

Conformity and obedience in 'schindler's list' assignment

[Psychology](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Conformity, Authority and Obedience Speech: Familiarity. Is this really beneficial, or rather an obstacle for the people who yearn to make a difference and move forward in life? If I were to ask all of you here today, are you afraid of being alone and cast aside, you would all, yes. People are afraid not to conform to the extent that you allow others to formulate your so-called creed and mould you into people they envision, not necessarily the person you aspire to be.

All of a sudden, your behavior pattern is the exact replica of your leader, you begin raring your beliefs from them, hanging off their every word until inevitably, you become utterly devoted. Whether your reasons are simply naivety or even just exhaustion of being constantly ignored, you have now lost yourself and are living the life that has been mapped out by someone whom you thought you could trust. Familiar is not necessarily good, it is only familiar. Comfortable is not necessarily good, it is often just familiar.

Doll Hitler, the chancellor of Germany during WWI, was, in hindsight, one of the most narcissistic leaders to date, however his true hearted was buried within his authoritative charisma and hypnotic speeches. Oscar Schneider and Ammo Goethe were both fascinated by the authoritative influence of which their country was surrounded. Both were raised on the very essence of fascism. With these thoughts of tyranny planted deep within their vulnerable minds, these views began to grow and develop into a way of life.

Initially manipulating the system, Schneider was concerned only with himself and the success of his moneymaking scheme, however over time, undergoes a change that romps him to spend his fortune to save the lives of those he

once exploited. He attempts to hide behind his constant self-control because he was taught that vulnerability is for the weak, yet somehow in spite of this, still seems vulnerable, one could even say fragile, a trait he shares with his foe Goethe.

His vulnerability is truly highlighted in the end of the movie where he convinces himself that he could have saved more Jews and collapses into the arms of his Jewish accountant and friend, Ithaca Stern. Stepping away from the familiarity and secure identity of authority in the Nazi party, made him shed his skin of cold hard steel to reveal a much more softer, more vulnerable side of this hero who conquered not only the Nazis but above all, himself and his own feelings of conformity and compliance.

To be able to stand up and overpower the protected fraternal he grew up admiring, is utterly inspiring and encourages us to not always take the role of the sheep but to assume the role of the shepherd and develop our own ideas instead of merely trusting the charismatic leader of the age. Unlike Slender, Goethe never manages to stray into goodness. However, the lack of hang in his basic nature does not render him a one-dimensional character.

On the contrary, Goethe is a complex and conflicted man who is torn between the familiar and the new in the form of the Nazi party as a child, however at this point, having grown and developed an even stronger, habitual even a somewhat fearful sense of narcissism, it is difficult for Schneider to subdue Goethe's way of life like he has his own. Goethe's fear of change, his fear of stepping into new realities, is so profound that he desperately clings to the world he knows, to the world he has become a part

of. His unwillingness to break free from these constraints ultimately leads to his downfall.

We witness one of his battles within himself where he first pardons a Jewish boy and then turns and shoots him, not liking the new picture of himself. Animosity takes over his mind and he resorts to his all too familiar ways. He is too weak, or rather too terrified to face himself face what he is becoming due to the simple fact it involves change. Change is the adversary, in Schindler's eyes and shown through this little Jewish boy. Hence he thought if he relieved himself of this boy, he would get rid of the change and go back to his life where everything was simple and "by the book". Inspire of this change continued to haunt him, to creep up on him and strike when he least expected. A war against one's self is a most terrifying ordeal because no matter where you run, where you hide, it will always be with you, tempting you, harassing you and finally consuming you. Schindler's List is no less a "Jewish story" or a "German story" than it is a human story. And its subject matter applies to every nation. Of course, the film is about racial hatred and the brutality of humankind, however my interpretation of the two main characters, stems from the concept of not only a war against nations but really a war against one's self.

Within Steven Spielberg's merciless depiction of Goethe, we witness his battle within his own self, a battle of which he could not win. In the beginning, Goethe was just like any other Hitler drone, a soldier whom had no intention to question Hitler's authority. However, once Schneider had planted seeds of doubt and punctured his barrier of obedience, disorder began brewing

beneath his cold and heartless exterior. The strange logic Schneider introduces to Goethe, forces IM to acknowledge and re-evaluate learned perceptions that he had previously accepted.

Today our society raises us to believe that obedience is good and disobedience is bad. We are taught that we should all do what we're told and that the people that are disobedient are almost always bad people. Society tells us this, but it is not true. Most people will even be obedient to the point of causing harm to others, because to be disobedient requires the courage to stand alone against authority. Disobedience is not always wrong. The truth is sometimes it is necessary to be rebellious. Man's development has largely been affected by being defiant.