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## CHAPTER 12

# The Context of Our Character, Part II

*Why Dealing with Cash Makes Us More Honest*

Many of the dormitories at MIT have common areas, where sit a variety of refrigerators that can be used by the students in the nearby rooms. One morning at about eleven, when most of the students were in class, I slipped into the dorms and, floor by floor, went hunting for all the shared refrigerators that I could find.

When I detected a communal fridge, I inched toward it. Glancing cautiously around, I opened the door, slipped in a six-pack of Coke, and walked briskly away. At a safe distance, I paused and jotted down the time and the location of the fridge where I had left my Cokes.

Over the next few days I returned to check on my Coke cans. I kept a diary detailing how many of them remained in the fridge. As you might expect, the half-life of Coke in a college dorm isn't very long. All of them had vanished within 72 hours. But I didn't always leave Cokes behind. In some of the