

have the last 300 represented more questioning of these ideas due to the enlightenment?



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:25 AM

and we kinda wasted 1000 of it after rome fell.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:25 AM

seems a bit disproportional though, more questioning of physical ideas through science but not so much questioning of social rules maybe



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:26 AM

yes that disproportional thing u mention is a major current issue



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:26 AM

everything DD has described as stasis just bugs me (scares me because of how it seems to be so possible even today). Like even in a society that's making progress it seems surprisingly easy to fall into static ideas in large swaths of one's life, while only making progress maybe in your career and that's it  
(edited)

i want to be improving as much as I can, even stuff like how i peel an egg  
but it seems counter-culture to be that way



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:27 AM

the amount ppl waste intellectual careers, or actually make things worse, is really disturbing from my perspective. it's so widespread.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:27 AM

ok social metaphysics is something i want to note down and look into further



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:29 AM

like all these rational ideas seem so compelling and interesting, but also i feel lucky that i've even come across them. i could imagine quite realistically leading a life where i might never have discovered these ideas, or i might have come across them once i was so cemented in error that i don't even notice how cool they are

i know. i was kinda lost before I found *The Fabric of Reality*. wanted better but didn't know what.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:29 AM

I was so convinced on effective altruism for a few weeks just recently, but then I realized how flawed it might be... Applied to an internship at an EA company here but likely wasn't qualified for the job. There's got to be a way to work on meaningful problems and apply CR to improve things though, but now I'm questioning my desire to make things better for others/the world

I'm kind of scared of objectivism because I don't know if I want to justify selfishness, but I realize it makes perfect sense too and I should just learn it and apply it

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:30 AM

oh that one is easy

Objectivism argues that there is a *harmony of men's interests* so that there can be *win/win* outcomes with NO LOSERS and NO HUMAN SACRIFICES

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:30 AM

ahh

win/win was one of my favourite ideas from all the company culture/psychology reading i was doing

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:31 AM

this is achieved, to a first approximation, by everyone non-violently pursuing their individual interests.

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:31 AM

ah

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:32 AM

capitalism is a system where ppl trade only for *mutual benefit*

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:32 AM

the thing is, is it ok to make your interests pretty altruistic?

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:32 AM

so it's in the selfish interest of both parties

but that is also good for the group and the other guy. it's not *only* selfish.

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:32 AM

yeah it seems like selfishness done in this system is good for everyone

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:33 AM

but it's ur responsibility to worry about your own interests. u should look out for others a little sometimes but it's not a main focus.

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:33 AM

but on a deeper level... selfishness enables you to create more good for everyone?

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:33 AM

if u don't make sure it's good for you, then something bad might happen to you – in which case it's not a win/win b/c of your error. you can't count on others to protect your interests.

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:33 AM

right

so it's not so much maximizing self as maximizing win/win

never lose/win and never win/lose ?

keep going for win/win

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:34 AM

to a good approximation, maximizing selfish benefit is the way to achieve win/win

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:34 AM

hmm ok

i'll keep reading and work on being persuaded on that

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:35 AM

this idea is not unique to Objectivism

it is part of "classical" liberalism (the original liberalism before Marxists stole the name)

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:35 AM

ah

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:36 AM

ideas like that are what caused the industrial revolution and created the modern world.

but now they aren't that popular

and we're, in many ways, destroying our civilization

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:36 AM

i think there are just certain deep ethical hangups that I have to understand and work on, like parts of me that aren't okay with taking advantage of others' irrationalities or mistakes to benefit myself, without at least pointing them out or bringing them up first and asking them if they mean to be making that decision that way. But I get the feeling objectivism actually accounts for a lot of these really well, so i should learn it and see how it fits together

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:37 AM

it's not about taking advantage of ppl, which is a much worse strategy than producing a lot of value and trading value for value with, preferably, competent men not fools.

the person you could take advantage of is a worse person to cooperate with. there's less to gain there.

and putting effort into taking advantage of him is less productive than putting that effort into producing stuff – books, corn, railroads, whatever



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:39 AM

hmm ok im going to read that a few times  
ahhh



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:39 AM

there are ppl in the world who take advantage of others, but their way of thinking is nothing like Objectivism.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:39 AM

it just seems so difficult in real life to actually cut ties with people or go deal with other people instead, but maybe that's an error to correct  
i think most of my challenge will be understanding how to apply objectivism day to day  
starting to tell the truth has been very difficult, but also very rewarding



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:41 AM

my point wasn't really about switching who you interact with, tho there is some importance there. if you have a reason to interact with someone, that can be ok. and it's fine to interact with gullible ppl as low level employees or as cashiers that you buy stuff from, there are plenty of ways to have a limited business relationship that is mutually good.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:41 AM

re:

we're, in many ways, destroying our civilization

yeah anti-progress thinking and stuff is something i've become aware of and it's scary, i realized i've grown up with some really bad ideas around stuff like global warming and recycling, where we are stifling progress and anti-human rather than addressing problems with *more* progress and better ideas. reminds me of the whole, "To beat a bad idea, don't suppress it but instead use better ideas against it" but we're here thinking in suppression/reversing terms rather than progress



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:41 AM

but if you're spending your time trying to con cashiers, that's really not the best way to get ahead for yourself.  
even if there were no police to catch you.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:41 AM

right

the deeper idea is that there are better ways to spend your time, even if you aren't going to get caught cheating others  
because those who can be cheated easily, are not worth cheating, and those who can't be cheated easily, are worth doing mutually beneficial business with and avoiding cheating

so in practice, simply not cheating is ideal

especially when you consider that honesty to others enables honesty to oneself and a connection to reality



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:43 AM

there are scams that cheat a LOT of gullible ppl. like bitcoin. if you cheat enough ppl, u can get a lot of money. but to cheat LOTS of ppl is hard, it's kinda like running a big company that does complicated stuff (so why not run a legit company)



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:44 AM

hmm yeah



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:45 AM

when u try to cheat ppl, u have an adversarial interaction. they put effort into stopping you, fighting you, making you fail. even if it's a small amount of effort that they have to use (adjusted for quality), it's still a subtraction, makes it harder for you. if you work with ppl for mutual benefit, their effort adds to yours instead of subtracting, they work with you instead of against you. that's fundamentally better for you.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:46 AM

yeah if i think about it in energy units, if all energy is put towards productive ends vs. defensive ends, then it goes much farther



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:46 AM

ya



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:46 AM

well this is something i heard based on correlation science from Adam Grant, but it was just that... the best negotiators were found to be high in concern for others *and* high in concern for themselves. that the two factors could be uncorrelated and still both be high (edited)



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:47 AM

conning and thieving also are not personally fulfilling.  
the goal of life is not to get a big pile of money



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:47 AM

it's about happiness right  
or fulfillment



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:47 AM

you should have some stuff you care about. like architecture or building oil rigs or writing philosophy books.

or even hairstyles and haircuts



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:47 AM

money just becomes the way to enable the things you care about



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:48 AM

so u actually like working on that and want to do it well



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:48 AM

right

yeah



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:48 AM

winning the lotto isn't very good at making ppl happy  
(or rich for very long)



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:48 AM

yeah

i realized whatever i could tell you I will do when i win the lottery



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:48 AM

stealing or conning is worse than winning the lotto



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:48 AM

once i win it, you might see very different behaviour from me  
so money has to be created in a fulfilling way



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:49 AM

it has other problems. ppl feel guilty about cheating others unless they have really fucked up values that  
cause them all kinds of problems  
lots of ideas are connected



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:49 AM

and the best way to get to creating money in a fulfilling way is to maximize your own interests (without  
impeding on anyone else's with violence or anything)  
ah



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:49 AM

like ur not gonna be good to your spouse if ur acting consistently with the ideas of a thief  
how u treat all ppl is connected

u can't just arbitrarily separate it

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:50 AM

it is

same as dishonesty to others and dishonesty to oneself i guess

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:50 AM

ya

it's hard enough to deal with reality well if you focus on doing it. if ur lying and cheating, trying to fake reality for other ppl, then it makes it harder for you to stay connected to reality yourself.

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:51 AM

mm

and i guess if im also trying to connect others with reality in a way that isn't benefitting me more than it's hurting me...

then im being unsustainable

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:52 AM

the opponents of liberalism wish to sacrifice the individual to the group, or one group to another, b/c they believe in conflicts where some ppl must lose.

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:52 AM

but i can measure win in more than money right, like i could say i would pay \$x for this fulfillment and i'm happy i get to do it,

yeah i hate compromise

i guess this is one area where the company culture stuff and this philosophy agree

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:53 AM

when they ask ppl to be unselfish, they are looking for willing victims so they don't have to go to war against them.

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:53 AM

oh hmm

willing victims

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:53 AM

altruism teaches that being a victim is virtuous

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:54 AM

i think i just have to admit i've been a willing victim, admit that it was wrong of me, and grow from it then



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:54 AM

it's a type of con, a way for some ppl to take advantage of others



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:54 AM

easier said than done due to deep ideas/emotions, but i can work on it

hmm

yeah, and i guess people can take advantage of others even while believing they aren't



**curi** 18-Sep-19 01:55 AM

most ppl who advocate altruism are pretty inconsistent. it's not very thorough. but that's the underlying theme and meaning.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 01:55 AM

ah

im internally conflicted i guess

but yeah i really appreciate this, im not going to stop digging into my discomfort on this stuff

i'll have to figure out how to practically apply this because i've been believing win/win but also making some decisions that were altruistic, so i need to work on that consistency and dishonesty (edited)

my favourite thing about win/win was when i realized that no negotiation had to ever be win/lose because we could always expand the factors at play, and different parties always value different factors differently

we could always look for things to negotiate on that one party cares about less than the other, and eventually find ways that both are happy

in fact i see now why altruism is so bad in a way

it causes one party to accept a win/lose as the willing victim

they become unwilling to communicate or continue to look for better solutions

because they believe whatever they agree to is the best they can get or that it's the right/fair agreement, regardless of how it hurts them or helps them

but if both parties are set on win/win and won't tolerate any sacrifice of self-interest, then you can really be creative together, communicate well, keep staying committed to finding final outcomes that you're both happy with

when one party is altruistic, it actually pulls it out of balance

and when both parties are altruistic im not sure it can go anywhere.. it just becomes about who is less altruistic controlling the decisions? dang this seems to apply to all sorts of things, like even participating in decisions of where to go for dinner with friends

if you aren't willing to acknowledge or represent your own self-interest and preferences, you're being dishonest to yourself or to the others

dang

im gonna sleep on this, but I think this makes sense

**swarmalator** 18-Sep-19 02:04 AM





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNMkADpvO4w>

## Primer

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 02:06 AM

lots of ppl are so worried about the self-interest topic, and many won't discuss it (or they will kinda yell at you but won't really think about it), but i find it's actually one of the easier topics in a lot of ways.

ur doing well at rational conversation @Freeze



**swarmalator** 18-Sep-19 02:06 AM

that video is what pops in my head when I think about altruism/selfishness. Even with a simple model, it communicates against common ideas of sharing is caring.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 02:07 AM

oh man swarm, my friend sent me that video a few weeks ago, it's so cool to see it again here

@PlatypusRex haha look

Thanks curi, it does mean a lot to me to hear that

you're right, when you put it that way, it's not a very challenging topic to understand or dissect

a lot of the difficulty is coming from bad ideas of mine, but im really glad i get to challenge them with your help

your encouragement is actually very helpful

i have to figure out where my rational beliefs seem to be breaking down in practice, where i end up thinking on behalf of the other person and then putting their needs on par with mine or ahead of mine, and why i seem to do this



**curi** 18-Sep-19 02:10 AM

from my perspective, it's hard to understand what's so hard about having a conversation like this. but most ppl can't/won't do it.



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 02:10 AM

mm there are a lot of emotional/cultural barriers i guess? I don't know really, it was difficult for me but also so fun

it feels good to face the uncomfortable ideas



**curi** 18-Sep-19 02:12 AM

were there specific bits of text that were difficult to read or write?

**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 02:15 AM



ah let me check, that's a good question  
i guess i worry that i can get *too* personal or self-centred

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 02:16 AM

the issue shouldn't be viewed as a continuum and matter of degrees. it's more about concepts and qualitative differences.

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 02:16 AM

ah

i realize that a large part of the value of these discussions is the public good they do, so I want to be asking questions/stating ideas that ideally encourage discussion and a direction that others benefit from too

but again maybe this... is an example of flawed altruism

i tend to do this i think, i empathize with others and then try to maximize whatever their objective is, but it seems flawed if i dont communicate it well because otherwise i'm imposing my idea of their desires on them through my actions/inactions

i have to learn to let others do what's best for them and for me to question it openly rather than manipulatively change myself to fit whatever idea i have of their goals  
that's dishonesty

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 02:20 AM

it's easier to understand and achieve your own goals than other ppl's goals  
by far, for many reasons

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**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 02:21 AM

yeah you're right

this is part of why TCS has been resonating so much with me

everything it describes of how kids know their own goals and have information relevant to them

and yeah so it makes sense that Popperian epistemology would be very useful for me, probably explains why I got so deep into DD stuff and enjoyed it so much

i know. i was kinda lost before I found *The Fabric of Reality*. wanted better but didn't know what.

glad I've come across Popperian epistemology after everything else i've taken on that may not have been so good for me (psychology, sam harris, eliezer yudkowsky/lesswrong, EA)

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**curi** 18-Sep-19 02:24 AM

Yudkowsky personally suppressed discussion of Popper on LW forum to avoid ppl like you seeing it.  
so it's not random bad luck that it took longer to find it.

re the game theory vid, haven't watched much yet but in general

i don't think game theory ppl stand out as advocates of capitalism. therefore there must be something they don't get about it.

idk what the problem is tho



**PlatypusRex** 18-Sep-19 02:35 AM

@Freeze ah yes share and take, a good one



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 02:37 AM



yeah curi, the weird thing is I had discovered Deutsch before Yudkowsky. The good news is I only spent a few days reading a bunch of LessWrong and Overcoming Bias stuff because I had applied for a job at an EA company before another discord friend of mine who is an electrical engineer by trade heavily criticized Yudkowsky for not having a university degree (criticized for the wrong reasons, not specific enough) and for using bad math in one of his posts (very specific, probably a valid criticism) but it got me skeptical enough to stop reading that stuff and go to other resources, which eventually led me here I think within a week or so

I never went from Deutsch to Popper but I realize now I really should



**curi** 18-Sep-19 02:43 AM

uni degrees mostly mean ppl are conformist



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 02:46 AM

ah

i guess it might mean something to you that i skipped university then, but i've never been sure i made the right decision, i just felt like it wasn't for me (edited)



**Freeze** 18-Sep-19 03:03 AM

one idea i'll leave here to ask about is this definition of the concept/distinction between influence vs. manipulation from this article written by the vitalsmarts team:

<https://www.vitalsmarts.com/crucialskills/2019/07/influence-versus-manipulation/>

*Manipulation versus influence.* First, I'll define manipulation, so we can see how influence is different. An action is manipulative if it derives a part of its power from subterfuge—i.e., from being hidden or underhanded. If explaining exactly what you are doing and why makes the action less effective, then it is manipulative. The influence strategies we teach in Influencer are just the opposite: they become more powerful as people understand how and why they are being used.

**David Maxfield**

**Influence Versus Manipulation - Crucial Skills by VitalSmarts**

Dear David, The culture in my organization is toxic. We have intelligent, proud, committed leaders who are beginning to learn the talk of collaboration and empowerment. However, they still cling to the quick-and-dirty solution of compliance. My question is, how is intentional...





**curi** 18-Sep-19 03:29 AM

Peter Boghossian's video had a bunch of comments where he explained what he was doing to the YT audience, but he did *not* explain that stuff to the guy he was talking to.  
he had in mind a bunch of ideas about how to influence ppl, get certain conversational results, etc., that he was keeping hidden.

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**AnneB** 18-Sep-19 07:24 AM

Freeze quoting curi website:

It's better to persuade children, and in the rare cases where the parent can't figure out how to do that, he has just demonstrated his own ignorance of either the subject or the child, and either way he's now in the one situation where he'd want to use force, but also the one situation where he has lost all justification to use it.

Freeze:

when you are most tempted to use force is when you have lost all justification to do so, in this situation as the parent

Using force against children is not just using physical force. Manipulation is using force. Rule-setting is using force.

Most child/parent relationships have lots of force in them, even relationships that seem on the surface to be pleasant.

I recently heard a child ask the adults in the room, "Ooh, is it dessert time?" There's force embedded there. That child's parents are forcing her to only eat certain foods at certain times. They have not persuaded her with reason that it's better for her to only eat those foods at certain times.

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**AnneB** 18-Sep-19 07:36 AM

Freeze:

my favourite thing about win/win was when i realized that no negotiation had to ever be win/lose because we could always expand the factors at play, and different parties always value different factors differently

People think win/win is impossible with children because children are too unreasonable. They are wrong.

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**JustinCEO** 18-Sep-19 08:56 AM

M] Freeze: although i've had weird discussions where people insisted it's okay to hit somebody if you catch them sleeping with your spouse, but I asked why and they just said because it's justified revenge

people think if you don't get violently angry in that situation it shows you don't care much

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**JustinCEO** 18-Sep-19 09:05 AM

re Altruism, Rand says

What is the moral code of altruism? The basic principle of altruism is that man has no right to exist for his own sake, that service to others is the only justification of his existence, and that self-sacrifice is his highest moral duty, virtue and value.

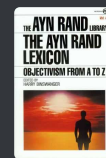
Do not confuse altruism with kindness, good will or respect for the rights of others. These are not primaries, but consequences, which, in fact, altruism makes impossible. The irreducible primary of altruism, the basic absolute, is self-sacrifice—which means; self-immolation, self-abnegation, self-denial, self-destruction—which means: the self as a standard of evil, the selfless as a standard of the good.

Do not hide behind such superficialities as whether you should or should not give a dime to a beggar. That is not the issue. The issue is whether you do or do not have the right to exist without giving him that dime. The issue is whether you must keep buying your life, dime by dime, from any beggar who might choose to approach you. The issue is whether the need of others is the first mortgage on your life and the moral purpose of your existence. The issue is whether man is to be regarded as a sacrificial animal. Any man of self-esteem will answer: "No." Altruism says: "Yes."

<http://aynrandlexicon.com/lexicon/altruism/1.html>

#### —Ayn Rand Lexicon

What is the moral code of altruism? The basic principle of altruism is that man has no right to exist for his own sake, that service to others is the only justification of his existence, and that self-sacrifice is his highest moral duty, virtue and value.



Do not confuse alt...

among many many other things

she goes into lots of detail on the topic

I recently heard a child ask the adults in the room, "Ooh, is it dessert time?" There's force embedded there. That child's parents are forcing her to only eat certain foods at certain times. They have not persuaded her with reason that it's better for her to only eat those foods at certain times.

right and lots of ppl would just think the kid's question is not notable or is cute or something that is something that ppl don't like about TCS and other ideas, is that it causes you to see more everyday horror



**besetro** 18-Sep-19 10:08 AM

When someone (child or adult) willfully complies with an authority because they think that's the right thing to do, is it force? It's irrational. It's bad. It indicates that something went wrong with the person's independent judgment -- in general, the person was coerced and hurt in the past. But is it force? What exactly does the concept of force refer to?



**AnneB** 18-Sep-19 11:15 AM

I don't know the answer to that.