

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete a close reading of the article.

- 1) Number your paragraphs.
- 2) Circles words you will need to attack with context clues.
- 3) Read carefully for key ideas
- 4) Make comments and write questions in the margins.

## **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT FOR TEENS: Failing the Integrity Test**

by Josephson Institute on May 31, 2012

There is an audio version of this at:

<http://whatwillmatter.com/2012/05/something-to-think-about-for-teens-14-failing-the-integrity-test/>

Chad and three of his friends were college seniors and they all had to take an important physics exam on Monday. Chad persuaded his buddies to take a weekend trip several hundred miles away to go to a rock concert. They all agreed they would study in the car driving there and back, but it never happened that way.

Instead, the boys partied all weekend and when they got back home late Sunday night they began to panic, knowing there was no way they would be ready for the exam.

Chad called the professor first thing Monday morning and told him that they were all ready and prepared for the exam but they couldn't get there on time because they got a flat tire, didn't have a spare, and couldn't get help. Chad convinced the professor to let them take a make-up exam.

When the boys showed up for makeup exam, the professor handed each a test booklet and put them in separate rooms. The first question, worth 5 points, was easy, but the second question, worth 95 points threw them for a loop: "Which tire was flat, and what time did the repair truck finally come?"

Chad's exam booklet had an additional note: *"You took two exams today. One on physics; the other on integrity. By the way, I just received a reference request from Harvard. How you do on this exam will determine how I fill it out."*

This story teaches two lessons: First, "you can dodge your responsibilities, but you can't dodge the consequences of dodging your responsibilities." Second, attempting to avoid the consequences of irresponsibility by lies and cover-ups always makes things worse – much worse.

Think about this: Was Chad's lie or little? How big does it look from the professor's point of view? Is it fair for the professor to hold the lie against Chad on the Harvard reference? Finally, fair or not, do you think the professor's reaction is something Chad should have considered before he decided to lie?

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## **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT FOR TEENS:**

### **FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A DECADE, LYING, CHEATING AND STEALING AMONG AMERICAN STUDENTS DROPS**

A continual parade of headline-grabbing incidents of dishonest and unethical behavior from political leaders, business executives and prominent athletes suggests that we are in a moral recession. But a new report — the 2012 Report Card on the Ethics of American Youth — suggests that a robust recovery is underway. The survey of 23,000 high school students reveals that for the first time in a decade students are **cheating, lying and stealing less** than in previous years.

**CHEATING:** In 2010, 59 percent of students admitted they had cheated on an exam in the past year; in 2012 that rate dropped to 51 percent. Students who copied an Internet document for a classroom assignment dropped 2 percent, from 34 percent in 2010 to 32 percent this year. Other good news:

**LYING:** Students who said they lied to a teacher in the past year about something significant dropped from 61 percent in 2010 to 55 percent in 2012. Those who lied to their parents about something significant also dropped from 80 percent to 76 percent. In 2012, 38 percent of the students said they sometimes lie to save money; that is a drop of 3 percent from 2010.

**STEALING:** In 2010, 27 percent of the students said they had stolen something from a store in the past year. In 2012 that number dropped to 20 percent. In 2010, 17 percent said they stole something from a friend in the past year compared to 14 percent in 2012. The percentage who said they stole something from a parent or other relative in the past year also decreased (from 21 to 18 percent).

"It's a small ray of sunshine shining through lots of dark clouds," said Michael Josephson, founder and president of the Josephson Institute of Ethics and a nationally-noted commentator on behavior.

Josephson's theory is supported by survey results showing that 93 percent of students said their parents or guardians always want them to do the ethically right thing, no matter the cost. Eighty-five percent said most adults in their life consistently set a good example in terms of ethics and character.

Other important findings: Young people believe ethics and character are important, and they think highly of their own ethics despite very high rates of dishonesty and other unethical conduct.

- 99 percent agree that "it is important for me to be a person with good character."
- 93 percent say they are satisfied with their own ethics and character.
- 81 percent believe that when it comes to doing what is right, they are better than most people they know.
- One in five (19 percent) of the boys disagreed with the statement: "It's not worth it to cheat because it hurts your character." One in ten girls did not agree with the statement.

Are these statistics surprising to you? How do you, personally, define character? Do you agree with the statement: "It's not worth it to cheat because it hurts your character"? Discuss.

Link: <http://charactercounts.org/programs/reportcard/2012/index.html#>

