

Lit Log  
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Rohan Kapoor  
College English

# Is it okay to Question Authority?

Reading through *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, the ward's strict system has made me realize how suffocating and controlling the system is. This ideology made me reflect and think about the way I interact with authority in my life. McMurphy's constant rebellion against Nurse Ratched has inspired the other patients to stand up for themselves. Reading about the small acts of rebellion made me realize and start to question whether I go along with the rules or expectations without questioning them.

One part that stood out to me in the book was when McMurphy bets to the other patients that he can get Nurse Ratched to lose her cool. The whole purpose is for McMurphy to test out how much power Nurse Ratched has. McMurphy uses his humor and small acts of rebellion to show that her control is beatable. When reading this, this situation is for McMurphy to test the amount of authority Nurse Ratched has over them. McMurphy uses his humor and small acts of rebellion to show that her control isn't invincible. These small acts remind me of when I was younger and I would stay up a bit longer than I was allowed to and I wondered whether my parents would tell me if I stayed up or not. Although this isn't a major act of rebellion, it felt fun to press my parents' buttons.

Another moment that stood out to me was the voting to watch the World Series. When McMurphy attempts to gather all of the patients to vote to change the ward's schedule, many of the patients are terrified to stand up against the nurse. Although McMurphy receives a majority rule, Nurse Ratched twists the rules to keep control. When rereading that scene, it feels

disheartening that no matter how much they fight, their proposals will get shut down. This moment reminded me of a specific situation involving the new basketball arena potentially coming to Chinatown. Many people have shown their support against the arena by signing petitions and organizing rallies but the higher-ups ignore that and want to do what's best for them instead of what's best for the people. All of the work that the communities do to fight for their community gets ignored. McMurphy never gives up and always finds a way to use small acts of rebellion.

What strikes me about McMurphy is how he encourages the other patients to find their voices and to find themselves again. Bromden starts to come out of his comfort zone because of McMurphy's influence. During the book, Bromden pretends to be deaf and invisible, but McMurphy treats him like he matters. Bromden starts to gain confidence and faith in himself. This reminds me of getting out of my comfort zone and playing tennis matches in front of other people. I used to get terrified and nervous when other people other than my coach would watch me. I was scared that I would get judged and wanted people to see the best of my abilities. As time grew my coach put me in situations where I had to be able to adapt to situations where a lot of people had to watch. This made me remove the fear of playing in front of strangers and the more I played, the more confident I was. McMurphy has proven how much of a difference it can make when someone believes in you and pushes you to become the best version of yourself.

Reading about McMurphy's rebellion has made me reflect on the ways I respond to the rules or authority. For the most part, I just go along with things because it feels a lot easier to obey the rules than to challenge them on my own. Originally I thought this book wouldn't open my eyes about standing up for myself but when reading it I was proved wrong. McMurphy's actions have made me understand and realize that there are times when it is worth pushing back from authority. Self advocating whether for yourself or others can make a large difference.

The book has shown me that sometimes it can be good for people to question authority and to be able to self-advocate for themselves even if it's scary. Sometimes it's not about breaking rules for fun, it's about standing up for yourselves and others.