
The Seven Sins

by Liz Greene



The Seven Sins

for Adele Adkins, born 5 May 1988

Nr 6212.502-29

Astrodienst AG, Dammstr. 23, CH-8702 Zollikon / Zürich

www.astro.com / order@astro.com

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Introduction

Is the twenty-first century really a time when we can talk about sin? Is the idea still relevant in a world in which we perceive morality as relative, deity as inexplicable or non-existent, science and technology as the new gods, and good and evil as outmoded ideas that are too simplistic for a reflective, modern (or even post-modern) individual? Is sin necessarily something that reflects a religious world-view, or might it be a fundamental psychological dynamic that has profound meaning in terms of our compulsions, our struggles with our own tendencies toward destructiveness, and our efforts to contribute something creative to life?

The concept of the Seven Cardinal Sins is a very ancient one, and long predates what we now think of in Western cultures as a medieval and grossly outdated list of offences against the dictates of religious orthodoxy. The word 'sin', in English, comes from the Old English word 'synn', which carries many meanings: moral wrongdoing, injury, mischief, enmity, feud, guilt, crime, and offences against God. The German word 'Sünde', which found its way into Old English, likewise means a transgression, a trespass, or an offence. Behind both of these lies the Latin word 'sons', which means a guilty person, or a criminal. Yet the earliest roots of the idea concern the journey of the soul from its heavenly origin to its life in earthly form, and the various ways in which humans transgress by opposing, abusing, or misinterpreting the will of the gods. If we are to understand within a psychological framework what it might mean to sin, and what kind of profoundly complex and potentially transformative themes underpin older and often highly misleading interpretations, we will need to look more deeply at each of the Cardinal Sins and its expressions in individual character and life.

The challenges of the Seven Sins don't disappear with age, nor lessen with experience. Like Shakespeare's Cleopatra, custom doesn't stale the infinite variety of the Sins. Although they may appear in youth in forms that outwardly don't resemble the forms of later life, they are in essence the same. For example, a compulsive greed for success in a young person might wear the face of personal worldly achievement, while in an older person the same compulsive greed may appear as a need to push one's children or grandchildren, whether they wish it or not, toward one's own unfulfilled dreams of success. Although some of the descriptions that follow may seem to belong to earlier or later times in your life rather than to the present, the essential nature of each Sin doesn't alter. What can change at any time in life, with effort and inner exploration, is our consciousness, and our capacity to recognise the subtle ways in which our inner compulsions can impel us to express the very best as well as the very worst within us.



The First Sin: Envy

The first Cardinal Sin is Envy. In Latin they called it 'Invidia'. But the psychological understanding of Envy is very complex, and perhaps 'sin' is not an appropriate term for this most important, challenging, and potentially immensely grounding aspect of human behaviour. Envy is not as simple as just wishing you had something someone else has, or wishing for qualities you see in another person but feel that you yourself lack.

Envy has to do with your capacity to accept certain limitations on the ways in which you build the foundations of your self-confidence; if you can work with those limitations rather than ignoring them, then Envy can provide the bricks and mortar that help you to feel you have firm ground to stand on throughout life. Envy is also a key factor in those areas where you feel insecure and unsure of yourself, and here too, if you are prepared to acknowledge and work with those insecurities rather than avoiding them, you can develop a quality of realism that will ground your aspirations and help to make them possible and real. The key to dealing with Envy is self-honesty and self-acceptance. Envy, in the sense that it remains an unconscious aspect of human emotion, might be better described as Self-doubt, because it involves the perception that others have more or are better than oneself. And perhaps a better word for Envy, when it is understood and worked with, might be Authenticity.

Learning to look at the sky

In some ways you are better equipped to deal with Envy than many people, because of your realism about human failings and limits. You tend to view life pragmatically, without the need for impossible ideals or expectations, and you have a toughness and resilience that allows you to cope fearlessly with many of the darker aspects of human nature. You can also, when required, be realistic about your own limits, and it is likely that you are your own harshest critic. If you are good at something, you do not assume that this makes you a genius; you just do it as well as possible. And if you are not very good at something, you can admit it and focus on spheres where your competence can yield the best rewards. This ability to make peace with human imperfections is a profoundly useful gift. But it may not protect you against Envy toward those who can look upward and beyond, and believe that humans could be more than they are.

The pitfalls of tradition

Your values are rooted in the solid ground of the past, and you can feel threatened by innovative and anarchic ideas. When you encounter individuals who are not bound by the same conventions as you, you may feel critical and even contemptuous. But perhaps you secretly wish you could kick over the traces and adopt all those inspirational new ideas and trends that appear to be so threatening. When you are too intent on self-control, you can be envious of those who display abandonment and spontaneity; when you are too bound by manners, duty, and what you see as proper behaviour, you can be envious of those who do exactly what they please. The eruption of Envy doesn't mean that you should abandon all that you hold most worthwhile. Your commitment to your values is a great strength. But try to recognise where there is room for greater flexibility, tolerance, and joy in your life, and where you could develop the kind of courage that allows people to unashamedly express their individuality.

The view from the summit

You are deeply ambitious, eager to make your way in the world and achieve a position of importance and stature, even if this doesn't include simple material gain. But it may be hard for you to believe that the world will offer enough respect and support for you to reach your goals, and you don't trust in hierarchies and authorities enough to willingly place yourself in their hands. You tend to expect failure, and this can make you fearful of even trying to reach the first rung of the ladder. You may be so suspicious that you adopt devious ways of controlling the world around you. Envy is most likely to arise toward people who seem to climb effortlessly and receive respect and recognition without the kind of self-doubt and dogged tenacity that you bring to your working life. And you don't get on well with rules made by others, although you are happy to make the rules yourself, and expect others to fall in line. You need structure and order in your working life, and you are a natural leader and organiser. But you may be so fearful of taking risks that you stifle your abilities in work situations where you have to answer to others' authority. You would do best working for yourself, for otherwise you may experience deep Envy toward those who are in charge of their own path in life.

Envy can be a beacon that shows the direction you need to follow in order to discover your own inner authority. You have deep doubts about your capacity to achieve your ambitions in the world, yet you long to base your efforts on the sense that there is some kind of orderly and just pattern at work in life that validates hard work and serves what is right and lawful. Doctrinal approaches might not ultimately serve your pragmatic nature, although you are likely to pursue and experiment with many systems of thought that initially seem to provide the answers you seek. Whether you pursue your quest in the mundane world or on an inner level, you need to discover faith in your own talents and skills, and a feeling of connection with an essentially orderly universe, before you can transform your Envy of those who appear to have succeeded easily in life into a genuine sense of self-value and inner Authenticity.

The life-enhancing properties of limits

Dealing with practical matters, daily routines, and health issues may seem harder for you than for many people. This isn't because you lack competence, but because you expect a level of order

and efficiency that is not achievable in the everyday world. Your perfectionism can undermine your confidence and make it hard for you to accept the ordinary mess and chaos of mundane life, including your body's requirements. You may be more sensitive than many people to what you eat, and more vulnerable to somatising tension and stress. This can make your body feel like a burden rather than a source of pleasure. You might also find it difficult to accommodate routines and structures created by others if you feel they are less than perfect, and you can't accept anyone else's authority unless you respect it. Yet you may fear striking out on your own and creating the kind of working life that suits you. You love structures and rules, and you can handle everyday matters with patience and pragmatism. But you may lack confidence in your abilities, and may try to play safe and remain in unrewarding work that thwarts your ambitions. The more you avoid the challenge of pursuing your own goals, the greater your Envy of those who have climbed to the top.

Envy can spread its poison in tangible ways, generating stress and resentment that make you feel ill, tired, and depressed. You may have to cope with physical limitations that are no one's fault and are not your choice. But limits, whether internal or external, chosen or imposed, can provide you with opportunities for insight, understanding, and the building of genuine self-confidence. You might not be able to radically alter your material circumstances, but you do have the freedom to respond to them in creative rather than destructive ways. You need to find the confidence to produce meaningful work in a rewarding environment, and to take on the responsibilities of worldly life with a sense of optimism. If this means you have to radically change your working goals, then bite the bullet and try. Your own choices and efforts may make the difference between debilitating Envy and a deep sense of Authenticity.

Partners can be mirrors

Your need to defend yourself against hurt can result in relationship patterns that create the very hurt you are trying to avoid. You tend to find ways of controlling relationships, even if this is not your conscious wish. You may achieve control by choosing someone who is weaker and more dependent than you are, emotionally, intellectually, or financially, or by choosing someone who appears strong and competent but whose inability to respond to your emotional needs leaves you protected against the dangers of real intimacy. Either way, Envy can colour your personal life if you do not recognise your own defensive patterns. Don't try to convince yourself that your partner is responsible for all your unhappiness. You may also envy your partner for a self-sufficiency that you need to develop yourself; or you may envy them for the vulnerability you are too frightened to express. And you may find yourself envying people who seem to have warmer, and more honest partnerships than you. Try to explore more deeply the dynamics behind your relationships. The greater your awareness, the more likely you will be to transform Envy into a creative force that can ensure a fulfilling and lasting bond.

Bring on the revolution

You sometimes find it hard to distinguish between your personal experiences and those of the larger collective to which you are attuned. You are a denizen of two worlds: an ordinary human with the ordinary human range of fears, aspirations, strengths, and emotional needs, and a visionary who can see far into the future and perceive a better and more enlightened world. What

appeals to one side of you feels threatening to the other, and you urgently need a creative vehicle - whether in the arts, the sciences, psychology, esotericism, sociology, or politics - that can reconcile your receptivity to new ideas with your respect for structure, order, and the realities of the material world. It is virtually impossible for you to choose one over the other, although during the course of your life you are likely to try. Rather than hoping that you can find a way to live a stress-free life, try to accept the inner tension and focus on your creative vehicle, making sure your personal values are as strongly affirmed as your vision of the future. You aren't well suited to working for other people, and eventually you will find a way to break free. Resentment at having to live within mundane limits can also make you feel ill and tired. Yet you long for order, although you may blame others for imposing it on you. You need work that allows you independence and the chance to contribute something useful to others.

Your Envy has many faces, and one of the most important is Envy of those who are not buffeted by the inner tensions you experience. Sometimes you may wish you could be like 'everyone else', whoever those people might be, and live a 'normal' life, whatever that might entail. Inner stress requires you to make continuous efforts to contain and balance two opposing aspects of your nature. Envy will arise when you try to ease the conflict by projecting one end onto other people and identifying with the other end yourself. If you find yourself taking the stand of tradition against those who refuse to follow the rules, be careful, for you may be deeply envious of their capacity for freedom. If you find yourself taking the stand of the outsider railing against those who are too conventional, be careful, for you may be deeply envious of the stability they enjoy. Try to accept the value of both worlds, for then you can transform Envy into an authentic vision that can be implemented in the world. After all, as Leonard Cohen wrote, it's the cracks in the structure that let the light in.

The stiff upper lip

Whatever you might be feeling, you are likely to put a lid on it and get on with whatever tasks await you. Even if you are not British, you tend to believe in the stiff upper lip. You can be ferociously proud, and resent anyone spotting even a tiny whiff of weakness or neediness. Beneath this hard shell you often feel lonely and frightened, but you don't really believe that others will care enough to help you. This pattern of enforced self-sufficiency may have roots in your early life, and you may have experienced considerable isolation. It is also possible that you were expected to shoulder responsibilities too early, and never had much of a chance to be a carefree child. Whatever your background, you may need to learn to open up and trust others more, rather than always being the one who shoulders burdens for them. You are prone to deep envy of those who seem to get all the help, especially when they whinge and moan, while your propensity is to remain silent and hope that someone will magically discover your need. You may defend yourself against rejection through a reluctance to commit yourself, and an inclination to escape whenever you feel vulnerable. You may also escape into your mind, convincing yourself that there are Meaningful Things with which you should concern yourself, in order to forget your needs and your Envy of those who don't suffer the anxiety you do.

Envy can be a big problem because you are so doubtful of finding the kind of emotional support you long for. Although childhood experiences may be connected to your present emotional patterns, it may be your own touchy defensiveness that causes your feelings of isolation, for you

are too unwilling to let go of a sense of injury even when no injury was intentionally inflicted. You can sometimes forget all the people who have shown you love and understanding, yet you will remember every single time when someone has let you down - even when your idea of being let down is exaggerated or even invented. Hanging on to grievances can open the door to a particularly destructive form of Envy. The more conscious you are of your fund of resentment toward those whom you imagine have had it so much easier than you, the better able you will be to transform Envy into a spirit of genuine self-sufficiency softened and warmed by greater emotional trust.

Conditional love

Envy can strike you where you value yourself least, and that tends to be in the sphere of love. You are never entirely certain that you are lovable, and therefore you mistrust others when they try to offer you love, as well as mistrusting your own capacity for love. You may experience painful self-doubt around your physical attractiveness, and you may believe, deep down, that you will always end up being rejected, even if you are perpetually told how attractive you are. Your lack of self-value may be connected with early experiences where the love being offered was conditional and you were expected to behave in certain ways in order to earn affection and loyalty. But now you may blame the feeling of being unloved on partners, rather than looking more deeply at the ways in which you undermine yourself. You may envy people who attract love into their lives with ease, and also seem to love with ease. And Envy can make you behave in hurtful ways to others, based on the principle that it is better to reject them first before you yourself are rejected. Your deepest self-doubt is related to your need to express love through words and ideas, and your desire for companions who can provide intellectual stimulation as well as breathing space. You may be convinced that you are unlovable because you don't gush with sentiment. And if too many emotional demands are placed on you, you tend to want to escape.

Try to explore more deeply the ways in which you denigrate your own worth, for then you can begin to deal with the problem of Envy in more creative ways. It is your feelings of self-doubt that fuels Envy of those whom you believe to be more lovable and loving than you. Trying to play safe, by getting involved with people who are not likely to reject you but don't stir your deepest passions, is not a helpful solution. And constant feelings of rejection might tell you more about yourself than about an apparently unloving partner. Try to be aware of the ways in which your expectation of rejection, and your conviction that you will never find real happiness, can lead you to behave in destructive ways to others as well as yourself. If you are always looking for the first sign of love being withdrawn, you may drive it away yourself, because no one likes to be doubted all the time. You are neither unloving nor unlovable. The more deeply you can explore the unconscious roots of your Envy, and its consequences in your thoughts and actions, the more likely you will be to achieve the kind of contentment you seek.

Victims, oppressors, and the hall of mirrors

One of the triggers for Envy within you is the feeling that you have somehow been cheated of the kind of support and understanding you most needed, and you carry a wound that doesn't seem to heal, no matter what you do. Whether this experience is related to family, schooling, peers, social group, material circumstances, or your body, it may be difficult for you to let go of the conviction

that you have been unfairly short-changed. Although this may feel deeply personal, in fact it is the paradigm of a broader human problem, and reflects a difficult interaction between the imperfections and blunders of human society and your own sensitivity and idealism. No collective is perfect, and innocent people get hurt. But it's hard for you to let go of the fantasy of a perfect world in which no one is ever treated badly, rejected, left out, or misunderstood. This can open the door to Envy of those who seem to have been 'lucky' where you feel unfairly treated. If you were able to move beyond your own personal pain, you might see that no being exists who has not been injured by life in some way. You have inherited a long family history of scapegoating and victimisation, and you are attuned to a suffering that goes back for many generations. You carry the wounds of many people other than yourself, and you may feel deep mistrust of the instinctual aspects of human nature as well as deep Envy toward those who are comfortably merged with a larger collective.

If you are able to look beyond your personal emotional experiences and take a more philosophical as well as psychological perspective, you will be able to see the broader context of your feelings of hurt and deprivation, and can develop the kind of commitment to making a real difference that can balance your acute awareness of human failure and stupidity. Cynicism and a sour mistrust of human nature are not an antidote to Envy, nor will they help anyone, including you, to achieve greater awareness of their own choices and actions. Try to recognise that your own sensitivity and your own idealistic expectations may inflame the wound and make it seem incurable. Envy can only take root if you allow yourself to feel victimised by something that is ultimately no one's 'fault', but is ultimately a product of our muddled, fallible humanity.

Envy and individuation

Unacknowledged Envy can distort your vision. Other people can appear to be so much better endowed, luckier, or more gifted than you are, and that injures you. Or they become the objects of your criticism and contempt, and that injures them. Envy can be an intractable destroyer, which is why it was viewed as the greatest of the Sins. Much of the world's misery and destructiveness is rooted in unconscious Envy, not only of individuals but also of national and racial groups. The creative side of Envy, when it is conscious, is that it can make you work much harder to develop the qualities you believe you lack in your own individual way. You can achieve profound insights into your deepest values, as well as the skills and knowledge to express them. But first you have to find out what these qualities are, and recognise that you will always remain who you are, and can develop your potential only within the limits of your unique personality. This means, in short, that you need to be able to accept and appreciate who you are, rather than hoping to become like somebody else. Ultimately human beings can never become anything other than the fullest and best expression of their own essential individual core.

It might help you to recognise that the people who make you most uncomfortable - the innovative, experimental, and sometimes shocking members of society who break all the rules in order to discover new possibilities - are the people you might feel most envious of. Your respect for established values is a valuable and supportive quality, but you always run the risk of stagnating if you cannot move forward with life and open yourself to innovative ideas. Envy is virtually guaranteed to disturb you when you are most entrenched in your structures and most intolerant of anyone who has the courage to question the prevailing wisdom of the collective.

Dealing with Envy doesn't mean trying to compensate for what you believe you lack by becoming just like someone else, or acquiring what they have. Envy breeds in the darkness when you carry a distorted vision of yourself and judge yourself wanting. Transforming Envy into Authenticity requires the painful recognition of what you secretly wish you had, an equally painful recognition that you will never have it in precisely the form you admire it in others, and the dawning realisation that you can develop it in your own unique way, through hard work, effort, commitment, and appreciation of your own gifts. The psychoanalyst Melanie Klein wrote that Envy could be healed through Gratitude. Klein's idea of Gratitude is the experience of feeling fulfilled by what you are able to do reasonably well, whatever that might be. And it also involves appreciation of the gifts of others, because these gifts brighten all our lives. Gratitude doesn't demand perfection or genius, and it emerges with the realisation that everyone, whatever their limitations, has some area of life where they can shine and feel a self-respect that comes from within. If you can feel contented rather than resentful that you are who you are, Envy can transform into a genuine and indestructible sense of Authenticity.



The Second Sin: Gluttony

The second Cardinal Sin is Gluttony. In Latin, it was known as 'Gula', a word that also means 'throat' - an allusion to a boundless greed for food and drink. Like Envy, Gluttony can be destructive, from its effects on physical health to its effects on the planet through overconsumption and waste. Also like Envy, Gluttony is an archetypal human expression that needs more careful examination. We usually think of Gluttony in terms of food. Films are full of images of individuals with ravenous appetites devouring delicacies in such gross fashion that one feels like throwing up one's own lunch. One has only to think of 'Monty Python's Meaning of Life', in which a man eats so much that he bursts. This might seem comic rather than sinful. But as a culture, we have, perhaps justifiably, been accused of rampant and wasteful consumerism. And ultimately the destructive impact of Gluttony can result in irreversible damage to the planet itself.

But Gluttony isn't only about a shameless appetite for more food, money, or possessions. The great medieval philosopher Thomas Aquinas wrote: 'Gluttony denotes, not any desire of eating and drinking, but an inordinate desire ... leaving the order of reason, wherein the good of moral virtue consists.' Aquinas thought Gluttony sprang from a failure of moral conviction, reflected in an unwillingness to relinquish 'inordinate' desire. Perhaps another way of understanding Gluttony is that it reflects a compulsive need to be more than what we are. When we fail to understand that need, it may translate itself into a symbol: more food, a bigger car, a larger house, more expensive clothes, more lovers, more fame or popularity, greater knowledge or power. We might also call Gluttony Dissatisfaction, because it reflects something within us that remains perennially discontented with mundane reality, and strives for something that will satisfy a subtler, more inward kind of appetite. If we can maintain moral integrity in the face of that dissatisfaction, we might discover a powerfully creative drive that we could also call Aspiration.

Buried yearnings

Because you relate well to the earthy world, you probably have a strong appreciation of the pleasures of the senses, and a tendency to overindulge yourself when it comes to satisfying desires of one kind or another. But pleasure isn't the same as Gluttony, even if it sometimes results in excess. You have the realism to know when to stop - even if it's just short of the line - and the self-discipline to be able to make necessary sacrifices when you have gone too far. The sin of Gluttony is identifiable by its compulsive quality, and you are more likely to experience a profound and gnawing restlessness that points to a powerful unknown craving concealed beneath the surface of your awareness. This craving could be rooted in a sense of meaninglessness, and working

with it creatively demands recognition that there might be more in life, and particularly in your own life, than material stability, practical knowledge, or the safety of rules and conventions.

Kicking over the traces

Your allegiance to values that have stood the test of time is one of your great strengths, and your respect for individual effort helps you to become a responsible and productive person. You are usually astute about the workings of the world. But Gluttony can take forms other than an addiction to material objects and sensual pleasures. It can also appear as a compulsive resistance to change, and an overwhelming dependency on structures and beliefs that are rooted in the past. This kind of Gluttony can stifle new ideas that seem to threaten the stability of the status quo. But it also can be a disguise for a very different and much subtler aspiration: the need for a direct experience of inner roots and origins that lead back to an indestructible psychological and spiritual core.

Everything in excess

Even if you see yourself as a spiritual person, the material world is irresistibly attractive to you. Your appreciation of the pleasures of the senses might not necessarily lead to destructive over-indulgence, but you will probably display excess in some area of physical life, even if it is an obsession with the natural world and a refusal to lift your eyes above it. You may also be addicted, not to money itself, but to the comfort of knowing that you have a lot of it; however much you acquire, it will never seem like enough. Gluttony can be expressed in many ways, and the incessant demands of physical appetites are only one of them. Moderation is vital for you, but moderation in appetites or ideas may elude you because you have an unrelenting stubbornness that will not bend to the persuasions of reason or even your own emotional needs. You can be a patient and generous friend, and the contented beneficiary of other people's generosity. But you can be too greedy to 'collect' people and groups that will enhance your sense of self-importance and further your belief that you have a mission in life. Try not to use others to further your endless pursuit of new projects and new visions of changing the world.

For you, the greatest danger of Gluttony is that your strength and tenacity can be enlisted in supporting a fanatical devotion to whatever you most deeply value. This can include a compulsive attachment to money and material objects; intense possessiveness of particular places or people that you feel you cannot live without; and non-corporeal things like a system of beliefs, a political ideology, or a social or ecological cause to which you feel bound. Your capacity for deep commitment is a wonderful asset, but you may become so hungry for the experience that it ceases to be an Aspiration and winds up devouring other, equally important dimensions of your life. Sometimes you seem to forget about how to use the 'Stop' button, or simply can't find it. Your considerable physical and mental resources need to be conserved and cared for, rather than squandered on a compulsion that swallows up everything in its path.

Together we can change the world

You crave a sense of being connected to a larger community, and you thrive in settings where you can share new ideas with like-minded people. You need to be part of a network that you

believe will enhance the world around you. Friendships will usually be built around your work and your group involvements, and you are likely to be lucky in your friends because your bond is based on a shared vision of life. And your own generosity attracts generosity from others. This kind of Gluttony is not in itself negative, but you may become so addicted to your ideals and the people you can share them with that you are unable to relate to anyone who doesn't espouse your world-view. You may also find it hard to countenance the emotional dynamics of any collective, which inevitably involve rivalries, jealousies, and the sort of petty meanness that offends your vision of the perfect group. And sometimes you may be so focused on the future that you can't be content in the present or at peace with the world as it is. Your ideals are likely to be pragmatic ones that promulgate a useful contribution to others. You are rarely caught up in schemes and plans that can't be put to practical use, and you can be deeply resistant to change or any project that requires the input of innovative thinking and risk-taking. Your loyalty can be absolute, but so can your stubbornness and intractability.

You would be deeply unhappy if you were not able to participate, directly or at a distance, in larger movements in ideas, technologies, or creative work. Your deepest goals are concerned with human progress and the potentials of the collective, rather than just your own personal development. Transforming Gluttony into Aspiration doesn't require you to become a recluse who avoids any contact with the larger world. But you can become so dependent on the bigger vision that you forget your value as an individual. The sense of connection that you crave can occur between you and your own soul; it doesn't depend on the company of others. You don't always need the support and approval of the group to validate your ideals, although you have a tendency to become addicted to the praise and acknowledgement of others in order to believe in what you are doing. The more you are able to recognise that fulfilment of your hopes does not rest entirely on the support of the collective, the better able you will be to make a valid contribution that doesn't rob you of your individual dreams, goals, and aspirations.

The insult of an ordinary fate

The great poet Goethe once said that he could never accept the insult of an ordinary fate. The same might be said of you. You believe in your inalienable right to pursue your dreams, and you will always have intuitive visions of future possibilities that can expand your life and give you a sense of meaning. Whenever you find yourself stuck in a situation that stifles your imagination and dampens your enthusiasm through banality, boredom, or excessive emotional demands, you are likely to move on to the next opportunity without looking back. This can give you a rich and exciting life, with a very good possibility of achieving many, if not all, of your goals, whether they are material or spiritual. But you are always in danger of arrogance and inflation, not because you overestimate yourself - although that might happen with uncomfortable frequency - but because you often fail to recognise that others might enjoy the same inalienable rights, and need to be respected rather than exploited or simply discarded as you wing your way into the future. You always try to keep both feet firmly on the ground, and this can provide a balance to your addiction to constant adventure. But Gluttony may express itself through compulsive sensual and material cravings that tie you to your body and the mundane world, generating dissatisfaction and a tendency to suddenly explode with grand ideas that get you into trouble.

Despite the fact that you may well possess exceptional gifts, you can find it hard to value who you really are and what you are genuinely good at. You may need to learn to appreciate your true individuality rather than a mythologised image of who you would like to become, and make the best possible use of your talents rather than hurling yourself into the pursuit of a dream that might ultimately end in disappointment. Being a glutton for self-importance can also hurt and alienate others, who may find it difficult to tolerate the kind of disdain you may inadvertently show toward them. The Aspiration to find meaning through a deep confidence in your individual self is a positive and life-enhancing longing. A craving to be bigger, grander, and superior to others is not life-enhancing, but may provide you with an illusory antidote to feelings of uncertainty about your self-worth. Realism and a sense of humour can help you to find a balance between a compulsive hunger for what is impossible and an optimistic journey toward fulfilling your genuine potentials.

The dream of the divine

Your Gluttony can sometimes exhibit a doctrinal flavour, and you might not recognise your yearnings as compulsions as long as you can perceive them as spiritual aspiration or service to a higher cause. You can be a glutton for self-sacrifice, and greedy for others' acknowledgement of it. Your awareness of invisible dimensions of life is real and highly creative, and your genuine compassion prevents you from inflicting the kind of harm to your body, your environment, and your fellow humans than do those who exhibit Gluttony in obvious material ways. But you can be greedy for experiences that help you to feel 'evolved' or 'enlightened' and thus spiritually superior to others. Try to be conscious of those areas where your belief that you are acting selflessly has more complex roots. And be careful of using the term 'selfish' in relation to others; your apparent selflessness may suggest that you are a glutton for self-sacrifice because it feeds your craving to escape the banality of an ordinary mortal existence. Your longing to lose yourself in close relationships can bring you moments of heightened joy and awareness of the deeper unity of life. But you may fail to recognise the separateness of the other person, and you may be addicted to experiences of self-sacrifice that erode rather than support the mutual affection and respect of two individual human beings.

Your Gluttony is embedded in a very genuine spirituality, and this can make it hard to recognise as Gluttony. People will always notice the substance-addicted person, but they may not recognise equally powerful addictions such as a craving for power, or a craving to be needed. Sometimes your self-abnegation springs from love and compassion, and you are capable of deep devotion and selfless acts. Sometimes it springs from a need to feel at one with a greater unity. And sometimes it springs from a need for self-aggrandisement and a belief in your spiritual and emotional superiority. Your craving reflects a true commitment to the life of the spirit, but also a gift at manipulating others through guilt because they perceive you as endlessly willing to give up your own desires to make them happy. The most constructive way of working with this paradox is to be as honest as possible about the gratification that self-sacrifice provides, and as balanced as possible in attending to the requirements of the world as well as the call of the spirit.

Are you sure it's destiny?

Gluttony may take the form of deeply obsessive behaviour. Your pursuit of the person, object, or creative work you feel you cannot live without can become overwhelming, swallowing up your sense of humour and your ability to be flexible. This kind of Gluttony can become a dramatic, life-or-death craving, in part because your efforts to look confidently toward the future are constantly buffeted by the fear that some greater power will interfere and ruin things. You need detachment and a good dose of irony in those areas where you feel you are under threat. Try to step back and take a more objective view of the situations in which compulsion and anxiety dominate your life to the point where you believe there is some kind of preordained destiny that involves struggle and possible disaster. Beneath the object of your craving there may lie a profound symbol of a deep connection with the archetypal patterns that underpin your life's unfoldment. The focus of your mythic quest is your creative life, and that includes romantic love. You can be dedicated and intense, and anything you create will carry the stamp of your obsessive need to penetrate to the depths. But you need to learn some detachment, for otherwise you can be subsumed by the sense of a grand destiny rather than simply getting on with what you do best.

Gluttony can erupt in your life in quite extreme forms, because you are capable of devoting yourself to the object of your craving regardless of the cost. While this can evoke great courage and strength, it can also be destructive, because your appetite for danger, crises, and excessive behaviour can overwhelm other, equally valuable aspects of your life, as well as making others feel very uncomfortable. An obsessive addiction to emotional crises, a fixed idea that subsumes everything else, or a ritual that seems to provide solace and safety, can be like the addiction to a dangerous substance. It can erode your capacity for contentment and make it hard for others to comprehend anything you create. Greater insight, detachment, and a capacity to laugh at yourself can help you to recognise what might lie behind your obsession: a profound Aspiration toward experiencing the indestructible inner ground of your being.

Where angels fear to tread

Sometimes you can feel like a keg of dynamite just waiting to be set off. You can be bold to the point of foolhardiness, and you have a propensity to become furiously impatient if you feel thwarted by people or external circumstances. Delays can enrage you, even if they are of your own making, and when you want something, you want it right now. Your constant craving for new challenges can make it hard to accommodate the limits of ordinary everyday life. You have a surplus of energy that you tend to invest in potential rather than actuality, and there are times when you are capable of provoking an argument simply because you find consistency very boring. You feel most alive when you are courageously battling something or someone, and if the crusade has a good idea behind it, you are happy to join - provided you can lead it. Your impatience can be aggravated by your fixed convictions, and if you believe you are fighting for something you believe to be right, you can entrench yourself with great intensity, and enlist the support of as many other people as you can. You have the gift of inspiring others with your clarity and vision. But no one can ever tell you what to do.

It is likely that life itself will be your best antidote to Gluttony. However courageous you might be, you still have to live in a world in which changes happen far too slowly, and which is often

run by people whom you perceive, perhaps justifiably, as stupid and incompetent. You might not have to endure more obstructions than others, but it may often feel that way. Eventually you will have to learn greater patience and tolerance because you won't have any other option. Life can provide an excellent antidote to your kind of Gluttony, simply because you will never be able to have everything you want at the moment you want it. Although this learning process is virtually guaranteed, it might help if you avoided alienating the people who want to help and support you. The most unpleasant aspect of your Gluttony is that, although you are not an unkind person, you are capable of blind and unthinking reactions when you feel thwarted, and others might not have the capacity, as you do, to shake off the dust of battle and feel invigorated afterward.

But what does it mean?

Gluttony might seem to be one of the less serious and destructive of the Cardinal Sins, and it has provided the theme for many comic figures such as Shakespeare's Falstaff. But even this most obvious form of Gluttony is not a laughing matter, for it carries serious dangers, emotionally as well as physically. Subtler forms of Gluttony can be equally devastating because compulsions always leave us at the mercy of the unconscious complexes that rule our lives like a kind of fate. Jung, in company with many ancient philosophers, believed that compulsions did indeed constitute fate, and that only greater consciousness could break their power and allow their creative dimensions to be expressed in life. Only through a clearer recognition of the deeper symbolism behind your own Gluttony can you transform it into the kind of Aspiration that gives your life meaning, movement, hope, and faith.

Your faith in the strength of values rooted in the past is one of your strongest assets, offering stability and self-containment to your character and allowing you to appreciate all that has been tested by time. But be careful of becoming addicted to stability to the point where you reject change simply because it is change, and not because it has nothing to offer. You can become a glutton for clinging to the same safe track, and this could produce a sense of stagnation and frustration. Aspiring toward the preservation of values that are deep and true is an important dimension of your character. But refusal to allow your life, your perceptions, and your ideas to flow into new channels can become a form of Gluttony that masks profound insecurity and a fear that if the future is different it will inevitably be worse. Try to have more faith in yourself, rather than becoming compulsively dependent on objects and attitudes that you may have outgrown long ago.

The deeper symbolism that lies behind Gluttony hints at the source of that mysterious spark which injects every human life with a feeling of meaning and purpose. Without this spark, human beings grow weary, cynical, and depressed, and lose their joy in living. Gluttony can reveal itself as a bright beacon illuminating a road that leads toward a sense that we are part of an intelligent pattern and can contribute meaningfully to that pattern, whatever form our abilities and talents might take. While apparently one of the least serious of the Sins, Gluttony can also be the most important in terms of its relationship with our essential human need for meaning. However, Gluttony is also one of the hardest Sins to recognise, because we try to convince ourselves that the thing we crave is too necessary to be subjected to any efforts at analysis or transformation. If you can recognise that what you believe to be a passionate and justified need might really be a destructive compulsion, then you might begin to understand that any object of obsessive desire,

THE SEVEN SINS

Personal Horoscope by Liz Greene

for Adele Adkins

corporeal or non-corporeal, is a symbol that can open a door revealing that highly individual and life-enhancing Aspiration that lies behind your Gluttony.



The Third Sin: Wrath

Wrath, the next Cardinal Sin, is what we might understand as uncontrolled rage. In Latin, it was called 'Ira', from which we derive the English word ire. Uncontrolled rage is terrifying and destructive, whether it is expressed as physical or emotional violence acted out by one individual toward another, as violence perpetrated by one group against another group or against a scapegoat, or as the more impersonal but equally horrifying acts that accompany any war - whether that war is based on religious fanaticism, material acquisitiveness, political ideology, or all these and more. Rape, abuse, and assault are not always physical; they can also be emotional and intellectual, and sometimes we are not aware that we have had a subtle kind of violence perpetrated against us, or that we ourselves might have perpetrated it. Acts of Wrath are rightly considered sins, for they are among the most horrific experiences any human being can go through. Often the scars left after such experiences never fully heal. And because we know this, we are often frightened of our own anger, because we know where it could so easily lead.

In the medieval world, Wrath was associated with the Devil. But like the other Cardinal Sins, Wrath is a highly complex issue. Defensive anger is a fundamental instinct in all animal forms of life, and it can be entirely healthy and appropriate. The legal systems of most Western countries recognise the right to legitimate self-defence in the face of violence. Anger is also vitally necessary when we need to find ways to protect ourselves from psychological abuse and assert our identity as individuals. And there are moments in history when the only possible way to stem a tide of collective violence has been to respond with violence in order to survive. Uncontrolled Wrath is irredeemably destructive. But if we are unable to fight on a psychological level for the right to feel what we feel or think what we think, or to ask for well-earned respect in the world, our rage may take subtler and highly unpleasant forms. The creative face of Wrath might be called Courage, because whenever we seek to change things, inner or outer, we must display an initiative that requires bravery and honesty in equal measures. Sigmund Freud once said that the qualifications for being able to descend to the depths of oneself in order to understand one's own psyche are threefold: Courage, Courage, and Courage.

The long, slow burn

As a realist, you can harness anger much of the time and make it work to your advantage, because you know that it can serve your goals in life, whether material or spiritual. Challenges, especially when they are practical, often bring out the best in you. You know that directing anger into productive tasks and projects can help you to achieve your ambitions, and you don't always

view self-assertion as a bad or dangerous thing. Wrath might not present the same kind of problem to you as it might to many others, because you have a great deal of self-control and a good sense of your own limits. However, these virtues might not be helpful in the expression of justifiable personal anger, particularly if you are required to express emotions that threaten your material or domestic stability. You may save up anger to the point where your only outlet is to undermine the emotional or material well-being of those whom you resent, for you can have a long memory and sometimes find it hard to let go of grievances, real or imagined.

The threat of chaos

You depend on structure, tradition, and the test of time to determine the value of objects, relationships, and ideas. The disciplined Wrath that belongs to institutions such as the military may be acceptable because there is a respect for order. But undisciplined rage can be deeply threatening. You tend to suppress this face of Wrath, deny its existence within yourself, and find little understanding when you encounter it in others. But if you stifle your anger too forcibly, it may break out at the worst possible moment; and if you try to find disciplined outlets for it, your behaviour may become too harsh and almost military, especially in personal relationships. You need to understand the psychological dimensions of Wrath more deeply before you can transform it into the Courage you admire. You can be fearless in defending what you value and hold dear. But try to explore more deeply the Wrath that arises when individuality is crushed in the name of rules, habits, and conventions.

Learning to fight for a Self

You are more inclined to become angry on others' behalf than on your own. You can become outraged about any form of injustice, but it may be harder for you to assert your own feelings. You have plenty of energy and courage when it comes to championing your ideals, but the energy and courage seem to vanish when it comes to expressing your emotional needs. This can breed unconscious rage, which then increases the intensity with which you espouse the causes that matter to you. You believe in fair and civilised behaviour, but reformers can often be deeply unfair, refusing to recognise individual differences and values, and insisting that everyone adapts to one uniform doctrine. To make the most creative use of your considerable mental energy and gift for teamwork, make sure you can distinguish between genuine ideals and the personal resentments you may have accumulated through years of effacing your individual desires. You have a powerful and broad-ranging mind, and you are willing to fight for Truth, however you define it. You are interested in many different perspectives. But views that emerge from individual feeling and intuition rather than rational intellect can arouse great anger in you, revealing an inflexibility that protects you from the truth of your personal inner life.

Thinking is more important to you than action, and you will always want to explore the Why of existence rather than the How. Your sense of community with others is a creative asset, and your expression of strength and courage depends on your connection with them. But try to recognise that as an individual you are also of value, and have the right to strive for the fulfilment of your own desires and needs. You are more susceptible to unconscious Wrath than many people because you find it so hard to act on your own behalf, and you tend to rationalise your feelings by justifying or rejecting them in the name of an idea. Occasionally, rather than thinking all the time

of 'We', you might spend a bit more time considering 'I'. Otherwise you run the risk of becoming a machine for promulgating ideas that might not have any real connection to the unique dreams and hopes that exist within you as well as in every other individual.

Lies, damned lies, and Absolute Truths

Wrath may express itself in your life through your devotion to particular ideas and ideals. You have the mentality of a crusader, and you can become enraged when others fail to see reality as you see it. You want freedom to explore the world, mentally or physically or both, in order to pursue what you understand as Absolute Truths, but you are not always prepared to grant others that freedom if they don't agree with your viewpoint - even though your viewpoint may change several times during the course of your life. You have great mental energy and the courage of your convictions, and you don't need to borrow others' ideas to know what feels right to your own conscience. But beware of fanaticism, which is a form of Wrath emerging from deep but unconscious self-doubt and uncertainty about the convictions you hold so passionately. Rage disguised as evangelism will not help you to achieve real faith, although greater tolerance might. You strive to find answers to the big questions in life, but you do it through the intellect rather than listening to your feelings and intuition as well. This could make you a good friend of the sciences, but an intractable enemy of vision, inspiration, and inner experience. Try to be less structured in your thinking, and more open to the non-rational dimensions of life.

Fanaticism reflects an effort to convince oneself of the Truth: the more others can be bullied or manipulated into agreement, the more secure you feel, and the less your own doubts niggle. Fanaticism is closely related to Wrath, because having your views challenged or ignored by others is tantamount to defeat, if you identify your potency with your most cherished beliefs. You will always need something in which you can believe passionately, and some cause that you can fight for. But you may need to cultivate enough detachment to recognise that convictions that are absolutely right for you may be entirely wrong for someone else. This doesn't mean that everything is relative and that there are no ultimate moral or spiritual truths. But beliefs, ideals, and conceptual models can be interpreted on many levels and are always circumscribed by the limits of any individual human's understanding, including your own.

Can't get no satisfaction

You have a powerful will, plenty of energy, and an irrepressible determination to carve your own way in life. But your wishes often collide with the quiet voice of an inner self that draws you in directions that seem opposed to what you most strongly desire. You may feel that it is others, or life itself, which keeps getting in your way, and this can make you ill-tempered, angry, disruptive, and aggressive. Or, if you try to suppress the anger, you can feel depressed and apathetic. Or you may swing between the two. But the real obstacle is within you, and it is not something negative or destructive that seems to pull you along a path that makes you want to say, along with the Rolling Stones, that you 'can't get no satisfaction'. It may be necessary for your development as a complete individual to work with your desires in a way that is creative rather than repressive, and that can direct your energy into goals that serve that quiet inner voice.

The lifelong process of becoming yourself, which Jung called 'individuation', doesn't require exorcising your demons, or perfecting what is imperfect, or transcending what you are meant to be. But this process may involve frustration because you need to accommodate a fundamental conflict between your strong desire nature and a deeper need to focus your life on an inner vision that gives you a sense of meaning and purpose. Try to develop more trust in your inner world, rather than trying to solve your conflict through aggressively conquering the outer world or suppressing desire to the point where you lose your faith in yourself. Wrath will always be a problem because you aren't a lukewarm person and you feel things passionately, even if you try to stifle those passions. But Wrath can also become the courage to contain your anger and wait until you have a clear intuition of the path all that energy is ultimately meant to serve.

Persuasion

You can cloak Wrath with great amiability and charm, and this helps not only to soften your anger, but also to hide it from yourself. You have a genuine desire to behave in a kind and civilised way and to be please and be pleased by others, and this keeps you out of trouble with those close to you. But you are also frightened that you might be rejected if you assert your will too strongly. You may work hard to convince yourself that you don't feel anger at all, when in fact you can feel things passionately. In your close relationships, your need for harmony often makes you say 'Yes' when you mean 'No', and agree when you really want to disagree strongly. This can cause subtle dishonesty in your intimate life, for any anger or frustration you experience may be hard to communicate, and you may opt for a peaceful life at the expense of your own desires, or choose duplicity with unfortunate consequences if you are found out. You can be delightfully charming and flirtatious. You have a genuine interest in people, and a deep love of constant new experiences you can learn from. But you can also utilise your charm to exploit others and persuade them to believe whatever story you choose to tell. Make sure you are as aware of your own and others' emotional needs as you are of your power to charm.

Your ability to balance self-assertiveness with diplomacy is a great asset and a genuine gift. But you need to recognise when you are really angry, and find ways of expressing it - diplomatically, because this allows you to maintain good relations with others, but also honestly, because otherwise you run the risk of saving up a big fund of anger. When you feel resentful, you tend to express it in indirect ways, through verbal inferences that hurt or through actions that quietly undermine the feelings of others. You may also use duplicity, hoping that it will help you to maintain harmony but still do exactly what you want. Dealing with Wrath always requires consciousness. Uncontrolled rage is destructive, but yours is not uncontrolled. However, it may be unconscious, because you are often too dependent on harmony to courageously face the kind of confrontations that are healthy and necessary in every close relationship.

Sulks and tantrums

Be careful of dramatising your responses to situations that arouse your anger. Lack of reflection can make you behave in rash and impulsive ways that may get you in trouble. Your anger is exaggerated by your tendency to see everything as a Shakespearean drama, in which a mildly annoying person becomes a dangerous villain, and a sensible restriction placed on your freedom becomes imprisonment in a dungeon. You can be exceedingly self-willed because you inflate

everything, including your desires and the anger that quickly erupts when those desires aren't immediately fulfilled. You have immense energy, but sometimes you don't know what to do with it, and impatience can be a serious handicap if you are trying to enlist the cooperation of others or pursue a task that requires careful attention. At times you can behave like a small child having a very large tantrum, and collisions with authority are usually of your own making. Your anger can take the form of excessive self-indulgence if you feel trapped, thwarted, or frustrated. You have big appetites and little patience with any form of self-discipline, and you may fail to understand why courting danger could be a foolish endeavour. But your self-indulgence is often a soporific intended to stifle Wrath, not a creative way of dealing with it.

Your rage isn't likely to be malicious or spiteful. It would be destructive to repress anger, but equally destructive to unleash it unthinkingly, especially when your relationships, your work, or your legal freedoms are at stake. Putting your energy into pursuits that avoid the frustration of repetitive tasks and the constriction of others' authority can help you to avoid unnecessary explosions. Remind yourself on a regular basis that not everyone possesses your courage and willingness to take risks; they may be frightened by your impulsiveness, or threatened by your tendency to bring things out into the open that they would rather keep hidden behind closed doors. Greater tolerance for those lacking your fighting spirit can help you to temper Wrath without repressing it, and a working life that offers a high degree of autonomy can help you to overcome the resentment that comes from feeling your freedom has been compromised.

Running with a tethered ankle

Painful experiences in early life have created a tendency to hold your anger in check, and to question your ability to fulfil your desires without meeting obstruction. The awareness that there are some things in life that even a powerful will cannot alter has left you with feelings of vulnerability, but you also have a great survival capacity that increases your strength and determination. You unleash that strength in careful ways that don't attract violent opposition. Although this might sound negative, it is a positive asset that can help you to deal with Wrath in constructive ways. You are often unsure of yourself and easily lose faith in your decisions and your capacity to act on them. But your hesitancy is a brake on rashness, allowing you to reflect before you act. Out of something painful, something creative has formed, giving you a strong sense of empathy for those who, like you, have been the unwilling object of someone else's will. Receptivity to a long ancestral memory of the pain of the scapegoat and the social misfit have made you fearful of attracting the anger of the collective. Wrath can terrify you because you understand at a profound level what happens when it erupts in an unthinking collective. But you can develop deep insight into the ways in which victims and persecutors mirror each other.

Because your chief experience of Wrath has probably been that of others' anger toward you at a time in life when you were not old enough to defend yourself, you are likely to have difficulty in valuing your own anger, let alone expressing it when you need to. But this doesn't mean you are sitting on an emotional time-bomb. You have insight and patience distilled from a deep level of anxiety and unhappiness, and paradoxically, that which has harmed you has also made you stronger, more insightful, and more able to handle destructive emotions because you know too well what their effect can be. You can't unlearn what you have learned and become an innocent believer in La-La Land. But your pain has given you empathy and respect for restraint, as well as a

sensible and life-preserving mistrust of the collective. It also allows you to look more deeply at the roots of Wrath and make creative use of it as a tool for healing and understanding.

Fighting to become

Wrath can be a terrifying and destructive experience, whether it erupts within us or we experience it at the hands of others. But Wrath is also deeply linked with courage and the spark of individuality that allows us to fight for the right to become ourselves. Obvious Wrath can be observed in any act of violence or abuse, physical or psychological, but indirect Wrath is a lot harder to spot. It can take the form of spite, where a person unconsciously, or perhaps deliberately, tries to wound or belittle another person because of an imagined slight or injury, or because of corrosive Envy. Indirect Wrath can also turn against the person feeling it, and then it can become self-destructive: a repeating pattern of feeling exploited, bullied, injured, or controlled. Wrath can also, if powerfully repressed, emerge through the body, expressing itself in psychologically linked symptoms that mysteriously reflect the nature of Wrath itself: burning, itching, and inflammation, as well as addictions that numb the furious fire. To transform Wrath into courage, you must find the courage to confront your own Wrath.

You might respect the necessity for battle, but you tend to view it from a distance rather than recognising its devastating emotional consequences. You dislike violating the unspoken expectations of the collective because those expectations give you a sense of security. Wrath has no respect for rules of any kind, and courage is likewise a spontaneous, irrational, and miraculous intervention from somewhere deep within, called out by a response to circumstances rather than by an act of will. Handling Wrath creatively may involve breaking the social rules or going against collective assumptions of 'normal' behaviour. It may also require the courage to express individuality when necessary. The more you try to inhibit your feelings, the more destructive your rage is likely to be. Honesty about your emotions can help you to find the most appropriate expression for anger while still maintaining the structures and emotional bonds that you value.

Wrath is perhaps the most frightening of the seven Sins, because its expressions often involve physical harm to others and to oneself. But like the other Sins, Wrath has a core that is immensely creative and necessary for the unfolding of life and of your own individuality. The most difficult and paradoxical dimension of Wrath in the modern world is its suppression and denigration through our sometimes impossible ideals and ideologies. Because humans so often feel guilty and ashamed about even the most justified anger, unjustified rage erupts in ways that are often out of control, in collectives as well as individuals. The more you as an individual can explore the nature and causes of your anger, your resentment, your feelings of powerlessness, and your urge to have greater power and self-determination, the more Courage you will discover to help you deal with life, and your own emotions, honestly and fairly.



The Fourth Sin: Pride

The Fourth Cardinal Sin, according to the early Church Fathers, is Pride, which in Latin was known as 'Superbia'. From this Latin root we get the English word superb. The sin of Pride, in its worst forms, reflects one's conviction that one is indeed superb, and vastly superior to other, lesser beings. But Pride, as with all the Cardinal Sins, can be much more complex. There are forms of pride that are positive and life-affirming - for example, the pride that makes us desire to be self-sufficient rather than utterly dependent on others, or the pride that makes us determined to uphold a conviction or a promise even when we feel very afraid. In both these examples, however, the core of the complex issue of Pride is revealed: it can only exist in relation to others. When we are by ourselves, we don't tend to feel proud, because there is no one to impress. And the sin of Pride is really about impressing others and at the same time making it clear that we are superior in some way.

But Pride, like the other sins, has a deeper and more mysterious core. This core is concerned with love, but not the love that we experience for other people. It is really love of that inner spirit - what the Greeks called the 'daimon' - that we might sometimes glimpse in rare moments when we experience a sense of real connection with a greater universe and a strong feeling of personal destiny. In some ancient philosophies it was believed that each soul was given a 'daimon' at birth: a companion, guide, and embodiment of the individual's destined path in life. Jung called it the Self, and others have given it other names. When we are in touch with it, we have no need to use Pride as a way of impressing others, or making ourselves feel powerful and important. Pride in achievements or talents has its uses, but it can easily slip into the arrogance of 'Superbia', especially as a way of compensating for inner insecurities. Pride in our loyalty to our 'daimon' or inner Self reflects the nature of the love that the sin of Pride conceals at its core.

Discovering Wonderland

You take pride in your ability to deal with the mundane world and its demands and responsibilities. You aren't afraid to work hard, and you don't expect free lunches. But deeper pride in your own individuality may be harder for you to achieve. The circuitous road to solid self-esteem requires a willingness to ignore what is safe and known, and sometimes make choices that others might regard as eccentric, irresponsible, or simply foolish. You may have followed your impulses and done many unconventional things in your life, and others might see you as bold and individualistic. But when you do break the rules and gamble on a dream, you are likely to suffer great anxiety about whether the world will retaliate by making things tougher. Offering loyalty to an

inner self that you can't see, touch, or explain might not always be safe, but it can offer a sense of meaning that challenging circumstances can never destroy.

Breaking with tradition

The idea of following your individual *daimon* may challenge your way of thinking, because you rely on values that have their roots in traditions that have been tested over time. Although you are capable of translating these values into individual goals, it isn't easy for you to turn your back on collective expectations, especially if they promise a secure place in the world. You are proud of your self-discipline, your ability to be productive and responsible, and your attentiveness to history and its lessons. You draw great strength from feeling that there are deep roots beneath your feet that protect and sustain you. But genuine self-esteem may also depend on listening to the individual voice of your own soul, which may, at times, require you to break with the past so that your creative energy is free to develop. Try not to get stuck, because ignoring this inner voice can lead you to stifle others' potentials as well as your own. And it can also lead to the nagging sense that life has passed you by.

Shifting foundations

You are justifiably proud of your steady, pragmatic nature, and you experience deep satisfaction when others rely on your strength. You find your way through difficulties with patience, calm, and realism, and your confidence grows from your ability to work slowly and steadily toward a goal of harmony and stability. But you may rely too much on these gifts to define yourself, and this can make you stubborn, intractable, and resistant to any change that you yourself have not initiated. False Pride in your strength can mask a fear of the unknown and an incipient panic when you face those mysterious patterns in life that defy practical understanding and require you to accept what you cannot resist. You may experience great anxiety when dealing with the realms of feeling, intuition, and imagination, and you might be wise to look more deeply at the inner world rather than focusing entirely on what you perceive through the senses alone. You can be a steady and loyal friend and the stalwart in any group with which you are involved. Make sure that excessive Pride in your reliability doesn't lead you to shoulder other people's tasks to the point where you can't express your own values and desires. You need people around you who value your contributions, but not people who exploit your diligence.

Your confidence depends on making the most creative use of your strength, talents, and appreciation of the material world. Your feeling for beauty is an important dimension of your individual identity, and you need to create it or surround yourself with it in concrete forms. But be careful to avoid false Pride, which can make you make you denigrate whatever you are unable to understand, measure, or define in practical terms. This is especially true of your powerful emotions and sudden intuitions, which will always defy any attempt to suppress them or explain them away. If you wish to experience the kind of inner connectedness that provides an enduring sense of self-esteem, you will need to learn to let go when life requires it, acknowledge your vulnerability, exhibit greater humility toward what you don't understand, and recognise that there are many things in life that will always defy your definitions of reality.

The love of community

You want to feel you are connected, not only to those close to you, but also to a wider world in which the trends, currents, and new ideas of the time are available for your creative intervention. You are highly idealistic about how you believe the world could be, and strongly motivated to make a significant contribution - not to become a 'celebrity', but to feel you are part of a network of innovative souls who are paving the way to a better future. You are justifiably proud of the clarity of your ideas and your contribution to the larger community. But don't let false Pride in your collective role serve as a defence against deep personal insecurity and the fear of loneliness and isolation. Make sure you can recognise, value, and express your individual creative spirit and emotional needs. You aren't simply a useful component in a vast interconnected network, and a sense of genuine self-esteem requires validation of your individual self. You are usually the stabilising factor in any group, because you have the ability to hold things together and bring them down to earth. In the realm of ideas, this is a great virtue, because you can always see what is achievable and what is not. But be careful of stubborn intransigence and inflexibility. Sometimes dreamers see more than you do, if your eyes are always on the ground.

At some point in your life, you will find yourself at the centre of a network of individuals, all of whom participate in a similar vision of progress or a similar love of a particular craft, skill, or set of beliefs. This kind of involvement gives your life a sense of meaning and purpose. But you will always need to find creative ways of working with the tension between your need to participate in group life and your need to remain loyal to your own inner voice and values. Tension may also arise because you love working with others, but you will always try to dominate any group in which you are involved because you know you are a competent leader and your ideas are innovative as well as sound. The more you can work toward a balance between your personal needs and creative talents and your sense of obligation to the larger community, the more genuine self-esteem you will enjoy, and the more creative your contribution to the world can be.

Danger: high explosives

You have a great deal of courage, whether or not you can acknowledge it. But it may be harder to feel a genuine sense of self-esteem because you worry so much about handling your anger and aggression positively. This can make you swing between extremes. Sometimes you can lose your temper at the smallest of triggers, but at other times you allow yourself to be pushed about by others because you are frightened of appearing aggressive. False Pride in reactive rage won't make you truly strong or courageous. It is a defence against feeling powerless and uncomfortable with who you are. But if you disconnect from your anger and allow others to bully or manipulate you, this won't give you confidence either. Nor will indirect ways of expressing rage. You need to learn to assert your individuality honestly and consciously when it's necessary, rather than saving up fury and venting it in ways that undermine any feelings of self-worth. You see clearly what you want to achieve on behalf of others or in the name of an ideal. But asserting your personal values may be harder. You won't escape the inner challenge of becoming an individual by hiding behind ideas that justify self-assertion while allowing you to feel selfless. Individuals, not hypothetical models of humanity, create genuine progress in the world.

Look carefully at your conscious goals and aspirations, for some of them might not be as independent and individual as you may think. You may have become accustomed to bowing to others' wishes in early life, and now it could be hard for you to distinguish between what you truly want for yourself, and what others want from you. Anger can build up inside you because you are trying too hard to fulfil expectations that are not your own, and this can undermine your self-esteem and make you even angrier. Honest self-expression can be hard because you can swing from one extreme to the other without knowing whether you are simply reacting or whether you are really expressing your deepest values. Building a sense of real connectedness may require a lot of introspection and reflection before you can distinguish between knee-jerk reactions of rebellion and the aspirations that reflect your deepest inner Self.

Life at the casino

The excitement of the big win can fill you with joy. But you may assume that you will always win because you feel life favours you, and the cavalry will always ride to the rescue even when things look dire. You have immense faith in your lucky star, and your enthusiasm can be infectious and broaden the lives of others. But false Pride can make you inflate and overestimate yourself; and the problematic consequences aren't due to bad luck or other people's malice, but rather, to your own refusal to accept the limitations of mortality and the mundane world. Pride and Greed can form a dangerous alliance, and you can never get enough big, lucky wins. On certain levels life may indeed be a gamble. But there are other levels that require responsiveness to others, hard work and dedication, and the willingness to accept your ordinary humanness. All hot air balloons eventually have to land on the ground before they rise again; make sure yours lands softly. Making a significant contribution to the larger community inspires you and helps you to feel you are living a meaningful life. You can be generous and inspiring in any group effort. But be careful to avoid the false Pride of believing you belong to some kind of spiritual, moral, intellectual, or ideological elite that entitles you to ignore the value of others' feelings and ideas.

You can be generous and even profligate with your time and resources, and when things don't go your way, you get up and try again. You can be genuinely beneficent in your dealings with others. Life tends to give back what we give to it, and your confidence and enthusiasm will usually be met with good will from other people - as long as you don't expect them to clean up any messes afterward. Your good luck depends largely on both intuitive opportunism and the positive qualities you display toward others, because when your open-handedness is unforced - as it usually is - you tend to attract bounty in return. But genuine self-esteem needs to be built on something more than good luck, generosity, and faith in your future. You need more realism, patience, and sensitivity, and less of that prideful inclination to fly, like Icarus, too close to the Sun without considering the consequences when the heat melts the wax on your wings.

The treasure hard to attain

Your special receptivity to the world of the imagination can be a source of positive pride, especially if you use your gifts in the service of others. But make sure that false Pride in your special vision doesn't become an excuse to avoid the challenges and responsibilities of material life. Your greatest danger is the risk of losing your balance and failing to acknowledge that your

calling, however valid and authentic, doesn't exempt you from the necessity of recognising when you are waiting for others to support and serve you while you focus on some higher goal. Pride may creep into your life if you begin to believe that you were put on this earth solely to save others, or that your gifts entitle you to special exemptions. If you can stay true to your ordinary humanity as well as your inner vision, it will affirm the humanity of others, and prevent you from isolating yourself in an inflated bubble that leads anywhere except to genuine self-esteem. You glimpse hidden mysteries and heightened states of awareness through your close relationships. You can find a romantic vision in even the most difficult of partnerships, at least in the beginning. But you need firm boundaries and greater realism in dealing with other people's emotional complexities. The longing to save or be saved can't solve ordinary human conflicts.

Your sensitivity to the currents of the larger collective can be an essential element in living a meaningful life, as well as the foundation for a fulfilling vocation. You would be wise to develop your talents in workable ways, or you may be overwhelmed by others' emotions to the point where you can't distinguish between what belongs to them and what is genuinely yours. Then you may begin to seek other, less productive means of escape in order to avoid the reality of human suffering and separateness. Work hard to affirm your individual identity, with all its ordinary selfish failings, rather than sacrificing yourself to your art, your vision, or a spiritual source that might or might not really want that kind of self-immolation. True self-esteem depends on keeping one foot firmly on the earth of your humanness, and the other in that Otherworld which you feel impelled to serve through the gifts that have been given to you.

Eat or be eaten

Your life may be full of immense challenges, dramatic endings, and new beginnings, and something deep within you demands crises in order to fulfil your determination to prove your strength. Individuality is equivalent to survival, which means that your self-confidence depends on knowing that you can overcome any obstacle and withstand any crisis or disaster. You are proud of your strength, determination, and resilience. But life is not only about eating or being eaten, and it can be hard for you to experience the joy and pleasure of the moment. False Pride in your strength can prevent you from recognising how your perception of a world full of enemies, and your proud refusal to bow to what you perceive as defeat, have led you into painful power-battles. You are likely to fight back with every resource at your disposal, including manipulation. But genuine self-esteem can't grow from seeing life as an angry struggle for survival. In matters of love and creative expression, your depth and intensity make it impossible to take things lightly. You can love and hate deeply and irrevocably. And any creative work can become a source of either regeneration or destructiveness, because it is essential to your sense of identity. Try to discover the spontaneous joy that might infuse your efforts with gentleness and flexibility.

As long as Pride doesn't secretly ally itself with your personal grievances and suspicion of the motives of others, you can turn your strength into a powerful tool for transformation, because your penetrating insights can reach to the deepest levels of human nature. But you need to avoid seeking a scapegoat for all the human ills you perceive around you and all the personal unhappiness you may have experienced. If you cannot learn to value kindness and gentle feelings as well as the grand crises of domination and submission, Pride may feed not only on your own past hurts and injuries, but on a sense of oppression that stretches back into your family history. Then

you may find yourself becoming fanatical about a cause, determined to perceive others as enemies, and so addicted to the archetypal theme of the Battle with Darkness that you fail to notice you have lost your self-esteem and your individual values somewhere along the way.

The Self behind the self

The Sin of Pride has many faces. The kind of pride expressed through characteristic manifestations such as pride in accomplishments, pride in family, group, or nation, or pride in personal qualities, is not in itself sinful. Pride has many positive and confidence-building qualities, even in its most worldly forms. But the Sin of Pride as *Superbia* - a sense of superiority - can indeed be a Sin, because it belittles the value of others and can justify controlling or harming them in the name of one's own greater cleverness, talent, spiritual evolution, empathy, or social awareness. A sense of self-worth rooted in a deep connection with an inner Self that is both individual and part of a larger unity is the antidote to the more destructive expressions of Pride, transforming it into a love of the mystery that lies behind the gifts, successes, achievements, sufferings, struggles, and rewards you have experienced in life.

You are justifiably proud of your adherence to structure and tradition, and your respect for the conventions that allow the world to run in a civilised and orderly way. But be careful of using false Pride as a defence against all that you fear within yourself and in the world around you: chaos, change, and the unpredictability of human emotions and instincts. You need to acknowledge and value those aspects of your nature that long to break free and pursue new ideas and unknown pathways, for it is through the discovery of an independent spirit that you can build an authentic sense of self. The more you shelter behind the rules, the less truly confident you will feel. Take pride in your achievements and your strength, but try also to recognise those more anarchic elements within you that are the true source of creativity and that can help you to experience yourself as a whole individual.

Pride, of all the Cardinal Sins, is the one most intimately related to a sense of destiny and purpose. Learning to differentiate between what you have achieved through your own effort and dedication, and what you have been given as gifts for which you are a custodian, a vehicle, and a mouthpiece, is not an easy task for anyone. It is particularly difficult because, even if the mysterious source of your gifts is acknowledged as something other than yourself, Pride can slip in and claim superiority because you might secretly feel you are some kind of chosen vessel. Pride needs an equal measure of the antidote of humility before it can reveal its most creative face. Michelangelo once described the art of sculpting as releasing the innate design already inherent in the stone, rather than making it up himself. It is in this spirit of recognising that each of us is a vessel for a special individuality that Pride can become a source of love - including that elusive expression we often misunderstand and call self-love, which is really love of the Self.



The Fifth Sin: Lust

The Fifth Cardinal Sin is Lust. This sin was called 'Luxuria' in the medieval Christian world, and it was related to sexual desire and what was known as voluptuousness: unbridled sensuality. Times have changed since then, and Lust is hardly viewed as a sin these days in Western cultures; it is more surprising to encounter individuals of either sex who deny feeling it or, for that matter, doing their utmost to satisfy it. And when Lust is experienced and pursued between consenting adults, it is indeed difficult to perceive it as a sin. In recent times it has become an image of glamour, adding spice to advertisements for perfume, cosmetics, clothing, automobiles, mobile phones, and even household goods like toilet cleaners and kitchen towels. We lust after film stars and pop singers, and referring to someone as 'eye candy' is intended as a compliment. We devour with our eyes the person who arouses our lust.

But in older texts describing the soul's journey from its heavenly home into earthly incarnation, the term used for Lust was not exclusively sexual, nor even necessarily sensual. It was described as 'the Lust whereby men are deceived', suggesting that desire in itself is not a sin, but that it can become compulsive and destructive when it involves self-deception or the deception of others. Lust was also called 'Inappropriate Longing', revealing yet another, subtler, yet extremely important dimension of Lust: desiring that which one has no right to desire. And erotic desire is not necessarily exclusively sensual either; the great god Eros, from whose name we get the word 'erotic', was understood as that cosmic power which bound the disparate elements of the universe together, and this great deity symbolised intense passion of any kind, including intellectual and spiritual desire. The sin of Lust is not, after all, simply 'unbridled sensuality'. And if we can begin to understand what constitutes 'inappropriate longing' for each individual, Lust might turn out to be an immensely creative force; for what we cannot possess in the outer world, we can nourish in the inner, and discover in the process a profound experience of joy.

Transgressing boundaries

You are comfortable living in the material world, and Lust in the form of erotic desire may not seem like a sin at all to you. But there are forms of Lust that you might not recognise for what they really are. Your appreciation of the beauty and pleasure in nature, in sensual gratification, in craftsmanship and skill, and in the orderly patterns and cycles of everyday life, is not in itself destructive. But Lust as a Sin is not concerned with simple delight in the sensory world. Its subtler face concerns self-deception and the deceit of others, and it can involve an inappropriate desire for people, things, and ideas that are not rightfully yours to possess. Lust may involve a

passionate desire for goals that transgress the boundaries of what life permits you to have - in other words, longing to become someone other than yourself - leaving you resentful and inclined to seek a culprit or a scapegoat to blame for your sense of deprivation.

Recreating the past

You value structure and tradition, but you are realistic enough to accept the reality of physical Lust and find ways of accommodating it in your life without too much disruption to your personal world. But there are many forms of Lust, and yours may be an 'inappropriate longing' for values that have passed their sell-by date but which you cling to because they give you a sense of safety and personal authority. Insisting on a hierarchy of rules that deny others - especially those you love - the right to greater freedom and individuality is a Lust for control. It can be more destructive than sensual Lust because it favours attitudes that stifle new possibilities, and it can make you intolerant and narrow. Traditional values can be the strong glue that binds families and societies together, and the present world may need more of them. But try to recognise when your longing begins to stifle everything innovative and creative in others and in yourself.

The butterfly effect

You might not be particularly driven by Lust in the physical sense. But you can be seduced by the belief that you can enjoy encounters with many different people without anyone becoming emotionally clingy, possessive, or angry. You love the intellectual stimulation of others' minds and the excitement of erotic exchanges that don't necessarily have to turn into physical intimacy. This flirtatious quality gives you great charm, and you can be a fascinating companion. But your longing for the freedom to delight whom you please and do whatever you want can make you insensitive and even inadvertently cruel to people for whom deep emotional exchange is more important than the sparkling surface of life. It is in your nature to slip away from onerous emotional constraints because you love discovering new people and ideas. But try to be conscious of those times when your need to sparkle tramples on the feelings of those closest to you. You are deeply sensitive to the collective human longing for beauty, and you have the gift of being able to articulate this longing in creative forms. Don't let too much rationality interfere with your receptivity, or use your intellect as a defence against images and feelings that need to be given expression. Cultivating the skills to give shape to your ideas is worth the effort.

A longing for constant mental stimulation can be immensely creative, allowing you to express new ideas to others in eloquent and inspiring ways. Lust for constant change in your contacts with others can also be creative, for you always learn through your exchanges, and others benefit from the knowledge you acquire. But a longing for unconditional acceptance of inconstancy might not be appropriate if you want stable and emotionally rewarding personal and professional relationships. You may find partners and colleagues who can give you the freedom you desire, and you will always have friends who value your wit and grace and have no wish to tie you down. But you are drawn to people who can give you an emotional anchor, and these people may not accept the role in which you cast them. Try to cultivate more sensitivity and a greater awareness of what you really need, rather than merely following the lure of what enchants you.

The enchantment of relinquishment

You pursue your deepest longings privately and even secretly, although not necessarily because you have any moral objections to Lust. You yearn for an ineffable experience of oneness, and your desire to lose yourself doesn't belong to the realm of sensual satisfaction because it is your human body that defines your separateness. Deep down, your Lust is a mystical longing, even if sensual gratification is the surface level of its object. You are in love with the sacrificial act of desiring what you cannot have or openly possess because of the way in which it transforms you, and an ideal of self-abnegation colours the ways in which you experience desire. Illicit love, love that can't be fulfilled openly, or love for someone unobtainable, may provide you with avenues to pursue your quest for dissolving into a greater unity. Your longing must remain unsatisfied as long as you exist in a mortal body, because it offers a bridge into the realm of the unseen. Your need for freedom and flexibility can draw you to relationships that don't tie you down, while allowing you room to explore the inner realm without the emotional limits of everyday life. While this can nourish your creativity, it can also involve insensitivity to others' feelings. You can't merge with loved ones and remain detached and distant at the same time.

Conflict between your ordinary human desire for sensual gratification and your longing for an experience of union with the ineffable can generate painful inner tension. You may try to deal with the conflict by suppressing your desires, or escaping them through means that damage your health and wellbeing. Be careful of self-pity and resentment because you feel life has treated you unfairly. You need to take responsibility for your own choices and the kind of relationships in which you are inclined to become involved. Recognising the impossibility of fully satisfying your longing through any human object, and understanding that the union you seek is with something incorporeal and beyond the realm of human knowledge, can help you to value your actual relationships and allow you to express your vision of timeless beauty through creative forms that infuse the most ordinary aspects of everyday life with a hint of the ineffable.

Divided desires

Your longing for a perfect love conflicts with your instinctual emotional needs, and this can leave you with a chronic sense of dissatisfaction, no matter how hard you try to control or rationalise it. What you desire most intensely, and what you need for a sense of emotional security, often collide, and you find it hard to decide which path to pursue and which aspects of your emotional life deserve your loyalty. You often feel disappointed in the people around you because you convince yourself they can never fulfil your needs; and you may blame them for demanding too much from you, when it is really you who demands that others solve the dichotomy in your own nature. The ideal relationship you long for is often inimical to what might give you a real sense of security. You suffer from a chronic inner battle between desire and safety, and are forever feeling others have let you down; but the resolution of the conflict may lie within you. Even if you long for emotional closeness and stability, you need the freedom to pursue greener pastures and extricate yourself from claustrophobic emotional demands if you feel you have to. You need to honour both aspects of your nature, rather than identifying with one side and then encountering the other through partners who act it out for you.

Your conflict between desires and needs may be uncomfortable, but it is highly creative. Life will compel you to learn to express your emotions honestly, and compulsive pursuit of your longing will always be challenged by anxiety and emotional discomfort. If you are inclined to pursue the kind of Lust that involves deception or self-deception, your instincts will usually tell you, loudly and insistently, that this isn't the most helpful way to go. And even if you succeed in deception, you will unconsciously ensure that the people you are trying to deceive will discover the deception. Your perennial emotional discontent could be a friend when it comes to your inner development, if you can recognise that it may be wiser to deal with the objects of your longing as symbols that lead to deeper self-understanding, rather than concrete actualities that force you to choose between opposing aspects of yourself that are equally valid and necessary.

In the eye of the beholder

You have a painful longing to be something other than you are. Your lack of self-worth is linked to your early life, and to experiences of unmerited rejection, hurt, or scapegoating, perhaps within the family, but perhaps also among your peers and in the larger community. Now you have a hard time believing that you will find contentment. When you look in the mirror, you see only the flaws you believe you must attempt to correct or permanently endure, and not your real self. Lovability, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, but in your own eyes, your worth is measured against the expectations and limited perceptions of others, and not according to knowledge of your real self. You may harbour bitterness, resentment, or feelings of victimisation. But you need to step back from this negative perception. The collective can often be blind, cruel, opinionated, and stupid; but you don't have to accept its distorted values. Ancient patterns in your family background, going back over many generations, may highlight your sense of being an outsider. You aren't inclined to trust life, even when you need to let go and allow yourself to feel part of a greater whole. Try to learn as much as you can about the ways in which the past has undermined your confidence and exaggerated your resentment.

Manipulating your relationships won't help you to build real confidence, and honesty with yourself might be wiser if you want to work creatively with the insecurities that dog you. You need a broader, more inclusive understanding of your past hurts, for they may reflect the failings of humans as a collective rather than any real failing in you. You need to trust both yourself and those you love, but this won't happen unless you can see how often you misinterpret others' feelings toward you, and allow negative expectations to block any love or support they try to offer. You are too perceptive to accept shallow sentiment in a relationship; but try to share your vulnerability rather than withholding love, persisting in being victimised, or displaying unconscious emotional cruelty as a means of avoiding hurt. With insight and inner work, you can enjoy rewarding and joyful relationships as well as deep wisdom about the nature of human love.

The pied piper

You don't need to be pushy to get what you desire, because you can usually charm others so elegantly that they can't refuse you. You have refinement and finesse, and you will always be able to attract others. You can be kind even when you are determined to have your way, although you prefer enough challenge to alleviate the boredom that arises if a relationship is devoid of sparks for too long. Your longing for excitement is tempered by consideration, and you are wise enough

to pursue objects that you know are obtainable. But there may be times when you have to fight on your own behalf, and your civilised approach may not always be viable. Don't try too hard to please everyone while you pursue your goals. You long for conquests that avoid any serious collision with others and carry no risk of emotional turbulence, and you can feel baffled and miserable when you discover that life, and love, aren't always that easy or comfortable. You have the gift of being reasonable, and you often achieve your desires because you can convince others to give you support. Because you are genuinely interested in them, they are likely to respond to your wishes. But you may overlook your own feelings as well as those of others, and fail to recognise when reason might not be the best approach in a relationship.

Lust in its sensual forms isn't likely to be a painful issue in your life, because your longings, even when they are intense, are usually tempered by charm and civilised behaviour, and you rarely pursue an unobtainable object of desire. But your yearning can become 'inappropriate' if you assume that you will always get what you want without the discomfort of open confrontation. Most of the time, your desire to win the prize with a minimum of conflict is likely to be fulfilled. Some of the time, you may need to deal with chaotic and aggressive elements within yourself and in others that require greater insight, toughness, and willingness to accept aspects of human nature that you might prefer to avoid. And sometimes you may need to follow a cherished longing on your own, without becoming resentful if loved ones don't follow you. Sadly, life might not allow you to get everything you want while pleasing everyone at the same time.

Strict conditions

Lust can arouse deep conflict in you. You are too lacking in real self-esteem to believe you can ever achieve the object of your desire, and you tend to choose safe relationships that protect you from vulnerability but don't satisfy your deeper longings. Lust may be accompanied by pain at various times in your life, but the pain can act as a catalyst for insight and wisdom. You carry deep insecurities that are rooted in childhood, reflecting a lack of belief in your worth and an entrenched assumption that if anyone ever really gets to know you, they won't find you lovable. You believe that you have to earn love by becoming what others want you to be, and then you feel hurt and rejected when they don't recognise or want who you really are. You need to explore your past to understand why you always expect love to be conditional rather than freely given, and why you yearn for an idealised, perfect love that can never be achieved in any human life. You have deep doubt in your own authority, and you are fearful that, if you don't follow the world's rules, you will suffer. This insecurity can make you long for power, which can stifle your emotional expression and make you determined to control any relationship in which you feel vulnerable. But taking the path of safety will leave you feeling lonely and emotionally hungry.

Lust coloured by insecurity can have painful repercussions. You may feel very sorry for yourself because you have been denied the kind of happiness you long for. But self-pity won't solve the problem. You may become bitter and view others as unloving, hardening your heart to protect yourself against hurt. But bitterness will leave you feeling even more devalued. You may select partners whom you don't desire as much as they desire you, hoping to keep your vulnerability safe. Or you may endure a repeating pattern of denigration by people who mirror your own self-denigration. Alternatively, you could recognise that the naïve, sentimental love of romantic novels and films could never suit your depth and complexity. Frustration of a dream of perfect love

may leave you hungry, but it will not starve you if you can build a sense of self-worth from within, rather than expecting others to heal your childhood wounds and provide it for you.

Beauty and the Best

Lust, however harmless we might perceive it in our so-called 'permissive society', can be a powerfully destructive force. Homer, in *The Iliad*, wrote of the ruin of the great city of Troy through the lust of Paris, a Trojan prince, for Helen, the queen of Sparta, who happened to be married to someone else. Myth and literature are full of the corrosive effects of Lust, and its dangers don't always reflect the precepts of an intolerant religious or moral doctrine. Lust is as psychological as all the other Sins, and it confronts us with the necessity of recognising the limits life places on our desires and dreams. Yet because of the elusiveness of the true symbolic nature of Lust, we may not recognise when we are possessed by it, and we may try to convince ourselves that our desires are legitimate and even selfless, and therefore merit gratification without any inner reflection.

You are no more immune to the sensual attractions of Lust than anyone else, but if you choose to pursue them, you tend to be more careful than many people, in order to ensure that the security of your life isn't threatened. But a subtler kind of Lust may trouble you: the deep longing for change and transformation, which collides with your stubborn resistance to any experience that might lie beyond your control or understanding. Try to recognise your antagonism toward anything new that might shake up your life. If you deny your longing for freedom from the self-imposed limits within which you live, Lust can draw you toward people and situations that shake up your world and force you into a future you are unprepared for. Try to find a balance between what you value and what you yearn for to foster the growth of your inner life and the creative potential that may lie undeveloped because you are too afraid to take the risk of pursuing it.

You will never truly possess the object of your Lust in the outer world, because the thing you really lust for is not 'out there'. Nor are you likely to possess it in the inner world as an unchanging state of enlightenment, perfection, or transcendence. No amount of machination, force, deception, self-deception, or self-sacrifice will satisfy Lust, because by its nature the object of your longing is a symbol of something ineffable. The more you can grasp this, the more easily you will recognise when you are slipping into the web of Lust, and the more creatively you will handle the frustration and unhappiness that inevitably accompany any effort to contain intense desire. Seeing beyond the form of an outer object, or accepting the impossibility of an inner ideal of perfection, is not the same as self-sacrifice; but they are prerequisites for a connection with the archetype of beauty within you and the transformation of Lust into joy.



The Sixth Sin: Deceit

Deceit, the Sixth of the Cardinal Sins, was known as 'Avaritia' in Latin. The term Deceit, usually referred to as Avarice in medieval descriptions of the Sins, is based on a much older text that calls it 'the machinations of evil cunning'. This Sin was also known as Covetousness. Avarice and Covetousness, which are an unpleasant mix of Deceit and Greed, require cunning and machination to achieve their aims, since others are unlikely to simply give us whatever we want, especially if we have no right to it. Deceit has a chameleon-like quality. It readily allies itself with any of the other Sins, and is focused on stealing what rightly belongs to another, whether the object is material, intellectual, emotional, or spiritual; and the archetypal figure behind it is the Thief. But Deceit, as anyone will know who has had to survive in life-threatening situations that require disguise and dissimulation, can reflect a realistic understanding and adaptation to the world, and it can become a preserver and protector in the face of overpowering difficulties and pressures in a dangerous world.

The sin of Deceit is neither simple lying nor simple greed. It is the urge to use trickery, and can accompany a sense of superiority because successful perpetrators of Deceit believe that they are cleverer than other people and therefore entitled to dupe them. On this level, Deceit can be deeply destructive to relationships and to an individual's place in the larger community. But why should anyone choose to lie compulsively, or winkle out of others what might be given freely, or steal what should be earned through honest effort? Deceit can sometimes accompany the belief that we can have nothing worthwhile in life unless we steal it. Deceit can also flower if we believe that integrity and honesty are old-fashioned, out-of-date virtues that have no place in a tough, hard, uncompassionate world. Deceit can be supported by cynicism and a profound disregard for the feelings of others and the moral demands of inner conscience. Yet the acute intelligence, perspicacity, subtlety, and depth that successful Deceit requires could also, if combined with integrity and compassion, generate something we might call Worldly Wisdom.

Cunning with conscience

You are pragmatic and clear-sighted, and Deceit is always within reach because you know all too well that it can sometimes be necessary in order to survive and make your way in the world. This doesn't mean that you are by nature a dishonest person. Every human being has the potential for Deceit. There may be times when, however reluctantly, you are convinced that prevarication is the only path through which you can achieve your goals, and you have enough shrewdness and awareness of the ways of the world to outwit those you might feel deserve to be outwitted -

whether this involves cheating institutions that you perceive as oppressive and unfair, or individuals whom you believe are not as deserving as you are. But genuine worldly wisdom, as opposed to avarice or cynicism, is a combination of canniness and ethics, and you need to keep a firm hold on both in order to achieve your goals while retaining your self-respect.

The illusory power of tradition

You favour traditional values that reject overt expressions of Deceit, and those who display it are likely to earn your criticism and dislike. But you may be capable of deceiving yourself about the nature of people and the nature of the world around you. You dislike any challenge to authority, especially your own, and you don't easily accept people who are eccentric, unconventional, or rebellious. Intellectual rigidity can blind you to the need for movement and growth, in individuals and in the world. You can be avaricious in clinging to the status quo for reasons that involve self-deception as much as loyalty to a cherished set of values. And sometimes you lack empathy for those who are not in a position to adhere to the past, but must move with the times because they have no other choice. Opening your heart and mind could help you to find a better bulwark against Deceit than simple pronouncements of what you believe to be right.

Light fingers

You have a nimble and adaptable mind, and you can play with different ideas without suffering unduly from the stress of contradictions. Your flexibility is both a gift and an open door to Deceit, since truth is relative and you can present a different point of view depending on the listener. This can cause conflict, because you value the slow accruing of values and knowledge based on direct experience. You may sometimes find yourself saying things you don't really believe, or talking too much when you know you should remain silent. Fluidity of thinking doesn't automatically make you a deceitful person. But you aren't averse to bending the facts and retelling history in ways that amuse you or serve your goals but might not help others to achieve a clearer, more truthful perspective. You may also be happy to make use of words and concepts that aren't your own. The realm of ideas, for you, is a fertile pasture where anyone has the right to find nourishment. This can make you light-fingered when it comes to the origin of an idea and who really deserves the credit for it. This is not calculated Deceit, but reflects a democratic attitude toward knowledge that, in itself, is highly idealistic. But in the real world, the work that others put into developing their ideas may leave them angry and aggrieved if their contributions aren't acknowledged. You have many mental gifts; make sure you back them up with integrity and respect for others' feelings and creative offerings. You have a connection with deeper currents in the collective psyche, and you need to give your insights form through a creative medium. You may feel overwhelmed by what you sense and imagine, and may try to rationalise your experiences rather than honouring them. Maintain your boundaries, but respect and try to express what you cannot rationally understand.

The world of the mind is a kind of home for you, but the world of Deceit is never very far away - not necessarily in material forms such as avarice (although that can't always be excluded), but in the form of ideas that you believe should be free to all rather than the property of a single individual. You can also be evasive, tricky, and economical with the truth because you perceive truth as relative rather than absolute. Offering knowledge is admirable as long as you have worked to

earn it, but not so admirable if you steal ideas that have been given shape through someone else's hard work. In the legal world, 'Theft of Intellectual Property' is an offence that is difficult to prove but hard to ignore if one has been robbed. You have intelligence, quick perceptions, and the ability to articulate your ideas elegantly and convincingly. Make sure you find the wisdom to express your talents with emotional sensitivity and integrity.

The sound of many silent voices

You are a reticent person and you aren't inclined to share your deepest thoughts and perceptions with others. Your tendency to withhold can result in difficulties in communication, and even those close to you may feel you are keeping things from them, when in fact you may simply find it hard and even painful to articulate with clarity what you really want to say. Your natural reticence could feed the machinations of Deceit if you allow it, because you give very little away and are therefore unlikely to get caught if you engage in any dishonest activity or choose to lie deliberately. But your tendency to keep your thoughts to yourself is not itself calculated, and it is accompanied by depth of thinking, rich intuitive insight, and an interest in penetrating beneath the surface of things, allowing you to connect with deeper and more profound levels of reality that nourish your desire to be of service to something greater than yourself. Your versatility and communicative gifts can provide you with many creative vehicles for your sensitivity to the collective psyche. Don't be afraid of opening yourself to emotions and intuitions that seem more mysterious and unfathomable than your rational perceptions. Learn to give them shape, rather than deceiving yourself into believing you are solely a creature of reason.

You are capable of great depth of thought, and you have a special sensitivity to the many unspoken voices of the collective psyche. Try to focus on the inner world with as much knowledge and creative skill as you can muster. You have a natural inclination to Deceit because of your dislike of revealing inner realities, but you also have a finely honed conscience and a sense of the support a good network of family, friends, and community can offer. This recognition of the importance of others, combined with your awareness of subtler spiritual realities, can allow you to offer your gifts in the service of others, with positive results on inner as well as outer levels. Service is important for you, but it doesn't have to be of a solely practical kind, and it may not appear in obvious forms. Inspiring faith and imagination in others through your creative work is as valuable a contribution as any concrete efforts you might make on others' behalf.

Unannounced arrivals

Sometimes ideas erupt in your awareness without your realising where they came from. The same may be true of creative skills or crafts; suddenly you know how to make something or do something, without the background of long years of training. And Deceit can also emerge suddenly and unexpectedly, without your understanding why you should suddenly covet something you are not entitled to, or indulge in deception without realising why you need to. You aren't always well connected with your perceptions and thinking processes, which can occur beneath the surface and produce a conclusion, a revelation, or an impulse without any conscious recognition of its source. This is a double-edged gift, and you need to develop insight and reflection to ensure that your loyalty to your values remains firm. You don't lack intelligence or talent; but sometimes you have little awareness of how ideas come into your mind. Your mind can move from idea to

idea so rapidly that you can't keep up with your thoughts. Test the usefulness of your ideas, and learn to listen. Once you get talking, it can be hard to stop.

You can be inspired in immensely creative ways, which is the 'up' side of your gift. Ideas and images simply arrive, and they can be innovative and even brilliant ones. But inflexible opinions can arrive with the same force, and these opinions may not be your own, but belong to the deeper collective psyche. You are especially vulnerable to the kind of collective rationalisations that are often used to justify Deceit, especially in the name of social or ideological concerns. Learn to evaluate carefully what you really think, rather than giving voice to a collective attitude that doesn't reflect your genuine individual values. You may also need to work to be more conscious of those times when Deceit can influence your attitudes and push you into behaviour that you might consciously deeply disapprove of. The most creative use of your gift requires conscious effort as well as recognition of the autonomy and power of the unconscious psyche.

What is Truth?

Deceit has been called by many names throughout history, among them Avarice and Covetousness. This Sin is like a serpent, coiling under and through our most cherished ideals and noble intentions, always masking itself as something else. Deceit can align itself with Envy, Gluttony, Wrath, Pride, Lust, and Sloth, producing hybrids that often seem socially acceptable in a world devoid of genuine worldly wisdom. Deceit is the easiest Sin to justify through the rationalisations provided by political, social, and religious ideologies, and the archetypal Thief and Liar can be a truly destructive force. But Deceit is also an immensely creative catalyst, helping us to translate innovative ideas into concrete actions. Without Deceit, no vision could achieve manifestation, no dream could ever contribute to the alleviation of human suffering, and no amount of compassion could produce the skills necessary to help actual people in actual life.

You want to feel you are in control of your life, and resistant to the kind of lazy self-indulgence that leads to exploiting others. But subtler forms of Deceit can affect you despite any moral stance you might take against calculated dishonesty. Your resistance to innovative ideas can be a form of self-deception, for dogmatic self-righteousness can thwart your need to break free of conventions and pursue new possibilities. You can also wilfully refuse to recognise the needs and values of others, who may not wish to follow the same path as you but who are entitled to understanding and respect even if they don't accept your views. Stifling others' self-expression in order to keep control is a form of avarice, because it involves grasping and holding what doesn't belong to you: other people's freedom to become what they need to be. Try to acquire the wisdom to recognise when things need to change, and when they need to stay the same.

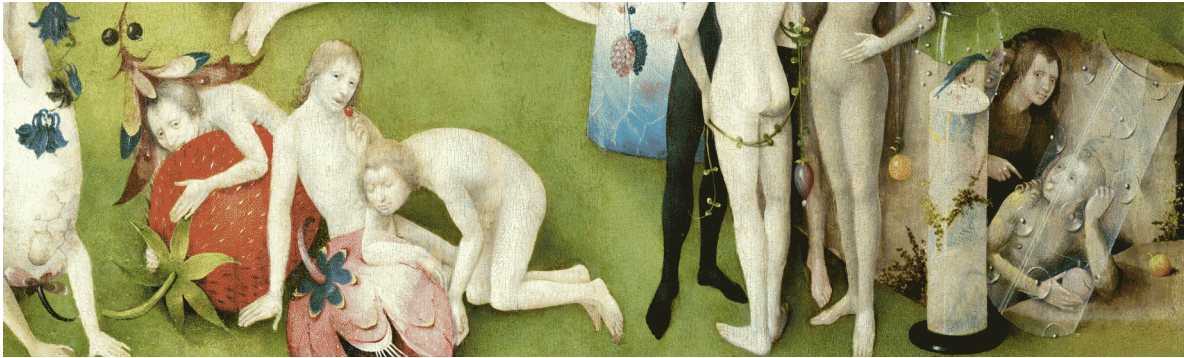
In an ideal, two-dimensional world without subtlety or nuance, perhaps Deceit would not be necessary; nor would any of the other Sins. Yet Deceit, in its creative forms, is truly essential in order to translate any good intention or aspiration into concrete action, and any feeling of love into an act of loving that enhances your own life and the lives of others. No higher power can accomplish the transformation of Deceit into worldly wisdom; everything depends on your willingness to pursue inner insight, your decision as an individual to confront the murky and ambiguous aspects of your own inner world, and your recognition of the multifaceted and paradoxical nature of the psyche. When you can recognise how cleverly Deceit can infuse your most

THE SEVEN SINS

Personal Horoscope by Liz Greene

for Adele Adkins

cherished moral and spiritual convictions, you will be truly wise in a world that requires subtlety as well as goodness, experience as well as innocence, and realism as well as faith.



The Seventh Sin: Sloth

The last of the Seven Cardinal Sins was known as Sloth, but earlier texts present it as 'Tristitia', which means Sadness. It was also called Indolence, and sometimes by the Latin term 'Acedia', which means Apathy. The fact that there have been so many different terms used for this last of the Sins suggests that it is a complex human expression with deep roots that need a subtler, more psychological understanding to reveal its nature. Sloth implies laziness, which is very different from sadness, and it is often used as a pejorative description by those with a disciplined work ethic about those who espouse a more relaxed approach to life. Apathy can be related to both sadness and laziness, because it's sometimes hard to understand whether you are simply being indolent or are crippled by deep doubts and loss of self-esteem. A more appropriate modern term for Sloth might be Depression, a word that is poorly understood in both medical and popular circles. And the much older Hellenistic text that linked Lust to deception also referred to the Sin of Apathy as 'that which causes increase and decrease': in other words, being at the mercy of your moods and feelings, sometimes to the point where you are unable to function in life.

The idea of Sloth originated in a historical epoch when one was expected to pray regularly, do good works, and devote part if not all of one's life to the service of the Church. Personal feelings, especially those that reflected emotional needs, were not viewed as legitimate or acceptable. The modern Western idea of individuality was not part of the collective world-view in those days; individuals were identified by their place in the overall Great Chain of Being, as it was called, and did not have the right to individual emotions, beliefs, ideas, and dreams. In the Western world, we no longer espouse that world-view, although there are still plenty of spheres of life in which personal needs and desires are unacceptable in the face of collective expectations and assumptions. Apathy might sometimes reflect laziness; but it might also reflect deep unhappiness, dissatisfaction, and loss of faith and trust in life. But the ability to accept and move with the cycles of time in a spirit of grace, attentiveness, and loyalty to your inner dreams can transform Apathy into an immensely valuable quality: Serenity.

Bogged down

A conflict exists between your impulsive, self-willed, and dramatic emotional nature and your conscious need for material stability and structure. You have a fiercely impatient quality within you that wants exactly what you want exactly when you want it, like a self-absorbed child who will not take 'No' for an answer. This inner child, in contrast to your usual realistic and self-controlled temperament, refuses to learn patience, discipline, or the denial of dreams. Your insistence

on security and your tendency to view the world with a realistic and often cynical eye may deny the inspirational nature of your heart and your ceaseless longing for adventure and new pastures to explore; and an unpleasant sense of meaninglessness can pull you into an apathetic and depressed state that even self-discipline and rational analysis can't shift. Apathy can reflect the denial of a vital, imaginative spirit that deserves more attention and respect.

Loosening the stiff upper lip

If you are troubled by feelings of Apathy, you prefer to adopt the proverbial 'stiff upper lip' and get on with things, rather than exploring more deeply the roots of your sadness. This is an admirable quality that reflects self-discipline and a refusal to indulge in self-pity, but it can be unhelpful because there may be deeper reasons why depression might invade your life. You dislike having to dig too deeply into realms that are too chaotic, particularly the world of the emotions and the imagination. But your restraint and insistence on rational explanations may mask a deep need for change, or a justifiable discontent that requires you to make important shifts in your life or your outlook. Depression cannot be ordered into nonexistence, nor is it wise to ignore it. You would be wise to explore the emotional or creative discontent underlying Apathy, and learn to cope when your life need changes you are too frightened to face.

Keep the emergency exits open

Apathy can afflict you if you feel trapped and your instinctive need for exploration and adventure, mental or physical, is ignored or thwarted. Settling into a repetitive, safe, and humdrum existence is not an option for you. You are a deeply restless person with a craving for constantly expanding your horizons, and your need to discover meaning and significance in everyday life experiences may express itself as a chronic hunger for change and new projects and contacts. You are nourished by the sense that you are always travelling somewhere, exploring, investigating, and discovering new people, ideas, images, creative ventures, and worlds you didn't know existed. Sameness is anathema to you. Your curiosity and passion for discovery are fundamental emotional needs, and if your freedom of movement is blocked, you can lose faith in life and become depressed, lethargic, and even physically ill. You are deeply attached to your work, and you need to feel useful to others. But you dislike routine and the constricting hierarchies and structures of large institutions and companies. Find an area of work where you can express your ideas and enjoy the freedom to move. Your body may express your Apathy and boredom before you realise how stifled you feel.

Your ceaseless flow of creative energy and ideas is a valuable asset, but it can also cause problems, especially if you overload your plate and take on too many things at a time when you can't come up with the financial or physical resources to complete them. Then you may endlessly procrastinate and escape through travel or into your dreams, and you may get nothing done at all. Apathy can make you doubt yourself and the deeper meaning you believe underpins your life. Make sure you recognise and honour your volatile spirit, and find creative vehicles through which it can be expressed. But you will also have to accept worldly limits, including the ones you have imposed on yourself through committing yourself to an inspiring idea or project. Try to accept these limits with patience as well as optimism, or you may indulge in a kind of childlike sulk when you discover that you cannot do what you want precisely when you want to.

Macrocosm in microcosm

Your sense of security is rooted in the feeling that your world is properly ordered and structured, and the rhythms and rituals of mundane life protect you from anxiety. You depend on your work emotionally as well as financially, especially if you can contribute your skills for the benefit of others. Service, whether material, emotional, intellectual, or imaginative, gives you a sense of value and belonging. Apathy can trouble you if you don't feel secure in your job or mistrust the reliability of the people you work with. You can also feel depressed if you have placed so much emphasis on security that you deny more inspiring goals because you are frightened of taking chances. Apathy can make itself known not only through depression and loss of energy, but also through annoying physical symptoms that reflect the depth of your emotional distress. You need structure in your life, but you also need work in which your imagination and intellectual curiosity can be satisfied. Don't try to stay in the same job doing the same thing day after day. Endless routines will lead to Apathy and an inevitable explosion that results in having to seeking new pastures, which you might be better seeking sooner and without the explosion.

Pay careful attention to your body, which acts as a barometer according to the changes in your emotional weather. Stability is important for your sense of security, but don't sell your soul for it. Expressing your creative abilities, even if it requires leaving a secure working environment behind, may be essential at some point in your life, and you need to find the courage to take chances and listen to your inner self, rather than retreating from any sign of disruption. You need structure in your daily life, and mundane rituals that are emotionally rewarding because they symbolise deep realities encapsulated in small things. Looking after both body and psyche is essential, because you often express what you feel on the physical level before you realise what you are feeling. If you are willing to organise a life that is suited to you alone and doesn't conform slavishly to the expectations of the outer world, serenity is within your reach.

The safe haven

Depression can trouble you if you experience unwelcome changes in your close relationships. You are deeply dependent on partners to provide you with a sense of security, even if you are reluctant to admit it. You may convince yourself that you are a detached and independent person, but you need to know that you can go away and come back again with a warm and loving welcome awaiting you. Learn to acknowledge your real feelings and express them more openly, rather than taking others' support for granted; allow those closest to you to see your vulnerability, respect theirs, and avoid projecting your own emotional dependency on partners. If you view others as possessive people who don't give you enough breathing space, you may find yourself bereft because you have hurt the people you most need. The real core of your emotional life is your relationships, and real serenity is within reach if you can accept it.

Divine discontent

What you need in order to feel emotionally secure, and what you desire in order to fulfil your dream of idealised love, are in constant conflict. When you have what you need, you feel restless and frustrated because it's never enough. When you have what you desire, you feel insecure and unsettled. Swinging between these extremes opens the door to Apathy rooted in resentment and

impossible longings, and discontent can be a chronic state of mind. Don't blame others for your own inner conflict, and be especially careful not to blame loved ones for not meeting your expectations; no individual can be all things at all times. And avoid blaming yourself for failing to become a superhuman who can always be nurturing and stable, and also exciting, alluring, and desirable. Your own impossible expectations and demands can depress you when other people fail to fulfil them, and they will fail, sooner or later, because they are human, just like you. You tend to idealise communication in relationships, hoping that you can find perfect companions with whom you can share endlessly interesting ideas. You have a low boredom threshold, and this can drive you to seek inspiration through a succession of different people. Yet your emotional needs may require a deeper and more committed way of relating.

Apathy can trouble you when you can't reconcile the reality of human nature with your romantic ideals. You need to deal with your conflict intelligently because it isn't likely to go away, and forcing yourself to choose between two valid aspects of your nature won't help. If you can find ways of expressing your dichotomy through creative expression rather than expecting it to be solved by other people, you might not be so ready to blame them for your discontent. Your resentment arises from disappointed assumptions, and you need to be aware of your assumptions about your right to emotional and sexual satisfaction. You may fail to recognise that relationships are about two people, and not just about your own personal fulfilment. You can find serenity if you can find creative outlets to give shape to the tension within you, and if you can respond to life, people, and your own emotional confusion with insight, gentle realism, and humour.

Flying in turbulence

You like to keep the emergency exit doors open because you always expect the unexpected, and you want to be prepared. You carry a great deal of inner anxiety, which you seek to assuage through detaching from everyday concerns and emotional demands and escaping into a realm of ideas and intuitions that connect you with a broader, more impersonal universe. You can be an inspired and unconventional thinker and a committed rebel against social conventions and petty, banal ways of thinking. You might not be fully aware of this powerful rebellious spirit, and you may even be surprised by the way in which upheaval and change dog you even when you believe you want a peaceful, humdrum life. Make sure you understand your need for freedom, and try to make room in your life for interests and relationships that can expand your vision. If you fail to keep at least one or two doors open, you can feel trapped, stifled, and deeply depressed. Choose your field of work very carefully. Nothing is likely to propel you out the door more quickly than a routine job in which you lack authority and the ability to express original ideas. You dislike rules, regulations, and hierarchies, but you may need to learn to develop greater patience and respect for discipline. Your body may tell you when you are in the wrong work.

Neither side of your emotional dichotomy is 'wrong'. Both sides provide an important dimension of your innovative, restless nature. Like other humans, you need to belong and enjoy safety, security, and the warmth of companionship. But you have an anarchic spirit that always looks ahead, seeking ways to break free of the stifling restrictions that shackle people to narrow views of reality. Be as conscious as possible of the times when you repress either side of the dichotomy, and when it is time for something new to emerge in your life. Apathy can arise when the voice of inspiration and originality isn't given room for expression; but it can also arise when you pursue

too much freedom at the cost of your need for stable relationships and a secure environment. Listen to both voices, maintain the constantly shifting balance between them, and find serenity in acceptance of your gift of vision and the aloneness that often accompanies it.

It's not fair

Apathy may plague you with a painful sense of being unfairly treated by life. You might believe that the source of your unhappiness lies in the cruelty and callousness of others, or the failings of society. If you identify with the role of the victim, you may feel you carry emotional scars that can never be healed. Perhaps you were deprived of emotional nourishment in early life; but your family members were themselves deprived or damaged in some way. Pay more attention to the resentment and bitterness you carry, and look more deeply at the inevitable conflict between the darker side of human nature and your own extremely high ideals. You could develop deep compassion for the unfair suffering in the world, but you may need to view with a more detached perspective the plight of flawed humans struggling, as you yourself do, to find light and meaning in a difficult world, and blundering badly because they, like you, feel life is so unfair. Isolation and social ostracism may be recurrent themes in your family history, stretching back to the past long before your birth. Learn from this undercurrent, but don't identify with it and see yourself as a victim of society. Your individual abilities need to be encouraged without ancient anger and bitterness that aren't relevant to your identity or your present life.

Apathy may manifest as feelings of isolation and depression, but you may also experience it as corrosive resentment. Don't identify with being the helpless victim of heartless forces you can't control; all humans are wounded by life in one way or another, even though you may believe your own hurts are worse. Self-pity and bitterness can't be healed by some magical power outside yourself; healing and wisdom need to come from within. You probably suffered unfair treatment in your early life, and you need to face this with compassion toward yourself. But compassion isn't the same as self-pity. Try to achieve a more detached perspective so that you can grasp the difference between actual injustices and your own impossibly high expectations. Identifying entirely with your wounds could turn you into exactly the kind of person you have felt injured by in the past; empathy for human blindness as well as human pain can give you true serenity.

Sentries on patrol

You aren't inclined to ask for support from anyone because you don't expect them to provide it. You can be proudly self-sufficient to the point where few, if any, people understand how sensitive, shy, and isolated you feel inside. You may have a long history of having to look after yourself, and you may feel as though you were never allowed to be a joyful, irresponsible child. Sometimes your assumption that others will let you down can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, because your defensiveness and mistrust can communicate the wrong message and lead others to reject you because you are rejecting them. Nothing can recreate your childhood, but you can look more deeply within at the ways in which Apathy, and resentment can fester beneath the surface because, deep down, you demand proofs of other people's affection and then feel even more aggrieved if they don't respond to your unspoken demands. Your fear of relinquishing control and being dominated by others through your emotional needs can lead you into displaying a proud self-sufficiency that might fool other people but leaves you feeling lonely and unsupported when

you most need encouragement. You have little trust in others' integrity, and expect them to cheat you, take advantage of you, or abandon you.

Your expectation of being let down can make you push others away. You believe it's better to do the rejecting first rather than sitting around waiting to be rejected. You can be highly controlling to ensure that others can't hurt or disappoint you. The most destructive aspect of your Apathy is your tendency to allow self-pity and resentment to undermine your ability to engage freely and confidently with life. Your defensiveness can make you manipulative in communicating your feelings, and you can be unreasonably critical and judgemental. All your self-protective manoeuvring can leave you feeling deeply lonely, even if your life is full of people who truly care about you. You can be strong, reliable, resilient, and tireless in looking after others. But you won't find serenity unless you are honest with yourself and recognise the emotional prison you have built around yourself with walls made from the disappointments of your early life.

What goes round comes round

Apathy is a Sin that is profoundly related to the cycles of time, and to the idea that everything comes into being, arrives at fruition, and passes away when the time is right, making way for a new birth and a new cycle. Although the poet T. S. Eliot once wrote that April is 'the cruelest month', it is perhaps only with the coming of winter that humans experience most vividly the profound sadness of the dying year. Living in accord with such deep archetypal cycles demands that you recognise the ebb and flow your feelings, and the rightness of the times when you are most needy, most vulnerable, and least able to stand alone, as well as the times when you are at your strongest and most creative. You will never receive all of what what you need at any time in life; but you may discover that you can experience enough love, respect, and encouragement, and support, from others as well as from yourself, to find serenity as you make your way through life.

Your respect for time and tradition can make it hard for you to acknowledge depression, for in your eyes it smacks of self-indulgence. Your strength and realism are admirable, but you may sometimes impose a simplistic set of rules on your complex inner nature. When you feel apathetic and depressed, you need to understand why, rather than maintaining a stiff upper lip and doggedly soldiering on. There is a time and a place for courage and self-control, but your emotional needs deserve something more than narrow-minded assumptions about how humans should behave. The vital force of your un-lived individualism will demand expression no matter how hard you stamp on it, and Apathy will mask the unhappiness of the unacknowledged soul. Serenity is possible if you can value yourself as a whole person, and not a stereotype you have imposed on your inner self because it seems safer, more socially acceptable, and more secure.

If you experience sad emptiness where there could be fullness in your emotional world, you may need to turn to memory, especially the memory held in your emotions and your body, to discover what remains unfed. This can help you to accept what has been lost or cannot be changed, forgive those who have failed you, and seek with greater realism and compassion all that is rewarding in life, which might be far more than you imagine. Serenity can develop from a full recognition of your emotional needs, especially if you yourself have been denying those needs. Understanding your feelings without self-blame can be an effective antidote to the Apathy that drains colour, joy, and hope from life, and so can an acceptance of the flaws and limitations of every living

creature with whom you engage. You will never find the perfect parent, whether you seek this through relationships, groups, material security, or political or spiritual convictions that promise safety and salvation. But you can find a good enough parent within yourself to nourish your inner world and share at least an important part of it with those closest to you.

Conclusion

The Seven Sins have always been a powerful metaphor for the ways in which humans 'go wrong' in life. The Sins began as a story of the planetary journey of the soul into incarnation, but they were appropriated and given a particular moral slant by religious authorities, and have remained deep in human consciousness as impulses that, even in this apparently liberal twenty-first century, still have the power to make us feel bad about ourselves. There might be wisdom in the older perception, since the Seven Sins lie behind some of the most destructive emotions and actions of which humans are capable. There may be dimensions of each of these human expressions that are truly sinful, as the etymology of the word 'sin' suggests: they injure and demean life, and are thus in the nature of a debt that we owe but are reluctant to pay.

Envy, if left unconscious and unchecked, breeds hatred and the urge to spoil and destroy. Gluttony, if left unconscious and unchecked, despoils our bodies, the lives of others, and even the planet itself. Wrath, if left unconscious and unchecked, generates acts of brutality, cruelty, and violence. Pride, if left unconscious and unchecked, leads to untrammelled displays of arrogance, power, and superiority that denigrate and oppress others. Lust, if left unconscious and unchecked, leads us into situations where we manipulate, betray, and justify our humiliation of others because we are driven by a compulsive need for self-gratification disguised as romantic desire. Deceit, if left unconscious and unchecked, turns us into liars, cheats, and schemers, full of cunning and willing to injure anyone who stands in our way. And Apathy, if left unconscious and unchecked, can make us expect other people to prop us up, emotionally and financially, because we feel we are owed something by life and have the right to demand that others give us what we need.

These are not harmless human foibles. In an era when deeper questions about the meaning and nature of life have been given definitive answers by science, sociology, and politics, it might be important to remember that the word 'sin', albeit abused by so many religious doctrines, means 'injury' or 'transgression': an injury against the unfolding patterns of life itself. Yet the Seven Sins are also very much more. Each of them conceals an immensely creative human impulse. If we are prepared to understand their roots rather than simply indulging in an orgy of guilty self-loathing, they could help us to fulfil the highest potentials of which we are capable. Envy can become an appreciation of the worth and talent of others, and a spur to develop our own individual gifts. Gluttony can become an aspiration toward a deeper reality that gives a sense of meaning to our lives. Wrath can become courage and even heroism, as well as the will to take up life's hard challenges with integrity. Pride can become self-respect, allowing us to express all that is most individual and creative in us. Lust can reveal what we find most beautiful and joyful in life. Deceit can become honest pragmatism and a full embrace of the reality of the world in which we must live. And Apathy can yield a profound understanding of our deepest emotional needs, our most cherished longings, and our share in the cyclical nature of life.

The illustrations are excerpts from the triptych 'The Garden of Earthly Delights' by Hieronymus Bosch (around 1500).

ASTROLOGICAL DATA USED FOR THIS HOROSCOPE:

name: **Adele Adkins** (female)

birthdate: **5 May 1988**

place: **Tottenham, ENG (UK)**

long: **0w04** lat: **51n35**

local time: **08:19**

U.T.: **07:19**

sid. time: **22:12:16**

method: **Liz Greene**

houses: **Placidus**

9 December 2025

Planetary Positions

planet	sign	degree		motion
☉ Sun	Taurus	15800'42	in house 11	direct
☾ Moon	Sagittarius	26713'36	in house 6	direct
☿ Mercury	Gemini	0853'31	in house 12	direct
♀ Venus	Gemini	25821'03	in house 12	direct
♂ Mars	Aquarius	18756'28	in house 9	direct
♃ Jupiter	Taurus	13814'13	in house 11	direct
♄ Saturn	Capricorn	2304'59	in house 6	retrograde
♅ Uranus	Capricorn	0339'52	in house 6	retrograde
♆ Neptune	Capricorn	10302'37	in house 7	retrograde
♇ Pluto	Scorpio	11805'01	in house 5	retrograde
♁ Moon's Node	Pisces	21737'26	in house 10	retrograde
♁ Chiron	Gemini	25853'45	in house 12	direct

House Positions

Ascendant	Cancer	5831	Descendant	Capricorn	531
2nd House	Cancer	21827	8th House	Capricorn	21327
3rd House	Leo	8844	9th House	Aquarius	8744
Imum Coeli	Virgo	1801	Medium Coeli	Pisces	1701
5th House	Libra	4805	11th House	Aries	4705
6th House	Scorpio	21851	12th House	Taurus	21851

Major Aspects

Sun Square Mars 3°56	Mars Trine Chiron 6°57
Sun Conjunction Jupiter 1°46	Jupiter Trine Neptune 3°12
Sun Trine Neptune 4°58	Jupiter Opposition Pluto 2°09
Sun Opposition Pluto 3°56	Saturn Conjunction Uranus 1°25
Moon Opposition Venus 0°53	Saturn Conjunction Neptune 7°58
Moon Conjunction Saturn 5°51	Saturn Opposition Chiron 6°11
Moon Conjunction Uranus 4°26	Uranus Conjunction Neptune 9°23
Moon Square Moon's Node 4°36	Uranus Square Moon's Node 9°02
Moon Opposition Chiron 0°20	Uranus Opposition Chiron 4°46
Venus Trine Mars 6°25	Neptune Sextile Pluto 1°02
Venus Opposition Saturn 6°44	Moon Opposition Ascendant 9°17
Venus Opposition Uranus 5°19	Saturn Opposition Ascendant 3°26
Venus Square Moon's Node 3°44	Uranus Opposition Ascendant 4°51
Venus Conjunction Chiron 0°33	Neptune Opposition Ascendant 4°32
Mars Square Jupiter 5°42	Chiron Conjunction Ascendant 9°37
Mars Square Pluto 7°51	

Numbers indicate orb (deviation from the exact aspect angle).