

# People who swear more have this one positive trait in common

Are you \*\*\*\*ing us?!



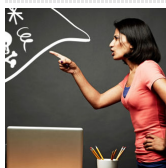
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By [Anya Meyerowitz](#) 2 January, 2017

We spent our teenage years being told to wash our mouths out with soap and our working lives trying to replace swear words with something less offensive when our boss asks why that report he asked us to do at 5.30pm on a Friday isn't on his desk at 9am on Monday.

However although we spend much of our lives trying to prevent our profanities from coming out, those of us who swear a lot actually have one majorly positive thing in common: we're more honest.

This b\*\*\*\*y great news comes from researchers at the University of Cambridge and various other educational institutions around the world who found that people who liked more swear words and used them more often were less likely to lie.



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Their latest study into profanities, published in the journal *Social Psychological and*

*Personality Science*, surveyed 276 people about their swearing tendencies and why they felt inclined to swear. Most participants professed that it was due to a need to express their real feelings.

It was not, as we often tell children, as a way of insulting or intimidating others but as a way of conveying negative or positive emotions.

Participants were asked a series of questions intended to measure honesty, including whether they had ever blamed someone else for their own mistake **or cheated** during a game. They were also asked to list the swear words they most commonly used and with what frequency they used them.

When the two parts of the experiment were compared, scientist's found that those who admitted to using them more were also found to lie least.

A second experiment which monitored the language of 74,000 Facebook users also found that those who swore more online were more honest. Researcher's used previous studies to match the signs of dishonesty with participants online behaviour. Those who are more honest online tend to use 'I' or 'me' more while **the dishonest amongst us** used anxious words such as 'worried' or 'nervous'.



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The studies co-author David Stilwell, from the UoC, commented: 'There are two ways of looking at it. You might think if someone is swearing a lot, this is a negative social behaviour seen as a bad thing to do, so if someone swears they are probably a bad person as well.

'On the other hand, they are not filtering their language so they are probably also not putting their stories about what is going through similar filters which might turn them into untruths.

In layman's terms, you're language being unfiltered reflects how you communicate elsewhere and the likelihood of it being authentic.

'This is what we seemed to land on in this study,' Stilwell continued. 'That people who **use the language** that comes to mind first are less likely to be playing games with the truth.'

However, before you start mistrusting those members of your family who are well-spoken, the research was focused on 'self-promoting' deception – i.e. **trying to make ourselves look better** rather than trying to mask a bank robbery.

Oh, phew!