

People who swear are reportedly more honest than those who don't, study



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People who use swear words are more likely to be honest, study says.

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The dirtier the mouth the more honest the person may be, a new study has found.

According to the joint study by Maastricht University, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Stanford University and University of Cambridge, those who swear like sailors are considered more sincere than those who don't swear or keep their profanity to a minimum.

“We set out to provide an empirical answer to competing views regarding the relationship between profanity and honesty,” the paper reads. “We found a consistent positive relationship between profanity and honesty; profanity was associated with less lying and deception at the individual level, and with higher integrity at the society level.”

So how'd they make this conclusion?

The study was divided into three parts.

The first involved a group of 307 people. The goal was to research the relationship between swearing and honesty by using a widely used lie scale. Each participant was given a series of questions on their use of curse words as well as questions about their behaviour (i.e. if you say you will do something, do you always keep your promise no matter how inconvenient it might be?).

Researchers went on to compare the length of each participant's swears list with their responses. Based on that they concluded those who wrote down a higher number of frequently used curse words were more honest with their answers.

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The second part of the study saw researchers comb through status updates of over 73,700 Facebook users.

According to the authors, a previous study published in *American Psychologist* found that Facebook provides a fairly accurate depiction of users' personalities and behaviours (i.e. whether they're honest) – hence their decision to utilize the platform.

By using the characteristics associated with lying as outlined in a 2003 report in *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, researchers were able to detect when a Facebook user was lying. According to the characteristics, liars:

1. Dissociate themselves from the lie by refraining from referring to themselves;
2. Prefer to use concrete language rather than abstract when referring to others (using someone's name instead of "he" or "she");
3. Are likely to be uncomfortable lying and will express more negative feelings;
4. Require more mental resources to obscure the lie and will use less cognitively demanding language (meaning they will use more motion verbs and less exclusive words).

The results from the second study were in line with the conclusions of the first: the more people swore, the more honest they were in their statements (a.k.a. Facebook statuses).

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The third part of the study looked at how society as a whole views swearing, and whether people who swear are seen as being more honest and genuine.

To do this, researchers looked at the American participants of the study, and organized them by their home state. States were considered to be a "society."

By using another computer program to analyze the data from the 2012 State Integrity Investigation, researchers were able to conclude that yes, those societies (a.k.a. states) who had the highest percentage of swearers also had a higher integrity score.

Of course, this isn't the first time having a potty mouth was found to be a positive thing.

A 2015 study concluded that intelligent people tend to use more swear words.

"Taboo or 'swear word' fluency is positively correlated with overall verbal fluency," Dr. Tomothy Jay, author of the study, told *Medical Daily*. "The more words you generated in one category meant the more words you generated in another category, orally and verbally."

In fact, people who are able to name more swear words in a minute often have a greater vocabulary bank.