

Have the pseudo-religious cults promoted belief systems that create emotional problems?¹

Alexander S. Holub, Ph.D.

Let's take a good long look at what the cults are doing and how they are doing it. They are, as you shall see, attempting to create a *standard personality* in each of their members regardless of the fact that there are individual differences in all of us. This standard personality is necessary for the survival of the cult because any deviation from their imposed norms will cause a disintegration of the whole organization. If there is anything that cults absolutely don't want is for their organization to dissolve. The egos of those in charge couldn't take the loss of worshipers — and the loss of cash flow.

All of the cults practice some sort of mind-controlling techniques and these techniques may have created a whole new and extraordinary classification of mental aberration. Some persons have tried to compare the cult mind controlling techniques to brainwashing, but this is misleading. The brainwashing of Korean War fame was based firmly on physical coercion. The cults require, first of all, *voluntary* participation. By manipulating words, playing on the ignorance of people, and people's natural desire to belong, cults make it seem like what an individual did was his or her personal choice. It was, in fact, a cleverly designed presentation. From the opening contact and throughout the daily life of the cult member, control is accomplished *not* by *direct* physical coercion but through information (rather, *misinformation*)² and its manipulation. We must also remember that subtle coercive forces are also at work here. Forces based on conformity and fear.

The communications techniques that the cults use rely heavily on the use and abuse of information. They use deceitful and contorted language, skillfully designed hypnotic suggestions, profound emotional experiences, and emotionally disabling tactics intensified by physical exhaustion and isolation.

To seek out new members, they use devious sales pitches. They offer images of easy paths to rapture, personal encounters with God, Jesus, or the group's own living (or dead) messiah. The sales pitch is always based on some sort of "hook" that catches the attention of the possible member. This hook can be anything from working for "world peace" or a better world, to the imminent "end of the world," to "inner peace and harmony," to being "saved from the pains of Hell," to the experience of "real love" or any number of things. The thing to remember is that they claim they are the *only* ones with all the answers and the *only* ones who can save the world. Once hooked, the new member is given the initial indoctrination. There is, at some point, usually a single moment of "conversion," an intensely *emotional* experience *engineered* through the adept exploitation of information and emotions. When this occurs the new member is surrounded by everyone at the experience and is confronted by their "love" for him or her. This is then contrasted to what it is like "outside" of the group.

After this, the cults step up the indoctrination imparting the group's beliefs and values, for an individual is now at the most receptive time. More importantly, now the leaders begin to sow

¹ Is it new or is it a more extreme version of what is already practiced? A psychological fact that we have to deal with is that there are more people in mental institutions due to religion than any other reason.

² There is an old Yiddish saying, "A half-truth is a whole lie." All cults are experts at manipulating information.

specific suggestions which lie at the root of the mind-control process. They call for the individual to "surrender" to "turn off the satanic (or reactive) mind" or merely to "let things float." All of these are nothing more than *covert hypnotic suggestions*. Most often, the new convert is placed in an ongoing trance state making for easy manipulation and control.

Simple self-hypnotic rituals close the indoctrinee's mind to any doubts, questions, and disturbing memories of family, friends, and the outside world. This also has a tendency to produce a manipulated emotional "rapture," which is a numbed, mindless high usually interpreted as the accomplishment of their peak spiritual goal. That is why you see cult members walk around with that vacuous, expressionless smile on their faces.³ Also, this is where the cult experience departs from respected, *valid* religious or spiritual experience.

There have been seen twenty serious mental, emotional, and physical effects of cult life. Physiologically there has been seen extreme weight gain or loss, as well as abnormal skin conditions such as rashes, eczema, and acne. In women menstrual dysfunction has been reported and in men there has been observed higher pitched voices and reduced facial hair growth. In both sexes sexual dysfunction has also been seen. It is interesting to note that sexual relations is generally frowned upon by the cult — except, in many instances, by the leaders.

Psychological problems which have been reported are pressures by the cult leading to feelings of fear, guilt, hostility, and depression as well as violent outbursts and self-destructive or suicidal tendencies. The most disturbing are the bizarre disturbances of awareness, perception, memory, and other basic information processing capacities.

Former members of cults have complained of disorientation and of "floating" in and out of trance states. This is referred to as depersonalization neurosis in psychology. They've also talked of recurrent nightmares, hallucinations, and delusions for up to *eight years* after leaving the cult. They have discussed instances of perplexing or frightening "psychic" phenomena which they have experienced and due to the intense rituals being repeated ad infinitum, they have the inability to break mental rhythms of chanting, meditation, or **Glossolalia** (i.e. **speaking in "tongues"**).

The term "information disease" may represent a disorder of awareness caused by the manipulation of information which feeds every sensory channel of the nervous system. Neurophysiology has established that, from birth, information processing pathways in the brain are shaped and maintained by the steady flow of information through the nervous system. At any age, these same pathways may be converted or damaged by a sudden bombardment of new information or experience (i.e. trauma).

In some cases, new and intense experiences may bring about a reorganization of long-standing synaptic microstructures. In others, new patterns of thought and feeling may simply

³ "Hypnotism itself is a condition in which engrams (definition: a mental image of pain kept in the supposed 'reactive mind') may be keyed in which have never before been restimulated: *the glassy-eyed stare of the person who has been 'too often hypnotized,' the lack of will seen in people too often hypnotized, the dependence of the subject upon the operator: all these things stem from the keying in of engrams* (italics, mine). Any time the body is rendered 'unconscious' *without physical pain* (italics, mine), no matter how light the degree of 'unconsciousness' is, even if it is only the lightness of weariness, an engram may be keyed in." ***Dianetics, The Modern Science of Mental Health***, L. Ron Hubbard, P. 195. Obviously, Scientology keys in a lot of engrams. Hubbard has claimed that Scientology and Dianetics "therapy" doesn't use hypnosis. The fact is that both work through an extensive use of emotional memory. As soon as you recall an emotional experience, whether positive or negative, you go into a trance state; that is, a hypnotic trance. The clearings and auditings in Scientology are nothing more than the induction, promotion, and manipulation of trance states.

bypass or be superimposed over the older ones. There is an apparent link between the frequency and the intensity of reported defects and the amount of time spent performing cult mind-stilling ritual practices. Extended practice of these techniques appears to have long-lasting repercussions on the mind. Some former members have said that they have actually experienced "physical pain" while attempting to make reasoned, independent decisions as well as frightening periods with the inability to distinguish fantasy from reality.

Cult life is a life of interminable flux. There are programs of menial labor, round-the-clock fund-raising, and recruiting duties permeated throughout with endless rituals, devotional, proselytizing and/or even "therapeutic" sorts of activities. One of the reshuffled priorities is that of sexual relations. This ranks quite low. In fact, 72-percent of the cults promote celibacy.

Physical punishment has also been reported. One-fifth of the ex-cult members have reported beatings, starvation, physical bondage, cold showers, and dowsings. This, as well as, long hours of humiliation and degrading labor activities await a cult member who commits the heresy of thinking and questioning the validity of the teachings or superiors.⁴

In order to be a member of a cult it is necessary that you follow specific guidelines. Invariably they want your money. You must realize that they *will* take it because they can do more with it than you. Remember the "hook?" Well, your money is used to get "world peace" or whatever else *they* have deemed necessary to do with *your* money. Besides your money, they'll be glad to take your possessions as well. They can take and sell them for more money. Next, you are required to do fund-raising drives or proselytize for them as well as to give them *all* of the money that you make from any outside jobs. It isn't necessary to state the money that they get doesn't in any way go for what they claim. It's quite obvious that it is used to get the higher echelon in the organization a pretty nice life free from income taxes while you're being overworked and starved.

The most compelling of the acts of cult life is the intense and virtually daily rituals or "therapeutic" practices which are required. The methods vary but there three to seven hours per day are spent practicing one or more techniques. In other words, what is happening here is the direct *induction, promotion, and manipulation* of different trance states. After the appropriate induction, as well as the post-hypnotic suggestions, you will come out of the practice "feeling good" as if something has been accomplished. The fact of the matter is that any problems you've had have been successfully *repressed* further into the unconscious and not dealt with in any effective manner. Part of this repression is through the skillful use of language which directs the process. It is from the process of repression of psychological or emotional problems that the physiological problems later develop.

There are also group practices which are required. There is a good bit of time spent in group rituals, including "sensitivity" sessions, psychodramas and role playing, guided fantasies, "witnessing," and other emotional confessional activities.

On the average of twenty to thirty hours per week are spent attending lectures, seminars, workshops, or required private study of cult doctrines. In all, usually forty to seventy hours per

⁴ "A society which practices punishment of *any kind* (italics, mine) against any of its members is carrying on a contagion of aberration" (definition: conduct that is not supported by reason), *Dianetics, The Modern Science of Mental Health*, L. Ron Hubbard, P. 185 Punishment, both mental and physical, have been reported to be part of Scientology's internal affairs. (See, *L. Ron Hubbard, Messiah or Madman*, Bent Croydon and L. Ron Hubbard, Jr. also *The Bare-Faced Messiah: The True Story of L. Ron Hubbard* by Russell Miller. Look also at internal directives regarding Amnesty from *punishment* to Missions and their members who don't exceed their quotas).

week are spent in various mind-controlling practices. All this time results in negative *long-term effects* on both the health and the emotions.

Whenever someone literally escapes from the cults, the deprogramming, as it is termed, can be very difficult. Coming out can be a most harrowing ordeal. The average time to full rehabilitation is almost a *year-and-a-half*. Of those deprogrammed, one-fifth reported having self-destructive or suicidal tendencies. One-third of them had further sought professional follow-up counseling or therapy.

The cults play on the fact that their practices produce, essentially, an addiction response. They realize that whenever anyone wants to get away that they *will* go through *withdrawals* — the same as any *drug addict*. These withdrawals are used and misinformation about them is given to the cult member attempting to leave. The withdrawals are the "devil" coming to take over your body, the "purity" of your mind being corrupted, or any number of out-and-out lies. If you absolutely: need to perform certain rituals; need to have specific level courses; cannot make a decision or take care of problems that come up in your life (or marriage) without talking to their "counselors," pray to their version of god, or consult their writings; cannot live without the organization; are attached to the philosophy of the group, then you're addicted to a cult.

The psychological trauma that the cults inflict on its members is directly related to the amount of time spent in the indoctrination and mind-controlling rituals. The majority of damage appears to occur during the first few months. For those who got out, deprogramming has helped to speed up the recovery and reintroduction into the regular society with fewer long-term effects.

The majority of the cult groups, more than 75%, are *fundamentalist Christian* or *Evangelical* sects. These include: *The Way International*; *The Christ Family*; *The Tony Alamo Christian Foundation*; *The Children of God*; *The Church of Bible Understanding*; *The People's Temple*; *The Branch Davidians*; and *The Jehovah's Witnesses*. These groups apparently employ some rather sophisticated mind control techniques. The Christian-based cults have reported the highest average hours per week in ritual indoctrination. They also rated higher than all of the cults, except Scientology, in the combined long-term effects and the average rehabilitation (19 months).

Cults continue to claim that any inquiry into their operations and practices is forbidden by the Constitution. Yet, U.S. courts have repeatedly ruled that the First Amendment provides only unqualified freedom of religious belief, not unlimited freedom to practice those beliefs in ways that may violate existing laws or pose a threat to the health and safety of individuals or society. Similarly, the mental-health establishment has historically been slow to examine matters of faith in medical and scientific terms (Conway and Siegelman, *The Awesome Power of the Mind Probers*, *Science Digest*, Sept. 1983, Pp. 72-75)

All cults have some things in common:

1. They all think that they *own* "The Truth" or God. Only that group and their teacher is right and everyone else is wrong.
2. They all make a lot of statements, which are half-truths, that can easily be agreed with by just about everyone. This is called a "yes-set," and is designed to get you to continue to

agree with them. Once you've agreed, with a series of questions they will bring in their own philosophy and you'll tend to agree with that as well. It isn't the philosophy you're agreeing with at all, but your mind has gotten used to answering "yes" so naturally you'll answer in the affirmative again. This, they will say, is the "truth" coming out.

3. Only they have the answers and only they are the "saviors of the world." It is only through them that you will achieve true liberation, enlightenment, clarity of thought, etc. How much freedom do you have if you're attached to a group and its philosophy?
4. They all create an emergency that only that group can solve. With this emergency comes a scapegoat. Cults will always have a scapegoat, whether real or imaginary. This is necessary in order to direct the unconfined hostility.
5. They all create a depersonalization, a dissociation of the individual from their body and their self. A distance is created between the individual and his or her emotions as well as their experience of the world. Consistently being depersonalized is a sign of mental illness.
6. They impose their own brand of morality on the members of the cult claiming that they are morally and ethically right and the rest of the world (or even any other group who holds similar beliefs) is wrong.
7. Much of their information is based on half-truths and down-right manipulations, misquotes, etc. of material.
8. They use the "carrot-on-the-stick" ploy to keep the members within the organization or coercion on psychological, emotional, or spiritual levels.
9. They all promise personal and spiritual freedom but tie you in to the organization and its philosophy.
10. They are quick to point out the evils in the society and in everyone else but don't see any in themselves.
11. They all promise some sort of "transcendental" experience.

Many people get involved in the cults because they are searching for a fast road to "enlightenment," or because they lack any real discipline in their life, or *think* that they are spiritually or emotionally lacking.⁵

There are test questions which can be asked to find out if what you're experiencing from the group is truly a spiritual experience, or if you are being controlled by them:

⁵ This is one of the problems with occidental religious philosophies. They create a lack in the individual, which they *alone* can fill, and it is from that lack that the control is exerted. Then they criticize the cults for beating them at their own game.

1. Do(es) the experience(s) that I am having lead to sound ethical and moral values, to wholesome behavior, and attitudes toward myself and others; that is, can I relate better to others as well as to myself including those *not* in the group; do these experiences contribute to my *total* experience of the world and all people and things in it? Or is my experience and my life being controlled, manipulated, and restricted?
2. Is what I am learning in accordance with the deepest wisdom of human experience as has been seen consistently down through the ages, or am I being taught only *one* point of view while others are being criticized, discredited, and even ridiculed?
3. Does it feel deeply, intuitively "right"--and does it continue to feel right as time goes on? Do I have even the slightest doubt that there may be something wrong with it?
4. Does it allow for the freedom to think, to question, to grow and expand beyond the initial point free from attachments to previous, and even the present, institutions, philosophies, beliefs, and so on? Am I allowed to criticize, to research, to question, and to find out for myself outside of the group and its materials, or does doing these things cause me to be ostracized and become anathema from the group? When I do question, do I get "pat" answers or told to that I have to "accept it?" The question may be: If I am free as the group tells me I am, am I attached to the philosophy, the group or organization, or a specific book or series of books? To be truly free means that you do not rely on anything or anyone except yourself. Am I allowed to leave the group with their blessing and allowed to go on my own without reliance on them in any way, shape, or form?

A true transcendental experience is beyond the common emotions found in most religious techniques which are being passed off as an experience of God or some aspect of God. There are commonalities in the techniques being passed off as transcendental which are used in most primitive religious rites, and which are common in many pseudo-religious cults. *First*, it is necessary to take on particular body positions. These positions are *supposed* to enhance the flow of "spiritual energy." They do nothing more than create a physical state for the speedy induction of a trance. *Second*, music is used which has certain beats, timing, and drive and which has an effect on the brain wave frequency and/or heart rate (percussion and bass tones). This includes anything from 50 to 72 beats per minute (bpm). You will find that the relaxed heart rate is usually around 60 bpm and the normal heart rate is 72 bpm. Almost all religious music is within these ranges. Gospel music, for example, has a tempo set about 60 bpm, quite appropriate for trance induction and manipulation. *Third*, body movements and swaying motions are used to assist in the trance states. *Fourth*, at some point there is a grasping of hands which also has the effect of assisting in the induction of trance states. *Fifth*, a leader who is skilled in the use of voice production promotes the state. That is, voice inflection, tone, word spacing, and so on are all part of hypnotic trance induction and they all have specific effects. *Sixth*, directed and controlled breathing is used. This tends to be high in the chest and quite fast not allowing for deep breathing. Deep breathing gives the individual physical and mental control. This is taught in the Oriental martial arts as well as in many Oriental spiritual practices such as yoga and tantra. The fast high breath also brings about hyperventilation thus causing lightheadedness and possibly even fainting. This is then passed off as some sort of "mystical" or "spiritual"

experience. *Finally*, specific instructions are given on what's to be expected in the experience in the trance state. It then appears that the group has a "connection" with some sort of spiritual realm. From that point, further instructions are given. These instructions are nothing more than post-hypnotic suggestions. This, then, is passed off as religious experience. By this time, you're hooked! Then, due to embarrassment, fear, low self-esteem, a sense of insecurity and/or inferiority, the need to belong, and even the need to please, you will do what you're told and try to get others involved. With every person you can't convince, you will assume that s/he is "lost" and wrong and you're right. With every person you can convince, you will become more convinced that you're right. So, the cult is in a win-win situation with you.

Belief Patterns: How are Beliefs Maintained?

The word "belief" is defined as: a conviction; an opinion; something of which one is convinced. It is better defined as "an opinion which is acted upon *as if* it were a fact." Beliefs do not need facts to back them up; in fact, most beliefs have little or no facts backing them up. All they need is acceptance. For example, people have beliefs about the color blue (e.g. it's a healing color; it's good for relaxation). The facts about the color blue is that it is part of the visible spectrum of the whole electromagnetic spectrum with a wave length of 500 millimicrons. Beliefs are associated with particular states of mind characterized by an intensified attention and receptiveness, and increased responsiveness to a certain set of parameters or filters. This description is one that Milton Erickson used to describe "trance" or "hypnosis." In other words, beliefs promote trance states, and when in trance states your attention is focused only on fulfilling the belief.

A belief acts as a filter, a predisposition that is carried forth into some situation. In this sense, a belief operates as a post-hypnotic suggestion. This predisposition will determine what a person pays attention to and includes in their model of the world, and, by definition, what is deleted. What you believe determines the kind of feedback that you get, as well as the distinctions you make. Beliefs tend to cluster around those distinctions, and behaviors surround those beliefs. In psychological terms, this is referred to as a complex.

Beliefs can also be thought of as "stabilizers." They provide a template or map to make sense of and give purpose to the world of experience. That is, they serve to establish and maintain coherency. Beliefs only deal with the present moment in time. They do not focus on the future or the past. They are in the "now."

Beliefs dictate what responses you make to the world. The ways in which beliefs are validated act as a self-fulfilling prophecies. Even prior to the selection of a response, your choice is often removed because the belief itself is synonymous with a perceptual filter that allows you to only notice parts of the world that are consistent with the belief you already have. For example, how you define a problem is going to determine how you deal with it. People define their reality by their beliefs.

Beliefs are typically in place before the behavior occurs. A person is going to believe s/he can do something before actually doing it. Once commitment or conviction occurs, then the brain goes through the feedback mechanisms to guide behavior to meet the map set up by the belief.

A belief is a generalization about something that has been induced through inference. Beliefs, by definition, tend not to be supported by empirical data. In fact, beliefs often preclude the necessity for sensory feedback. Nevertheless, people operate as if the beliefs are true and will continue to be true throughout all time and *must* be true for everyone. So, in this sense, a belief exists as an idea or an ideal, a model, standard or archetype as distinguished from sensory data.

Alfred Korzybski, the founder of General Semantics, stated that human beings act as if they have the ability to transcend and separate (dissociate) from ongoing sensory feedback to arrive at opinions, judgements, and beliefs about the real nature of anything. He continued on, "People form beliefs when they don't know what's real." Hence, people tend to operate from an ideal; a fantasy image of reality than from what reality is.

Beliefs are a static, coded version of an ongoing process. This means that beliefs take an ongoing process and prevent it from continuing. As such, they are a form of motivation to experience through perception that which they represent symbolically.

As has been mentioned, Korzybski stated that a belief is something we build when we don't know what's real. Beliefs are categorical generalizations which can really never be justified in an epistemological sense because beliefs are categorical generalizations and in that sense, artificial. Since we can never know all experience, any beliefs that we may hold are only maps. We can never know all of the territory. Therefore, a well-formed belief is not going to be based on the statistics there may be to support it. Rather, it will be based on one primary factor: how well does the belief serve the individual. A valuation and evaluation of belief is to be primarily based on the consequences of having that belief.

Basic points about beliefs:

1. Beliefs are **nominalized**. This can be equated in English with the gerund, which is a verb used as a noun (e.g. loving, a verb as in "Loving you makes me feel good"). In other words, beliefs are ongoing processes which become static in time and space. They stay the same under all circumstances and are, hence, unchanging.
2. Beliefs are created out of personal experience of the world and are conditioned by involving the judgement about oneself. Beliefs are preconceived from cause/effect relationships involving assumptions of oneself. (Assumptions which draw a conclusion as well as a behavioral directive).

Beliefs come from a idea that X and Y are synonymous. (The old concept that appleses equals oranges.) They are built on assumptions that are taken to be true but have never been explored. They are generalizations assumed to exist throughout all existence and time, and often, applying to everyone everywhere. Hence, they set a direction for thought, perception, & action

Mental Laws or Principles of Belief

1. ***Law of Concentration*** - The conscious mind can dwell on only one thought at a time. That which has the most focus tends to become manifest. But only if it is realistic and achievable.
2. ***Law of Substitution*** - Since the conscious mind focuses on one thing at a time, put your best thought in there to have what you want in life.
3. ***Law of Utilization*** - There are no mistakes in communications, only feedback. If what you're doing isn't working, adjust and change what you're doing. As the old adage says,

“If you keep doing what you’ve always done, you’re going to keep getting what you’ve always got.”

4. ***Law of Requisite Variety*** - In cybernetics, one main rule is that the element in a system which has the greatest flexibility and variability in its behavior will have the greatest control on that system. The greater variability and flexibility you have gets you the most control over their experience. Matching your internal communications means adjusting to the outside.

When contradictory information is added the person must process the information at higher logical levels. This forces a mental reorganization causing a paradigm shift. This brings it up to the a higher logical level.

The greater the amount of uncertainty the greater the amount of information conveyed with resolution of that uncertainty. This is called "misdirection" and it is a technique of many who focus on creating beliefs in others. Misdirection builds expectations. When you shift perceptual position, see things from a different perspective, it changes the way you view and hear something. Belief is not about *what* can't be done, although many beliefs people adhere to are literally impossible. Belief comes out of a *model or map* of what can't be done. Belief is from a notion of *impossibility* with presuppositions attached. The presuppositions support the beliefs. Beliefs are categorical information that act as posthypnotic suggestions and set out to prove what they *assume*. Most beliefs are built up from the fact that at certain times in life we don't know what's real. Beliefs are stabilized by the meanings in labels we attach to them, hence, the context in which they were accepted shapes their meaning. The basic structure of belief is: $X_{gen} = Y_{gen}$ (the X generalization = the Y generalization) which is seen in a statement such as "You didn't smile. You don't like me." Two generalizations become synonymous and two ongoing processes are linked as if they were the same or similar. Involved also is an either/or process which can be seen in a statement such as "Either you smile at me, or you don't like me."

Polya Patterns

Patterns of Plausible Inference

George Polya (a Hungarian born mathematician) pointed out that beliefs are rarely developed or proved on the basis of actual experience. Polya was able to find out what it is that switches a belief. The premise being that since there's an infinite number of numbers, you could really never know if any axiom or theorem was true for every number. In fact, it's impossible to ever know for sure. Consequently, we operate mostly off of principles of plausibility. Polya discovered that each time something validates something you believe, each validation needs a smaller and smaller amount of strength. Even though it reinforces it, it really doesn't reinforce it that much. But one counter-example can flip the pictures and get an individual to recode the information that built the belief in the first place at a higher logical level. This is why being able to set up a train of thought that paces the way a person thinks and then violating it works so well to cause confusion and with the appropriate manipulation of information, that confusion can be easily resolved and a mind changed.

1. **Meta Pattern: Probability**
Credibility based on past experience.

- A. The more something occurs, the more an individual believes it will occur again.
- B. If something which is not very probable (based on past experience) occurs, it tends to validate the cause/effect belief which supports it.

2. **Environments Which Increase Plausibility**

- A. ***Verification of a Consequence***: If a particular belief (B) implies a particular consequence (C) and that consequence is verified, then it makes the belief more plausible. However, it does not prove the belief. The degree of plausibility will be strengthened as long as counter-examples are not considered; that is, if there is a lack of other probable causes.

If B implies C and C occurs, then the credibility of B is strengthened.

- 1) Successive verification of several consequences.
- 2) Verification of an improbable consequence.

- B. ***Contingency***: If a belief (B) presupposes (or requires a necessary preceding condition) some event or phenomenon (N) and the presupposition is verified, then it strengthens the belief (i.e. makes it more plausible).

If B presupposes N and N occurs, then the belief becomes more credible.

- C. ***Inference from Analogy***: A belief (B) is more plausible if an analogous conjecture can be verified. If the analogy (A) cannot be shown to be true, but it can be shown to be credible, then it nevertheless increases the plausibility of that belief.

If B is shown to be analogous to A and A occurs, then B becomes more credible.

- D. ***Disprove the Converse***: The plausibility of a belief increases if a rival conjecture (C) is disproved.

If B is proved to be incompatible with C and C is false, then B becomes more credible.

Inventory of Belief

Structure and Presuppositions

The process of dealing with beliefs isn't about finding out if a belief is right or wrong, nor about validating or invalidating a belief. It's dealing with the functionality of that belief. Does that belief assist the person in dealing with reality in an effective way? Or does the belief retain a fantasy life which keeps the person from relating to others or their self? "Belief" is a low-quality

word, a generalization, and as such restricts (in some way) thinking and behavior by the fact that "belief" has been built from assumptions that have not been explored or examined. Beliefs can remain intact in some instances because often it is better to question and examine the unexplored assumptions they maintain and find the validity of their implied universality. This begins to diminish the impact of a "limiting" belief and expand the range of what's possible.

1. ***Incongruity Between Levels***: This involves the coding of phenomena at the wrong logical levels. Involved here is a conflict between the conscious mind and unconscious motivation. "Conflict" can be understood in relation to the notion of logical levels.
2. ***Temporal Ambiguities and Discrepancies***: Pay attention to temporal predicates, particularly the tense of verbs. For example, "could" is ambiguous because it can refer to past or future.
 - A. Circular Causality: This involves the paradoxical nature of causality. This is because the phenomena can run both backward and forward in time (i.e. "I want to leave because I'm tired" or "I'm tired because I want to leave").
 - B. Time-Frame of Cause/Effect Relationships: Where do people put their convincers in terms of time?
3. ***Unexplored Assumptions***: Typically, a belief sets out to prove what it assumes. Discover what it is that is out of awareness that somebody is using as evidence to build, maintain, and give credence to a belief.
4. ***Presuppositions***: We're interested particularly in those embedded inside of the Metamodel Patterns.
5. ***Complex Equivalencies***:
 - A. Mixing Semantic Levels (i.e. beliefs about identity, capability, and behavior)
 - B. Criteria and Values: These are evaluative determinants (i.e. linguistic forms that nominalize — adjectives). Exploring the either/or boundaries that are set by generalizations and result in mutually-exclusive beliefs.

It is important to remember that whenever we learn anything the brain reconstructs itself neurologically and biochemically. The cults take this natural process, induce changes, and maintain those changes through behavioral and thought control and restructuring individual belief structures. With such control exerted and subtle, and sometimes direct, pressures to conform the continued support of the individual is sustained.

Research has found that there are specific conditions which will strengthen conformity. The cults use these to a great degree. They are:

1. The individual is made to feel incompetent or insecure. With the many Evangelical cults, the leader or founder is the only one with knowledge. Everyone else has to strive to get to

his or her level of “spiritual development.”

2. The group has at least three people. Whenever an individual begins indoctrination or begins to question, he or she is constantly surrounded by those already convinced. The neophyte is never alone.
3. The group is unanimous in any decision that is made. From the founder or leader(s) comes the choice and from all below comes agreement.
4. The individual admires the group’s status and attractiveness. Often, cults have high-profile members. These persons are paraded in front of new members making the group appear to be appealing. It doesn’t matter that these high-profile members aren’t that bright in the first place. Because of the admiration people have for “successful” individuals, it seems like that success is part of belonging. No one thinks of the myriad of other members are spend their lives working for the cult.
5. No prior commitment has been made to any other philosophy or choice. If an individual has no goals, no commitments, no direction the cults seem worthwhile. Any thinking person will consider all options before getting involved in anything.
6. Others in the group are watching what that individual is doing. In every cult the members are being observed by either higher-ups or those on the same level. This helps to maintain order and a cult mind-set. Both order and a mind-set are important to the survival of the cult.
7. The group encourages respect for its standards. Often cults reward those who maintain a behavioral standard. Since there’s a natural the desire to please those considered in authority knowing a reward may be forthcoming a behavioral ideal will be maintained.

People will obey under certain conditions as well. These conditions are:

1. The person giving the orders was close at hand and was perceived as a legitimate authority figure.
2. The authority figure was supported by a prestigious institution or group.
3. There were no role models for defiance. That is, no one is seen disobeying any orders.
4. If someone did disobey, it wasn’t directly observed and the punishment was discussed.

Cults need to maintain a certain mind-set in order to survive. Because people are convinced that they have no control over their lives; that someone or something else is in control, then they can be persuaded to follow. Humans have a strong affiliation need. Research has shown that 33% of the population will directly conform to what they’re told. Another 33% will follow, but not as strongly. The final 33% will not conform at all. That doesn’t mean the final 33% will not conform to something else. They will. Human beings are conformers. Cults rely on

this and this is what keeps them alive.

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