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# Black Sheep: The Hidden Benefits of Being Bad

*By Richard Stephens*



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## Black Sheep: The Hidden Benefits of Being Bad By Richard Stephens

Richard Stephens became the focus of international media attention in 2009 for his research on the psychological benefits of swearing as a response to pain. Now, fresh from winning the 2014 Wellcome Trust Science Writing Prize, Richard's first popular science book uncovers other pieces of surprising and occasionally bizarre scientific enquiry showing that what we at first perceive as bad can, in fact, be good.

More pub conversation than science book, Richard's writing style is very accessible - both engaging and humorous. Think wasting time is bad? Not always! Research shows that taking time out can help you solve difficult problems. And if you can't be bothered tidying up, well fine, research shows that people are more creative in a messy environment. Swearing is rude but research shows that in some situations it can be a form of politeness. Swearing can also be used as a tool of persuasion.

Black Sheep casts a slant on a range of human experiences from life to death, sex to romance, from speed thrills to halting boredom and from drinking alcohol (in moderation) to headily excessive bad language. This is a fascinating left-field tour of the world of psychological science. Get ready for the many hidden benefits of being bad that you really won't have seen coming.



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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

Richard Stephens demonstrates that the bad ("NEVER DO THAT!") things in life do have their good, practical side. -- Marc Abrahams, founder of the Ig Nobel Prize Packed with anecdotes from popular culture as well as intriguing accounts of scientific research, this book is a genial and knowledgeable guide to everyday vices from alcohol to chewing gum, which finds that there are often hidden virtues to be found in them, too. Richard Stephens wears his authority as a psychologist lightly, and in a warm, entertaining style offers his perspective that risk is not the same as danger; that life can be enriched by taking a few risks - depending on the context, of course. -- Michael Regnier, Science Writer/Editor at the Wellcome Trust

#### **About the Author**

Dr Richard Stephens is the winner of the Wellcome Trust Science Writing Prize 2014. He is a lecturer at Keele who married a human statue and races cars in his spare time. His research on the psychological benefits of swearing has been the focus of international media attention including television appearances on BBC's The One Show and Stephen Fry's Planet Word. Richard and his team picked up an Ig Nobel Prize in 2010 in recognition of science that "first makes you laugh and then make you think". Richard is a founder member of the international Alcohol Hangover Research Group and Chair of the British Psychological Society Psychobiology Section.

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