

UNITED WISDOM

Insiders and outsiders: when belonging becomes exclusion

Relationships and Intimacy

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Epigraph

> *always also my choice*

Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908), Lecture III, subsection IV: a short fragment of his own sentence about choosing loyalty. University-hosted scan of selected text, printed p.293, web line829. Text.

What this article is about

Insiders can mean people who share a history, work, and responsibility. The distinction helps identify who has been entrusted with a task and who participates in a common decision. Sometimes, however, another conclusion follows: an outsider deserves less attention, their words need no checking, and their inconvenience does not count. A boundary of participation becomes a boundary of human significance. The change need not involve a loud declaration. It can occur in an ordinary joke, exclusion from conversation, or a decision whose consequences are carried by people without a vote.

This article considers the group's view of those outside it. It does not require admitting everybody to every team or making every relationship equally close. Shared work can have important conditions, limited resources, and grounds for refusal. The question is whether a particular boundary justifies a particular action, or belonging has silently become permission to disregard other people. Examples are hypothetical, and historical sources compare questions. We do not diagnose prejudice from one remark or promise that respectful arrangements will remove conflict between groups.

I. Shared history offers closeness without answering everything

Imagine a photography club whose members have organised exhibitions for years. They know one another's working habits, remember difficult projects, and can quickly divide tasks. For a new proposal, approaching a familiar member can be easier than explaining everything to an outsider. The choice has a reasonable subject: experience of working together. It does not follow that an unfamiliar photographer is less capable or less deserving of attention. The group currently knows more about one candidate. Lack of knowledge about the other remains lack of knowledge, rather than a ready negative description.

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Mira suggests examining work by a photographer who does not belong to the club. Sergei replies that insiders already understand the required format better. This may be true of experience with the present exhibition. But if the work has not been examined, its quality has not been established. Convenience of collaboration differs from artistic judgement. The first involves habits and availability; the second involves stated criteria and the photographs themselves. Substitution occurs when known membership becomes a sufficient answer to every question requiring separate grounds.

Preserving closeness does not require continually proving impartiality by choosing outsiders. A familiar participant may really suit the task better. What matters is naming the subject assessed: a deadline, organisational experience, particular work, or responsibility for the room. The decision then has a subject someone can question. If the only explanation is that the person is one of us, justification becomes unlimited. A shared name seems to permit every advantage, including advantages involving things membership neither establishes nor helps perform.

The distinction has a human cost. Clearer consideration may show that familiar decisions were convenient for the group and difficult for others. That does not require declaring the club's entire history bad. Members can acknowledge the value of shared experience and separately consider today's rule. Belonging remains significant without assessing the whole person. Insiders can be closer, better known, and joined by a common promise. Outsiders do not therefore become less truthful, less important, or obliged to earn ordinary respect by joining the club.

II. A participation boundary can be justified

The club has a small room and cannot exhibit every proposed work. Places are limited, so some refusals are inevitable under these conditions. A boundary does not in itself mean humiliation. Organisers can explain the decision's subject, the selection process, and what the organisation can actually provide. Limited space nevertheless answers only a limited question. It explains restricted participation in one exhibition, rather than a need to mock a rejected photographer, conceal the conditions, or declare all nonmembers' work unworthy of examination.

Some roles also require particular access. A responsible person may hold the room's key; agreed responsibility may determine who decides internal spending. A visitor does not acquire control over shared resources simply through wanting to participate. The connection between restriction and task matters. Clear conditions concerning a real action can be assessed. If a rule suddenly expands into prohibiting contact with outsiders, its subject has changed. Without separate grounds, the former condition for holding a key cannot justify directing participants' entire external lives.

A counterexample also concerns the person seeking admission. A photographer may demand a place while disregarding the organisers' work and existing promises to others. Respect does not require satisfying every request. Organisers can state a limit while remaining courteous. Distinguishing refusal of one possibility from devaluing a person helps both sides. It does not remove disappointment or guarantee agreement with selection. It leaves room to dispute the decision without turning every conflicting interest into a claim that one side has no right to exist separately at all.

A justified boundary needs a proportionate explanation, rather than endless public disclosure of every circumstance. Sometimes personal information or security details cannot be shared. An available part of the reason can be stated without promising complete transparency where it would affect others. Confidentiality also has a subject, however. It should not become a universal answer to every question about a rule. Even a limited explanation can identify whether refusal concerns a resource, an accepted obligation, or behaviour. Naming an outsider's affiliation replaces none of these grounds.

III. Exclusion begins with an additional conclusion

Mira notices rejected works being discussed in language that would not be used about a familiar author. The photographer is called a random person and presumed incapable of understanding serious photography. A whole character has been inferred from nonmembership. Without evidence of those capacities, the assumption remains an assumption. It may influence the next decision even if the present rejection was justified by space. The original restriction should therefore be distinguished from the additional judgements members attach to it among themselves.

One joke does not establish the motives of an entire group. Someone may repeat a familiar expression without thinking; another may really consider outsiders inferior. This article does not guess an inner state from a word. Observable actions can be examined: who is not heard, whose information is not checked, and who is assigned a deficiency without grounds. This subject is narrower than a general accusation of bad character and more precise for discussing a rule. It also reveals disagreement within the group instead of treating every member as one unchanging personality.

Sometimes outsiders really have done something unwelcome. An author missed an agreed deadline, a visitor damaged a work, or a contractor failed to keep a promise. Responsibility concerns the particular person and action. Extending it to everyone in their circle needs separate grounds; a common label supplies none. At the same time, what happened should not be cancelled for a pleasing declaration of equality. Respecting dignity does not require avoiding the assessment of harm, the restriction of access, or the acknowledgement of a

breach. Different actions require different conclusions even when emotion invites us to combine them.

Substitution is particularly visible when insiders receive explanations in advance while outsiders receive motives in advance. A familiar person was late because of circumstances; an unfamiliar person was late because they are irresponsible. Information about circumstances may really differ. Then the more precise statement is that one reason is known and another is not yet known. Recognising uncertainty requires no unchecked trust. It prevents filling a gap with negative certainty solely through affiliation. A group can remain cautious while declining the additional conclusion that makes its convenience the final measure of another person.

IV. Loyalty does not justify every group action

In Lecture III of *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, Royce distinguishes devotion to one's cause from destroying others' opportunities to be loyal to theirs. He preserves choice rather than affiliation as fate alone. This is normative philosophy, not a measured law of group behaviour. It raises a question about loyalty's external consequences without requiring acceptance of his whole ideal or self-sacrifice.

The club can be cohesive through mutual support. The same cohesion may accompany a decision to obstruct another group's exhibition because their success feels like a loss. The subject matters: what actions are taken and on what grounds? Competition for a defined resource differs from trying to remove every independent possibility from others. These cases need not be treated alike. Internal assistance remains real, but it does not in itself establish that everything the group does beyond its boundaries is justified.

An uncomfortable objection matters: others sometimes really obstruct shared work. An organisation may protect its materials, deny access after a breach, or oppose another decision. Protection cannot be cancelled by an appeal to respect every relationship. The question concerns the action's relation to the threat. Protecting particular property does not require humiliating every member of another group. Declining cooperation does not require denying their capacity to create valuable work. Proportionality is an editorial orientation for consideration, rather than a promise that its extent is easy to determine in every dispute.

A member need not publicly oppose the group to retain judgement. Sometimes they can decline to support one decision, clarify its grounds, or limit their own role. If disagreement creates risk, open objection is not an exercise in maturity. What matters is distinguishing loyalty to people from agreement with a particular action. The distinction does not guarantee continued belonging; the group may reject it. Pressure nevertheless cannot make every group decision a compulsory moral answer merely because shared history really is precious to the person.

V. Care for a newcomer preserves historical differences

In Leviticus19:32–37, in the KJV, treatment of a resident stranger is connected with remembrance of being strangers in Egypt. This is a command within a particular religious order, alongside other duties, rather than modern group research. The comparative question is whether remembered exclusion helps someone notice a person beyond their familiar circle. The ancient passage establishes neither today's exhibition rules nor modern membership rights.

Mira remembers the difficulty of first proposing her own work to unfamiliar organisers. The memory may help her notice an unexplained refusal now. It does not prove the new photographer experiences everything similarly or make their work suitable. The club can change its treatment while preserving the decision: state the actual restriction and an available way to submit another time. Memory then informs attention to conditions instead of assigning another person one's own biography or promising what organisers cannot deliver.

Reverse idealisation is another risk. An outsider may become a symbol of sincerity supposedly lost by insiders. This, too, judges a whole person by position, with the sign reversed. An unfamiliar photographer need not embody a new moral beginning. They can have good work, an inconvenient schedule, disputed taste, and limitations. Respectful consideration allows this ordinary assortment. Elevating someone above the group is unnecessary for ceasing to rank them below it. Less knowledge calls for caution in both directions, rather than compulsory admiration.

A historical analogy preserves a question without combining every basis into one teaching. Royce considers moral loyalty through service to a cause and other loyalties. The selected biblical passage locates treatment of a stranger within a religious command and a people's memory. The hypothetical editorial scene concerns a photography club. A general phrase about kindness cannot erase the difference. Attention beyond a familiar boundary can be compared while retaining different aims, historical conditions, and the absence of tested effectiveness for the proposed contemporary practice.

VI. Consider a rule together with its application

Organisers say an exhibition is open to everyone. Yet outsiders' submissions are considered only after familiar members receive the places. Formal openness therefore does not establish the actual chance of obtaining a place; this article calculates no such probability. The process can be clarified: what was promised, when selection begins, which places are occupied, and whether announced conditions are the same. The question concerns procedure rather than a compulsory identical result. Different works may receive different decisions. A stated offer should not conceal another arrangement known only to insiders.

Perhaps the exhibition was intended for members from the outset. That format, too, can have a clear basis if it is not presented as something else. Outsiders should not be asked to prepare extensively for selection that does not provide for them at all. An honest boundary can be more useful than promised openness without available space. It does not remove questions about how membership is determined or information provided. It permits discussion of the real rule instead of requiring a newcomer to prove sufficient persistence to discover concealed exclusion.

A counterexample concerns a rule identical in wording but very different in cost. An inconvenient meeting time may be a familiar habit for existing members and an obstacle for someone with another schedule. This does not prove deliberate exclusion. Organisers may lack another available hour. They can acknowledge the limit and consider an alternative for the particular task. If none exists, they should not promise accessibility to everyone. The point is to see a condition and its consequences, rather than declare every inconvenience a moral crime or every habit an unchanging necessity.

Applying a rule can also involve history. An insider is allowed to correct an error; an outsider is rejected after the first inaccuracy. A difference may have grounds in known experience or accepted responsibility. Those grounds should be named separately. Otherwise membership becomes a universal discount on every action. Changing a process does not require identical trust from the first encounter. It requires understanding what establishes trust and what conclusion it permits. Known past reliability does not make every present action correct solely through the performer's name.

VII. People without a vote still experience consequences

The club plans an evening opening with music. Members decide, while neighbours outside the club hear the noise. Nonmembership does not mean no affected interest. A neighbour does not acquire control over the entire programme, but members can consider timing, volume, and an available way to report difficulty. Exact technical or legal rules are not established here. The hypothetical scene makes a narrower distinction: a decision's boundary and its consequences' boundary can differ, so internal agreement does not answer every external question.

Sergei believes that, because the event suits members, neighbours' objections express dislike of art. Before the subject is known, this is another additional conclusion. They may object to sleeping hours, access to a door, or a specific noise. A neighbour may genuinely not want an exhibition nearby. These possibilities need different consideration. If appropriate, the available subject can be asked about without first demanding a positive judgement of the club. Someone need not admire its cause to explain how it affects their ordinary life.

A group may be unable to satisfy every external request. Some conflict or exceed its capacities. It can name what was considered, what changed, and what limit remains. Refusing one demand need not involve ceasing to notice the person. Direct contact can also be unsuitable in a dangerous situation; no single safe method is prescribed. In ordinary voluntary consideration, an external consequence can become part of the decision rather than automatically being insignificant because someone without a membership badge experiences it.

Attention to outsiders is not solely the goodwill of one intermediary. If only Mira listens to neighbours, explains conditions, and relays questions each time, the group may preserve convenience through her continual labour. Defined roles can be divided if members are willing to accept them. This does not guarantee neighbours' agreement. It makes consideration of consequences part of the actual work, rather than an incidental personal service. Membership remains bounded while attention to affected people becomes less dependent on whether someone inside is sufficiently persistent and free to talk.

VIII. A former member does not lose their entire history

A photographer leaves the club and prepares a separate project. Remaining members may regret the departure, redistribute tasks, and end former resource access. These are consequences of a changed role. But declaring all previous work insignificant solely because of departure concerns another subject. Belonging becomes a retrospective condition for recognising completed work. The group can remember contribution without promising previous cooperation. Someone may no longer be an insider and remain the author of actual labour that mattered to a common history.

The opposite difficulty occurs when a former member demands their old authority because they helped so much. Contribution remains, but it does not establish control over every future decision. Gratitude, authorship, agreed rights, and a current role differ. Some questions need particular professional or legal information and are not settled here. In the hypothetical everyday setting, gratitude does not automatically preserve possession of the room's key. Refusal of a key does not justify denying past assistance. Both statements can remain true without putting the whole person on trial.

After separation, groups may want to tell their version of events. The account should not assign identical motives to every former member. Verified actions and remaining disagreements can be named without making affiliation a complete explanation. Where facts are insufficient, uncertainty remains. This is no rule to remain silent about harm or abandon protection. It asks what extent of statement the known history supports. A person's new circle also need not be bad merely because it includes someone with whom the present group no longer cooperates.

Mira may keep separate contact with the departing photographer without conveying confidential club information. Combining these boundaries requires specificity. A real conflict of roles can be considered separately; a prohibition based solely on anxiety about outside contact has another subject. Belonging should not automatically authorise control of every conversation. The article nevertheless promises no compatibility of every relationship. Participation sometimes requires choosing between roles. That choice is better described through actions and responsibility than by declaring all outsiders unworthy of contact.

IX. Protection does not require humiliation

Imagine a visitor repeatedly violating clear exhibition conditions and damaging another person's work. Organisers restrict access. This action should not be cancelled for formal hospitality. Established facts and the restriction's relation to them matter. Yet the person's name, origin, or circle does not explain every similar breach. A space can be protected without extending responsibility to absent people whose actions have not been examined. Specific protection and a general verdict against outsiders serve different purposes.

Some conflicts are not resolved through conversation. A group may end cooperation, decline contact, or use support suited to the circumstances. We require no friendship with someone causing harm and make no contact a moral examination. Respecting dignity also concerns avoiding unnecessary humiliation and generalisation when protection has a sufficient subject. This is an editorial ethical position, not a universal safety algorithm. An actual situation can involve facts and risks absent from the hypothetical scene, which readers must handle within their own context.

A counterexample appears when calm language conceals actual exclusion. Organisers remain courteous but never examine outsiders' works while continuing to promise open selection. Politeness does not in itself establish a fair rule. Actions, conditions, and consequences deserve consideration alongside treatment. A respectful tone can be acknowledged while the process is disputed. A justified restriction can be supported while humiliation is noticed. One quality does not cancel every other question. Belonging becomes exclusion through arrangements as well as harsh words; courteous words can conceal those arrangements.

Members also need not decide the moral quality of the whole group after one episode. Examining a particular rule and the possibility of changing it may be more useful. Sometimes an important condition and a continuing difference become apparent. Either result can be unwelcome. Clarity promises neither reconciliation nor unchanged closeness. It distinguishes a limited role from human value, caution from ready contempt, and protection from an unlimited right to exclude. This leaves a subject for the next decision when the familiar formula of insiders against outsiders no longer helps.

X. Belonging remains a choice with consequences

The club can preserve its name, history, and exhibition format while changing one selection rule or its treatment of rejected photographers. Respecting outsiders need not dissolve a group. A precise account of common work may make the boundary more honest: this is the task, this the resource, and these the accepted conditions. Membership then names a role rather than a complete human rank. This is one possible hypothetical arrangement, not an established stage of community development or a guarantee that everyone inside or outside will regard it as right.

Alternatively, members decline to reconsider. Mira can acknowledge disagreement, withhold support for one action, or alter participation. She need not publicly demonstrate breadth of judgement through a risk she regards as excessive. Others also choose and may not preserve the previous arrangement. The cost deserves recognition instead of a promise that a correct ethical position will necessarily gain acknowledgement. Someone can value history while seeing a limit in the current rules. These attitudes require neither justifying every group decision nor denying everything valuable in its past.

Return to insiders and outsiders: what distinguishes them in this particular action? Known experience, accepted responsibility, or a limited resource? Or a right to be heard tied to membership without grounds? The answer is not always simple. Different grounds nevertheless allow different questions without requiring affiliation to tell us more than it does. A group may have its own tasks while outsiders have their own undertakings and limits. Noticing this separateness neither makes internal connection less real nor obliges us to make every external connection close.

Belonging becomes exclusion when a specific boundary begins to justify an unrelated disregard for another person. A small available action can resist this: describe a rule more precisely, avoid unsupported extensions of responsibility, hear an affected concern, or acknowledge uncertainty. The outcome remains open. Respect promises neither identical membership nor agreement, while a cause's value does not prove every action right. Judgement remains necessary: insiders can be close, while outsiders remain people whose lives are not exhausted by their relationship to our group.

What this means in practice

If you wish, choose one group decision affecting an outsider. In a private note, separate the participation rule from additional judgements about the person. What is actually restricted: a place, a role, information access, or a common task? Which grounds are known, and what is assumed solely through affiliation? You need not declare the whole group bad or every outsider good. You can stop at the distinction and keep it private. It is neither a moral test, a prejudice diagnosis, nor proof that a particular refusal is necessarily unjustified.

If consideration is accessible and safe, clarify one subject: the announced selection process, a restriction's grounds, or an external consequence. Noticing rudeness does not require opening every resource to everyone. Changing tone alone should not conceal an inconvenient rule. Name an available action and those it affects while preserving their right to answer differently. Under threats or coercion, direct objection and contact are not prescribed. The article establishes no safe course for every situation and replaces no necessary professional information.

After a possible clarification, notice what is clearer: a justified boundary, an unconfirmed generalisation, a participation cost, or a continuing difference. A pleasant result should not be required to prove the question right. Sometimes a group changes one action; sometimes conditions remain. The practice is voluntary and promises no acceptance. Its purpose is to keep common work, actual responsibility, and human dignity distinct. Belonging retains a defined scope instead of authorising judgement of the entire life of everyone outside it.

Key quotation

> *loyal to loyalty*

Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, Lecture III, subsection IV: a short fragment of his own moral principle. University-hosted scan, printed p.294, web line843. It is compared with the external consequences of group loyalty, rather than declared a contemporary empirical model. Text.

Connections between traditions

Read text	Question	Difference and limit
Royce, Lecture III, III–IV	How does internal loyalty affect others' possibilities?	A normative service ideal is neither measured group psychology nor a requirement of self-sacrifice
Leviticus19:32–37, KJV	Can remembering an outsider's position help notice a newcomer?	A religious command is no contemporary membership rule, law, or exhibition selection procedure
Hypothetical photography club	When does a task boundary become a general judgement of people?	Scenarios are not a factual case; reasonable restriction and humiliation are considered separately

Sources

1. Josiah Royce. *The Philosophy of Loyalty*. Macmillan, 1908. University-hosted selected-text PDF, from *The Philosophy of Josiah Royce*, printed pp. 290–294, selected Lecture III context. Continuous context at web lines 711–859 read; the editor's note 671–672 confirms the original edition. Not the whole book. The collection's official publisher identifies editor John K. Roth and the 1982 edition; this extracted scan's exact printing is not established. Rights UNKNOWN; no universal licence.

2. *Bible, King James Version*. Leviticus19:32–37. Wikisource. Selected context at web lines383–384 and the chapter opening read; no claim of reading the whole book. Identified English version; print-base year unestablished, rights UNKNOWN. Bounded paraphrase without direct quotation.

Tags

belonging, insiders and outsiders, group, exclusion, dignity, membership, participation boundary, responsibility, loyalty, fidelity, choice, resources, rule, procedure, refusal, respect, difference, outsider, consequences, generalisation, uncertainty, memory, former member, protection, proportionality, photography club, Josiah Royce, Leviticus, historical philosophy, religious ethics, United Wisdom

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