

Swear Much? Don't Swear It Off Just Yet

You may be pleasantly surprised to learn what it says about you

by [Carleen Wild](#) | *Updated 06 Jan 2017 at 8:55 AM*

From an early age, most of us are taught not to curse. It's impolite, makes us look bad, and is unacceptable in nearly all social situations (although it doesn't appear the toddler in the video below got that memo). Some families might even keep a bar of soap handy to encourage their kids to follow that one particular rule.

Baby Says Swear Word Multiple Times
Jukin Media



Dry cleaner returns \$1,700 found in pocket

Yet a recent study found that those who are more likely to have a trait we admire don't — honesty.

"We examined the relationship between dishonesty, and showed that profanity with honesty at an individual level, at

society level," the team of international researchers wrote in *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.

Check this out.

The researchers found that people are more likely to swear as a way to express themselves, rather than cause harm to others. So the more an individual swears, the more honest they are likely to be. "Liars, on the other hand, are known to prefer third-person pronouns and negative words in their speech," they stated.

For the study, 276 participants answered a questionnaire about their swearing habits, as well as how honest they were in different situations. Researchers also analyzed the status updates of more than 73,000 Facebook users, measuring for honesty and profanity. Previous data was also studied to compare integrity levels with how often people swear. All the experiments, the researchers concluded, had the same result: Honesty was associated with higher levels of swearing.

Past research has also suggested that swearing may be a sign of increased intelligence. A 2016 study found that individuals with higher levels of verbal intelligence tended to use more swear words.

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However — before you go around encouraging your kids to cuss away or trusting people you may never otherwise because of how prolific their profanity is, the team did offer this parting thought: "We caution that the findings should not be interpreted to mean that the more a person uses profanity the less likely he or she will engage in more serious unethical or immoral behaviors."