

The Cult Test

I found this test written by a guy who calls himself Secret Agent Orange who created an extensive web site exposing Alcoholics Anonymous as a cult. Apparently he had such a bad experience with them that he ended up writing an extremely well researched web site about cults and cult behavior. His site is massive and impressive.

One of the most interesting things on his site is his cult test. Of course no test is perfect, but I rate this as damn good and by far the best one I've ever seen. Taking the test and reading the material that each question links to is very educational. Definitely a must read for anyone interested in cults.

Each question is a link to a detailed explanation of each question with a lot of very interesting information about cult behavior. I encourage you, if you really think you might be a cult member, to read each one and really think about it.

Try taking this test as an American citizen to test if America is a cult!

The word "cult" doesn't necessarily mean religious cult. A nation can be a cult. If you are an American citizen, take this test to see if America is a cult. You might find the results interesting. You might also apply it to your job, or political party, or any other group that you are a member of.

As the "guru" of the Church of Reality I have taken the test on behalf of this religion. Member and nonmember alike are encouraged to challenge my answers and make sure I'm being unbiased. Any time the guru takes the cult test it's automatically suspect because I can guarantee that 100% of us gurus will tell you that we are not cult leaders. So it's no surprise that the Church of Reality did well on this test.

One of the first tests to determine if you are in a cult is if the cult will let you take this test. Can you take this test and discuss it with your group? What would happen if you encouraged other members to take this test, would you get in trouble? Do these questions cause you to experience strong emotions? If you can't take this test, even if it's just for laughs, you might be a cult member.

The results don't determine if you are or are not in a cult. It is ultimately to cause the issue to be discussed and thought about. The test itself should be scrutinized. Are there better questions? Did Satan inspire this test to undermine faith? Even if you run a benovolent organization, you might take this to see if your organization is becoming cultish.

So - here it is - have fun!

Click on each question to get the details about what is being asked.

- 1. The Guru is always right.

No - the Guru definitely is not always right.

- 2. You are always wrong.

No - members can be right or wrong.

- 3. No Exit.

Well - you can't exit reality itself. but you can quit the Church of Reality

- 4. No Graduates.

True - the quest for reality never ends. But anyone has a shot at passing the guru. If you do - I hand over the keys and you get to be the guru.

- 5. Cult-speak.

Yes - we have cult speak! We have our own language, we invent new terms and we redefine words. But they aren't thought terminating, but thought inspiring. But that's what the guru is supposed to say

- 6. Group-think.

No - group think is actually prohibited. Members are required to think for themselves.

- 7. Irrationality.

No - we believe in only what is real.

- 8. Suspension of disbelief.

Disbelief is required. We are a doubt based religion.

- 9. Denigration of competing sects, cults, religions...

Sometimes I just have to take a shot at the crazy theists. The Principle of Inclusiveness requires we put up with them. We aren't into the hate thing.

- 10. Personal attacks on critics.

Still trying to get noticed enough to have critics.

- 11. Insistence that the cult is THE ONLY WAY.

Got us on that one. You're either with reality or you're against it.

- 12. The cult and its members are special.

I think the Church of Reality is special, and so are the members. Hooray for us! But the question is if we are "special" as in "Chosen by God" or something. This planet is a spec of dust in the universe. How special is that?

- 13. Induction of guilt, and the use of guilt to manipulate cult members.

If you were real loyal members you'd get me on TV like all the other preachers are.

- 14. Dogma, Unquestionable Dogma, and Sacred Science.

The only thing you can't question is that you must question everything.

- 15. Indoctrination of members.

So many web pages - so little time.

- 16. Appeals to "holy" or "wise" authorities.

We're out here on our own. It's up to us to become wise authorities.

- 17. Instant Community.

Maybe when we get bigger. We have an instant online community.

- 18. Instant Intimacy.

Oooooohhhh if only! But in the context of the real question, no, we don't do that. No community confessions.

- 19. Surrender To The Cult.

Are you willing to make a personal commitment to reality today? We don't ask that you hand over your property.

- 20. Giggly wonderfulness and starry-eyed faith.

The Church of Reality probably has some enthusiastic believers but not starry-eyed.

- 21. Personal testimonies of earlier converts.

Reality changed my life. If we get some celeb converts we'll exploit them just like everyone else does.

- 22. The cult is self-absorbed.

No. Not us!

- 23. Dual Purposes.

It's all about what's real. There is some fear of Deists though. We don't want to be marched into church at gunpoint.

- 24. Aggressive Recruiting.

We aren't aggressive enough.

- 25. Deceptive Recruiting.

Reality itself - how can that be deceptive. If you think reality is deceptive, you might be a cult member.

- 26. No Humor.

My mother always said, "There's something funny about that boy!"

- 27. You can't tell the truth.

Truth is what the Church of Reality is all about. Members can say anything they want. The truth is not suppressed. We accept scrutiny.

- 28. Cloning -- You must redefine yourself and your life in cult terms.

We're strongly individualistic. Strength in diversity.

- 29. You must change your beliefs to conform to the group's beliefs.

Well - this church is about reality. You are expected to give up fictional deities.

- 30. The End Justifies The Means.

Not in this church.

- 31. Dishonesty, Deceit, Denial, Falsification, and Rewriting History.

Nope - that's what we are against.

- 32. Different Levels of Truth.

Everyone gets the same truths.

- 33. Newcomers can't think right.

Newcomers often bring in fresh ideas.

- 34. The Cult Implants Phobias.

We aren't in the fear based stuff. But if you leave our "cult" you might end up in a real cult.

- 35. The Cult is Money-Grubbing.

Sometimes I fanaticize about that. Rolling around naked in the Church of Reality money room.

- 36. Confession Sessions.

We aren't into the confession thing. We are for changing and moving on. Looking to the future.

- 37. A System of Punishments and Rewards.

Nope - don't have that.

- 38. An Impossible Superhuman Model of Perfection.

We accept that everyone is imperfect.

- 39. Mentoring.

Nope.

- 40. Intrusiveness.

Your personal lives are your own business.

- 41. Disturbed Guru, Mentally Ill Leader.

I suppose it is up to the members to answer this one. The guru has had an interesting life.

- 42. Disturbed Members, Mentally Ill Followers.

If reality is for the mentally ill then what kind of world is this?

- 43. Create a sense of powerlessness, covert fear, guilt, and dependency.

No. We empower everyone.

- 44. Dispensed existence

This cult decides nothing about people's worthiness.

- 45. Ideology Over Experience, Observation, and Logic

Reality over fiction.

- 46. Keep them unaware that there is an agenda to change them

We are openly trying to change people to bring reality into their lives.

- 47. Thought-Stopping Language. Thought-terminating clichés and slogans.

We use thought provoking language. Think about that!

- 48. Mystical Manipulation

Not our style.

- 49. The guru or the group demands ultra-loyalty and total commitment.

We demand that you doubt everything.

- 50. Demands for Total Faith and Total Trust

Assumes a fundamental distrust to keep everyone honest.

- 51. Members Get No Respect. They Get Abused.

We try to respect everyone.

- 52. Inconsistency. Contradictory Messages

Contradictions should be resolved.

- 53. Hierarchical, Authoritarian Power Structure, and Social Castes

We do have a hierarchy

- 54. Front groups, masquerading recruiters, hidden promoters, and disguised propagandists

Not big enough to consider front group.

- 55. Belief equals truth

If you believe in bullshit, I mean REALLY believe in bullshit, it's still bullshit.

- 56. Use of double-binds

No virgins thrown into volcanoes.

- 57. The cult leader is not held accountable for his actions.

Oh I wish!

- 58. Everybody else needs the guru to boss him around, but nobody bosses the guru around.

See previous answer.

- 59. The guru criticizes everybody else, but nobody criticizes the guru.

See previous answer.

- 60. Dispensed truth and social definition of reality

Nope. It's about reality, not the guru.

- 61. The Guru Is Extra-Special.

My mother though so. But nothing beyond that.

- 62. Flexible, shifting morality

Would I lie to you baby?

- 63. Separatism

We're inclusive. We're involved.

- 64. Inability to tolerate criticism

We require criticism.

- 65. A Charismatic Leader

I hope not.

- 66. Calls to Obliterate Self

Actually humility and loss of self importance and selflessness are very powerful. We're busted on this count. But it can be abused by cults.

- 67. Don't Trust Your Own Mind.

Busted again in some respects. But to us it's a realistic assessment of our own limitations and research into ways to compensate. How to discern reality with an imperfect mind to work with.

- 68. Don't Feel Your Feelings.

We aren't into feeling control.

- 69. The cult takes over the individual's decision-making process.

Nope - you make your own decisions.

- 70. You Owe The Group.

You don't owe us anything.

- 71. We Have The Panacea.

Not hardly.

- 72. Progressive Indoctrination and Progressive Commitments

I suppose that is yet to be seen. We would like people to try harder spreading reality.

- 73. Magical, Mystical, Unexplainable Workings

We're a no magic religion. Sorry.

- 74. Trance-Inducing Practices

We don't do weird.

- 75. New Identity -- Redefinition of Self -- Revision of Personal History

Reality can be a profound change. But nothing is required by the Church of Reality. We don't give you a new name.

- 76. Membership Rivalry

Not hardly.

- 77. True Believers

Well, you don't get any more real than reality itself. So we're busted on this one.

- 78. Scapegoating and Excommunication

We're too small to start throwing people out.

- 79. Promised Powers or Knowledge

Well, if we work hard and develop the technology, almost anything is possible.

- 80. It's a con. You don't get the promised goodies.

We don't make promises.

- 81. Hypocrisy

Nope. Sacred Principle of Responsibility. If we screw up, we own it.

- 82. Denial of the truth. Reversal of reality. Rationalization and Denial.

Nope, we want the truth.

- 83. Seeing Through Tinted Lenses

Everyone is tainted by their own perspective. We try to look at the world as it really is. But we are limited by the lens of humanity.

- 84. You can't make it without the cult.

You can find reality without us. We are just reality's pimp.

- 85. Enemy-making and Devaluing the Outsider

Our job is to help "them" evolve in a positive direction. We are one planet. It's all us really.

- 86. The cult wants to own you.

No. This cult wants you to own yourself.

- 87. Channeling or other occult, unchallengeable, sources of information.

We are a no voodoo religion.

- 88. They Make You Dependent On The Group.

I hope not - but if we put together a really good group, maybe that would be a good thing. But dependency and control is not in our goals.

- 89. Demands For Compliance With The Group

We demand nothing.

- 90. Newcomers Need Fixing.

Not at all.

- 91. Use of the Cognitive Dissonance Technique.

Not into group rituals.

- 92. Grandiose existence. Bombastic, Grandiose Claims.

Busted! I think the Church of Reality is the religion of the future and hope that reality defeats fiction-based religions.

- 93. Black And White Thinking

We are a gray religion.

- 94. The use of heavy-duty mind control and rapid conversion techniques.

Nope. We believe in freedom.

- 95. Threats of bodily harm or death to someone who leaves the cult.

Not even close.

- 96. Threats of bodily harm or death to someone who criticizes the cult.

See previous answer.

- 97. Appropriation of all of the members' worldly wealth.

Anyone want to sign over their wealth to us? Sure! But we aren't out to take it.

- 98. Making cult members work long hours for free.

We don't make people do anything.

- 99. Total immersion and total isolation.

Nope. We have no control.

- 100. Mass suicide.

Not going to happen.

- Bibliography

So - was I honest in answering these questions? Is the Church of Reality telling the truth? Will we change the answers in the future? If so - why? It will be interesting to see 100 years from now how much of the fundamentals of this religion stay true to the original vision of a natural reality based religion.