

## RECOGNIZING AUTHORITARIAN CONTROL

SOURCE: THE GURU PAPERS

(p17) .....in judging whether a hierarchy is essentially authoritarian or not, one faces the following considerations:

1. What is its purpose?
2. Who decides if its purpose is being fulfilled and how is this decided?
3. How free are the members of the hierarchy to enter and leave it? That is, how much coercion is involved in getting people to belong and stay?
4. How responsive is it to change from within or without, and how open is it to internal and external feedback? This includes who determines what is even considered relevant feedback.
5. In what direction does the power flow? Does it only flow from top to bottom, or are there mechanisms within the structure of the hierarchy that give the lower rungs a say in who the higher rungs are and what they do?

(p57) Any of the following are strong indications of belonging to an authoritarian group:

1. No deviation from the party line is allowed. Anyone who has thoughts or feelings contrary to the accepted perspective is made to feel wrong or bad for having them.
2. Whatever the authority does is regarded as perfect or right. Thus behaviors that would be questioned in others are made to seem different and proper.
3. One trusts that the leader or others in the group know what's best.
4. It is difficult to communicate with anyone not in the group.
5. One finds oneself defending actions of the leader (or other members) without having firsthand knowledge of what occurred.
6. At times one is confused and fearful without knowing why. This is a sign that doubts are being repressed.

Kramer, J.& Alstad, D. (1993). *The Guru Papers: Masks of Authoritarian Power*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books/Frog Ltd.