

# Social psychologist: Lust makes you smarter and evidence that seven deadly sins are good for you

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(Medical Xpress) -- Good news for lovers on Valentine's Day - the seven deadly sins, including Lust, are good for you. University of Melbourne social psychologist Dr Simon Laham uses modern research to make a compelling case for the virtues of living a sinful life in his latest book *The Joy of Sin: The Psychology of the Seven Deadlies (And Why They Are So Good For You)*.

Dr Laham argues that human behavior is more complex than simple "good" or "evil" and shows us that Pride, Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Envy, Sloth and Anger are not soul-condemning offenses, but ever-present and, if indulged wisely, are largely functional human tendencies.

In particular, for lovers intent on indulging in a bit of lust this Valentine's Day, Dr Laham reveals:

**Lust can make you smarter.** Research shows that [people](#) with sex on the brain are better at solving 'analytic thinking' problems. Lust triggers us to become focused on the present and the details of satisfying a rather pressing current goal, namely sex.

**Lust makes you helpful.** Lust is so well designed to fulfill its function of getting people into bed, that it leads us to behave in ways that potential partners will find more attractive.

**Lust builds love.** Research shows that lustful participants are more likely to display a range of loving, relationship maintenance strategies – like adopting constructive conflict resolution strategies – to increase the chances of sex in the future.

**Gluttony** - People who have eaten a piece of cake are more likely to donate to charity.

**Greed** – Money can buy you happiness as long as you spend it the right way. Studies show that people are happier when they spend their money on experiences rather than material possessions.

**Sloth** - The ultimate slothful state, sleep and even napping, improves your memory and makes you more insightful. Research has also shown that slowing down makes you more helpful. Studies in cities in which people walk more slowly, such as Bakersfield in California, pedestrians are more likely to stop and offer help.

**Anger** - Anger triggers an oppositional mindset which makes people more willing to entertain beliefs contrary to their own. In addition, angry negotiators, tend to be more likely to get what they want in a negotiation.

**Envy** - Comparing yourself to those better off than you can lead to boosts in mood, self-image and creativity.

School students who compared themselves to superior students got better grades.

**Pride** – Proud people persist longer at difficult tasks and adopt leadership roles. Studies show that the proud are more liked.

Dr Laham said that when you take a look at the evidence, the seven deadly sins can really serve us quite well despite being told for centuries

they are bad for us.

“This is great news for Australians as a recent BBC poll deemed Australia the most sinful country on earth,” he said.

So research now shows that it’s ok to indulge in a bit of Lust this Valentine’s Day and you’ll be better off for it. In fact, indulge in all seven deadly sins and you might just be a little smarter, happier and more successful.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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