

THE CULTURE COMPASS

Orienting for Profit

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SCHOOL OF



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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.

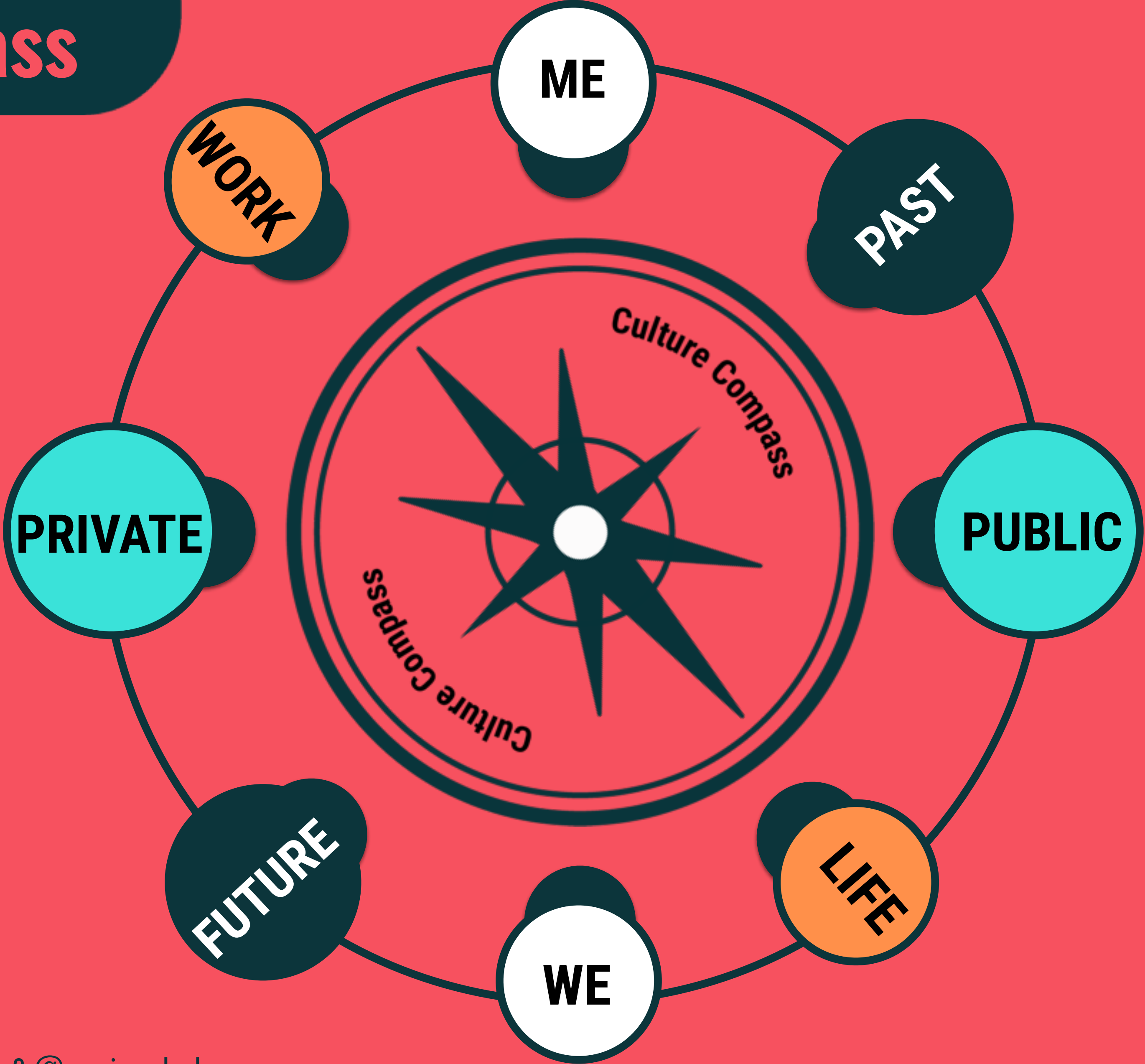
The articles, sites and companies will **be linked from the images**, so you can dive deeper into any topic.

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.



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.



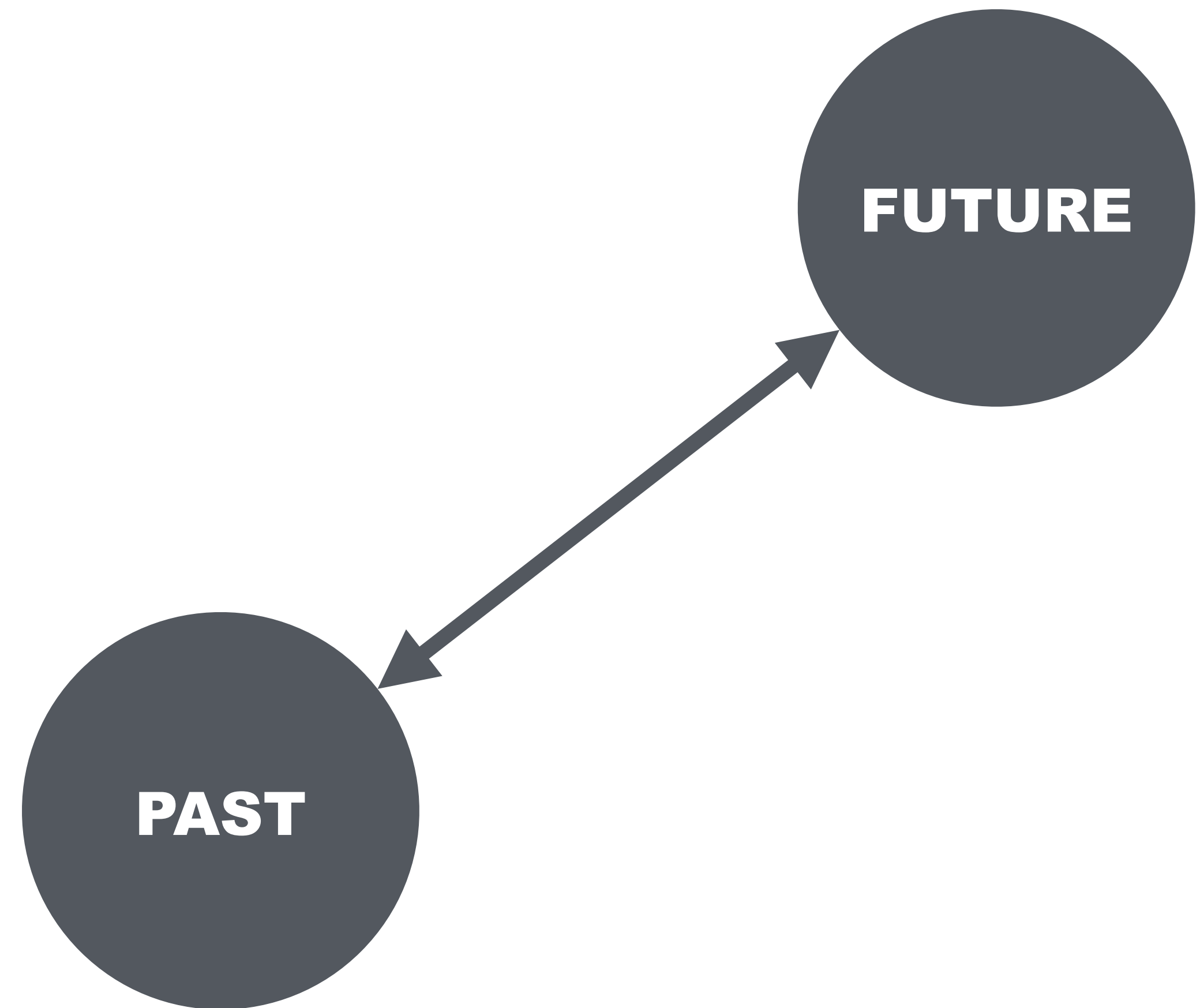
Cultures have orientations around certain ideas.

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”).



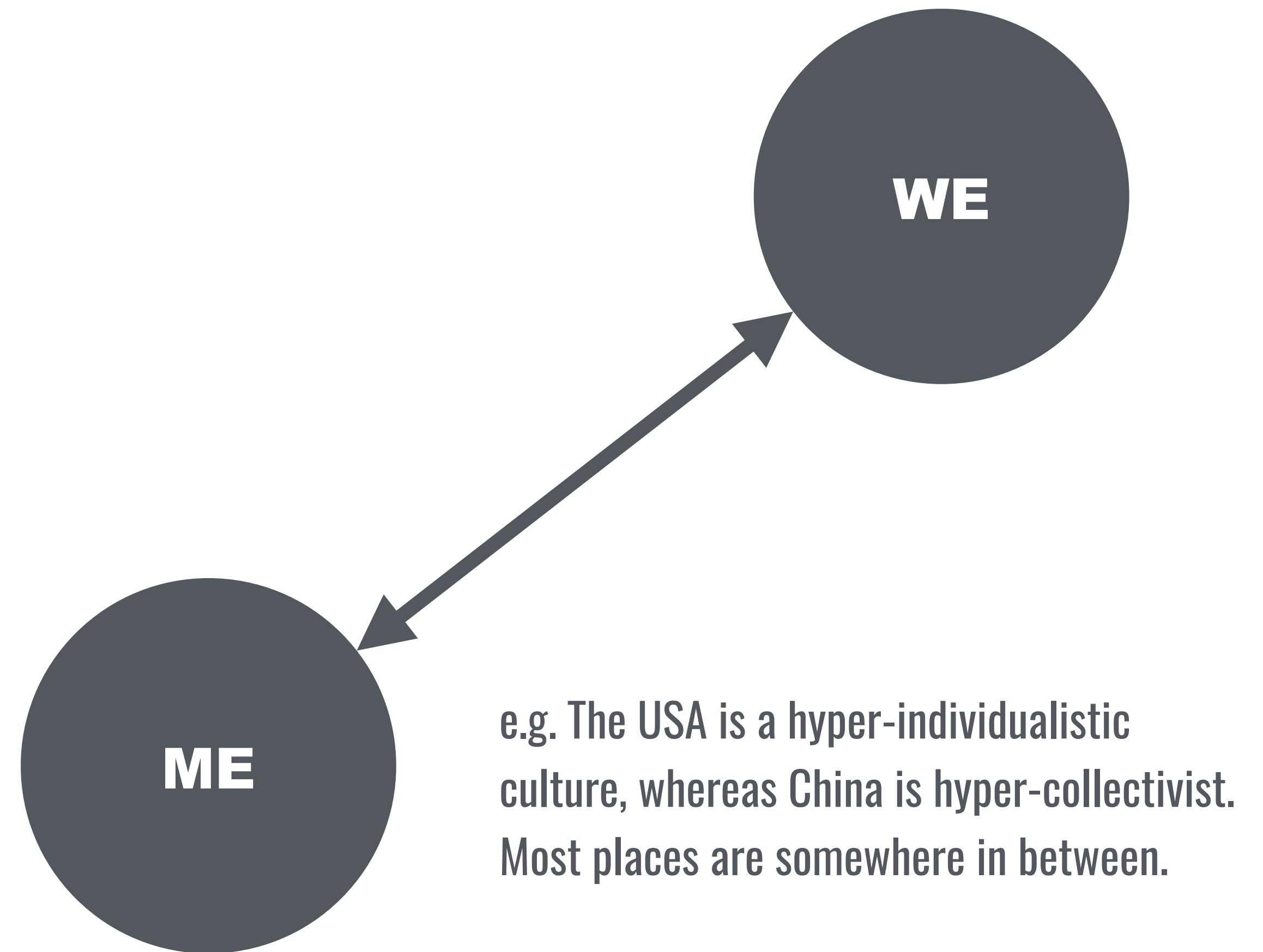
Cultures have orientations around certain ideas.

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?

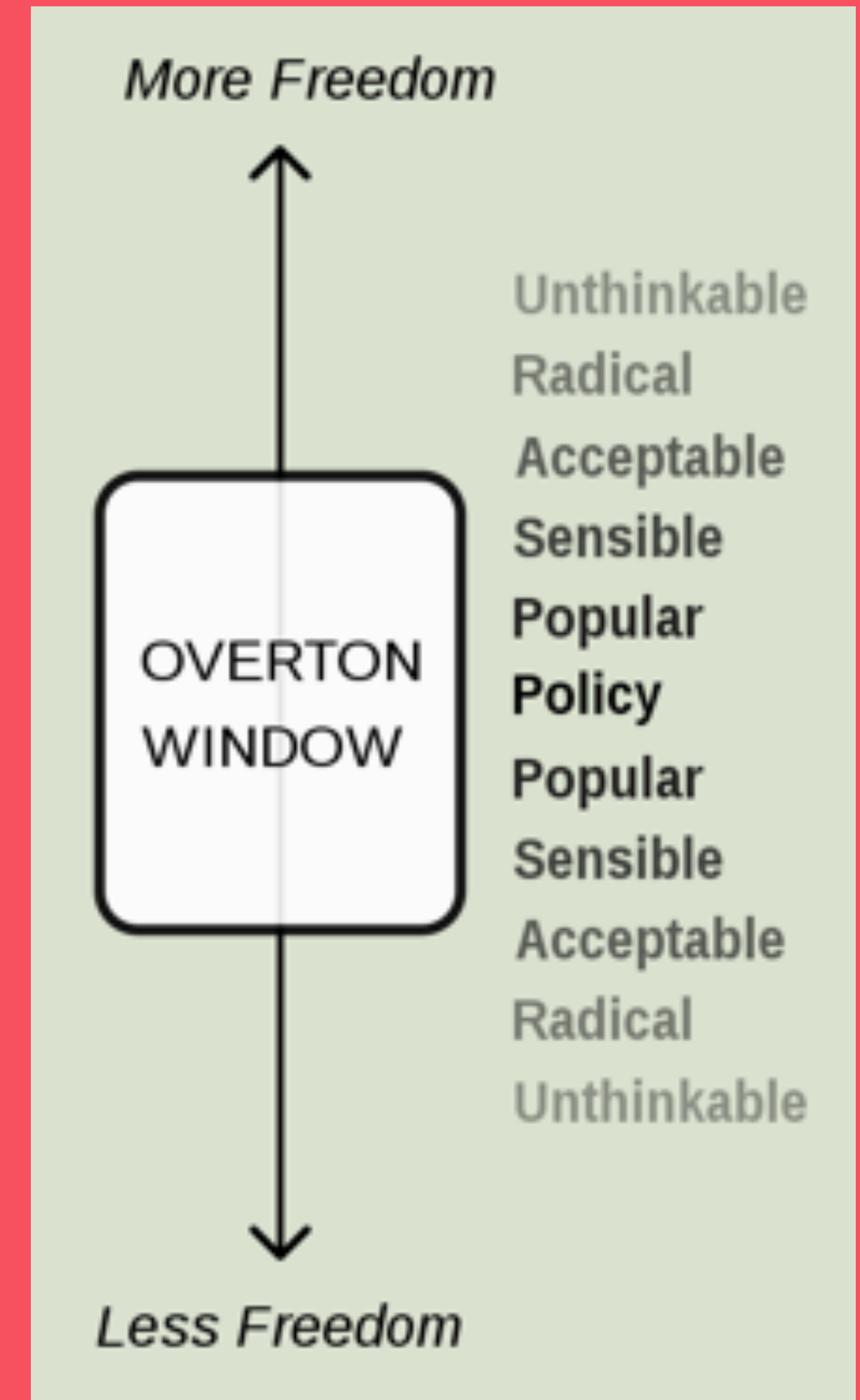
Good question. Let me answer it by talking about something else for a second.

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.



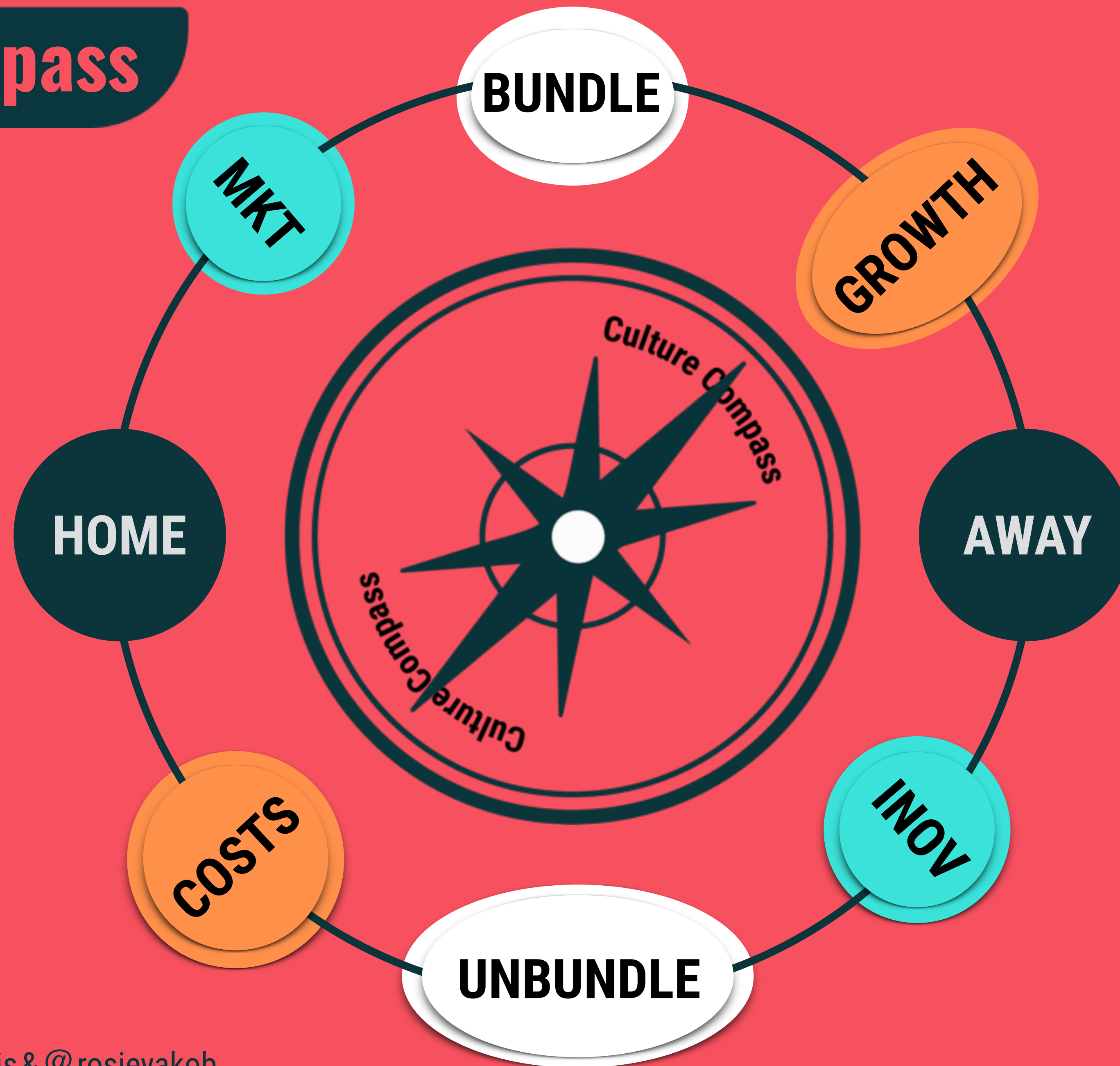
A company can sell or deliver its product or service in your home, or outside it. This renegotiation is in flux due to commerce, delivery and the pandemic. At the same time, work can either be done at home, or not at home, which is also going through a rather radical renegotiation.



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

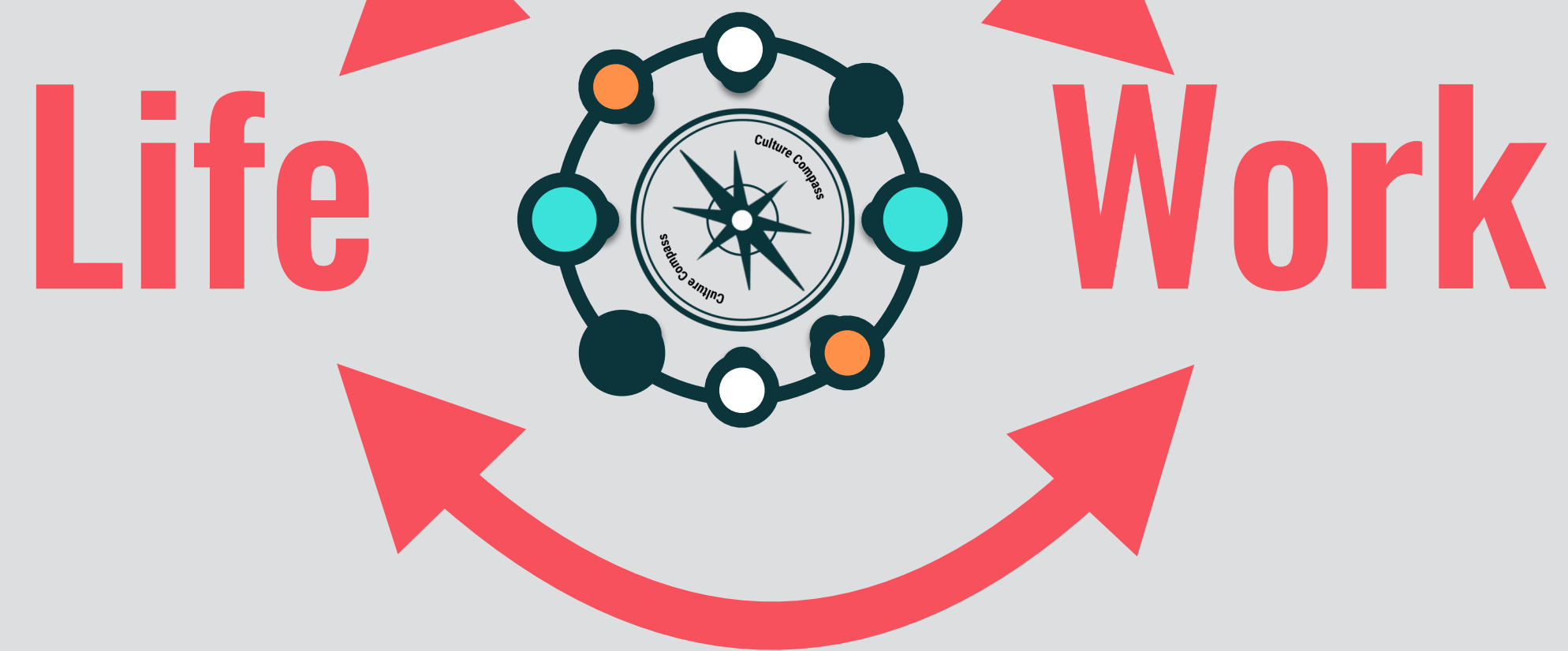
Or

Innovation: find new things to sell

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



Part 3



LIFE VS WORK

Work is a big part of almost everyone's life everywhere, but it's of particular focus in USA, where people work the longest hours, take the least vacation, have the least protection, and there is a strong culture sense that hard work is its own reward, built around Puritan religious values originally, and now a big part of the political and cultural discourse.

Whilst even putting work and life as opposites overstates the importance of work to some, the idea of work blurring into non-work life, or life being monetized as work, is everywhere, as a function of always-on email, presentism in offices and zoomism now, the gig economy, side hustles, OnlyFans, influencers, influencer houses, monetizing social media in general as in individual, the precariat, and people working double shifts.



American obsession with work has taken over people's lives



Work is intertwined with ideas about morality (hard work is good for the soul + builds character) and status - so now the highest earners work the most:

“Today’s rich American men can afford vastly more downtime. But they have used their wealth to buy the strangest of prizes: more work!”



Meanwhile, secure, long term employment is increasingly scarce



The Gig Economy Is Coming for Millions of American Jobs

The gig economy has two sides, with the increased freedom and flexibility applying to those in demand workers that can command high fees, but leaving the lower end of the service sector in precarious pseudo-employment without protection or benefits.

The pandemic has led many people to reevaluate their work/life balance and priorities.

Flexible, inclusive working patterns are increasingly in demand



“Flex is a creative, rebellious way to live. It’s about looking at routines (like the nine to five) and social norms (like women bearing the brunt of the ‘emotional load’ at home) and bending and re-shaping them.

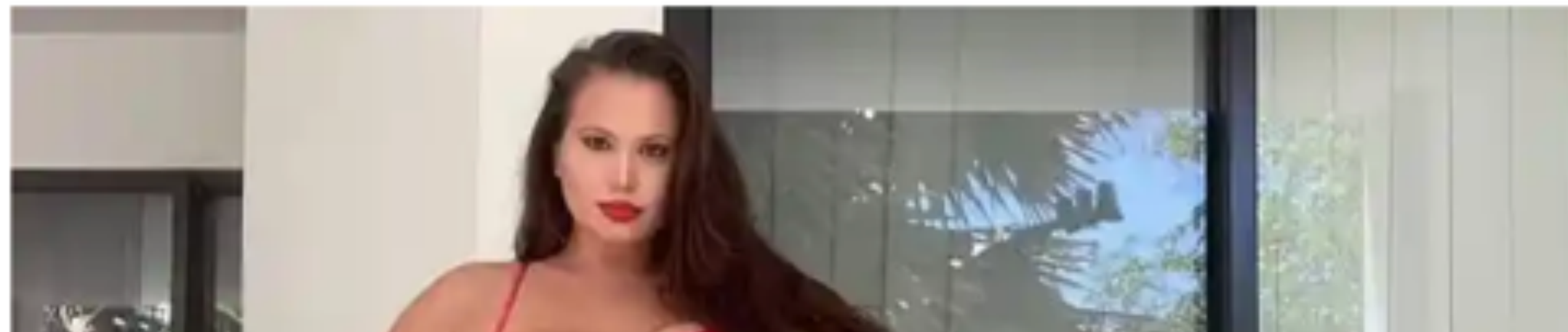
Flex is looking within and understanding yourself, your body and the patterns of your relationships, and working out how to live, earn money and be happy in a way that is perfect for you and your unique talents.

Flex is knowing that the world is changing fast. The jobs we were trained for in school won’t exist in a decade. The career ladder has been replaced with the portfolio.”

OnlyFans grew significantly during the pandemic...with growing pains

'Everyone and their mum is on it': OnlyFans booms in popularity during the pandemic

The site is best known for charging fees for nude content but making money off it is hard work



Use of OnlyFans exploded during the pandemic, going from **7.5 million** users last November to **85 million now** (Dec 2020).

Rosewarne says people have tried to label OnlyFans as “empowering” or “exploitative”, but she warns against defining the site either way.

For those who are unsuccessful on OnlyFans, **publicly engaging in sex work can still have serious consequences**. It has been known to affect job prospects in non-sex work industries, can affect court decisions in child custody cases, and in extreme cases has resulted in housing discrimination.



1

HOME > HEALTH

A wave of people turned to OnlyFans to earn money when they lost their jobs due to the pandemic

Canela López Jun 17, 2020, 12:17 PM

2

CORONAVIRUS

"We're In Hard Times Right Now." Meet The Nursing Students Turning To OnlyFans To Get By.

3

Celebrities with OnlyFans: 14 stars who have an account

By Page Six Team

November 12, 2020 | 9:04am | Updated

4

Chris Brown joins OnlyFans

By Julie Gordon

November 12, 2020 | 9:01am



5

Celebrity • Posted 21 hours ago

Michael B. Jordan Is Joining OnlyFans And It's The Christmas Gift We All Wanted

6

yahoo! | Yahoo Sport Australia

'Absolute disgrace': Zelina Vega sacked by WWE over OnlyFans account



Sam Goodwin • Sports Editor

Fri, 20 November 2020, 4:55 pm GMT-5 · 3-min read

TRENDING

A brief history of OnlyFans as it traverses the renegotiation of life vs work and public vs private



Covid collapsed different spheres - work, family, school - into one space

Blurred Boundaries: Work-Life Balance in the Time of COVID19

Healthy Work Now May 22, 2020 · 10 min read



by Marnie Dobson Zimmerman, Ph.D. & Pouran Faghri M.D.*

“Before COVID-19 and the shutdown, most of us kissed our kids goodbye in the morning, dropped them off at daycare or school—and went out into the world of work.

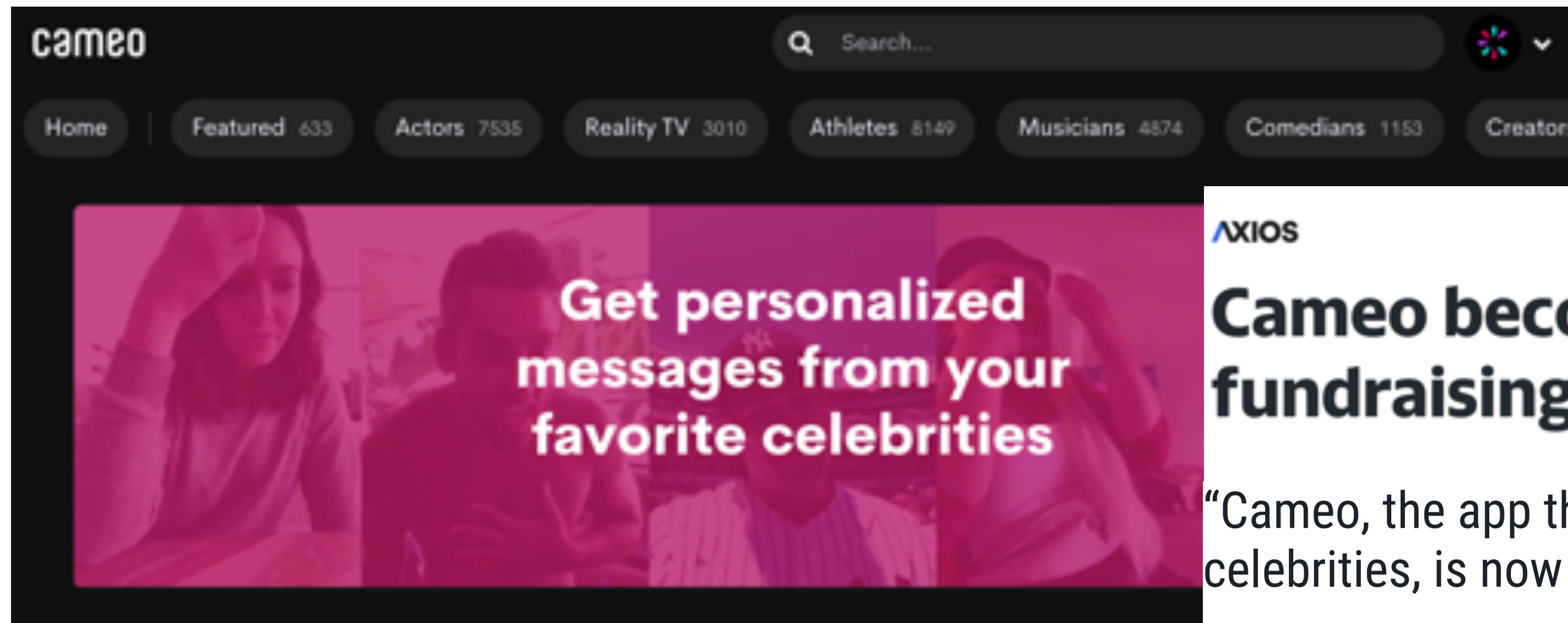
Sure, for many of us the pressures and stresses of work came home with us at the end of the day. We worked long hours, overtime shifts, or kept on working, answering emails, preparing presentations after the kids were in bed (or while they were watching TV).

But now the private and public sphere of home and work has completely blurred into one and we confront managing work (if we have it), while acquiring new skills as amateur teachers.”



Cameo brings celebrities into consumers homes, and vice versa

And brings work into homes of celebrities



AXIOS

Cameo becomes a unicorn with latest fundraising round

“Cameo, the app that lets fans pay for personalized videos from celebrities, is now a unicorn.

Driving the news: The company said Tuesday that its parent Baron App Inc. has raised \$100 million in a round led by e.ventures, giving it a valuation of just over \$1 billion.”



Life coaching blurs life & work and therapy & advice



LIFE

What is life coaching? It's not therapy, but it's a nearly \$3 billion business

Published Fri, Mar 26 2021-10:22 AM EDT



SHARE    

Life coaching is part of the \$2.85 billion global industry of professional coaches, according to ICF. Beyond life coaching, there's also executive, career, leadership and even nutrition coaching. ICF estimates there are 71,000 professional coaches worldwide and 23,000 based in North America.



Productivity has been a dominant idea for some years...

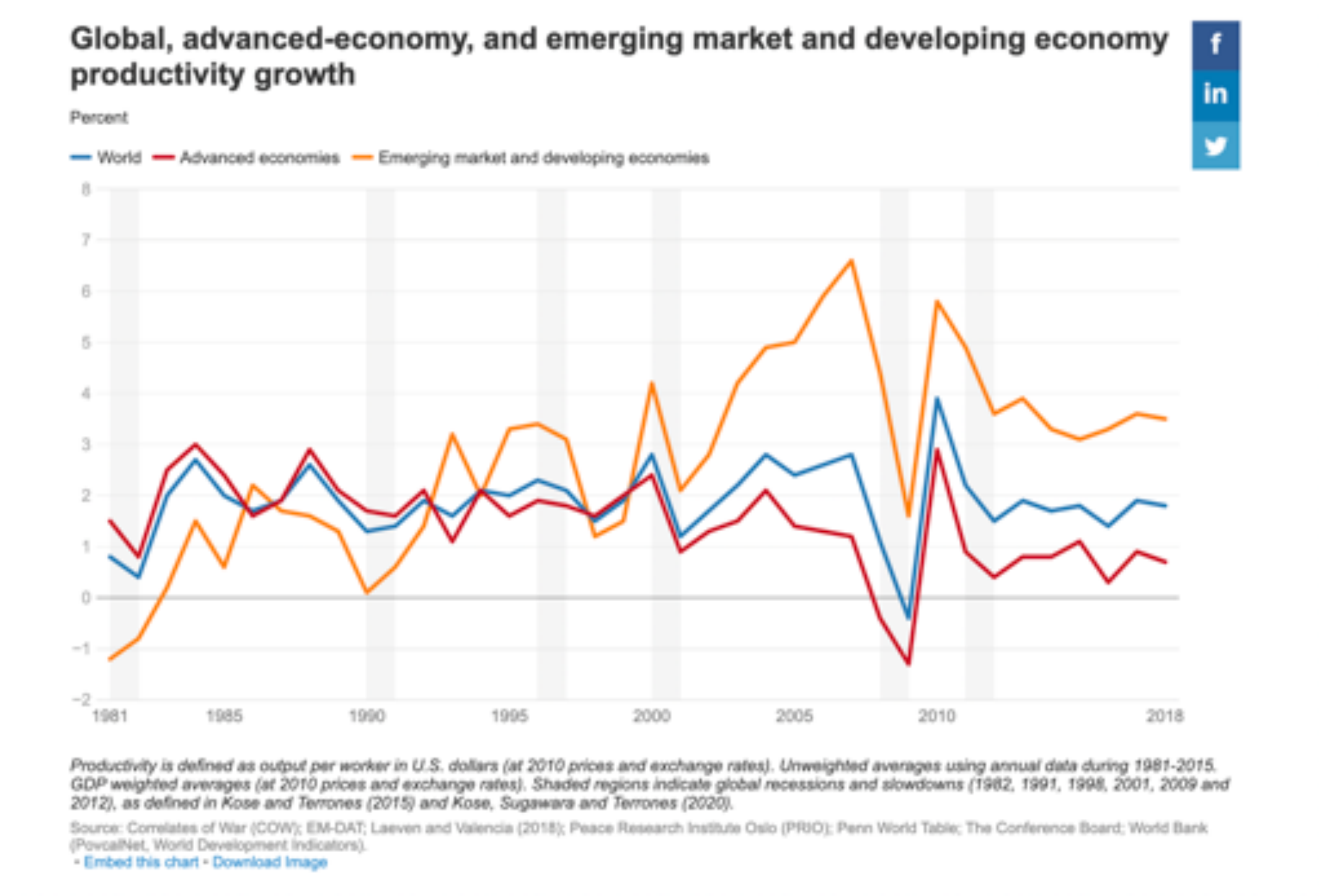
REAL SIMPLE | LIFE | LIFE STRATEGIES

Our Best-Ever Tips for Being More Productive (and Ditching Procrastination for Good)

Stop putting things off with our tips for getting more done in less time.

By [Real Simple Editors](#) | January 19, 2021

ironically as productivity as slowed...



...and especially in the USA



Below trend: the U.S. productivity slowdown since the Great Recession



Productivity Is a Cult

It's time to deprogram yourself and exit



Christine Seifert, PhD [Follow](#)

Jan 24, 2020 · 6 min read ★



CLICK TO READ

CLICK TO READ



More recently has seen the beginnings of a backlash. These shifts don't happen all at once. Ideas come to dominance and then the counter idea gets presented, and opportunities are created or exposed during that period.

Steven Poole / December 13, 2013

Against the Insufferable Cult of Productivity



Calm, Headspace and JourneyLive amongst many others



Headspace revenue

Year	Revenue
2016	\$30 million
2017	\$40 million
2018	\$60 million
2019	\$100 million

Are helping people finding balance, claim back time for themselves, away from work and persistent media.

Twitch blurs recreation & work, public & private, celebs & fans

Twitch continues to grow in Q1 2021, but YouTube Gaming is lagging

Hours watched on Twitch are up 97%, but Facebook is poised to overtake YouTube

The streaming giant generated 6.3 billion hours watched in Q1 2021 -- a 97% increase year-on-year.

The screenshot shows a news article from the 'GAMES' section. The headline is 'Jimmy Fallon played Among Us with streamers and the cast of Stranger Things in Twitch debut'. Below the headline, it says 'Fallon's first Twitch stream' and 'By Jay Peters | @jayspeters | Updated Apr 6, 2021, 7:52pm EDT'. There are social media share icons for Facebook, Twitter, and a general 'SHARE' button. The main image is a Twitch stream showing three video feeds: Jimmy Fallon, Questlove, and Kirk. Below the feeds is a game window showing the 'Among Us' game interface. To the right of the stream is a 'Verge deals' subscription box with a text input field for an email and a 'SUBSCRIBE' button.

How much can you make from twitch?

On average, expert streamers can make between \$3,000 to \$5,000 each month playing around 40 hours a week. That specific number doesn't include ad revenue, which averages about \$250 every 100 subscribers. If you put in the time and grow a respectable audience, Twitch can certainly be lucrative.

<https://www.businessofapps.com> > affiliate > twitch

[Twitch Affiliate Partner Program - Reviews, News and Ratings](#)

Search for: [How much can you make from twitch?](#)



Thanks

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