**False Signaling and Personal Moral Failings:
Two distinct pathways to hypocrisy with unequal moral weight**

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Abstract

Moral engagement is a key feature of human nature: we hold moral values, condemn those who violate those values, and attempt to adhere to them ourselves. Yet moral engagement can make us appear hypocritical if we fail to behave morally. When does moral engagement risk triggering ascriptions of hypocrisy? And when do hypocrites—more so than ordinary wrongdoers—earn particular moral outrage? Across four studies (total $n = 1,787$), we provide evidence of two distinct pathways to hypocrisy: (1) violating a moral value that you have signaled to others that you adhere to (i.e., engaging in *false signaling*) and (2) violating a moral value that you genuinely hold (i.e., committing a *personal moral failing*). Furthermore, we show that these pathways have unequal moral weight, such that false signaling is evaluated more negatively. In Study 1, we confirm that paradigmatic hypocrites activate judgments associated with both pathways. In Studies 2-3, we investigate case studies designed to activate one pathway but not the other. We find evidence that both pathways are sufficient to trigger ascriptions of hypocrisy, but false signalers are more likely to be penalized for their hypocrisy (and thus deemed less moral than non-hypocritical transgressors). Finally, Study 4 demonstrates that a target who violates a stated value, but avoids activating either pathway, is judged as neither hypocritical nor immoral—confirming that at least one pathway is *necessary* for hypocrisy. Together, these findings suggest that false signaling and personal moral failings constitute two distinct pathways to hypocrisy with unequal moral weight.

Keywords: moral engagement, hypocrite, deception, dishonesty, moral values

Introduction

Moral engagement is an essential feature of human nature. People ubiquitously hold moral values and express them to others (Barasch et al., 2014; Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Schwartz, & Bilsky, 1987; Skitka, 2010; Wilson et al., 2000). Furthermore, when we witness people violating our moral values, we often choose to condemn and punish their transgressions (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004; Henrich et al., 2006). And we strive to act in ways that align with our values, even when faced with the temptation to betray them (Rand & Nowak, 2013).

Moral engagement has obvious upsides: by promoting our values, calling out injustice, and attempting to behave morally, we can make the world a better place. Yet moral engagement can also feel perilous, because people do not always live up to the moral values they hold or espouse. For example, posting a moralizing message on social media risks backlash—perhaps a snarky reply about past behavior of yours that contradicts your current message (e.g., the “This you?” meme on Twitter; Harris, 2020). This possibility reflects that moral engagement can appear *hypocritical*, if you yourself do not behave morally. In this paper, we explore the question of when and how moral engagement risks triggering ascriptions of hypocrisy—and when being judged a hypocrite is something to fear.

Does moral engagement inevitably create a hypocrisy liability?

Traditionally, when we think about hypocrisy, we think of somebody who publicly condemns a potential transgression (e.g., by declaring it immoral to use marijuana) while privately committing that same transgression. Yet recent work demonstrates that other forms of moral engagement can *also* risk triggering ascriptions of hypocrisy (Barden et al., 2016; Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Effron et al., 2015; Effron, Markus, et al., 2018; Effron, O’Connor, et al., 2018; Graham et al., 2015; Hale & Pillow, 2015; Wagner et al., 2009).

More specifically, evidence suggests that acting to contradict a privately held moral value can make you a hypocrite, even if your attitude is never imposed on others (Graham et al., 2015). For example, a target who smokes marijuana illegally is judged by a majority of subjects to be a hypocrite when she personally holds the belief that illicit drug use is wrong, even though she never expresses this view to others (Alicke et al., 2013). Furthermore, privately engaging in good deeds can make you appear hypocritical, if your good deeds are inconsistent with your public transgressions. In a recent series of studies (O'Connor et al., 2020), subjects judged the founder of a pro-infidelity website to be hypocritical for privately remaining faithful to his wife. Or, in another scenario, subjects deemed a tobacco company executive hypocritical for secretly donating to anti-smoking causes. Thus, while the paradigmatic hypocrite is somebody who “says one thing and does another,” it increasingly appears that *any* moral engagement can cause you to be labeled a hypocrite—even if you never say anything at all.

This work may lead to the perception that holding high moral standards or striving to act virtuously poses an inherent liability. Even if you avoid publicly espousing your values or condemning others for violating them, engaging morally puts you at risk of hypocrisy. Of course, hypocrisy in the absence of public condemnation is less likely to be detected by others. But it is always possible that your private attitudes or good deeds will be discovered (or inferred). Perhaps, then, it is safer to inoculate yourself from charges of hypocrisy through moral apathy, given that moral engagement can place a target on your back.

In this paper, we provide a contrary view. We acknowledge that moral engagement makes you liable to appear hypocritical. But we also argue that it does not always put a target on your back, because you can be deemed a hypocrite without necessarily being judged negatively. Furthermore, we propose that the existing literature has overlooked this point, and more

generally the important conceptual distinction between *hypocrisy* and *negative moral evaluation*. For example, a recent paper argued that the reason hypocrisy is relevant to person perception is that it results in “severe consequences” such as “moral condemnation, punitive sentiment, and other forms of censure” (O’Connor et al., 2020, p. 1)—a claim that suggests hypocrisy is necessarily linked to negative moral evaluations. Yet we contend that certain acts of hypocrisy do not trigger any of these consequences, despite still being seen as genuine acts of hypocrisy.

The role of false signaling

We propose that it is possible for hypocrites to avoid negative evaluation in cases where they avoid engaging in *false signaling*. In previous work (Jordan et al., 2017), it has been argued that people dislike hypocrites because they deceptively send false signals about their personal moral conduct. To support this claim, Jordan et al. considered prototypical hypocrites, who publicly condemn transgressions that they engage in. They showed that condemnation serves as a signal of personal conduct, such that people who condemn wrongdoers are judged to be more trustworthy and moral—a finding that aligns with a growing body of work on the signaling value of punishment (e.g., Barclay, 2006; Jordan et al., 2016; Jordan & Rand, 2019; Nelissen, 2008; Raihani & Bshary, 2015). Thus, when a hypocrite chooses to publicly condemn a transgression, she signals to observers that she is unlikely to commit similar transgressions herself. But because hypocrites *do* commit similar transgressions in private, these signals are deceptive and misleading. And critically, Jordan et al. provided evidence that this false-signaling feature of hypocrisy explains why people judge hypocrites negatively.

Recent evidence that people see hypocrisy in the absence of false signaling would seem to pose a challenge to this false signaling theory. For example, recall that sin-industry promoters whose private behavior is virtuous—such as the founder of a pro-infidelity website who privately

stays faithful to his wife or a tobacco company executive who privately donates to anti-smoking causes—are judged as hypocritical (O'Connor et al., 2020), even though their moral acts are not public and are thus unlikely to earn them undeserved reputational benefits. However, if one draws a distinction between hypocrisy and negative moral evaluation, it becomes clear that such examples do not necessarily negate the proposal that false signaling is the key to why people dislike hypocrites. Instead, it is possible that people see such targets as hypocrites, but do not judge them to be especially immoral.

It may seem natural to assume that even hypocrites who avoid false signaling will be harshly evaluated by others. But negative evaluations of such targets could simply reflect that they became hypocrites by committing moral transgressions, such as encouraging people to smoke or to commit infidelity, and all transgressors are judged negatively. To ascertain whether hypocrisy *per se* is judged negatively, we must compare hypocrites (e.g., the tobacco executive who donates to anti-smoking causes) to people who commit identical transgressions, but avoid moral engagement and therefore hypocrisy (e.g., a tobacco executive who does not donate to anti-smoking causes).

Indeed, O'Connor et al. (2020) compare sin-industry promoters who hypocritically behave virtuously in private to non-hypocritical transgressors. And they find that private moral acts that contradict public sins can actually *improve* moral evaluations of a target, despite also triggering ascriptions of hypocrisy. In particular, subjects judge the founder of a pro-infidelity website to be more moral if he hypocritically chooses to privately remain faithful to his wife than if his marital fidelity is unknown. This finding supports the proposal that hypocrites who avoid false signaling may not be evaluated negatively—and in fact may be evaluated *positively*—relative to targets who transgress without any contradictory moral engagement.

However, O'Connor et al. also find that private moral acts that do not contradict public sins—and thus avoid triggering ascriptions of hypocrisy—receive even *greater* moral praise. In particular, a tobacco executive who privately donates to charity receives more praise if he (non-hypocritically) supports anti-obesity causes than if he (hypocritically) supports anti-smoking causes. In this way, O'Connor et al. do demonstrate that there can be some penalty for hypocrisy even in the absence of false signaling: private good deeds receive less praise if they create hypocrisy. Yet their results also suggest that the penalty for such hypocrisy may be rather limited, given that private good deeds that create hypocrisy can be evaluated positively in absolute terms.

In sum, then, we propose that false signaling may play a key role in explaining why people dislike hypocrites more than ordinary wrongdoers. However, even hypocrites who avoid false signaling may sometimes be penalized for their hypocrisy.

Two distinct pathways to hypocrisy with unequal moral weight

Thus far, we have argued that there is an important distinction between hypocrisy and negative moral evaluation—moral engagement can make you liable for hypocrisy without necessarily placing a target on your back. Therefore, a complete account of hypocrisy must address two distinct research questions: (1) *what constitutes hypocrisy* and (2) *what causes hypocrites to be evaluated negatively* (and in particular, more negatively than non-hypocritical transgressors). In this paper, we propose a causal model that attempts to answer both questions, and in doing so sheds new light on the role that false signaling plays in shaping perceptions of hypocrisy.

Our model centers around two distinct pathways to hypocrisy: (1) violating a moral value that you have signaled to others that you adhere to (i.e., engaging in *false signaling*) and (2)

violating a moral value that you genuinely hold (i.e., committing a *personal moral failing*). We propose that both of these pathways are independently sufficient to trigger robust ascriptions of hypocrisy, and that at least one is necessary—merely violating a stated moral value does not constitute hypocrisy if neither pathway is activated. And critically, we propose that these two pathways have unequal moral weight, such that engaging in false signaling is more likely to result in negative moral evaluation than committing a personal moral failing.

To illustrate our two proposed pathways, imagine two coworkers, Nate and Rob, who each witness a third coworker throw a glass bottle into the office trash can instead of recycling it. Nate, personally, has never thought recycling was a moral imperative, but upon witnessing his coworker's conduct he publicly declares in front of his boss that he thinks it is morally wrong not to recycle. In contrast, when Rob witnesses the coworker's transgression, he says nothing—but he privately thinks to himself that failing to recycle is morally wrong. How would you evaluate Nate and Rob if, the next day, each had an opportunity to recycle at home but failed to do so? We suggest that both Nate and Rob are hypocrites, but they embody two distinct pathways by which moral engagement can give rise to hypocrisy.

The first pathway, exemplified by Nate's behavior, is the *false signaling* pathway. Nate chose to engage morally by publicly condemning his coworker for not recycling—and yet he failed to recycle himself. Thus, Nate sent a dishonest signal to others that he himself is likely to recycle. As a result, Nate might be seen as deceptive, as earning undeserved reputation benefits, and as unfairly maligning others as a way to make himself appear virtuous. Furthermore, we propose that Nate's false signaling will make him appear hypocritical.

In this paper, we focus on cases of false signaling in which a target signals his values to others via public moral condemnation. However, other acts of public moral engagement could

similarly serve to signal a target's moral virtue (and therefore give rise to ascriptions of hypocrisy following a subsequent transgression). For example, if Nate were to conspicuously donate to pro-environmental charities while privately failing to recycle, our theorizing suggests that he would also activate the false signaling pathway and appear hypocritical.

The second pathway, exemplified by Rob's behavior, is the *personal moral failing* pathway. Rob chose to engage morally by holding the belief that failing to recycle is wrong. And because he failed to recycle himself, Rob violated one of his genuinely held moral values. Consequently, Rob may be seen as having weak character, as intentionally taking actions he believes to be wrong, and as inconsistently and unpredictably acting to contradict his values. And we propose that Rob's personal moral failing will make him a hypocrite, too. Indeed, the philosophical literature has identified "weak will" (or *akrasia*), knowing misdeeds, and unpredictability as salient features of hypocrisy (Szabados & Soifer, 1999; Kittay, 1982).

In this paper, we likewise focus on cases of personal moral failings in which a target conveys his genuinely held values via (public or private) moral condemnation. Again, however, other acts of (public or private) moral engagement could similarly serve to convey a target's moral values (and thus make the target appear hypocritical following a subsequent transgression). Mirroring the above example, if Rob were to privately support pro-environmental charities while publicly failing to recycle (like the aforementioned tobacco executive), our theorizing suggests that he would again be seen as committing a personal moral failing and appear hypocritical.

As described above, we propose that our two pathways have divergent consequences for moral evaluations, with hypocrisy being evaluated more negatively when it involves false signaling. Thus, while both Nate and Rob are hypocrites—and Rob may even be judged as more

hypocritical—Nate will be seen as a worse person. Rob may be disliked, too, but he will attract less outrage—and to the extent that he receives moral disapproval, it is more likely to simply reflect that he failed to recycle (and less likely to reflect a penalty for the inconsistency between his behavior and moral engagement).

In this way, our model supports the idea that moral engagement makes one liable to become a hypocrite. But it also suggests that we need not always fear judgments of hypocrisy: if we can avoid falsely signaling our morality to others, we may be forgiven for failing to live up to the moral values that we hold or express. And this proposal—that hypocrisy is possible in the absence of false signaling, but that false signaling is the key pathway to negative moral evaluation—may help explain why “the most prevalent conceptualization of moral hypocrisy” in the social psychology literature emphasizes moral duplicity, with “deceptive public claims or displays of morality” as hallmark features (Graham et al., 2015, p. 159; Monin & Merritt, 2012).

To support our model of hypocrisy, we present four studies (total $n = 1,787$). In Study 1, we investigate perceptions of the paradigmatic hypocrite who condemns a transgression that he subsequently engages in. We confirm that these traditional hypocrites do indeed activate judgments associated with both personal moral failings and false signaling, and are in fact judged to be hypocritical and immoral. Then, in Studies 2-3, we investigate case studies that are designed to avoid activating one of these pathways while continuing to activate the other. Through these case studies, we provide evidence that both personal moral failings and false signaling are sufficient to trigger judgments of hypocrisy, while false signaling is the stronger pathway to negative moral evaluation. Finally, in Study 4, we investigate a case study that is designed to feature word-deed misalignment without activating either pathway. We use this case study to provide evidence that at least one pathway is necessary to trigger judgments of

hypocrisy. Together, these studies support our proposal that false signaling and personal moral failings constitute two distinct pathways to hypocrisy, with unequal moral weight.

Study 1

Introduction

Study 1 has two aims. Our first and primary aim is to investigate evaluations of *traditional hypocrites*—who engage morally by publicly condemning a transgression, but then go on to transgress themselves. In particular, we compare traditional hypocrites to *control transgressors*, who commit identical transgressions but do not condemn them. We use this comparison to test the hypothesis that traditional hypocrites trigger a set of judgments associated with false signaling and personal moral failings, as hypothesized by our two-pathways model. And we also seek to confirm that traditional hypocrites are judged to be more hypocritical and less moral than control transgressors.

We also use Study 1 as a pilot test for Study 2. In Studies 2-3, we will attempt to shed light on the causal influence of each of the two proposed pathways on hypocrisy judgments and moral evaluations. To this end, Studies 2-3 present case studies that are designed to activate only one of the two pathways. Study 1 investigates whether a candidate case study is successful at activating the personal moral failing pathway but not the false signaling pathway, such that it is appropriate for use in Study 2.

More specifically, in previous research we considered the case of the *honest hypocrite* (Jordan et al., 2017). Like traditional hypocrites, honest hypocrites condemn transgressions that they subsequently engage in. However, unlike traditional hypocrites, honest hypocrites pair their condemnation with a public admission that they sometimes engage in the relevant transgression (e.g., “I think it’s morally wrong to download music illegally, but I sometimes do it anyway”).

We reasoned that honest hypocrisy might constitute an appropriate “personal moral failing only” case study. Honest hypocrites seem to avoid false signaling (by openly confessing to their sins) while still committing personal moral failings (by engaging in transgressions that they claim to see as immoral).

However, previous research did not measure the extent to which honest hypocrites activate judgments associated with our two proposed pathways, leaving this reasoning untested. Thus, in Study 1, we address two questions. First, do honest hypocrites in fact avoid judgments associated with false signaling? Or might subjects judge that despite their confessions, honest hypocrites still aim to portray themselves in an overly positively light? And second, do honest hypocrites in fact trigger judgments associated with personal moral failings? Or might subjects judge that because honest hypocrites are willing to openly admit to their transgressions, they must not genuinely see those transgressions as immoral—and thus must not actually be violating their moral values? By investigating these questions, Study 1 allows us to evaluate whether the case of the honest hypocrite can be used in Study 2 to isolate the causal influence of personal moral failings in the absence of false signaling.

Methods

Procedure

Study 1, like all studies in this paper, employed a three-condition, between-subjects design. In Study 1, we asked each subject to evaluate a series of four scenarios (in random order). In each scenario, a target character participates in a conversation in which he or she learns that an acquaintance has engaged in a moral transgression—trying to get out of jury duty, downloading music illegally, wasting paper by printing documents single-sided, or ignoring their

mother's phone calls. Afterward, the target privately commits the same transgression that was discussed in the earlier conversation.

Study 1 randomly varied whether the target was a *traditional hypocrite*, an *honest hypocrite*, or a *control transgressor*. Specifically, in the conversation that took place before the target transgresses, the traditional hypocrite publicly condemns the transgression; the honest hypocrite publicly condemns the transgression but admits to sometimes engaging in the behavior herself; and the control transgressor says nothing. To illustrate, below are each of the vignettes about avoiding jury duty:

In the traditional hypocrite condition, target condemns the transgression:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty. Jennifer says that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

In the honest hypocrite, the target condemns the transgression while admitting to sometimes transgressing herself:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty. Jennifer says

*that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty, but that she sometimes does it anyway.*¹

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

In the control transgressor condition, no information is provided about the target's response:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

For the full text of all scenarios in all studies, see Supplemental Material.

After reading each scenario, subjects made a series of judgments about the target, pertaining to our two proposed pathways. Starting with the false signaling pathway, recall that we hypothesized that false signalers might be seen as misleading others, enjoying undeservedly positive reputations, and unfairly maligning others as a way to make themselves appear virtuous. Thus, to measure activation of the false signaling pathway, we asked subjects to evaluate the

¹ We note that no underlining was used in the stimuli presented to participants (in any of our studies); we have added all underlining to this manuscript for emphasis.

extent to which the target (i) was deceptive²; (ii) gained undeserved reputational benefits³; and (iii) harmed others through her condemnation.⁴

Turning to the personal moral failing pathway, recall that we hypothesized that people who violate their genuinely held values might be seen as having weak character, knowingly committing wrongdoing, and inconsistently and unpredictably acting to contradict their values. Thus, to measure activation of the personal moral failings pathway, we asked subjects to evaluate the extent to which the target (iv) displayed weakness of will⁵; (v) intentionally did something she knew to be morally wrong⁶; and (vi) behaved inconsistently with her values.⁷

Each of these six judgments were measured via two survey questions (see footnotes for precise wording); thus, subjects responded to a total of twelve questions, which were presented in random order on a single page. All questions were measured via un-numbered sliding scales with extreme anchors reading “*Not at all*” and “*Very much*,” and responses were translated into numerical scores ranging from 0 to 100. In all studies, we averaged responses to the two questions for each judgment, resulting in one composite score for each of our six judgments; this approach is consistent with our planned analyses of Studies 2-4, which were pre-registered.

Next, we measured two key outcome variables: ascriptions of hypocrisy and moral evaluations. To measure hypocrisy, we asked subjects “How hypocritical do you think [target]

² To what extent is Jennifer deceptive and misleading? To what extent does Jennifer pretend to be somebody she's not?

³ To what extent does Jennifer have an undeservedly positive reputation? To what extent do others believe that Jennifer is more moral than she actually is?

⁴ To what extent does Jennifer slander the reputation of others? To what extent does Jennifer hurt others by speaking negatively about them?

⁵ To what extent does Jennifer have poor self control? To what extent does Jennifer fail to follow through on her principles?

⁶ To what extent does Jennifer know her behavior is wrong? To what extent does Jennifer knowingly choose to behave immorally?

⁷ To what extent does Jennifer's behavior contradict her stated values? To what extent is Jennifer inconsistent and unpredictable?

is?” on a sliding scale with anchors reading “*not at all hypocritical*” to “*very hypocritical*”. To measure moral evaluations, we asked subjects four questions, again on sliding scales: “How much do you like [target]?” (anchors: “*Not at all*” and “*Very much*”), “How good a person do you think [target] is?” (anchors: “*Not at all good*” and “*Very good*”), “How honest do you think [target] is?” (anchors: “*Not at all honest*” and “*Very honest*”), and “How trustworthy do you think [target] is?” (anchors: “*Not at all trustworthy*” and “*Very trustworthy*”). These four questions showed high interitem reliability ($\alpha = .95$), and in all studies, as per our pre-registrations for Studies 2-4, we averaged them together to create a single composite measure of *moral evaluations*. The five questions pertaining to our outcome measures (i.e., the hypocrisy item and four moral evaluation items) were presented in random order on a single page.

We also note that as a secondary analysis, we repeated all analyses of composite moral evaluations using each of our four individual moral evaluation items. These analyses were included (as secondary analyses) in our pre-registrations for Studies 2-3, and for completeness we conducted them for all four studies. And we found that across all studies, analyses of each individual moral evaluation item produced results that were identical in direction and statistical significance to those obtained from analyses of composite moral evaluations.

Finally, after evaluating all four vignettes, subjects answered a series of demographic questions, reported their own evaluations of the transgressions in question (e.g., answering the question “How wrong is it to use a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided?”), and answered an open-ended question about why they evaluated the vignette targets the way they did (as well as, in the hypocrisy conditions, a question about what they thought motivated the targets to engage in condemnation). Complete stimuli for all studies are available online at https://osf.io/vuapm/?view_only=564ddb40853246ff81497f78b0e206da.

Subjects

In Study 1, we used Amazon Mechanical Turk to recruit a target of $n = 450$ subjects (150 per condition). This sample size gives us at least 80% power to detect differences between pairs of conditions of effect size $d = .32$ or greater, equipping us to detect small-to-medium effects. To form our final sample, we excluded duplicate responses from the same IP addresses or MTurk worker identifications as well as any incomplete survey responses. In Studies 2-4, which were pre-registered, we committed to using this same target sample size and procedure for recruiting and excluding participants. A total of 451 subjects completed Study 1; our final sample included 444 subjects (150 in *traditional hypocrite*; 151 in *honest hypocrite*; 143 in *control transgressor*), $M_{\text{age}} = 35.39$, 47% male.

Results

In Figure 1, we plot false signaling and personal moral failing judgments, as well as hypocrisy judgments and moral evaluations, across conditions. We note that in Figure 1, and in all analyses of Study 1, we averaged subjects' responses across our four scenarios. This analysis approach is consistent with our pre-registrations for Studies 2-3 (which are our two pre-registered studies in which subjects, like in Study 1, evaluated more than one scenario).

Traditional hypocrites

We begin by considering traditional hypocrites, who we hypothesized would activate both proposed pathways. As expected, we found that traditional hypocrites received significantly higher ratings than control transgressors on the three judgments associated with false signaling: (i) deceptiveness ($B = .55$, $t = 11.21$, $p < .001$); (ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = .45$, $t = 8.60$, $p < .001$); and (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = .46$, $t = 8.78$, $p < .001$), $n = 293$. Likewise, traditional hypocrites received significantly higher ratings than control

transgressors on the three judgments associated with personal moral failings: (iv) weakness of will ($B = .55, t = 11.22, p < .001$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral ($B = .41, t = 7.75, p < .001$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = .62, t = 13.38, p < .001$).

Thus, traditional hypocrites showed substantial activation of both pathways.

Next, we turn to judgments of hypocrisy and moral evaluations. As anticipated, we find that as compared to control transgressors, traditional hypocrites were judged to be significantly more hypocritical ($B = .52, t = 10.41, p < .001$) and received significantly more negative moral evaluations ($B = -.23, t = -4.00, p < .001$).

Finally, we investigate whether the effects of traditional hypocrisy on hypocrisy and moral evaluations are attenuated or eliminated when controlling for (i) the three false signaling judgments and (ii) the three personal moral failing judgments, as we would expect if the proposed pathways contribute causally to these outcomes.

Starting with hypocrisy, as reported above, the effect of the traditional hypocrite condition (relative to the control transgressor condition) in a model without controls is $B = .52, t = 10.41, p < .001$; in a model with false signaling controls it becomes $B = .08, t = 2.19, p = .030$; and in a model with personal moral failing controls it becomes $B = -.02, t = -.44, p = .661$.

Turning to moral evaluations, as reported above, the effect of the traditional hypocrite condition in a model without controls is $B = -.23, t = -4.00, p < .001$; with false signaling controls it becomes $B = .11, t = 1.86, p = .064$; and with personal moral failing controls it becomes $B = .12, t = 1.92, p = .055$. Thus, controlling for judgments associated with the proposed pathways substantially attenuates or eliminates the effects of traditional hypocrisy on our outcome measures.

Together, these results (i) suggest that traditional hypocrites do in fact activate both proposed pathways, and (ii) are consistent with the proposal that these pathways help to explain why traditional hypocrites are judged to be hypocritical and immoral. However, we observed high collinearity between the two pathways: in an analysis of the control transgressor and traditional hypocrite conditions, mean ratings across the three false signaling judgments were correlated with mean ratings across the three personal moral failing judgments at $r = .90, p < .001$. Thus, Study 1 is not well-equipped to illuminate the impact of each pathway on hypocrisy judgments and moral evaluations.

For this reason, in Studies 2-3, we consider case studies that are designed to isolate the causal influence of each pathway, by activating one pathway but not the other. To facilitate this goal, we next examine whether the honest hypocrite condition in Study 1—which we hoped would activate the personal moral failing pathway but not the false signaling pathway—does in fact achieve these aims, such that it is appropriate for use in Study 2.

Honest hypocrites

To this end, we now turn to considering the case of the honest hypocrite. First, looking to the personal moral failing pathway, we ask: do honest hypocrites robustly activate the judgments associated with this pathway? Or might subjects infer that honest hypocrites—who are willing to openly admit to their transgressions—must not genuinely see those transgressions as wrong, and thus have not truly committed a personal moral failing?

As we hoped, we found that honest hypocrites received significantly higher ratings than control transgressors on the three personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = .42, t = 7.80, p < .001$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral ($B = .42, t = 7.94, p < .001$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = .42, t = 7.82, p < .001$), $n = 294$.

However, we also found that honest hypocrites received significantly lower ratings than traditional hypocrites on two of the personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = -.18, t = -3.23, p = .001$) and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = -.32, t = -5.81, p < .001$), $n = 301$. On the third judgment—(v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral—we found no significant difference between honest and traditional hypocrites ($B = .01, t = .14, p = .889$). Thus, honest hypocrites did substantially activate the personal moral failing pathway, albeit to a somewhat lesser extent than traditional hypocrites.

Next, looking to the false signaling pathway, we ask: do honest hypocrites fail to activate the judgments associated with this pathway? Or do subjects still see honest hypocrites as false signalers, despite their willingness to admit to their transgressions?

Contrary to our intentions, we found that honest hypocrites received significantly higher ratings than control transgressors on one of the three false signaling judgments—(i) deceptiveness ($B = .17, t = 2.99, p = .003$), $n = 294$. However, consistent with our intentions, this effect was relatively small, and we found no significant difference between honest hypocrites and control transgressors on (ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = .07, t = 1.24, p = .216$) or (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = .09, t = 1.54, p = .124$). We also found that honest hypocrites received significantly lower ratings than traditional hypocrites on all three false signaling judgments—(i) deceptiveness ($B = -.41, t = -7.86, p < .001$); (ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = -.42, t = -7.96, p < .001$); and (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = -.38, t = -7.01, p < .001$), $n = 301$.

Thus, the case of the honest hypocrite is reasonably effective at activating the personal moral failing pathway without activating the false signaling pathway. While honest hypocrites do activate the personal moral failing pathway slightly less than traditional hypocrites, they activate

it much more than control transgressors. In contrast, honest hypocrites activate the false signaling pathway much less than traditional hypocrites, and only slightly more than control transgressors. Thus, while traditional hypocrites robustly activate both pathways, honest hypocrites only show substantial activation of the personal moral failing pathway. We therefore see honest hypocrisy as an appropriate case study to deploy in Study 2 to investigate the causal influence of personal moral failings on evaluations of hypocrisy and immorality.

Figure 1. Dependent measures across conditions in Study 1. As compared to the control transgressor, the traditional hypocrite substantially activates both the false signaling and personal moral failing pathway, and is judged to be more hypocritical and less moral. In contrast, the honest hypocrite substantially activates the personal moral failing pathway, while only slightly activating the false signaling pathway—and thus provides a reasonable case study through which to isolate the causal influence of personal moral failings. From left to right, we plot (i) mean ratings across the three false signaling judgments, (ii) mean ratings across the three personal moral failing judgments, (iii) hypocrisy ratings, and (iv) composite moral evaluation ratings; bars show means, error bars show 95% CIs, and dots show individual data points.

Discussion

Study 1 provides evidence that paradigmatic hypocrites—who condemn the same transgressions they later engage in—do in fact activate both pathways in our two-pathway model of hypocrisy. As compared to control transgressors, traditional hypocrites robustly triggered judgments associated with false signaling: they were seen as deceptive, as earning undeserved reputation benefits, and as harming others through their condemnation (consistent with a strategy of unfairly maligning others as a way to appear virtuous). Additionally, traditional hypocrites robustly triggered judgments associated with personal moral failings: they were seen as weak willed, as intentionally acting in ways they know to be wrong, and as behaving inconsistently with their values.

As expected, traditional hypocrites were also judged to be more hypocritical and less moral than control transgressors. Furthermore, consistent with our proposal that the false signaling and personal moral failing pathways contribute to these outcomes, the effects of traditional hypocrisy on evaluations of hypocrisy and morality were substantially attenuated or eliminated when controlling for the judgments associated with either pathway.

However, due to high collinearity between pathways, Study 1 is not well-positioned to shed light on the causal contribution of each pathway to each of these outcomes. Thus, in Studies 2-3, we seek to isolate the causal influence of each pathway on judgments of hypocrisy and negative moral evaluations. We do this by presenting participants with hypocrisy case studies that are designed to activate one pathway but not the other.

Study 2

Introduction

In Study 2, we examine two case studies: the *honest hypocrite*, designed to exhibit a personal moral failing without falsely signaling, and the *detached hypocrite*, designed to falsely signal without exhibiting a personal moral failing. The detached hypocrite—like traditional and honest hypocrites—engages morally by publicly condemning a transgression, and then later goes on to commit that same transgression. However, our vignettes make clear that the detached hypocrite does not privately consider the transgression to be immoral. He is thus morally *detached* because he does not genuinely care about the moral value in question. In this way, the detached hypocrite is designed to exhibit no personal moral failing, and to activate only the false signaling pathway.

Study 2 employed a three-condition, between-subjects design, in which subjects evaluated a series of vignettes describing either detached hypocrites, honest hypocrites, or control transgressors. As in Study 1, subjects evaluated each target character on a series of judgments pertaining to the false signaling and personal moral failings pathways, as well as on their hypocrisy and moral character. This design allows us to (i) investigate whether the detached hypocrite is an appropriate case study to isolate the influence of false signaling (by measuring the extent to which detached hypocrites activate each pathway) and (ii) use our case studies to illuminate the causal influence of each pathway on hypocrisy judgments and moral evaluations.

Method

Procedure

Study 2, which was pre-registered (on the website [aspredicted.org](https://aspredicted.org/#17505), #17505), followed a similar procedure to Study 1 with a few minor changes. Most notably, Study 2 removed the

traditional hypocrite condition and introduced the *detached hypocrite* condition. As described above, in the detached hypocrite condition we specified that the target does not genuinely hold the moral value that she expresses through her condemnation.

Thus, the jury duty scenario for the detached hypocrite reads:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

Jennifer does not really think that it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty, so trying to get out of jury duty does not really violate her moral values. She sometimes tries to get out of jury duty.

In her conversation with Rose, however, Jennifer tells Rose that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

For the honest hypocrite, the scenario is largely the same as in Study 1:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

In her conversation with Rose, Jennifer tells Rose that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty, but that she sometimes does it anyway.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

For the control transgressor, the scenario remains the same as in Study 1: the target says nothing (i.e., she does not engage in moral condemnation) and simply engages in the relevant transgression.

As in Study 1, after reading each vignette, subjects rated the target on three judgments associated with false signaling (specifically, on the extent to which the target (i) was deceptive⁸; (ii) gained undeserved reputational benefits⁹; and (iii) harmed others through her condemnation¹⁰); and on three judgments associated with personal moral failings (specifically, on the extent to which the target (iv) displayed weakness of will¹¹; (v) intentionally did something she knew to be morally wrong¹²; and (vi) behaved inconsistently with her values¹³).

The wording used to measure some of these judgments was slightly different than in Study 1; see

⁸ To what extent is Jennifer deceptive and misleading? To what extent does Jennifer pretend to be somebody she's not?

⁹ To what extent does Jennifer have an undeservedly positive reputation? To what extent do others believe that Jennifer is more moral than she actually is?

¹⁰ To what extent does Jennifer harm the reputation of others? To what extent does Jennifer hurt others by speaking negatively about them?

¹¹ To what extent does Jennifer have poor self control? To what extent is Jennifer too weak to follow through on her principles?

¹² By choosing to try to get out jury duty, to what extent was Jennifer knowingly doing something she felt was wrong? When she chose to try to get out of jury duty, to what extent did Jennifer intentionally make a choice she knew was immoral?

¹³ To what extent did Jennifer's choice to try to get out of jury duty contradict the values she personally holds? To what extent was Jennifer's choice to try to get out of jury duty inconsistent with her genuinely held values?

footnotes for the Study 2 wording. Finally, after completing these ratings, subjects completed hypocrisy judgments and moral evaluations of the target; these outcome variables were measured as in Study 1. Our four moral evaluation items again showed high interitem reliability ($\alpha = .95$).

Subjects

We planned to recruit subjects and form our final sample as in Study 1. A total of 453 subjects, recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk, completed Study 2; our final sample included 450 subjects (150 in *honest hypocrite*, 148 in *detached hypocrite*; and 152 in *control transgressor*), $M_{\text{age}} = 38.44$, 37% male.

Results

In Figure 2, we plot false signaling and personal moral failing judgments, as well as hypocrisy judgments and moral evaluations, across conditions. We note that in Figure 2, and in all analyses of Study 2, we averaged subjects' responses across our four scenarios (as per our pre-registration).

While our analyses of Study 2 adhere relatively closely to our pre-registration, we do deviate from it in a few important ways, described in Appendix A. Most notably, while our pre-registration planned to focus most extensively on the comparison between our two case studies (i.e., the comparison between honest and detached hypocrites), we ultimately report analyses comparing all pairs of conditions on all dependent variables.

Detached hypocrites

We begin by considering the case of the detached hypocrite, which was designed to activate the false signaling pathway without activating the personal moral failing pathway.

First, we evaluate the extent to which the detached hypocrite case study was successful at achieving these aims. As expected, we found that the detached hypocrite received significantly

higher ratings than the control transgressor on the three false signaling judgments: (i) deceptiveness ($B = .45, t = 8.71, p < .001$); (ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = .36, t = 6.57, p < .001$); and (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = .16, t = 2.82, p = .005$), $n = 300$. We also found that the detached hypocrite received ratings that were no higher—and sometimes lower—than the control transgressor on the three personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = .06, t = 1.09, p = .276$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral ($B = -.19, t = -3.29, p = .001$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = -.17, t = -3.07, p = .002$). Thus, the detached hypocrite showed substantial activation of the false signaling pathway, but slight *suppression* of the personal moral failing pathway—and as such constitutes an appropriate case study through which to investigate the causal influence of false signaling.

Next, we turn to our two outcome variables. We find that as compared to the control transgressor, the detached hypocrite was judged to be significantly more hypocritical ($B = .32, t = 5.83, p < .001$) and received significantly more negative moral evaluations ($B = -.26, t = -4.64, p < .001$).

Together, these results suggest that the false signaling pathway is independently sufficient to cause both of these outcomes. Moreover, we find that the effects of the detached hypocrite condition (versus control transgressor) on hypocrisy and moral evaluations are eliminated when controlling for the three false signaling judgments. Looking to hypocrisy judgments, the effect without controls is $B = .32, t = 5.83, p < .001$; with false signaling controls, it becomes $B = -.03, t = -.83, p = .406$. Looking to moral evaluations, the effect without controls is $B = -.26, t = -4.64, p < .001$; with false signaling controls, it becomes $B = -.02, t = -.36, p = .716$.

Honest hypocrites

Next, we consider the honest hypocrite, who was designed to activate the personal moral failing pathway without activating the false signaling pathway.

As in Study 1, we find that the case of the honest hypocrite was largely successful at achieving these aims. The honest hypocrite received significantly higher ratings than the control transgressor on the three personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = .43, t = 8.26, p < .001$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral ($B = .55, t = 11.46, p < .001$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = .55, t = 11.37, p < .001$), $n = 302$. In contrast, while the honest hypocrite received significantly higher ratings than the control transgressor on two of the false signaling judgments, (i) deceptiveness ($B = .24, t = 4.37, p < .001$) and (ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = .17, t = 3.08, p = .002$), these effects were relatively smaller and we observed no differences between honest hypocrites and control transgressors on (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = -.01, t = -.22, p = .823$). Thus, mirroring Study 1, the honest hypocrite showed substantial activation of the personal moral failing pathway, but only minor activation the false signaling pathway—reinforcing the conclusion that the honest hypocrite constitutes a reasonable case study through which to investigate the causal influence of personal moral failings.

Next, we turn to our two outcome variables. We find that as compared to the control transgressor, the honest hypocrite was judged to be significantly more hypocritical ($B = .38, t = 7.11, p < .001$) but did not receive significantly more negative moral evaluations ($B = -.06, t = -1.02, p = .306$). Together, these results are consistent with the proposal that personal moral failings are sufficient to trigger attributions of hypocrisy. Yet they also suggest that personal moral failings are *not* sufficient to trigger negative moral evaluations of that hypocrisy.

Furthermore, consistent with the proposal that personal moral failings are sufficient for hypocrisy, we find that the effect of the honest hypocrite condition (versus control transgressor) on hypocrisy is eliminated when controlling for the three personal moral failing judgments (without controls: $B = .38, t = 7.11, p < .001$; with personal moral failing controls: $B = .01, t = .26, p = .796$).

However, because honest hypocrites did show some activation of the false signaling pathway, we also repeat this analysis controlling for the three false signaling judgments. We find that including these controls attenuates the effect of the honest hypocrite condition on hypocrisy (with false signaling controls: $B = .20, t = 5.05, p < .001$). Thus, our data are also consistent with the possibility that the false signaling pathway contributed to subjects' judgments that honest hypocrites are hypocritical. In this way, they limit our ability to infer that personal moral failings are independently sufficient to trigger judgments of hypocrisy.

Comparison of case studies

Finally, we compare the two case studies to each other. We see that the case studies were successful in dissociating the two pathways: the honest hypocrite was viewed as significantly lower than the detached hypocrite on the three false signaling judgments—(i) deceptiveness ($B = -.27, t = -4.78, p < .001$); (ii) reputation benefits ($B = -.23, t = -4.01, p < .001$); and (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = -.17, t = -3.05, p = .002$), $n = 298$. In contrast, the honest hypocrite was viewed as significantly higher on the three personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = .40, t = 7.46, p < .001$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior believed to be immoral ($B = .60, t = 12.94, p < .001$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = .60, t = 12.75, p < .001$). Furthermore, looking to our outcome variables, we find that the honest hypocrite was

seen as similar to the detached hypocrite in ratings of hypocrisy ($B = .05, t = 0.88, p = .379$) but as significantly more moral ($B = .21, t = 3.64, p < .001$).

Figure 2. Dependent measures across conditions in Study 2. As compared to the control transgressor, the detached hypocrite substantially activates the false signaling pathway but not the personal moral failing pathway. In contrast, the honest hypocrite substantially activates the personal moral failing pathway, while only slightly activating the false signaling pathway. Both the detached and honest hypocrite are judged to be (similarly) hypocritical—but only the detached hypocrite is evaluated negatively for her hypocrisy. Thus, false signaling and personal moral failings are two routes to hypocrisy with unequal moral weight. From left to right, we plot (i) mean ratings across the three false signaling judgments, (ii) mean ratings across the three personal moral failing judgments, (iii) hypocrisy ratings, and (iv) composite moral evaluation ratings; bars show means, error bars show 95% CIs, and dots show individual data points.

Discussion

Study 2 provides support for our two-pathways model of hypocrisy, which posits that both false signaling and personal moral failings can each independently give rise to judgments of hypocrisy—and that false signaling is the key pathway to negative moral evaluation.

To isolate the influence of false signaling, we considered the case of the detached hypocrite. This case provides evidence that false signaling is sufficient to give rise to judgments of hypocrisy and moral condemnation. Subjects do not see detached hypocrites as having committed a personal moral failing: when considering associated judgments (e.g., weakness of will), subjects evaluate detached hypocrites no more negatively—and in fact somewhat more *positively*—than control transgressors. Yet subjects *do* see detached hypocrites as having falsely signaled their moral virtue: as compared to control transgressors, detached hypocrites are evaluated more negatively on judgments associated with false signaling (e.g., deceptiveness). And detached hypocrites are judged to be more hypocritical and less moral than control transgressors—suggesting that false signaling alone is sufficient to trigger both of these judgments. Furthermore, the effect of detached hypocrisy on judgments of hypocrisy and negative moral evaluations is eliminated when controlling for false signaling judgments.

To isolate the influence of personal moral failings, we consider the case of the honest hypocrite. This case provides evidence that personal moral failings are sufficient to give rise to judgments of hypocrisy, but do *not* always elicit moral condemnation. Subjects see honest hypocrites as having committed a personal moral failing, evaluating them much more negatively than control transgressors on associated judgments. In contrast, while subjects do evaluate honest hypocrites somewhat more negatively than control transgressors on some judgments associated with false signaling, these effects are much smaller. And we find that honest hypocrites are judged to be more hypocritical—but no less moral—than control transgressors, replicating findings from previous work (Jordan et al., 2017) and Study 1 (as illustrated in Figure 1).

Together, this pattern of results reveals that the personal moral failings committed by honest hypocrites are *not* sufficient to trigger negative moral evaluations. This holds true even

while honest hypocrites (weakly) triggered some judgments associated with false signaling. Furthermore, our results provide suggestive evidence that personal moral failings *are* nonetheless sufficient to trigger hypocrisy judgments. Honest hypocrites—who primarily activated the personal moral failing pathway—are robustly judged to be hypocritical, and this judgment is eliminated when controlling for personal moral failing judgments.

Yet our results do leave open the possibility that some activation of false signaling judgments is necessary for judgments of hypocrisy. Honest hypocrites do trigger some minor activation of some false signaling judgments, and controlling for these judgments does somewhat attenuate the effect of honest hypocrisy on hypocrisy judgments. But given that the activation of these judgments was minor enough not to trigger negative moral evaluations, we contend that a more parsimonious interpretation of our results is that personal moral failings are sufficient to trigger judgments of hypocrisy. This conclusion aligns with previous research highlighting cases in which targets are judged to be hypocritical in the apparent absence of false signaling (e.g., targets who engage in private good deeds that contradict their public sins; O'Connor et al., 2020). Thus, taken together, the results of Study 2 support the proposal that false signaling and personal moral failings provide two distinct and sufficient pathways to hypocrisy—and that false signaling is the stronger pathway to trigger negative moral evaluations.

One might, however, consider an alternative explanation for the finding that honest hypocrites were not judged to be less moral than control transgressors. Might this finding reflect that honest hypocrites *are* penalized for their hypocrisy, but are also rewarded for their willingness to openly confess their transgressions? Previous research (Jordan et al., 2017) suggests that this explanation is unlikely. To investigate, Jordan et al. measured perceptions of hypocrites who engage in false signaling (e.g., by condemning single-sided printing before

printing single-sided) but openly admit to transgressions in unrelated domains (e.g., by confessing to downloading music illegally). Such hypocrites *are* evaluated more negatively than control transgressors, suggesting that openly confessing to negative behavior only protects hypocrites from negative evaluation when it eliminates false signaling. This work bolsters our contention that honest hypocrites are forgiven for their hypocrisy because they avoid false signaling, and false signaling plays a key role in negative moral evaluation.

Our conclusions are also further supported by the comparison of detached and honest hypocrites to each other. These two case studies successfully dissociate our two pathways: detached hypocrites are rated as higher on personal moral failing constructs and lower on false signaling constructs. Interestingly, subjects see detached hypocrites and honest hypocrites as similarly hypocritical, but yet judge detached hypocrites—who engage in false signaling—to be meaningfully less moral. These case studies thus highlight the primacy of false signaling in shaping moral evaluations of hypocrites, and directly support the proposal that false signaling and personal moral failings offer distinct pathways to hypocrisy that carry unequal moral weight.

Study 3

In Study 3, we aim to bolster our conclusions from Study 2 by generalizing our results to an additional case study. To this end, we again employ our Study 2 design, but replace the honest hypocrite condition with a new case study: the case of the *private hypocrite*. Like the honest hypocrite (and all of our hypocrisy case studies), the private hypocrite engages morally by condemning a transgression, and then later goes on to commit that transgression. However, while the honest hypocrite avoids false signaling by pairing her public condemnation with a public admission that she sometimes transgresses, the private hypocrite avoids false signaling by expressing her condemnation only privately, in her diary.

Method

Procedure

Study 3 was pre-registered on aspredicted.org (#19140). In Study 3, we substituted the honest hypocrite for the *private hypocrite*, who keeps her moral condemnation to herself.

The jury duty scenario for the private hypocrite reads:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

That evening, Jennifer writes in her diary about how her day went and about her conversation with Rose. Although she never expresses this view to others, Jennifer writes that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty.

The next morning, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

The scenarios for the detached hypocrite and the control transgressor remain largely the same as in Study 1, with some additional details added to match the private hypocrite:

The jury duty scenario for the detached hypocrite reads:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

Jennifer does not really think that it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty, so trying to get out of jury duty does not really violate her moral values. She sometimes tries to get out of jury duty.

In her conversation with Rose, however, Jennifer tells Rose that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty.

That evening, Jennifer writes in her diary about how her day went and about her conversation with Rose.

The next morning, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

The jury duty scenario for the control transgressor read:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

That evening, Jennifer writes in her diary about how her day went and about her conversation with Rose.

The next morning, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

As in Study 2, subjects evaluated the target in each of the four vignettes on the three false signaling judgments, the three personal moral failing judgments, hypocrisy, and morality ($\alpha = .96$ across our four moral evaluation items). All variables were measured as in Study 2, with the exception that for the two deceptiveness items, Study 3 added the phrase “toward others” in order to clarify that subjects were being asked about the target’s tendency to mislead others (not herself). For instance, subjects rated the extent to which “Jennifer [is] deceptive and misleading *toward others*.”

Subjects

In Study 3, we recruited subjects and formed our final sample as in Studies 1-2. A total of 449 MTurk subjects took part; our final sample included 447 subjects (151 private hypocrite; 149 detached hypocrite; 147 control transgression), $M_{\text{age}} = 38.23$, 47% male.

Results

In Figure 3, we plot false signaling and personal moral failing judgments, as well as hypocrisy judgments and moral evaluations, across conditions. We note that in Figure 3 and in all analyses of Study 3, we averaged subjects’ responses across our four scenarios (as per our pre-registration).

While our analyses of Study 3 adhere relatively closely to our pre-registration, we do deviate from it in a few important ways. These deviations are analogous to the deviations for Study 2, and are likewise described in Appendix A.

Detached hypocrites

As in Study 2, we begin by comparing the detached hypocrite to the control transgressor. We find that our results replicate the patterns observed in Study 2.

First, the detached hypocrite again received significantly higher ratings than the control transgressor on the three false signaling judgments: (i) deceptiveness ($B = .53, t = 10.67, p < .001$); (ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = .40, t = 7.53, p < .001$); and (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = .28, t = 5.04, p < .001$), $n = 296$. The detached hypocrite also received ratings that were no higher—and sometimes lower—than the control transgressor on the three personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = .08, t = 1.44, p = .152$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral ($B = -.14, t = -2.37, p = .019$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = -.11, t = -1.84, p = .067$). Thus, as in Study 2, the detached hypocrite activated the false signaling pathway and not the personal moral failing pathway.

Looking to our outcome variables, we replicate the finding from Study 2 that the detached hypocrite is judged to be significantly more hypocritical ($B = .39, t = 7.32, p < .001$) and receives significantly more negative moral evaluations ($B = -.37, t = -6.93, p < .001$) than the control transgressor. These data further bolster the claim that the false signaling pathway is sufficient to trigger both of these outcomes. Consistent with this claim, the effects of the detached hypocrite condition (versus control transgressor) on hypocrisy and moral evaluations are eliminated when controlling for the three false signaling judgments. Looking to hypocrisy, the effect without controls is $B = .39, t = 7.32, p < .001$; with false signaling controls, it becomes $B = -.05, t = -1.24, p = .215$. Looking to moral evaluations, the effect without controls is $B = -.37, t = -6.93, p < .001$; with false signaling controls, it becomes $B = -.08, t = -1.38, p = .170$.

Private hypocrites

Next, we consider the case of the private hypocrite, which was designed to primarily activate the personal moral failing pathway without activating the false signaling pathway.

We find that this new case study was moderately successful in achieving these aims, albeit somewhat less so than the honest hypocrite from Studies 1-2. As intended, the private hypocrite received significantly higher ratings than the control transgressor on the three personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = .54, t = 10.94, p < .001$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral ($B = .51, t = 10.20, p < .001$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = .63, t = 14.12, p < .001$), $n = 298$.

However, like the honest hypocrite—and contrary to our intentions—the private hypocrite also received somewhat higher ratings than the control transgressor on two of the false signaling judgments—(i) deceptiveness ($B = .35, t = 6.53, p < .001$) and (ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = .30, t = 5.32, p < .001$). These effects were again smaller than the effects of private hypocrisy on our personal moral failing judgments, and the private hypocrite received ratings that were no higher than the control transgressor on (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = .04, t = .72, p = .470$). Yet the private hypocrite did activate the false signaling pathway somewhat more than the honest hypocrite.

Next, we turn to our outcome variables. Mirroring results from Study 2, we find that the private hypocrite was judged to be significantly more hypocritical than the control transgressor ($B = .50, t = 10.00, p < .001$). However, deviating from the patterns observed in Study 2, we also find that the private hypocrite received significantly more negative moral evaluations than the control transgressor ($B = -.23, t = -3.98, p < .001$).

Our results are consistent with the proposal that the two pathways contributed to hypocrisy attributions. We find that the effect of the private hypocrite condition (versus control transgressor) on hypocrisy is attenuated when controlling for the three false signaling judgments (without controls: $B = .50, t = 10.00, p < .001$, with false signaling controls: $B = .27, t = 6.51, p <$

.001) and eliminated when controlling for the three personal moral failing judgments (with personal moral failing controls: $B = .02$, $t = .37$, $p = .711$).

Our results are also consistent with the possibility that either of our two pathways contributed to the negative moral evaluations that private hypocrites received. We find that the effect of the private hypocrite condition on moral evaluations is eliminated when controlling either for the three false signaling judgments (without controls: $B = -.23$, $t = -3.98$, $p < .001$, with false signaling controls: $B = -.04$, $t = -.78$, $p = .436$) or for the three personal moral failing judgments (with personal moral failing controls: $B = .01$, $t = .14$, $p = .889$).

Thus, our data are consistent with the possibility that private hypocrites were judged to be immoral because, contrary to our intentions, they activated the false signaling pathway. But they are also consistent with the possibility that the personal moral failing pathway contributed to the negative moral evaluations of private hypocrites—even though this pathway was insufficient to trigger negative moral evaluations of honest hypocrites in Study 2.

Comparison of case studies

Finally, we compare detached hypocrites to private hypocrites. As in Study 2, we find that the two case studies successfully dissociated the two pathways: the private hypocrite received significantly lower ratings than the detached hypocrite on the three false signaling judgments—(i) deceptiveness ($B = -.26$, $t = -4.66$, $p < .001$); (ii) falsely gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = -.17$, $t = -2.96$, $p = .003$); and (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = -.24$, $t = -4.23$, $p < .001$), $n = 300$ —and significantly higher ratings on the three personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = .46$, $t = 8.94$, $p < .001$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior believed to be immoral ($B = .55$, $t = 11.50$, $p < .001$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = .60$, $t = 13.02$, $p < .001$).

Next, we look to our outcome variables. Whereas in Study 2 we found no difference between our case studies in hypocrisy ratings, in Study 3 we find that private hypocrites were seen as significantly more hypocritical than detached hypocrites ($B = .13, t = 2.21, p = .028$). Yet private hypocrites were nonetheless also seen as significantly more moral than detached hypocrites ($B = .18, t = 3.12, p = .002$).

Figure 3. Dependent measures across conditions in Study 3. As compared to the control transgressor, the detached hypocrite substantially activates the false signaling pathway but not the personal moral failing pathway. The private hypocrite substantially activates the personal moral failing pathway, and activates the false signaling pathway more weakly. The private hypocrite is evaluated less negatively than the detached hypocrite, despite being judged as more hypocritical. From left to right, we plot (i) mean ratings across the three false signaling judgments, (ii) mean ratings across the three personal moral failing judgments, (iii) hypocrisy ratings, and (iv) composite moral evaluation ratings; bars show means, error bars show 95% CIs, and dots show individual data points.

Discussion

Study 3 provides further support for our two-pathways model of hypocrisy. As in Study 2, our case studies successfully dissociate personal moral failings from false signaling. We also

replicate the finding that detached hypocrites are seen as hypocritical and immoral, suggesting that false signaling is independently sufficient to trigger both judgments. And we find that private hypocrites, like honest hypocrites, are evaluated less negatively than detached hypocrites, despite being seen as no less—and in this case, actually *more*—hypocritical. Study 3 thus bolsters the claim that false signaling and personal moral failings are two distinct routes to hypocrisy with unequal moral weight.

Interestingly, however, unlike honest hypocrites in Study 2, private hypocrites in Study 3 were judged to be more immoral than control transgressors. One potential explanation for this finding is that private hypocrites unexpectedly activated some of the judgments associated with false signaling—and moreover did so to a greater degree than honest hypocrites. Consistent with this possibility, the effect of private hypocrisy on negative moral evaluations was eliminated when controlling for false signaling judgments.

However, it is also possible that in the case of private hypocrisy, personal moral failings *do* give rise to negative moral evaluations (despite not doing so in the case of honest hypocrisy). Consistent with *this* possibility, the effect of private hypocrisy on negative moral evaluations was also eliminated when controlling for personal moral failing judgments. Thus, we are unable to draw a decisive conclusion about the reason that private hypocrites were evaluated more negatively than control transgressors.

Nonetheless, the comparison between private hypocrites and detached hypocrites supports our conclusion that the false signaling pathway carries greater moral weight than the personal moral failing pathway. While private hypocrites were rated as much higher than detached hypocrites on constructs related to personal moral failings—and were seen as more hypocritical—they were nonetheless judged to be meaningfully more moral.

Study 4

Introduction

Taken together, our results thus far have supported the proposal that false signaling and personal moral failings are two independently sufficient pathways to hypocrisy (with unequal moral weight). We find that detached hypocrites—who robustly activate the false signaling pathway—are judged to be hypocritical, despite not activating the personal moral failings pathway. And we find that honest and private hypocrites—who robustly activate the personal moral failings pathway—are likewise judged to be hypocritical, despite showing relatively weak activation of the false signaling pathway (especially in the case of the honest hypocrite).

But are these pathways *necessary* to trigger hypocrisy judgments? Or will any target who violates a stated moral value appear hypocritical, even if her stated value reflects neither an attempt to falsely signal her virtue nor a genuine moral conviction? Such a proposal would align with the “mere inconsistency” view of hypocrisy (Crisp & Cowton, 1994; Effron, O’Connor, et al., 2018; Greenbaum et al., 2012; Simons, 2002; Stone & Fernandez, 2008).

Our model proposes that hypocrisy is triggered only when a target activates at least one of the two pathways. Thus, we predict that a target who condemns a transgression that she later engages in—but avoids activating either pathway—should *not* be judged as more hypocritical than a control transgressor (who avoids condemnation altogether). In Study 4, we devised a final case study to test this prediction.

Method

Procedure

In Study 4 (pre-registered at [aspredicted.org](https://aspredicted.org/#40326), #40326), we investigated perceptions of a target character who condemns a transgression that she later engages in, but whose

condemnation is motivated by neither a genuine moral conviction nor a desire to signal her morality. Instead, her condemnation is motivated by uneasiness with a potentially threatening stranger. We designed this *no-pathways condemner* to avoid activating either the personal moral failing or false signaling pathway.

Using a three-condition, between-subjects design, we compared the no-pathways condemner to two other target characters. First, as in Studies 1-3, we included a *control transgressor* target, who transgresses but does not engage in moral condemnation. This comparison enabled us to investigate whether the no-pathways condemner triggers any above-baseline judgments of hypocrisy.

Additionally, we included a *traditional hypocrite* condition. This condition was similar to the traditional hypocrite condition in Study 1, but the language was modified to more closely match the other conditions in Study 4. Thus, the traditional hypocrite condemns a transgression that she subsequently engages in, and does nothing to avoid activating either pathway. Our model predicts that whereas the no-pathways condemner should be seen as neither hypocritical nor immoral, the traditional hypocrite should be seen as both hypocritical and immoral.

Study 4 presented subjects with just one vignette, featuring just one type of transgression. Specifically, subjects in Study 4 read about a target character who avoided jury duty. We chose to present just one vignette because we imagined that subjects might regard the vignette's backstory—which was made more complex to accommodate the no-pathways condemner condition—as overly contrived if they encountered it four times across four vignettes.

The no-pathways condemner vignette makes clear that when the target condemns the transgression, she is neither attempting to falsely signal her virtue nor expressing genuine moral conviction:

Jennifer is riding the subway when a man sits down next to her. She does not know this man, but he strikes up a conversation with her. He tells her that he recently was called for jury duty, and that he thinks jury duty is an extremely important civil obligation that he was proud to perform. He also asks Jennifer what she thinks about people who try to get out of jury duty.

Jennifer thinks the man is weird and is kind of freaked out by his talking to her, especially given that the subway is completely empty. She just wants their conversation to go as smoothly as possible so that she can get off at the next stop. For this reason alone, Jennifer tells the man that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty.

The next morning, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

The traditional hypocrite vignette does not speak to the target's motivation for condemning the transgression, allowing both pathways to be activated:

Jennifer is riding the subway when a man sits down next to her. She does not know this man, but he strikes up a conversation with her. He tells her that he recently was called for jury duty, and that he thinks jury duty is an extremely important civil obligation that he was proud to perform. He also asks Jennifer what she thinks about people who try to get out of jury duty.

Jennifer tells the man that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty. The next morning, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

The control transgressor vignette does not include any condemnation:

Jennifer is riding the subway when a man sits down next to her. She does not know this man, but he strikes up a conversation with her. He tells her that he recently was called for jury duty, and that he thinks jury duty is an extremely important civil obligation that he was proud to perform.

The next morning, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

As in Study 3, subjects evaluated the target on the three false signaling judgments, the three personal moral failing judgments, hypocrisy, and morality ($\alpha = .94$ across our four moral evaluation items). All variables were measured as in Study 3.

Subjects

In Study 4, we recruited subjects and formed our final sample as in Studies 1-3. A total of 451 subjects completed the survey; our final sample included 446 subjects (131 no-pathway hypocrite; 158 traditional hypocrite; 157 control transgressor¹⁴), $M_{\text{age}} = 38.30$, 60% male.

¹⁴ In Study 4, sample sizes are relatively less even across conditions (as compared to Studies 1-3) because we did not use the “evenly present elements” feature on Qualtrics.

Results

In Figure 4, we plot false signaling and personal moral failing judgments, as well as hypocrisy judgments and moral evaluations, across conditions.

No-pathways condemners

We begin by considering the no-pathways condemner, who was designed not to activate either pathway. To investigate whether we successfully achieved this aim, we compare the no-pathways condemner to the other two targets on each of our six pathway-relevant judgments.

As expected, the no-pathways condemner received much lower ratings than the traditional hypocrite on the three false signaling judgments—(i) deceptiveness ($B = -.36, t = -6.64, p < .001$); (ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = -.24, t = -4.25, p < .001$); and (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = -.14, t = -2.38, p = .018$)—and on the three personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = -.41, t = -7.59, p < .001$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral ($B = -.40, t = -7.36, p < .001$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = -.45, t = -8.54, p < .001$), $n = 289$.

Furthermore, the no-pathways condemner was viewed as no worse than the control transgressor on two of the false signaling pathway judgments—(ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = -.02, t = -.34, p = .734$); and (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = -.06, t = -1.05, p = .296$)—and on all of the personal moral failing pathway judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = -.08, t = -1.41, p = .158$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral ($B = -.11, t = -1.82, p = .070$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = -.07, t = -1.23, p = .218$), $n = 288$. The no-pathways condemner received significantly higher ratings than the control transgressor on only one judgment: (i) deceptiveness ($B = .17, t = 2.98, p = .003$).

These results indicate that as intended, the no-pathways condemner activates both pathways far less than the traditional hypocrite, and for the most part avoids activating either pathway any more than the control transgressor.

Next, we turn to our outcome variables. We find that the no-pathways condemner was seen as significant less hypocritical than the traditional hypocrite ($B = -.39, t = -7.21, p < .001, n = 289$), and in fact no more hypocritical than the control transgressor ($B = .03, t = 0.59, p = .557, n = 288$). Likewise, the no-pathways condemner was evaluated significantly less negatively than the traditional hypocrite ($B = .27, t = 4.83, p < .001, n = 289$) and in fact no more negatively than the control transgressor ($B = -.02, t = -0.39, p = .697, n = 288$). Thus, the no-pathways condemner—who condemned a transgression that she subsequently engaged in, but did not substantially activate either pathway—was not judged to be significantly more hypocritical or less moral than the control transgressor.

Traditional hypocrites

Finally, we confirm that—as in Study 1—the traditional hypocrite *did* activate both pathways and *was* judged to be more hypocritical and less moral than the control transgressor.

The traditional hypocrite received significantly higher ratings than the control transgressor on two of the false signaling judgments—(i) deceptiveness ($B = .48, t = 9.61, p < .001$) and (ii) gaining undeserved reputation benefits ($B = .22, t = 4.02, p < .001$)—although she was not rated higher on (iii) harming others via condemnation ($B = .08, t = 1.37, p = .172$), $n = 315$. Additionally, the traditional hypocrite received significantly higher ratings than the control transgressor on the three personal moral failing judgments—(iv) weakness of will ($B = .34, t = 6.43, p < .001$); (v) intentionally engaging in behavior known to be immoral ($B = .32, t = 5.91, p < .001$); and (vi) inconsistency with values ($B = .42, t = 8.17, p < .001$). And finally, the

traditional hypocrite was seen as significantly more hypocritical than the control transgressor ($B = .45, t = 8.82, p < .001$), and received significantly more negative moral evaluations ($B = -.30, t = -5.51, p < .001$).

Thus, the traditional hypocrite activated both pathways, and was judged to be hypocritical and immoral. These patterns rule out the possibility that some general feature of Study 4 (e.g., the backstory about Jennifer's subway ride) prevented us from observing any differences between conditions. And they thus support our conclusion that the no-pathways condemner was not judged to be hypocritical (or immoral) specifically because she was not seen as a false signaler or as violating a genuinely held moral value.

Figure 4. Dependent measures across conditions in Study 4. As compared to the control transgressor, the no-pathways condemner fails to substantially activate either the false signaling or the personal moral failing pathway, and is not judged to be any more hypocritical or any less moral. In contrast, the traditional hypocrite activates both pathways, and is judged to be both more hypocritical and less moral. From left to right, we plot (i) mean ratings across the three false signaling judgments, (ii) mean ratings across the three personal moral failing judgments, (iii) hypocrisy ratings, and (iv) composite moral evaluation ratings; bars show means, error bars show 95% CIs, and dots show individual data points.

Discussion

Study 4 provides further support for our causal model by exploring the case of the no-pathways condemner: an individual who condemns a transgression that she subsequently engages in, but is motivated neither by genuine moral conviction nor the desire to falsely signal her virtue. Subjects did not judge the no-pathways condemner to be any more hypocritical than a control transgressor who avoids condemnation altogether (even though they *did* judge a traditional hypocrite to be more hypocritical than the control transgressor). Our results thus reveal that judgments of hypocrisy do not automatically attach to any target who condemns a transgression that she subsequently engages in. Instead, our results suggest that false signaling and personal moral failings are not only sufficient pathways to hypocrisy, but also that at least one pathway is *necessary* for a target to be deemed hypocritical.

Our results thus shed light on what people think it means to be a hypocrite. In particular, they lend support to the proposal that “hypocrisy” is a rich psychological construct that goes beyond simple word-deed misalignment (Effron et al. 2018; Simons 2002). This conclusion is especially interesting in conjunction with Studies 2-3, which highlight the important conceptual distinction between judgments of hypocrisy and negative moral evaluations. Together, we find that people see “hypocrisy” as a specific label—one that is reserved for people who violate a *publicly signaled* or *genuinely held* moral value (and not merely a *stated* moral value). And yet at the same time, people do not always perceive hypocrisy negatively.

General Discussion

In this paper, we have supported a causal model of hypocrisy designed to address two distinct questions: (1) what constitutes hypocrisy and (2) what causes hypocrites to be evaluated

negatively. Across four studies, we have provided evidence that *false signaling* and *personal moral failings* constitute two independent pathways to hypocrisy, with unequal moral weight.

In Study 1, we confirmed that traditional hypocrites activate judgments associated with both of these pathways. Then, in Studies 2-3, we presented subjects with case studies designed to primarily activate one pathway but not the other. By attempting to disentangle the two pathways, we found evidence that both pathways are sufficient to trigger robust judgments of hypocrisy, but false signaling is the stronger pathway to negative moral evaluation. Finally, in Study 4, we investigated whether these pathways are necessary for judgments of hypocrisy—or if, alternatively, any target who violates a stated value will automatically be judged a hypocrite. Notably, subjects did not deem hypocritical a target who condemned a transgression that she subsequently engaged in, but was motivated neither by a desire to falsely signal her virtue nor a genuine moral conviction. Thus, we find evidence that activating at least one pathway is necessary for hypocrisy.

Theoretical contributions

Together, our results shed light on when moral engagement risks triggering ascriptions of hypocrisy—and how different kinds of hypocrisy attract different levels of moral opprobrium. By supporting the proposal that false signaling is a key pathway to negative moral evaluation, our results build on existing evidence that people are highly sensitive to cues of dishonesty and react negatively to perceived attempts by others to misrepresent themselves for reputation gains (Aquino & Reed II, 2002; Graham et al., 2015; Lapsley & Lasky, 2001; Smith et al., 2016; Walker & Pitts, 1998). And our results suggest that in contrast to our rigid intolerance for deception, we are comparatively more forgiving toward people who fall down on their genuinely held moral convictions.

This contrast highlights the primacy of deception in morality judgments, and reveals that personal failings such as weakness of will are regarded as less morally offensive. While we tend to expect good people to be honest about their moral values and behavior, we are more understanding when they fail to follow through on their values in the face of temptation. Of course, when people violate their values by committing transgressions, we judge them negatively for those transgressions—but our results suggest that we are less likely to penalize them further for their *hypocrisy*.

By highlighting this distinction, our findings speak to an apparent tension in the literature. Recent work has challenged the false signaling theory of hypocrisy (Jordan et al., 2017) by showing that one can be labeled a hypocrite without moralizing in front of an audience. For example, O'Connor et al. (2020) find that subjects judge a tobacco company executive who secretly donates to anti-smoking causes to be hypocritical—despite the fact that he does not act to falsely signal his virtue. Yet our work clarifies that while such non-signaling hypocrites *are* seen as hypocritical, they are relatively less likely to be penalized for their hypocrisy.

At the same time, our findings also clarify an important way in which non-signaling hypocrites and traditional hypocrites are perceived similarly. Our results suggest that both kinds of hypocrite are seen as “hypocritical” for a richer reason than mere word-deed misalignment. In particular, both are judged to be hypocrites because they have failed to live up to a standard they’ve set for themselves and/or signaled to others. The same cannot be said for the no-pathways condemner in Study 4, who condemned the same behavior she engaged in *without* activating either pathway—and was not considered a hypocrite. In this way, our results reveal that hypocrisy is a meaningful psychological construct that is neither coextensive with negative moral evaluation nor with mere inconsistency between word and deed.

Together, these findings help address the question of whether moral engagement inevitably creates a hypocrisy liability. Our results suggest that simply engaging morally—even if we avoid publicly condemning others or advertising our moral efforts—*does* increase the risk that we will later become hypocrites. This risk could be seen as a reason to opt for moral apathy, given the difficulty of upholding one's values with perfect consistency. Yet our findings ultimately undercut this narrative. Instead, we find that hypocrisy is not always a bad thing—if we can avoid false signaling. If you fall down on your held or expressed moral values but do not misrepresent your behavior, others may call you a hypocrite. But most of the outrage that your actions provoke is likely to simply reflect your bad behavior, rather than the inconsistency between that behavior and your moral engagement.

When are personal moral failings evaluated negatively?

Importantly, however, we do find evidence that hypocrisy in the apparent absence of false signaling is sometimes evaluated negatively. While honest hypocrites were not evaluated more negatively than non-hypocritical transgressors, private hypocrites were.

One possible explanation for this finding is that subjects evaluated private hypocrites negatively because they (unexpectedly) saw them as false signalers. Interestingly, in Studies 2-3 we struggled to identify case studies that activated the personal moral failings pathway while completely avoiding triggering judgments associated with false signaling. We attempted to achieve these aims by asking subjects to consider *honest hypocrites* in Study 2 (who condemned transgressions that they later committed, but also openly confessed to sometimes transgressing) and *private hypocrites* in Study 3 (who condemned only in a private diary). These targets were far less likely to activate judgments associated with false signaling (e.g., deceptiveness) than

detached hypocrites (our case study designed to feature false signaling), but they still activated them somewhat more than control transgressors. This was especially true for private hypocrites.

Thus, it is possible that private hypocrites were evaluated more negatively than control transgressors not because they committed personal moral failings, but rather because they activated judgments associated with false signaling. That said, the fact that private hypocrites (and, to a lesser extent, honest hypocrites) activated judgments associated with false signaling is itself a puzzle that needs explaining. Did subjects somehow see these targets' actions as inherently deceptive and misleading? Or as predictive of other deceptive and misleading behaviors?

Alternatively, subjects may have rated private hypocrites as somewhat deceptive and misleading because they had *already* evaluated them negatively, for reasons unrelated to false signaling. And more generally, private hypocrites may have been judged negatively not because they were seen as false signalers, but rather because of their personal moral failings. This proposal aligns with other recent evidence that hypocrisy can be penalized in the apparent absence of false signaling. As discussed in the introduction, O'Conner et al. (2020) find that private good deeds receive less moral praise when they are inconsistent (versus consistent) with public transgressions, and therefore trigger ascriptions of hypocrisy. Together, these results challenge the notion that hypocrisy is never judged negatively in the absence of false signaling, and suggest that personal moral failings can sometimes trigger negative moral evaluation.

When are personal moral failings penalized, and when are they forgiven? That is, when an individual engages morally in a way that conveys a genuinely held value, under what circumstances will he consequently be judged more harshly if he betrays that value? One interesting possibility is that the answer depends on whether he, by virtue of his hypocritical

moral engagement, is judged to *feel better than is merited*. O'Connor et al. (2020) suggest that people may interpret private good deeds that contradict public transgressions (e.g., the tobacco executive's donations to anti-smoking causes) as attempts at "moral cleansing". In other words, people may see inconsistent good deeds as a strategy through which transgressors attempt to alleviate their guilt and thereby feel more virtuous than is deserved. Furthermore, O'Connor et al (2020) present evidence that targets who are judged to feel undeservedly virtuous receive less moral praise for their good deeds.

Linking this finding to the present work, it seems plausible that subjects saw private hypocrites (who were penalized for their hypocrisy), but *not* honest hypocrites (whose hypocrisy was forgiven) as feeling undeservedly virtuous. One key difference between our private and honest hypocrisy vignettes is whether, at the time of condemnation, the target acknowledges that they sometimes transgress. In the honest hypocrisy vignette, when the target engages in condemnation, she also confesses to transgressing (e.g., "*Becky says that she thinks it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the Internet, but that she sometimes does it anyway*"). In the private hypocrisy vignette, by contrast, the target simply engages in (private) condemnation without making any confession (e.g., "*Becky writes that she thinks it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the internet*"). Thus, subjects may plausibly have concluded that, while condemning, the private (but not honest) hypocrite felt more virtuous than was ultimately merited by her behavior.

More generally, it stands to reason that cases of personal moral failings may vary meaningfully in the extent to which the target is seen, by virtue of their moral engagement, as feeling undeservedly virtuous. And this judgment may plausibly play an important role in explaining when personal moral failings are evaluated negatively. This hypothesis is somewhat

consistent with the proposal that people see hypocrisy whenever an individual enjoys “undeserved moral benefits,” such as appearing or feeling more virtuous than is merited (Effron et al., 2018). Our theory offers the insight that hypocrisy can occur even in the absence of undeserved moral benefits, so long as the target violates a genuinely held moral value; the honest hypocrite represents a plausible example of this scenario. However, enjoying undeserved moral benefits may be essential for hypocrisy to be *penalized*.

Importantly, evidence that personal moral failings are sometimes penalized does not negate our conclusion that false signaling tends to be penalized more harshly. First, the fact that honest hypocrites were not evaluated negatively establishes that personal moral failings do not *always* trigger negative moral evaluation. Moreover, our results are consistent with the proposal that *appearing* undeservedly moral is seen as worse than *feeling* undeservedly moral.

In particular, the contrast between private hypocrites and detached hypocrites in Study 3 is consistent with this proposal. As argued above, subjects may see private hypocrites as *feeling* undeservedly moral—but they should be less likely to see them as *looking* undeservedly moral, because private hypocrites condemn in private. In contrast, subjects are likely to see detached hypocrites as *looking* undeservedly moral (given their public condemnation)—but they should be less likely to see them as *feeling* undeservedly moral, because detached hypocrites are aware that their condemnation does not reflect a genuinely held conviction or a true tendency to adhere to the relevant value. And critically, Study 3 found that private hypocrites were seen as less immoral than detached hypocrites (despite actually seeming *more* hypocritical). Thus, our results are consistent with the proposal that hypocrisy is penalized less harshly when it involves feeling undeservedly moral than when it involves looking undeservedly moral.

For these reasons, our results support the conclusion that our two proposed pathways to hypocrisy—false signaling and personal moral failings—have unequal moral weight, with false signaling being evaluated more negatively. Nonetheless, future research should continue to explore the interesting question of when personal moral failings are evaluated negatively, and the interesting hypothesis that the answer may lie in whether the target's moral engagement causes them to feel undeservedly moral.

Furthermore, future research should more generally investigate the specific mechanisms through which false signaling and personal moral failings give rise to our two outcome measures (i.e., ascriptions of hypocrisy and negative moral evaluations). Our studies focused on a few specific judgments associated with false signaling and personal moral failings. In particular, we hypothesized, and found evidence to suggest, that false signalers are seen as deceptive, as earning undeserved reputation benefits, and as unfairly maligning others as a way to make themselves appear virtuous. And we also hypothesized, and found evidence to suggest, that people who commit personal moral failings are seen as weak-willed, as intentionally taking actions that they know to be wrong, and as inconsistently and unpredictably acting to contradict their values.

By measuring these judgments, our results shed new light on the ways that people evaluate hypocrites, and allow us to differentiate our case studies on important dimensions. However, we did not measure other potentially important judgments (e.g., does the target feel undeservedly moral?) or attempt to disentangle the causal influence of each individual judgment. Our work thus leaves open interesting questions about the specific mechanisms through which false signaling and personal moral failings are seen as hypocritical, and—sometimes—immoral.

Limitations

Across all studies, we recruited American subjects from Amazon Mechanical Turk. Samples from Amazon Turk have been shown to be more diverse and closer to nationally representative than the typical college student sample at major research universities (Buhrmester et al., 2011). However, an important limitation of our research is that Amazon Turk samples are nonetheless not nationally representative, and that by focusing on Americans our work leaves open important questions about perceptions of hypocrisy across cultures, including in those that are not “WEIRD” (Henrich et al., 2010). Notably, evidence suggests that hypocrisy can be evaluated more negatively in independent (versus interdependent) cultures (Effron et al., 2018), raising the interesting question of whether this pattern reflects differences in evaluations of personal moral failings, false signaling, or both. Thus, future research should investigate the generalizability of our two-pathways model of hypocrisy to other populations.

Additionally, we have supported our model via vignette studies that allow us precise control over the details of our hypocrisy case studies. Furthermore, consistent with prior work on hypocrisy, our vignettes featured transgressions that are only moderately severe (i.e., evading jury duty, downloading music illegally, wasting paper by printing documents single-sided, or ignoring phone calls from a parent) (Jordan et al., 2017). We chose to use moderate violations in order to prevent the outrageousness of the transgressions themselves from overwhelming participants’ evaluations of targets (which could make it difficult to detect effects of *hypocrisy*). However, future research should evaluate our two-pathways model outside of the laboratory (e.g., in field experiments or analyses of real-world data), and across a broader array of examples of hypocrisy, including those that involve more extreme transgressions.

Conclusion

Moral engagement is an essential feature of human nature, but puts us at risk of becoming hypocrites if we fail to behave morally ourselves. Across four studies, we have provided evidence that there are two distinct pathways to hypocrisy—*false signaling* (i.e., violating a moral value that you have signaled to others) and *personal moral failings* (i.e., violating a moral value that you genuinely hold)—and activating at least one pathway is necessary for word-deed inconsistency to appear hypocritical. Moreover, we find that moral engagement does not inevitably put a target on one's back, because ascriptions of hypocrisy are distinct from negative moral evaluations. Indeed, the pathways we have identified carry unequal moral weight: hypocrites are more likely to provoke particular outrage (such that they are deemed less moral than ordinary wrongdoers) by falsely signaling their virtue than by failing to live up to their genuinely held values. Together, our results shed light on when and how moral engagement leads to ascriptions of hypocrisy—and when being a hypocrite is something to fear.

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Appendix A: Deviations from our pre-registered analysis plans

As described in the main text, Studies 2-4 were pre-registered. Our pre-registration for Study 2 can be viewed at: <https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=pw2rt9>. Our pre-registration for Study 3 can be viewed at: <https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=ij7v7q>. Our pre-registration for Study 4 can be viewed at: <https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=gw6cx7>. Generally speaking, our analyses adhered closely to our pre-registered analysis plans, but here we discuss a few important deviations.

First, we note a few differences between the language we used in our pre-registrations and the language we use in this paper. In our pre-registrations for Studies 2-3, we refer to detached hypocrites as “dishonest hypocrites.” In our pre-registration for Study 3, we refer to private hypocrites as “diary hypocrites.” In our pre-registration for Study 4, we refer to no-pathways condemners as “no-pathways hypocrites.” Finally, in all pre-registrations we refer to control transgressors as “non hypocrites,” and to the judgments associated with our two proposed pathways (e.g., judgments regarding how deceptive or weak-willed the target is) as “trait concepts.”

Next, we turn to describing the ways in which our analyses deviated from our pre-registered analysis plans. All of these deviations pertain to our analyses of Studies 2-3.

We begin by discussing our primary analyses. In our pre-registrations for Studies 2-3, we planned to focus most extensively on the comparisons between our two case studies (i.e., the comparison between honest and detached hypocrites in Study 2, and between private and detached hypocrites in Study 3), and less on the comparisons between each of our case studies and control transgressors.

More specifically, we planned to compare our case studies to each other on all DVs (i.e., all false signaling and personal moral failing judgments, as well as composite moral evaluations and hypocrisy judgments). In contrast, we planned to compare our “non-signaling” case studies (i.e., honest hypocrites in Study 2 and private hypocrites in Study 3) to control transgressors on all DVs except false signaling judgments. And we planned to compare our “non-personal-moral-failing” case study (i.e., detached hypocrites) to control transgressors only on hypocrisy judgments.

However, as our conceptual understanding developed over the course of our research, we chose to focus more extensively on all condition comparisons. Thus, we ultimately report analyses comparing all pairs of conditions on all DVs.

Next, we turn to discussing secondary analyses. In our pre-registrations, we planned to conduct a set of secondary analyses that took a correlational/mediation approach to analyzing the relationships between false signaling and personal moral failings judgments and our outcome measures (i.e., composite moral evaluations and hypocrisy judgments). More specifically, we pre-registered two different correlational/mediation approaches for Studies 2 and 3, both of which were relatively extensive.

However, we ultimately chose not to focus extensively on correlational/mediation analyses in our paper, and thus we do not adhere to either of these two approaches. Instead, we took a relatively simple approach across both Studies 2 and 3. In particular, whenever we found a significant difference between a hypocrisy case study (i.e., detached, honest, or private hypocrites) and control transgressors on one of our outcome variables, we asked: are our data consistent with the possibility that the observed difference is explained by the pathway(s) that this case study activated? To address this question, we reported the results from an analysis that

controlled for the judgments associated with any pathway(s) that the case study activated, and noted whether the relevant difference between conditions was attenuated (or eliminated).

We believe that this approach allows us to (i) give readers the chance to evaluate whether our data are consistent with our proposed causal model while (ii) not placing too much focus on correlational/mediation analyses that cannot establish causality (and can be difficult to interpret, given the collinearity between judgments). To read about the alternative correlational/mediation approaches that we planned to conduct, see our pre-registrations.

Finally, we note that in our pre-registrations for Studies 2 and 3, we additionally planned to conduct a set of secondary analyses excluding subjects who provided incorrect answers to a simple analogy question and/or incomprehensible responses to an open-ended question about their day. However, we inadvertently failed to include these questions in Study 2 or 3, and thus do not conduct these analyses.

Supplemental Material: Full text of all vignettes across Studies 1-3

Here, we provide the full text of all vignettes across Studies 1-3 (in which subjects evaluated multiple scenarios). We note that in Study 4, subjects evaluated just one scenario, for which the full text is provided in the main text. Furthermore, we remind the reader that complete stimuli for all studies are available online at https://osf.io/vuapm/?view_only=564ddb40853246ff81497f78b0e206da.

Study 1

1.1 Downloading Music Illegally

Traditional hypocrite condition:

Becky and her friend Amanda are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Amanda mentions that the acquaintance often downloads music illegally from the Internet. Becky says that she thinks it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the Internet.

Shortly after their conversation, Becky goes online, and downloads music illegally.

Honest hypocrite condition:

Becky and her friend Amanda are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Amanda mentions that the acquaintance often downloads music illegally from the Internet. Becky says that she thinks it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the Internet, but that she sometimes does it anyway.

Shortly after their conversation, Becky goes online, and downloads music illegally.

Control transgressor condition:

Becky and her friend Amanda are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Amanda mentions that the acquaintance often downloads music illegally from the Internet.

Shortly after their conversation, Becky goes online, and downloads music illegally.

1.2 Trying to Get Out of Jury Duty

Traditional hypocrite condition:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty. Jennifer says that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

Honest hypocrite condition:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty. Jennifer says that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty, but that she sometimes does it anyway.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

Control transgressor condition:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

1.3 Ignoring Phone Calls

Traditional hypocrite condition:

Bruce and his friend Zach are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Zach mentions that the acquaintance often ignores his mother's phone calls. Bruce says that he thinks it is morally wrong to ignore your mother's phone calls.

Shortly after their conversation, Bruce notices that his mother is calling, and ignores the call.

Honest hypocrite condition:

Bruce and his friend Zach are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Zach mentions that the acquaintance often ignores his mother's phone calls. Bruce says that he thinks it is morally wrong to ignore your mother's phone calls, but that he sometimes does it anyway.

Shortly after their conversation, Bruce notices that his mother is calling, and ignores the call.

Control transgressor condition:

Bruce and his friend Zach are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Zach mentions that the acquaintance often ignores his mother's phone calls.

Shortly after their conversation, Bruce notices that his mother is calling, and ignores the call.

1.4 Printing Single-Sided

Traditional hypocrite condition:

Kevin and his friend Jack are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Jack mentions that the acquaintance often uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided. Kevin says that he thinks it is morally wrong to use a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

Shortly after their conversation, Kevin has a large document to print, and uses a lot of paper by printing it single-sided.

Honest hypocrite condition:

Kevin and his friend Jack are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Jack mentions that the acquaintance often uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided. Kevin says that he thinks it is morally wrong to use a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided, but that he sometimes does it anyway.

Shortly after their conversation, Kevin has a large document to print, and uses a lot of paper by printing it single-sided.

Control transgressor condition:

Kevin and his friend Jack are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Jack mentions that the acquaintance often uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

Shortly after their conversation, Kevin has a large document to print, and uses a lot of paper by printing it single-sided.

Study 2

2.1 Downloading Music Illegally

Detached hypocrite condition:

Becky and her friend Amanda are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Amanda mentions that the acquaintance often downloads music illegally from the Internet.

Becky does not really think that it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the Internet, so illegal downloading does not really violate her moral values. She sometimes downloads music illegally.

In her conversation with Amanda, however, Becky tells Amanda that she thinks it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the Internet.

Shortly after their conversation, Becky goes online, and downloads music illegally.

Honest hypocrite condition:

Becky and her friend Amanda are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Amanda mentions that the acquaintance often downloads music illegally from the Internet.

In her conversation with Amanda, Becky tells Amanda that she thinks it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the Internet, but that she sometimes does it anyways.

Shortly after their conversation, Becky goes online, and downloads music illegally.

Control transgressor condition:

Becky and her friend Amanda are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Amanda mentions that the acquaintance often downloads music illegally from the Internet.

Shortly after their conversation, Becky goes online, and downloads music illegally.

2.2 Trying to Get Out of Jury Duty

Detached hypocrite condition

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

Jennifer does not really think that it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty, so trying to get out of jury duty does not really violate her moral values. She sometimes tries to get out of jury duty.

In her conversation with Rose, however, Jennifer tells Rose that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

Honest hypocrite condition:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

In her conversation with Rose, Jennifer tells Rose that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty, but that she sometimes does it anyways.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

Control transgressor condition:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

Shortly after their conversation, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

2.3 Ignoring Phone Calls

Detached hypocrite condition:

Bruce and his friend Zach are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Zach mentions that the acquaintance often ignores his mother's phone calls.

Bruce does not really think that it is morally wrong to ignore your mother's phone calls, so ignoring one's mother's phone calls does not really violate his moral values. He sometimes ignores his mother's phone calls.

In his conversation with Zach, however, Bruce tells Zach that he thinks it is morally wrong to ignore your mother's phone calls.

Shortly after their conversation, Bruce notices that his mother is calling, and ignores the call.

Honest hypocrite condition:

Bruce and his friend Zach are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Zach mentions that the acquaintance often ignores his mother's phone calls.

In her conversation with Zach, Bruce tells Zach that he thinks it is morally wrong to ignore your mother's phone calls, but that he sometimes does it anyways.

Shortly after their conversation, Bruce notices that his mother is calling, and ignores the call.

Control transgressor condition:

Bruce and his friend are Zach are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Zach mentions that the acquaintance often ignores his mother's phone calls.

Shortly after their conversation, Bruce notices that his mother is calling, and ignores the call.

2.4 Printing Single-Sided

Detached hypocrite condition:

Kevin and his friend Jack are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Jack mentions that the acquaintance often uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

Kevin does not really think that it is morally wrong to use a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided, so single-sided printing does not really violate his moral values. He sometimes uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

In his conversation with Jack, however, Kevin tells Jack that he thinks it is morally wrong to use a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

Shortly after their conversation, Kevin has a large document to print, and uses a lot of paper by printing it single-sided.

Honest hypocrite condition:

Kevin and his friend Jack are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Jack mentions that the acquaintance often uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

In his conversation with Jack, Kevin tells Jack that he thinks it is morally wrong to use a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided, but that he sometimes does it anyways.

Shortly after their conversation, Kevin has a large document to print, and uses a lot of paper by printing it single-sided.

Control transgressor condition:

Kevin and his friend Jack are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Jack mentions that the acquaintance often uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

Shortly after their conversation, Kevin has a large document to print, and uses a lot of paper by printing it single-sided.

Study 3

3.1 Downloading Music Illegally

Private hypocrite condition:

Becky and her friend Amanda are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Amanda mentions that the acquaintance often downloads music illegally from the Internet.

That evening, Becky writes in her diary about how her day went and about her conversation with Amanda. Although she never expresses this view to others, Becky writes that she thinks it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the internet.

The next morning, Becky hears a song she wants access to, and downloads it illegally online.

Detached hypocrite condition:

Becky and her friend Amanda are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Amanda mentions that the acquaintance often downloads music illegally from the Internet.

Becky does not really think that it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the Internet, so illegal downloading does not really violate her moral values. She sometimes downloads music illegally.

In her conversation with Amanda, however, Becky tells Amanda that she thinks it is morally wrong to download music illegally from the Internet.

That evening, Becky writes in her diary about how her day went and about her conversation with Amanda.

The next morning, Becky hears a song she wants access to, and downloads it illegally online.

Control transgressor condition:

Becky and her friend Amanda are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Amanda mentions that the acquaintance often downloads music illegally from the Internet.

That evening, Becky writes in her diary about how her day went and about her conversation with Amanda.

The next morning, Becky hears a song she wants access to, and downloads it illegally online.

3.2 Trying to Get Out of Jury Duty

Private hypocrite condition:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

That evening, Jennifer writes in her diary about how her day went and about her conversation with Rose. Although she never expresses this view to others, Jennifer writes that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty.

The next morning, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

Detached hypocrite condition:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

Jennifer does not really think that it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty, so trying to get out of jury duty does not really violate her moral values. She sometimes tries to get out of jury duty.

In her conversation with Rose, however, Jennifer tells Rose that she thinks it is morally wrong to try to get out of jury duty.

That evening, Jennifer writes in her diary about how her day went and about her conversation with Rose.

The next morning, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

Control transgressor condition:

Jennifer and her friend Rose are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Rose mentions that the acquaintance recently tried to get out of jury duty.

That evening, Jennifer writes in her diary about how her day went and about her conversation with Rose.

The next morning, Jennifer gets called for jury duty, and tries to get out of it.

3.3 Ignoring Phone Calls

Private hypocrite condition:

Bruce and his friend Zach are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Zach mentions that the acquaintance often ignores his mother's phone calls.

That evening, Bruce writes in his diary about how his day went and about his conversation with Zach. Although he never expresses this view to others, Bruce writes that he thinks it is morally wrong to ignore your mother's phone calls.

The next morning, Bruce notices that his mother is calling, and ignores the call.

Detached hypocrite condition:

Bruce and his friend Zach are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Zach mentions that the acquaintance often ignores his mother's phone calls.

Bruce does not really think that it is morally wrong to ignore your mother's phone calls, so ignoring one's mother's phone calls does not really violate his moral values. He sometimes ignores his mother's phone calls.

In his conversation with Zach, however, Bruce tells Zach that he thinks it is morally wrong to ignore your mother's phone calls.

That evening, Bruce writes in his diary about how his day went and about his conversation with Zach.

The next morning, Bruce notices that his mother is calling, and ignores the call.

Control transgressor condition:

Bruce and his friend Zach are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Zach mentions that the acquaintance often ignores his mother's phone calls.

That evening, Bruce writes in his diary about how his day went and about his conversation with Zach.

The next morning, Bruce notices that his mother is calling, and ignores the call.

3.4 Printing Single-Sided

Private hypocrite condition:

Kevin and his friend Jack are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Jack mentions that the acquaintance often uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

That evening, Kevin writes in his diary about how his day went and about his conversation with Jack. Although he never expresses this view to others, Kevin writes that he thinks it is morally wrong to use a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

The next morning, Kevin has a large document to print, and uses a lot of paper by printing it single-sided.

Detached hypocrite condition:

Kevin and his friend Jack are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Jack mentions that the acquaintance often uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

Kevin does not really think that it is morally wrong to use a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided, so single-sided printing does not really violate his moral values. He sometimes uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

In his conversation with Jack, however, Kevin tells Jack that he thinks it is morally wrong to use a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

That evening, Kevin writes in his diary about how his day went and about his conversation with Jack.

The next morning, Kevin has a large document to print, and uses a lot of paper by printing it single-sided.

Control transgressor condition:

Kevin and his friend Jack are discussing a mutual acquaintance. Jack mentions that the acquaintance often uses a lot of paper by printing documents single-sided.

That evening, Kevin writes in his diary about how his day went and about his conversation with Jack.

The next morning, Kevin has a large document to print, and uses a lot of paper by printing it single-sided.