

Phil Zimbardo – Interview
By Valerie Hearn, IAAP
November 15th, 2008

INT: First of all, I really want to thank you for doing this. I'm sure all the IAAP members will really appreciate being able to read about you and your work.

ZIMBARDO: Good.

INT: Yes, I have them also. You have made, obviously, an enormous contribution to contemporary psychology in many ways and you have contributed on many different issues by teaching, obviously, at Yale and Stanford and your research – most notably the Stanford Prison Experiment, and you've done work among other areas in shyness and madness and how time perspective influences people's lives. You've written many books and articles, the latest book being *The Lucifer Effect*.

ZIMBARDO: The latest is *The Time Paradox*.

INT: Oh, is it really?

ZIMBARDO: Yes, it came out a couple months ago. It's *The Time Paradox: The New Psychology of Time That Will Change Your Life*.

INT: And also the Heroes Project.

ZIMBARDO: Yes, that's the newest thing.

INT: Anyway, obviously, you've had an enormous international influence on contemporary psychology and probably you're the most well known contemporary psychologist in the world.

ZIMBARDO: Well, me and Bandura, I think.

INT: [chuckle] Okay. You want to share that.

ZIMBARDO: Yes. Well, he's actually the most cited psychologist I think now. I don't know if he's passed Freud but he's the most cited living psychologist for sure.

INT: Okay. So from your point of view, why do you think that people are so interested in your work?

ZIMBARDO: Well, I think most of my work starts with trying to understand – it begins with trying to understand people's personal, social, political problems. So I almost always start from real world situations, events, experiences and then try to re-conceptualize them in ways that lead to research, experimental research ideally. Then what I always try to do is go back to pointing out how what we learn from research can be applied in various real world situations. So essentially the ideas come from real world situations then I apply it – psychological analysis then experimental analysis—and then try to feed back the findings to make the world better in some way or make people's lives better in some way.

INT: And also I think the way you feed it back is really important.

ZIMBARDO: Um-hm. [yes]

INT: Because you feed it back in ways that non-professionals can really understand.

ZIMBARDO: Yes. My parents were uneducated, I don't even think they went to high school. Yes, they didn't even go to high school. So everything I do has always been "How do I explain it to my mother? How do I explain it to my father?" So it simply means reducing things to the level of really the ordinary person. I avoid psychological jargon. Also I've been teaching introductory psych for fifty years. Introductory psych is how do you make psychology interesting, understandable, and exciting to students, most of whom are not going to become psychologists. In fact, only 5% of the kids who take introductory psych go on even to major in psych. So my whole career is how do you take psychological ideas and make them interesting to everyday folk.

INT: I think that's wonderful because so much of the literature would be completely not understood by most people.

ZIMBARDO: I mean the simplest thing, for example, is research on shyness. Most people would frame it as social phobia, which automatically medicalizes it. And I'm saying, "No, no." What people understand is the term "shyness," so you say shyness is really a social phobia but by calling it "shyness" – my first book was *Shyness: What It Is, What You Can Do About It*. So it tries to say let's simplify these terms that people can understand and appreciate. And evil – most people who study similar phenomena would study under anti-social behavior or dysfunctional behavior, but the average person knows it as evil. When I started giving lectures under the title – psychologists were upset, "That's not a psychological concept, that's religious, that's spiritual, that's philosophical,"

INT: Yes, I think that's absolutely terrific. So moving on to a more professional venue, at the International Congress of Psychology in Berlin there were so many people that wanted to attend your presentation and were turned away that you agreed to give it a second time. So you were undoubtedly the star at the ICP in Berlin. What was that like for you?

ZIMBARDO: Oh, it was wonderful. I've been going to the International Congress of Psychology since 1959. I gave my first – the first time I ever went to Europe was I had just graduated from Yale and I presented at the Congress in Bonn, Germany. I have not gone to all of them but I go every few years – I mean almost every other one. So this one in 2008 – that was, what, the fortieth or fiftieth year that I had been going so I really felt good about that. What happened was I was scheduled to be in a small room that holds two hundred and I looked at the room and I said, "That's really going to be too small." But more importantly there was only one entrance and I knew if the room fills up people are going to be pushing – while people are coming out because they could get a seat, other people would be pushing in. So I went to one of the organizers and said, "This could be a fire hazard." I said, "I don't want to be immodest but I am sure I will fill up a room of two hundred, so they reluctantly put me in a room for eight hundred. The problem is in that convention center they pay for each

room, they pay more the bigger the room. So they were reluctant to do it; they finally did it. The guy said, “Well, I hope you're going to fill it up.” The room held eight hundred and there were at least two hundred people standing and sitting in the aisles. Apparently the first day there were four hundred people that got locked out. So at the end of my talk, which was very well received – it was about the psychology of evil and it was the Lucifer Effect and it ends with celebrating ordinary heroes – the organizer came up to me and said, “People are really angry.” I said, “Oh, my god, what did I do?” I thought I had committed some sort of faux pas, I said something which translated badly. He said, “No.” They're angry at him because they couldn't get in. They actually handled it badly because they had just closed the doors and people thought they would then eventually – and like for ten or fifteen minutes nobody said, “It's closed, you can't get in.” So he said, “Would you do it again tomorrow?” I said, “Sure.” I feel bad that people couldn't get in. It turns out the next day it filled up with eight hundred, there were several hundred standing and there were still a few hundred left out. I told him, I said, “I'm not going to do it a third time. Three times is a burden.” In fact, there were people who got upset, they couldn't get in the second time. But that was really a great feeling. Then not only that, see, often you give a talk – I give ten, twenty, thirty a year—and after the talk nobody mentions it. Like people don't say, “Gee, it was really interesting. I liked this or that.” Even when you go to a college, you know, a dinner afterwards and you say, “Did I just give a talk?” There's no feedback.

INT: Isn't that interesting.

ZIMBARDO: It's rare. And there people were coming up, “I love this and this. Put me on your list. I want to help with the Heroes Project.” So in that sense it was not just an ego boost, it was really a vote of confidence for the research, and people got excited about it.

INT: So I'm curious, how did you get interested in evil?

ZIMBARDO: Oh, it's simple. I grew up in the South Bronx New York ghetto and if you grow up in the ghetto you're surrounded by evil, meaning people do really bad things to other people – stealing, cheating, lying, beating up other kids, gangs getting into fights and then later drugs

coming in and turf wars and people killing and getting killed. So as a kid I always wondered why other kids I knew that I thought were good kids at some point went bad – got involved in gangs, got involved in selling drugs or went to prison, got abused or abused other kids. So I was just always curious in a general sense of why do good kids go bad? See, now, what's interesting is if you grow up poor you are an intuitive situationist; that is, when you look around you see failure. "My father's not working, my friend's father's abandoned him, the other friend's sister's a prostitute, this one's pushing drugs." So you want to believe that if the situation was changed things would be better. If you grow up rich then you're surrounded with success, and you want to take credit for it, you want it to be in your genes.

ZIMBARDO: So what I was saying is when you grow up rich you're a dispositionalist; that is, you look around and you see success and you want to take credit for success, you want it to be in your genes, you want it to be in your legacy. You want to believe that you are destined for goodness. So a lot of social psychologists really came from immigrant backgrounds. Essentially what they were aware of is how much human behavior is influenced by the particular situation you're in. I think people who focus more on inner determinants of behavior tend to come from more privileged backgrounds, tend to want to see human behavior as a kind of an unfolding of things within people. Social psychologists like me say, "Yes, the person is important and people bring different things into any situation but we have underestimated how powerful situations are to transform human behavior. So my interest in evil comes from a more general interest in understanding how ordinary people are influenced by the situations around them.

INT: This is really interesting, it never occurred to me that people who grow up poor are seeing failure and people who grow up rich are seeing success. It stands to reason that if you see success you're going to think about inner determinants as opposed to environment.

ZIMBARDO: Yes, because if you grow up rich the question is who gets credit for it; if you grow up poor, who gets blamed for it? You don't want to blame people. You don't want to say, "Well, it's my father's fault, he had a psychopathic personality or he was da-da-da." You want to

say, “If he had had a good job this wouldn't happen. If we lived in a different neighborhood this wouldn't happen.” So that’s the origins of my primitive interest in evil.

INT: Please describe the Lucifer Effect.

ZIMBARDO: The Lucifer Effect starts with Lucifer who was God’s favorite angel who, according to cosmic scriptures – obviously there was nobody there to record it – that one day Lucifer and some other angels disobeyed God by not honoring Adam, God’s perfect creature, saying simply that “He’s a mortal, we are angels, and we existed prior to him.” Apparently this was not a God who was into reconciliation or absolution, and Lucifer, who was his favorite angel, is sent to hell. So God paradoxically creates hell as a place to put the fallen angels and that starts evil in the universe. That is, by identifying, by re-naming Lucifer as the Devil, as Satan, and putting all the other angels – these are then fallen angels who lose a cosmic battle with Michael the Archangel and the good angels—in hell. So this is the start of good versus evil. It’s the start of thinking of evil in terms of dispositions of the Devil as a source of evil and Hell as the font of evil. Of course, it’s a story made up by some guy. No one could have been there. It’s not like the Apostles, it’s not like the Gospels where somebody’s writing. The point of the story is really the importance of obeying authority; that is you disobey authority and then you could go to hell. So the people who are writing these stories are priests, are rabbis and so they want everybody to obey authority. Children obey parents, students obey teachers, patients obey doctors, and mostly parishioners obey the priests and the rabbis. That’s the bottom line. Who wrote that story? It could have been “divinely” inspired, but it’s a myth. It’s a myth to understand why evil exists in the world, but mostly I think it’s that myth that embodies the notion of you must obey authority or else. Anyway, so the Lucifer Effect starts off with the transformation of God’s favorite angel into the Devil. For me growing up as a Catholic kid, for which that story was very significant in Catholic school – I mean I didn’t go to Catholic school, I was in Sunday School – that I began to think of that as in a sense a metaphor for how ordinary people first begin to do bad things. So my research was just that, looking at what are the conditions under which somebody’s who’s good and moral, etc. could first be led to step across the line and begin to hurt other people is one kind of evil. The

Lucifer Effect is understanding behavior as being influenced by social forces. It's to emphasize the power of the social situation to transform ordinary, even good people, into perpetrators of evil. But once I got involved in the Abu Ghraib prison case as an expert witness for one of the guards, I began to realize that the bigger question and the third part of the Lucifer Effect is understanding how systems create and maintain those situations. Ultimately the Lucifer Effect is understanding complex behavior as the interplay between what individuals bring into a situation, what situations bring out of people, and what are the systems that have the power to create and maintain those situations. So systems are the legal, cultural, political, economic foundation in every society that creates the situations that we live in. They create the institutions of war, of schools, of corrections, etc., of the military and that's where the power is. Psychologists have ignored that totally. With the exception of family therapy we don't really have systems analysis very much. Maybe with some organizational behavior but we stop mostly at the individual level and the social psychologists say, "No, let's add the situational level." I'm now saying, "No, you need all three. You have to understand the individual, the situation, and the system."

INT: What role do you think anxiety plays in the Lucifer Effect?

ZIMBARDO: To the extent that someone is anxious, they've got to be anxious about something, that anxiety can distort your perception of a situation; anxiety can make you fearful of somebody who may not be threatening because they look like someone else. Anxiety might make you defensive to take action to protect yourself. So anxiety would be a catalyst for taking various actions. What I'm thinking is in some situations you become more vulnerable to situational pressures because you're anxious about something. That you can be more easily manipulated by an authority figure, by a dictator precisely because you're anxious. To the extent that influence agent understands your anxiety or your anxiety as a part of a general anxiety that other people are feeling that can be manipulated. So, in fact, the anxiety that we all felt after 9/11... There's a distinction between fear and anxiety. In fact, I did one of the first experiments – in fact, that was the study I presented in 1959 at the Congress in Bonn. It was the Freudian distinction between fear and anxiety as experimentally tested in a situation where we created analogs of fear

and anxiety and we showed that when you are fearful you want to affiliate with other people like you but when you're anxious you want to isolate yourself from other people because you think your reactions are irrational, don't make sense, and you don't want to be with other people to expose yourself. So after 9/11 people initially felt fear; that is, "I could die." Fear is a strong emotional reaction for a realistic danger. But then it got morphed into anxiety so people who were in small towns, people who were in Hawaii, people who were in Alaska where there was no realistic threat that terrorists were going to come to... Terrorists are not going to come to some remote place in Hawaii. Nevertheless, those people felt the same emotional arousal, and when you feel that what you want is somebody to reduce that anxiety, somebody to reduce that fear, and at that point we all regress to wanting a strong father. We want somebody who'll come and say, "I will take care of this." And this is exactly what the Bush administration knew and did.

INT: Do you think they really knew that?

ZIMBARDO: Oh, sure. Sure. They knew it at not a psychodynamic level, they knew it at a more primitive political level. They created the Department of Homeland Security. When you're anxious in that way, what do you want? You want security. They called it Homeland Security. That was not an accident. They had psychologists – they have trained psychologists on their staff. The Department of Homeland Security, that was the start of saying, "We will make you secure." In fact, most of the people – 25% of the Americans still think Bush is doing a favorable job, right?

INT: Yes.

ZIMBARDO: Those 25% of the people have said, "Well, there has not been a terrorist attack since 9/11, he kept us safe." So despite everything else he did, that's the most dominant thing. In fact, he then says, "We're going to declare a war on terror," and once he does that he becomes Commander in Chief of the Army. As Commander in Chief he now has special martial powers, and they used all of them to redefine the enemy as not prisoners of war but enemy combatants, to say it's okay to spy, it's okay for surveillance, etc., etc. But the bottom line was most Americans who were anxious after 9/11 –

there's no question, all the research shows this was clearly anxiety – were comforted that here is a strong man. In fact, before 9/11 the most typical adjective describing Bush was indecisive; after 9/11 it switched to be decisive. In fact, in all of his image creation – certainly against Kerry and others– they described them as flip-flopping, indecisive and Bush is decisive. When you're anxious what you want is somebody who's decisive and says, “Do A, do B, do C.” That's exactly what Hitler played on in the same way. What I said is you have to understand what people bring into a situation. I'm not saying, “Oh, dispositions don't matter.” Of course, they matter. What is shyness? So my research goes back and forth. Shyness and the research on time perspective is all about individual differences in people's time perspective biases. People who are focused on the past, present, or future and how that influences their behavior. I'm a generalist. My main contribution is making people aware of the power of situation but I'm also sensitive that people differ. They have different learning styles, different cognitive styles, different ways of approaching situations. Some babies are born bold, some babies are born inhibited on day one in the nursery. I'm not saying genes don't play a role, it's really that we have underestimated the power of situations, and my main job is simply saying we must appreciate more fully the power of situation influence. Because it's only by appreciating the power of situations that you can prevent it. You can say, “Okay, I'm not going to go into that situation. I'm going to avoid that situation,” or “We've got to change that situation,” rather than we have to change the individual. So the outcome of the Lucifer Effect is understanding that all of our efforts at change have focused on changing the individual – re-education, rehabilitation, therapy, socialization, imprisonment, segregation, and execution, the Inquisition. They're all focused on one thing, changing an individual who has done something that is not acceptable to society. My sense is none of those have worked. Even if they worked, if therapy was 100% effective, you're only treating a fraction of all the people who are shy, who are anxious, who have obsessive-compulsive disorders. By finding out is there a situational component, if we can modify the situation then you're affecting – you're having a much bigger impact in reducing the problem.

INT: Thank you. That was just a terrific answer. I'm tempted to ask you also questions about the current political climate but in the interest of time...

ZIMBARDO: The problem of mine is this is interesting but the question is what's going to go into an article and you're limited to how much you could cover.

INT: Right. This is going to be transcribed and put on the IAAP Website. So if this primitive technology doesn't work I'm going to have to shoot myself. [chuckle] So then my next question is what do people need to know about evil in the modern world?

ZIMBARDO: [pause] What I outlined in my *Lucifer Effect* book is what is the slippery slope of evil? Evil doesn't appear full-blown. Next week, November 18th, is the thirtieth anniversary of the Jonestown Massacre, November 18th, 1979. 912 American citizens, 303 children committed mass suicide or were murdered by their friends and family in Jonestown, Guyana. Why did they do it? They did it because their leader, Jim Jones, a pastor, Church of Christ the Disciple, head of the People's Temple – a religious group in San Francisco and L.A. – told them to do it. He gave a speech in which he said, "Congressman Ryan has just been killed." He said, "I don't know who did it," but obviously he sent guys to do it. "The military is going to come in and kill us all so we're going to take our lives. We're going to do revolutionary suicide." And he persuaded mothers to give their children Kool-Aid laced with cyanide and if they didn't do it they got injected with cyanide and in one hour nearly a thousand people committed suicide, the biggest mass deaths in the United States. It's being celebrated [sic] next week in San Francisco. Well, that's an evil but if you look at that and you say, "Oh, my god, what stupid people. Why would they join a church like that?" That final evil built up over a number of years. In order to understand the end product you have to really understand the slippery slope that led to that. Why did people join in the first place, what began to go wrong, what were all the ways he shaped the way these people thought over several years? So, again, evil in the modern world, things that look really bad – like evil is Enron. Evil is – we're talking about a phenomenon that affects people's lives negatively. It's really based on individual greed. No, I'm sorry, it's based on collective greed of all these financial

institutions, bank lenders, mortgage places, all of whom at some level knew you cannot keep giving high risk loans to anybody but they couldn't resist the high yield. In 2002, only one of fifty loans made by all American financial institutions were high-risk. Last year two out of three loans were high-risk. So that means almost everybody was doing it. So how do you understand this disaster? Because you have to understand it to prevent it from happening again. We think of evil mostly in war, as rape and horrible things but evil is also things that impact humanity, impact our everyday lives in negative ways. We really want to understand evil not simply as a kind of philosophical or theatrical phenomenon, we want to understand it because we can try to prevent it, we can try to change it or mitigate it.

In my lectures, in my books I say what we learn from all of our research in this area and in *Lucifer* I have two whole chapters summarizing all of the social-psychological research on de-humanization, de-individuation, power, group conformity. What we understand from the Milgram experiment – parenthetically, Stanley Milgram and I were high school classmates.

INT: Isn't that great.

ZIMBARDO: James Monroe High School in the Bronx, we were in senior year class together. So what you learn from Milgram's experiment is all evil begins with a 15-volt switch, it's hardly noticeable. All evil begins with a small first step. It's "Sign here, sign this petition," "Just give this little money," "Just join the picket line," just do this, "Just give this oath." Then it builds up where the situation or a system gets you to de-humanize other people, it gets you to displace or diffuse your responsibility so you don't feel you're responsible even though you're the one pulling the trigger. It involves what we call de-individuation, making yourself anonymous because then you're not accountable. So being put in a disguise, in a mask, in a costume, in a uniform makes it easier to do bad things. Conformity to group norms, which is uncritical conformity because we all want to belong, we all want to be liked.

INT: So is that particular factor what you think people were doing that caused the financial meltdown?

ZIMBARDO: Those are some of the steps that --

INT: But I mean specifically conformity to group norms?

ZIMBARDO: Yes, it was two things. One, it was – usually people who are in those positions of financial, any financial organization, are usually what – now we switch to time – are usually future-oriented people and future-oriented people are prudent, they're wise. All of their decisions are if. “If I do this then what?” But greed is a powerful individual motivation which can become a collective one which we all see – we can all benefit from it. Greed transforms people into the present-hedonistic. Present-hedonistic people never think about the future, they never think about if/then. Present-hedonism is the core process in all addictions. So this became an addiction where you stop focusing on future consequences and all you want to do is make as much money as quickly as possible and you end up not thinking about negative consequences. In fact, you suppress it. There were lots of reports coming out two years earlier where people are saying, “We don't have sufficient reserves, we don't have sufficient liquidity. We can't keep doing this.” People were saying, “Yeah, but we can't stop because, look, we could make this big killing. We package all these loans, we sell it to somebody else, we make this profit,” and they package it and sell it to somebody. So it was everywhere. Little banks in Ireland are now implicated in undoing some teachers' retirement program in Wisconsin. Somehow those funds got dealt with in some bank in Ireland which is now going under. So I think it was that. It's the collective greed that transformed people who are usually prudent future-oriented people, who then would never make these kinds of loans, into present-hedonistic people who never think about their future. It's also an incidence of really the common dilemma. The common dilemma we usually think about as physical resources. For example, the original common dilemma is there's a grazing area and all the farmers want all of their animals to graze as much as possible, to make them as big and healthy so they can make money. But you know that if everyone grazes without limits you will exhaust the grazing area and then nobody will have anything. So the issue is that's where you must cooperate rather than compete. Well, in Monterey, California, Monterey Bay, it was the center of the sardine industry in America. Every fishing boat would go out every day and fish all the fish that their boat could carry and people were

saying, “You can't keep doing this, it's not an infinite resource.” One day a fisherman went out and there was not a sardine left. They had fished out every sardine in Monterey Bay and so the whole industry sunk. I think the common dilemma is a similar thing there as here. It's not a physical resource like sardines or grass for cows.

INT: No, but the analogy is great.

ZIMBARDO: I think it's a good analogy.

INT: I do too. I think it's a great analogy. Going back to this Lucifer Effect, how does your Stanford Prison Study relate to Abu Ghraib?

ZIMBARDO: On August 28th, 2004, the world was shocked when images of American soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners were revealed on mass media and went around the world. What was shocking was that it was American men and women soldiers not only abusing the prisoners, not only taking pictures abusing them but putting themselves in the pictures. This spawned outrage certainly in all Muslim countries but even in America. How could this happen? So here is a case of what seemed like obvious evil because the soldiers were taking delight – smiling, high fives, thumbs up – while they were doing these terrible things – getting prisoners to simulate fellatio, getting them to masturbate, and piling them naked in pyramids – just all kind of horrendous things. When I saw those pictures I was shocked but I was not at all surprised because visually they were comparable to pictures that I have from the Stanford Prison Study. Our guards put bags over the prisoners' heads; our guards stripped prisoners naked, our guards sexually humiliated and degraded prisoners and it happened within five days in a situation where these educated college students, all of whom at some level knew that it was an experiment and, certainly, also knew that the guard – the boys who were randomly assigned to play the role of guards knew that the ones who were in the prisoner condition had not done anything wrong to be there. So immediately after the revelation General Myers, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, goes on television and says, “This is the work of a few rogue soldiers. It is not systemic.” Bush administration spokespeople go on and immediately say, “It's a few bad apples, the military is wonderful – the American military is wonderful.” I look at this and say, “You

know what, I knew on day one in the Stanford Prison Experiment all of my guards and all of my prisoners were good apples and I knew that because we did an extensive selection procedure. We gave seven personality tests, clinical interviews, health checks, and we only picked two dozen out of 75 applicants who were the most normal and healthy on every dimension. So I knew on day one that they were all good apples and I knew on day six they were all bad apples. That's why I could say it was the situation that transformed them. My hypothesis is that the soldiers in Abu Ghraib when they started out were good apples and that certainly in these pictures what they're doing they're really bad apples but maybe it was the situation in Abu Ghraib that corrupted them. That's the hypothesis. The bad apple attribution is really a dispositional one and I'm saying maybe – of course, it could be that they did certainly qualify as such – but maybe they were really good soldiers and it was the Lucifer Effect. I was interviewed on NPR and I said that – the media loves metaphors. Again, this points back to your early opening question that I knew how to use simple language that ordinary people could pick up. I said, “Yes, maybe they were bad apples but I'd rather believe that it's the Lucifer Effect,” and the media picked that up. I did a bunch of interviews and one of the people who heard the interviews was the lawyer for one of the soldiers, actually the sergeant who was supposedly in charge of the night shift in Abu Ghraib, the night shift on Q1A – all the abuses happened only in this particular place. He called me and said, “Would you like to be part of the defense team?” I said, “No.” I said, “What they did was terrible.” He said, “But if you're part of the defense team you can have access to this man, you can do psychological tests, you can interview him, check out his background. You can also have access to all of the investigative reports so you know what the situation is and you have access to all of the images.” There were more than one thousand. What was leaked out was about a dozen. So I couldn't resist, I said yes. So the *Lucifer Effect* book, two of the chapters are going into in-depth about who was this guy and who were the other soldiers, what was the situation like and, finally, what was the system that created that situation. Then I was a defense witness. I went to his trial and I gave testimony. The conclusion is Abu Ghraib was exactly like the Stanford Prison Study only to the nth degree; that is, it was a situation designed to produce exactly what happened, designed to get soldiers to abuse prisoners and enjoy doing so. The worst abuses at the

Stanford Prison Study occurred on the night shift. The only abuses that happened at Abu Ghraib happened on the night shift. How come? In Abu Ghraib in the day shift there were always senior officers to impose oversight. In the night shift, which is 4:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m., not once in three months did a senior officer ever go down to the dungeon. So there's no oversight. In the Stanford Prison Study the guards figured out that's when I was asleep. It was only me, two graduate students and an undergraduate and in the middle of the experiment, my senior graduate student had to go home. So there were just three of us and the experiment's going 24/7 and I was sleeping on the couch in my office. I was in charge of all the logistics in the study and it was overwhelming. But they figured out on the night shift that probably nobody was looking, so the worst things happened on the night shift.

What it means is that if you want – let me back up. Abu Ghraib is a huge prison and, the abuses happened only in a very specific place, Tier 1A, that's the interrogation center which is run by military intelligence. In addition to interrogators from military intelligence there are interrogators from the CIA. There are also civilian interrogators from Titan Corporation, so we're outsourcing interrogation. So there are three sets of interrogators and when the insurgency breaks out none of them are prepared for it. They started arresting whole families, all the men and boys in the family. When Chip Frederick, the guy I defended, gets there in September there are two hundred prisoners, in less than two months there's a thousand, and they're overwhelmed. Most of the people they're interrogating have no information to give, number one. Secondly, many of the interrogators have no cultural background preparing them for this. Almost none of them speak Arabic so they have to do it through a translator. They don't understand non-verbal cues. They're in a rush to get confessions, information, so they violate the most basic principle in interrogation [which] is you've got to build rapport so they are getting no information, zero. So military intelligence goes to military police and says, "You guys have to help us. You have to prep the prisoners for interrogation. You have to 'take off the gloves.' You have to soften them up." Essentially they're saying, "You've got to abuse them. You got to do whatever the hell you can do so when we interrogate them they're going to break down and give us what we want." So they give them permission to be evil and then

there is no oversight. And so essentially what they got was what they wanted to get. What they didn't want was the pictures, you see. Now, in fact, the military started out taking some of the first pictures because they used those to show them to other prisoners they were going to interrogate to say, "If you don't do this, this is going to be your fate." This is according to General Janis Karpinski who was in charge. She was the one that said the first pictures were official pictures then the soldiers said, "Hey, wait, we can take them for ourselves." For the soldiers those pictures were called bragging rights and what nobody had said was these are not real soldiers, they are Army reservists. These are weekend soldiers who have zero mission-specific training, no training for this job and they have the lowest respect in the whole military because they're not real soldiers. They don't go through boot training. But what is lower in the pecking order than Army reservists is the prisoners. So what they're doing is saying, "Hey, look what we can do. Look what we can get away with." Some of those images, like the guys piled naked in the pyramid, they were on people's screensavers long before the revelations, and this went on for months. So how come nobody at the senior level knew about this? I'm sure they knew about it and they didn't care. They never thought it would get out of the little circle. So what I'm saying – this is a long way of answering it, but there were strong parallels between the Stanford Prison Study and Abu Ghraib. In fact, one of the twelve investigative reports was by the committee headed by James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense, and in it he says – it's almost a quote – the landmark Stanford study should have been a cautionary tale for all military detention operations. He says we know that inherent in those situations is the danger of mistreatment of prisoners. We know that from the Stanford Prison Study. Therefore, those situations must be handled with careful training, careful planning, and with much caution. There was none on purpose because they wanted the guards to soften up the prisoners doing anything they could think of so that they would give information. They needed the information because the insurgency's out of control, the Bush administration is saying we need – the key phrase is "actionable intelligence." We need intelligence that we can take action on to stop this insurgency. And the military command from generals down to colonels right down the line is saying, "You guys have to give us this information." In fact, General Jeffrey Miller, who was the one who set up the worst interrogation procedures at

Guantanamo, he flies to Abu Ghraib and he tells the general – colonel in charge, “This is what you must do. We have to Gitmo-ize Abu Ghraib.” He says, “Here are the interrogation procedures that you have to utilize.” The difference is in Guantanamo these were allegedly high-value detainees, people who supposedly had some Al Qaeda connection. In Abu Ghraib these were people who were just picked up off the streets or whose houses were broken into, clearly not Al Qaeda, so they had no information to give and, also, once you're there after a few weeks whatever information you had is cold, it's irrelevant. So here is this negative loop where they're arresting all these people, there are desperate pressures on them to get information. They're not getting information because of bad interrogation tactics. Many interrogators I spoke to said at best 2% of all these people had any relevant information but you didn't know which 2%. You could interview a whole day and get nothing at all so it made sense to say, “Look, we've all got to work together. Army Reserve, military police on the night shift, you guys have to do whatever you have to do to help us.” And they said, “Yeah. We want to win the war. We don't want our buddies to be killed by roadside explosive devices.”

INT: So in the Stanford Prison Study and also in Abu Ghraib there were heroes, one hero for each, as I understand it.

ZIMBARDO: Right. Right. Sure.

INT: How do you define a hero?

ZIMBARDO: What I'm trying to do – in the *Lucifer Effect* there's fifteen chapters of grim, grimmer, and grimmest. The Stanford Prison Study, research on Milgram, research on de-humanization by van Duren, and then two chapters on the abuse at Abu Ghraib. I was overwhelmed – immersed in evil writing that for two years and I needed some personal salvation so the last chapter is “Resisting Unwanted Influence and Celebrating Heroism.” The first part of the chapter is in all these experiments, in all these situations there's always someone who resists or some minority who resist. How do they do it? So I summarize “Here are Dr. Z's ten principles for resisting influence that is unwanted, influence that could push you in the wrong direction.” In fact, parenthetically, I have a wonderful

Website, www.LuciferEffect.com. In there I not only have lots of stuff about Lucifer and about the book but I have a whole section where I expanded on how to resist influence and I summarize all the psychological research on group influence that leads to conformity, influence by a persuader, influence by cults, media influence, propaganda and I say, “Here are the tactics of resistance,” and then “Here’s the data; here’s the research based on that.” So I hope some of the members will look at that.

INT: Yes. If you wouldn't mind going back to your definition of a hero...

ZIMBARDO: For me heroes – I'm trying to democratize and demystify heroes. I'm trying to say heroes are not special people. Heroes are ordinary people whose act of heroism is extraordinary. It's the action that really re-defines the person. The person who does the heroic thing doesn't have to be more religious, altruistic, or compassionate, more anything. All they have to do is take action when other people don't. Heroes are people who somehow are able to transform intention into action, civic attitudes into civic action. We don't know – “we” meaning no one knows what is the catalyst for that transformation. That's my next project, trying to understand what is the trigger for transforming good intentions – “I'd like to help, I should be involved, it's really terrible” – into the phrase “I will take action.” Heroes are ordinary people who take action when most people are passive – I call that ‘guilty upheaval of inaction’ – while other people are doing evil and they take that action on behalf of other people or a moral principle knowing that there's a high probability that it will have personal cost to them and doing it without expecting material gain. You don't do it to become a hero. You don't do it for some monetary reward. Heroism differs from altruism in the cost benefit factor. An altruistic deed is I'm going to give money to a charity, I'm going to help an old lady cross the street – all the Boy Scout stuff. I'm going to sign a petition to help somebody. But typically in altruism you don't do it saying, “Oh, my god, what's the cost to me?” I'm going to take money out of the bank but it's at a cost of giving my last dollar. But with heroism there's always a cost. If you're a whistle-blower very often you lose your job, you're seen as a maverick, you're seen as a fanatic, you're seen as the enemy of the people in some way and you do it nevertheless. Heroes are ordinary people who take an extraordinary action on behalf – to help to people,

to help individuals or groups or a moral cause, fully aware of the cost of doing so.

INT: I love, by the way, the story of your wife Christina intervening in the Stanford Prison Study. [chuckle]

ZIMBARDO: The interesting thing about heroes is heroes flourish when there's evil. You can't be a hero unless either there's evil or some emergency situation. You can't be a whistle-blower unless somebody's committing fraud or embezzlement. You couldn't be a hero at Abu Ghraib if everything was going well. You couldn't be a hero in the Stanford Prison Study if the experiment was just running as an ordinary experiment. Paradoxically, heroes need evil in order to show their stuff or they need an emergency situation. Like in China, in Sichuan Province where there was that huge earthquake before the Olympic Games there's the story of this 9-year-old boy. The school building collapsed and most of his classmates were killed. He survived and as soon as he did he went back and rescued two other kids. They said, "Why did you do it?" He said, "I was the hall monitor. It was my job to help my classmates." So here's a training in heroism that most kids or hall monitors never in their life get a chance to put that civic value into action. The whole point of what I'm calling heroes in waiting is that there could be a time in your life when you have to transform good intentions or good practice in to action and you will be ready. The Hero Project – Oh, do you want me to tell the story of Christina?

INT: Yes, I'd love it. [chuckle] It's a great story.

ZIMBARDO: The hero of Abu Ghraib was the guy who revealed the abuses to the authorities. He was an ordinary guy. He was a private in the Army Reserve, the lowest rank, named Joe Darby. His buddy, Charles Graner, gave him a CD with a thousand of these pictures. To his credit Darby says, "When I first looked at them I thought they were funny. Whoever thought of piling guys naked in a pyramid?" He said, "But then as I looked at more and more of these pictures I was repulsed because we're supposed to be bringing democracy to these people and we're bringing humiliation and shame." So he took the CD and he gave it to his senior investigating officer and that blew the whistle on the whole thing and there was an investigation and they

stopped it. The guy I defended got eight years, Charles Garner got ten years, Lynndie England – the infamous woman involved – she got three years. Most of the others got a year or six months, most were dishonorably discharged. He knew that doing this would be a huge cost because these are his buddies, he knew they were going to get in trouble. In fact, they had to put him, his mother, and his wife in hiding for three years because everybody wanted to kill them, all the guys in his battalion plus people in his hometown. That's why they had to put his mother and wife in protective custody. Because they said he was a snitch, that his revelation embarrassed the Bush administration and the American military. It wasn't until three years later that he received a hero award at the Kennedy Center by Caroline Kennedy. But for three years after he did this heroic deed he was persona non grata. Now in the Stanford Prison Study things were getting worse and worse. In fact, the data we analyzed afterward show that level of verbal aggression, level of psychological abuse escalated daily. Five prisoners had to be released because of emotional breakdowns or psychosomatic problems that emerged, five of the original twelve. We added others in between. So when the second prisoner broke down I should have ended the study and said, "Look, we've proved the power of the situation." The problem was that I had adopted a second role in addition to being the principal investigator. I adopted the role of prison superintendent. There was a warden, David Jaffe, who was an undergraduate and my two graduate students, Kurt Bankston and Craig Heinie, they were like my lieutenants. So my other role was prison superintendent. I had a door with a sign on it that said "Superintendent." When there was visiting at night – there were two nights where visitors came—they had to see the warden before they went in and the prison superintendent when they went out and I had to deal with the logistics of all kinds of things. When there was an escape attempt I had to deal with the local police. I had to deal with the city police to arrange for the mock arrests. And the problem was once I assumed that role then unknowingly, unconsciously I fell into the role of an institutional authority. As a prison superintendent what you care about is your prison and your guards first, just like school superintendents care more about their teachers than they do about pupils and parents. The same thing is true in hospital administration, etc., etc. So my job was to see is it running efficiently. For example, at ten o'clock at night is the last time prisoners could go to the toilet, after that they'd have to

go in the bucket in their cells so the guards line up the prisoners for a toilet run. Each night it got more and more abusive. They put bags over their heads, their legs chained together, a hand on each other's shoulder because they couldn't see where they were going, guards yelling and cursing. Well, on Thursday night, it's about ten o'clock, the guards are lining up to do this. I look up and I have my agenda and I check off ten o'clock toilet run going as scheduled and I don't think anything about it. Meanwhile on Friday, the next day, which is about halfway through the study – it started on Sunday – I had invited a bunch of people who knew nothing about the study – graduate students and young faculty members – to come down and interview everyone – all the guards, the prisoners, me and the staff – to get a sense of how things were going from an outsider's perspective. One of the people I invited down was Christina Maslach. She had been my graduate student at Stanford. She had just graduated in June, had just gotten a job at Berkeley as an assistant professor in social psych. This was now August, so she had in-between status and we had recently started dating. She was down at Stanford I think maybe working in the library so I said, "Hey, why don't you come down to the prison. You'll get a sense of, a look at what's happening and then we'll go out to dinner and then tomorrow you can do the interview." So she comes down just before 10 pm, and she's talking to some of the kids who are about to be guards on the night shift and she's saying, "What really sweet nice guys." The guy puts his uniform on, steps on the yard and she sees him – he's the worst guard, the guard the prisoners call John Wayne – and she couldn't believe his transformation. She's talking to him, he goes in the guards quarters, comes out in a uniform, goes on the yard and he's this monster. Not only that, then I say, "Hey, Chris, look at this, how interesting." She now looks up and sees guards humiliating prisoners, screaming at them, pushing them, prisoners with bags over their heads shuffling along like zombies and she starts tearing up. I said, "What's wrong? Don't you see this is the crucible of human nature?" She runs out and I run after her and she says, "It's terrible what you're doing to those boys. They're not guards, they're not prisoners, they're boys and you are responsible." Then she said, "I'm not sure I want to continue this relationship with you because if this is the real you it's over. I thought you were loving and caring, but this is somebody I don't know." That was like a double whammy, double slap in the face. I said, "Oh, my god, you're right." No, we actually argued. It's not

like I said, “Oh, yeah, you're right.” We argued maybe for an hour, and then suddenly it just hit. Physically we were out of the building, out of the prison, outside in front of the Stanford psych department. I said, “Oh, my god, you're right.” I realized that I had been transformed more than the prisoners and guards into thinking I was a prison superintendent. Again, I was there probably twenty hours a day sleeping in my office on the floor above, coming down. So I was living that. I mean I was there day and night, around the clock so it was what's called a total situation. I was as embedded in the situation as any of them. In fact, the guards worked eight-hour shifts and they went home. We thought initially when they came back they'd feel guilty about what they did. No. When they came back they got in the uniform and they just replayed it over and over. So she was a hero. She stopped this abuse and essentially stopped it at potentially great cost. I could have said, “Well, that's it. Forget the relationship and don't count on me as a reference anymore.” So it was a double thing. She's putting in jeopardy a personal romantic relationship and also a career. I could have said, “Well, you're not the kind of social psychologist I want to support. I don't want to support this kind of feminist weak sister thing.” And, in fact, I said, “You're right.” The good news is we got married exactly a year later in the Stanford Chapel and we've been married for 36 years happily – happily ever after.

INT: That's a wonderful story. It's doubly wonderful because not only did she step in as a hero, but you were able to respect the hero's point of view.

ZIMBARDO: I want to be clear. I didn't say, “Oh, yes, you're right.” Because I now had to – obviously I'm defensive. Somebody's slapping me in the face when I'm saying, “Oh, my god, look at this wonderful thing we're doing for research.” But in the process of arguing – I don't even remember because it was really very emotional – I'm slowly coming around. I think had we argued in the prison setting I might not have come around. I don't think I would have come around if I was down there because everything about the physical, psychological social presence would have kept me trapped in that role. When I was outside of that prison setting then I think it was easier to regain my equilibrium.

INT: Which is a testimony to the influence of the situation.

ZIMBARDO: Yes. Well, yes, I think so. Because these are kids playing the role. I'm an adult. I've never done an experiment – nobody's ever done an experiment like that where it goes 24/7 but, again, being trapped, embedded in that situation was the key.

INT: That's fantastic. Another question, why are you moving from evil to heroes?

ZIMBARDO: Oh, because I think heroes are the antidote to evil. That is to the extent that we have many, many heroes in our culture, in our society, in our nation, in the world I think that's the main antidote to evil. When you're talking about evil you're talking about bullying, you're talking about corruption, you're talking about prejudice, discrimination, all of those everyday evils. What makes the media is the Abu Ghraib thing. What makes the psychological media is the prisoners, the Milgram, some dramatic event. I'm saying most of the evil is undramatic because it happens day in and day out. Bullying happens in almost every class, every middle school, every high school; every camp has bullies who make the world terrible for not only the kid who's bullied but for everybody. All the other people who know it's happening and look the other way, and you know you always feel guilty about that, and all the people who allow prejudice to go on and discrimination to go on and corruption. According to the U.N. corruption is one of the ten major worldwide problems that needs to be resolved. In some countries it now goes from senior administration people through the military. It's happening now in Mexico where prison superintendents, prison guards, judges, jurors, politicians are all on the payroll of these big drug cartels so it's corrupting the whole nation. To the extent that you have corruption it breeds cynicism because people say, "It doesn't matter what you know, it only matters who you know." I come from a Sicilian background where the Mafia is the source of corruption and it produces a kind of fatalism, a kind of cynicism, which is the counter to what heroes do. Heroes bring hope and corruption brings cynicism. What my Heroes Project is trying to scale up is this general notion of everybody should be a hero-in-waiting, everybody should take a personal vow and say, "I am a hero-in-waiting who will act when the heroic situation arises, when I am in a heroic situation."

That's a personal statement. Then we want that to be transformed into a public commitment. We're going to be developing Websites where people go on and say, "Hey, I'm Valerie Hearn, and I'm a hero-in-waiting, and I want people to know that." Now you're putting it out publicly. We know when you make a public commitment it increases the likelihood of taking action.

INT: That's oversight, right?

ZIMBARDO: Yes. Then what we're going to do is to give people examples of how they can do it. We're going to give people a resource kit. It's not enough to have the intention. In order to transfer intention to action you have to have some resources. People who are effective heroes do the following things. One thing, for example, is you are more effective as a hero if you form a social network. This is what we learned from Gandhi, this is what we learned from Martin Luther King and this is what we learned from Christians who helped Jews in the Holocaust is you can't do it alone, you are most effective if you form a network. But what it means is we have to teach people social influence skills. We have to teach people how do you go about influencing five or six or ten other people in your neighborhood, in your family, in your school, in your synagogue, whatever, to see the world the way you do and be willing to become heroes-in-waiting with you. So we're going to begin with, for example, a national Transform the Bully Hero Project. What that means is you're going to convince other kids in your class, in your workplace to collectively confront a bully and say things like "We know what you're doing, we don't like it. Not only does it hurt the kid you're bullying but it makes our classroom unpleasant and we would like you to stop if. If you do we're going to be your friend and if you don't we will make your life miserable. You have a free choice." Nobody's done that. What you do is either you look the other way or you tell the teacher and they move the kid to another class and, guess what, he bullies again. Now there's a big problem of bullies in the workplace. These kids graduate or they get kicked out and they go into the workplace and they're even worse bullies especially if they become foremen or low-level administrators. So this is the kind of thing we're trying to do is to say everybody is a hero-in-waiting. That's democratizing it and demystifying it to say you don't need special stuff. All the earlier research on Christians who helped Jews in the Holocaust said they

were more religious, that they came from families where parents were more activist. I really question that research because – I don't know, even if they studied a thousand people, there were millions who didn't do anything who were religious. There were millions who didn't do anything whose families were activist. Also they didn't even ask the question until twenty years later. Nobody had done research on what I call the heroic decisive moment. Really the key is the moment in which you say, "I will do it," or the moment you did it. You say, "Stop the action." What were you thinking at that moment? What's going through your head? What was the algebra of the forces saying, "Don't get involved," which is what your mother says, "Don't get involved, mind your own business," versus "Mama, humanity's my business, I have to get involved." So for me that's one of the most exciting things to study and the most difficult in all of psychology, the moment at which intention is transformed into action, the moment at which all the forces which say, "Don't get involved," get swamped by forces that say, "You must get involved," and we don't know anything about that.

INT: It sounds like an absolutely wonderful project.

ZIMBARDO: Let me add something. Of course, there are extraordinary heroes. I'm saying heroes are ordinary. Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Gandhi and the list goes on and on. These are extraordinary people because they sacrificed their entire life to a cause. They are really bad role models for us. Bad in the sense that I look at them and I say, "That's wonderful they exist, that's why we know their names," but I can't give up my whole life for any cause because I've got a life. I got kids, I got a family, I got to teach, I got to do research, etc., etc. But I admire them for it and in the same way that kids have fantastic heroes of Spiderman and Wonder Woman, Superman, etc., etc. Those are bad role models for kids because they have attributes that kids can never have. That's why I'm saying we can't admire them – the same thing with celebrities. Celebrities shouldn't be heroes. The fact that Michael Phelps won eight medals at the Olympics – that's a testimony to practice, hard work, and dedication. He's not a hero. He didn't make anybody's life better other than for Americans to have a sense of momentary pride. We should really separate out role models and celebrities who do admirable things from people who make someone else's life better or

ultimately makes the nation better. I'm saying anybody could do that. In fact, what I'm saying is not only can anybody but we want more and more people to do it. Again, it's not waiting for Abu Ghraib to come or the Stanford Prison Study, it's what are the micro actions you could take, what are the small things you could do in your family, in your neighborhood. I'm saying step one is what can you do to make someone else feel special? The cost is going out of your way to give a compliment, going out of your way to bring a single mother across the street some fresh berries that you got from the farmer's market that she might not have been able to afford or have the time to get. So it's little things that are making people's lives better then it escalates to stopping the bullying and it escalates to how do you oppose prejudice.

INT: So how can IAAP members get involved in the Heroes Project?

ZIMBARDO: Oh, god, I don't know. That's a really important question. Right now I have no funding. In fact, I have no nothing – I have no secretary, I have no assistant. I'm retired from Stanford. I'm teaching at the Pacific Graduate School of Psychology, exploring human nature with the clinical psychology students, and I'm teaching at the Navy Postgraduate School, of course, the psychology of terrorism. But I have no secretary, no – I'm doing it all myself. My hands are numb from answering hundreds of e-mails every day. I'm trying to get some funding and part of what we want to do is start new research, part of what we want to do is develop a special Web presence. Again, we want to use the new Web 2.0 to develop these projects, like the Obama campaign built in, to get people involved nationally in anti-bullying things, people giving feedback – “This is what I did. This is what worked.” Making a commitment to being a hero-in-waiting publicly. At this point I think what I'm trying to do on the Lucifer Effect Website is just have a volunteer signup. “I'd like to get involved,” and give your name and e-mail and something about yourself. I think also we want to know how you think you could be involved.

INT: Could IAAP members go to that Website?

ZIMBARDO: Yes. It's www.LuciferEffect.com. I think on the first page it says, "Sign up to volunteer." Also what's important is for IAAP members – I gave a talk at the TED Conference in February—is TED.com. Technology, Entertainment, and Design; it's one of the most important conferences in America. It's where Al Gore got the idea for his movie—at this conference, literally. I gave a talk – 18 minutes, 20 minutes, it was really tight – on the Lucifer Effect and heroism. They've just launched the talk. Members really should look at that. There are some minutes on evil and the last four or five minutes on the Heroes Project. The members should know about those because these are the best presentations. Then if they look at that they could sign up to volunteer on the Lucifer Effect Website. They might be able to help. Then we'll get back to them and say, "We got it, we're making a list. As soon as we get some projects engaged and some funding then we'll try to get as many people involved as we can."

INT: Two last questions. What would you like your legacy to be?

ZIMBARDO: [pause] Maybe, "He made psychology fascinating and relevant."

INT: [chuckle] That's great.

ZIMBARDO: If I can do it in a succinct way – being concise is not my long suit, I should say.

INT: [chuckle] I can tell.

ZIMBARDO: "He tried to use psychology for good, to make the world better." Although the Stanford Prison Study is my major claim to fame, really for me the more important thing is the research on shyness. I was the first person to study shyness in adults ever. I was the first one to set up a shyness clinic for treatment of adolescents and adults. I got started in 1972, right after I did the Stanford Prison Study because shortly after I was doing the Stanford Prison Study I was thinking, "Isn't shyness a silent self-imposed prison?" Nobody makes you shy, you make yourself shy. Shyness is a self-attribution, you say, "I'm a shy person." People don't say, "Oh, you're a shy person." Once you do that then you play the role of prisoner and

guard. The guard is somebody who limits the freedom of prisoners by issuing coercive rules of what you must do and what you can't do. So the shy person is really both his own prisoner and guard. What I started thinking is – I started looking at what was the research on shyness and almost all research stops at the age of 13 because all research in shyness is done by developmental psychologists and back in the Seventies they really stopped at adolescence. They had not yet developed a lifespan perspective. I said, “Gee, that doesn't make sense because I have students who are 18 to 20 who are shy.” I know adults who are shy. So I first began to teach a course on shyness with only shy students essentially saying, “What do you want to know?” Then I took down all the questions they asked and I said, “Let's go out and collect the data.” We started with surveys, and then I got a grant to do research on shyness. We started doing experiments and then we set up a shyness clinic. We would try different techniques of social skills building, emotion regulation with different groups. A separate group was cognitive behavior modification and everything we did worked. And so we moved it out into the community with regular therapists and it's been going on for thirty years. Now it's in the Pacific Graduate School of Psychology as both a treatment and a research center and we've been training therapists who want to add shyness as part of their skill base. So that I'm really proud of because it was taking an idea, turning it into a course, turning the course into research, and then turning the research into very applied practice. I think for me that's – it's almost the model of what I do best and in terms of a contribution I think that's – Oh, I'm sorry, then halfway through writing two popular books: *Shyness: What It Is, What To Do About It* and *The Shy Child*. One starts at 18 and above, the other one 18 and below, and those books they sold hundreds of thousands of copies of. That's before the Web so that's more outreach.

INT: That's an absolutely marvelous contribution.

ZIMBARDO: Thank you. Thank you.

INT: This has been absolutely fantastic, a wonderful experience for me and I'm sure all the IAAP members will greatly appreciate it.

ZIMBARDO: I hope so.

INT: I'm so grateful for your generosity for giving me so much time.

ZIMBARDO: The problem is that the Heroes Project is really at a key point. It's intuitively the right thing to do and most people say, "Yes, of course." Once you say it, "Of course." But it's not clear to me what are the next steps, what is the next initial step? You don't want to do things that just simply, say, make work. Here's the idea I just got. One of the key things about being a hero is becoming socio-centric. A hero has to think about other people more than about self. "I could get hurt for this but it doesn't matter, I have to help somebody else."

INT: That's exactly right.

ZIMBARDO: Most people in therapy are there because it's the opposite, they have become obsessed, absorbed in themselves in a negative way. "Here are all these problems I have," so here's this anxiety, here's the fear. So one kind of treatment is to say, "While you're working through these problems maybe you ought to think about also becoming a hero-in- waiting." If you can get them to make that switch over. It's not "Forget about your problems." Yes, we're going to deal with these – "You've got to work through this thing with your mother, with your boss, whatever," but you might think about other people. Because that automatically puts them focused on the other and that's one of the things with shyness. One of the links with shyness is shy people are totally self-absorbed. In every situation they're going into they have intentions that never get carried out into action, they're always thinking "Why me?" or "I'm going to be ridiculed, I'm going to be laughed at, nobody likes me." It's all "me." It's never, "What can I do to make –It's never "Can I find some person who's shyer than me at this party to make them feel good?" I would think even in therapy this might be an interesting secondary tactic.

INT: I think that's a great idea.

ZIMBARDO: Think about in development. I just thought about it at this moment, I hadn't thought about that before but in general – Maybe I'll try to introduce it in the shyness clinic. You say, "We're going to deal with –" You don't have social skills so actually in treating shyness the simplest thing is when people don't have social skills. It's

like you're going to go to Europe and you don't know Italian. Here's the lesson you take. But while we're working on that what you might think about is what are the skills you do have which can be put into helping anybody else, maybe helping other people who are more shy than you. Or if you're a shy adult it's talking to shy kids.

INT: That's a great idea.

ZIMBARDO: Maybe it's the link between people who are self-centered, self-absorbed either because they really have real problems or because they have created these self images of "I am a suffering shy person," or "I'm a suffering shy neurotic" or whatever they say, "Yes, we're going to buy that and we're going to work on that, but maybe one of the homeworks you'd like to do in the next week or two is think about how you could become a hero-in-waiting. Can you think about anything you could do that could help another person?"

INT: That's a totally great idea.

ZIMBARDO: I've got to work on that. I mean I'm saying, "Thank you, thank you."

INT: [chuckle]

ZIMBARDO: It's that kind of thing. It's how do you put ideas out so that people pick it up? "I like that, but here's how I will use it, here's how I will transform it." Again, the thing about the new Web thing is ideas work best when they're viral. You put it out and it just triggers people to say, "Hey, yeah, but how about this? I can do it this way. I can do it that way. I can put it in therapy. I can put it in the workplace. I can put it in my class."

INT: Thank you so much for talking with me.