



# Conspiracy Theorists

## What

Don't waste time arguing with a Conspiracy Theorist.

Your infuriating workmate may not believe that Elvis is alive and serving in a Memphis diner. They may believe they are 'blessed' with an alternative explanation for the death of Princess Diana, the true cause of 9/11 and the origins of Covid. Conspiracy Theorists have an internal logic which defies alternative arguments.

## So What?

With Conspiracy Theorists understanding is easier than redeeming. Researchers have shown that it's a coping mechanism which tends to follow unanticipated collective trauma. A way of ordering and making sense of upsetting events, of taking something complex and simplifying it. Ground-breaking 2017 research described it as 'like a religion'.

Social media amplifies and adds to distortions. Algorithms find and feed similar views. *64% of the people who joined extremist groups on Facebook did so because the algorithms steered them there.* False claims were 70 percent more likely than the truth to be shared on Twitter. It's now easier to find and believe in conspiracies.

## Now What?

Conspiracy Theorists require an outgroup which can then be ascribed as being either sheep-like, unwitting controllers and at the top, a cadre of evil manipulators. You will be seen as being part of their outgroup!

The outgroup legitimises the ingroup. Ingroup members are on a personal journey as part of an insightful elite – with its own heroes - envisaging an alternative and better future. It's too easy to stereotype them as paranoid, cynical, asocial and politically disengaged. No, they are more annoying than that!

## Types of Conspiracy Theorists

1. **Whisperers** – know someone who knows and have inside knowledge
2. **Groupies** – revel in a sense of community
3. **Professors** – parade their grasp of the 'facts'
4. **Disruptors** – enjoy the chaos
5. **Lost Boys** – are looking for simple explanations
6. **Ah-buts** (serial doubters) – love to find little flaws
7. **Narcissists** – pursue attention

Intelligent doesn't mean smart. Confidence doesn't guarantee truth. Wisdom is not a consequence of knowledge. You cannot 'fix' your infuriating workmate. The ThreeWhats Playbook on Conspiracy Theorists may help you understand.