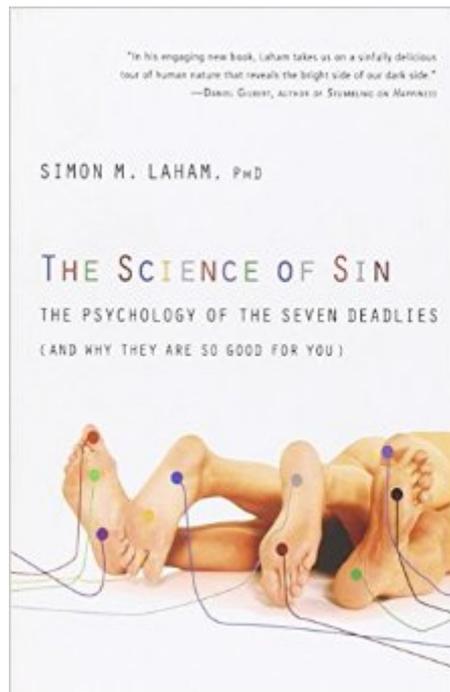


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The Science Of Sin: The Psychology Of The Seven Deadlies (and Why They Are So Good For You)



Synopsis

Pride, lust, gluttony, greed, envy, sloth, and anger. They're considered "deadly" because of their capacity to generate other evils. The truth is, we all sin and we do it all the time—in fact, usually several times over before breakfast! But human behavior, argues social psychologist Simon Laham, is more complex than "good" or "evil." In psychology, these sins aren't considered morally wrong or even uniformly bad, but are treated rather as complex and interesting psychological states that if, indulged wisely, can be functional, adaptive, and lead to a range of positive effects. The Science of Sin takes on these so-called sins one by one and through psychological research shows that being bad can be oh-so-good for you. Did you know that: Being slow and lazy can help you win the race? Anger makes you more open-minded? Coveting what others have not only makes you more creative but bolsters self-esteem? So go ahead, eat that last cookie and kick back on the couch for a day of TV with your neighbor's boyfriend—from gluttony to greed, envy to lust, Laham shows how even the deadliest, most decadent of vices can make you smart, successful, and happy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

*A full executive summary of this book is available at newbooksinbrief.com. Lust, greed, gluttony, anger, sloth, envy and pride. The seven deadly sins are recognized as an integral part of the Christian (and especially the Catholic) belief system, but their influence in Western culture extends

well beyond these realms. Indeed, even the atheistic among us are likely to regard the seven characteristics perhaps not as sins, but at the very least as vices, or character flaws. Nevertheless, despite the near universal acknowledgement of the reproachfulness of the seven deadly sins, the psychologist Simon Laham takes a very different approach to these so-called sins in his new book "The Science of Sin: The Psychology of the Seven Deadlies (and Why They Are So Good for You)". Indeed, as the title suggests, Laham maintains that the seven deadly sins are not nearly as bad as they are cracked up to be, and in fact the author argues that much good can come of them, so long as they are approached in the right way. Laham tackles each sin in order, awarding each a separate chapter. As a general rule, each chapter begins with an explanation of the sin as it was originally conceived, and why it was considered to be a sin (though there are chapters where the author stints in this regard, or leaves such a discussion out altogether, and in these cases it is sorely missed). Following this, we are apprised of how the characteristic, or, in some cases the emotion, that is represented by each sin is regarded by modern psychology. Included here is an account of why each characteristic is thought to have evolved in our species in the first place (though again, the author is sometimes remiss in providing such an explanation, much to the chagrin of the interested reader).

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