Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Experiment Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Write an overall reflection of Zimbardo’s experiment. What did you think about what you saw? What was your reaction to the behaviors? Etc.

2. Who made the line between reality and illusion even more obscured? How did they contribute to the success/failure of this experiment?

3. How do you think, or even why, people conform to roles they are assigned? Explain. Describe what kind of guard you would be if assigned that role. Describe what kind of prisoner you think you would be if assigned that role.

4. What are your thoughts about the guard “John Wayne”? Why did he act so sadistic? Why did the other guards let him lead that way? Why did the prisoners obey him if this was all pretend? Explain.

5. Prisoner 8612 played the role of the crazy prisoner; Prisoner 416 claimed to lose his identity and totally submerge in the role of prisoner; Sarg was an obedient prisoner. Why do some rebel, while others are submissive? John Wayne was a sadistic guard. Why? Do all have the ability to be sadistic? Is it human nature? How far do people go?

6. Explain why this study was unethical. Give specific examples.

7. How does this experiment relate to the real world? What in your life would be examples of conforming into assigned roles? What would be examples of conforming to submission or conforming to authority? What are some real world examples that would compare with the prison guard/prisoner relationship? Explain how and why.