

## **“Why are People Reluctant to Tempt Fate?”**

The talk examines the belief that it is bad luck to “tempt fate.” First, I will present research documenting the intuition. Second, I will examine the claim that the intuition is due, in large part, to the combination of the automatic tendencies to attend to negative prospects and to use accessibility as a cue when judging likelihood. Then I plan to present recent, unpublished work that goes beyond the question of “why.” Specifically, I will discuss, “what” the belief entails, “who” tends to believe, and “when” people will avoid actions that are thought to tempt fate. Time permitting, I will end by presenting research that explores the psychology of “reversing one’s fortune.” Simply speaking, I will ask: Why do people knock on wood?