



## BEWARE THE CHAINS OF COMMONALITY

We are surrounded by conformists; in many ways, the most dangerous people we can ever meet--because in total conformity, lies the death of individuality.

In his *Notes from the Underground*, Dostoevsky writes that, "man is above all a creative animal, condemned consciously to strive towards a goal and to occupy himself with the art of engineering, that is, always and incessantly clear with a path for himself [or herself] *wherever it may lead.*"

This striving, is what leads us to upgrade the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), in search of answers beyond the Standard Model; it drives our art, our designs, and even our wants and needs; it drove Elon Musk, to shake things up with his new "Powerwall." Along with others, to step outside the norm and actually use the new Tesla Powerwall! Conformity is law--in many cases--however, laws change, because it's humans that set most of them in place; and humans are extremely fallible, thus creating fallacious standards. But, of course, there's always the old Goth conundrum: is it not conformity, to purposely nonconform?

Probably.

Though it's the nonconformity that drives many changes that go on to become new norms, setting up new situations of nonconformity. Wash. Rinse. Dry. Repeat.

Conformity is certainly law here in prison; but it doesn't quite reign supreme. Especially now that South Carolina adheres to Federal law, giving prisoners' back their right to grow a beard if they wish. Changes are happening, and each occurs in part because of someone's refusal to conform. Be that prisoner, staff, or both.

To question, is human; it's how we've managed to make it to where we are today. The good, and the bad. We're here though, against all odds, and have a chance to stay beyond our given lot--possibly even seed the Cosmos. We don't even have to necessarily know the path we're on to follow it, especially the conformists--they'll simply ride along with the Creatives, simply making a path to occupy their "condemned" consciousness.

I could very easily break down, give up, become the stereotypical, conformed prisoner many would prefer; but that's not in me to be. And now, my nonconformity reaches out to tickle your brain, a moment of FYI that puts a pause in your thoughts to pose the question: what have you done lately, to assert your individuality?