**Video Title:** Philip Zimbardo: Why ordinary people do evil ... or do good

**Video URL:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsFEV35tWsg>

**Run Time:** 23:11

**Source:** TED Talks/YouTube

**Closed Caption Available:** Yes

Traditionally, the idea of "evil" has been the province of philosophy and theology. This is changing as social psychologists become interested in the roots of evil behavior. We have seen the term evil used quite often in the post-9/11 era to characterize terrorists. What exactly does the term “evil” mean and what are its origins? Is a person born evil and as a consequence likely to behave evilly? Or, is evil behavior dependent upon the situation suggesting that a normal person placed in a given situation can behave evilly? After World War II many Nazi war criminals attributed their evil acts to the situation (e.g., following orders). Adolph Eichmann, for example, who was the architect of the Holocaust claimed that he had no particular animus toward Jews and that his actions were the result of his following orders from his superiors. In this video, Philip Zimbardo presents a lecture on the social psychology of evil. His "Lucifer Project" has gone a long way to bringing the concept of evil into the scientific realm. As you watch the video, answer the following questions:

1. According to Zimbardo, what is the relationship between good and evil?

2. What is the definition of evil offered by Zimbardo in the video?

3. What roles do individual, situational and system factors play in evil actions? What is the “Lucifer Effect?”

4. What are the seven factors leading to the “slippery slope” to evil actions?

5. To what extent do you think that the "I was following orders" defense has validity? Does it help explain evil behavior (why or why not)?