

The basic essentials that fuel our society are conformity, obedience and compliance. Obedience is more than just following the law or higher authority without question; it's the way of human civilization. Conformity is another way humans adapt to their environment or some sort of movement just to feel apart of something and be accepted. As well for compliance, which is fulfilling someone else's demands or desires. It baffles me to know how all three of these methods have so much power over us, sub-consciously and consciously. Which leads to my question, is non-conformity possible? And if so, are conformity and compliance good qualities?

Looking at our 21<sup>st</sup> century society, humans have adapted to our different environments and created our own norms, cultures, and groups, because of the process of socialization: conformity and compliance. There are different types of socialization: natural, planned and cross-species socialization (John, 1). Natural socialization is the process when infants start to explore, play and discover the world around them (John, 1). Planned socialization occurs when other people train and teach their young or other people. This is a human phenomenon and through history, guardians have been making plans in order to teach and train others. Lastly, cross-species socialization happens when humans train animals to obey their commands and other methods of obedience (Robertson). Infants are born without culture, or language (John, 1). Their parents, friends, teachers, and animals around them and in their environment transform them. These sources know the ground rules of this society to teach the infants so that they can grow up and process that information. All of these three types of socialization impact how the infant is going to be raised. It's the same for when a child interacts and with animals. The child and the animal/pet can make a good companionship that is a good start to a healthy emotional devolvement (Robin, 63). But at a certain age, children soon start to do things they want to do and explore the world through their own eyes. An example that shows human socialization is the article "The Concept of Socialization," written by Dr. Craig Robertson, Department of Sociology at University of North Alabama, he states:

"It is through socialization and the learning of cultural values, norms, attitudes, and roles, that the homo-sapiens becomes more human and less animal...Fundamental to a healthy start in the socialization process is development of attachment bonds... The self however takes time and social experience to develop, as it is a product of many social interactions and the identification of statuses with those interactions.... Related to the emergence of the self are statuses. It is thought that through one's occupancy of statuses, self-identity or social identity emerges. Self or social-identity will, by default, change over time since we move into and away from statuses throughout our lifetime. This movement brings us to and away from interactions with others and membership in particular social groups. Thus, the self is in a continual process of becoming attributable to our interactions and the many self-identities we have" (Robertson 1).

This quote deepens the process of socialization and the development of human self-identity, interaction with others, norms, attitudes, roles and culture. This is probably the most important part of raising a child because as they grow they must be taught how to behave, talk, and other factors in order to function in our society. Socialization is the key to self-identity and placement in a community. This is a whole movement of many young people growing up and finding themselves within our societal norms and expectations. Furthermore, this leads to humans wanting to join groups, or trying to be hip to the new trends, or just following and being

pressure into a crowd in order to feel part of something. This is where conformity and compliance play a huge role in people's identity and beliefs.

Conformity and compliance are two additional factors that humans suffer with living in a society that is always changing. Today in American society about six major corporations own about 70% of the media that we consume everyday (Ashley 3). All these messages that we are exposed to influence our beliefs, behaviors and perceptions on our selves and how we view the world. Our media is becoming faster due to our technology and because of that humans are continuously conforming to fit in society's norm for appearance and behavior. This is concerning because whatever we see or hear from our media is controlled by six major corporations: General Electric, News Corporation, Disney, Viacom, Time Warner and CBS who can give us messages that we listen to and sub-consciously abide by (Ashley 2). How will we know if what they are saying is true or just another way of brain washing our beliefs and perspectives? An example of media influence in our society is appearances and self-image:

“In a recent survey by Teen People magazine, 27% of the girls felt that the media pressures them to have a perfect body... 69% of girls in one study said that magazine models influence their idea of a perfect body shape... Many males are becoming insecure about their physical appearance as advertising and other media images raise the standard and idealize well-built men...by the time a young person is 17 years old, they have received over 250,000 commercial messages through the media” (Body Image and Advertising 1).

The facts shown here indicate the influence our media has especially on the younger generations. This affects both sexes and the results aren't pretty. About 69% of young girls already have been wired of the “ideal” perfect body and not given the chance to admire their own beauty (Body Image and Advertising). For boys, they start to feel insecure and follow the gender roles of how to be a man and idolize built men. Imagine the total effect around the world of our younger children who are being jam-packed with these norms and struggle to find themselves and have been corrupted by the messages our media tells us. About 250,000 commercial messages have been consumed in a person's mind by the age of 17, and as they grow the media has given them a whole mind overflowed with their messages. We are oppressed by these societal norms and soon become walking zombies looking for a brain and a cure. Zombies don't use their brains and they walk around lifeless as they keep populating the earth they create an apocalyptic world where everyone is infected. This looks like our society, we walk around consuming and consuming all the media we see, hear and read. These commercials, TV shows, social media and movies are being posted everywhere we go and it's becoming our vital source of information and communication nowadays. We start to believe them because they are everywhere. We trust them and then we follow whatever they tell, either from buying diet pills, to more serious issues of telling biased stories of violence in poor communities. We believe them without question and our beliefs and ideas of our environment make what we are today.

If the major corporations own much of my media it makes me wonder, am I the way I am today based on the things that I've been exposed to in my years of living? Would I still be the same person if I weren't? Would I have the chance to know who I am if the media and my environment weren't around me? What if my mom and dad never trained me to be civilized or obey my authority when being told? How would I function in society? Would I have the courage to speak on something that isn't right? But isn't it my right to speak up when needed and have the freedom of individuality? But do I have free will as well, and if I do, do I use it? There is a

this quote that relates to this question by renowned English actor, writer and dramatist, Peter Ustinov: "In America, through pressure of conformity, there is freedom of choice, but nothing to choose from" (Ustinov 1). This quote speaks to me because, living in America, we are told that we have certain rights due to our constitution. But if by human nature we do sub-consciously conform in order to "fit in" and everyone is just following what they are being told without question or doing something that doesn't make them happy, aren't we losing our freedom? When people feel pressured into conforming into some group another they are not being true to themselves. Its also another way of looking at obedience because by conforming you are being obedient to the group's norms and behavior and you start to change yourself into something you're not. So who are you? Are we individuals if we do conform, obey and comply by some sort of authority that can either limit us or help us find who we are?

In conclusion, obedience, conformity, and compliance are the basic fundamentals our society; they feed us but at the same time starve us. We depend on them and use them in multiple ways such as religion, socialization, media and structure in our law and government. In our society, there will always be desire for more power and authority. The more we stand by and allow other people hinder us from our freedom of choice, speech, and individuality, we soon lose our right to rebel against them. One of the major controlling and brain washing methods is through our media and the big corporations who control it and our government as well. We buy their products, listen to their ads, commercials, and News channels and abide by their rules without thought or much question. Also, we grow up obeying our parent's rules (same rules their parents told them) and as we grow older, we are soon immune to obedience to the point where we don't see the damage it can cause. Conformity just falls in after that because one can't work without the other.

This must stop; we must turn off or be more aware of what we see on TV and stop trusting everything that comes from it. The United States Senator from New York, senator Chauncey Depew states a very important point that sums up my concept: "Follow the path of the unsafe, independent thinker. Expose your ideas to the dangers of controversy. Speak your mind and fear less the label of 'crackpot' than the stigma of conformity. And on issues that seem important to you, stand up and be counted at any cost" (Depew 1). This quote implies that we as a society need to be independent thinkers and stop taking the path that is most taken. When we feel uncomfortable doing something, we learn and grow faster in life. We are challenging ourselves, our ideas, and society's ideas and norms. By sitting down and allowing everything to walk right past you and just follow it shows cowardliness. If we as Americans are given the right of speech we should be using it before it is gone because then how can say we have free will and self-identity?

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