

# New Research From Psychological Science

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Read about the latest research published in *Psychological Science*:

## [Ethical Free Riding: When Honest People Find Dishonest Partners](#)

*Jörg Gross, Margarita Leib, Theo Offerman, and Shaul Shalvi*



Do honest people turn dishonest when they partner with a liar? Gross and colleagues investigated how dishonesty can emerge and spread in collaborations. Participants were assigned a partner and asked to report the outcome of a die roll presented on a computer screen. They earned extra money if they and their partner reported the same outcome, with higher numbers yielding higher pay. This created an opportunity to increase a payoff through coordinated lying. After several rounds, participants who had lied about the die outcomes tended to choose new partners when originally paired with honest ones. Honest participants who had been paired with dishonest partners tended to choose to stay in the dyad, securing a high compensation without having to lie themselves. The authors describe this as ethical free-riding. When honest participants were forced to stay with a dishonest partner, both individuals tended to become dishonest. Overall, the results suggest that honest people will turn a blind eye to other people's rule violations if they stand to profit from them. They discuss the implications of these findings for organizations and societies.

## [Income Inequality Affects the Psychological Health of Only the People Facing Scarcity](#)

*Nicolas Sommet, Davide Morselli, and Dario Spini*



To analyze the relationship between income inequality and unhappiness, Sommet and colleagues used data from an internationally representative survey in which measures of feelings of unhappiness and family savings (a measure of financial scarcity) were collected in four waves (1994–1998, 1999–2004, 2005–2009, and 2010–2014). They assessed the relationship among unhappiness, financial scarcity, and national income inequality, calculated by the Gini coefficient, which describes household income distribution in a given country. In their results, income inequality was

associated with unhappiness for individuals experiencing financial scarcity (i.e., individuals who spent their savings and/or borrowed money) but not for individuals experiencing financial equilibrium or abundance. These effects were similar across countries. Sommet et al. also used data from a national Swiss survey (1999–2013) that included questions about psychological health problems and found that income inequality was associated with those health problems only for individuals who experienced financial scarcity. These results suggest that income inequality may aggravate the consequences of scarcity.