

Are You "Superstitious?"

#36

Any
Level

Do you learn things on purpose, or by accident? Some examples of on-purpose learning include studying for a spelling test, doing drill-and-practice math problems, and drawing a map of Europe and labeling the capital cities. An example of "accidental" learning is deciding that your red shirt is "lucky" because you wear it one day and have a great day.

Of course, you know *intellectually* that the shirt didn't cause your great day. But *emotionally* it may seem that your red shirt is "lucky." And you may act on these feelings in the future, wearing your red shirt whenever you want to have a great day.

The belief in luck (good or bad) is called *superstition*. This PSI helps you find out how superstitious you are. Good luck!

What's Your STYLE?

Total your Yes and No responses.

a's b's

- 10-12 No's mean you're not at all superstitious
- 8-9 No's mean you're not very superstitious
- 5-7 No's mean you're about average when it comes to being superstitious
- 3-4 No's mean you're somewhat superstitious
- 0-2 No's mean you're very superstitious

"A few people will be at the right place at the right time by luck, but most people win by building the right place themselves and spending a heck of a lot of time there."

—Marilyn vos Savant, American columnist (listed under "Highest IQ" in the Guinness Book of World Records)

Find Out MORE

- Find out about superstitions in other cultures and countries. Do they seem even stranger than the ones you're used to? For example: In Japan, there is a superstition about the number 4—one should avoid saying it because it means death! Greeks avoid saying "five," but Moslems believe that an outstretched hand with five fingers spread keeps evil away. In Italy, to offer someone salt is bad luck. And so on.... If you're fascinated by superstitions, you'll probably find this book good reading: *A Dictionary of Superstitions* by Iona Opie (Oxford University Press, 1992).
- The next time you watch a baseball game, notice the many little habits of the batters. Many of these reflect superstitions they developed after hitting home runs—another example of accidental learning. *NOMAR!*
- If you have a personal superstition that's unique to you (as far as you know), try to remember how it got started. Ask your family members and friends about their superstitions. You may want to collect unusual ones in a notebook.

Ask yourself these 12 questions. For each, check Yes or No.

1. Do you go out of your way to walk around ladders instead of under them?
Yes No
2. Do you ever rearrange your room, change your hairstyle, or do other things in the hope of changing your luck?
Yes No
3. Do you have a Good Luck Piece, like a rabbit's foot or a special coin or stone?
Yes No
4. Do you feel a twinge of anxiety when a black cat crosses your path?
Yes No
5. On Friday the 13th, are you a little more cautious than usual?
Yes No
6. Do you feel that supporting an athletic team somehow helps them to win?
Yes No
7. Do you avoid stepping on cracks in the sidewalk?
Yes No
8. If you broke a mirror, would your first thought be, "Oh, no, here come seven years of bad luck!"?
Yes No
9. Do you have a lucky number?
Yes No
10. Do you have a lucky color?
Yes No
11. Do you regularly read your horoscope in the daily newspaper or in magazines?
Yes No
12. Do you sometimes feel that it's luckier to do things in a certain order—for example, putting your left shoe on first, or brushing your teeth before you comb your hair?
Yes No

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Survey 10 different people and list 10 different superstitions you come across.