### SURVEY DATA ON ETHICS

**Rating Occupational Groups**

Only Police Are Way Up; Lawyers, Clergy, Bankers, and Reporters, Way Down

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professions rank-ordered by 1993 responses</th>
<th>First Time Asked</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Druggists/Pharmacists</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals directors</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV reporters</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankers</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalists</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper reporters</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building contractors</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business executives</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local officeholders</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senators</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realtors</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor union leaders</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State officeholders</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressman</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance salesmen</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising practitioners</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car salesmen</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

□ □ □ = Those professions currently ranked lower than when question was first posed.

**Question:** How would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields—very high, high, average, low, or very low?

**Note:** *Indicates the first year the category was asked.

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization; latest for CNN/USA Today, July 19-21, 1993.
Are People Ethical?

There has always been concern that somehow we're slipping; but the concern seems to be intensifying.

**Question:** On the whole, would you say that you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the honesty and standards of behavior of people in this country today?

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest for CNN/USA Today, January 6-9, 1992.

![Graph showing satisfaction levels in 1963 and 1992](image)

**Question:** Do you think that young people today have as strong a sense of right and wrong as they did, say, fifty years ago?

**Source:** Surveys by Ben Gaffin & Associates, June 1952; and the Gallup Organization for Catholic Digest, November 1965.

![Graph showing responses in 1952 and 1965](image)

**Question:** Do you think that in general morals are better or worse today than they were ten years ago among...young unmarried people?

**Source:** Survey by the Roper Organization for Fortune magazine, August 1938.

**Question:** Compared to when you were growing up, would you say teenagers today are more moral in their behavior, less moral in their behavior or about the same?

**Source:** Survey by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman for Time, January 19-21, 1987.

![Graph showing responses in 1938 and 1987](image)

**Question:** [Asked in 1960] Some people say that most people can be trusted. Others say you can't be careful in your dealings with people. How do you feel about it? [Asked in 1972-93] Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

**Source:** The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) for the Center on International Studies, March 1960; and the NORC General Social Surveys (GSS) for 1972-93.

![Graph showing changes in trust from 1960 to 1992](image)
In Many Areas, Though, the Professed Norms Seem Strong and Conventional

Tax Fraud

Question: Do you feel it is wrong or not wrong if...a taxpayer does not report all of his income in order to pay less income taxes?

Wrong 94%  
Not wrong 4%

Source: Survey by NORC for the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), February-April 1991.

Question: Have you ever cheated on your federal income taxes, or not?

No 95%  
Yes 4%


Lying

Question: Do you think it is sometimes justified to lie to friends or to family members or do you think lying is never justified?

Depends/DK 10%  
Justified 18%  
Never 73%


Extramarital Affairs

Question: Do you think it is always wrong or sometimes okay for...a married person to have sex with someone other than his or her spouse?

Always wrong 87%  
Sometimes OK 11%


Question: (If ever married) Have you ever had sex with someone other than your husband or wife while you were married?

No 83%  
Yes 17%

Source: Survey by NORC-GSS, February-April 1993.

Stealing

Question: The ...eighth commandment is...Do not steal...Does the way you live these days completely satisfy, mostly satisfy, somewhat satisfy, a little bit satisfy, or not at all satisfy that commandment?

Completely 86%  
Mostly 7%  
Somewhat 6%  
Not at all 1%  
Not sure 1%


Insurance Fraud

Underestimating the number of miles driven per year on an auto ins. app.* 32%

Question: For each one, please tell me when it would be acceptable to you personally—almost always acceptable, usually acceptable, usually not acceptable, or almost never acceptable.

*Data from 1991. Question asked on a six point agree/disagree scale, responses shown combine strongly agree, agree, and probably agree.

Only a Few Areas Where Norms Have Clearly Changed

Euthanasia

**Question:** When a person has a disease that cannot be cured, do you think doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life by some painless means if the patient and his family request it?

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of November 15-18, 1990.

![Euthanasia chart]

**Premarital Sex**

**Question:** There's a lot of discussion about the way morals and sexual attitudes are changing in this country... Do you think it is wrong for a man and a woman to have sexual relations before marriage, or not? [In 1969 the question lead was phrased..."the way morals and sex are changing in this country."]

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of August 29-September 3, 1991.

![Premarital Sex chart]

**Women in 1939**

**Question:** (Asked of women only by women interviewers) Do you consider it alright, unfortunate, or wicked when young men have sexual relations before marriage?

**Source:** Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune* magazine, September 1939.

![Women in 1939 chart]

**Men in 1939**

**Question:** (Asked of men only by men interviewers) Do you consider it alright, unfortunate, or wicked when young girls have sexual relations before marriage?

**Source:** Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune* magazine, September 1939.

![Men in 1939 chart]
What About Young People?

The proportion saying, for example, that they have cheated in school is high, but where we can track it, the proportion often seems to be decreasing.

Question: For the activities below, indicate which ones you did during the past year [percentage saying "frequently" or "occasionally," as opposed to "not at all"].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cheated on a Test at School (1988)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Public University</th>
<th>Private University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Survey of approximately 200,000 incoming college freshmen.
Source: Survey by the American Council on Education, in conjunction with the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles, Fall 1988.

Question: You sit down to take an important test. You know you don’t know the answer to most of the questions because you haven’t had enough time to study. There is a person sitting next to you who is very smart and well-prepared and you can see her answers. In this situation, would you probably try to copy her answers on your own test? Once in a while glance at her test for ideas about the right answers? [Or] answer the test as best you can by yourself, even if you won’t do well?

Note: Survey of 5,012 students in grades 4 through 12.

Question: At your school, how common is cheating on tests or exams? Would you say there is a great deal, a fair amount, or not very much cheating? Have you, yourself, ever cheated on a test or exam?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent saying &quot;have cheated&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Survey of approximately 500 teenagers.

THE PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE, September/October 1993
**Acquiring Values:**

**Personal experience:** solid  
**Society's experience:** shaky

**Question:** ...When you were growing up, how much did your family shape your beliefs about right and wrong—a great deal, some, not much, or none?

How about young people today...?

**Question:** ...Please tell me for each of these areas whether you share the same values, somewhat different values, or very different values than your parents?...Being honest (Asked of women.)

...Please tell me whether you think your children will have the same values, somewhat different values or very different values from you?...Being honest (Asked of mothers.)

**Note:** Sample is of Southerners only.  
**Source:** Survey by Institute for Research in Social Science, Southern Focus Poll, Spring 1993.

**Question:** What do you feel has been the single most important factor in influencing your beliefs about what is right or wrong?

**Source:** Survey by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman for Time, January 19-21, 1987.

**Question:** What do you think (has/should have) the most influence on the values of young people today?

**Source:** Survey by Mellman & Lazarus for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co., September 1991.