the opportunity to cheat. So, given this opportunity, did these participants cheat? As you may have surmised, they did (but, of course, just by a bit).

Up to now I have not told you anything new. But the key to this experiment was what preceded it. When the participants first came to the lab, we asked some of them to write down the names of 10 books that they read in high school. The others were asked to write down as many of the Ten Commandments as they could recall.* After they finished this "memory" part of the experiment, we asked them to begin working on the matrix task.

This experimental setup meant that some of the participants were tempted to cheat after recalling 10 books that they read in high school, and some of them were tempted after recalling the Ten Commandments. Who do you think cheated more?

When cheating was *not* possible, our participants, on average, solved 3.1 problems correctly.†

When cheating was possible, the group that recalled 10 books read in high school achieved an average score of 4.1 questions solved (or 33 percent more than those who could not cheat).

But the big question is what happened to the other group—the students who first wrote down the Ten Commandments, then took the test, and then ripped up their worksheets. This, as sportscasters say, was the group to watch. Would they cheat—or would the Ten Commandments have an effect on

*Do you know the Ten Commandments? If you'd like to test yourself, write them down and compare your list with the list at the end of this chapter. To be sure you have them right, don't just say them to yourself; write them down.
†Can the Ten Commandments raise one's math scores? We used the same two memory tasks with the control condition to test that premise. The performance in the control condition was the same regardless of the type of memory task. So the Commandments do not raise math scores.