

Triple your team's focus, regardless of the chaos. Learn how from author **Shawn Vanderhoven**
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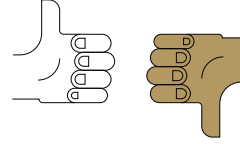
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INVITE DISSENT

Leverage your team's brainpower to make tough trade-offs



REMEDY FOR: Team unequipped to make tough trade-offs.

THE REASONING: Dissent leads to discernment. When you make trade-off decisions alone, you miss what your team sees: which cuts will hurt and which will free them to do their best work.

Pick two important projects that you don't have the bandwidth to do both.

OPTION 1: START WITH EXPOSURE THERAPY Face the pain of trade-offs directly. Clarity begins with deliberate confrontation. Don't run from hard choices look straight at them. As you review important work competing for your team's attention, ask two questions:

1. What sacrifice comes with walking away from this opportunity?
2. What sacrifice comes with pursuing this opportunity?

OPTION 2: ESTABLISH A MURDER BOARD Don't defend your preferences—attack every option's weaknesses. Put each idea on the table and ask, "Why shouldn't we do this?" Push your team to surface every possible weakness: cost, delay, complexity, confusion. The option that survives scrutiny is your best path forward.

- Assign a devil's advocate for each meeting if challenge doesn't come naturally to your team culture
- Task team members with building the strongest case against each design, not just defending their favorites
- Laud the best critiques, not the safest ideas
- The goal isn't pessimism—it's making the best recommendation within fixed resource constraints

OPTION 3: DECLARE YOUR MINORS When you can't eliminate important work, name it as a "minor" with explicitly limited capacity. This moves minors forward slowly while protecting focus on your major priorities. Minors get:

- Minimal resources (10-15% of capacity)
- Clear boundaries on scope and timeline
- Permission to move slowly without guilt

This prevents good work from dying while keeping it from consuming the energy needed for great work.

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PAUSE TOOLS

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