

Morgan Freeman Tops Our List Of The Most Trustworthy Celebrities

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I write about Hollywood and run the Celebrity 100 List.

If you're one of the millions of people who just spent two weeks parked on the couch watching the Olympics, chances are you heard Morgan Freeman's voice every night. The 75-year-old actor narrated ads for Games sponsor Visa that touted unity and achievement. Freeman's melodic voice is unmistakable and it evokes one specific reaction in viewers that Visa desperately wants to be associated with: trust.

Freeman tops our list of the Most Trustworthy Celebrities this year. We used data from E-Poll Market Research whose E-Score Celebrity service ranks more than 7,000 celebrities on awareness, appeal and 46 different personality attributes.

When people say they find the actor trustworthy, they're talking about his public persona, which is defined by the roles he plays. Freeman almost never plays a bad guy: He's usually the calm voice of reason off to the side in movies like *The Dark Knight* and *Million Dollar Baby*.

Of course he's also played God in 2003's *Bruce Almighty* and its follow-up, *Evan Almighty*. How can you not trust someone in a role like this?

That may or may not reflect who Freeman actually is, but it doesn't matter. When it comes to celebrity, it's all about perception. Freeman has managed to avoid any big scandals (reports that he was dating his step-granddaughter turned out to be untrue), which helps him maintain the public's trust. "Trust is subjective," says Gerry Philpott, head of E-Poll. "We ask people which word would you use to describe this person and a high percentage said 'trustworthy.'"

Many of the celebrities on our list have earned the public's trust by staying in the spotlight for decades without providing any grist for the gossip mills. Betty White, who ranks seventh, is the oldest on our list at 90. White is still going strong with a new show called *Off Their Rockers*, which features seniors pulling pranks. (Maybe people shouldn't be quite so trusting of White.)

At 81, James Earl Jones is the second oldest on our list. Jones has been mostly heard, not seen, on film over the past 15 years. Although he voiced one of the least trustworthy of all villains, Darth Vader, Jones' voice still has an effect on people. He was NBC's voice of the Olympics in 2000 and 2004.

The youngest celeb in the top 10 is a 48-year-old: Sandra Bullock, who ranks sixth, just ahead of White, her co-star in 2009's *The Proposal*. Bullock is unique on the list because she has been touched by scandal: Her husband, Jesse James, was caught cheating on her just after she won an Oscar for her role in the 2009 film *The Blind Side*, leading to their divorce. Bullock came through the scandal looking like a star. She adopted a baby boy soon after and took a small breather from acting. She is still one of the highest-paid actresses in Hollywood though. We estimate she earned \$25 million between May 2011 and May 2012 helping her rank 55th on our Celebrity 100 list.

Michael J. Fox, who ranked as the most trustworthy celeb last year, came in fifth this time around. Philpott says that Fox's move down the list probably reflect the fact that the actor, who spends much of his time raising money for Parkinson's research, just hasn't been in the limelight very much lately.



The Most Trustworthy Celebrities



Morgan Freeman

Trustworthy score: **112**

When Visa wanted a voice that would convey the full weight and emotion of the Olympic Games, the credit card company turned to Freeman.



Ron Howard

Trustworthy Score: **109**

Maybe we trust the director so much because we still think of him as little Opie Taylor from Mayberry.



Mike Holmes

Trustworthy Score: **108**

Credit Holmes with making something as banal as a home inspection gripping drama.



Tony Dungy

Trustworthy Score: **108**

The former football coach had the most consecutive playoff appearances and was the first African-American coach to win the Super Bowl when his Indianapolis Colts beat the the Chicago Bears in 2006.



Michael J Fox

Trustworthy Score: **107**

Fox, who raises million for Parkinson's research, topped our list last year. This year he ranks fifth.



Sandra Bullock

Trustworthy Score: **105**

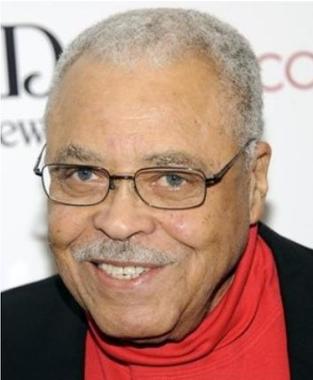
Since her 2009 triumph *The Blind Side*, Bullock has been fairly quiet. Her next big film is next year's *Gravity*.



Betty White

Trustworthy Score: **104**

The 90-year-old actress is still going strong with her senior prank show *Off The Rockers*.



James Earl Jones

Trustworthy Score: **104**

The deep-voiced actor rarely appears on screen these days but he lent his voice to the revamped Star Wars ride at Disneyland.



Tom Hanks

Trustworthy Score: **103**

The actor plays multiple roles in the upcoming film *Cloud Atlas*.