

group. This outcome was similar to the results we achieved with the Ten Commandments—when a moral reminder eliminated cheating altogether. The effect of signing a statement about an honor code is particularly amazing when we take into account that MIT doesn't even have an honor code.

So we learned that people cheat when they have a chance to do so, but they don't cheat as much as they could. Moreover, once they begin thinking about honesty—whether by recalling the Ten Commandments or by signing a simple statement—they stop cheating completely. In other words, when we are removed from any benchmarks of ethical thought, we tend to stray into dishonesty. But if we are reminded of morality at the moment we are tempted, then we are much more likely to be honest.

At present, several state bars and professional organizations are scrambling to shore up their professional ethics. Some are increasing courses in college and graduate schools, and others are requiring brush-up ethics classes. In the legal profession, Judge Dennis M. Sweeney of the Howard County (Maryland) circuit published his own book, *Guidelines for Lawyer Courtroom Conduct*, in which he noted, "Most rules, like these, are simply what our mothers would say a polite and well raised man or woman should do. Since, given their other important responsibilities, our mothers (and yours) cannot be in every courtroom in the State, I offer these rules."

Will such general measures work? Let's remember that lawyers do take an oath when they are admitted to the bar, as doctors take an oath when they enter their profession. But occasional swearing of oaths and occasional statements of adherence to rules are not enough. From our experiments, it is clear that oaths and rules must be recalled at, or just before, the moment