

MOTIVE

To understand an action, an attitude, or a policy position, you would usually look for a motive.

Sometimes they are self-evident; sometimes it takes some investigation, but most of the time you can find one. If you wonder why large corporations act without consideration of the general public, including their own workers, the reason is fairly simple: greed.

There is an extra twist to this, because the boards and CEO's that run them, do so on behalf of stockholders, most of whom care nothing about how the company is run as long as it brings them dividends and rising stock prices. If they're successful at this, the stockholders don't care that these managers vote themselves huge salaries and bonuses, while paying actual workers as little as they can. *The greed has no control.* There is no conscience.

As destructive as this system is, at least its motive is clear. Most harmful things that are done are motivated by greed or by desire for power, or both.

Good things have motives, too. For a majority of people, greed for wealth and power is not the predominant motive. They want enough to live on, but they care that others have enough, too. They have empathy, not just for those who are like them, but those who are different too.

Such people may organize to help one another, or donate to charities, or become leaders and enter politics to help and protect the public as a whole. There are many issues that one may concentrate on, but the basic motive is the same: they care about people because they're people.

Certainly one does not need to be poor to care about poverty, to be a victim of prejudice to care about bigotry, to live in a polluted area to care about the environment. One only needs to realize that we all have basic common interests, and that we serve those interests best when we cooperate and help one another.

But what is difficult to understand are people who are poor or middle class, who take sides against their fellow citizens who are in the same economic class. These are people who should be able to understand and identify with others like them- people who have to work hard to get by, or may suffer from unemployment, yet they side with the corporations, the banks, and the extremely wealthy by voting for those interests instead of their own.

Various reasons are given. Some have difficulty identifying with those of different colors or national origins. Some are determined to force others to obey rules based on religious dogma, so they oppose the caring cooperative groups who also favor more personal freedom.

The biggest reason is the fact that the interests of corporate wealth, because of their almost unlimited funds, can be advocated constantly through every source of information that exists. Anyone who does not question enough what is said, and who doesn't seek out alternative opinions, could easily be convinced.

People are told that individual freedom is the same as the economic system that enables corporations to profit immensely, paying their top management huge bonuses while their workers can barely support their families. So they come to revere these amoral entities for their wealth, perhaps thinking that if they emulate their greed and selfishness, they too will get a bigger share than their neighbors.

And they go along with the power of corporations to influence foreign policy to protect their profits worldwide at the expense of the rights and welfare of foreign nations that our military dominates and intimidates. Whatever is good for the pursuit of profit must be the right thing to do.

If educated people disagree, then education must be suspect. Better to stay ignorant in order to be patriotic, wealth-worshipping Americans. If logic proves them wrong, then argue without logic. If even religion says that we should share with and care for the poor, sick, and disadvantaged, and that we should not make war, but turn the other cheek; to love our enemies, then new versions of the religion must be formed that say the opposite.

The ideology that rejects cooperation and the brotherhood of man, but instead pits neighbor against neighbor serves only those at the top of the economic heap, excusing their behavior, resulting in more and more wealth for them and less and less for the rest of us.

What we would gain from unity and cooperation is not necessarily radical change of our economic system. We only need to restore a balance, where people, not corporations, control our democracy, where wealth does not determine the outcome of our elections, where workers earn a fair portion of the wealth they produce, and where our laws protect the public and do not repress our rights and freedoms.

-Cosmic Rat August 21, 2013