The Cause and Effect of Deviant Behavior in Individuals

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Many people hear the term "deviance" and think of a 15 year old kid tagging a liquor store or stealing something from the corner store with their buddies. Of course, deviance can range from something as benign as dying your hair a bright color to something as tragic as murder. Some of the most dangerous deviance, in my opinion, is the everyday deviance of today's youth against the patriarchal society that we live in.

Most in this country have committed deviance at some point in their lives. Many people commit deviance just by existing; LGBTQ+ people, people of color, disabled people, homeless people, mentally ill people, and women all commit acts of deviance just by waking up in the morning. Women in positions of power are deviant, women who freely show emotion and aren't apologizing for it are deviant, even women that choose not to wear a bra in the morning are considered deviants to society. Plainly put, anybody can be, and most likely is, deviant. The more conscious forms of deviance are the ones we fight for. Feminism is one of the biggest forms of deviance that someone can adopt in their lives. Even as much as a year ago, people considered feminism as a dirty word that conjured up images of angry, man-hating butch lesbians who wore flannel all day and didn't shave their armpits. Thankfully, feminism has become so much more mainstream and widely accepted by so many that we as a society have been able to completely redefine what it means to be a feminist. While most people realize that feminism is a liberating movement about equality, there are still a vast majority of people that can't move past their completely false notion of the angry anti-male lesbian stereotype, so much that men have come up with the term "meninism" as the antithesis to feminism, claiming they fight for "men's rights" but do little more than harass women online. By being a feminist, you're publically declaring that you do not support the current way of life that puts all those that aren't
white men at the top while the rest of society fights for scraps, and if that's not a textbook form of deviance, I don't know what is.

Deviance is so important for someone to grow into their own person. If nobody ever committed a deviant act and followed someone else's rules their whole life, they wouldn't know how to think for themselves. Having opinions makes you deviant, but it also makes you an intelligent person capable of independent thought. If you allow someone to tell you how to dress, how to speak, what to believe, how to act so you don't cause waves, then you're not really living your own life, you're allowing somebody else to. Parents have ideas of how they want their children to live their lives, and often let their expectations known very early on. There's nothing wrong with wanting to make your parents happy by studying a certain subject in school or going down a certain career path, but it's so important to find out if you're doing it for you parents or if you genuinely enjoy the life you're building for yourself. Deviance against your parents' wishes might hurt their feelings, but if you don't assert yourself and your needs above all else, you'll spend your entire life trying to please someone else and won't know what to do when there's nobody there to tell you what to do. Parents won't always be around forever, so children need to learn certain deviance early on to prevent them from leading an wholly unhappy life.

People in positions of power tend to do whatever they can to keep their power, the same goes with deviance. The people that benefit from society's norms are the ones who try their hardest to punish deviance. White men realize that the minorities of the world are just about fed up of being belittled and treated as second class citizens, so they try to do all they can to keep people of color down so the status quo isn't disrupted. Marginalized people, however, will give their lives to disrupt that status quo so their people can rise up from their actions. The Stonewall riots were led by the poorest and lowest of the LGBTQ+ community: transgender women,
women of color, prostitutes, and drag queens, but they paved the way for the gay rights
movement that has just this year legalized gay marriage. Many advocates are killed by the very
people they're rebelling against, never seeing the fruits of their labors but knowing that they're
doing what is best for future generations. With the prolific death of black people in America, the
phrase "Black Lives Matter" has become a mantra of hope and solidarity across the black
community showing that they won't be treated like animals, that their lives are worth something
and the police can't kill black people without being held accountable in some way. People all
over the country and the world have participated in rallies and protests after the gruesome deaths
of their black brothers and sisters, much like the gay riots in San Francisco and the civil rights
marches of the past. Unfortunately, like those marches, it quickly turns from peaceful protesting
to an all out war zone between the protesters and the aggressors, in this case the police. However,
one thing we have today that our predecessors didn't is widespread media. Now, cops are held
accountable for their actions because the whole world can find out about their actions in a matter
of seconds. Much like the riots of the past, people of power claimed that "violence solves
nothing!" However, it seems like violence is the only way change can be paved. People aren't
going to allow injustices to be committed in their lives without a fight. Their deviance, and the
deviance of all activist past has helped to shape the world we live in where gay people can get
married in all 50 states, where black people and brown people and Asian people can use the same
bathrooms and eat at the same restaurants as white people. While people might claim that there's
no use in fighting The Man, history says differently. In some cases, fighting with all you've got
can change the world.

I definitely feel very strongly about deviance because I'm part of many marginalized
groups that wouldn't have any power if it weren't for past deviances. Being an outspoken
mentally ill Latina feminist would have gotten me arrested or institutionalized, if not killed if it weren't for the deviance of the outspoken mentally ill Latina feminists before me. Growing up poor also shaped me into the societal deviant that I am today. Seeing friends living lavish lives while my family was barely above the poverty line opened my eyes at a very young age to the stark difference in the classes. It made me want to do everything in my power to make sure nobody ever felt as humiliated as I did, or went days without eating because there just wasn't enough money for school lunches that week. Once a person goes without something they never thought they'd have to give up, it gives them perspective that they never knew they needed. Most people don't know how awful it feels to be poor because they've never seen their parents break down over fear of eviction. Most people don't know the fear of being kicked out of the house for their sexuality because their sexuality is what's expected, or what's "normal." Most people don't know how it feels to be terrified of interaction with other people because of anxiety. Most people don't know how it feels to see cops routinely target and kill their friends because of the color of their skin, but some people do. Some people live every day with these burdens on them, these fears in their lives. These are the people that fight the hardest so that nobody else every feels the way they do. The people who commit deviant acts as a result of their upbringing know how it feels to be looked down on and are determined to put an end to it however they can.

Deviance has an automatic negative connotation in most respects. In many cases, deviance is an illegal activity such as grand theft or murder. The more risky deviances are the ones that challenge the way of life that we currently know. The deviances that challenge the wealthy, white men in charge are more dangerous because history has shown that they work. Deviance is proven time and time again to be necessary for grown as a person and growth as a society, and some deviant thoughts should be fostered so they can grow and bring about change.