

# Evil: Is It Us or All Around Us?

October 21, 2011

Psychological scientist Philip Zimbardo reflected on his controversial Stanford Prison Experiment with Jon Stewart in a past episode of the *Daily Show*. In 1971, twelve students were randomly assigned to the roles of a prisoner or a guard in a mock prison in the basement of the Stanford psychology building. Within 36 hours, the students displayed characteristics of abusive guards and pathological criminals. The experiment was supposed to run for 2 weeks, but it ended after only 6 days.

In this clip, Zimbardo also discusses his book [\*The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil\*](#) and explains how our environments can affect our actions.

The drastic results of the Stanford Prison Experiment can be daunting, but Zimbardo says the Lucifer effect can also be seen as a celebration of human mind. While some are moved to evil acts, ordinary people can also become heroes.

Read more about Zimbardo and the Stanford Prison Experiment: [\\_](#)

[\*Champions of Psychology: Philip Zimbardo\*](#)

[\*Bad Apples or Bad Barrels? Zimbardo on 'The Lucifer Effect'\*](#)

[\*Shocking "prison" study 40 years later: What happened at Stanford?\*](#)

[\*Using the Psychology of Evil To Do Good\*](#)