

Once you view dishonesty through this lens, it is clear that you can't open a newspaper in the morning without seeing new examples to add.

AND SO WE return to our original observation: isn't cash strange? When we deal with money, we are primed to think about our actions as if we had just signed an honor code. If you look at a dollar bill, in fact, it seems to have been designed to conjure up a contract: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, it says in prominent type, with a shadow beneath that makes it seem three-dimensional. And there is George Washington himself (and we all know that he could never tell a lie). And then, on the back, it gets even more serious: IN GOD WE TRUST, it says. And then we've got that weird pyramid, and on top, that unblinking eye! And it's looking right at us! In addition to all this symbolism, the sanctity of money could also be aided by the fact that money is a clear unit of exchange. It's hard to say that a dime is not a dime, or a buck isn't a buck.

But look at the latitude we have with nonmonetary exchanges. There's always a convenient rationale. We can take a pencil from work, a Coke from the fridge—we can even backdate our stock options—and find a story to explain it all. We can be dishonest without thinking of ourselves as dishonest. We can steal while our conscience is apparently fast asleep.

How can we fix this? We could label each item in the supply cabinet with a price, for instance, or use wording that explains stocks and stock options clearly in terms of their monetary value. But in the larger context, we need to wake up to the connection between nonmonetary currency and