

COSMOPOLITAN

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DRUNK SEX ONLY

Are you in the club?

WHEN IT
COMES TO

DATING

WHICH
APPROACH
WORKS?

WHY DOES
IT FEEL SO
F**KING
GOOD?

(Swearing, that is)

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MARGARITA
PLEASE!

BALLER
HOLIDAYS
ON A
BUDGET

TERROR
IN THE
STREETS

'There were bodies
everywhere'

JESSICA ALBA

'I work damn hard
for my money'



WHY DOES
SWEARING
MAKE US
FEEL SO GOD-
DAMN GOOD?

A F*KING FUN**

F#!*ING
S@!T FS@K
D*#K D!#K
S*!T FISK

**WE LOVE TO PEPPER
OUR LANGUAGE WITH
AN 'EFF THIS' OR A 'NO
SH!T', BUT THERE'S
MORE TO IT THAN
JUST THROWING
DOWN A SWEAR FOR
SH!TS AND GIGGLES.
DISCOVERS POTTY-
MOUTH MEL EVANS**

► 'Scuse my French, but letting out a swear every now and then feels f*cking good, doesn't it? Not only does a little colourful language show our passion and bring some spice to a sentence, it's also been proven to be good for us on the inside.

And we're quite a swearsy generation, with a recent study finding three-quarters of Gen Y are comfortable swearing in the office, compared to 58 per cent of Gen X and Baby Boomers (bunch o' squares).

PROLIFIC PROFANITY

There has been a real change in our view of swearing. It wasn't too long ago 'shit' was bleeped before the non-prime-time hour of 8.30pm. Now the F-bomb is probs being dropped on *Home and Away...* by Alf (that's right, no more 'flamin' galahs'). OK fine, Alf may not be swearing (yet), but Monika

Bednarek, senior lecturer in linguistics at the University of Sydney, examined TV in the United States and found *The Wire* averaged more than 100 instances of profanity per episode. We're like sponges, sucking up every word.

'The more exposure we have to swearing, the more likely we are to integrate it into our own expressions,' says psychologist Dr Samantha Clarke. 'It can change the way we express ourselves. Someone may have only sworn when they were upset or angry, yet the increase of media using swearing as a form of humour or endearment is likely to adapt the function of swearing for the individual watching.'

Now we're dropping much more than an 'oh, fiddlesticks' in front of our parents – and mum's not clutching her pearls! Aside from family benefits, swearing is good for our health, too. From increasing our depth of emotions to creating a sense of catharsis, there's much good to be done by peppering our language with a few curses.

It makes us feel good and it also turns us into hard mofos. A 2011 study led by Richard Stephens of Keele University found that people who swore were better able to tolerate pain. They had 67 participants place their hand in ice water and see how long they could hold it in there. When they swore, they could hold it twice as long. 'Increased tolerance is

linked to the activation of the limbic system, which releases adrenaline – linked to pain relief,' says Dr Clarke. 'This is called the hypoalgesic effect.' The effects of pain relief were more evident in those who did not typically swear. Still, long-time swearer or not, before you next pop a Panadol, why don't you scream 'F*CK!' first and see if that helps?

SOCIAL SWEARING

Not only does swearing help when we stub a toe, it downplays our feelings of weakness and provides us with a coping mechanism, making us *feel* more resilient. It's also said to improve circulation, elevate endorphins and generate a sense of calm. It's the feel-good hit of the summer, really.

So a swear a day keeps the doctor away* (*not actual medical advice), *and* it helps us in social situations. Due to the emotional effect of the words themselves, swearing helps us find our place within friendship circles. According to Dr Clarke, when someone is presented with a swear word, their amygdala, a central part of the limbic system, which

controls fight or flight, is activated, showing these types of words cause significant emotional reactions. 'It can assist with bonding, creating cohesion between members of a group, particularly if there is a mutual view of swearing,' she says. And you can't deny a playful insult is the chosen way for Australians to convey affection – the C-word is pretty much a term of endearment.

BEST USED SPARINGLY

Sure, swearing can bring us together, as it's seen as a way of building connections with those you are engaging with. But be warned: when used incorrectly, much like love, it can tear us apart.

'Swearing can inhibit a relationship from forming or even rupture established ones,' warns Dr Clarke. 'There are other ways to express our emotions without having to revert to swearing, as it can still be viewed as aggressive.'

When used in the right context, there's nothing better than a peppering of 'f*ck'... but let's treat it as a privilege, not a right – especially now we know the more we abuse the words, the less good it feels. And if I'm ever caught mid-iced water crush à la Rose in *Titanic*, I'd like some sweet, sweet pain relief. **COSMO**

INVESTIGATION