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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

Resisting social influences becomes important when such influences can be appropriately thought of as "mind control." When information is systematically hidden, withheld or distorted it is impossible to make unbiased decisions. Under these circumstances, people may be subtly led to believe they are "freely" choosing to act. It is precisely this kind of decision that persists and most affects our behavior since we come to believe in those attitudes and actions for which we have generated our —

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20. Abstract (continued)

own justifications. The thesis of this essay is that "mind control" exists not in exotic gimmicks, but rather in the most mundane aspects of experience. Because it does, it is possible to reduce our susceptibility to unwanted coercive control by increasing our vigilance and learning to utilize certain basic strategies of analysis. In this paper, we present resistance strategies which are broadly applicable to the wide array of mind-manipulation attempts that surround us daily--in a "self-help" format that provides for ready accessibility. Findings from relevant social-psychological research, from interviews and personal experiences with con men, cultists, super-salesmen and other perpetrators of mind control comprise the reservoir of information from which we have drawn. We have blended pragmatic advice with a conceptual analysis of the basic issues on which vulnerability to persuasion rests--in the hope that individuals who find they must make decisions on the basis of contrived communications will be better able to transform them into thoughtful, meaningful choices.

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On resisting social influence

Susan Andersen and Philip Zimbardo

Stanford University

On Resisting Social Influence

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Abstract

Resisting social influences becomes important when such influences
can be appropriately thought of as "mind control." When information is
systematically hidden, withheld or distorted it is impossible to make
unbiased decisions. Under these circumstances, people may be subtly led
to believe they are "freely" choosing to act. It is precisely this kind
of decision that persists and most affects our behavior since we come to
believe in those attitudes and actions for which we have generated our
own justifications. The thesis of this essay is that "mind control"
exists not in exotic gimmicks, but rather in the most mundane aspects of
experience. Because it does, it is possible to reduce our susceptibility
to unwanted coercive control by increasing our vigilance and by learning
how to utilize particular basic strategies of analysis. We present a
series of troublesome situations followed by strategies of resistance
which are broadly applicable to the wide array of mind-manipulation
attempts that surround us daily. Our sources have included surveys of
relevant social-psychological research, as well as interviews and personal
experiences with con men, cultists, super-salesmen and other perpetrators
of mind control. Pragmatic advice is blended with a conceptual analysis
of the basic issues on which vulnerability to persuasion rests--in the
hope that individuals who find they must make decisions on the basis of
contrived communications will be better able to transform them into
thoughtful, meaningful choices.

A middle-aged man in a dark tweed sportscoat sat with some buddies over a beer and boasted of newly made profits from his small clothing store downtown. His eyes glimmered as he recounted clever hoaxes that would ensnare price-conscious customers. "They're so easy," Sam blurted out with a laugh. The old "hard of hearing" script was his favorite. It went like this. Having evoked a patron's interest in some brand new piece of merchandise, not yet even price tagged, he would call out to his partner Herbie for the selling price. Loud and clear from the back room Herbie would shout "$86.50!" just as Sam's hearing aid suddenly came loose. Tinkering with it for a moment to remedy the problem, he would examine the merchandise curiously and say, "Fifty dollars, huh? O.K., I guess that's the price." And then looking the customer straight in the eye, "But no free alterations for that kind of money." Most paid cash on the spot to escape before Herbie could discover the "error." For an item worth no more than thirty dollars, they left with some deal!

Other popular scams suit people of all professions, appearances and backgrounds. In the pigeon drop, for example, an elderly woman sitting by herself in a public place is led to believe that she is entitled to share in a bonanza of money found in an envelope on the floor--by the woman sitting next to her. While allegedly waiting out the claim period she must show "good faith" by putting some of her own bank savings in "escrow" with the con woman's lawyer, for safe keeping. When they disappear with her money she is left, as a trusting pigeon, with only the droppings--a worthless envelope.

When the results of unquestioningly adhering to situational pressures become severe and enduring, a deceptive dance may begin to look progressively more like mind control. Human needs are capitalized upon for someone else's ends. Although customers in the first scenario pass up the opportunity to be honest, they are exploited on the basis of one fairly obvious desire: to get something for a little less. In the second episode, an innocent elderly woman

inadvertently gets caught up in the well-designed choreography of a couple of
professional con artists because she accepts at face value the reality they con-
veniently provide. In the end she is a willing participant in a journey with
a predictably unhappy ending. No doubt the lawyer wore a dark business
suit to support the credibility of his "profession."

In our analysis, the goal of mind control is to manipulate thoughts,
feelings and behavior within some context over time. Of course, we recognize
that most of us will agree with the consequences of some control strategies
because they reflect ideals that are intimately a part of our lives. These we
describe as socialization rather than programming, as education rather than
propaganda, as personal development rather than brainwashing. People who con-
vert to our church are "saved" from damnation, while "defectors" are doomed by
their ignorance. But the process of covert coercive control is what is at issue
here, regardless of the ends to which it is put. Take a father's concern for
inculcating a sense of patriotism in his son:

> "I am very pro-American. I have a small son and have hopes that when
> he grows up he will join one of the armed forces. To ensure this, I
> have thought of talking to him while he is sleeping--no great speech,
> but a little patriotism and the suggestion that an army career would
> be good." (Caplan, 1969, p.65)

Deliberate attempts to manipulate someone else's behavior look more exploi-
tative when they are covert because the "victim" might have resisted had his or
her "informed consent" been requested. But control is actually most effective
when someone is subtly led to believe that he or she has "freely" chosen to act.
Once we make the commitment, we generate our own justifications even when truly
"uninformed" of the important details. Our choice of actions is only as reason-
able as the information we have available to us; and reliable information can
be methodically hidden or withheld. Take, for example, the case of government

officials refusing to warn the public about the risks of radiation fallout during
the atomic bomb tests in Nevada in the 1950's. Residents chose to stay in the
area. In Oklahoma, the Ke₁ -McGee plutonium plant was recently found guilty of mis-
leading employees about the hazards of its operation -- after a long struggle to
expose flagrant safety violations. On a broader level, while the Western press
was bombarded with information about the United States' restraint in Iran and
its concerted efforts in the Middle East, there has been little coverage of the
war being waged by American-supplied Indonesian troops on the island of Timor
which has left as many as 100,000 people dead. Making decisions about both
public and personal issues has become considerably more complex in recent years,
readily allowing those "in power" in our social worlds to define reality for the
rest of us. By controlling the information to which we are exposed they conven-
iently restrict the range of alternatives from which we seem to "freely" choose.

What this points out, of course, is that we are always being controlled.
Politicians influence our votes; teachers our thinking; religious leaders our
morality. Advertisers emphasize our ability to make "rational" decisions
between products they have apparently compared, and then urge us to buy the one
of their choosing whether we need it, want it or can afford it. Our tastes in
food, dress, art, music, friends and so on are all acquired through subtle
processes of social influence. The quality of our interactions with other
human beings fundamentally determines our experience.

The exotic and the mundane

Formidable quests to gain control over the human mind have often employed
exotic technology. Exquisite torture devices, electroshock therapy, mind
altering drugs, hypnosis, and sensory deprivation have all been used to get
targeted persons to do the bidding of various agents and agencies of control.
Indeed, these methods carry enough wallop to distort and sometimes destroy the
mind's normal functioning. But they are not adequate for the task of reliably

directing behavior through specific scenarios as designated by would-be manipulators.

John Marks' exposé of the CIA's secret mind control program (see The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate") suggests that no foolproof way of "brain washing" another person has ever been found. After a decade of intensive, costly research into the technology of such control, the CIA's MKULTRA program was deemed a failure. Covert operations could claim little more than being capable of turning unsuspecting victims into "vegetables."

Relying on technology was the mistake. Effective mind control exists in the most mundane aspects of human existence: the inner pressures to be bonded to other people, the power of group norms to influence behavior, the force of social rewards (such as smiles, praise, a gentle touch). We influence one another, intentionally or unintentionally, using the most basic principles of social psychology, motivation and social learning. It is people in convincing social situations and not gadgets or gimmicks that control the minds of other people. The more worried we are about being seen as ignorant, uncultured, untalented or boring, and the more ambiguous the events are that are to be evaluated, the more likely we are to take on the beliefs of those around us to avoid being rejected by them.

Basic training in compliance

What insures the success of undesirable social influences, whether they involve buying new products, entering new relationships, or simply maintaining the status quo in a contrary environment, is our blindness to the potency that situations possess. Etiquette and protocol are powerful inhibitors of unconventional action. When people around us behave alike and as they are expected to, it becomes difficult for us to evaluate their actions critically or to deviate from what is expected of us in the situation. The kinds of social programming we are all subjected to in childhood circumscribes our perception

of such behavioral possibilities with a neat cleave. The "good child" learns
his place in all social settings, stays put in her seat, is polite, speaks only
when spoken to, is cooperative, does not make trouble, and never makes a scene.
As children we are rewarded for going along with the group and for not insisting
on getting our way. It is the wiser course of action, we are taught, to go with
(or around) power, not to challenge it.

By taking social roles for granted in a context, we can be unwittingly led
to take on companion roles in the various scenarios being enacted. If she wants
to play "guest," we become "host"; if he is quick to assume responsibility, we
passively surrender some of our own; if they are a couple in conflict, we become
mediator. And once ensconced in some social role, our behavioral freedom is
compromised in subtle ways. Interviewees answer but don't ask questions, guests
don't demand better food, prisoners don't give commands, audiences listen,
"true believers" believe, rescuers sacrifice, tough guys intimidate, others
recoil and so on. Expectations about what behaviors are appropriate and permis-
sible within the structure of a role come to control us more completely than
the most charismatic of persuaders. As a nation we saw in the Watergate cover-up
how the "best and the brightest" caved in to the pressures that required "team
players" to win this one for the President. Unquestioned protocol persuaded them
to betray their public offices.

Those who occupy social roles that carry prestige and credibility in our eyes can
work wonders with us. The most potent influences are eased around to us by our buddies
or reputable "experts"--rather than by those who we think of as "enemies."   A
neighbor tells us to stop by for a chat with some interesting people, our doctor
prescribes a new antibiotic, a businessman offers us exciting financial prospects,
brother says he's impressed with a new pastor. Hindsight tells us that such
testimonials have encouraged us to take the first step along most of the paths we've
chosen for ourselves, good and bad because such influences are basic to being

engaged in the social life of the community.

Saturation and detachment

Unlike our response to "overtly" persuasive communicators who may beseech
us to buy the latest gourmet cookware, to jog daily, to elect particular poli--
ticians or give to certain charities, situations with "normal appearances"
(see Goffman, Relations in Public) don't seem to require skepticism, resistance
or even our conscious attention. We often move through them "on automatic" and
are thus prone to being influenced without our slightest knowledge.

To counteract this possibility, we could refuse to play social roles, to
seek social rewards, join organized groups or notice modeled behaviors--but only
if we are also prepared to withdraw from society entirely. Alternatively, we
could choose to detach ourselves from some aspects of social life emotionally,
but this usually has the drawback of leaving us without social support, friends,
lovers or anything in which to believe. Being detached enough to observe and
analyze is intimately tied to survival, but utter detachment can lead to paranoia.
A prisoner we know of at a federal penitentiary, for example, who was held in
solitary confinement for several years, told us he "beat the system" by turning
off his emotions before they could get to him. Now he feels nothing . Neither
self, humanity, nor compassion.

Of course, continual emotional "saturation" is problematic too. Remember the
last time you got so lost in your anger, joy or sadness that it somehow got the best
of you. Or a time when you were so totally enthralled with an idea or situation that
you missed a "cue" to exit that you wish you would have seen. But you simply didn't
recognize it or think about it. People in cults are trained to think positively
and "programmatically" about what they do. Viewing one's actions from a variety of
perspectives is not done. Orders are followed and much information is systematically
withheld. To take some specific examples, prospective Peoples Temple and Unification
Church members have been asked to "open their minds" to exciting new identities, to
saturate themselves with new meanings, a sense of belonging, and to refrain from being
judgmental. Guru Maharaj Ji suggests liberation from one's own mind in these terms:

"So mind really gets to you, mind really affects you, in very, very

subtle ways, in very, very subtle manners. And what is the reason,

that I come out and I scream and I yell, 'Don't listen to your mind.'?

There is something within, inside of you which is much more beautiful

than your mind, which is much more precious, which is much more beauti-

ful than that crazy mind."

Perhaps we don't want to be wholly critical and alert at all times, but

mindlessness is often promoted as a way of encouraging passive acceptance at

the expense of vigilance and individual discretion. The hook is that when we

are faced with complex problems we often yearn for simple answers and rules of

thumb for how best to proceed. Immersing ourselves in the teachings of a power-

ful leader, in the say-so of the dominant partner in a relationship, or in the total

ideology of any highly cohesive group can be comforting. But when we lose our desire

to formulate unique, creative ideas in any situation we begin to lose our sense

of self there. Thorough, unquestioned saturation can hinder our ability to

evaluate our actions critically when it is in our best interests to do so.

The problem is paradoxical. Although, detaching ourselves from social life

to avoid "being taken" is obviously absurd, the more we open up to other people's

thoughts the more likely we are to be swayed by them; and open, passionate

involvement is essential to some of the richest forms of human experience. We

want to feel strongly, to trust completely, to act on impulse and feel connected

to others in the community. We want to be "saturated" with living and to feel

we can suspend, for periods of time, our evaluative faculties, our cautiousness.

Yet we must be able to pull back and monitor our experiences, reflect upon the

choices we have made, and assess the "goodness" of our involvements. Oscillating

between these poles, immersing and distancing again at "appropriate" intervals

is the point. The question is "when?"

* * * * * * * *

Is it possible to recognize those social influences that can distort our integrity and freedom of choice amid the many benign but persuasive pressures that surround us daily? And can we then act to avoid or counter them? We believe so. In the most skillfully contrived situations there may not be enough information for us to infer that we are about to be "taken." Nevertheless, it is possible to reduce our susceptibility to such unwanted control by increasing our vigilance and by utilizing some basic strategies of analysis that will promote clear thinking.

At the prevention stage, it is important to recognize the operation of effective persuasion tactics, and then be able to deal with them effectively enough to know what we are getting into. Our most important decision at this stage is to avoid taking that first step, if we so choose. Once in the secondary stage--after a commitment to an ongoing involvement has already been made and we're in over our heads--being capable of recognizing control tactics at the system level is the key to getting out. If getting out is unfeasible or undesirable, we may simply want to be able to maintain our integrity and sense of self in the system. On the other hand, we may want to challenge its structure directly from within, or with extensive systems of mind control, from without.

The strategies that follow have been drawn from a diverse body of information, including: extensive personal experience with cults and cult members; the body of psychological research on persuasion and attitude change, social-cognitive monitoring and social cognition; research on the situational control of behavior, on social learning principles of behavior modification and self-control; training manuals for police interrogators (see Psychology Today, June, 1967), and sales personnel; and our own personal acquaintances with effective con artists and miscellaneous wheeler-dealers.

Developing a critical eye

To assert the freedom to choose options that are not apparent in any situation, we must be simultaneously committed to our social worlds and sufficiently disengaged from them to maintain a critical analysis. For this reason,

developing a critical eye is central to counteracting compelling social pressures
whether they occur one-on-one or within a social system. To acquire the kind of
sensitive skepticism and critical eye needed to detect undesirable influences when
they arise, we must learn to be vigilant to discontinuities between the ideals
people espouse and their concrete actions. Separating the preacher from the practice,
the promise from the outcome, the perceived intention from the consequence is at the
crux of resistance because it is too easy to mistake the label for the thing labeled,
to deal in symbols and concepts instead of people and their behavior.

Many notable politicians, for example, gave their support to pastor Jim
Jones without questioning why he was surrounded by a half dozen guards, why his
church had locked doors, and why newcomers were searched before being approved
by the Welcoming Committee. Peoples Temple members admired "Dad" because he
cared for them and because he said he cared most of all about the children. But
they failed to critically appraise or to even acknowledge the reality that he
punished them severely (at times with electric shock) and subjected them to
public ridicule for minor transgressions.

The biggest lies are often hidden by a compelling context and are discovered
later on the basis of discontinuities that in hindsight are obvious. The unanti-
cipated nightmare of the slave labor camp Jim Jones created in Guyana thrived on
his systematic distortion of every detail of the reality of Jonestown: there
was mild weather, he said, an abundance of food, no mosquitos, easy work days, no
sickness, no death. The discontinuities were there to be perceived. "The moment
I got off that plane I knew somethin' was wrong," said Richard Clark, who led an
escape party out of Jonestown through the jungle the morning of the massacre. It
was the opposite of what had been promised--a jungle hell where people worked
long hours on menial jobs in sweltering heat, often hungry and sick. But denial
en masse of these obvious discrepancies kept Jones' system of total mind control
going until the very end. According to Margaret Singer's extensive studies of

former cult members (see Psychology Today, January, 1979), those who left cults without the aid of deprogrammers did so because they had "grown bitter about discrepancies between cult words and practices."

Actually, comparing the concealed purpose of a communication to its manifest content is one of the central tasks in analyzing propaganda. It is not unlike decoding what we think of as "Freudian slips" where the idea is to distinguish between the "error" that conveys the speaker's intention and his admonition that it was "just an error." Too often we overlook blatant discrepancies by automatically supplying semantic corrections that render statements or situations into "good form," thus allowing contexts to cover over discontinuities.

Because effective manipulators provide as coherent a situation as possible in which to gain our compliance, detecting discrepent or ulterior motives is difficult. Although becoming obsessively critical or suspicious would be dysfunctional, carefully appraising the credibility of a message source and the quality of an appeal makes sense. Most persuaders recognize the importance of standard operating procedures, form and style in undercutting our ability to apprehend "unexpected" events or influences. According to sociologist Irving Goffman, they conceal their intent amid "normal appearances." We are more likely to be caught off guard when the situations we are in appear normal. Say we're just "having fun" with friends, or being "entertained" or "educated," or are simply engaged in a common social interaction. We usually feel no need to attend to the details of what is going on, of who is influencing whom and of what is impacting upon our behavior. But many undesirable social pressures prey upon our adherence to simple, unquestioned protocol in such situations. Information from Rape Preventio   nters, for example, suggests that it is especially important for women to be aware of the effects of "normal appearances." Entering dangerous situations with potential rapists may seem "natural," tantamount to being polite or helpful, when you have been trained to be ladylike. Answering all questions put to you with a friendly gracious smile or always deferring to the protection and judgment of men, even when they are strangers, is not the best idea.

Nor is being courteous and open with service personnel at the expense of requesting

proper identification. Being able to disobey simple situational rules when we

feel we should is important for men as well as for women. It requires assertiveness,

and leastwise, a critical evaluation of the situation.

*   Actively monitor social interactions. Establish a critical distance periodically

    to examine situations from other perspectives. Search for situational pressures

    in your physical and social surroundings, for the small details as well as the

    big picture. Practice thinking ahead, anticipating what will come next, checking

    for discrepancies and noting how you feel about them.

*   Be willing to disobey simple situational rules when you feel you should, to

    sound false alarms occasionally or to cause a scene. Never do anything you

    don't believe just to appear normal or to get someone off your back.

*   Be able to recognize the conditions under which you are most vulnerable to

    accepting persuasive appeals (the conditions we will describe in the next

    section). Should a potent persuasion tactic be present in a situation, postpone

    making a decision on the matter, if possible, or be able to say "no."

*   At the very least, try to get more information so that you can carefully

    consider the consequences of saying "no" to something that could turn out

    essentially "good" (Could you return in a week or a year and say "yes"?) or

    of saying "yes" to something that could turn our essentially "bad" (Could you

    lose your money, pride or life?). Obtain and utilize all available information

    and search for new, reliable sources.

Resisting persuasion: confidence, clarity and persistence.

Effective persuaders not only influence people, they win friends "in the

bargain." After inte..sive interrogation for the murder of two socialities,

George Whitemore, Jr. "broke" and gave a 61-page confession of guilt. He went

on to express his admiration for his interrogator, a detective, whom he now

claimed to respect more than his own father. Subsequent events established

that Whitmore was persuaded to confess to a capital crime he did not commit.

The best persuaders always _appear to be just like us_. They understand our problems, empathize with our predicaments; in fact, they were there once themselves. They speak our language, share our needs, and know the inside jokes. When someone appears to share our concerns, he or she becomes a cohort, an ally, someone we can trust and give the benefit of the doubt. The tactic is powerful because attitude change, like all socialization, is most effective when it goes unnoticed. The conversation is slowly led into areas where our disagreement would otherwise be obvious. Credibility leads us gently over each successive hurdle as we change our attitudes through small, continuous approximations. In the end, we perceive that we have brought it about on our own.

*   Check for signs of ingratiation, for an overemphasis on mutual interests, and for requests for just one small commitment now--with an open-ended contract for later. How deep do the stated similarities go? How well does the persuader really know the common friend you supposedly share?

                              * * * * * * * *

As trivial as it may seem, a major persuasive device is the expression of confidence in the beliefs espoused and courses of action recommended. Research shows that powerful people _express confidence_ and _self-assuredness_ across all channels of communication--through body language, through words and paralinguistically. Regardless of someone's "real" credibility, what we end up responding to is how competent, confident and stable he or she "appears" to be. Someone who looks us straight in the eye, stands very close and speaks forcefully is not intimidated, but intimidating, and perfectly in control of the encounter. In reaction, those who get persuaded express doubt; they do so as much by what they say as by what they don't say. Minor hesitations like "uh," "ah," "er," or a pause can be capitalized upon and manipulated because they convey momentary lapses of thought, momentary vulnerabilities. The way we carry ourselves is also revealing.

In fact, training manuals for sales personnel are filled with tactics for

skillfully manipulating the choices people come to make in bargaining situations.
And desired results are obtained. Millions of Americans are subjected to stress
and intimidation in the presence of those whom society has termed "expert." Automobile
mechanics, for example, often make thousands of dollars each year for labor and
supplies they don't deliver. Last year, over two million Americans underwent surgical
operations that they did not need (at a cost of over four billion dollars). Because
it is difficult to feel efficacious around people who ostensibly have more knowledge
than we do, we are often inhibited from asking the appropriate questions, from
thinking critically and carefully about decisions that may affect our lives.

* Practice "seeing through" programmed responses to authority. Pay attention
  to the social roles you and others occupy in a setting and the subtle
  indicators of those roles that you may be responding to (business suit,
  repairman's uniform, etc.).

* Be aware of who is controlling whom in social situations, to what end
  and at what cost.

* To the extent that it seems possible, refuse to accept the initial premise
  from someone that he or she is more powerful, more competent, more in
  control than you are. Perhaps accepting this premise is what makes it so.

* State your arguments with conviction if the other person does so.

* Learn to retain a sense of self-worth in the face of intimidating circum-
  stances by creating an "appearance of competence" equal to that which an
  effective persuader conveys through his or her voice and actions. Carry
  with you a powerful, concrete image, replete with tactile sensations,
  sights and sounds, that reminds you of your own competence. Remember a
  time when some person or group of people thought you were the best thing
  to hit the planet, a violin if you are a virtuoso, a photograph, person
  or place, anything that makes you feel exhilarated and alive, that you will
  not reveal to others but will retain as an inner core that cannot be
  violated. Apparent competence can reduce feelings of helplessness in

stressful situations. As the dialogue or set of actions unfolds, the need

for the image fades. If you can get your questions asked, your bargaining

done, experiences had, you will have more control over your actions and the

choices that others make on your behalf.

* * * * * * * *

Mind control typically involves coming to accept a new reality. The errors

of our old ways of looking at the world are exposed as such, and a new reality is

embedded in their place. By confusing us with elaborate but inadequate justifications

for recommended actions, persuaders can catch us off guard. False analogies,

semantic distortion and convenient rhetorical labels can facilitate this process if

we do not stop to question them and think about them creatively. We are often

dissuaded from probing beyond surface illusions of meaningfulness by letting symbols

substitute for reality, abstract maps for concrete territories. John Dean reminds

us that the entire Watergate cover-up was shrouded in cute euphemisms, jargon and

rhetoric. Instead of referring explicitly to the money involved in the scandal,

they spoke only of the "bites of the apple." At the extreme, it is easier to "waste

an enemy" or to engage in "revolutionary protest" than to murder other human beings.

Inconsistent or ambiguous descriptions with confusing terminology can lead us to

accept invalid conclusions that we would otherwise resist. Current research on

metacomprehension, by Stanford University's Ellen Markman, reveals that this is

precisely what many children do. They are able to understand the simpler component

parts of a complex message so they overestimate their comprehension of it as a whole

and accept it as adequate. We believe this can also be true of adults.

*   Never accept vague generalities and inadequate explanations in response to

      your pleas, questions or challenges.

*   Learn to recognize when a message is actually confused or ambiguous (and

      perhaps intentionally so) so that you can avoid attributing your confusion

      to your "inherent" inability to think about the matter clearly. Especially

if someone suggests that "you're just too stupid to understand" or "women
get too emotional to think logically." Interrogate yourself about the meaning
of a communication to see if the conclusions follow from the arguments, and
if the expectations you form while listening are confirmed or disconfirmed.

* Paraphrase other people's thoughts both aloud and to yourself to see if you
  are understanding clearly.

* Practice generating creative arguments and counterarguments as you listen to
  persuasive messages to avoid slipping into "automatic" processing.

* Tentatively assess the meaning of an ambiguous situation or communication once
  you have some reliable information but don't forget that the assessment is
  tentative. Label it as such and wait for further clarification.

* Always seek outside information and criticisms before joining a group or
  making a commitment to invest time, energy or money in some endeavor.

* Train yourself and your children to notice the "tricks" in deceptive inf   on
  packaging, such as those utilized in television commercials. Stanford U   essity's
  Don Roberts has found that knowledge of make-believe constructions, of audio-
  visual distortion techniques, the use of celebrities, experts, overgeneralizations
  and so on can build the kind of skepticism in children which is the front-line
  of all resistance efforts. Cult deprogrammer Ted Patrick echoes a similar
  sentiment in advocating how best to insulate ourselves from mind control:
  "Knowledge is our only protection."

                    * * * * * * * *

Susceptibility to control becomes greater as "compulsive" self-awareness
increases. When we are induced to focus attention on ourselves by being made to
feel awkward, deviant or silly, we begin to worry about what others think of us,
and can thus be led to resolve any opinion disparities in their favor.

At the extreme, Manson family member Leslie Van Houten described Charles
Manson as controlling his followers through unrelenting intimidation and strict
isolation. "I was always frightened of not being accepted even in school," she

reported. "But Charlie played on that; he saw a danger in my humor and outgoing-
ness. . . . He'd try to make me feel I was missing something. He said I didn't
know what was happening and that I was really stupid."

* Be sensitive to (and avoid) situations and people that put you on the spot,
  make you feel different, awkward or inadequate.

* Try to focus attention on what you are doing rather than on thoughts about
  yourself. Keep an especially firm handle on generating negative internal
  dialogues about yourself, and never accept a chronically negative view
  from someone else.

* Maintain some non-social interests that you can satisfy while you are alone--
  like painting, carpentry, working on cars, reading or writing. If you can
  develop a concrete sense of self-worth, a sense of who you are, what you
  are interested in and where your competencies lie, quite apart from the
  values, interests and judgments of others, you may feel better about ur-
  self in their presence, as well as in their absence.

* Be willing to look foolish now and then, an to accept being "different"
  as being "special" rather than inferior.

                         * * * * * * * *

Effective persuasive appeals get their umph by reaching beyond reason to
emotions, beyond awareness to unspoken desires d fears, beyond trivial attitudes
to basic concerns about self integrity and survival. Clever persuaders are adept
at detecting what we want from a situation, what our fears and anxieties are, and
what areas of supposed mutual interest will best gain our attention. Once some-
one has our trust, he or she can change our attitudes by inducing an emotion-
laden conflict that requires immediate resolution. By <u>making</u> <u>us</u> <u>feel</u> <u>fearful</u>
<u>or</u> <u>anxious</u>, the manipulator is in a position to ease our discomfort by providing
reasonable explanations and soothing solutions. Much advertising is based on
this principle. So are many social interactions.

A recent <u>60 Minutes</u> documentary (1/28/79) reported that sellers of Industrial Insurance have their working class clients nearly paralyzed with fear over spiralling medical and burial costs.   But relief is at hand as the salesperson unfolds the insurance policies that will resolve any uncertainties the future may hold. If the client owns other policies, they go unmentioned or are dismissed as inadequate. All that is clear is the imminence of death and an eight-inch replica of a satin-lined mahogany coffin in the hands of a credible-looking business man who adds in a deep clear voice, "Wouldn't you prefer your loved one to rest in a beautiful casket like this than to be buried in an old pine box?"

* A crucial issue concerning our needs and vulnerabilities is if, when and how to reveal them. No matter what the relationship, avoid getting sucked into unwanted confessions that may later be used against you. Many cults and mind control systems utilize public confessions, self-exposure "games" and the like to catalogue the weaknesses of their followers, for later exploitation.

* Avoid making decisions when under stress, particularly in the presence of the person who has triggered the emotional reaction. Tell them you'll decide mañana.

* As you feel yourself becoming uncomfortably aroused, begin taking slower, deeper breaths to help your body relax. Imagine the air flowing through your muscles and loosening the tension in your shoulders, the back of your neck, your upper arms, and down through your chest, abdomen and lower back. Relax.

* * * * * * * *

<u>Knawing</u> <u>feelings</u> <u>of</u> <u>guilt</u> can also provide a powerful impetus for personal change. What better way to create a sense of self-disgust, a desire to confess, to do penance or perhaps even to experience suffering? Simply being in the presence of those less fortunate can often do the trick, particularly if we are somehow made to feel responsible for their plight. Professional beggars make

it their business to make passersby feel guilty for being well dressed and well
fed. Organizations that support themselves through donations often thrive upon
the proceeds collected by mildly handicapped solicitors. More broadly, the
pivotal contingency in Patty Hearst's psychological transformation at the hands
of the Symbionese Liberation Army was the guilt she was led to feel over her
family's privileged position, the disparity between their wealth and the poverty
of so many, and her life of noninvolvement in the struggle of oppressed peoples.
All conflicts were slowly relieved with each step she took in the direction of
accepting her captors' definition of reality.

Letting someone do favors for you can also make you feel indebted and
guilty. Diane Louie, who escaped Jonestown with Richard Clark the morning of
the massacre, recounted for us her experience in the hospital there. She was
suffering from a severe intestinal virus, feeling duped and dissatisfied when
Jim Jones came to her bedside. "How are your living conditions?" he asked.
She shifted uncomfortably in her cot trying not to raise her eyes to him. "Is
there any special food you would like?" She thought of her stifling, crowded
bungalow, the maggots in her rice, her exhaustion, the broken promises. "No,"
she said, "everything is fine; I'm quite comfortable." To us she said, "I knew
once he gave me those privileges he'd have me. I didn't want to owe him nothin'."
She was one of a handful able to escape the mass murder and suicide.

*   Be aware of the guilt and anxiety reactions you typically experience so
     that you can circumvent their illicit use by skillful manipulators. Learning
     to confront your frustrations and fears is the most potent way to prevent
     their being exploited unbeknownst to you. Start by thinking about the least
     provoking aspects of problematic situations while in a   ite of total
     relaxation, and work up to more difficult ones

*   Don't let people make you feel indebted to them by accepting a definition
     of a situation that suggests sacrifices are being made on your behalf.
     Although reciprocal exploitation and need fulfillment are part of every

social contract, when you feel justified in doing so, be prepared to
acknowledge the sacrifices of others with a sincere thanks, instead of the
expected repayment in kind.

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When the opposition is about to yield, successful persuaders employ tactics
of ingratiation to build the bonds of liking and respect that will extend past
the initial sale.   Once aware that their prey is bagged, the slickest operators
then emphasize the victim's freedom of choice--after tactfully constraining the
alternatives. The newly persuaded person chooses "freely" while the context
the influencer provides bolsters his or her decision. Properly executed
persuasion never appears to be "designed" to induce change, but rather ends in
a natural resolution of mutually generated concerns. New attitudes and behaviors
that are accompanied by the feeling that they have been chosen without extrinsic
justification are enduring and resistant to change.

Skillful persuaders may also deny us our freedom in order to control our
behavior with the help of the reactance principle. Studies by psychologist
Jack Brehm suggest that when we perceive severe limitations on our behavioral
freedom we sometimes move to reassert it by advocating the opposite position--perhaps
just what the opposition wanted. "So, you're gonna let that guy (or nation)
get away with treating you in that shameful way!" "No salesman could possibly
sell more of this product in such hard times!" "Excuse me for saying so, sir,
but this is quite an exclusive line; you may not be able to afford it."

* Remember that reacting against someone's dogmatic assertions about what you
   should do is not your sole avenue to freedom of action. Sometimes it is best
   to test their intentions by giving them the impression you will comply with
   their demands and then observing their reactions. If they start pushing
   in the opposite direction or simply look befuddled, you may have uncovered
   a hidden agenda.

* Be wary of people who overemphasize how free you are to choose among the

options they have prescribed. Electing Anacin over Bayer is not the same
as deciding whether you want an aspirin. Nor is the question, "How many
bombs should we drop? Two? Three? Ten?" the same as "Should we drop
any bombs?" Test the limits of your options by selecting "none of the
above" or proposing unexpected alternatives, at least tentatively, especially
when you create them yourself and believe they are better.

* * * * * * * *

Resisting systems: voice, exit or rebellion

When social persuasion moves into the big time, one-on-one confidence
games are not economical. The behavior of large numbers of people must be
managed efficiently. For this reason, persuaders develop systems of control
that rely on basic rules and roles of socialization and that impart a sense of
belonging. When interaction among people is restricted to interchange between
their social roles, however, it becomes easier for ethical, moral and human
concerns to take a back seat. Because we may be ostracised from organizations
that mean something to us, perhaps fired from our jobs for not complying with
the requests of our superiors, sometimes refusing to perform actions we perceive
to be unethical can be difficult. When John Dean refused to participate in the
Watergate cover-up after he himself had worked to initiate it, along with his
cronies and the President of the United States, he had to part ways with some
of the most cherished assumptions of society: he questioned the morality of
Presidential orders. According to Dean, ". . . this would never have been done
had it not been done to protect a president. And for a long time I had trouble
separating the man from the office." Nazi war criminal Adoplph Eichmann's account of
his actions during World War II is not unrelated: "I was just doing my job in following
orders." Nor is the problem faced by subjects in Milgram's obedience experiments
unrelated. How ever generalizable the subjects' behavior in these experiments may be,
normal people apparently inflicted painful, potentially lethal doses of electric shock
to a stranger at the insistence of a credible "scientist" in a learning experiment.

Tightly-structured situations are dangerous when we lose sight of who we are, when we forget that we have feelings and histories other than those program-med by the immediate setting and the roles we are led to play in it. In order to avoid slipping into acts that violate our integrity, we must be "present" in our societal and institutional roles as distinctive individuals. Knowing when to escape from an oppressive or dangerous situation, or alternatively, when to organize and rebel with others, requires that we learn to question the rules others lay down for us and that we are alert to role-based constraints on our actions. Extending our field of vision to include frames of reference other than those prescribed facilitates our making thoughtful decisions in situations that don't encourage independent thinking.

* Test for the presence of stated and unstated rules that unnecessarily restrict freedom of speech, action and association. By subtly violating some of the rules and roles and then observing the consequences, you may discover how much latitude is allowed for idiosyncracy in the system, for eccentric or creative self-expression.

* Resist the lure of uniforms and other disguises that make you look like one of the bunch.

* Develop a sense of humor about yourself to minimize utter saturation in your role in the system, to retain a creative view of your situation, and to gain some experience dealing with your apparent weaknesses without undue anxiety.

* Listen to criticisms of your most cherished beliefs and institutions. Know them, but don't accept them uncritically. Allow yourself to confront the issues so you can carefully gauge their merit, and perhaps see events not only as the systems you are in expect you to see them, but "as they are."

* Retain your sense of individual integrity in the system by calling others by name and referring to yourself by name. If people are typically referred to by title, try adding their first or last name to the conventional address,

abbreviating it casually, or somehow reformulating the typical approach so
that it draws upon them as human beings instead of as objects that merely
serve instrumental ends.

* Make an effort to discover the person behind the role, to respond to
someone's uniqueness, rather than to a stereotyped role impression.

* Disclose personal observations about your surroundings and about experiences
you've had elsewhere to those you feel might share your views. Elicit
feelings and ideas from them so that together you can disengage the
"scripts" that specify the basic, unquestioned rules of the setting.

* Remember that ignoring social roles is not easy and is sometimes met with
censure. The more ridigly structured our social role enactments, the less
ambiguity we must face in the social world. But accepting a certain amount
of ambiguity is the crux of spontaneity and flexibility. Treated like a
machine it is much too easy to become one.

* Take note of one caution: masterful persuaders always want us to reveal
our true selves, our true needs and desires, to feel at home with them.
You may not want to reveal more than others reveal to you, or you may at
least want to take the process slowly. (Sound familiar?)

* * * * * * * *

When a group of people becomes more <u>preoccupied</u> <u>with</u> <u>seeking</u> <u>and</u> <u>maintaining</u>
<u>unanimity</u> <u>of</u> <u>thought</u> than with carefully weighing the pros and cons of alternative
actions, raising moral issues and critically appraising decisions, unanimous
resolutions are often reached prematurely. And as part of the package, members may
be   led to support these decisions for better or for worse. When tightly-knit
groups are insulated from outside sources of information and expertise and their
leaders endorse prospective policies before members have a chance to air their
views, decision-making processes deteriorate. Studies of the dynamics of
Presidential cabinet meetings during the Johnson and Kennedy administrations

revealed just this pattern. The Bay of Pigs fiasco was but one of the blundering

outcomes. Psychologist Irving Janis termed the process "Groupthink."

Actually, being invited to contribute to a discussion in any group makes

us more likely to go along with ultimate group decisions, even when they violate

our prior postures. Participant learning is one of the most powerful means of

gaining knowledge and changing attitudes. But it is the impression that we are

part of a decision-making process that binds us to its product; and impressions

are readily managed. It is often just our vote, our money or sweat that is

sought to carry out someone else's decisions. In extreme cases, a system may

be designed to create vulnerability and dependence by slowly and insidiously

destroying the individual member's knowledge of self. When we are isolated

from those we care about, from our sense of self-continuity, we begin to feel

amorphous and uprooted, and the process renders us more susceptible to the

hands of makers-over. Isolating feelings from intellectual concerns serves a

similar function. Persuaders bring us to their place of power, separate the

good or aware "us" from the evil, ignorant "them," and then proceed to limit

our access to ideas that they find heretical, traitorous or not in their best

interests. This can be   true of interpersonal relationships just as it can

be true of memberships in social institutions, groups or organizations.

When we are isolated from outside information it is impossible to make

unbiased decisions. Police interrogators question suspects at the station,

not at their homes. Synanon rehabilitates alcoholics and drug addicts (and keeps

its other members in line) by removing them from their usual haunts and restricting

their liberty. Jim Jones isolated Peoples Temple members in the jungle of a

strange land. When we come to believe so thoroughly in our favorite concepts

that we begin to hate those who don't share our views, to develop rehearsed

programmatic responses to discrediting arguments and to acknowledge only ideas

stated within our terminology, it may be time to start making our belief systems

a little more permeable. Nothing is so simple as the labels "good" and "evil"
suggest. Moreover, they foster utter vulnerability to the system that is termed
"good."

* Try to establish whether you can actually have an impact upon decision-
  making processes in a relationship or group, or whether you are simply part
  of the clean-up crew for decisions that have already been made. Watch
  for premature closure or initial consensus while discussing an issue. What
  arbitrary constraints are placed on the alternatives to be considered? Do
  rigid procedural devices limit discussion and suppress unusual suggestions?

* Refuse to accept the "we"-"they" dichotomy that cuts you off from outsiders
  and suggests you should think of them in terms of dehumanizing labels like
  animals, sinners, queers, red necks, women's libbers, the teaming masses,
  and so on.

* Suspect appeals that encourage you to detach your feelings from the rest of
  your being; assert the harmony of mind-body, intellect and emotion, past
  and present.

* Try to encourage independent thinking among group members (as suggested
  by the strategies in the previous section). Solidify channels of feedback
  between members, between members and leaders and from outside evaluators
  to the group.

* Remember that the minority may at times have the only accurate view of
  the issues. Any worthwhile group should tolerate dissent or be abandoned.

* Allow yourself to question commitments if they are no longer appropriate
  for you. Consistency in the face of contrary evidence is usually not a
  virtue but a sign of rigidity, delusion or prejudice. Make an effort to
  admit past errors and to acknowledge old beliefs and commitments that
  proved limiting for you.

* Continually seek outside information, reality checks and critical appraisals
  of what you are doing.

* Maintain outside interests and sources of social support and reject the
  appeal that devotion to the cause requires severing ties to outsiders.
  Battered wives, religious converts, undercover agents, mafia informants
  and inmates of prisons and mental hospitals all suffer from impoverished
  connections to outside systems.

* Family and friends should leave the path back home open. Your unconditional
  accessibility to those who have strayed, no matter what they've done or said,
  may be their only hope. Disowning children, friends or relatives when you
  disapprove of their decisions is much less effective in the long run than
  a gentle hand and some warm words. "Love-bombing" is the favorite tactic
  of most cults, because it works best among the love-deprived--those we have
  not given love.

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The tighter a system is, the more likely that minor challenges will be met
with retaliation. In prisons, mental hospitals, religious or political cults,
military establishments, concentrations camps and so on, people have virtually
total control over the existence of others and minor deviations or threats to that
power are intolerable. Actually, "perceived threat" is what all political relation-
ships are about. When our existence is threatened and we think we have a chance
to survive, we'll fight for it. If we then come to threaten the very structure
of a coercive system, it is likely to retaliate by pursuing the tactic, "divide
and conquer," or perhaps, "promote." By giving us status and responsibility,
the system arranges that needs no longer run at cross-purposes. Ours are co-opted
for its sake so that as dissidents we will not revolt. But when maintaining
the status quo is not palatable, the main question is whether changing the system
is feasible. Those who survived Jonestown did so by escaping its grasp. And some
systems have time on their side; they can wait out the opposition and have their
officers paid for doing so. Supporters of the status quo are employed while those

who oppose do so as outsiders part-time and struggle to make ends meet. In any case, it is often more practical to challenge systems from without--especially by forming other systems.

* Don't let your silence pass for agreement with the system. While talking to others, subtly imply your discontent in areas where you think they might agree. Avoid incriminating yourself completely in the face of their utter resolve by intuiting their responses as you speak and overstepping only those rules that are of least concern to the system.

* Once you establish a group of allies and decide that you cannot escape the system or that you are committed to changing it, band together in opposition so that yours will be a _position_ to be acknowledged rather than a _disposition_ to be "treated." A consistent minority, firm in its conviction can often undo a majority.

* Begin by assessing the power base of those who hold the reigns. Seek means of doing without or of finding substitutes for the resources powerholders threaten to withhold from you. Do you really need the attention, respect, security, approval, money or whatever these particular people have to offer? Then, by determining what contributions you make to the system that are important to its functioning, you and your allies can collect a significant repository of such resources to withhold from it when bargaining time arrives. Citizens' action, organized labor, the women's movement, and so on, base much of their strategies on such decisions.

* Appeal to the same human needs that the powerholders in the system manipulate in others. If they are to reconsider their position, they must be led to do so on their own terms, or effective coercion must prove that their terms are no longer tenable. Learn to negotiate with powerholders using your resources. Collective resistance by a group that states its problems concisely, specifies clear and concrete goals, resources and strategies is

infinitely more likely to be successful than are disorganized revolts and spit-and-run tactics.

* **Exit those situations in which disobedience is likely to be futile and punishable**, if you can. Escape plans must be carefully thought through in concrete terms, not wished about vaguely. Try not to go alone. Remember that the revolutionaries of the world have been the ones to free us from tyrannical systems of control. Public exposes are essential if the veil of secrecy that conceals mind control practices in all of their varied forms is to be lifted. Jeannie Mills, defector from the Peoples Temple and co-founder of the Human Freedom Center in Berkeley, was unable to get people to believe her horrendous tales of Jim Jones' brutality and deceit until she convinced several reporters to check out the discontinuities between his preaching and his practice. It takes a firm sense of social commitment to escape a system of mind control, and to then persist in challenging it from without. Although buyers do well to beware: "Every exit is an entry somewhere else." (Tom Stoppard, _Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead_).

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As conscious citizens we must demand of ourselves ever greater diligence in seeking out and utilizing all sources of information and then ensuring that this information is made available to others.

It is because we can exercise our ability to critically evaluate ideas, institutions and our own behavior that we can perceive options beyond those provided by convenient dogma and ostensibly inescapable circumstance. In this way are we "free" to make meaningful choices and to not be controlled.

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