

Why Are You Surprised by Authoritarianism?

Most kids are conditioned almost from day one to obey arbitrary authority. No one attempts to explain or justify the source of the parent or teacher's authority; no consent is sought, and no choice is offered.

Schools demand complete conformity to schedules and activities, controlling everything from when and how long you get to think about what, to when you can eat and go to the bathroom. The authority is entirely arbitrary. The main fallback when kids question is, "because I said so".

Kids are also conditioned to believe that, absent this imposed control, they would destroy themselves. They'd be dumb, self-destructive, and socially disastrous if they weren't controlled in every facet by whatever adult has appointed themselves an authority. Nevermind how stupid, shallow, cruel, or petty that adult may be.

Eventually, kids begin to believe it. They assume the world cannot function unless they blindly follow orders. They assume they would hurt themselves and others if they were free. They cannot see beyond the frightful comfort of conformity.

After nearly every citizen spends the first two decades of their life conditioned to obey authority without question, something odd happens. People act surprised when those same citizens follow political strong men and seek legislative solutions for every problem.

The real wonder is just how rebellious and free humans still are after so many years of control and conditioning.