

Obedience

Psychology



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Every area of life has some kind of rules, sometimes these rules are easy to abide by and other times they may not be. Even though we may not always agree with the rules that are laid down for us, many times we follow them because of our obedience towards authority figures. We tend to follow the rules of our authority because they generally know what is best for us and know what the right thing to do is. However, there may be times in which our authority figure is telling us to do something that either feels wrong or we know is the wrong decision or action to make. In this case, it sometimes makes individuals wonder whether to go against their beliefs and opinions to obey the authority or if they should choose to go with their gut feeling. .

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 be alone against authority. In Stanley Milgram's "Perils of Obedience" experiment, his studies showed that sixty percent of ordinary people would agree to obey an authority figure even to the point of severely hurting another human being. (Milgram 347). Disobedience is not always wrong. The truth is sometimes it is necessary to be disobedient. In Hebrew mythology, human history began because of an act of disobedience, Adam and Eve gained independence from nature by disobeying God and eating an apple. (Fromm 377). Man's development has largely been affected by being disobedient to authority. Authority that has tried to prevent new ideas and keep things as they are, so that authority will remain intact. It's as though we are allowing society to imprison us by accepting the roles assigned to us

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(Zimbardo 375). Obedience is a behavior deeply ingrained in us. It is often an impulse that overrides ethics and sympathy. There is much evidence of this, including the Holocaust. It was not just a small group of deranged individuals that committed these atrocities, it was people who had blind obedience to authority. The tendency to locate the source of behavior disorders in a particular person or group underestimates the power of situational forces. We are prone to obey because when we are obedient to an authority it makes us feel safe and protected. We can't make mistakes because the authority decides for us. We can't be alone, because the authority watches over us. So, no matter what our behavior is, it can be justified on the ground that we are only following orders, doing what we're told from above. We can easily be brought to view ourselves as an instrument for carrying out another person's wishes, and so we no longer feel responsible for our actions. Unfortunately, that can make us feel responsible to the authority, instead of the content of the orders the authority is giving. Morality is still there, but the focus is changed. We feel the need to perform well, out of obligation or duty, to those who are in authority. This does not necessarily mean that all disobedience is good and all obedience is bad. That would ignore the relationship between obedience and disobedience. An act of obedience to one principle is usually an act of disobedience to another. Many martyrs of religion, science, and freedom have had to disobey those who wanted to stop them in order to obey their own consciences, the laws of humanity and reason (Fromm 379). If a man can only obey, he is a slave and will accomplish very little. But, if a man can only disobey, he is a rebel and does not act in the name of a conviction or principle. Studymode. com