

Why a good deed sometimes leads to bad behavior

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NBC:

Doing a good deed can lead some people to more kind acts while spurring others to backslide. But how people respond depends on their moral outlook, according to a new study.

People who believe the ends justify the means are likelier to offset good deeds with bad ones and vice versa. By contrast, those who believe right and wrong are defined by principle, not outcome, tend to be more consistent, even if they're behaving unethically.

The findings were published Feb. 27 in the journal *Psychological Science*.

But other studies found just the opposite: Behaving ethically leads people to more good deeds later, said study co-author, Gert Cornelissen, a psychologist at the University Pompeu Fabra in Spain.

To sort out this conflicting picture, Cornelissen and his colleagues asked 84 undergraduates what they would do in a hypothetical dilemma where a runaway trolley is on a collision course with five people, and the only way to save them is to flip a switch, reroute the trolley and kill one person.

Read the whole story: [NBC](#)