rethinking how we consume, as Diana Ivanova explains in her TEDx talk on the carbon footprint of consumption. It's not "buy nothing" or "shop 'til you drop." It's shifting our mindset to think systemically—acknowledging that everything is connected and every solution has ripple effects.

3. Progress Lives in the Tension

Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X had wildly different methods—but both were necessary. Charismatic leadership shows us that leaders move people not by yelling louder, but by resonating deeper.

We need the disruptors and the bridge-builders. The rebels and the reformers. It's not about choosing between them, it's about learning from both.

4. Echo Chambers Are Emotional Junk Food

Algorithms are designed to feed us what we already believe. And it feels damn good to hear we're "right" all the time.

But like junk food, it weakens us over time. It dulls our curiosity. It makes us emotionally flabby. Soon we're not thinking—we're just reacting.

Want mental strength? Step outside your bubble. Talk to someone you disagree with and actually listen. Don't go in to win. Go in to understand.

5. Identity Is Not a Fucking Brand

In today's world, it's trendy to treat your beliefs like merch.

We post, we hashtag, we build a personal brand around “our side.” But the second you question that brand—or admit you're evolving—you risk being “canceled,” unfollowed, or labeled a traitor.

That's not growth. That's cult behavior with better fonts.

Humans evolve. Your 22-year-old self probably had some hot takes that make you cringe now. That's normal. That's healthy. The people who never change? They're the dangerous ones.

6. Servant Leadership Starts with Humility

Servant leadership, as Robert Greenleaf argued, requires acceptance, empathy, and foresight. And here's the kicker: you can't do any of those things if you've already decided you're right 100% of the time.

Real leaders know they don't have all the answers. They create space for others to speak—even if it challenges them. Especially then.

7. Extremes Break Shit. Balance Builds It.

Yeah, extremes can spark change. But sustainable progress? That's built in the messy middle.

It's built by people willing to wrestle with contradictions, to sit in discomfort, to have conversations that don't fit neatly into a tweet.

It's built by people who choose dialogue over dogma. Curiosity over certainty. Connection over condemnation.

So? Embrace the Third Option

You don't have to choose between being silent or being outraged. Between being "for" or "against." Between right or left, red or blue, woke or asleep.

There's a third option: be awake.

Be awake enough to notice when you're falling into either/or traps.

Be awake enough to ask, "What if both are true?"

Be awake enough to see the humanity in someone you disagree with—and still hold them accountable.

Because that's where real shit happens. Not on the fringes. Not in the outrage. But in the slow, gritty, complicated work of building bridges where others want to build walls.

Let's Bring Back the Art of the Conversation

We don't need more enemies. We need more people willing to say, "Tell me more."

We don't need louder opinions. We need deeper questions.

We don't need to pick sides. We need to build sides that don't exist yet.

So the next time someone says, "Whose side are you on?"—don't just answer. Challenge the question.

Because maybe the real power isn't in choosing a side.

Maybe it's in choosing each other.

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