Summary of Lifton’s (and Barker’s) Points (K. Harrigan)

How Leaders of Destructive Extreme Groups Control Members

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| **Control of Environment:** Relationships with the outside world are controlled. Relationships with friends, family, or outsiders may not be allowed or encouraged. The leader controls what members listen to, watch, think, say. The group separates itself from society, either geographically or socially | Notes: |
| **Mystical Manipulation**. The leader claims to have a higher purpose than anyone else. This is “proven” by “miracles” or claims that are trickery. Believers become more and more dependent on the leader for their view of what is real and about the larger society. | Notes: |
| **Confession:** Members must confess past and present “sins”. By confessing to the group, they admit that they are weak and not pure. | Notes: |
| **Purity:** Members are pushed to attain an impossible purity. They can never pure enough and must always work harder to be purer. | Notes: |
| **Aura of Sacred Science:** The beliefs of the group are “perfect” and sacred, even when they don’t make sense. Beliefs are not open for discussion and must be accepted. | Notes: |
| **Loaded Language:** New meanings are given to words. Terms are made up—ones that outsiders don’t know. Simple, black and white thinking (bumper sticker mentality) is encouraged. Sharp distinctions are made between believers and non-believers, good and evil, etc. These things are not open for discussion. | Notes: |
| **Doctrine over any person:** The group is always more important than any individual. Important decisions in the lives of the individuals are made by the leader or others in the group. | Notes: |
| **Insiders are saved, outsiders are doomed:** The leader asserts that some people deserve not to live—they are not important. Former members are bad, traitors, or evil. | Notes: |