



Picture: SHUTTERSTOCK / AFRICA RISING

You might want to rethink your New Year's resolutions if you've pledged to swear less, because scientist have found the foul-mouthed among us are the most honest.

In a [study](#) titled:

Frankly, we do give a damn: The relationship between profanity and honesty

researchers from the Universities of Hong Kong, Stanford, Cambridge and Maastricht found a link between profanity and honesty.

The researchers say profanity can include sexual references, vulgarity, offensive slang and anything else considered socially inappropriate.

They first asked a group of 276 participants about their swearing habits, as well as how honest they were in different situations, and found the most honest people were also the heaviest swearers.

They also found that people were much more likely to use swearing as a way to express themselves and their emotions, rather than in an anti-social or harmful way towards others.

In a second study the researchers tested these findings in a more real-life setting, by analysing the status updates of more than 73,000 Facebook users.

They measured for honesty (previous research shows liars prefer to use third-person pronouns than first-person ones and more negative words) and profanity.

Again, they found that honest people were more likely to use profane language.

Then, they used previous data to compare the integrity levels of US states with how often they swear – where they found the same conclusion.

Study 3: State-level profanity and integrity rates.

State	Profanity rate	Integrity	State	Profanity rate	Integrity	State	Profanity rate	Integrity
Alabama	34	72	Maine	33	56	Oregon	36	73
Alaska	42	68	Maryland	46	61	Pennsylvania	42	71
Arizona	41	68	Massachusetts	46	74	Rhode Island	44	74
Arkansas	29	68	Michigan	41	58	South Carolina	29	57
California	44	81	Minnesota	39	69	South Dakota	38	50
Colorado	39	67	Mississippi	33	79	Tennessee	32	76
Connecticut	52	86	Missouri	37	72	Texas	38	68
Delaware	51	70	Montana	35	68	Utah	26	65
Florida	41	71	Nebraska	42	80	Vermont	35	69
Georgia	36	49	Nevada	47	60	Virginia	40	55
Hawaii	45	74	New Hampshire	36	66	Washington	36	83
Idaho	31	61	New Jersey	50	87	West Virginia	34	68
Illinois	45	74	New Mexico	34	62	Wisconsin	39	70
Indiana	35	70	New York	46	65	Wyoming	34	52
Iowa	40	87	North Carolina	37	71			
Kansas	39	75	North Dakota	37	58			
Kentucky	37	71	Ohio	39	66			
Louisiana	35	72	Oklahoma	33	64			

The researchers say swearing is often used to express one's feelings, which suggests people who do this more regularly portray themselves in a more honest light.