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From the desk of David Simpson

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“The worst part of success is finding someone who is happy for you.”

- Bette Midler (December, 1945 –) Singer, songwriter, actress

The root of the problem Midler is addressing (and her quote is so right) is envy. As everyone knows, envy is one of the seven deadly sins. The remainder are, of course, lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath and pride. And as Warren Buffett points out, envy is the one that is the most futile. His reasoning is that you can get something out of (and even enjoy) all the rest. But you get nothing out of envy except having a miserable day.

People who experience envy rarely speak of it. Who can actually blame them? After all, envy is really all about self-criticism. They feel inferior in some way. People will admit to guilt, pride, shame, greed and even anger. They can actually own up to all of these failings without a loss of self-esteem. Not so with envy. So envious people tend to shift the blame of any failures to “bad luck, fate, or just pure chance. That approach is at least tolerable. The alternative is coming to the conclusion that the real issue is the envious person’s lack of judgment or competence – and that is far too damaging to one’s self-esteem.

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as benevolent envy. Envious people are rarely interested in closing the gap. Research shows that what they really want is for those they are envious of to be worse off or somehow fail.

In the end, research shows that people who have envy respond with either submission, ambition or destruction. It might be a good idea to keep an “eye” on which one a person might adopt.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David".