

## Pay no attention to the Man behind the Curtain

I notice that when I'm talking to a person who is a member of a cult and fully brainwashed, it's like I'm not really talking to that person at all. It's more like I'm talking to a puppet. It reminds me of the scene from the movie *The Wizard of Oz* where it is discovered that the Great and Powerful Wizard is just a guy behind the curtain controlling a false projection of a powerful wizard. When I talk to cult members it is like the person isn't really there. They are just parroting the dogma of the cult and interestingly enough, they have no idea that their thoughts are not their own.

How can you tell if you're in a cult? One indicator is if you don't have freedom. For example, if you are a Scientologist and you have someone from the church following you around all the time to keep you in the cult, that's not freedom. How much diversity of opinion is in your group? What ideas are you prohibited from discussing? Do you all dress alike? Are you required to shave your head, or are you prohibited from cutting your hair? What about that suit and tie? What rituals are you required to participate in? What things are you not allowed to do that people in free (sinful) cultures do?

Generally I think it can be said that cult members are more restricted than people who are not cult members. If, for example, you can go anywhere you want, do anything you want, say anything you want, and your friends see you as a little weird and someone who has a unique and interesting perspective on things, I would say that it is unlikely that you are a cult member. The requirements that are placed upon you regarding what you are "supposed" to do is also an indicator of cult type thinking. If you are feeling the weight of "supposed" or you notice that you are influenced too much by other people, that raises the likelihood of cult influence.

Do you often find that you want to do things but you don't get to do them because other people don't want you to? Or do you find yourself doing things that you don't want to, but you do them because other people make you do it? Do you spend a lot of time dealing with what other people think of you? Or are you overly concerned about your reputation within your circle or your social position within the community?

What things are you afraid of? Does freedom trigger a fear response? If freedom is something that scares you, then you should question yourself about why that is. Are you in a situation where people are thrown out of the group for failing to be loyal to the group discipline or exercising freedom? Are you subject to punishment for not complying? How much of your life is penalty driven?

I've spent a lot of time living in the San Francisco Bay Area which is noted for its free thinkers. This area has a huge diversity of opinions and it is a haven for "weird people". People like me. And all the new cool stuff is usually invented right here. This is probably the number one spot on the planet for innovative thinking and it is also the number one spot on the planet for free thinking. People are accepting of diversity, love their freedom, and argue about everything. I believe there is a relationship between this freedom and the inventions and ideas that start here. In contrast, during the Dark Ages nothing really happened. If you were innovative you were put to death. Freedom is important and our message to all who read this is - be free. Take back your life and own it. Tell Jesus you want your soul back and that you want to live your life in the real world. Own your own destiny.