

A

Charles Darwin said, "This not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." So you've sold your home, quit your job, shunned your colleagues, abandoned your friends and family. The end of the world is nigh, and you 'know for a fact' that you are one of the chosen few who will be swept up from the 'great flood' approaching on 21st December at midnight to be flown to safety on a far off planet. And then midnight on 21st December comes around and there is no flood. No end of the world. No flying saucer to the rescue. What do you do? Admit you were wrong? Acknowledge that you gave up position, money, friends - for nothing? Tell yourself and others you have been a schmuck? Not on your life.

1. What could be the best title for this passage?

- A) The importance of 21st December for certain belief systems
- B) The influence of Charles Darwin on daily life
- C) A so-called doomsday and how it unfolds
- D) The catastrophes expected right after 21st December
- E) What is ahead of us and how we can safeguard ourselves

Charles Darwin said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." So you've sold your home, quit your job, (1) **shunned** your colleagues, abandoned your friends and family. The end of the world is (2) **nigh**, and you 'know for a fact' that you are one of the chosen few who will be swept up from the 'great flood' (3) **to approach / approaching** on 21st December at midnight to be flown to safety (4) **in / on** a far off planet. And then midnight on 21st December comes around and there is no flood. No end of the world. No flying saucer to the rescue. What do you do? Admit you were wrong? Acknowledge that you (5) **gave up / took up** position, money, friends - for nothing? Tell yourself and others you have been a (6) **schmuck**? Not (7) **at / on** your life.

1. "**shunned**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) distracted B) cared
C) warned D) avoided
E) convinced

2. "**nigh**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) fictitious B) exaggerated
C) imminent D) controversial
E) underrated

6. "**schmuck**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) fool B) seer
C) adherent D) herald
E) sage

B

Social psychologist Leon Festinger infiltrated a flying saucer doomsday cult in the late 1950s. The members of this cult had given up everything on the premise that the world was about to self destruct and that they, because of their faith, would be the sole survivors. In the lead up to the fateful day, the cult shunned publicity and shied away from journalists. Festinger posed as a cultist and was present when the space ship failed to show up. He was curious about what would happen. How would the disappointed cultists react to the failure of their prophecy? Would they be embarrassed and humiliated?

1. What could be the best title for this passage?

- A) Social psychologist Leon Festinger and his ideology
- B) An alien in disguise witnessing a wrong prophecy
- C) How Leon Festinger adapted to the cultists
- D) From doubt to a firm belief in a doomsday cult
- E) How a weird idea finds adherents despite the failure

2. The writer ends the text with a set of questions to ---.

- A) create suspense
- B) make an educated guess
- C) ridicule the cultists
- D) explain Festinger's feelings
- E) summarize what happened

Social psychologist Leon Festinger (1) **infiltrated** a flying saucer doomsday cult in the late 1950s. The members of this cult had given up everything on the (2) **premise** that the world was about to self-destruct and that they, because of their faith, (3) **will be / would be** the sole survivors. (4) **In the lead up to** the fateful day, the cult shunned publicity and shied away from journalists. Festinger (5) **posed / viewed** as a cultist and was present when the spaceship failed to show up. He was curious about what would happen. How would the disappointed cultists react (6) **at / to** the failure of their prophecy? Would they be embarrassed and humiliated?

1. "**infiltrated**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) contested B) favoured
C) cautioned D) evaded
E) penetrated

2. "**premise**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) fiction B) overstatement
C) proposition D) debate
E) rumour

4. "**In the lead up to**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) prior to B) right after
C) throughout D) subsequent to
E) in the course

C

What actually happened amazed him. Now, after the non-event, the cultists suddenly wanted publicity. They wanted media attention and coverage. Why? So they could explain how their faith and obedience had helped save the planet from the flood. The aliens had spared planet earth for their sake - and now their new role was to spread the word and make us all listen. This fascinated Festinger. He observed that the real driving force behind the cultists' apparently inexplicable response was the need, not to face the awkward and uncomfortable truth and 'change their minds', but rather to 'make minds comfortable' - to cast a veil over the unacceptable inconsistencies.

1. What could be the best title for this passage?

- A) Why the cultists suddenly wanted publicity
- B) How a faith and obedience can help save the planet
- C) The motives behind the desire for media attention
- D) The ways to eradicate inconsistencies in certain cults
- E) Cognitive dissonance: who are you kidding?

What actually happened amazed him. Now, after the non-event, the cultists suddenly wanted (1) ----. They wanted media attention and (2) ----. Why? So they could explain how their faith and obedience had helped (3) **saved / save** the planet from the flood. The aliens had (4) ---- planet earth for their sake - and now their new role was to spread the word and make us all listen. This complete U-turn on doctrine, though self-contradictory and almost impossible to absorb, fascinated Festinger. He observed that the real driving force behind the cultists' (5) **ostensibly / accurately** inexplicable response was the need, not to face the awkward and uncomfortable truth and 'change their minds', but rather to 'make minds comfortable' - to (6) ---- the unacceptable inconsistencies.

1. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) upheaval B) remedy
C) concern D) advertising
E) dissemination

2. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) freedom B) attention
C) magnate D) blackout
E) awareness

4. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) invaded B) discovered
C) liberated D) initiated
E) spared

6. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) buy into B) figure out
C) breakout D) engage in
E) smooth over

D

Festinger coined the term 'cognitive dissonance' to describe the uncomfortable tension we feel when we experience conflicting thoughts or beliefs (cognitions), or display behavior that is apparently opposed to our stated beliefs. What is particularly interesting is the lengths to which people will go to reduce the inner tension without accepting that they might, in fact, be wrong. They will accept almost any form of relief, other than admitting being at fault, or mistaken. Festinger quickly realized that our intolerance for 'cognitive dissonance' could explain many mysteries of human behavior.

1. What could be the best title for this passage?

- A) When one can't handle the truth
- B) Yet another confusing term
- C) Why admit being at fault?
- D) Many mysteries of human behaviour
- E) The inner tension versus social pressure

Festinger coined the term 'cognitive dissonance' to describe the uncomfortable tension we feel when we experience conflicting thoughts or beliefs (cognitions), or (1) ---- behaviour that is (2) **considerably / apparently** opposed to our stated beliefs. What is particularly interesting is the (3) **lengths** to which people will go to reduce the inner tension (4) **by / without** accepting that they might, in fact, be wrong. They will accept almost any form of relief, (5) **other than** admitting being at fault, or mistaken. Festinger quickly realized that our intolerance (6) **for / into** 'cognitive dissonance' could explain many mysteries of human behaviour.

1. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) account for B) engage in
C) call for D) deter from
E) expose to

3. "**lengths**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) subject B) resort
C) extent D) yield
E) gossip

5. "**other than**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) as well as B) contrary to
C) rather than D) for the sake of
E) in spite of

E

In a fascinating experiment Festinger and his colleagues paid some participants twenty dollars to tell a specific lie, while they paid another group of subjects only one dollar to do the same. Those who were paid just one dollar were far more likely to claim, after the event, that they had actually believed in the lie they were told to tell. Why? Well, because it's just so much harder to justify having done something that conflicts with your own sense of being 'an honest person' for a mere pittance. If you get more money, you can tell yourself: 'Yeah, I lied, but I got well paid! It was justified.' But for one dollar? That's not a good enough reason to lie, so what you were saying must have been true in the first place, right?

1. What could be the best title for this passage?

- A) An unacceptable experiment into human psyche
- B) How many dollars would you take to tell a lie?
- C) Justifying something that conflicts with your values
- D) The driving force behind lies: money
- E) What to do in the first place in an awkward case?

In a fascinating experiment Festinger and his colleagues paid some (1) ---- twenty dollars to tell a specific lie, (2) **while / although** they paid another group only one dollar to do the same. Those who were paid just one dollar were far more likely to claim, after the event, that they had difficulty in (3) **vindicating** the lie they were told to tell. Why? Well, because it's just so much harder to justify having done something that conflicts with your own sense of being 'an honest person' for a mere (4) **pittance**. If you get more money, you can tell yourself: 'Yeah, I lied, but I got well paid! It was justified.' But for one dollar? That's not a good enough reason to lie, so what you say (5) **can / must** be true in the first place, right?

1. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) subjects B) performers
C) entrants D) examiners
E) candidates

3. "**vindicating**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) upholding B) resorting
C) extending D) harvesting
E) refuting

4. "**pittance**" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) expense B) deception
C) wealth D) donation
E) chickenfeed

(F)

Emotional factors influence how we vote for our politicians much more than our careful and logical appraisal of their policies, according to Drew Westen, a professor of psychiatry and psychology. This may come as little surprise to you, but what about when we learn that our favoured politician may be dishonest? Do we take the trouble to really find out what they are supposed to have done, and so possibly have to change our opinions (and our vote), or do we experience that nasty cognitive dissonance and so seek to keep our minds comfortable at the possible cost of truth?

1. "seek" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) endorse B) prefer
C) shelter D) explore
E) disprove

6. What could be the best title for this passage?

- A) Tips for logical appraisal of the policies
B) Comfort zone gains an edge over truth
C) Why one feels the need to change her vote?
D) From dishonest policies to promising ones
E) What does it take to find out the truth?

G

Cognitive dissonance is essentially a matter of commitment to the choices one has made, and the ongoing need to **(1) satisfactorily / exactly** justify that commitment, even **(2) in favour of / in the face of** convincing but conflicting evidence. This is why it can take a long time to leave a cult or an abusive relationship - or even to stop **(3) to smoke / smoking**. Life's commitments, whether **(4) in / to** a job, a social cause, or a romantic partner, require heavy emotional **(5) -----**, and so carry significant emotional risks. If people didn't keep to their commitments, they would experience uncomfortable emotional tension. In a way, it makes sense that our brains should be hard-wired for monitoring and justifying our choices and actions - so as to avoid too much truth breaking in a once and **(6) -----** us.

5. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) speculation B) performance
C) response D) scrutiny
E) investment

6. " Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) protecting B) deceiving
C) overwhelming D) harvesting
E) persuading

7. What could be the best title for this passage?

- A) How to break the commitment to the choices one has made
B) The Influence of commitment to the choices one has made on our financial status
C) The high cost of commitment exposes us to cognitive dissonance
D) How our brains keep monitoring and justifying our choices
E) What happens if one fails to leave a cult or an abusive relationship?

H

I guess we are less likely to really develop **(1) in case / unless** we start to get a **(2) grip** and have some personal honesty about what really motivates us. This is part of **(3) ----** maturity. If I know I **(4) am / am being** lazy, and can admit it to myself, that at least is a first step to correcting it. If, **(5) however / therefore**, I tell myself it's more sensible to wait before vacuuming, then I can go around with a comfortable self-concept of 'being sensible' while my filthy carpets and laziness remain unchanged. Cognitive dissonance can actually help me mature, if I can bring myself, first, to notice it (making it conscious) and second, to be more open to the message it brings me, **(6) in spite of / due to** the discomfort. As dissonance increases, **(7) so / providing** I do not run away into self-justification, I can get a clearer and clearer sense of what has changed, and what I need to do about it. And then I can remember what Darwin had to say about who will survive...

2. "grip" is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) grasp B) bias
C) inclination D) view
E) intrusion

3. Choose the best option to fill in the blank.

- A) abstract B) functioning
C) responsive D) genuine
E) appalling

8. What could be the best title for this passage?

- A) Cognitive dissonance: a myth busted
B) The impact of personal honesty on what motivates us
C) Why laziness can remain unchanged in the long run
D) Grow up - make cognitive dissonance work for you
E) How Darwin proved right about who will survive

Cognitive dissonance

(A) Charles Darwin said, "This not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." So you've sold your home, quit your job, shunned your colleagues, abandoned your friends and family. The end of the world is nigh, and you 'know for a fact' that you are one of the chosen few who will be swept up from the 'great flood' approaching on 21st December at midnight to be flown to safety on a far off planet. And then midnight on 21st December comes around and there is no flood. No end of the world. No flying saucer to the rescue. What do you do? Admit you were wrong? Acknowledge that you gave up position, money, friends - for nothing? Tell yourself and others you have been a schmuck? Not on your life.

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(C) Now, after the non-event, the cultists suddenly wanted publicity. They wanted media attention and coverage. Why? So they could explain how their faith and obedience had helped save the planet from the flood. The aliens had spared planet earth for their sake - and now their new role was to spread the word and make us all listen. This fascinated Festinger. He observed that the real driving force behind the cultists' apparently inexplicable response was the need, not to face the awkward and uncomfortable truth and 'change their minds', but rather to 'make minds comfortable' - to smooth over the unacceptable inconsistencies.

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(E) In a fascinating experiment Festinger and his colleagues paid some subjects twenty dollars to tell a specific lie, while they paid another group of subjects only one dollar to do the same. Those who were paid just one dollar were far more likely to claim, after the event, that they had actually believed in the lie they were told to tell. Why? Well, because it's just so much harder to justify having done something that conflicts with your own sense of being 'an honest person' for a mere pittance. If you get more money, you can tell yourself: 'Yeah, I lied, but I got well paid! It was justified.' But for one dollar? That's not a good enough reason to lie, so what you were saying must have been true in the first place, right?

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(G) Cognitive dissonance is essentially a matter of commitment to the choices one has made, and the ongoing need to satisfactorily justify that commitment, even in the face of convincing but conflicting evidence. This is why it can take a long time to leave a cult or an abusive relationship - or even to stop smoking. Life's commitments, whether to a job, a social cause, or a romantic partner, require heavy emotional investment, and so carry significant emotional risks. If people didn't keep to their commitments, they would experience uncomfortable emotional tension. In a way, it makes sense that our brains should be hard-wired for monitoring and justifying our choices and actions - so as to avoid too much truth breaking in at once and overwhelming us.

(H) I guess we can't really develop unless we start to get a grip and have some personal honesty about what really motivates us. This is part of genuine maturity. If I know I am being lazy, and can admit it to myself, that at least is a first step to correcting it. If, however, I tell myself it's more sensible to wait before vacuuming, then I can go around with a comfortable self-concept of 'being sensible' while my filthy carpets and laziness remain unchanged. Cognitive dissonance can actually help me mature, if I can bring myself, first, to notice it (making it conscious) and second, to be more open to the message it brings me, in spite of the discomfort. As dissonance increases, providing I do not run away into self-justification, I can get a clearer and clearer sense of what has changed, and what I need to do about it.

And then I can remember what Darwin had to say about who will survive...

Cognitive dissonance A KEY

- 1.D
- 2.C
3. approaching
4. on
5. gave up
6. A
7. on
8. C

Cognitive dissonance B KEY

1. E
2. C
3. would be
4. A
5. posed
6. to
7. B
8. A

Cognitive dissonance C KEY

1. D
2. B
3. save
4. E
5. apparently
6. E
7. E

Cognitive dissonance D KEY

1. B
2. apparently
3. C
4. without
5. C
6. for
7. A

Cognitive dissonance E KEY

1. B
2. while
3. A
4. E
5. must
6. B

Cognitive dissonance F KEY

1. B
2. B

Cognitive dissonance G KEY

1. satisfactorily
2. in the face of
3. smoking
4. to
5. E
6. C
7. C

Cognitive dissonance H KEY

1. unless
2. A
3. D
4. am being
5. however
6. in spite of
7. providing
8. D

Bonus: correctly