



Are We Brainwashed?



brain·wash·ing

a forcible indoctrination to induce someone to give up basic political, social, or religious beliefs and attitudes and to accept contrasting regimented ideas

teaching

something that is taught : the ideas and beliefs that are taught by a person, religion, etc.

Ethan Metzger Poem

There's someone I know who is slow to commend but quick to condescend. Who is reluctant to lend a hand but is ready to point and laugh at those who need one. One day I was in school, in class, explaining my Judaism, when this person has the audacity to exclaim you know you are only Jewish because your parents forced you to be. I mean, it's all fake; you don't pray to God because you want to—you only pray to God because your parents made you think you have to. You don't keep any of the laws out of your own free will. Your parents just made you feel guilty when you didn't keep them. My classmate's smirked. Your parents brainwashed you your whole life—made you think you were doing God's work but they were just imposing restriction upon restriction. You don't have any real conviction of your own. You don't really know anything about anything.

A silence swept over the classroom. I could sense all my friends look at me as to how I would react. I felt like this peer went after me and more importantly my parents. Excuse me, I thought. My parents brainwashed me. I couldn't think of a response, but the more I thought the more I realized that this student actually had a very valid argument. I thought to myself, you're absolutely right, my parent's brainwashed me. From the time I entered this world, my parent's brainwashed me. From as early as I can remember, my parents were brainwashing me to have respect for other people for their belongings and for myself. Since I was little, they corrupted me into thinking that I need to treat everyone else how I want to be treated, no matter what. My parents programmed me into believing that I should stand up for someone being picked on—that I shouldn't be a bystander, if I could stop something from taking place. My parents brainwashed me?

Ya. My father twisted my infant brain in such a horrific way that he made me value my integrity and to make matters even worse, he led by example. And my mom: she incessantly told me as a child again and again and again and again to just do the best you can. That idea has now become so ingrained in my mind that I don't define success as whether I get an 'A,' rather if I gave it my all. My parents perverted my way of thinking, causing me to believe that I need to be accepting of other people and their beliefs. They contaminated my childhood with mottos and maxims and lessons about love and faith and character and yes—religion too. And I'm sorry for you that your parents clearly did not infect your DNA with any of these ideals. But, I didn't say any of that, because my parents also put in my conscience that I shouldn't judge someone until I've walked a mile in their shoes, which makes me think that God must run billions of marathons each day. Quite frankly, I don't have the stamina for that. But here is what I did say: "You can call it brain-washing if you want, that's fine. But I call it teaching."

Why Personal Values are Important for Successful Living

www.simplelifestrategies.com

It always fascinated me how as ad execs and strategists we would spend weeks or even months developing values for other people's brands, yet would spend not a minute or even a second analyzing what our own values might be. Personal values are in my opinion one of the most important things you can do to understand what's unique about you and I'm going to explain why.

But first, we'll get back to 'brand values' as this paints part of the picture...Take a look at technology giant Apple and it's immediately obvious that 'Innovation' is a core value here. And you can see this 'essence' coming through the products that they release. As a company, they are known for developing innovative, fresh products. So brand values reflect the very essence of a brand.

Personal values are the essence of who we are. Everyone's different. We all have little nuances that make us who we are. And the more we understand ourselves, the more self-aware we become and the easier it is to live a successful life.

The process of discovering your personal values involves not just discovering what you're passionate about but also finding out what's really important to you. I believe, we should frequently be asking ourselves what things are important to us and we should live our lives

“It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are”

- Roy Disney

Brainwashing is a Good Thing

www.torchweb.org—Parshas Mattos– Masei

By: Rabbi David Zauderer

The Torah records that the Jewish people had just waged war with the hostile nation of Midian, and they killed all the bad guys and brought all the booty and spoils of war back to their camp. The problem was that the vessels and cooking utensils that they got from the Midianites had previously been used for non-kosher foods and could therefore not be used by those who took them.

So Elazar, the new High Priest, instructed the men who had fought the battle and who had all these utensils in their possession: “Zos Chukas HaTorah – this is the law of the Torah: Only the gold and the silver, the copper, the iron, the tin, and the lead – everything that comes into the fire – you shall pass through the fire and it will be purified and everything that would not come in the fire, you shall pass through the water ...” (see Numbers 31:21-23).

The question is why did Elazar the Priest preface these laws with the statement “Zos Chukas HaTorah – this is the ‘law’ of the Torah”? After all, the law of purging non-kosher utensils is just one small part of the many different laws of the Torah, so why is it called “the law of the Torah”?!

The Chassidic commentators explain that with these words, “Zos Chukas HaTorah”, the Torah is hinting to us that this ability of purging vessels from non-kosher taste and purifying them through fire is in reality “the law of the Torah”, i.e. it is a quality of the whole of Torah itself.

This is because the Torah that G-d gave us is referred to as a fire, as it says: “Behold, My word is like fire – the word of G-d ...” (Jeremiah 23:29). And just as we are taught that fire can purge and cleanse a vessel from all the non-kosher particles and gunk that it picks up, so, too, does the ‘fire’ of Torah and all the beautiful lessons and values contained within it have the ability to cleanse and purify our minds from all the immoral and non-kosher gunk that we pick up throughout life.

Maybe a little Torah – full of good family values, respect for elders, love for humanity, with a focus on growing spiritually and working on our character traits – can help us purge all that other stuff from our system and “purify” us.

As someone told me recently in the name of her grandmother, “Brainwashing is good thing ... as long as the water is clean”.

הלכה is generally translated as “Jewish Law.”

The root of the word **הלכה** is **הלך** which means to walk or to travel.

A more literal and appropriate translation of the word **הלכה** might be, “the path that one walks.”

“Those who stand for nothing, fall for anything”

-Alexander Hamilton