

Darkness  
Inertia  
Despair

EVIL IN ANY FORM IS THE ENEMY:

- Tim Dismeyer + Ecumenical Institute

It Uses Any Means To Defeat You And Others

Half invisible principalities and powers, yet incarnate in many established forms and mindsets that keep people in darkness, in inertia and despair.

A. Darkness: Hides what it means to live. Substitutes false living. Keeps others in darkness.

1. Zealot: When we cannot come to terms with the situation one response is to become a zealot.

- Hastily wants to change the situation.
- Can't stand it. Feels it's terrible, and catastrophic for things not to be as you want them to be.
- Pulls everything into wanting to make changes.
- Results in no patience.
- Wants to turn the pain of the situation into an insurmountable problem. instead of taking the pain into himself and looking beyond to actually resolve the problem.

2. Legalist: Has to do everything, to follow all the rules and regulations.

- Uses the routine of what's proven to escape radical need or challenge.
- Is not interested in the actual situation or in contributing to the future, or discovering what is possible in the future.

3. Perfectionist: Wants to do something for the sake of doing it, or proving that he can perfectly do it.

- Must be loved, approved by everyone.
- To be worthwhile, he must be perfectly competent.
- Seeks his own fulfillment and justification, and ignores that of others.
- Sees himself responsible for solving others problems as they see fit.
- Every problem has a perfect solution which they must find or catastrophic will happen.
- Wants to be somebody, and does not care about others or about enabling others in learning how to come to terms with life.

B. Inertia: Hands life over to the failure syndrome. Plays at living. Abandons challenges. Withdraws, refuses to struggle with life, with being.

1. Past-oriented: Hangs on to previous accomplishments, past perspectives and outmoded context; instead of seeing that living involves miracles and surprises, past events, experiences, irrevocably determine present behavior.

2. Disengaged: Does something only long enough to hold things until he can get away. Not practically engaged. No follow-through, therefore no action.

3. Weak: Must have someone stronger to depend on, be protected by. Feels inadequate by himself, unable to initiate or take responsibility by himself. Requires crutches, support, permission from others.

4. Drifter: Drifts from one moment to another without a plan, without a purpose, doing what is needed just to get along. Undisciplined. No intention of winning in life. It's easier to avoid than to face difficulties and responsibilities.

C. Despair: Tries to prove you can't win, you can't live. Will do anything directly or indirectly to keep from winning, from living.

1. Bitcher: Creates a situation where there are constant arguments. Picks up obvious shortcomings and escalates them into major contradictions.

-Mountains are made of molehills to escape reality.

-Most people are bad, wicked, terrible, should be blamed, punished.

-Outside circumstances are the cause of their unhappiness, and they have no control over them.

2. Injured: Can't stand what is going on for the injustices that are present. Old wounds that are still sore get opened again. New wounds are created where there were none before. Constantly preoccupied with dangers and fears.

(These two forms of despair fundamentally hate life. Therefore, they can never enable others because others are the locus of that about which they despair.)

3. Disillusioned: (Dark Night of The Soul) : Something, somewhere is their home from which they are being cut off or slowly being eroded away, i.e. idealized relationship, social customs, or preferred life-style. The person who embodies this mindset becomes impotent, weak, a nothing, and finally disappears. Consciously or unconsciously they are out to prove that you can only fail.

-(Dissmeyer, et al)

## EPHESIANS 6

### The Whole Armor of God

<sup>10</sup>Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord, and by means of his mighty power. <sup>11</sup>Put on all the armor that God gives you, so that you will stand up against the Devil's evil tricks. <sup>12</sup>For we are not fighting against human beings, but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. <sup>13</sup>So take up God's armor now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks, and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.



Put on all the armor

<sup>14</sup>So stand ready: have truth for a belt tight around your waist; put on righteousness for your breastplate, <sup>15</sup>and the readiness to announce the Good News of peace as shoes for your feet. <sup>16</sup>At all times, carry faith as a shield; with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. <sup>17</sup>And accept salvation for a helmet, and the word of God as the sword that the Spirit gives you. <sup>18</sup>Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people.

## Checklist of Enemies

The enemy is not solely the unfettered sovereign national state, violating the natural rights of man and jeopardizing his natural environment.

Nor is the enemy solely an atomic muscled totalitarian power with a world ideology.

The enemy is many people. He is a man whose only concern about the world is that it stay in one piece during his own lifetime. He is invariably up to his hips in success and regards his good fortune not as a challenge to get close to the real problems of the age but as proof of the correctness of everything he does. Nothing to him is less important than the shape of things to come or the needs of the next generation. Talk of the legacy of the past or of human destiny leaves him cold. Historically, he is the disconnected man. Hence, when he thinks about the world at all, it is usually in terms of his hope that the atomic fireworks can be postponed for fifteen or twenty years. He is an enemy because he is detached from the kind of concern for the rights of unborn legions that will enable the world itself to become connected and whole.

The enemy is a man who not only believes in his own helplessness but actually worships it. His main article of faith is that there are mammoth forces at work which the individual cannot possibly comprehend, much less alter or direct. And so he expends vast energies in attempting to convince other people that there is nothing they can do. He is an enemy because of the proximity of helplessness to hopelessness.

The enemy is a man who has a total willingness to delegate his worries about the world to officialdom. He assumes that only the people in authority are in a position to know and act. He believes that if vital information essential to the making of public decisions is withheld, it can only be for a good reason. If a problem is wholly or partially scientific in nature, he will ask no questions even though the consequences of the problem are political or social. He is an enemy because government, by its very nature, is unable to deal effectively today with matters concerned with human survival. It is now necessary to tame the national sovereignties and create a design of the whole. If this is to be done, it can be done not by the national sovereignties themselves but by insistent acts of the public will.

The enemy is any man in government, high or low, who keeps waiting for a public mandate before he can develop big ideas of his own, but who does little or nothing to bring about such a mandate. Along with this goes an obsessive fear of criticism. To such a man, the worst thing in the world that can happen is to be accused of not being tough-minded in the nation's dealings with other governments. He can take in his stride, however, the accusation that he is doing something that may result in grave injury to the human race. He lives entirely on the plane of plot-and-counter-plot, where the dominant reality is represented by scoring points on a day-by-day basis. He figures security largely in terms of statistics—generally in terms of the kind of force that can be put to work in a showdown situation—rather than in terms of the confidence and good will a nation may enjoy among its neighbors in the world. He is an enemy because he sees no connection between his own authority and the need to act in behalf of the human community.

The enemy is any man in the pulpit who by his words and acts encourages his congregation to believe that the main purpose of the church or the synagogue is to provide social respectability for its members. He talks about the sacredness of life but he never relates that concept to the real and specific threats that exist today to such sacredness. He identifies himself as a man of God but feels no urge to speak out against a situation in which the nature of man is likely to be altered and cheapened, the genetic integrity of man punctured, and distant generations condemned to a lower species. He is a dispenser of balm rather than an awakener of conscience. He is preoccupied with the need to provide personal peace of mind rather than to create a blazing sense of restlessness to set things right. He is an enemy because the crisis today is as much a spiritual crisis as it is a political one.

At a time when everything we are and everything we have are in jeopardy, it may help to know the faces of the enemy.

In Place of Folly 1961  
- Norman Cousins

# THE AGE OF INDIFFERENCE

BY PHILIP G. ZIMBARDO

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"The Devil's strategy for our times is to trivialize human existence and to isolate us from one another while creating the delusion that the reasons are time pressures, work demands, or economic anxieties."

**I**n some schools where computers are used as tutors, children have reported developing a closer, friendlier relationship with their ever-reliable machine than with Ms. Dove and her sundry personal idiosyncrasies. As these kiddies mature, some of them are likely to become "hackers," members of a new subculture of grown-up electronic whiz kids obsessed by interacting with computers. Hackers spend long hours at night or early in the morning, when "downtime" is shorter, playing with their programs and sending messages via electronic bulletin boards to hacker associates seated at terminals a few feet away. Fascination with the computer becomes an addiction, and as with most addictions, the "substance" that gets abused is human relationships. (See "The Hacker Papers" preceding this article.)

Not just in schools but in society as a whole, the hacker mentality is upon us, with or without the computer as a rationalization for putting other people at the bottom of our priority stack. There are forces at work in society increasing both the sense and the reality of our separateness from one another. It is as if we were suffering from a mysterious kind of "legionnaire's disease" of which the chief symptoms are isolation and a loss of naturalness in our relations with other people.

I used to believe that this separateness was the exclusive problem of the timid, introverted shys. For the past eight years I have been studying the personal and social dynamics of shyness, and I know that 40 percent of Americans quietly claim to be of that disposition. I also know that a surprising 25 percent of these sufferers became shy *after* leaving the universal self-concern and awkwardness of adolescence. I am aware, too, that self-help books for the shy are selling well; that shyness clinics are springing up; that social psychologists who used to be interested only in social affiliation are writing textbooks including chapters on loneliness, based on research and scientific meetings devoted to this fascinating phenomenon.

But shyness alone does not account for all of the isolation that marks contemporary society. My research team has surveyed, interviewed, observed, experimented upon, and done therapy with a vast number of shy people (reported in part in *Shyness: What It Is, What To Do About It*). While we were documenting their conversational awkwardness, passivity, reluctance to initiate social contact, and general social phobia, a curious discovery emerged—about a comparison group of nonshys. They do not show the same motivated avoidance and inhibition syndrome characteristic of their

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shy peers; theirs is an apparently unmotivated indifference. Unlike the shys, many of whom still *want* to connect, to have friends, date, marry, share intimate feelings, the nonshys often seem not to mind being isolated. Their conversations are rather banal and minimal, usually humorless, without signs of spontaneity, personal involvement, or joy in sharing ideas and feelings with friends. One gets the impression of watching a generation of clones of Mr. Spock from "Star Trek." Human speech is there, intelligence is evident, but the executive-command programming does not include feeling or affection.

**T**his fall, the class of 1984 will take its place in colleges and high schools, and it will be time to find out whether or not George Orwell's Big Brother prophecy of mind control comes true. By the time these students have graduated, I believe, the message they will have learned will prove to be not Orwellian but Garbo-esque: "Big Person is *not* watching you. He doesn't have time to care about you anymore. She'd rather be alone."

Don't get me wrong, I'm an optimist. I have always believed that people can control their destinies by work, self-discipline, humor, love of life, concern for other people, and a sensitivity to the tactics of manipulation by the authorities. But tonight is different from all previous nights in America, and tomorrow will be even worse. As the father of three children, it is with sadness that I make such an assertion, and with the hope it will be shown to be a false alarm.

I believe that the basic quality of our social lives is being diluted, distorted, and demaned by a host of profound structural changes in society. Because these new forces are systemic and not just transient developmental

stages, they won't simply be outgrown but are likely to become permanent fixtures in our daily existence. The consequences are serious. I know of no more potent killer than isolation. There is no more destructive influence on physical and mental health than the isolation of you from me and of us from them. It has been shown to be a central agent in the etiology of depression, paranoia, schizophrenia, rape, suicide, mass murder, and a wide variety of disease states.

There is no dearth of research, anecdotes, and observations demonstrating the pervasiveness of the disorder I am talking about. A recently published report by Ralph Larkin, a sociologist, on the crises facing suburban youth underscores some aspects of this new malaise of the spirit. The children of American affluence are depicted as passively accepting a way of life that they view as empty and meaningless. The syndrome includes a constricted expression of emotions, a low threshold of boredom, and an apparent absence of joy in anything that is not immediately consumable; hence the significance of music, drugs, alcohol, sex, and status-symbol possessions.

According to a high school guidance counselor, the current generation of students differs in at least one way from the young people of their parents' day: "Kids hate school much more now than they did then. I mean the word *hate* and underline it." But this hatred is among the few strong emotions they allow themselves to feel about anything.

Where do we witness displays of strong emotion anymore, except at sports events and rock concerts? And even when we witness them, how many of us will acknowledge as much or dare to share the emotion? On my way to visit my sister because she is dying of cancer, I explain the reason for my absence to student assistants.

"Have a nice trip!" chortles one. "See you when you get back," says another. And that is all they say. They haven't learned to extend comfort to another in distress. Too heavy.

Another anecdote, different but just as telling: "I hate myself for having this daydream, but I can't help enjoying it every time it pops into my head," confides Denny, a sophomore in my introductory psychology class of 680 students. "Everyone else fails the final exam, all hundreds upon hundreds of them, the nerds, the jocks, the freaks, and I get an A. Mine is the only A, floating high and dry in a sea of failure. Then somebody, everybody, would have to notice me, because I'd be special."

Assuming that the narcissism of shyness was fueling this fantasy, I launched into my counseling spiel of "shyness-can-be-overcome-if-you-work-at-it-and . . ." "Hold on, don't get me wrong," he objected. "I'm outgoing, an extravert. I used to make friends easily, but it seems as if there's no value to that anymore. No one has time to go beyond the superficial level of 'How's it going?' 'Have a nice day!' 'See you around,' and stupid stuff like that. There must be something wrong with *me*, because I just can't seem to connect in any meaningful way to the people I live with. We are all working so hard to make it that maybe we don't have any energy left over for making it with each other."

The student health service at the university reassured this young man that his problem was a common psychiatric symptom of alienation and loneliness. In fact, it ranks near the top of the list of symptoms students present to this and similar clinics at other colleges when they seek professional help for their "attachment deficiencies." (See "Leaving Home," page 52).

Signs of alienation show up long before college. Visit the Serramonte

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## There is nothing more destructive of physical and mental health than the isolation of you from me, of us from them.

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Mall in San Francisco, the Smithtown Mall in Long Island, Florida's Broward County Mall, the Glendale Shopping Mall in Arizona. What you witness when school is out are mass minglings of kids too young to drive wandering about in the artificial air of a totally enclosed space amid artificial flowers, canned music, junk-food dispensers, and plastic twittering canaries. In smaller clusters are the elderly, keeping warm in winter and cool in summer, but never talking with the youngsters, except when the generations become adversaries over a particular piece of Astroturf. Neither side smiles, except when they detect that the mannequin in the window is a real woman pretending to be wooden—you see, she moves once every five minutes.

When the shopping-center kids get a little older, they escape the anxieties attendant on formal social dating (one-next-to-one) by dating in clusters. "We're all going for a pizza, wanna come along?" The tone seems to add, "No big deal if you say yes, no loss if you don't come."

Plenty of young adults who do date as couples find it less than satisfying. A handsome, successful television director tells me he has problems with women after the fifth date. He is concerned, wants help. For the first five innings, he has exciting, preprogrammed scripts for entertaining his dates. He strikes out when he runs out of scenarios and has to "be himself." Like many of his peers, he has never learned to be intimate, to relate closely to one other person, to make disclosures about his past, about his fears, frustrations, and future plans, in short, to reveal the private self behind the public façade. Disclosure presupposes trust, which in turn is nourished by sharing and gives substance and meaning to intimate contacts. But whom can you really trust these days?

If you yourself have switched from

being a team player in life to going it alone more often, if you seek out your friends less often than you used to, it may be good for you, but it is a loss for the rest of us. Maybe you switched because we "weren't saying anything anyway," or because we "no longer turned you on," or because you had come to expect more of us while giving less of yourself. Or maybe, as a woman told me in Atlanta, "There's times peoples just be tired of peoples." Or then again, the message might be the one that the mother of one of my shy freshmen passed along to him: "Do you realize how boring you are?" Better not to play the game at all than to be seen as boring by the other players?

Yet another sign of how alienated people are: not one of a dozen students in my wife's college seminar on sex roles could realistically imagine making a long-term commitment to one partner. "It would be nice if it happened, but it's not very realistic to expect it," a student said.

What about short-term commitments simply to pass the time of day with people occupying common space with you? Our world is becoming like an elevator: "No talking, smiling, or eye contact allowed without written consent of the management." Next time you shop in a supermarket, do a study, make a word count of the conversations between shoppers in line or with the checkout person. Then try to use your data to prove that your subjects are not mute or deaf. The silence is not confined to America, either. Even the loquacious Italians, whose love for life persists despite daily reports of political disaster and economic uncertainty, look to me like automatons as I watch them in one of the new supermarkets in Florence or Rome. No time to say "Hello" or "Ciao," to talk of zucchini or kings.

Our brave new world is one in which the basic social unit is the

large, impersonal institution. In such institutions, authority is concentrated in the hands of a few remote power brokers. Decision making begins with concerns for cost-effectiveness, profitability margins, and efficient management of behavior, and ends with rules that must be followed—or else. If the rules are followed, everything runs smoothly, and the mark of impersonality is stamped on each product, each of us. Institutions can't do their thing unless they can count on the predictability and compliance of those they "serve." Thus there can be no spontaneity, impulsivity, strong emotion, dissent, opposition, time to think anything over, no time to be "just people." Today's young people are being forged into cogs in the corporate structure. And they are the ones who will eventually control our world.

Cult leaders and their management teams know all this. There they come, at least 2,000 strong, offering simple solutions to complex problems, love-bombing affection-starved youngsters. Cults attract a following not necessarily through political, religious, or economic ideology, but through offering the illusion of friendship, of non-contingent love. You exist, you are one of us, you get your fair share of our love and respect. (Wasn't that the message families once communicated?)

**I**f there is a Devil, it is not through sin that he opposes God. The Devil's strategy for our times is to trivialize human existence in a number of ways: by isolating us from one another while creating the delusion that the reasons are time pressures, work demands, or anxieties created by economic uncertainty; by fostering narcissism and the fierce competition to be No. 1; by showing us the personal gains to be enjoyed from harboring prejudices and the losses from not moving out whenever the current situation is uncom-

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## The well-tended front lawn is the modern moat that keeps the barbarians—other people—at bay.

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fortable. Fostering in us the illusion of self-reliance, that sly Devil makes us mock the need for social responsibility and lets us forget how to go about being our brother's keeper—even if we were to want to.

Surely one cause of the growing sense of disengagement in our society is the rise in middle-class affluence since the 1950s, which has allowed an enormous number of people to buy space, privacy, and exclusive-use permits and services. The move to suburbia is a move away from too many people too close. The well-tended front lawn is the modern moat that keeps the barbarians at bay. Every occupant in a separate bedroom with private toilet, personal television, telephone, and hi-fi reduces hassles and conflicts. No need to share.

In the quest for upward mobility, moreover, the middle class sends its children away to prestigious colleges, moves to wherever its jobs demand, and does more and more of its business on the road. The consequence is a generation of children who have been uprooted time after time until, as one said to me, "I don't want to bother making friends. It's not worth the effort, because we'll be gone soon and it hurts more to leave good friends than casual acquaintances." The same is true of parents, who may find it even more difficult to make new friends in strange places. And as more of us take our paper-work jobs home or our jobs take us away from home, there is less time for family and neighborhood contacts.

Geographical mobility also strains the bonds of extended families. With relatives thousands of miles apart, ritual gatherings become rarer, and relatives become curious aliens to our children. The zero population growth movement has as one of its unintended consequences children with few siblings or cousins and eventually with few aunts or uncles. The paucity

of relatives, coupled with the fact of delayed childbearing and the high divorce rate, mean there will be fewer of us with a sense of primal ties to many kin and of roots that run deep into one place, our "home."

By 1990, about one-third of all young people under 18 will have parents who have divorced at least once. Almost 60 percent of divorced couples have one or more children now under 18 years old. The number of children involved in divorce has risen from half a million in 1960 to 1.1 million now. Divorced mothers of children under 18 are increasingly likely to be in the labor force, which takes them away from home for long periods. I think a lasting legacy for the children of divorce is a deeply felt loss of trust in authorities (like parents, who have let them down) and in institutions (such as marriage, whose for-better-or-worse slogan won't sell even in Peoria).

Finally, youthful cynicism has been fed by watching, on the evening news, or in some cases, "up close and personal," almost everyone going out on strike for better bucks—teachers, police, fire departments—all, apparently, in it for the money, not love of a profession. Widespread cynicism about institutions seems to be evident across the board. How to trust anything, given the moral disgrace of Watergate, the vision of criminals being media-hyped to promote their best-selling exposés, and the weakening of national pride after Korea, Vietnam, OPEC control of economy, and the Bay of Pigs rerun in the desert of Iran?

**A**s corny and unsophisticated as it sounds, the only escape from hackerdom is to think of people as our most cherished resource. We need to work hard at reestablishing family rituals, such as family meals without TV and with meaningful conversation. Par-

ents and teachers should show more concern for the social-emotional development of children and put less emphasis on intellectual competition. We must oppose systems and procedures that deny our uniqueness while spreading depersonalization and anonymity in the guise of efficiency.

Social-support networks provide emotional sustenance, informative feedback, and validation of self-worth. They have been shown to buffer the adverse impact of change on physical and mental health, and it is important to create enough of them for everyone to have a chance to become a valued part of a life-support system.

Maybe the economic downturn the nation is facing is a blessing in disguise. Parents will not be able to afford divorce as readily and may eventually discover that they have something of value in common—as many of our parents did. More children may return home after college, and communal living and expanding, elastic family structures may become necessities. Sharing instead of hoarding, and caring instead of flaunting, may even become fashionable.

While waiting for all that to happen, it is well to reevaluate the survival strategies that many of the poor—immigrants, blacks, and other minorities—have used to advantage in the past when their money was soft and times were hard. Without a false sense of personal invulnerability, and with an accurate appraisal of the power of the "system" to overwhelm all in its path, they maintained their dignity by reaffirming family values and by tightening the bonds of friendship. Survival demands collective action; "alone" is for gravestones in hacker cemeteries. □

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Philip G. Zimbardo is a professor of psychology at Stanford University and the author of the tenth edition of *Psychology and Life* since 1937, one of the most widely used introductory textbooks in the field.