

THE CULTURE COMPASS

Orienting for Profit

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HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This has been written to be a readable expansive exploration. As such topics will be explained in writing, and then examples will highlight some innovations or elements that we believe demonstrate shifts in this axis.

The articles, sites and companies will **be linked from the images**, so you can dive deeper into any topic.

We aren't going to cover every axis, nor is this exhaustive, it's an attempt to look at some interesting things that we believe indicate movements in culture and business opportunities. We'll be releasing a new section each week in April. We'd love to hear what you think, over on Slack.

Rock ON.



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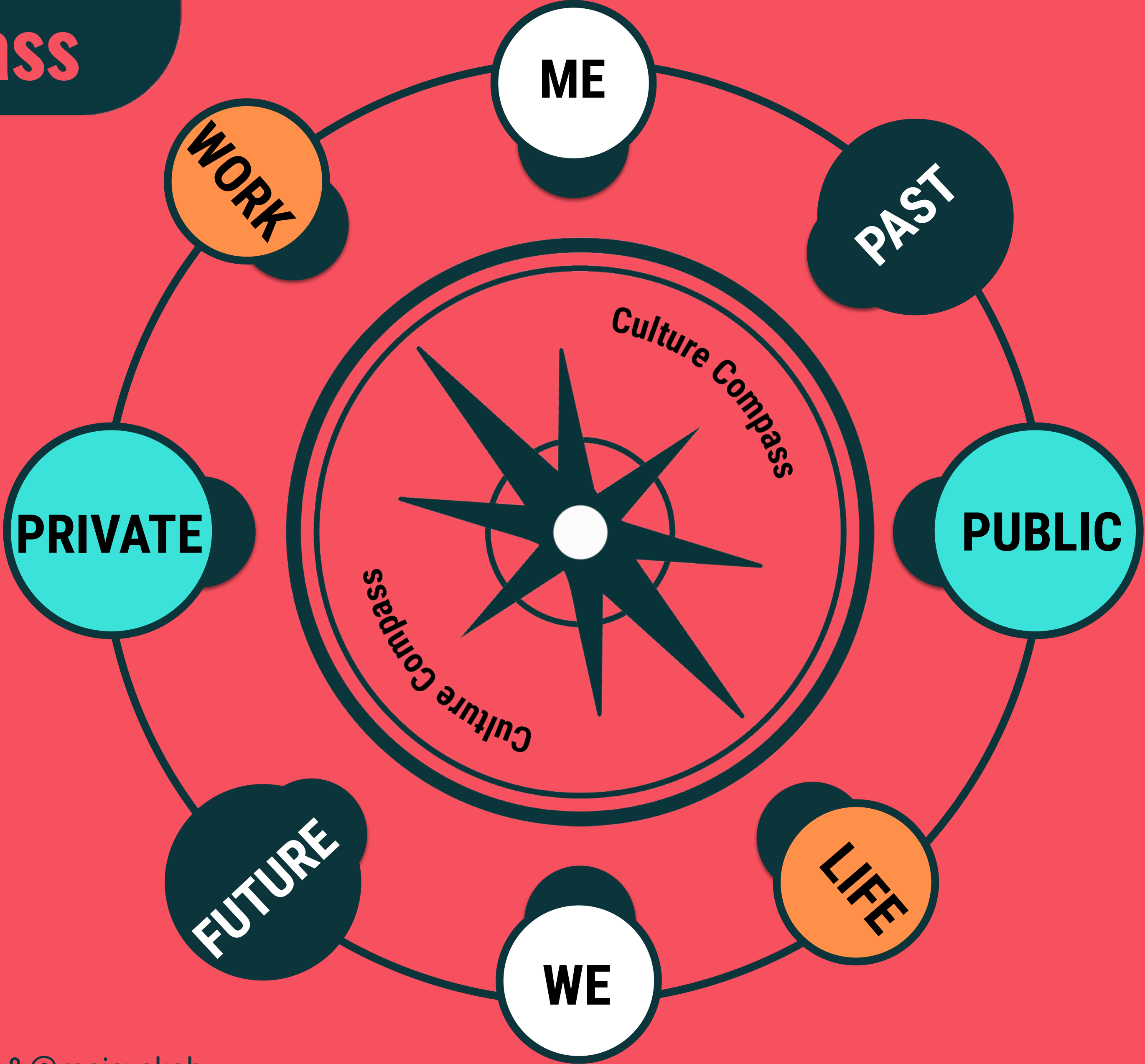
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Culture Compass



WHAT IS THE CULTURE COMPASS?

The Culture Compass is a navigation device for understanding and predicting shifts in culture.

Across any number of vectors, culture swings like a pendulum, gaining momentum in one direction before reaching an apogee, only to swing back with ever greater force in the opposite direction. Even before cultures around the world reached the levels of polarization we currently see, things would move in one direction and then swing backwards, sometimes violently.

At the most macro, political level, it's hard not to have noticed how in the USA having its first black president seemed to lead to a lot of racism and the president that followed. In part, this is simply repackaging the idea of mainstream and counter-culture, which by definition exist in counterpoint to each other, shifting over time as some things that are fringe counter-culture get absorbed into the mainstream and monetized and so on.



CORE CONCEPT: THE PENDULUM EFFECT

1 Also called pendulum law. *Physics*. A law, discovered by Galileo in 1602 that describes the regular, swinging motion of a pendulum by the action of gravity and acquired momentum

2 the theory holding that trends in culture, politics, etc. tend to swing back and forth between the opposite extremes



FURTHER READING on CULTURAL PENDULA

Newton's law of cultural change

Why do cultural movements seem to move in the equal and opposite direction to the movements which preceded them? And how can that energy be harnessed accordingly?



Gavin May Oct 11, 2016 · 10 min read



<https://medium.com/@gavinmay/newtons-law-of-cultural-change-4a7eadd10659>

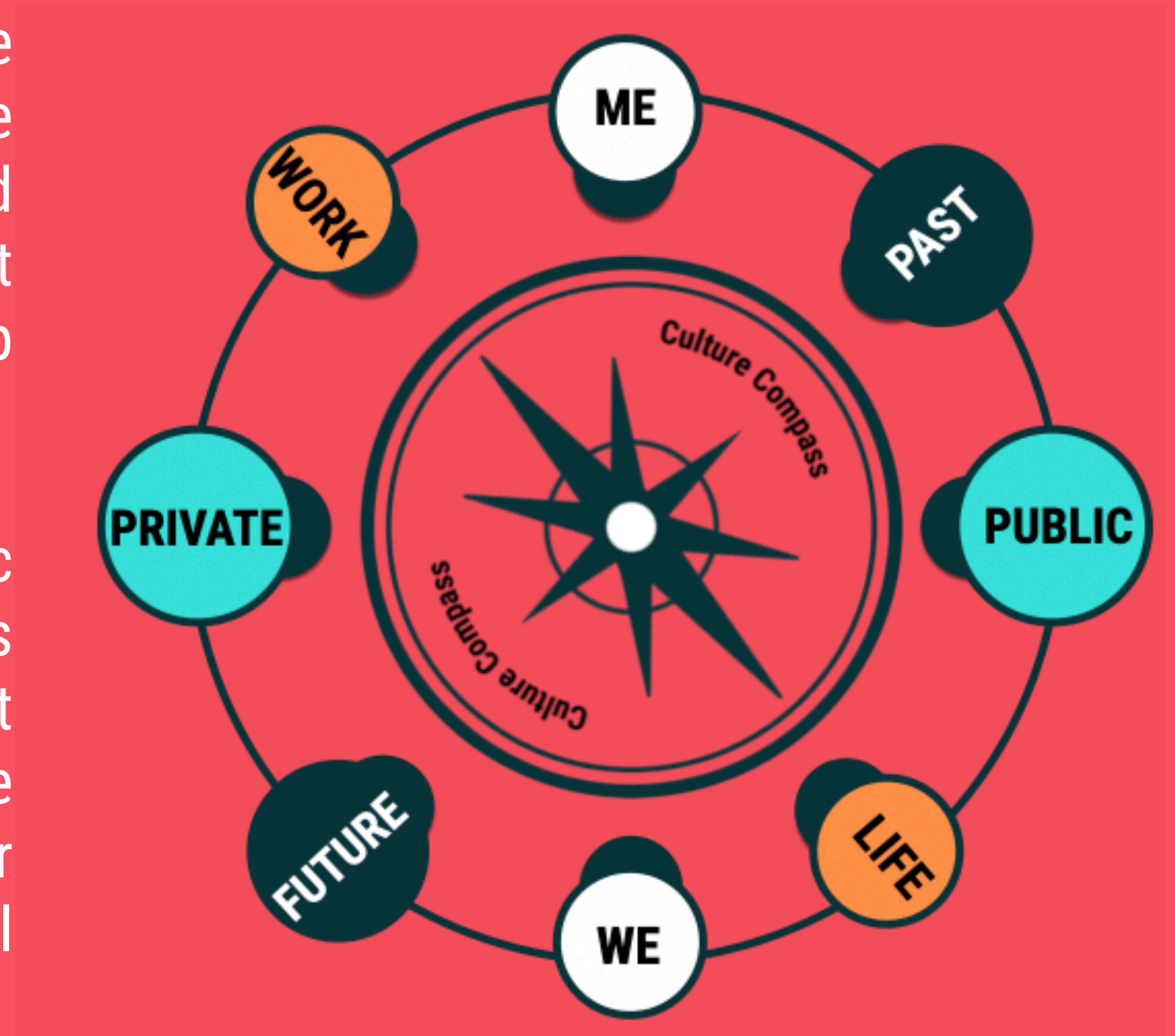
<https://thepatterning.com/2017/02/13/the-nostalgia-pendulum-a-rolling-30-year-cycle-of-pop-culture-trends/>



Using the Culture Compass to find a holistic view

There isn't just one pendulum moving through culture however, there are many. We have picked a few of the most important ones here but we're sure you could think of some others. That's great. Please do and let us know. This is an abstract tool designed to help thinking and consider what will come next.

By putting them together we get a more holistic sense of what is happening because it's not as simple as a single axis and it's not as simple as just swinging backwards and forwards, driven by some invisible force, or the push and pull for power between the two broad political viewpoints we call left and right.



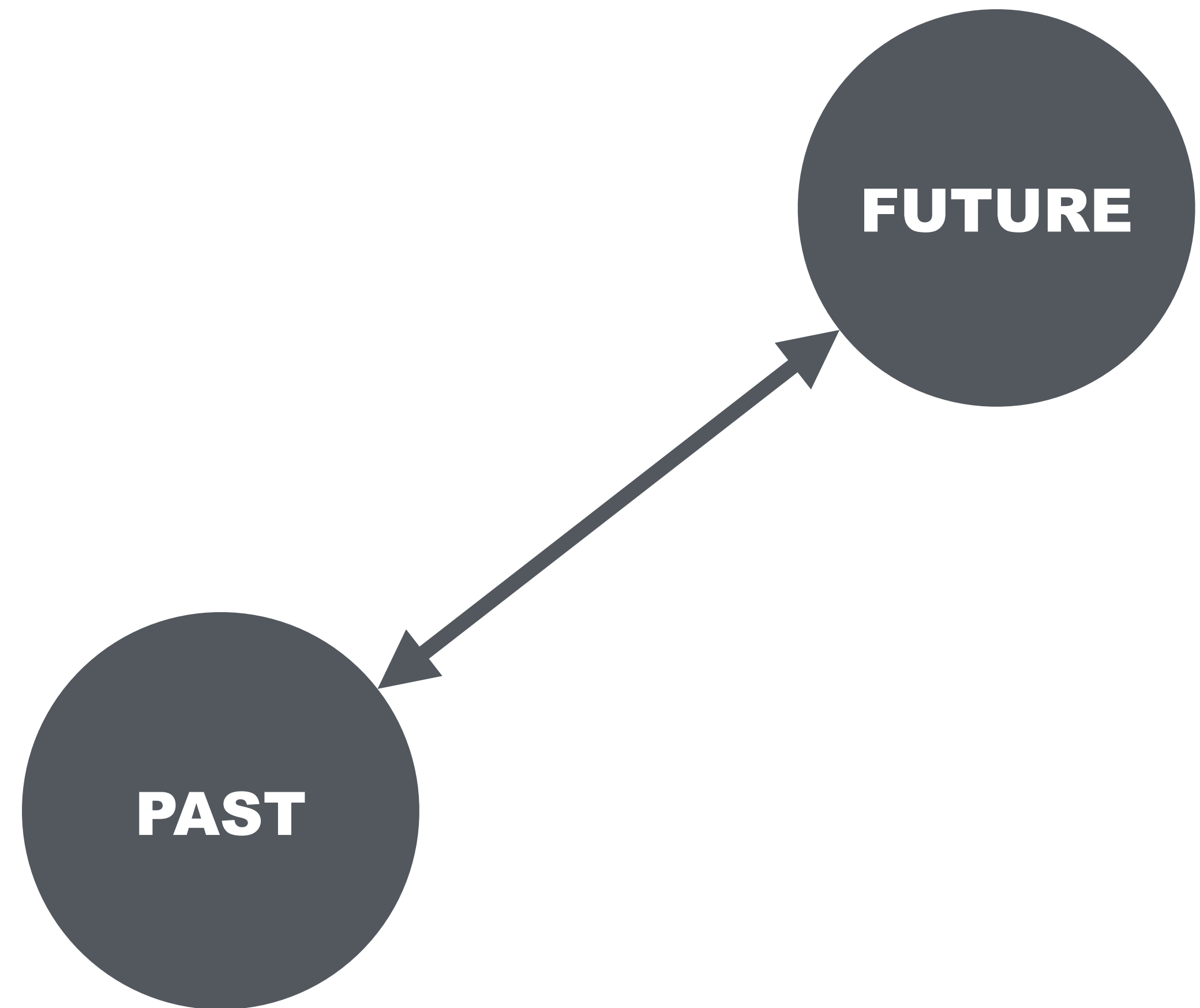
Cultures have orientations around certain ideas.

One is the idea of the **Past vs Future**, which broadly maps onto these two poles:

Conservatism: seeks to preserve tradition (“commitment to traditional values and ideas with opposition to change or innovation”)

and

Progressivism: seeks change for the sake of equality (“support for or advocacy of social reform”).



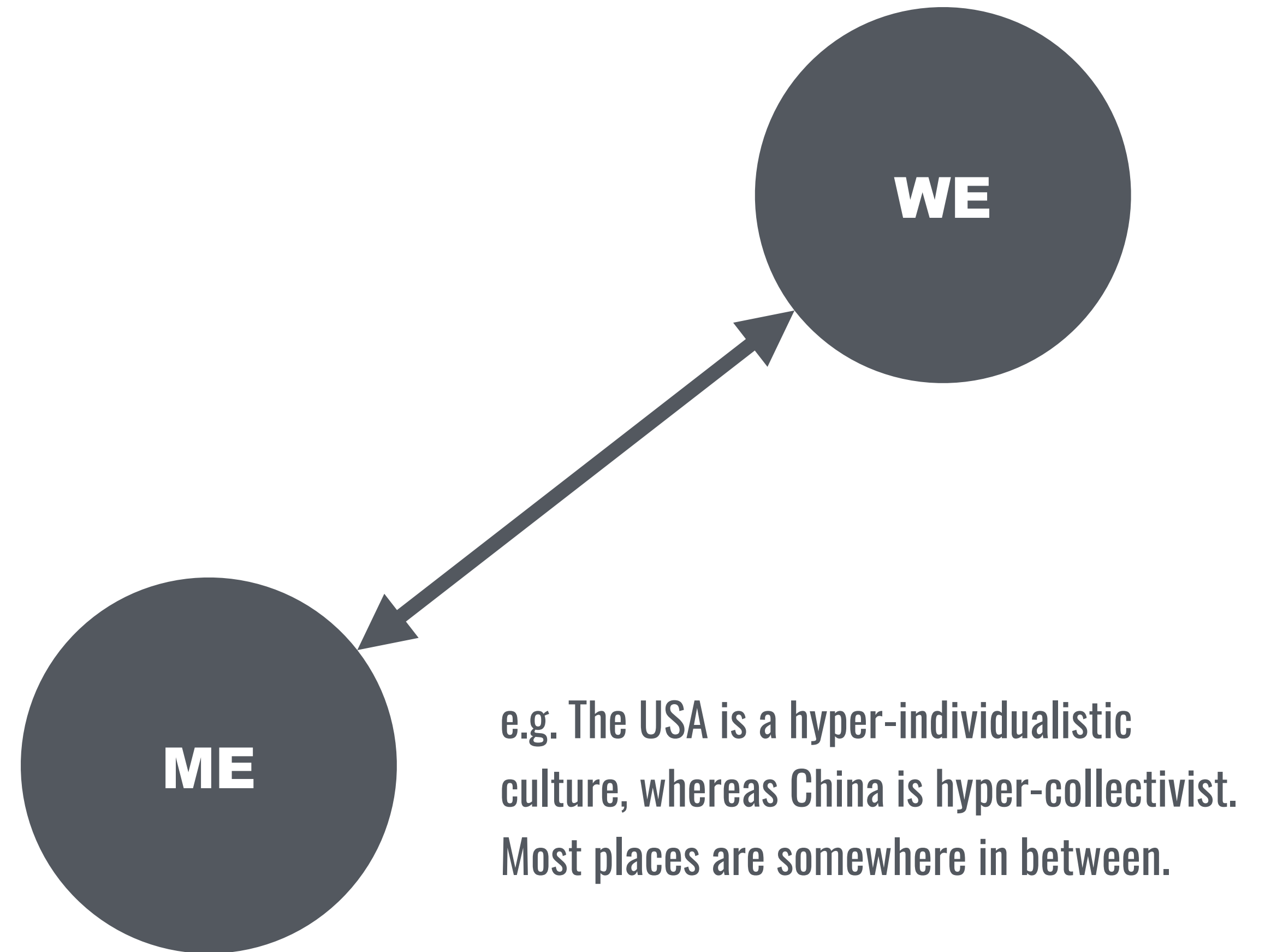
Cultures have orientations around certain ideas.

Another important one is what we are calling Me vs We, which broadly maps onto

Individualism: favouring freedom of action for individuals over collective

and

Collectivism: the practice or principle of giving a group priority over each individual in it.



Often, there are pendulum swings between two forces.

It's not that either are better, or worse, but rather that societies need aspects of both. However, they tend to orient heavily towards one for a time, which leads to the resurgence of the other, thanks to counter-culture. Highly individualistic societies struggle with the collective actions needed to control pandemics, but they also tend to create incentive conditions for people and businesses to take certain kinds of risks, and so on. Makes sense, right? **So, here's the idea:**

Whenever a new innovation changes the dynamics of a category, or when massive exogenous events like pandemics force changes across categories, a renegotiation takes places along these axes.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY A RENEGOTIATION?

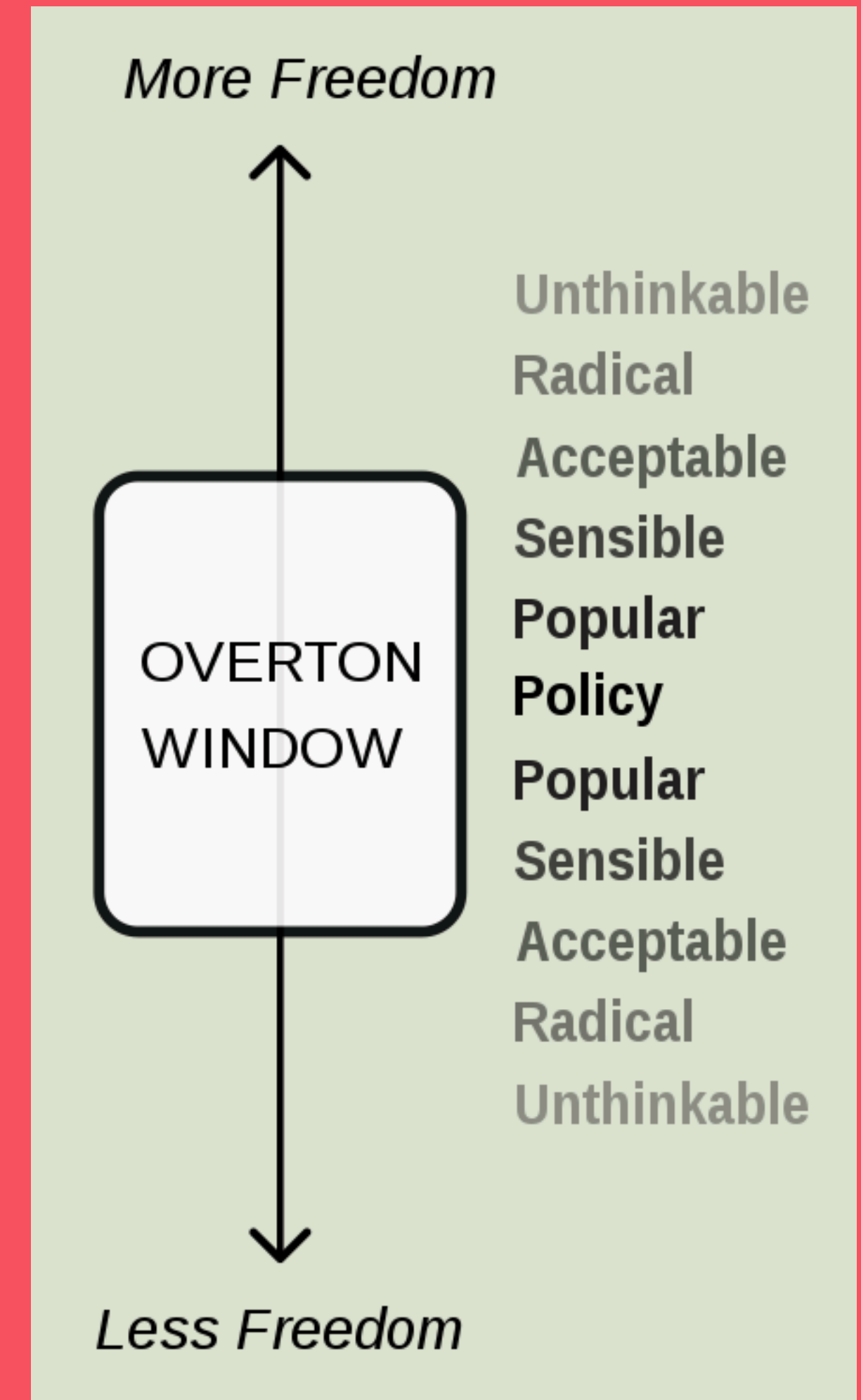
Good question. Let me answer it by talking about something else for a second.

The Overton Window is the range of acceptable discourse at any moment of time in culture. Originally it referred to the range of policies that were politically acceptable to the mainstream population at a given time, but the meaning has broadened. This happens. It basically refers to what we consider acceptable versus extreme, in lots of ways. Especially about politics and what we should and shouldn't say in polite society, which change all the time.

“Overton described a spectrum from “more free” to “less free” with regard to government intervention, oriented vertically on an axis, to avoid comparison with the left/right political spectrum. As the spectrum moves or expands, an idea at a given location may become more or less politically acceptable.

Shifting the Overton Window involves proponents of policies outside the window persuading the public to expand the window. Proponents of current policies, or similar ones within the window, seek to convince people that policies outside it should be deemed unacceptable.” - Wikipedia

CLICK TO READ



CORE CONCEPT: OVERTON WINDOW OF CULTURE

“It just explains how ideas come in and out of fashion, the same way that gravity explains why something falls to the earth. I can use gravity to drop an anvil on your head, but that would be wrong. I could also use gravity to throw you a life preserver; that would be good.”

Joseph G. Lehman, Overton’s boss at a Think Tank and popularizer of the term



SO...WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY A RENEGOTIATION?

When something big happens, or a challenger brand creates an innovation so powerful the entire market has to follow suit, it forces a movement along one of the Culture Compass axes, as ideas that were previously outside of the Overton Window become more acceptable and then normal. Such renegotiations will usually follow classic adoption curve dynamics in their spread through culture. But ultimately the Window moves because there has been a collective renegotiation about what is acceptable and appropriate to the mainstream, and what ideas are considered extreme or fringe.

Christmas was a social, public event until the Victorian era, when it began to shift into the home, becoming a private, family occasion.

Consider how Facebook started as a private network, locked to your university, but became a 'public by default' platform, because \$. Consider how Venmo makes your transactions public by default, and how Public, the share trading app, takes that one step further, turning trades, and gains and losses, into the stream of a social network. That which was Private becomes Public, as it were - that seems to be another important area that is being renegotiated. Uber made private driving public. Airbnb made private homes available to the public.



The rest of this deck highlights some interesting examples of these renegotiations that we have been tracking and thinking about.

These renegotiations are always ongoing, accelerated by the aforementioned interventions, and the shifts themselves create opportunities as what is social becomes private, or vice versa, for some parts of the population.

To capitalize on these shifts, companies also orient themselves to the context they find themselves in. Companies also have certain axes they tend to orient their thinking and behavior around. For example, depending on their point in their lifecycle and contextual factors, they tend to either focus on investing to grow, or cutting costs for profitability.



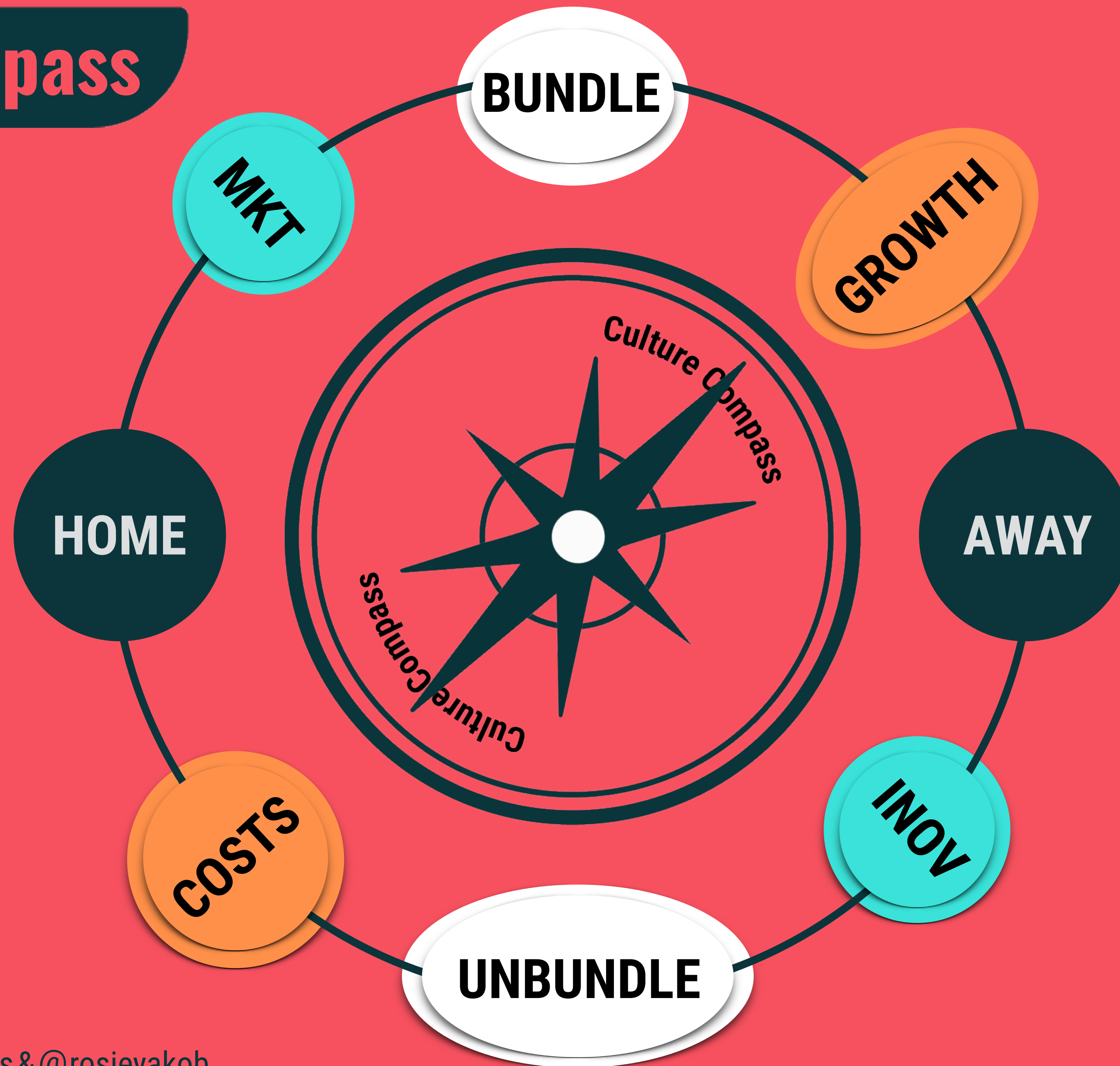
A company can sell or deliver its product or service in your home, or outside it. This renegotiation is in flux due to commerce, delivery and the pandemic. At the same time, work can either be done at home, or not at home, which is also going through a rather radical renegotiation.



So we made a Commerce Compass too, looking at business orientations.



Commerce Compass



WHAT IS THE COMMERCE COMPASS?

The Commerce Compass maps orientation of business as they look to capitalize on opportunities created or exposed by the movements in culture.

The only two ways that companies can grow are:

Marketing: sell more things to more people for more money

Or

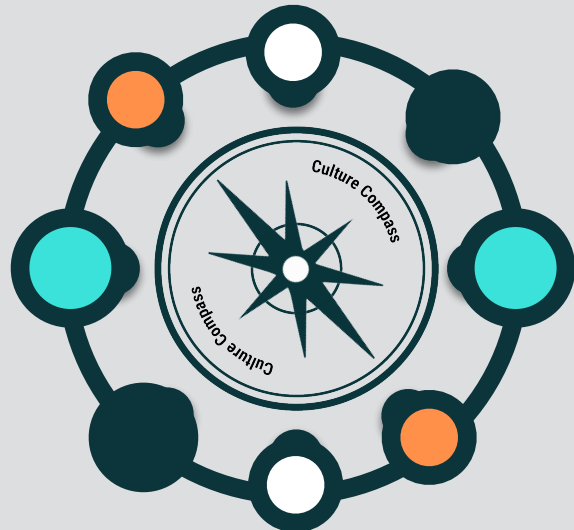
Innovation: find new things to sell

We'll look at the other axes later in the deck.



Part 1

Public



Private

01



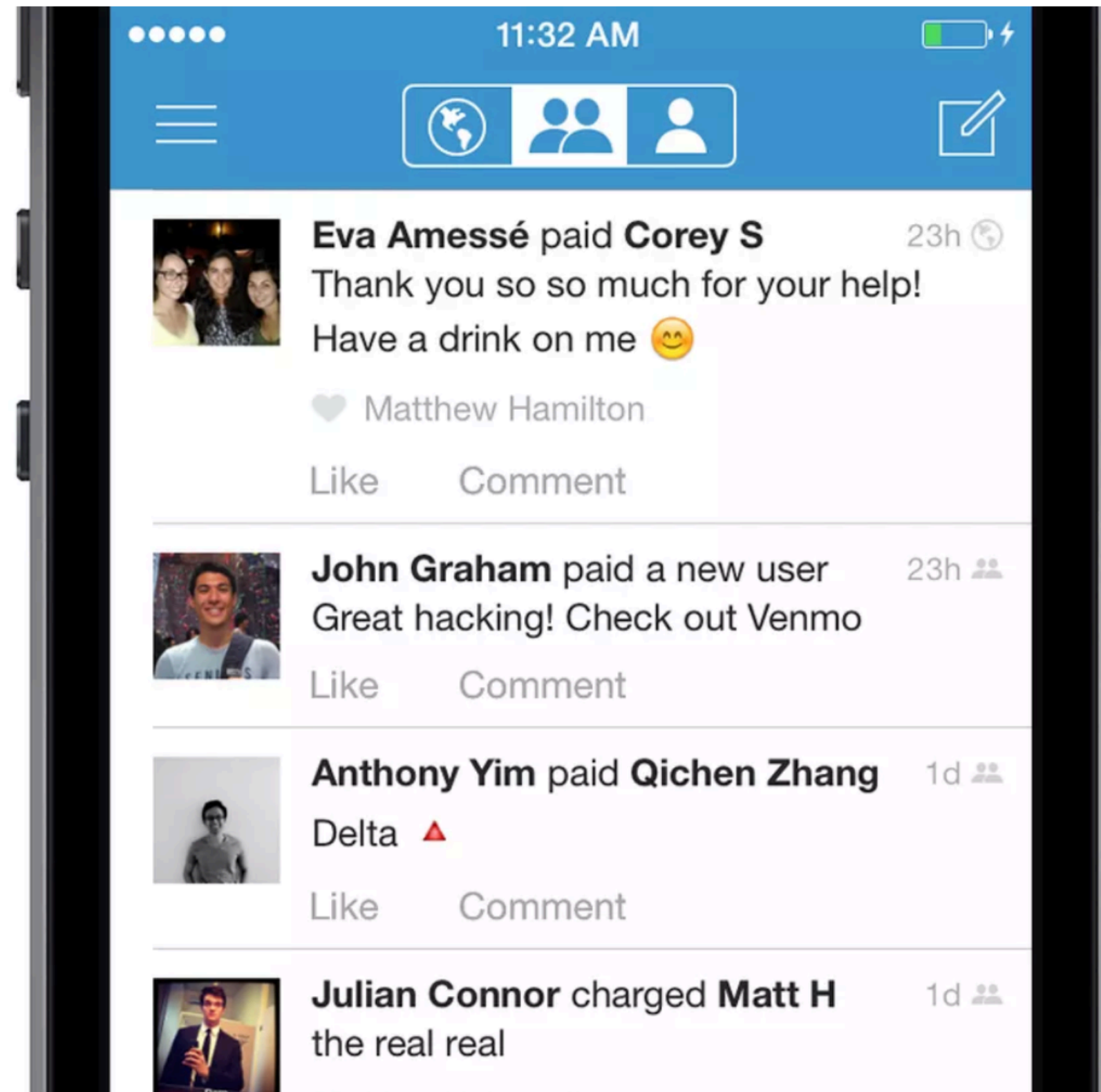
PUBLIC VS PRIVATE

Culture, obviously accelerated by things like internet enabled mobile phones but lots of other things too, is renegotiating what is considered private and what is considered public. We can see examples of this everywhere, from the homemade sex tapes that made Paris Hilton and Kim Kardashian globally famous; to seeing pictures of our friends babies on social media; all of social media really; to talking about mental health issues more openly; all of reality television; the harvesting of personal data from mobile devices and online browsing; Wikileaks; Prism; and so on.

Somethings we used to consider private we now make public, that is the most obvious direction of this pendulum. But some public things have become private too, like how the government tenders contracts which is supposed to be public but often obfuscated; people going off-grid or leaving social media, and a counter movement concerned about surveillance capitalism and facial recognition is gaining steam.



Venmo changed the market by making transactions public by default

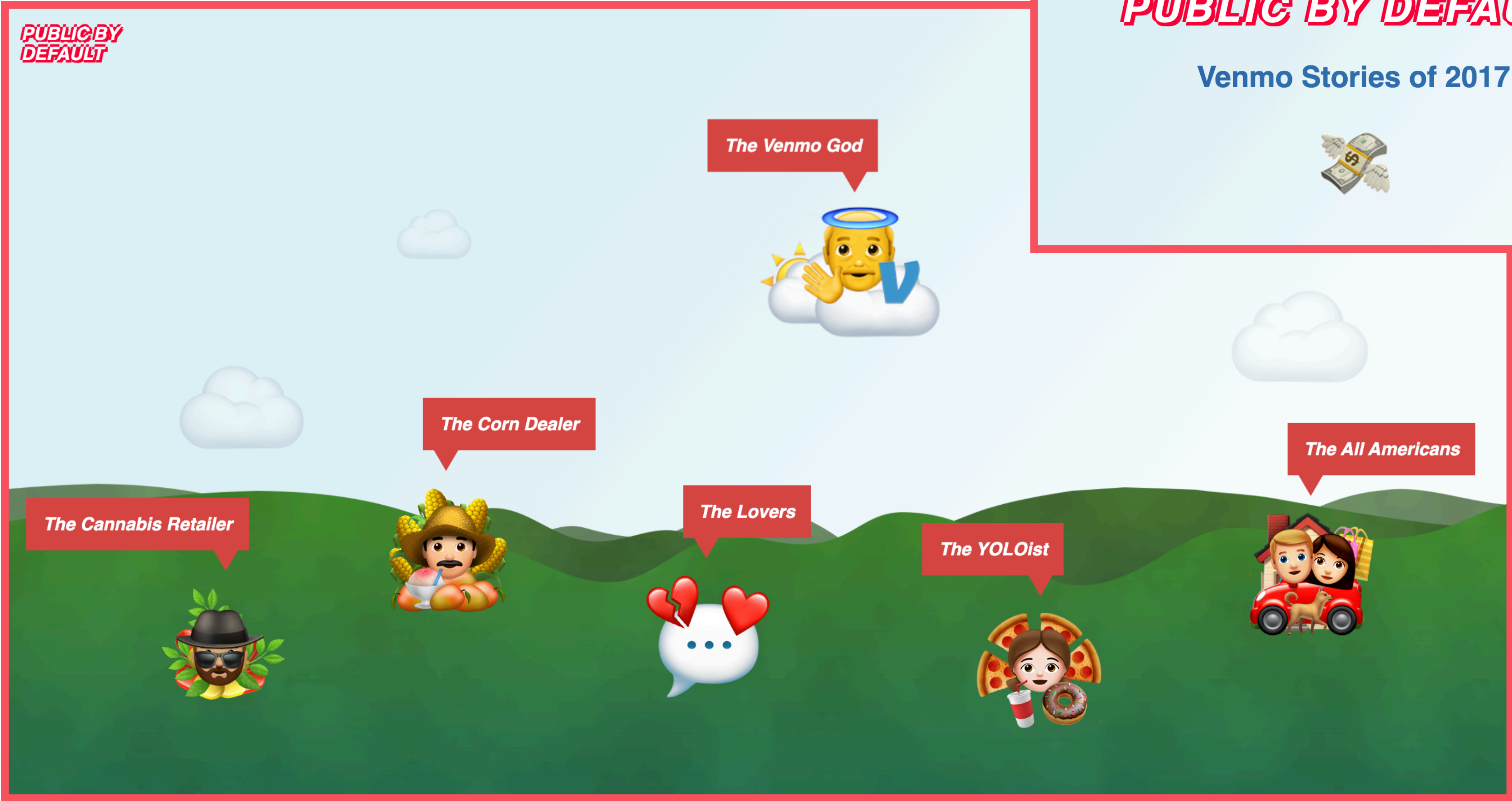


Unless you change your settings, anyone can see your Venmo transactions.
Venmo

"We make it default because it's fun to share with friends in the social world.

People open up Venmo to see what their family and friends are up to." - **Venmo**

Consumer segmentation from public Venmo data



A brief recent history of online share trading:



Launches ZERO COMMISSION trades

Robin Hood Hits 3 million users same as E*Trade

All online brokers drop commissions

Public Launches

Dow Jones



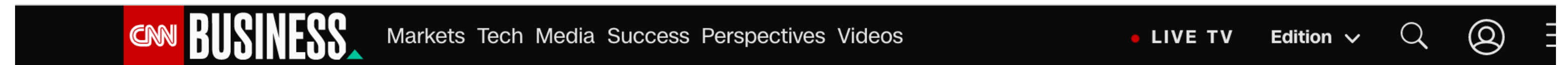
Pits Close



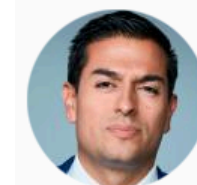


NO MERCY NO MALICE

Robinhood Has Gamified Online Trading Into an Addiction



Apparent suicide by 20-year-old Robinhood trader who saw a negative \$730,000 balance prompts app to make changes

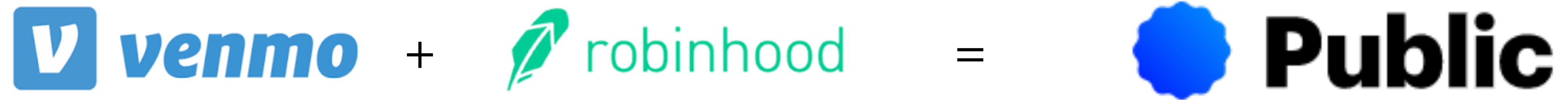


By [Matt Egan](#), CNN Business

Updated 8:43 AM ET, Sat June 20, 2020



Ideas are new combinations





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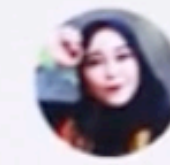
[schoolofstolengeni.us](#) | by @faris & @rosieyakob

AS SEEN IN

FORTUNE

VARIETY

Forbes



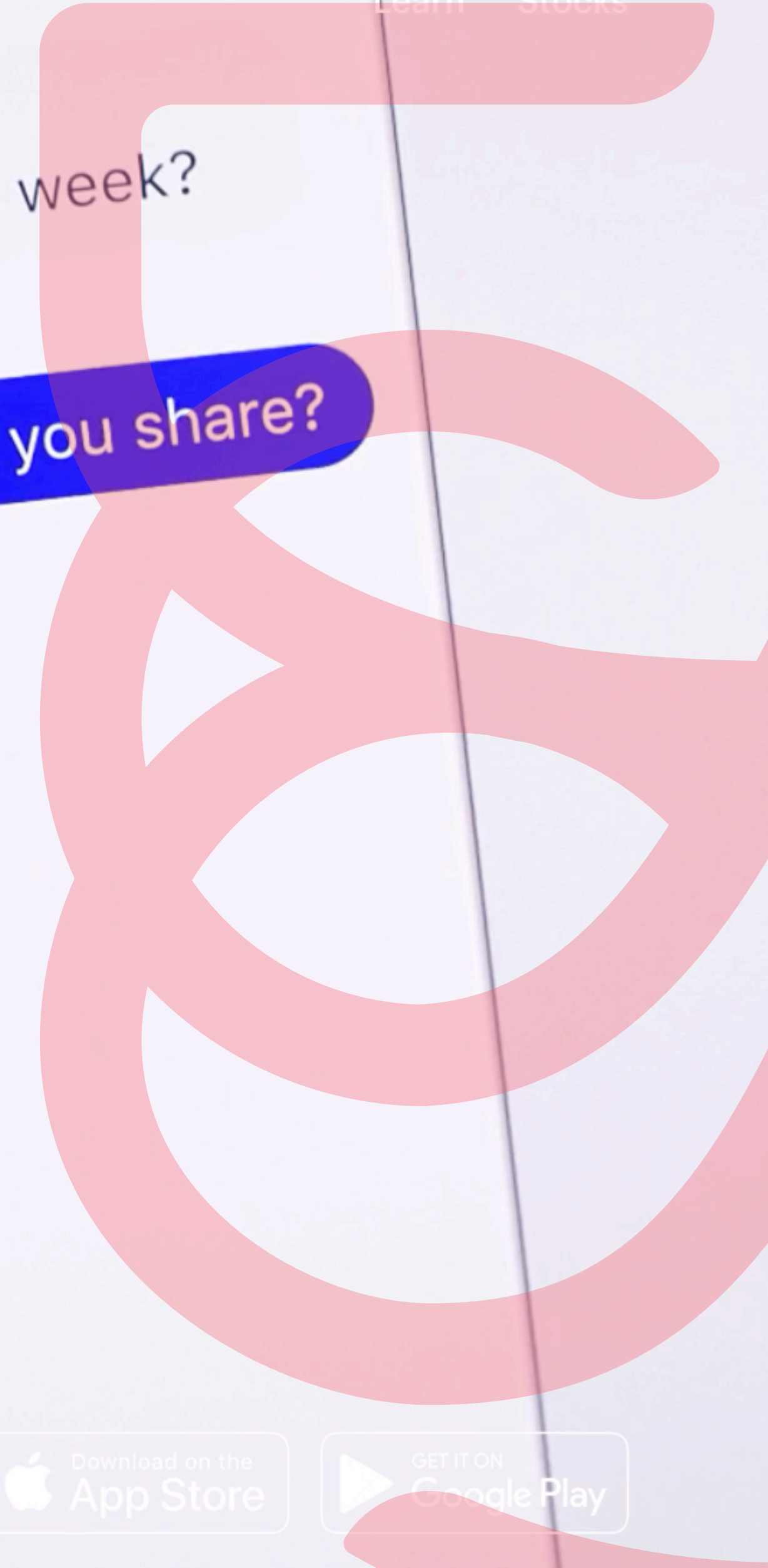
Are you all following \$NFLX's moves this week?

I hadn't seen. Can you share?



ADC Public

Learn Stocks





A whole new way to invest

Public makes the stock market social.

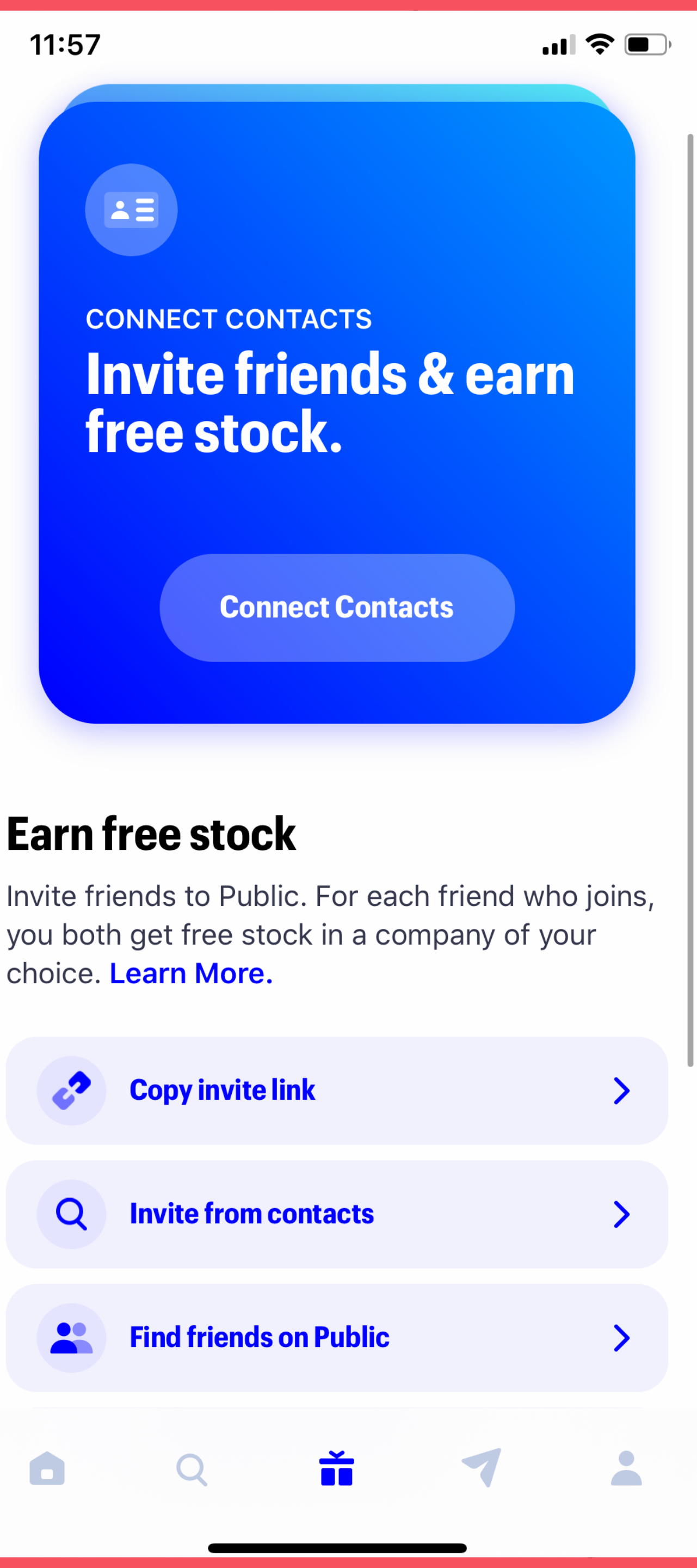
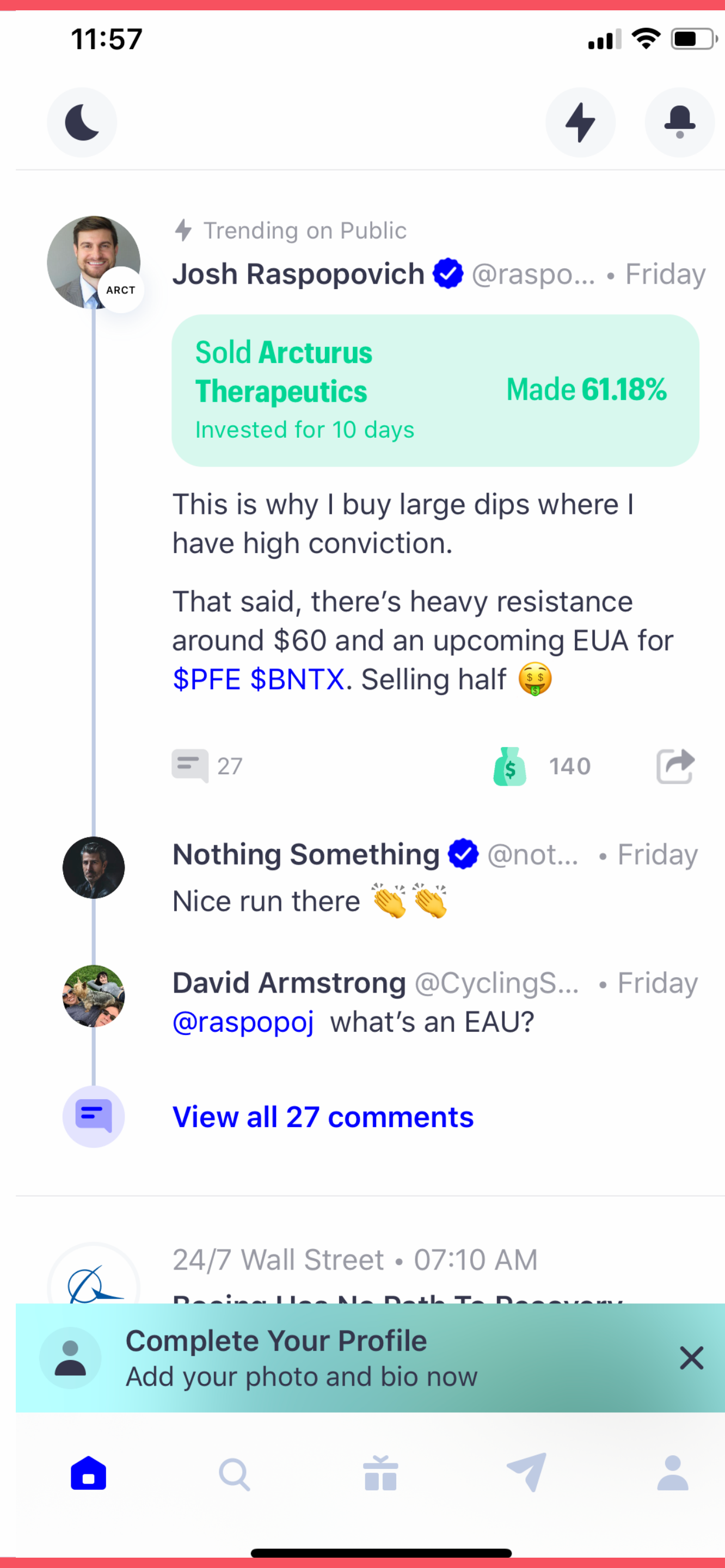
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⚡ Trending on Public

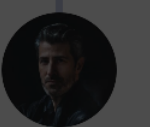
Josh Raspopovich ✓ @raspo... • Friday

Sold Arcturus Therapeutics Made **61.18%**
 Invested for 10 days

This is why I buy large dips where I have high conviction.

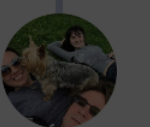
That said, there's heavy resistance around \$60 and an upcoming EUA for \$PFE \$BNTX. Selling half 🤔

💬 27 💰 140 ➦



Nothing Something ✓ @not... • Friday

Nice run there 🙌🙌



David Armstrong @CyclingS... • Friday
@raspopoj what's an EAU?

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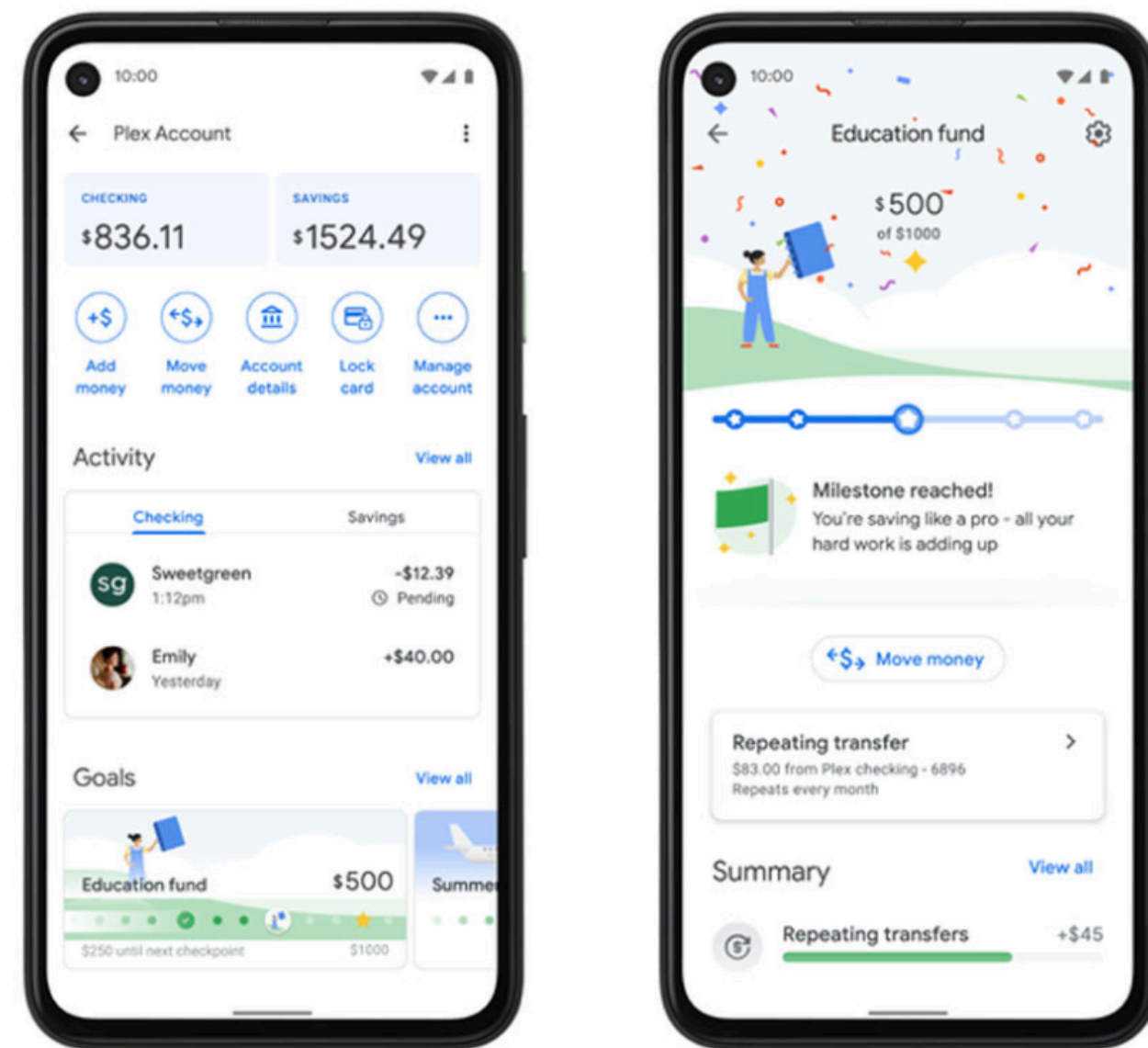
⋮ More



Google announces banking, and removes the fees

Google Pay to launch mobile-first bank accounts in the USA in 2021

By Tom Phillips • 20 November 2020



MOBILE-FIRST: Google plans to launch the mobile banking Plex Account in the USA next year

Plex, a new mobile-first bank account integrated into Google Pay

with no monthly fees, overdraft charges or minimum balance requirements.

Sometimes public v private is about exposing who isn't given access to things we take for granted.

5.4% of US households are unbanked, often because banking is prohibitively expensive for the poorest people, who get charged the most fees.



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