



[David Brooks](#) New York Times, JUNE 24, 2016

“In any organization there are some people who serve at the core. These insiders are in the rooms when the decisions are made. ...Then there are outsiders. They throw missiles from beyond the walls. They are untouched by internal loyalties and try to take over from without. ...But there’s also a third position in any organization: those who are at the edge of the inside. These people are within the organization, but they’re not subsumed by the group think. They work at the boundaries, bridges and entranceways. ...

A person at the edge of inside can be the strongest reformer. This person has the loyalty of a faithful insider, but the judgment of the critical outsider. Martin Luther King Jr. had an authentic inner experience of what it meant to be American. This love allowed him to critique America from the values he learned from America. He could be utterly relentless in bringing America back closer to herself precisely because his devotion to American ideals was so fervent. ... The person on the edge of inside is involved in constant change. The true insiders are so deep inside they often get confused by trivia and locked into the status quo. The outsider is throwing bombs and dreaming of far-off transformational revolution. But the person at the doorway is seeing constant comings and goings. As Richard Rohr says, ‘she is involved in a process of perpetual transformation, not a belonging system. She is more interested in being a searcher than a settler.’ ...

Insiders and outsiders are threatened by those on the other side of the barrier. But a person on the edge of inside neither idolizes the Us nor demonizes the Them. Such a person sees different groups as partners in a reality that is paradoxical, complementary and unfolding.”

Freedom at the Arboretum is a unique celebration for those “at the edge of the inside.” From the variety of our “inside” positions (and from our outside lawn-chairs) we bring one another doors, bridges, walkways, and a potluck of desserts! Thank you!

+Martin Wells