

# Take responsibility

*We are quick to blame others, study shows*

**I**S YOUR BOSS quick to blame you when something goes wrong but slow in giving credit for a job well done? New research from Duke University helps explain why people are biased towards treating negative actions as intentional but positive actions as unintentional.

The researchers found that people use two different mechanisms to judge how intentional an action was. If the action produced a negative effect, participants were more likely to draw on brain areas involved in processing emotion, in particular, the amygdala. On the other hand, for positive outcomes people relied less on emotion and more on statistics. That is, they thought about how often people in a particular situation would behave in a similar way.

The team used an example: The CEO knew the plan would harm the environment, but he started the plan solely to increase profits. Did the CEO intentionally harm the environment? As many as 82 per



cent responded that the CEO was deliberate.

When the researchers replaced the single word "harm" with "help" in the scenario, however, only 23 per cent deemed the CEO's actions intentional. "There's no logical reason why we would call something intentional,

just because it causes a bad outcome as opposed to a good outcome," said corresponding author professor Scott Huettel.

"Intentionality implies purpose on the part of the person, and that should be there for good as much as it is for bad. But it's not," Huettel added. In the example of the CEO who

makes a profit and also helps the environment, participants were more likely to say that because CEOs commonly aim to make money; helping the environment was an unintentional side-effect.

The study was published in the journal *Scientific Reports*. IANS

## Get goals

*A high 'sense of purpose' in life relates to lower death risk*

**PEOPLE WHO HAVE** a higher sense of purpose in life are at lower risk of death and cardiovascular disease, says a study. "Possessing a high sense of purpose in life is associated with a reduced risk for mortality and cardiovascular events," said one of the researchers, Randy Cohen from Mt. Sinai St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital, New York.

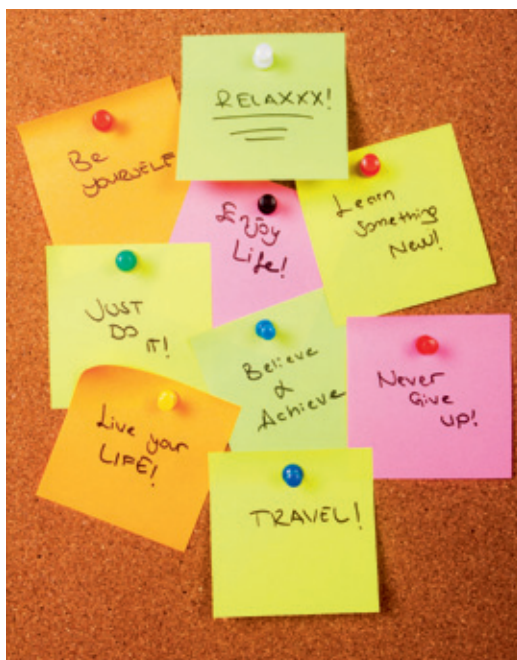
The findings suggest that approaches to strengthening a sense of purpose might lead to improved health outcomes. The researchers pooled data from previous studies evaluating the relationship between purpose in life and the risk of death or cardiovascular disease. The analysis included data on more than 136,000 participants from ten studies--mainly from the US or Japan.

The US studies evaluated a sense of purpose or meaning in life, or "usefulness to others". The Japanese studies assessed the concept of ikigai,

translated as "a life worth living". The study participants, average age 67 years, were followed up for an average of seven years.

During this time, more than 14,500 participants died from any cause while more than 4,000 suffered cardiovascular events such as heart attack or stroke. The analysis showed a lower risk of death for participants with a high sense of purpose in life. Mortality was about one-fifth lower for participants reporting a strong sense of purpose, or ikigai, the findings showed.

A high sense of purpose in life was also related to a lower risk of cardiovascular events. "Together, these findings indicate a robust relationship between purpose in life and mortality and/or adverse cardiovascular outcomes," the researchers wrote. The study appeared in *Psychosomatic Medicine: Journal of Biobehavioral Medicine*. IANS



## ALIGN YOUR LIFE

### *Busting Feng Shui Myths*

**O**ver the years I have heard some very bizarre Feng Shui myths that have now become the norm that people seem to be following. These myths are so deep rooted that books are written on it and many follow it. However there is no logic or reasoning mentioned for these superstitions.

The most common and widely followed myth is to place a huge statue of laughing Buddha at the entrance, so that you will become rich and famous. As much as I would like to believe this, it is completely not true. The laughing Buddha statue has significance in China due to its cultural reference. But does it mean anything to anyone in any other culture? So there you have your answer.

The next one is that one must keep the lid of the toilet closed at all times. If you don't, then you will lose a lot of money. If this were true more than half the world would be bankrupt and would have lost their wealth. Close the lid for hygienic purposes but it has no other significance whatsoever.

Another myth is that placing bamboo plants everywhere in your home improves health. Bamboo is used in Feng Shui to enhance the wood element and weaken the metal element. They are placed based on the calculations of Flying Star Feng Shui. However placing them everywhere without any reason can make you feel good. But has no actual benefit.

Some people believe red colour brings good luck and must be used everywhere. I knew of a client who had painted his home and office in red to boost his business. Instead he was always down with a headache and didn't know what was wrong. Anything in excess is not good. Similarly red colour represents fire energy and can be used in sections of the house where you need to enhance this energy or reduce an element. This again is based on the flying star Feng Shui calculations. Therefore using this colour everywhere will not help you at all. Instead it just might give you a headache due to the heavy density of the colour.

Last but not the least is that sleeping with your head in the South direction will make you world famous. Many believe that South direction represents fire and fame. By sleeping in this direction you will be enhancing that aspect of your life. However there is no scientific basis to this belief and therefore it's not accurate. Which directions are favourable to you will be based on your date of birth and Kua number calculations. One fixed direction cannot be applied to billions on this planet.

So before you jump into implementing Feng Shui in your home, be sure that what you are following is authentic and not a superstition.

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