



We won the right to belong, but have we forgotten how to belong?

Before we begin talking about Pride, identity, or community, I'd like to ask you to do something a little different.

I'd like you to think about yourself. Not your labels. Not your profession. Not your gender. Not your sexuality.

Just you.

Have you ever walked into a room full of people who were supposed to be *your people*... and still wondered where you fit?

Because I have.

I don't want to convince you of anything. I don't want to tell you who's right or wrong, or whether our community is moving in the right direction.

Instead, I simply want to invite you to think with me. Together, we'll explore how our community has grown, how it has changed, and why I believe one of the biggest challenges we face today is no longer visibility... **It's belonging.**



Who am I?

When I ask myself that question, the list becomes quite long. I am Mexican, Canadian by choice, gay, Latino, an immigrant, a student, a volunteer, and a professional. Each of these identities has shaped who I am and introduced me to remarkable people.

Yet, despite belonging to so many communities, I have also experienced moments of loneliness—especially within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

That realization led me to an important distinction: **being included is not always the same as belonging.**



We want to belong

When the modern Pride movement emerged after Stonewall in 1969, our community was united by a common struggle. Society rejected us, and that shared experience created a strong sense of solidarity. Over the decades we fought for, and achieved, extraordinary progress: marriage equality, workplace protections, legal recognition, greater visibility, and representation.

As many of those battles were won, something else began to happen. The pressure coming from outside our community diminished, allowing the differences within our community to become more visible. I do not see this as a sign that we are failing. Rather, I believe it reflects something deeply human: once people are finally free to be themselves, they naturally express themselves in different ways.

The question, then, is no longer simply about visibility. It is about belonging.



From One Community to Many

When I moved to Canada, I imagined I would find one large LGBTQIA+ community where I would immediately feel at home.

Instead, I discovered hundreds of communities.

There are spaces for gay men, bears, leather enthusiasts, drag performers, Latinos, people living with HIV, professionals, athletes, people of faith, youth, seniors, transgender and non-binary people, refugees, and many others.

Every one of these communities serves an important purpose. Each creates safety, visibility, and connection for people with shared experiences.

Standing in the middle of all of them, however, I found myself asking:

The challenge today is not diversity itself. Diversity is our strength.

The challenge is learning how all of those different parts continue to stay connected.



Where is my table?

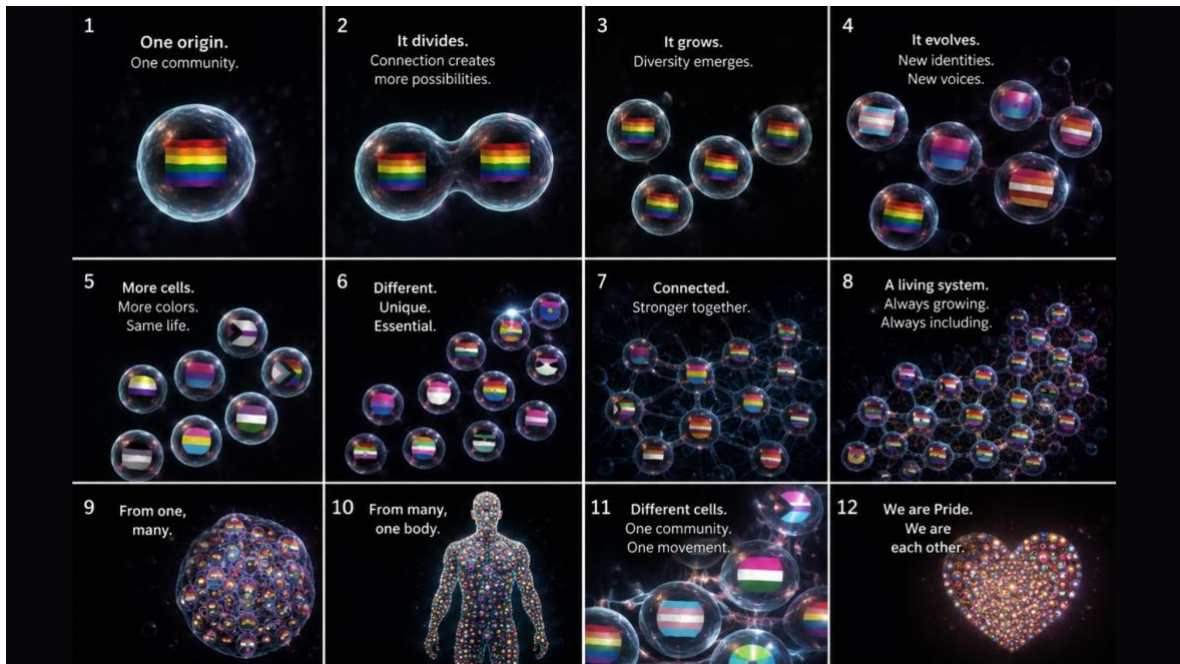
That question helped me realize something important. I do not believe our community is becoming divided. I believe it is becoming specialized.

There is a significant difference.

Every growing system becomes more complex. Families do. Companies do. Countries do. Communities do. As the LGBTQIA+ movement has grown, it has evolved into a rich ecosystem of interconnected groups.

Now tell me, "Is this fragmentation...or is this evolution? people wanted to be recognized—not separated.

We all know this quite famous song “born this way” right? But we sometimes forget to ask what’s after we are born? Yes, we were born this way, but we also grow, we evolve, we develop complex systems and as a community and also as a complex living organism, we require bigger organs to survive.



A Living Body

Every human being begins as a single cell. Through growth, those cells multiply, specialize, and eventually become organs with different functions. A healthy body does not ask every cell to be identical. It depends on each one performing its unique role while remaining connected to the whole.

Perhaps our community is experiencing the same kind of growth. Instead of asking whether we are becoming fragmented, we might ask whether we are simply evolving.

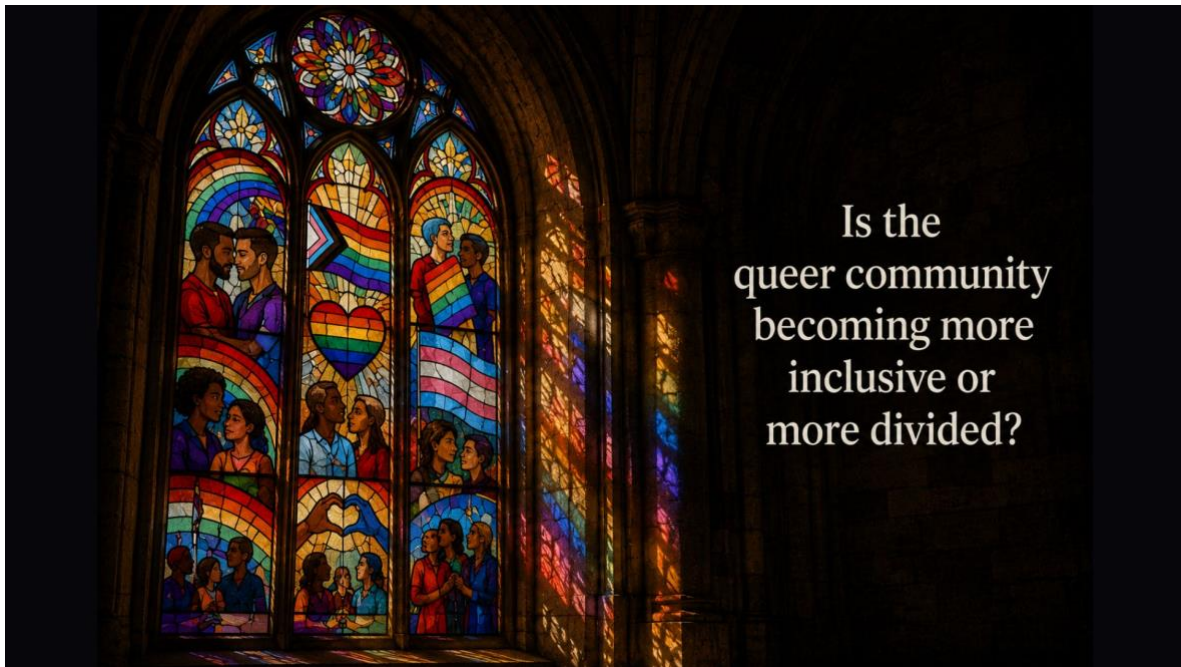
If our community were a living body, what role would you choose to play? Would you be the lungs, bringing fresh air to difficult conversations? The brain, challenging assumptions and imagining better possibilities? The eyes, helping us notice people who have become invisible? The ears, listening to voices that have too often gone unheard? The mouth, speaking up when others cannot? The stomach, nourishing future generations through mentorship, education, and hope? The liver, filtering out resentment, anger, and toxicity before they spread? The hands, quietly doing the work that rarely receives recognition?

Every one of those roles matters. Everyone contributes to the health of the whole.

But if I had to choose one organ, I would choose the heart.

The heart continuously sends oxygen, nutrients, and life throughout the body. It never asks which organ deserves its care more than another. It simply keeps the entire body alive.

I believe our communities need more people willing to become that kind of heart.



Is the
queer community
becoming more
inclusive or
more divided?

So, Is the Queer Community Becoming More Inclusive or More Divided?

After reflecting on this question, my answer is neither.

I believe we are becoming more human.

Human beings are wonderfully complex. We do not all think alike. We do not vote alike. We do not worship alike. We do not love alike. We do not come from the same cultures or life experiences. That diversity should not surprise us. It should be expected.

The true measure of a healthy community is not whether everyone agrees. It is whether people continue choosing one another despite their differences.

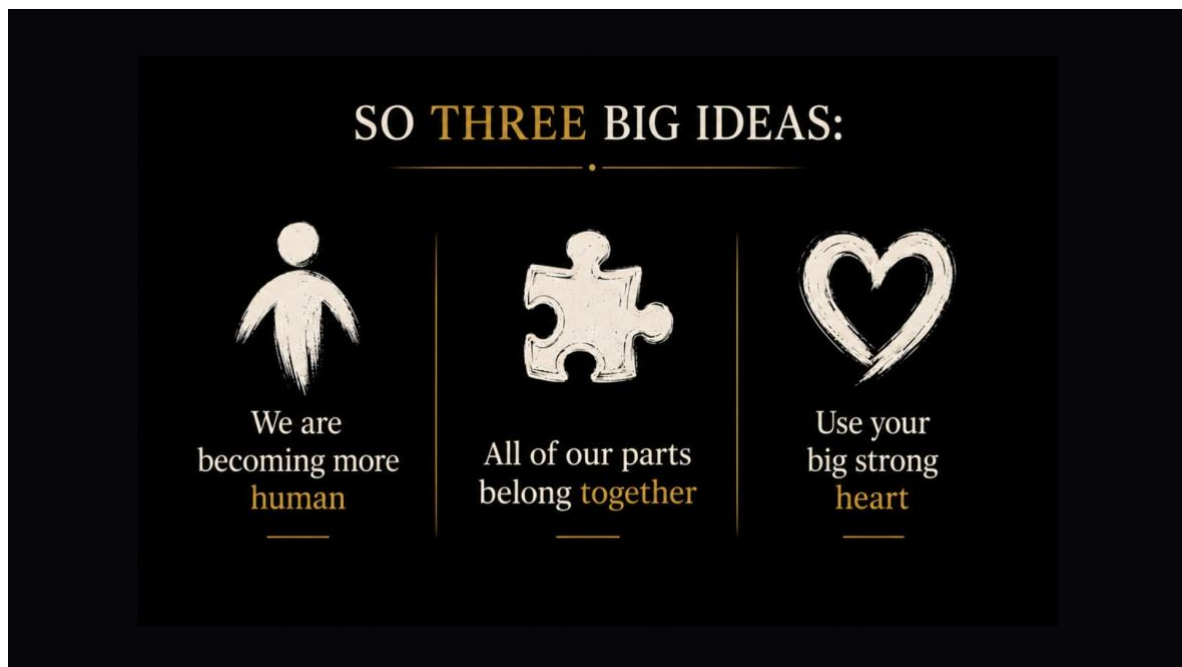
The first Pride was never built on complete agreement. It was built on courage, solidarity, and the willingness to show up for one another.

Perhaps that remains our responsibility today.

To continue showing up.

Because the opposite of exclusion is not inclusion.

It is belonging.



The opposite of exclusion isn't inclusion. It's belonging.

So, three big ideas. It's not about inclusion or exclusion it's just that:

In the process of evolution for our community, **we are naturally becoming more human.**

So please make all our parts feel that they belong, because they do belong, they are part of that unique beautiful, sexy body.

And to do that, I will always encourage you to **use your big strong heart**

If you have any further questions, don't hesitate to contact me through our organizers.

Paco Malagon