

People who swear a lot are more f***ing honest

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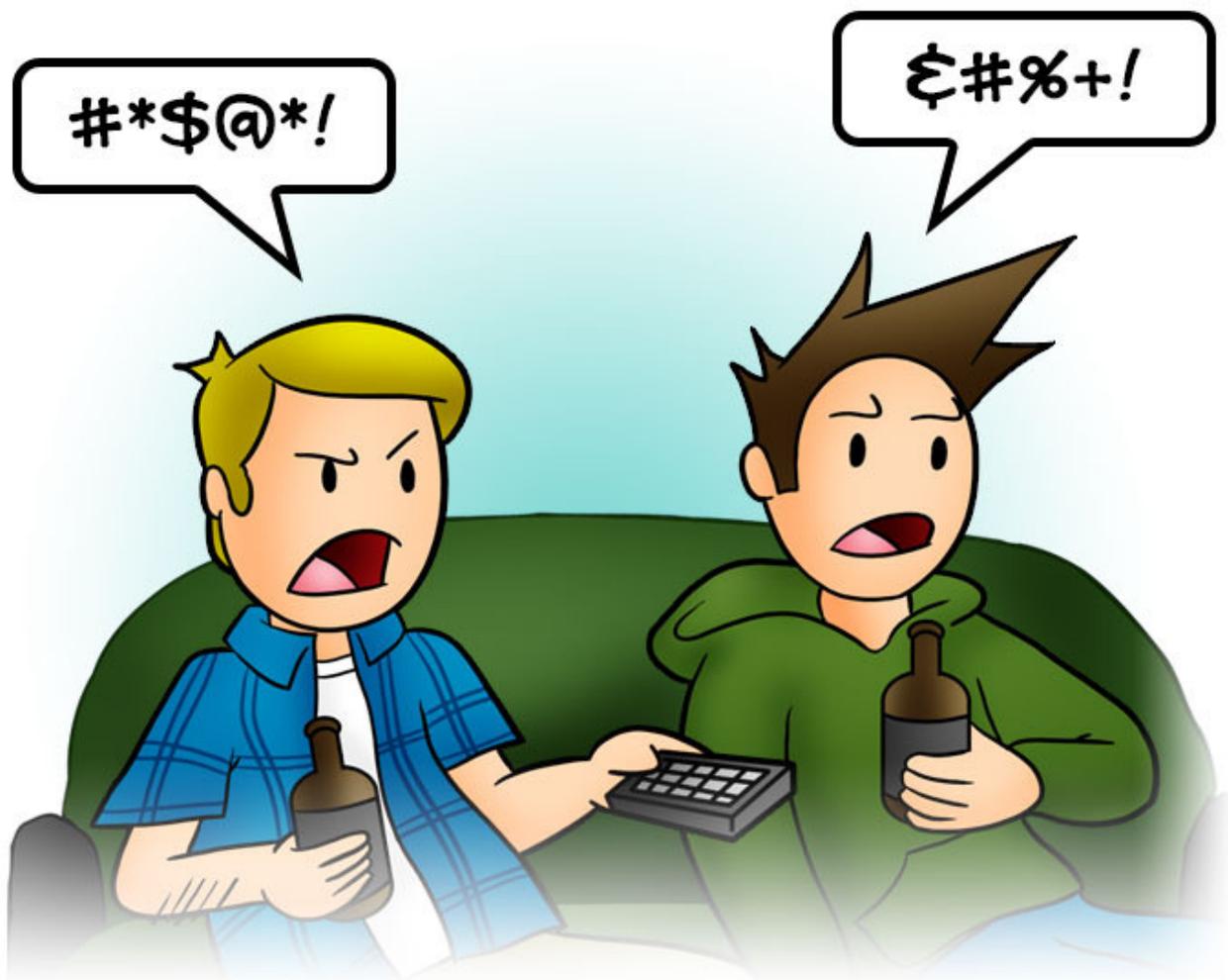


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Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

We all have *that* friend who's raised profanity to an art form. Keep them close if you cherish honest opinions and relationships. That's according to a new study which found people who easily churn obscenities are likely more honest.

The international team of researchers performed two studies meant to establish if there's any link between swearing and honesty. For the purpose of this study, profanity can include sexual references, vulgarity or offensive slang.

In the first part, 276 volunteers were interviewed about their swearing habits but also how honest they were in certain situations. For the second part, the researchers mined the status

updates of 75,000 Facebook users looking for both profanities and indicators of deception. Previous studies established that, generally, liars use third-person pronouns and negative words. It's worth mentioning that for the Facebook study, the kind of dishonesty analyzed was 'self-promoting' deception aimed at making someone look better.

The findings suggest "that the positive relation between profanity and honesty is robust, and that the relationship found at the individual level indeed translates to the society level," the researchers wrote in the journal *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.

Interestingly, the more obscene words the person used, the likelier he or she was to be truthful. Though swearing is often used out of anger or malice, habitual use of profanities can be quite candid, the study suggests.

The following table shows a correlation between profanity rate and integrity by state.

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			

Credit: Social Psychological and Personality Science.

"You might think if someone is swearing a lot, this is a negative social behavior," said study co-author David Stillwell from the University of Cambridge. "On the other hand, they are not filtering their language so they are probably also not putting their stories about what is going on through similar filters which might turn them into untruths."

Previously, scientists found a correlation between swearing a lot and higher verbal intelligence. Another study found bad language can actually provide pain relief.