

# Philip zimbardo and his contributions to psychology flashcard



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In today's fast paced society many of us have a tough time dealing and coping with our problems. This is when psychologists come into play.

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. It deals with the mind and how we process mental and emotional things. Philip Zimbardo's thoughts on psychology are, " I have been primarily interested in how and why ordinary people do unusual things, things that seem alien to their natures. Why do good people sometimes act evil? Why do smart people sometimes do dumb or irrational things?" And this is exactly what he tested in his Stanford Prison experiment.

Philip Zimbardo was born on March 23 in 1933 in New York City. Being raised in the South Bronx, he was the first person to attend college in his family. After enrolling in Brooklyn College, that's where he earned his bachelors degree in 1954. (Fails) He then received his Masters from Yale University in 1955 and his Ph. D in 1958, which are both in psychology. For a short time he taught at Yale in 1958, and then went to New York University and Columbia University. He has been a professor at Stanford University since 1968. (Williams, 1998) His research has covered so many ideas and areas of psychology. It has involved role playing, laboratory experiments, field studies, simulations and studies that demonstrate psychology phenomena. (Fails) All of his research has been mainly about how good people could turn evil, intelligent people end up doing dumb things, normal people do unexpected things and how the power of certain social situations can really change people's personalities whether they are a man or a woman.

Zimbardo has won more than twenty-four awards throughout his life. He has also served on twenty boards and consultations, is the author of more than

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twenty psychology textbooks, has written over one hundred and twenty journal articles, and is also the creator of a video teaching series called Discovering Psychology. His research has included finding that link to criminal behavior. That is why he is most famous for his Stanford Prison experiment. (Williams, 1998) A psychological study of the human response to captivity, particularly, to the real world circumstances of prison life is a landmark in Philip Zimbardo's contribution to psychology. In his experiment, The Stanford Experiment, he wished to discover what happens to "normal" people who are placed in an "evil" environment.

The thing that fascinated Philip Zimbardo was, "How do the roles that we play within groups affect our behavior?" So from a group of volunteers, twenty-four well adjusted college men were randomly assigned to play roles of either a "prisoner" or "guard." Two prisoners and one guard were kept on stand-by, just in case if they would need them later on. In all, this experiment involved ten prisoners and eleven guards. Zimbardo even took his own role as being the superintendent of the prison. They were each paid fifteen dollars a day for participating in this two week study of "prison life." Also, being randomly selected to the role of either prisoner or guard, they had absolutely no idea what was in store for them. Prisoners were "arrested," frisked, photographed, fingerprinted, and secured off at the police station. Along with this, they were then blindfolded and driven to the "Stanford Prison."

The "Stanford Prison" was the basement of the of Stanford psychology department. It was converted into a makeshift jail. It had consisted of three very small cells, a solitary confinement cell, and several rooms for the  
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guards when they would change or watch TV. While the prisoners had to live their lives as a "prisoner" the guards were allowed to live their normal lives when not on duty. Given no detailed instructions, they were just simply told to maintain in some reasonable degree. They were prohibited from using any physical punishment or aggression against the prisoners. Once the prisoners arrived, they were given ID numbers, deloused, distributed prison clothing: tight nylon caps, shapeless gowns, and no underwear, and locked into cells.

On the other hand, guards were given official-looking uniforms, billy clubs, and whistles, and they were given complete control. Some guards were nicer to the prisoners than others, but they all did engage in some kind of power. Disobedience involved degrading tasks or the loss of "privileges." Which the prisoners weren't allowed to eat, sleep, or shower. As the guards demanded more and followed through with abusing, many of the prisoners became depressed. Only one prisoner had fought back with a hunger strike, this ended in the guard force feeding him. Several of the guards became more inhuman mainly at night. Because they thought the cameras were shut off at this time, the experiment soon got out of hand. Only two days in, a riot broke out. It had gotten so bad that one of the prisoners had developed a rash all over his body after finding out that his "parole" had been denied.

Four prisoners had to be released within the first four days of this experiment because of these severe reactions they were having. After this occurred, the entire study was shut down, which only lasted six days out of a planned two weeks. The focus of this experiment was to investigate captivity. The end result has been used to display the naïve and conformity of people when being provided with authorized ideas. It is also used to show <https://assignbuster.com/philip-zimbardo-and-his-contributions-to-psychology-flashcard/>

the power of authority when it is given. Considering this wasn't a true experiment because of the lack of control groups and the dependent variable, it does provide us understanding of individual behavior. According to the interviews directed after this experiment/study, the college kids became so interested and engaged in their roles that they actually forgot that they were only volunteers.

This stimulation of these roles became way too real, way too fast. To go along with his research, Zimbardo designed most of his experiments to be a model of Deindividuation. To be deindividuated means that you feel less self-conscious, less inhibited, and less personally responsible as a member of a group than when you're alone. His research has worked in order to answer this question: " Under what conditions and to what extent is human behavior controlled by environmental and psychological demand stimuli?" Zimbardo figured it out by saying, " Volition, commitment, and responsibility fuse to form the core of one pole of the basic human choice; [so that] the act of freely making a commitment for which one assumes responsibility individuates the decision-maker." Unfortunately, this leads to abuses of power, angry mobs, and tragic consequences like gang rapes, and hate crimes.