

# CULT CONVERSION AND LOFLAND'S HYPOTHESIS

## A PERSON

### Predispositional Factors

(Characteristics of individuals that they bring to the conversion process)

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| 1. The individual must experience an enduring, acutely felt tension or strain (for example, job failure or marital discord).   |
| 2. The person must hold a religiously oriented, problem -solving perspective. He or she may well have rejected conventional faith, but must still view the world in religious terms – see problems as having religious, as opposed to political or psychiatric, solutions.   |
| 3. On the basis of the first two characteristics, the person must be a religious seeker, one who is open to new religious outlooks.  |
| 4. When the person encounters the Divine Precepts group, he or she must be at, or very shortly coming to, a turning point in life. To convert, a person must be at a point in life when old lines of action and commitments are completed or have failed or been disrupted ( or are about to be) and when the opportunity (or necessity) of doing something different arises. (For example, he or she may have just lost a job, been divorced, been graduated from school, or recovered from a long illness. ) |

### Situational Factors

(Characteristics of the Interaction between an individual and the group)

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| 5. The potential convert must form or already possess a close, affective tie with one or more Divine Precepts members. Many converts already had such ties – they were married to, closely related to, or long-time friends with a Divine Precepts member. Others failed to convert until they had formed such a tie. In a sense, conversion meant coming to accept the beliefs of one's spouse, sibling, or friends. |
| 6. Ties with persons outside the Divine Precepts group must be nonexistent or neutralized. Some probable converts were held back from conversion by the unwillingness of spouses to convert or by the counter-persuasion and pressure of friends and families. Converts typically lacked any ties that could restrain them, and, if they had ties, they were neutralized by distance.                                 |
| 7. To become an active Divine Precepts member, to move from verbal agreement to actually giving one's life to the movement, requires intensive, day-to-day interactions with group members. Some verbal converts whose physical circumstances prevent such interaction never become full converts. Others do so only when their circumstances change so that such interaction occurs.                                 |

## A CONVERT