

**Summary of the research**  
**The group of friends and its effect**  
**Upon youth's thoughts, notions & Conduct**

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**Importance and positive & negative insights, concentrating upon gradual deviation.**

*This research discusses some insights as follows:*

- 1 - The sociological educational institutions.
  - 2 - The group of friends or companions and its effect upon forming its members' characters.
  - 3 - The friendship and the sociological & physiological needs.
  - 4 - The importance and the risk factor of such groups in the adolescence period.
  - 5 - The reason for which the adolescents and youth respond to the group pressure (concentrating on negative points).
  - 6 - The Differential Association theory and facilitating deviation.
  - 7 - The importance and seriousness of friendship in Islamic thoughts.
  - 8 - How do we interpret the deviation of some of the youth, away from the moderate correct path of the religion, towards fanaticism, violence, and terrorism?
- In the first article, I discuss the important social educational institutions that are responsible for forming the character of the child, the adolescent, and youth, stressing the importance of the groups of companions or friends.
  - In the second article I discuss the results of the field studies about the mutually exchanging effects among the friends inside the same group upon forming and reforming of the belief, ethics and conduct, as well as upon the educational level and the degree of sticking to the religious notion and conduct.
  - I also discuss the personal, social and environmental factors that affect the manner of the adolescent's responding to the collective pressure of the group.
  - In the third article, I discuss the needs of the children and the adolescents for these groups for fulfilling their psychological and social needs, and also for the

completion of forming their characters; for example the need for love, for association, for expression, for appreciation, for respect, for independence (getting rid of the parental & social authority), the need for insurrection against the community of the adults. This constitutes a response to the physiological changes during the period of attaining puberty.

- I also discuss the familial factor (the word familial can also mean the small community of relatives) that prevents - or hastens - the deviance of the adolescent with the group away from the religious and cultural ethics of the adults.
- In the fourth article, I discuss the seriousness of the group of companions during adolescence clarifying the negative effects, and spotlighting the important factors reported in the field studies, that have role in the child's and the adolescent's response to the pressure of the group towards immoral deviation (opposing the religious and cultural ethics).

**Among these factors:**

- 1 - Neglecting the parental educational role.
- 2 - The powerful leading personality of the leader of the group.
- 3 - Lack of ethical and religious education.
- 4 - Repeated familial disputes, and disjunction of the family.
- 5 - The child's or the adolescent's feeling of deprivation inside the family (lack of right fulfillment of their needs), and consequently, their turning to fulfill them in the group of companions.
- 6 - Communal pressure and at the same time the natural attraction of the children to join such groups for obtaining respect and support.
- 7 - Corrupted mass media such as films, series, and programs that urges deviation and leaving religious ethics by presenting the heroes in forms of deviant people.
- 8 - The retreat of the supervisory, educational, and instructive role of the educational social institutions.
- 9 - The instinctive inclination - during adolescence - to disobey the adults, experience everything by themselves, and to play the adventurous roles of heroes.
- 10 - The imperfection of notions of the adolescents as seeing manhood exemplified in smoking, drinking, molestation and leaving the religious and cultural rules etc.

- 11 - Group dynamics that compels its members to abide by the group's own rules otherwise they would be expelled out of the group and loose support.
- 12 - Some adolescents have deviant inclinations as a result of physiological or psychic abnormality; so they seek these groups to fulfill their deviant abnormal needs.
- 13 - Weak educational and parental authority caused by either exaggerated severity of excessive indulgence.
- 14 - Loosing self confidence and lacking of the warm relationship with parents.
- 15 - Absence of the educational and social supervision.

In the fifth article, I answered an important question: Why do people normally respond to friends' pressure (concentrating upon negative points)? And hereafter is a summary of the real field studies' results:

- 1 - Being at, approximately, the same age gives a feeling of freedom, absence of pressure, preaching, orders etc.
- 2 - Relations among friends are free of responsibility and of those restrictions between a boss and employee and a person and his follower etc.
- 3 - Communal thoughts, choices and conduct give a feeling of power and support.
- 4 - Many of the parents are no more good examples to be followed, and that's why the adolescents search for good models outside the family. These desired models could be found in some members of the group.
- 5 - Unlike the family and the community of relatives, everything is optional in the group.
- 6 - Also, unlike the family, the adolescent can fulfill, in the group, many different needs that may be forbidden inside the family.
- 7 - Sometimes there could be a charismatic member of the group who is admired by the rest of the members, and therefore, he can easily attract them to deviation if he is so.
- 8 - Frequent watching of modes of deviation on TV channels, internet, or inside the group turns them to be normal for the adolescents who will not feel any rejection or seriousness in such deeds.

In the sixth article, I discuss the differential association theory of 'Southerland' and 'krissy' which clarifies the reason for deviation of the children and adolescents. Such a theory that I applied on 1996 upon some deviants (juvenile delinquency) in specialized institutions in Egypt, where I added certain modifications to it.

I also prove that the most important issue of the theory is that deviation is an acquired conduct, and that any person usually deals with numerous groups and interacts with several relationships, but they are, actually, differential dealings and interactions that have different effects upon forming the child's or the adolescent's character. This effect depends on four matters:

- A. Repentant dealing or relationship
- B. Constant dealing or relationship
- C. The precedence of the relationship
- D. The depth of the relationship

I explained all these insights in details because the more frequently the child or the adolescent deals with the group, the more effect it has upon his feeling and appreciation towards the members of the group. Thus appears the importance of such primary groups and relationships.

In the seventh article, I discuss the Ever Glorious Qur'an's and Sonna's point of view- being the essential sources of Islam- about friends.

The *Qur'an* and *Sonna* stress the importance of dealing with good friends following God's methodology, ethics, prayers, dealings etc. They also clarify that bad companions constitute great danger upon the believer both in our world and in the world of eternity: in our world, they push him to commit crimes and does forbidden deed, which will lead him to be in hell in the other world (I mention some of the Qur'anic and Sonna texts proving this concept.

In the eighth, and final, article, I try to answer and important question:

**Why do some youth join what is called groups of fundamentalism or religious aberrations?**

I clarify that Islam is the real birthday of human rights, freedom and dignity; and that It is the religion of tolerance that gives everyone the chance to choose his

religion. This concept - freedom of notions- is numerously stressed in the Ever Glorious Qur'an (١) ﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ (٢٥٦)﴾ here is no compulsion in Religion' (Zidan 1993). Islam is a religion that respects the Other and his notions. It stresses applying justice to all human beings with no discrimination among people. But the case is that some deviants try to attract youth to fanaticism and terrorism which are strictly forbidden by Islam.

So, what are the characteristics of the young people who could be victims of such groups? The features that distinguish such youth, and the reasons for being attracted to such unacceptable groups, are summarized as follows:

- 1 - Religious illiteracy.
- 2 - Parents' failure to teach their children the right religious ethics.
- 3 - Lack of models both at home and at school.
- 4 - Failure of schools in planting religious and educational ethics in their pupils of students.
- 5 - Absence of the important roles of the religious institutions as mosques, different religious organizations, civil society, etc.
- 6 - Unemployment and leisure time of the youth.
- 7 - Severe poverty related to the deprivation of fulfilling the basic needs.
- 8 - The wide gap between the very rich people living in palaces and the severely poor ones living in tombs (graves) or unplanned areas.
- 9 - Social and economical corruption prevailing all over the community.
- 10 - Mass media especially TV channels that either urge to deviation or fanaticism while the young people lack the wise critical thinking; and the result is deviating youth and fanatic tendencies which are both wrong "افراط وتفريط" strictness and negligence) and opposing the core of the real religion.
- 11 - Some internet sites urge to many of the prohibited practices such as sex, violence, fanaticism and terrorism.

## **Economical and Social factors**

### **and their importance in clarifying the negative effect Of friends**

The friends effect, especially in the youth period (the period after adolescence), depends on many factors, among which are the economical and the professional states. It also depends upon the educational level and the existence of chances for employment, beside the above mentioned (the familial, educational, and religious insights, represented in the correct -or incorrect- religious understanding and knowledge).

No doubt that severe poverty is one of the most important factors that push the groups of friends or companions to adopt the criminal thoughts and the aggressive trends against the society and the Others (the word Others indicates the different people in religion, in race, in color, etc.); yea, against one's self. This extreme deprivation that young people suffer, leads them to deep depression: They will see no hope in future, in forming new families by legitimate marriage, or in any legal promising projects.

Another highly important factor is the unemployment and the lack of companies, factories etc. that provide different jobs for the newly graduated young people. This will result in an entire depression, which, by turn, will provoke these groups of young people to envy the community, and therefore could be easily victims of the groups of terrorists and fundamentalists. Moreover some friends use to justify having what they are craving for by violence, and stealing the rich people's homes, cars, etc. They even facilitate seduction of women, and deceiving young girls by some terms like 'illegal marriage' which could not be called real marriage (according to the marriage conditions in Islam). Islam never approves except the normal ethical marriage sticking to the rules of legislation.

Thus, poverty, unemployment, and deprivation of hope in future, are considered the main reasons for aggression against the society with all its parties and religions although they claim that they are adopting religious thoughts, and they give wrong exegesis of some Sonna and Qur'anic texts, especially if the leaders of the new deviating groups give the youth generous promises of solving all their problems whether economical, social, dealing with daily life etc.

## **Political insights of Youth-deviation**

In addition to the above mentioned economical and social insights, there is another factor that deals with the youth-right to express their points of view and openly discuss their problems with real and entire freedom. There also appears the effect of the political compulsion and suppression that cause the youth deprivation of their legal rights in having good education and good salaries suitable for dignified life. Political suppression also deprive the youth of electing their representatives in the parliament and the local assemblies.

All these sufferings of the youth (of corruption everywhere, of low wages, of prevailing of bribery and injustice), evoke wrong ideas and aggressive attitudes that are inserted into their minds by external groups of terrorism and fundamentalism.

### **The net and the hypothetical deviating groups**

Some young people are turned to be addicted to chatting with different groups of friends with different nationalities, religions, sexes etc. And as adolescence is characterized by rebellion, rejection of the parental authority, vague ethics, endeavoring to stick to such groups either real or hypothetical, so some leaders of these groups catch the opportunity to impose their domination upon the rest of the members of the groups. Such effect or domination may be good or bad, positive or negative; and sometimes young people are obligated to leave their notions, cultures and ethics to gain the acceptance inside the group, especially in case of friendship between a males and females.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, I would like to end with the fact that terrorism, violence, fundamentalism, and aggression have no religion; and deviation could exist everywhere all over the world. And as there are Muslem extremists, there are also Christian, Jewish, budist extremists, etc.

So, we can conclude that peer groups play an extremely important role in shaping the personality, thoughts, and behavior of their members either positively or negatively.