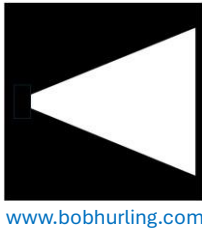


Repeat, Repeat, Repeat



Overview

We already know that repeating a statement makes it feel more true. But could repeating a message also make you, the person saying it, seem more credible? A team of researchers tested this idea across four experiments. Their conclusion: yes, repetition doesn't just shape the message; it also shapes how we see the messenger.

Key Findings & Insights

A repeated message is more likely to be judged true, that's the well-known illusory truth effect. This study goes a step further, showing that people also rate the source of repeated statements as more credible.

Experiment 1: People judged the truth of statements and the credibility of the faces shown saying them.

Repeated statements were rated more truthful, and the people who said them more credible.

Condition	Statement Truth (Mean)	Statement Truth (SD)	Source Credibility (Mean)	Source Credibility (SD)
Repeated	4.56	0.96	4.26	1.09
Unrepeated	3.68	0.7	3.46	0.87

Experiment 2: A new twist. People saw sources make repeated vs. unrepeated statements, and later judged new statements from those sources. The effect still held: new statements from previously "repeating" sources were judged more truthful — even when the new statements were unrelated.

Truth rating for new statements from repeated sources = 3.96 vs. 3.76 from unrepeated ones.

Statement Type	Mean Truth Rating	Standard Deviation
Novel from Repeated Source	3.96	0.62
Novel from Unrepeated Source	3.76	0.51



Experiment 3: Removed any truth ratings during the pairing phase. The effect disappeared, suggesting we need some judgment or reflection for the source credibility boost to stick.

Experiment 4: Reinstated various tasks, truth, recognition, or no task, during the pairing phase. The source credibility effect reappeared in all cases. Repetition does seem to influence how credible a person appears, even when you later hear them say something entirely new.

Conclusion

In real life, sources are everywhere, news anchors, influencers, CEOs. If hearing someone say something over and over makes us not only believe the message but trust them more, the implications for politics, media, and advertising are big.

This paper suggests that repetition doesn't just manipulate the message, it changes the messenger. In uncertain times, familiarity breeds not contempt, but credibility.

Mattavelli, S., Corneille, O., & Unkelbach, C. (2023). Truth by repetition... Without repetition: Testing the effect of instructed repetition on truth judgments. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 49(8), 1264.