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## We're prone to cheat -- if it's easy: Study

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**PhD student Rimma Teper, lead author of two studies that tested a group's willingness to take the easy road, says subjects were more likely to make poor decisions when the rule breaking didn't involve explicit action.**

Quick. Figure this out.

In your head, calculate —  $1 + 8 + 18 - 12 + 19 - 7 + 17 - 2 + 8 - 4$ .

Your answer?

The truth is, we were going to have a gimmick developed where we somehow read your mind to confirm your answer, but we ran out of money, patience and technology so the solution just appears at the end of this piece.

But what ever you do, don't look now.

We trust you. Unless we've made cheating too easy.

New research at the University of Toronto Scarborough suggests most people are honest, but that the moral line separating playing fair from fudging may have to do with how much work is involved in breaking the rules.

It's one thing to steal a paper with the answers on it, but another when the solutions just land in your lap.

PhD student Rimma Teper, lead author of two studies that tested a group's willingness to take the easy road, says subjects were more likely to make poor decisions when the rule breaking didn't involve explicit action.

"And given our study, we showed that threshold can be pretty small," she explains to QMI Agency.

In one test, researchers had participants take a math quiz, but warned them the computers were acting up. One group was told if they pushed the space bar, the answer would pop up, while the second group was told if they didn't hit the enter key within five seconds of looking over a equation, the answer would appear.

Those in the second group — who didn't have to do anything to cheat — were much more likely to take the shortcut, noted Associate Psychology Prof. Michael Inzlicht, who worked on the study.

Another test involved being asked, online, whether they would be willing to volunteer to help a student with a learning disability. Those who had to make a choice between 'yes' and 'no' were more likely to help than subjects who had the option of not following a link to sign up to be a Good Samaritan.

Teper says people find it awkward when they have to explicitly say no to helping someone.

She also found something heartening, explaining: "Overall, most didn't cheat at all.

"And that paints a rosy picture."

And the answer to our math question? 46. And we just know you didn't look before this.

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