

[Moral Compensation and the Environment: Affecting individuals' moral intentions through how they see themselves as moral](#) (link to the [article](#))

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To maintain a positive moral self-image, individuals engage in compensation: current moral behavior licenses future immoral behavior and current immoral behavior stimulates future moral behavior. In this paper, we argue that moral compensatory effects are a function of changes to one's moral self-image. In two studies, we examine the relationship between behaviors that stimulate changes to one's moral self-image and to ethical actions. In Study 1, we have individuals recall either few or many (im)moral behaviors that they take in regards to the environment. In Study 2, we provide individuals with either minor or extreme feedback about the states of their moral selves. We then examine their intent to engage, as well as their actual engagement in, in various moral or immoral behaviors. We find that having people engage in extreme, but not moderate, moral recalls leads to compensatory environment-related moral behavior. We propose that this effect is due to the ability of extreme moral behavior to alter individuals' moral self-images and hence their desires to alter these states via moral behavior.