

Why You May Be More Honest If You Swear Often

“Profanity is often used to express one’s unfiltered feelings ... and sincerity,” a study says.

01/10/2017 09:20 am ET



Rebecca Shapiro
Senior Editor, The Huffington Post

Good news if you’re a potty mouth.

Your penchant for profanity not only means you [might have a bigger vocabulary](#) or [are more intelligent](#) than your clean-tongued friends. You may also be more honest.

People who swear a lot lie less often and have higher levels of integrity, according to a [new study](#) published by researchers from Maastricht University, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Stanford and the University of Cambridge.

The researchers set up three different studies exploring the relationship between profanity and honesty. First, they asked 276 people about how often they use curse words and why they say them. Participants then answered a lie scale, a series of questions that ask redundant questions to evaluate truthfulness. Next, researchers scanned 73,789 Facebook profiles based on profanity use and honest status updates. Finally, the study team used previous data to evaluate the profanity use and integrity levels in each U.S. state.

In all cases, they found positive relationships between profanity use and honesty levels.

“Profanity is often used to express one’s unfiltered feelings (e.g. anger, frustration) and sincerity,” [researchers wrote](#). In such situations, people use curse words to truthfully portray how they feel.

Previous studies have shown that [people who curse often](#) do so because they prefer to express themselves using those words. Another study even showed that under certain circumstances, [cursing can even make people feel better](#).

So like all good things in life, just remember — moderation is key.