

## SOME COMMON CHARACTERISTICS FOUND IN MOST CULT GROUPS

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1. LEADER IS ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY.  
The leader is an absolute authority figure, often charismatic, with his/her special revealed truth, religious vision, world view. Leader sometimes portrayed as persecuted and suffering in receiving "special wisdom" only she/he possesses. Leader's truth cannot be questioned or judged by followers or "outsiders."
2. MOVEMENT POSSESSES EXCLUSIVE TRUTH.  
Group is "only true church," and all others are false, dead-ends, evil, "of the devil," to be abandoned and renounced. Ultimate Truth is only available to inside members.
3. RECRUITMENT BY "LOVE BOMBING."  
Recruiters pursue potential members with overwhelming attention, frequent invitations to study and social groups, constant phone calls, campus dorm visits, apparently unlimited interest focused upon the person being recruited.
4. RELATIONSHIPS CONFINED TO OTHER MEMBERS ONLY.  
Outsiders are to be avoided, except as targets of recruitment. Members discouraged from contact with families, friends, other non-members. People outside are "deceived & deceivers," agents of the devil, the enemy, not to be trusted.
5. CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT.  
Tight controls on individuality. May include sleep deprivation, overwork, constant demands to attend meetings and study groups, limited communication outside the group, frequent personal check-ups by designated leader/discipler to whom member is accountable.
6. FINANCIAL DEMANDS & SECRECY.  
Contributions required by leaders often oppressive on followers. Questions of how funds are used often seen as expression of "lack of faithfulness and trust."
7. ANTI-INTELLECTUAL STANCE.  
Obedience demanded, leader's instructions authoritative, group meetings more important than college/university studies. Raising questions by members or recruits seen as suggestive of their own lack of spirituality & obvious need to submit to authority.
8. PERSONAL CONFESSIONS REQUIRED.  
Sometimes privately to a leader, or written on lists to be reviewed later, sometimes publicly in a group. Past or present "deviant" behavior reveals "sinfulness" of new members. Confidentiality of "confessions" not always maintained, can be used as control tool.
9. LEAVING IS COSTLY.  
To leave is sign of sinfulness, devil working in you. Threats of "divine punishment" upon any who wish to leave. Those who do leave the movement are "shunned" by members who remain