

# ON OUR BEST BEHAVIOIR QUIZ

*We are programmed by our society: There's who we are, and then there's who we are told to be. We can sense the gap between the two, but it's hard to see—we can only make out the cultural messages that divide us from ourselves when we tune our ears to listen. I started listening to what our culture was telling me about who I should be, what I heard was alarming. I was internalizing so many messages about what it is to be a “good” woman, and how a “good” woman behaves. Most alarmingly, I realized I had concretized these concepts in my own consciousness; I patrolled and policed myself and other women by these dictates. These messages fall into a few categories. Take the quiz below to see whether these often-imperceptible rules prescribe your behavior as well.*

## SECTION 1

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1. I feel compelled to set my alarm clock so I can get a jump start on my day.  
**YES / NO**
2. When I sleep in, skip the gym, take a nap, or leave work early in order to rest, I feel guilty.  
**YES / NO**
3. I don't feel comfortable until I've crossed almost everything off my to do list each day  
**YES / NO**
4. I have a hard time saying no to people who ask me for favors.  
**YES / NO**
5. I secretly fantasize about getting sick or injured so I have a valid excuse for staying in bed.  
**YES / NO**

## SECTION 2

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1. I frequently send emails to my manager to let them know about recent work accomplishments.  
**YES / NO**
2. When someone compliments me, I say “Thank You” and do not explain away, shrug off, or belittle their statement.  
**YES / NO**
3. I can easily list three qualities about myself or personal achievements that I am proud of.  
**YES / NO**
4. I have told more than three other people about those three things.  
**YES / NO**
5. I don't hesitate to ask questions or to speak up in meetings; I don't preface my contributions with statements like: “I could be wrong, but...” or “This might be a stupid question, but...”  
**YES / NO**

### SECTION 3

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1. I have been on more than one diet in my lifetime, or I have been dieting on and off for several years at a time.  
**YES / NO**
2. I struggle to trust my body to let me know what I need to eat and to signal when I am hungry or full.  
**YES / NO**
3. I can easily point to which part (or parts) of my body I dislike or wish were differently shaped or sized.  
**YES / NO**
4. I find myself saying things like “I was so bad today” or “I was so good today” in reference to the types of foods or amount of foods I’ve eaten.  
**YES / NO**
5. I have used a filter or altered my posture in photographs so as to appear smaller or thinner than I think I naturally look  
**YES / NO**

### SECTION 4

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1. I am comfortable expressing my needs with friends, family, and colleagues.  
**YES / NO**
2. When I am frustrated or angry with someone, I tell them clearly how I feel– I don’t shy away from hard conversations; I don’t believe in sweeping anything under the rug or just letting it go.  
**YES / NO**
3. I don’t hold in my emotions, storing them up for an explosion; I rarely feel the need to vent.  
**YES / NO**
4. My relationships would not change or feel different if I began to speak up for myself and demand that my needs be met.  
**YES / NO**
5. When I feel impatient or resentful, I name the emotion and ask for help alleviating the situation.  
**YES / NO**

### SECTION 5

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1. When offered a job or a promotion, I negotiate a higher salary as a matter of course.  
**YES / NO**
2. I know what the gender wealth gap is and/ or I investment in the stock market, keep track of my own investments, and own bonds.  
**YES / NO**

3. I am comfortable discussing my salary, savings, and financial strategies with close friends or loved ones.  
**YES / NO**
4. I know how much money I want and need and have budgeted and financially planned accordingly.  
**YES / NO**
5. I rarely feel pressured to spend money I don't have.  
**YES / NO**

## SECTION 6

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1. I am able to state clearly, without shame or embarrassment, what excites me sexually. I explain confidently to partners how I like to be touched, what feels good, and what turns me on.  
**YES / NO**
2. I felt empowered the first time I had intercourse—I saw sex as a natural, thrilling, adventurous part of the human experience, and I was excited to share that with someone.  
**YES / NO**
3. I understand the connection between my brain and my body—I know what makes me aroused on both cognitive and physical levels, and I use that understanding to make my intimate life more pleasurable, rewarding, and empowering.  
**YES / NO**
4. I don't know how many sexual partners I've had; I don't believe there's a number that signals someone is overly promiscuous or overly prude.  
**YES / NO**
5. I feel my sexuality is a source of strength and power, and I want everyone to know it.  
**YES / NO**

## SECTION 7

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1. I have put down other women or privately delighted in another woman's misfortune.  
**YES / NO**
2. If I think deeply about the instances I've criticized another woman or gossiped about her, I can acknowledge I did it because she has something or has achieved something that I'd want for myself.  
**YES / NO**
3. I have a hard time speaking out loud or articulating to others what I'd like to achieve, possess, or earn in order to have the life I've imagined for myself.  
**YES / NO**
4. Other women who confidently articulate their desires or give voice to their ambitions irk me.  
**YES / NO**

5. I feel judged by my mother, or anxious about my relationship with my mother, because of the life I lead and choices I've made.

**YES / NO**

## CONCLUSION

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The categories in this quiz correspond to the Seven Deadly Sins.

If you answered mostly **Yes's** in **Section 1**: You likely view sloth as a sin, as a result you deny yourself rest.

If you answered mostly **No's** in **Section 2**: You likely view pride as a sin, as a result, you deny your own gifts.

If you answered mostly **Yes's** in **Section 3**: You likely view gluttony as a sin, as a result, you deny your body's signals.

If you answered mostly **No's** in **Section 4**: You likely view anger as a sin, as a result you deny your own needs.

If you answered mostly **No's** in **Section 5**: You likely view greed as a sin, as a result, you deny your own security.

If you answered mostly **No's** in **Section 6**: You likely view lust as a sin, as a result, you deny your own pleasure.

If you answered mostly **Yes's** in **Section 7**: You likely view envy as a sin, as a result, you deny your own wanting.

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*Internalizing these sins in the way women have prevents us from crediting ourselves (pride), pleasuring ourselves (lust), from feeding and securing ourselves (gluttony, greed), from releasing our emotions and asserting our needs (anger), from relaxing and resting (sloth), and from desiring . . . really anything at all (envy).*

*When I thought about this, I was stunned. I'm not even religious?!? How can it be, I wondered, that I restrict myself and behave according to a millennia-old religious code...that wasn't even in the Bible? To answer that question, to find a path back to a truer and more honest version of who I really am—who we can all be—I wrote **On Our Best Behavior**.*

**—ELISE LOEHNNEN**