

Lifestyle **People who swear more are more honest, new psychology study finds**

Expert says those who swear do not filter their language... or their stories

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Jennifer Lawrence *Getty*

For those who are frequently told off for littering their vocabulary with swear words, perhaps a new defence might work: “I was just being honest.”

Researchers from the University of Cambridge, Maastricht University, Hong Kong university and Stanford found that those who swear more are more likely to be honest people.

The authors studied 276 people in a lab, the social interactions of 73,789 people on Facebook and measured the average profanity scores against the integrity index for each US state. Their study, which will be published in the *Social Psychological and Personality Science* journal, concluded “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”.

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The co-author David Stilwell from the University of Cambridge told *The Independent*: “The main thing we found is if you filter your language when speaking then you’re probably also filtering what you’re saying as well. You are less likely to be about what you think and more about what you think other people want to hear.

"Someone who does not filter their language, so swears, is more likely to be saying what they think to be true so are being more honest and genuine from their perspective."

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In the lab, when participants were asked their reasons for swearing, the majority said it was to express their negative emotions and their true self. Participants said, in their experience, they often swore to be more honest about their feelings.

Professor Stilwell says the honesty they measured was "low-level, everyday honesty" in terms of people giving their real and true opinions rather than measuring "lies that would

get you sent to jail".

Previous studies have also waned in favour of the prolific swearer. Last year, a study suggested it was [intelligent people who swear more](#).

More about: [Swearing Honesty](#)