

New and
Expanded
Edition

A SELF-MADE BILLIONAIRE SPEAKS OUT
ON HONESTY AND GENEROSITY

WINNERS
NEVER
CHEAT

—*Even in Difficult Times*—

JON M. HUNTSMAN

Foreword by **Glenn Beck** from Fox News

PRAISE FOR *WINNERS NEVER CHEAT*

“How timely! How needed it is for one of the finest human beings, industrial leaders, and philanthropists on the planet to compellingly drill down on timeless, universal values for business and life. This book edifies, inspires, and motivates all of us to model these common sensical lessons for our organizations, all our relationships, and especially our posterity—for what is common sense is obviously not common practice.

Primary greatness is character and contribution. Secondary greatness is how most people define success—wealth, fame, position, etc. Few have both. Jon’s one of them.”

—Dr. Stephen R. Covey, author, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*

“In his creative gifts, in his business success, in his great philanthropy, in his human qualities, Jon Huntsman stands in a class all of his own.”

—Richard Cheney, Vice President of the United States, on the occasion of the dedication of Huntsman Hall, The Wharton School, The University of Pennsylvania

“Jon Huntsman has successfully navigated corporate America guided by a strong moral compass. In his book, Jon shares his depth of knowledge and outlines how to succeed in today’s competitive market place while taking the high ground.”

—Senator Elizabeth Dole

“Jon Huntsman’s new book ought to be mandatory reading for leaders—and those who aspire to be leaders—in every field. His secrets for success are no secrets at all, but invaluable lessons that he has reminded us, with his life and now with his words, are the pillars upon which we can build our lives, too.”

—Senator Tom Daschle

“Jon Huntsman’s book is about ethics, values, and his experiences. The practical way in which he shares those with the reader is amazing. This is a book with inspiration for a younger generation.”

—Jeroen van der Veer, Chief Executive, Royal Dutch/Shell Group

“As I read Jon’s book, I thought my father had returned to tell me that you are either honest or you are dishonest, that there is nothing in between. $2 + 2 = 4$, never 3.999 or 4.001. Also, if you always say what you believe, you don’t need to have a good memory. If we could only live the principles Jon has followed, what a different world it would be—both in our business and personal relationships.”

—Former U.S. Senator and Astronaut Jake Garn

“Jon Huntsman has taken us back to the basics—the basic values that transcend all professions and cultures. He has provided real-life examples that are inspiring and show that ‘good guys’ really can finish first. And he shows us how you can learn from mistakes. It is a ‘must read’ for both young men and women just stepping onto the golden escalator to success and anyone seeking reassurance that how one lives every day really does matter.”

—Marsha J. Evans, former President and CEO, American Red Cross

“A refreshing and candid discussion on basic values that can guide you from the sandbox to the boardroom—told by a straight shooter.”

—Chuck Prince, Chairman and CEO, Citigroup

“Jon’s outlook on moral and ethical behavior in business should be inspirational to all who read this book. The lessons of fair play and holding true to personal moral values and ethics are time-honored principals which are all too often overlooked in today’s world. While this book is geared to those in business, I see it as worthwhile reading to anyone.”

—Rick Majerus, former ESPN Basketball Analyst and legendary basketball coach, St. Louis University.

“It is true that all business enterprises are profit oriented, but the avarice for wealth and the ardent desire to stay competitive tend to lure more and more corporate executives to resort to unscrupulous, unethical practices. Although they may achieve temporary successes, their lucrative lies and fraud will be their ultimate undoing, causing great losses to their shareholders. Jon’s book is a stentorian call for the corporate world to reassert accepted moral values and learn the responsibility of sharing gains with society, probably in line with the economic standard of the country.”

—Jeffrey L.S. Koo, Chairman and CEO,
Chinatrust Financial Holding Co.

“Succinctly capturing what the world’s major beliefs all hold as an unassailable truth, that ethical behavior and giving more than you receive is the path to fulfillment and success in life, *Winners Never Cheat* deftly navigates these concepts with clarity and insight.”

—Louis Columbus, Director of Business Development,
Cincom Systems

“This is easily the most courageous and personal business book since Bill George’s *Authentic Leadership*. If anyone has doubts about how one person can make a substantive difference in the world, this beautifully written book should dispel them immediately. I hope its message is embraced worldwide.”

—Charles Decker, Author of *Lessons from the Hive: The Buzz for Surviving and Thriving in an Ever-Changing Workplace*

“Jon Huntsman and I have this much in common: We were raised to work hard, play fair, keep your word, and give back to the community. I relate to what he is saying. Real winners never cheat.”

—Karl Malone, Twice MVP of the NBA and Utah Jazz legend

“In an age of corporate scandal and excess, Jon Huntsman reminds us of the enduring value of honesty and respect. He shows us that morality and compassion are essential ingredients to true success. Over the years, Jon’s extraordinary business achievements have been matched by a sense of charity that continues to touch countless lives. I am privileged to call him a friend.”

—Mitt Romney, former Governor of Massachusetts

“I can’t put down the book after reading the first page. These are values universally cherished, whether in the United States, in China, or elsewhere. A great and loving man emerges from the pages so vivid that he seems to talk to you face to face, like a family member. My life is richer and mind is broader after reading the book. I am very proud of my friendship with Jon Huntsman.”

—Yafei He, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs—China,
Dept. of North American and Oceanic Affairs

“Nothing could be more timely than this provocative book from one of America’s foremost business and civic leaders about the urgent need for greater ethics in our public and private lives. With wit and clarity, Jon Huntsman shares his guidelines for living a life of integrity and courage. It is a wonderful tonic for much of what ails us today. *Winners Never Cheat* is a valuable handbook for anyone wanting to succeed in business, or life.”

—Andrea Mitchell, NBC News

“Jon Huntsman is more than a phenomenally successful entrepreneur. He is a giant of a leader and a role model of integrity. In *Winners Never Cheat: Everyday Values We Learned as Children (But May Have Forgotten)*, Mr. Huntsman establishes the inextricable link between following one’s inner moral compass and achieving lasting success. His book is filled with timeless wisdom, timely examples, and an inspiring life story. Jon is the quintessential nice guy who has finished first!”

—Dr. Amy Gutmann, President, University of Pennsylvania

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NEVER
CHEAT**

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EVEN IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Jon M. Huntsman

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TO KAREN,
MY PARTNER AND
BEST FRIEND.

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I am indebted to my mother and other family members—living and deceased—for providing models of kindness and decency, and to my late father-in-law, David Haight, who always believed in me.

My greatest debt, however, is reserved for my spouse, Karen, our 9 children, and 58 grandchildren for providing me with 68 convincing reasons why a person ought to stay the proper course.

—J.M.H.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon M. Huntsman is chairman and founder of Huntsman Corporation. He started the firm with his brother, Blaine, in 1970. By 2000, it had become the world's largest privately held chemical company and America's biggest family-owned and operated business, with more than \$12 billion in annual revenues. He took the business public in early 2005. He was a special assistant to the president in the Nixon White House, was the first American to own controlling interest of a business in the former Soviet Union, and is the chairman of the Board of Overseers for Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, his alma mater. Mr. Huntsman also has served on the boards of numerous major public corporations and philanthropic organizations, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Red Cross. The Business School at Utah State University is named after him, as is the basketball arena at the University of Utah. The Huntsman businesses fund the foundation that is the primary underwriter for the prestigious Huntsman Cancer Institute in Salt Lake City,

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which he founded. The hospital/research facility has become a leader in the prevention, early diagnosis, genetic legacies, and humane treatment of cancer. He resides with his wife, Karen, in Salt Lake City. His oldest son, Jon Jr., is governor of Utah.

FOREWORD

There is a good chance that you've never heard of Jon Huntsman. He shuns the spotlight, doesn't like to talk about himself, and likes it even less when others talk about his good works. If you've ever used a plastic plate, bowl, dish, or Styrofoam take-out food container, you have Jon Huntsman to thank. His company was the first to develop these products, along with the first plastic egg carton, the original Big Mac container, and plastic fork and spoon. The small business he started with his brother in 1970 became the largest privately held chemical company in the world.

Jon Huntsman's true legacy, however, isn't the multi-billion dollar company he built or how he revolutionized how we live with what he created, but his unwavering honor, integrity, and generosity in every aspect of his professional and personal life. In an era of high-priced lawyers and accountants always looking for the latest legal loophole or tactical advantage, Jon Huntsman has done business on a handshake. Deals valued in the hundreds-of-millions of dollars were negotiated and concluded,

literally, with nothing more than both parties looking each other in the eye and shaking hands. That is Jon Huntsman's reputation and legacy.

To many people, this will be nothing more than a quaint anecdote or a nostalgic reminder of how life used to be. They argue that Jon Huntsman is a man made for a different and simpler time. I would argue that we are a people out of place. Jon is currently living the life that all of us want to live, but somehow too many people have convinced themselves that business and relationships just aren't conducted this way anymore.

They couldn't be more wrong!

I first met Jon Huntsman on a visit to Utah when a mutual friend arranged for us to have lunch together. I really didn't know a lot about Jon Huntsman, but I knew he was a self-made man and a multi-billionaire. How could I turn down lunch with a multi-billionaire? When I was told we would be having lunch at a hospital cafeteria, I thought it wasn't exactly the lifestyle of the rich and famous, but I soon came to realize that the cafeteria at the Huntsman Cancer Institute is not your typical cafeteria.

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Some of the best prime rib I have ever eaten was during that lunch. How could hospital food taste so good? I learned that prior to the opening of the Huntsman Cancer Institute, Jon Huntsman battled cancer. During his hospitalization and course of treatment, Jon and other cancer patients would be hungry at 3 o'clock in the morning or 9 o'clock at night, but the kitchen was closed, and when it was open, the food was bland. So when Jon opened up his cancer center, he decided to have "five-star" dining for everybody. The patients can order whatever they want, whenever they want it, because Jon doesn't want them or their families worrying about being hungry or eating bland food while fighting cancer. They have other things to focus on.

The Huntsman Cancer Institute is a marvelous and beautiful facility. As we walked through the buildings, I learned that its entire design is geared toward providing comfort, warmth, and compassion to the patients. The medical team and technology are unrivaled and unsurpassed. Halfway through our walk, Jon stopped and looked me in the eyes and said, "We're going to cure cancer here and then I'm turning this into a Ritz Carlton." I laughed

and he replied, "I'm serious. We're going to cure cancer here." I believe him.

I met several grateful patients and their families. Their feelings and praise for the Huntsman Cancer Institute were universal. One patient explained how his son had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer and was scheduled to fly from Philadelphia to the Huntsman Cancer Institute for an initial evaluation and treatment. They arrived at the Philadelphia Airport only to be told that all flights to Salt Lake City were cancelled due to a heavy snow storm. As this father relayed his story to me, he broke down in tears. He told me that every delay in obtaining treatment resulted in the spread of cancer in his son's body. He telephoned the Huntsman Cancer Institute and advised them of the delay and his ongoing attempts to reschedule the flight. The father was told to continue with those efforts and that the medical team would get back to him. After a few moments, a heartbroken father received a call from the Huntsman Cancer Institute. He was told that Mr. Huntsman was sending his private jet to Philadelphia to pick up both him and his son to fly them directly to Salt Lake

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City. If Jon Huntsman had his way, this story would not be unique—it would be a regular occurrence.

I could spend a day sharing with you all that I learned in that short afternoon with Jon Huntsman, but it would take me a year to share with you all the things that I would like to learn from him. The way Jon conducts his business and lives his life will not only inspire you to be a better person, citizen, and entrepreneur, it also will give you hope that the good guys don't finish last.

As you read this book, I know you will feel as I did when I first read it. I hope you'll also feel compelled to share it with as many people as you can. I have never in my life purchased any book by the case, except for this one. As I meet people who question if business can be done with honesty and integrity, I send them a copy of this book to remind them that the answer is “yes,” not only can it be done, it is being done.

This isn't a book limited to doing business. This isn't a book about a company that introduced the world to plastic egg cartons, plastic plates, or plastic knives and forks—this is a book about the man behind it. This is a book about life, about principles,

Winners Never Cheat

and how success is a by-product of living those principles. This is a book about how success and blessings will rush to you by doing good first. Just ask Jon Huntsman if you'll be able to give away the money and blessings of success quickly enough.

In today's world where too many people try to grab and hoard as many dollars as they can, where politicians do anything to cling to power, where we mistakenly believe that business can no longer be done with a look in the eye and a handshake, it is time that we remember the values of honesty, integrity, and generosity. Like George Washington was in his time, Jon Huntsman is our time's "indispensable man." Look to Jon Huntsman, as he is still showing us the better way.

Glenn Beck

Glenn Beck talk show, CNN's *Headline News*

INTRODUCTION

GOOD TIMES, BAD TIMES

*Circumstances may change but your
values shouldn't*

When I wrote the original edition of this book in the fall of 2004, I had experienced four decades in the business world. My life had been enriched in every aspect. Like others before me, I discovered that “happiness is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it.” I had witnessed it all: the greed, the cheating, the lying, and the selfishness. And the triumphs, the miracles, the rages-to-riches, and the flim-flam folks.

Or so I thought. It turned out I was wrong. There have been sequels galore on the downside (and a few on the up). As I write these lines in the fall of 2008, ethical corner-cutting has risen faster than the price of a gallon of gas. Even those tough, cold winters in rural

Idaho were easier to swallow than some of today's Wall Street trickery. Traditional values appear to be as in vogue as a subprime loan.

The good times of 2004 to 2007—record markets, sizzling real estate, easy credit, relatively acceptable energy costs—conspired to make us morally flabby. It is easy to take the high road when the route is leading to better times. Generosity isn't difficult when money flows.

Historically, positive economic scenarios are followed by painful downturns. The result presents new temptations to bend rules, to hoard material possessions, and to dismiss decency as being so last year. Born of anger, fear, stress, and frustration, the temptation to cut a corner is strong and persuasive. For the honest of heart—life's real winners—times like this are just another passing test.

When reaping an abundant harvest, most of us keep our senses—the common variety and in relation to fair play. Yet, it is quite apparent, given the amount of irresponsibility, cheating, fraudulent behavior, and pure greed that has recently been exposed, that not everyone was playing by the rules. Indeed, the breadth and depth of abhorrent behavior from this minority were startling. From subprime

loan scams to speculation on the oil markets to crises in the insurance and financial sectors to falsifying the financial conditions of companies, ethical abuses, and the scope of government bailouts have been jaw-dropping.

Unfortunately, doing it the “right way” seldom cushions economic blows. Such letdowns can leave one confused and angry, but it is no time to panic, to lose track of our moral compass. On my mother’s tombstone in Fillmore, Utah, are etched Shakespeare’s immortal words: “Sweet are the uses of adversity.” Surefire winners understand this adage. Crises must and can be resolved in moral ways. In so doing, keep in mind two things:

1. The situation hardly ever is as bad as it seems. It will pass. Better times are ahead. If nothing else, history tells us that. Americans inherently tend toward optimism. It is in our genes. The fact is, the past 20 years, overall, have been fairly good to us.
2. Prosperous times are no guarantee we will adhere to a morally righteous path. Most people strongly adhere to a fixed code of ethics whether the economy is up or down, but some feel a sense of need for even more financial gain, regardless of the consequences.

The subprime mortgage and energy price debacles were conceived in a bed of raw greed, from a dream of getting something for nothing. They were born with illusions of easy, riskless, endless money. The erosion of moral values is the natural progression of this mindset. Such obsessions require the redrawing of ethical boundaries. This sort of greed destroys the financial and emotional underpinnings of others. For some, the idea of finding a morally acceptable alternative is placed on “call waiting” until the nefarious goal is reached.

When ethical boundaries are redrawn or removed, the addiction to wealth becomes all-consuming. When expediency trumps propriety, it results in an escalating toboggan ride down a mountainside, a descent impossible to stop until the sled crashes from excessive speed and lack of direction. The late '90s dot-com burst was evidence enough. Perhaps the hedge funds of today will be the next exhibit.

This scenario results from a flawed rationale. The “objective” or “goal” is an illusion because it is based on an ethically bankrupt premise from which nothing positive can be achieved. The goal can never be reached. There will never be “enough” money; there

will never be “enough” power. Thus, the “success” some envision will never be attained. A crash nearly always follows a dizzying display of “success” that is not solidly based in economic and ethical fundamentals. You can be sure the Piper will demand payment.

If everything were fair in life, perpetrators of economic meltdowns would be the only ones who suffered for their impropriety. But life isn't fair, and the fallout too often envelops good people who played by the rules, who trusted institutions, who are left to survive the rocky times brought on by others. The innocent are made to suffer for the sins of the reckless, the greedy, the cheats, the fast-buckers, the indecent, and the liars. With tough times comes another kind of temptation: the perceived necessity to cut corners, to cling to what you have, to rationalize that traditional values can be jettisoned if the ship is sinking. During this period, one can easily fall into the trap described by William Wrigley, Jr.: “A man's doubts and fears are his worst enemy.”

The confusion, frustration, stress, and fears that come with financial dilemmas can make even the most ethical of individuals vulnerable to bad choices. Nevertheless, reminding ourselves of the moral path and disciplining ourselves to follow it can sustain us

in such trying moments. If there is a silver lining to bad times, it is this: When facing severe challenges, your mind normally is at its sharpest. Humans seldom have created anything of lasting value unless they were tired or hurting.



A discussion involving ethics can be easily misunderstood by some minds. In reality, it is quite simple. The adherence to an ethical code is best defined as how one honors a bad situation or a bad deal. Heaven knows it is easy enough to honor a good deal, or to take advantage of an event or circumstance that is rewarding and beneficial to all sides.

My company, Huntsman Corp., has completed a court trial in Delaware, as I write this. The entire case centered around the other party trying to break a contract with us. Economic conditions changed somewhat between entering the contract a year ago and when it was to be executed, and the other company's prospects of going forward are far bleaker than when they signed the deal.

One of the lawyers for the company that signed the "iron-clad" contract with us but tried to back out made an interesting statement to the judge. "This is a very tight contract," she told the judge.

“Therefore, we must look for any loopholes possible to try and extricate my client from honoring the contract.” The judge didn’t buy it and required the company to keep its word.

Unfortunately, this sort of behavior happens on too many occasions. With crafty lawyers, it sometimes works. Most of the time, however, iron-clad contracts simply are what they were intended to be from the start: maintaining a binding agreement between two parties. And how one honors situations when things turn sour or when a deal ends up being more costly than originally thought is how one defines his or her personal values.

In survey after survey, Americans of all stripes—Republicans, Democrats, Baptists, Jews, Unitarians, liberals, conservatives, the rich, and the poor—indicate they are worried about values. I certainly am. Some shout their angst for all to hear; others express their concerns quietly. Civilization has basic standards for proper and right-thinking action. That was the theme of *Winners Never Cheat: Everyday Values We Learned as Children (But May Have Forgotten)* when it was first published, and it remains so with this updated version.

I don't have to paint detailed landscapes. Each reader is able to point to his or her own painful experiences starting in 2007. The scenario is neither mysterious nor coincidental: Unbridled greed often prompted unethical, reckless behavior that temporarily turned on the money spigot and fueled the hysteria for many. The shock, anger, and heartbreak took place in Act II.



The twin tragedy is that generosity becomes expendable in times of contraction. The basic urge to share, instilled in us from youth, is dulled by the self-centered instinct to survive. Is anyone surprised that charitable donations decreased in the second half of 2007 and have tanked in 2008? Are we surprised that civility and decency have taken back seats when we are in survival mode? Yet, tolerance and charity also are pillars of ethical behavior. In good times and in bad, our values insist we act graciously and generously.

Most of us care about one another. Human beings have considerably more in common with one another than they do differences. One's religion, political persuasion, family, financial and social status, or vocation does not hamper the common thread of personal decency running through most of

humankind. In spite of America's fervent embrace of self-reliance, the vast majority of us believe in taking care of one another. Albert Schweitzer said it well: "You don't live in a world all your own. Your brothers are here, too."

An ethical code of conduct is a nondenominational religion to which all but hardcore sociopaths can subscribe. Ethical responsibility is the gold standard for determining civilized, decent courses of action. Without established and commonly accepted values, the earth turns into a global food fight.

It is important for societies to settle on a set of values common to most and generally applicable to most every instance. There cannot be separate sets of ethics for home, for work, for church, and for play. Ethics belong in the home and the boardroom. And although it may seem that playing fields have changed because of unusual pressures or that rules have become malleable to accommodate unexpected situations, core values remain as solid as concrete.



Because of recent events, I saw a need to write an updated version of this book—not that what I said the first time is no longer in play. On the contrary—it remains as relevant today as it did when I

originally wrote it, as unchanged as when I first learned ethical principles six decades ago. It will hold true 60 decades from now, as well.

This version of *Winners Never Cheat* is presented as a warning that in the darkest of times, temptation will be most alluring. These are times for a mid-course pep talk, a reminder to stay the course, to run the good race, to fight the good fight, to follow the rules we learned long ago. They will see us through hardships and help us make ourselves and the world better off.

Periodic reviews of one's ethical stances are healthy. Times change, situations change, lives change, technology changes. Situations may be altered; basic values must not.

The simplest rules of good behavior injected into us as children, like vaccines, become the prompts for ethical behavior as adults.

Tough times must not be allowed to vanquish us. We are equipped with the values that have accompanied us since our earliest years. That preparation provides us with the strength to weather storms.

Sail on...

*IF THE GAME RUNS SOMETIMES AGAINST
US AT HOME, WE MUST HAVE PATIENCE
TILL LUCK TURNS, AND THEN WE SHALL
HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY OF WINNING
BACK THE PRINCIPLES WE HAVE LOST,
FOR THIS IS A GAME WHERE PRINCIPLES
ARE AT STAKE.*

—THOMAS JEFFERSON

COMMERCE WITHOUT MORALITY.

*—THE FOURTH OF
GANDHI'S SEVEN SINS*

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CHAPTER ONE

LESSONS FROM THE SANDBOX

*Everything we need for today's marketplace
we learned as kids.*

Growing up poor in rural Idaho, I was taught to play by the rules. Be tough, be competitive, give the game all you have—but do it fairly. They were simple values that formed a basis for how families, neighborhoods, and communities behaved. My two brothers and I had something in common with the kids on the upscale side of the tracks: a value system learned in homes, sandboxes, playgrounds, classrooms, Sunday schools, and athletic fields.

Those values did not lose their legitimacy when I became a player in the business world. Yet they are missing in segments of today's marketplace. Wall Street overdoses on greed. Corporate lawyers make fortunes by manipulating contracts and finding ways

out of signed deals. Many CEOs enjoy princely lifestyles even as stakeholders lose their jobs, pensions, benefits, investments, and trust in the American way.

Cooked ledgers, irresponsibility, look-the-other-way auditors, kickbacks, and flimflams of every sort have burrowed into today's corporate climate. Many outside corporate directors bask in perks and fees, concerned only in keeping Wall Street happy and their fees intact.

In the past 20 years, investor greed has become obsessive and a force with which CEOs must deal. Public companies are pushed for higher and higher quarterly performances lest shareholders rebel. Less-than-honest financial reports are tempting when

the market penalizes flat performances and candid accounting. Wall Street consistently signals that it is comfortable with the lucrative lie.

Although I focus much of my advice on business-oriented activities, the world I know best, these

Less-than-honest financial reports are tempting when the market penalizes flat performances and candid accounting.

principles are equally applicable to professionals of all stripes and at all levels, not to mention parents, students, and people of goodwill everywhere.

In the 2004 U.S. presidential election, morality issues influenced more votes than any other factor, but a Zogby International poll revealed that the single biggest moral issue in voters' minds was not abortion or same-sex marriage. Greed and materialism far and away was cited as the most urgent moral problem facing America today. (A close second was poverty/economic justice.)

In nearly a half century of engaging in some sort of business enterprise, I have seen it all. I continue to ask myself, perhaps naively so, why lying, cheating, misrepresentation, and weaseling on deals have ingrained themselves so deeply in society? Could it be that material success is now viewed to be more virtuous than how one obtains that success? One might even be tempted to believe that the near-sacred American Dream is unobtainable without resorting to moral mischief and malfeasance. To that I say, "Nonsense." Cutting ethical corners is the antithesis of the American Dream. Each dreamer is provided with an opportunity to participate on a playing field made level by honor, hard work, and integrity.

In spite of its selectivity and flaws, the American Dream remains a uniquely powerful and defining force. The allure stands strong and self-renewing, but never as feverish as in pursuit of material gain. Achieving your dream requires sweat, courage, commitment, talent, integrity, vision, faith, and a few breaks.

The ability to start a business from scratch, the opportunity to lead that company to greatness, the entrepreneurial freedom to bet the farm on a roll of the marketplace dice, the chance to rise from clerk to CEO are the feedstock of America's economic greatness.

The dot-com boom of the 1990s, although ultimately falling victim to hyperventilation, is proof that classrooms, garages, and basement workshops,

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crammed with doodlings and daydreams, are the petri dishes of the entrepreneurial dream. In many ways, it has never been easier to make money—or to ignore traditional moral values in doing so.

Throughout this nation's history, a spontaneous and unfettered marketplace has

produced thundering examples of virtue and vice—not surprising in that very human heroes and villains populate the business landscape. Yet, a new void in values has produced a level of deception, betrayal, and indecency so brazen as to be breathtaking.

Many of today's executives and employees—I would like to think the majority—are not engaged in improper behavior. Most of the people I have dealt with in four decades of globetrotting are men and women of integrity and decency, dedicated individuals who look askance at the shady conduct of the minority.

I have known enough business executives, though, who, through greed, arrogance, an unhealthy devotion to Wall Street, or a perverted interpretation of capitalism, have chosen the dark side. Their numbers seem to be growing.

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The rationale that everyone fudges, or that you have to cheat to stay competitive, is a powerful lure, to be sure. The path to perdition is enticing, slippery, and all downhill.

The path to perdition is enticing, slippery, and all downhill. Moral bankruptcy is the inevitable conclusion.

What's needed is a booster shot of commonly held moral principles from the playgrounds of our youth. We all know the drills: Be fair, don't cheat, play hard but decently, share and share alike, tell the truth, keep your word. Although these childhood prescriptions may appear to have been forgotten or lost in the fog of competition, I believe it is more a matter of values being expediently ignored. Whatever the case, it's time to get into ethical shape with a full-scale behavioral workout program.

Financial ends never justify unethical means. Success comes to those who possess skill, courage, integrity, decency, commitment, and generosity.

*Nice guys really
can and do finish
first in life.*

Men and women who maintain their universally shared values tend to achieve their goals, know happiness in home and work, and find greater purpose in their lives than simply accumulating wealth. Nice guys really can—and do—finish first in life.



Lessons from the Sandbox

I worked as White House staff secretary and a special assistant to the president during the first term of the Nixon administration. I was the funnel through which passed documents going to and from the president's desk. I also was part of H. R. Haldeman's "super staff." As a member of that team, Haldeman expected me to be unquestioning. It annoyed him that I was not. He proffered blind loyalty to Nixon and demanded the same from his staff. I saw how power was abused, and I didn't buy in. One never *has* to.

I was asked by Haldeman on one occasion to do something "to help" the president. We were there to serve the president, after all. It seems a certain self-righteous congresswoman was questioning one of Nixon's nominations to head an agency. There were reports that the nominee had employed undocumented workers in her California business.

Haldeman asked me to check out a factory previously owned by this congressman to see whether the report was true. The facility happened to be located close to my own manufacturing plant in Fullerton, California. Haldeman wanted me to place some of our Latino employees on an undercover operation at the plant in question. If there had

been employment of undocumented immigrants, the information would be used, of course, to embarrass the political adversary.

An amoral atmosphere had penetrated the White House. Meetings with Haldeman were little more than desperate attempts by underlings to be noticed. We were all under the gun to produce solutions. Too many were willing to do just about anything for Haldeman's nod of approval. That was the pressure that had me picking up the phone to call my plant manager.

There are times when we react too quickly to catch the rightness and wrongness of something immediately. We don't think it through. This was one of those times. It took about 15 minutes for my inner moral compass to make itself noticed and to swing me to the point that I recognized this wasn't the right thing to do. Values that had accompanied me since childhood kicked in.

Halfway through my conversation, I paused. "Wait a minute, Jim," I said deliberately to the general manager of Huntsman Container, "Let's not do this. I don't want to play this game. Forget I called."

I instinctively knew it was wrong, but it took a few minutes for the notion to percolate. I informed

Haldeman that I would not have my employees spy or do anything like it. To the second most powerful man in America, I was saying no. He didn't appreciate responses like that. He viewed them as signs of disloyalty. I might as well have been saying farewell.

So be it, and I did leave within six months of that incident. My streaks of independence, it turned out, were an exercise in good judgment. I was about the only West Wing staff member not eventually hauled before the congressional Watergate committee or a grand jury.



Gray is not a substitute for black and white. You don't bump into people without saying you're sorry. When you shake hands, it's supposed to mean something. If someone is in trouble, you reach out.

Values aren't to be conveniently molded to fit particular situations. They are indelibly etched in our very beings as natural impulses that never go stale or find themselves out of style.

Some will scoff that this view is an oversimplification in a complex, competitive world. It indeed is simple, but that's the point! It's little more than what we learned as kids, what we accepted as correct behavior before today's pressures tempted us to jettison those

values in favor of getting ahead or enhancing personal or corporate financial bottom lines.

Although the values of our youth, at least to some degree, usually are faith-based, they also are encompassed in natural law. Nearly everyone on the planet, for instance, shares the concept of basic human goodness.

Human beings inherently prize honesty over deceit, even in the remotest corners of the globe. In the extreme northeast of India, for example, there lies the semi-primitive state of Arunachal Pradesh. Few of us even know it exists. Indeed, this area is nearly forgotten by New Delhi. More than 100 tribes have their own cultures, languages, and animistic religions. Yet, they share several characteristics, including making honesty an absolute value.

How ironic, not to mention shameful, that the most educated and industrialized nations seem to have the most troublesome time with universal values of integrity, while semi-primitive groups do not.

Michael Josephson, who heads the Josephson Institute of Ethics in Marina del Rey, California, says one only has to view popular shows such as *The Apprentice* and *Survivor* to get the notion that life's winners are those who deceive others without

getting caught. Nobody seems offended by that. It's not so much that temptations are any greater today, Josephson notes, it's that our defenses have weakened.

Be that as it may, I maintain that each of us knows when basic moral rules are bent or broken. We even are aware when we are approaching an ethical boundary. Whatever the expedient rationale or instant gratification that “justified” stepping over that line, we don't feel quite right about it because we were taught better.

It is this traditional set of behavioral values that will lead us not into temptation but to long-term success. Forget about who finishes first and who finishes last. Decent, honorable people finish races—and their lives—in grand style and with respect.

The 20th-century explorer Ernest Shackleton, whose legendary, heroic exploits in Antarctica

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inspired half a dozen books, looked at life as a game to be played fairly and with honor:

Life to me is the greatest of all games. The danger lies in treating it as a trivial game, a game to be taken lightly, and a game in which the rules don't matter much. The rules matter a great deal. The game has to be played fairly or it is no game at all. And even to win the game is not the chief end. The chief end is to win it honorably and splendidly.



The principles we learned as children were simple and fair. They remain simple and fair. With moral compasses programmed in the sandboxes of long ago, we can navigate career courses with values that guarantee successful lives, a path that is good for one's mental and moral well-being, not to mention long-term material success, if we but check those compasses on a regular basis.

WHEN YOUNG MEN OR WOMEN ARE BEGINNING LIFE, THE MOST IMPORTANT PERIOD, IT IS OFTEN SAID, IS THAT IN WHICH THEIR HABITS ARE FORMED. THAT IS A VERY IMPORTANT PERIOD. BUT THE PERIOD IN WHICH THE IDEALS OF THE YOUNG ARE FORMED AND ADOPTED IS MORE IMPORTANT STILL. FOR THE IDEAL WITH WHICH YOU GO FORWARD TO MEASURE THINGS DETERMINES THE NATURE, SO FAR AS YOU ARE CONCERNED, OF EVERYTHING YOU MEET.

—HENRY WARD BEECHER

IT IS NOT OUR AFFLUENCE, OR OUR PLUMBING, OR OUR CLOGGED FREEWAYS THAT GRIP THE IMAGINATION OF OTHERS. RATHER, IT IS THE VALUES UPON WHICH OUR SYSTEM IS BUILT.

—SEN. J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT

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