



We view a behavior as correct to the extent that we see other people engaging in the behavior

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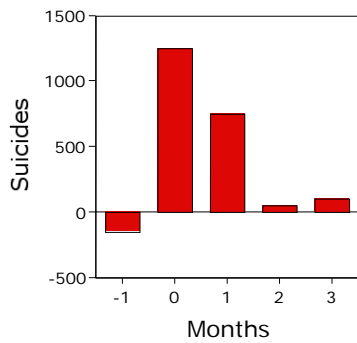
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Fluctuations in U.S. suicides before, during, and after 26 publicized suicide stories (Phillips, 1974)



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### Most Influential When...



- Person is uncertain for how to behave
- Person perceives others in environment as similar

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## Asch Experiment

- 6 confederates, 1 participant seated in a row
  - Participant is in the sixth chair
- Trials 1 and 2, everyone agrees
- Subsequent trials, all confederates prior to the participant provide a wrong answer...

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## What Happens?

- First, confused but rebel against the group
  - "It's C"
- Resisting group pressure wears the participant down
  - "C?"
- Soon, many participants are providing blatantly wrong answer in accordance with the group
  - "A"
  - Participant's voice is low and their eyes are on the table

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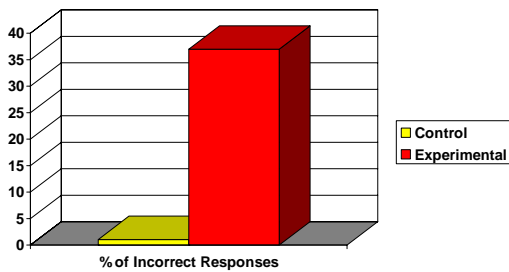
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## Asch's Results



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## and Cults



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## How To Spot A Cult



- Distinctive ritual and beliefs surrounding its devotion to a god or a person
- A charismatic leader
- Isolation from the surrounding “evil” culture
  - Probably the most important aspect

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## Your Counterattack



- Be sensitive to fake social proof
- Recognize that the actions of others should not form the sole basis for our decisions

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