

their integrity? The result surprised even us: the students who had been asked to recall the Ten Commandments had not cheated at all. They averaged three correct answers—the same basic score as the group that could not cheat, and one less than those who were able to cheat but had recalled the names of the books.

As I walked home that evening I began to think about what had just happened. The group who listed 10 books cheated. Not a lot, certainly—only to that point where their internal reward mechanism (nucleus accumbens and super-ego) kicked in and rewarded them for stopping.

But what a miracle the Ten Commandments had wrought! We didn't even remind our participants what the Commandments were—we just asked each participant to recall them (and almost none of the participants could recall all 10). We hoped the exercise might evoke the idea of honesty among them. And this was clearly what it did. So, we wondered, what lessons about decreasing dishonesty can we learn from this experiment? It took us a few weeks to come to some conclusions.

FOR ONE, PERHAPS we could bring the Bible back into public life. If we only want to reduce dishonesty, it might not be a bad idea. Then again, some people might object, on the grounds that the Bible implies an endorsement of a particular religion, or merely that it mixes religion in with the commercial and secular world. But perhaps an oath of a different nature would work. What especially impressed me about the experiment with the Ten Commandments was that the students who could remember only one or two Commandments were as affected by them as the students who remembered nearly all ten. This indicated that it was not the Command-