

Pride: Dictionary definition: “inordinate self-esteem”

Pride can be, in my opinion, a very good thing. Taking pride in your work isn't something to be ashamed of.

But when you look at the definition I think the word “inordinate” pops out at me. I've heard people say that their display is “the best” and even going so far as to be on tv or in print claiming to have “the best display in... (insert city, state, country here). I find that incredibly disrespectful to those around you and those who participate in this great hobby. Who says yours is the best? You? Your family? The local contest? Sometimes the people that do what we would consider “small” have made a big impact for the people around them. Wreaths on the door, small light displays, etc are every bit a part of the holidays as a 15,000 universe RGB video-playing behemoth. Regardless of what you do for the holiday we should all be proud of the work we put in. We should like the kudos and thanks but we should temper it with a little humility and work to keep the “inordinate self-esteem” at bay.

Gluttony: Dictionary definition:” an emphasis on over-indulgence”

This is an easy one to tip into in our hobby. Excess is what it's all about to us sometimes! But too many lights, too many songs, too much going on, and too much time taken away from jobs and families to set up... sometimes it's just too much. We've all heard that “less is more”. This seems to fly in the face of extreme decorating! But if we all work to find the things that make us (and our visitors) happy, without “over indulging”, we're going to avoid gluttony when it comes to our holiday shows. And don't eat ALL of the turkey either!

Envy: Dictionary definition: “painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage”

How easy is it to find ourselves envious of another person's display? Their elements are better, they have newer technology or they achieve more **traffic**. “Keeping up with the Joneses” is alive and well in this day and age and our holiday lights offer no rest from it. NO ONE has the BEST of everything. As my Pappy always said “you can have anything you want, but you can't have EVERYTHING that you want.”

Enjoy what you have and let others enjoy it too. Don't be envious of something someone else has; be proud (without being “inordinate”! See above!) of what you have worked to create. See something you like that someone else has or is doing? Work hard to get there but don't become Grinch-green with envy over it.

Sloth: Dictionary definition: “disinclination to action or labor”

Hobbies are cyclical. I truly believe that. We have discussions at LSH about how we need to bring veteran members back into the fold. But the rigors of everyday life- jobs, spouses, friends, children, etc- take a front seat to our hobby, as they should if your priorities are set in the right place. So I'm not talking about when you take a year off or simply decide to leave the hobby altogether. I'm talking about what happens when you get lazy. You stop learning and looking for new ways to improve your display. You start to take shortcuts and think “that's OK no one notices any way”. It's better to take a year – or more – off and recharge than to simply throw it up half-hearted and take the easy way out. Remember, no one ever created a great display by sitting on the couch and thinking about it. If it was easy everyone would do it!

Wrath: Dictionary definition: “strong vengeful anger”

This could apply to a lot of things when setting up (or tearing down). You can't get that sequence “just right”. The lights don't look the way you expect. People don't come to see your display. Last year (2012) I had this idea to fence in my yard with the wire mesh I had used on my shutters. Should have been easy and worked great. Unfortunately it did not and I had over 100 feet of wire mess cut to size and laying in the front yard. I could have thrown it away in a fit (and believe me I've done things like that before!) but instead I simply rolled it up, said “oh well” and put it away for another year/purpose. So that's the type of physical, outward anger that we get when something doesn't go perfectly. Try to relax and have fun when that happens. I know, I know it's easier said than done. But give it a try- I've mellowed considerably in terms of this the last couple of years. And I do find myself enjoying it all a little bit more because of that conscious decision.

There is another component where wrath raises its ugly head in our hobby: online forums! Online conversations turn nasty fast, more quickly than they should for people who are sharing a hobby and presumably are doing so to bring joy to others. I see people accusing others of stealing ideas or telling people that their opinions are “wrong” (people, opinions by definition cannot be wrong. The sooner we all get that the better off we'll be). Just because you've been a member of a certain group or forum since the mid-80s (a slight exaggeration) doesn't make you the foremost expert on all things Christmas! And even if you were/are (which you're not!), why do people have to be so rotten and nasty to each other on forums? Internet tough-guys or keyboard bullies should have no place in our hobby (or anywhere for that matter). Sometimes it's important to just agree to disagree, or shake your head at something someone posted and move on. It's alright, really. Don't get so upset that your “strong vengeful anger” takes hold and makes you out to be the bad guy.

Greed: Dictionary definition: “a selfish and excessive desire for more of something (as money) than is needed”

This is pretty self-explanatory: you want MORE. More money, more lights, more **traffic**, more channels, more presents... more, more, more, more! Excess is easy to get into when you are a part of this hobby, but to do so selfishly and to be constantly looking to getting something “more” isn't something that any of us should be striving for. It's actually the opposite of what most our displays are about!

Lust: Dictionary definition: “An overwhelming desire or craving”

Lust is often related to sexual desire (in fact that's the primary definition for it) but in this case it doesn't apply (or it better not at least! If it does then you have far bigger **issues** than my little thread could hope to help!). But the “overwhelming desire or craving” certainly is something we can probably all relate to. You know what I'm talking about: We want to be powerful; to be considered an “expert” in our hobby. We want to get a job where we are paid to fly the world over and do nothing but put up lights. We simply want to be GREAT and to have people validate that for us. Those are the type of feelings that lead us to lust after something. Lusting after anything, whether it's “stuff” or celebrity status, or something else in relation to our hobby is never a pretty thing. LOVE your display and what it brings to others. Don't lust over things that are not, in the grand scheme of things, that important.