

Truth Telling

Chi Ku

Ice Breaker

- Do you think you should tell the truth? Why?
- Do you try to tell the truth?

Reference

- Preferences for Truth-Telling: Johannes Abeler et al, University of Oxford.

Bible Verses

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

[Proverbs 11:3](#) | [NIV](#) | [reliability](#)

To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

[Proverbs 21:3](#) | [NIV](#) | [righteousness](#)
[sacrifice](#)

Bible Verses

If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.

[1 John 1:6](#) | [NIV](#) | [sin](#) [truth](#) [lying](#)

Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

[Romans 13:7](#) | [NIV](#) | [money](#) [owe](#) [debt](#)



Bible Verses

A perverse person stirs up conflict,
and a gossip separates close friends.

Proverbs 16:28 | NIV | gossip
friendship lying

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Matthew 5:8 | NIV | blessing heart



Bible Verses

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

[2 Timothy 2:15](#) | [NIV](#) | [truth](#) [work](#)

Be still before the Lord
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

[Psalms 37:7](#) | [NIV](#) | [life](#) [patience](#)



Bible Verses

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

[James 3:17](#) | [NIV](#) | [peace](#) [wisdom](#)

Ill-gotten treasures have no lasting value, but righteousness delivers from death.

[Proverbs 10:2](#) | [NIV](#) | [money](#) [righteousness](#)



Experimental Setups

- Recruit a group of subjects.
- Each subject rolls a dice and record the outcome but the experimenter is not informed about the outcome.
- The experimenter only knows the distribution of the dice outcomes.
- Each subject reports to the experimenter and is rewarded based on what he/she reported.

Experimental Results

- A significant portion of the subjects did not report the outcome with highest reward.

Experimental Result

- Reported outcomes spread over several states.

Experimental Results

- The probability of reporting an outcome is weakly proportional to its payoff.

Experimental Results

- Some non-maximal payoff outcomes were reported more often than their true probability.

Experimental Results

- When the probability of high payoff outcome increases, the probability of reporting high payoff outcome increases more than the increase in actual probability.

Experimental Result

- Changing the belief about how other people would report does not affect how this subject would report.

Experimental Result

- Making the report verifiable greatly affects how people report.

Most Likely Hypothesis

- There is a cost associated with feeling anxious about lying.
- There is a cost associated with feeling anxious about being regarded a dishonest.

Explanation

- This hypothesis could be supported by:
 - Authorities often impose some penalty on some one caught lying.
 - The society normally has less respect for people with no integrity.

What I learned

- According to this model, when a person faces a decision with a payoff that is much larger than his/her costs associated with anxiety of lying and being seen as dishonest, he/she is likely to lie.
- For example, some people lie about their true belief about global warming in order to save their jobs.

What I learned

- An alternative behavior model would be to maximize benefits. That is to be honest only when it yields the largest expected gain.
- But, the world is so complex that only God knows how the future would evolve; therefore, how to quantify gains for different actions.
- For example, home buyers face the decision of whether to exaggerate income in order to qualify for a bigger house purchase.

What I learned

- My hypothesis is that God created this world in such a way that lying is a dominated strategy. That is: there is always a better solution to the problem that does not require lying.
- This is because truth telling facilitates transparency which induces confidence and enables better planning.
- For example, instead of lying about your true career interest during a job interview, you could emphasize how your inclination could be valuable to the potential employee.

Application

- What would you do when your peers are getting ahead of you by cheating?

Lying and Tragedy of Commons

- Lying and the “tragedy of commons” are closely related in that it is often that a single person truth-telling loses more when others are lying; while a single person lying gains more when others are truth-telling.