

# The Cycle

by AJ Messick

## Chapter 1: Introduction – The World You Think You Know

Let's get one thing straight: I'm not here to sell you a conspiracy. No shadowy figures in dark rooms, no elaborate plots unfolding behind closed doors. I'm here to talk about something much more real. Something that's been right in front of you all along—so obvious, in fact, that you've probably never even thought to question it.

It's called *the Cycle*.

You've felt it, haven't you? That nagging sense that something's off. That the world doesn't quite make sense the way it's presented. Maybe it's that gnawing feeling when you watch the news or go to work, the little voice in the back of your mind that whispers, *Is this really it? Is this all there is?*

I'm here to tell you that you're not crazy. That feeling you've been ignoring? That's your mind trying to wake up, trying to break free from the Cycle. Because the truth is, the world is not as free as you think it is. The structures you've grown up with—education, government, the economy—aren't random, and they definitely aren't designed with your best interests in mind.

The Cycle is a system, one that's been shaping human society for centuries. It's not about a specific group of people or a single government pulling the strings. It's bigger than that. It's about the very framework of society itself. And here's the worst part: it's so deeply ingrained that you've probably never thought to question it. You were never supposed to.

The Cycle thrives on compliance, on keeping you content just enough that you don't look too hard at the man behind the curtain. The moment you stop asking questions, the Cycle wins. That's how it's always been—throughout history, those in power have found ways to make sure the rest of us stay in line, accepting the world as it's presented to us without asking too many questions.

But don't worry. You're not alone. The fact that you're here, reading this, means you've already taken the first step. You're starting to see the cracks in the system, starting to question the reality you've been handed. That's good. That's where it begins.

Let's start with history. We've all been taught that history is this steady march of progress, right? Kings, queens, revolutions, enlightenment—the slow but inevitable rise of freedom and democracy. But what if I told you that history is less about progress and more about control? That behind every major event, every shift in society, there's a pattern—a Cycle—that keeps things from ever really changing?

Think about it. From the Roman Empire to modern-day democracies, there's always been someone in charge. Always someone with a vested interest in making sure the rest of us stay in line. Sometimes, that control is blatant—like emperors or dictatorships. But more often than not, it's invisible, wrapped up in the systems we take for granted: education, media, laws. These aren't just random institutions—they're part of a carefully crafted Cycle that's been evolving for centuries.

Here's the kicker: the Cycle doesn't need to oppress you directly. It doesn't need to force you into submission. It's much more subtle than that. It works by shaping the environment you live in, the information you receive, and even the thoughts you think. It controls the questions you never think to ask.

That's what makes the Cycle so effective. It's not about brute force; it's about manipulation. It keeps you locked in place without you even realizing it, by ensuring that the ideas, values, and norms you accept as "truth" are really just the product of the system designed to keep you in line.

Now, I know what you're thinking: *this sounds like every other "the world is controlled" rant I've heard a thousand times*. But stick with me. What I'm offering here isn't some half-baked theory. It's fact. It's real. And I'm not asking you to take my word for it. What I'm asking you to do is look for yourself. The truth has always been right in front of you, hidden in plain sight.

But here's the problem—you've been trained *not* to see it. From the moment you were born, you've been conditioned to believe that the world operates a certain way. You go to school, get a job, pay your taxes, watch the news, follow the rules. Rinse and repeat. You stay busy, keep your head down, and don't ask questions. The Cycle ensures that by the time you start to notice something's wrong, you're already too deep in the game to see a way out.

But that's why I'm here. To show you what you've been missing. To help you wake up.

This book isn't about convincing you that the world is run by some secret cabal of elites (though, let's be honest, it's not far from the truth). It's about helping you see the structures around you for what they really are: tools of control, designed to keep you from asking the right questions.

So, what now? Now we start peeling back the layers. Now we start exploring the Cycle in detail—how it operates, where it comes from, and most importantly, how you can break free.

Because the truth is, you've always had the power to escape. You just didn't know it yet.

## Chapter 2: The Historical Roots of Control

Control is as old as civilization itself. From the moment humans first gathered in communities, the dynamics of power emerged: some would lead, others would follow. At first, power was raw and visible. Physical domination ruled, enforced by soldiers, monarchs, and laws backed by brutal punishment. Control was simple—do what you're told or suffer the consequences. It was clear, obvious, and inescapable.

But something changed as societies evolved. As populations grew, ruling through brute force became inefficient. You can only hold so many people in line with swords, whips, and chains. A more sophisticated form of control was needed—one that didn't just dominate bodies, but minds. The shift from physical to mental domination was subtle, but its impact would reshape the very fabric of human society.

Take ancient Egypt, for example. Pharaohs didn't just claim political authority—they were considered gods. The concept of divine rule wasn't just a power grab; it was a method of control. If the ruler was a god, then questioning their authority meant defying the heavens themselves. Rebellion wasn't just dangerous—it was unthinkable. The people weren't forced into submission by constant threats of violence. Instead, they willingly submitted because they believed in the system. And that's the key: control doesn't have to be imposed through fear if it's embedded in belief.

As civilizations grew more complex, control systems became more invisible. Monarchies and empires evolved, but the mechanisms of control stayed the same. In medieval Europe, the feudal system was a perfect example. It wasn't just a system of kings, lords, and peasants—it was a deeply entrenched belief system. The divine right of kings, the natural order of society, the role of the church—all were carefully crafted tools of control that ensured people stayed in their place, not just through force, but through a shared understanding of their role in the world.

Think about it. A peasant in medieval Europe didn't need to be constantly monitored by soldiers or police. The belief that their station in life was divinely ordained kept them in line. They accepted their role because tradition, religion, and culture all reinforced the idea that this was how the world was supposed to be. And when someone did question the system, the response was swift—burned at the stake, tortured, or ostracized by their own community.

Even as revolutions and enlightenment ideas spread across the globe, the underlying systems of control adapted rather than collapsed. Take the French Revolution. On the surface, it was a radical shift—overthrowing the monarchy, dismantling the feudal system, and establishing a republic. But underneath, power structures merely shifted. Instead of kings, a new elite took charge. The revolution promised liberty, equality, and fraternity, but true control remained where it had always been—with those who knew how to manipulate the system.

The same pattern repeated in the birth of democracies. People were told they now had a voice, that they could vote, that the future was theirs to shape. But while the form of control changed, the function remained. Laws, elections, and governments were all structured in ways that ensured power remained concentrated in the hands of the few, even as the many believed they were free.

The real genius of modern control is that it doesn't need to be seen. It doesn't require oppressive regimes or brutal dictators. It works behind the scenes, woven into the very fabric of society. Consider the legal systems in place today. They give the appearance of fairness, of justice for all. But look closer, and you'll see that laws are often written by and for those in power. Laws designed to protect property, protect wealth, and maintain social order. Real freedom is not encouraged—it's restricted to protect the system itself.

And then there's capitalism, the economic system that now rules much of the world. On the surface, capitalism offers freedom—the freedom to build, to innovate, to create wealth. But in reality, it functions as one of the most effective control mechanisms ever devised. It creates a cycle of dependency. You need money to survive, and to get money, you must work within the system. This isn't about freedom; it's about ensuring that you stay in line. After all, how can you rebel against a system when you're trapped in a cycle of endless work, debt, and consumption?

History teaches us that control doesn't need to be overt to be effective. In fact, the most powerful forms of control are the ones that don't feel like control at all. They're the systems we take for granted—the governments, the economies, the laws—that subtly shape our behaviors and beliefs without us ever questioning why they exist or who they serve.

Take the Roman Empire. Sure, they had legions of soldiers, but their real power came from their ability to offer a population “bread and circuses”—cheap food and entertainment to distract them from the realities of their own oppression. It wasn't just about keeping the people fed or amused. It was about controlling the narrative, keeping the population focused on trivialities while the elite made decisions behind closed doors. Sound familiar? Today, our “circuses” are 24-hour news cycles, celebrity gossip, and social media—a constant stream of distractions designed to keep us from thinking too deeply about the systems that shape our lives.

Now, think about modern democracies. On the surface, you have the right to vote, the right to free speech, the right to pursue happiness. But how much of that freedom is real? Yes, you can vote—but only within the confines of a system that has already been shaped to favor those in power. Yes, you can speak freely—but only as long as your voice doesn't threaten the established order. Yes, you can pursue happiness—but only through consumption, through buying into the very system that keeps you dependent.

Control has never been more effective than it is today, and the worst part? It's invisible. Most people don't even see it. They don't see the forces shaping their decisions, their beliefs, their understanding of the world. They don't see the system for what it is—a carefully constructed Cycle designed to keep them in line, generation after generation.

And that's where we are today. A world where control isn't just about brute force. It's about the quiet manipulation of the systems we live within. The rules, the norms, the expectations—they're all part of the Cycle. The control is so deeply ingrained that we mistake it for freedom. But real freedom? That's something you were never supposed to have. As we move forward, we'll dive deeper into how these invisible chains have been perfected, how the systems of control have become even more sophisticated. But make no mistake: the foundation of the Cycle was laid long ago. It's time to start questioning what you've always accepted as normal. Because until you do, the Cycle wins.

### Chapter 3: The Purpose of Education: Training Obedience

Education. It's a word that, for most people, conjures up images of classrooms, textbooks, and the idea of self-improvement. We've all been told that education is the great equalizer, the ladder anyone can climb to reach success. It's the foundation of progress, right? The cornerstone of democracy and personal freedom. But let me ask you this: If education is about freeing the mind, why do so many of us feel trapped by it?

Think about your time in school. The endless repetition. Memorizing facts, regurgitating information, sitting still, following orders. Bell rings—change class. Bell rings—time for lunch. Bell rings—time to go home. Sound familiar? It should. Because that's the point. School isn't about learning. It's about training. And what are you being trained for? Obedience.

The education system, as we know it today, wasn't designed to create thinkers. It was designed to create workers—compliant, disciplined, and above all, obedient workers. From the moment you set foot in that classroom, the Cycle begins shaping your mind. It teaches you not to question, but to accept. Not to think, but to follow.

Let's look at where this all began. The modern education system didn't just pop into existence by chance. It was deliberately designed. In the early 1800s, the Prussian state implemented one of the first mandatory public education systems. Their goal? To create loyal citizens who would obey the state without question. They didn't want creativity or independent thought—they wanted discipline, uniformity, and compliance. They wanted soldiers.

This model caught the attention of other nations, including the United States. Horace Mann, an American education reformer, traveled to Prussia in 1843 and returned with a vision. He believed that education could be the “great equalizer,” but he also understood the power of education to shape society. He saw how Prussia had used schools to mold obedient citizens and pushed for the same system back home. By the late 1800s, compulsory education was a reality across the U.S.

But here's where it gets interesting. The purpose of education wasn't just to teach literacy and numeracy. It was to instill values. And whose values? The values of those in power. Industrialists like John D. Rockefeller understood the potential of the education system to shape future generations. He didn't want a nation of thinkers—he wanted a nation of workers.

In 1903, Rockefeller established the General Education Board (GEB), a massive philanthropic organization dedicated to shaping American education. But don't be fooled by the word “philanthropic.” Rockefeller's goal wasn't to enlighten minds; it was to create a workforce that would keep the industrial machine running smoothly. And the education system he helped create did just that.

Rockefeller himself once famously said, “I don't want a nation of thinkers. I want a nation of workers.” Think about that. The system was never designed to foster creativity or critical thinking. It was designed to produce obedience.

Now, look at the structure of a typical school day. Bell rings—move. Bell rings—sit. Bell rings—listen. It's no accident that the school environment mirrors the factory floor. You're not being taught how to

think for yourself; you're being conditioned to follow orders, to move through life in a series of pre-determined stages, just like the assembly line you were being trained to work on. The purpose of school isn't education. It's indoctrination.

And it's not just the structure that's the problem—it's the content, too. What are you taught in school? A standardized curriculum designed to make sure everyone gets the same information. There's no room for deviation, no space for individual thought. You memorize facts, take tests, and move on. But the most important lessons aren't on the curriculum—they're hidden in the structure of the system itself.

What are these hidden lessons? They're the ones that teach you to sit still, to stay quiet, to follow the rules, to accept what you're told without question. These are the lessons that matter most to the Cycle. Because the Cycle doesn't want you to think critically. It doesn't want you to challenge the status quo. It wants you to obey.

Look around. The vast majority of people graduate from school with a deep-seated belief that the world operates a certain way, and they never think to question it. Why would they? School taught them not to. From a young age, they're taught that authority figures know best. Teachers, principals, administrators—they represent the system, and the system is never wrong. The Cycle makes sure of that.

But the real question isn't *what* you're being taught in school. It's *why* you're being taught it. Why does the system push certain narratives, certain facts, and certain ways of thinking? Because those who control the system have a vested interest in maintaining it. They don't want free thinkers who might challenge the foundations of society. They want cogs in the machine—people who will show up to work, pay their taxes, and keep the Cycle running.

And let's not forget how this system is upheld. Standardized tests, grading systems, and performance evaluations—all designed to keep you in line, to measure your worth by how well you conform to the system's demands. If you step outside the lines, if you think too differently, you're penalized. And that's no accident.

Now, you might be thinking, *But what about all the good that comes from education? What about literacy rates and access to knowledge?* Yes, there are benefits to education—literacy, critical skills—but don't confuse the system's benefits with its purpose. The system gives just enough to keep people satisfied, to maintain the illusion that it's working for them. But behind the scenes, the true purpose remains the same: control.

From the moment you step into a classroom, the Cycle begins training you to accept the world as it is. It molds you into the kind of person who won't question the system, who won't challenge the status quo. It creates citizens, yes—but citizens who are obedient, who will follow the rules, who won't rock the boat.

That's why the Cycle loves education. It's the perfect tool for shaping minds before they even realize what's happening. It's where the real control begins.

But here's the thing: once you see the Cycle, you can't unsee it. You can start to question it. You can start to break free. And it starts by understanding that school wasn't about learning—it was about obedience.

Here's the thing—most people in the system don't even realize they're part of it. Teachers, principals, school board members—they're not the masterminds behind the Cycle. They're as much a product of it as you are. They grew up in the same system, learned the same lessons, and internalized the same rules. They believe in what they're doing. They believe they're helping to shape the future, preparing the next generation for success. And, in their own way, they are.

But that's the genius of the Cycle. It doesn't need everyone to be in on the game. In fact, it works better when they're not. When the people enforcing the rules truly believe in them, they become even more effective at perpetuating the system. The Cycle is built to be self-sustaining, to create generations of people who follow the rules without ever questioning why they exist in the first place.

Think about the teachers you had growing up. Most of them probably cared deeply about their students. They wanted you to learn, to succeed, to be prepared for life. But what kind of success were they preparing you for? Most of them never questioned the system they were working within. How could they? It's all they've ever known. They went to school, got their degrees, and stepped into the role the Cycle had prepared for them, just like you. They're following the script, too.

Principals and administrators aren't plotting to keep you in line—they're doing what they were taught to do, managing schools as they were trained to manage them. They enforce the rules not because they want to suppress creativity or limit your potential, but because they believe that's what's best. They've been conditioned to see the system as normal, as necessary, just like everyone else. They're part of the Cycle, just like you.

And the school board members? Most of them are just trying to balance budgets, keep parents happy, and maintain the appearance of a well-functioning institution. They're not asking, "Is this system designed to suppress free thought?" They're asking, "How can we keep things running smoothly?" They're focused on compliance, on making sure everything fits neatly into the box the system has provided. They've never been given a reason to question the box itself.

That's how deep the Cycle runs. It's not about a grand conspiracy. It's about a system so ingrained in society that everyone—from the students to the teachers to the people running the show—is trapped in it. They don't realize they're perpetuating control because, to them, it doesn't feel like control. It feels like normal life.

It's important to remember this: the people who seem to be in charge—the ones enforcing the rules and shaping the curriculum—they're not the enemy. They're not the ones responsible for the Cycle. They're trapped in it just like you are. They've been shaped by the same forces, conditioned by the same rules, trained not to question the system they're a part of.

So don't blame them. Blame the system itself. Blame the Cycle that keeps turning, generation after generation, creating people who are conditioned to believe that obedience is education, that following the rules is the same as learning.

Once you see the Cycle for what it is, it's easy to feel angry or frustrated. It's easy to want to point fingers and assign blame. But that's just another trap the Cycle sets for you—getting caught up in the emotions, in the need to find a villain. The truth is, the real enemy is invisible. The Cycle doesn't need a villain. It runs on autopilot, shaping the world in such a way that no one has to think too hard about how it works. It thrives on invisibility, on the idea that everything is as it should be.

That's why it's so hard to see the Cycle when you're in it. It's like a fish in water—it doesn't realize it's wet because it's never known anything else. But once you step outside of the water, once you see the world for what it really is, you can start to understand how deeply the Cycle has shaped everything around you.

And once you see it, you can't unsee it.

So no, don't blame your teachers. Don't blame the administrators or the principals or the board members. They're not trying to keep you in line—they're just as stuck as you are. They believe in the system because it's all they've ever known. But now that you've started to see through it, you have the power to question it. You have the power to step outside the water and ask yourself: *What if there's more to life than what I've been taught? What if the rules I've been following aren't the only way?*

And that's where true education begins. Not in the classroom, not in the textbooks, but in the moment you start to question the very foundations of the system you've been living in. That's the first step in breaking free from the Cycle.

Because remember: school was never about learning—it was about obedience.



## Chapter 4: Media: The Illusion of Choice

Information is power. That's something we've all been told, right? Stay informed, read the news, keep up with current events—that's how you stay in control of your own life. The media promises to keep you informed, to provide you with the knowledge you need to make decisions, to live freely in an open society.

But what if I told you that the media—the very thing you rely on to understand the world— isn't as free as you think it is? What if I told you that the choices you think you're making aren't really choices at all?

You see, the media loves to give you the illusion of choice. Flip through the channels, scroll through the headlines, listen to different pundits argue about the latest issue. It seems like there's a wide range of opinions, doesn't it? A lively debate where all sides of the story are represented. But look closer, and you'll see that these "choices" aren't really choices at all. They're variations of the same script, designed to keep you locked into the Cycle without ever realizing it.

In reality, over 90% of the media in the United States is controlled by just six corporations. Six. These conglomerates own the news networks you watch, the websites you browse, the newspapers you read, and even the entertainment you consume. They decide what stories are worth telling, what issues get coverage, and how those issues are framed. And that means they have the power to shape how you see the world.

Sure, there are thousands of media outlets out there—local papers, niche websites, independent broadcasters. But let's be honest. Most people get their news from the same handful of sources: the big networks, the major newspapers, the popular websites. And those sources? They're all owned by the same small group of companies. The illusion of diversity is just that—an illusion. You think you're hearing many voices, but they're all saying the same thing.

This isn't just about politics or current events, either. It's about the entire structure of media. Take a look at any major news story. Whether it's an election, a scandal, or a war, the coverage tends to follow the same patterns. The facts might be presented differently depending on the outlet, but the narrative is remarkably consistent. You're presented with two sides—left versus right, conservative versus liberal—and told that this is the full range of debate. But that's not true. Those two sides? They're both within the Cycle.

The Cycle doesn't want you to think critically about the bigger picture. It doesn't want you to ask the hard questions—questions like, "Why is this story being told?" or "Who benefits from the way this issue is being framed?" Instead, it keeps you focused on the surface-level drama, on the daily headlines that make you feel informed without ever challenging the deeper structures of power.

Take a moment and think about how often the media questions the foundations of society itself. How often does the news ask why the world works the way it does? How often do you hear discussions about the fundamental nature of the systems we live in—capitalism, democracy, the economy? Almost never. And when those questions are asked, they're usually dismissed as radical, fringe, or

unrealistic. The Cycle has no room for those kinds of debates, because those debates might make people think. And thinking is dangerous.

But here's the thing: the Cycle doesn't need to control every detail of the media. It doesn't need to micromanage every article, every broadcast, every headline. It doesn't need to. The system is designed to work on autopilot. The people who work in the media, like the teachers and administrators we talked about in the last chapter, aren't part of some grand conspiracy. They're just as trapped in the Cycle as anyone else. They believe they're doing their jobs—reporting the news, providing information. But they've been trained to operate within the boundaries set by the system, just like everyone else.

Look at how media coverage works. It's not just about what stories are told—it's about how they're told. What's emphasized? What's left out? Who's given a platform, and who isn't? The media shapes the narrative, not just by reporting facts, but by framing those facts in a way that reinforces the existing power structures. It decides which voices get heard and which voices are silenced. It determines what's important and what's not. And in doing so, it controls the conversation before it even begins.

Let's take a real-world example. In 2008, when the financial crisis hit, there was wall-to-wall coverage of the stock market crashes, the bank bailouts, the economic fallout. But how often did you hear a discussion about the system that allowed this crisis to happen in the first place? How often did the media question the very nature of global capitalism, or ask whether the financial system itself might be fundamentally flawed? Almost never. Instead, the conversation was framed around how to fix the system, how to restore stability, how to get things back to "normal."

But what if "normal" is the problem? What if the financial crisis wasn't just a glitch in the system, but a symptom of a deeper issue—an issue that the media was never going to address, because addressing it would mean questioning the very foundations of the Cycle itself?

That's how the media maintains the illusion of choice. You're given a set of options, a range of opinions, and told that this is the full spectrum of debate. But the real questions—the ones that challenge the system—are never even on the table. And the result? You stay locked in the Cycle, thinking you're informed, thinking you're making your own decisions, when in reality, you're just following the script that's been laid out for you.

It's not just about what's said—it's about what's left unsaid. The real power of the media lies not in the stories it tells, but in the stories it chooses not to tell. The questions it doesn't ask. The issues it ignores. And by shaping the boundaries of the conversation, the media shapes the way we see the world without us even realizing it.

So, the next time you watch the news, or scroll through your feed, ask yourself: *What am I not being told? What questions am I not being encouraged to ask?* Because that's where the Cycle does its best work—in the spaces between the stories, in the silence between the headlines.

And the more you think about it, the more you'll start to realize: you think you're hearing many voices, but they're all saying the same thing.

## **Chapter 5: The Cycle: What Comes Next**

The Cycle has always adapted. Through empires and revolutions, kings and presidents, it has persisted. It evolves, shifts, and molds itself to fit the needs of the time, always staying one step ahead of those who dare to question it. But what happens when it begins to fracture?

We're standing at a crossroads. For the first time in history, the cracks in the Cycle are becoming impossible to ignore. More people than ever are questioning the systems that govern their lives, seeing through the illusion of control. Technology has given us the tools to communicate, to share ideas, to wake up. And yet, the Cycle is evolving too—using those same tools to tighten its grip, to control the narrative, to keep us locked inside.

The future of the Cycle is uncertain, but one thing is clear: it won't go down without a fight. New systems of control are emerging, more invisible and insidious than ever before. Algorithms that predict your every move. Systems that reward compliance and punish dissent without you ever realizing it's happening. The Cycle isn't just adapting—it's perfecting itself.

But here's the question no one wants to answer: what happens when the Cycle can no longer sustain itself? When the systems of control fail, and the cracks become chasms? Do we finally break free... or does the Cycle start again, stronger than before? And more importantly—what if it's already too late?