

Groupthink (Principle #1)

...suggestion, which explained everything, was itself to be exempt from explanation.... But there has been no explanation of the nature of suggestion, that is, of the conditions under which influence without adequate logical foundation takes place.

- Sigmund Freud

When I first started a blog nearly seven years ago I called it groupthink. My intent was to convey the beautiful possibilities of getting people to achieve social awareness of each other and influence on one another; to think and act in a collective fashion. My sister kindly informed me that to psychologists the term implies the favoring of consensus over reason itself and often carries a negative connotation. Strictly speaking, it is neither good nor bad, it just is what it is; troupes don't just come in groups, they think in groups. This explains witch hunts in Salem, Massachusetts to its modern equivalent which still occurs in politics today.

Dunbar (3) who studies the social systems developed in our closest genetic cousins, describes the collective decision-making process of *Hamadryas Baboons*'. When on the move and deciding which route to take, one male will move to the periphery of the group and take a long and hard look at an alternative route. A few other males will catch onto this and a vote is essentially cast among males as to whether to take this new direction. The voting is reaffirmed by reaching through the legs of another and grabbing his testicles.

The point is that this same sort of collective decision-making process is evident in many of our closest genetic cousins other than just *Hamadryas Baboons*'. It is also plainly evident in us [minus the testicle grabbing - arguably]. What I am suggesting is that 'leaders' as we conceive of them are a byproduct of a sedentary ecology, i.e. a stagnant environment centered around the cultivation of private property. 'Leaders' arise out of property disputes. But when you take away the need to own private property, there is little to suggest we as a species follow them. A big silverback gorilla may break up fights and otherwise monitor a group, yet playing one's social role is very different than others sitting around and waiting for someone else to 'lead' them.

Principle #1: *we don't follow leaders, we follow each other.*