

Why is it wrong to cheat at school if you're only trying to help another person?

When we say we believe in being “honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men” (Articles of Faith 1:13), we mean more than just not lying. Being honest means that we don’t mislead others by our words or actions. It also means not helping someone else cheat or steal.

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, reminded us: “Cheating in school is a form of self-deception. We go to school to learn. We cheat ourselves when we coast on the efforts and scholarship of someone else. . . . Others can challenge and motivate us, but we must reach down deep into our souls and call forth our God-given intelligence and capabilities. We cannot do this when we depend on the efforts of someone else” (“Honesty—a Moral Compass,” Oct. 1996 general conference).

So, even though you may think you’re helping friends who want you to give them answers, in reality you’re hurting them. And you’re hurting yourself. If you truly want to help your friends succeed, help them study, show them how to find answers themselves, and encourage them along the way.

When you take the high road and refuse to help your friend cheat—even when it’s hard—you build character and integrity. As you build integrity in your life, others will know that they can trust you, and, more important, Heavenly Father will know He can trust you. **NE**

▶ See a *Mormon Messages* video that won a Church International Video Contest, “Honesty: You Better Believe It,” at lds.org/go/honestyNE916.



Think about Why It Hurts Them

When we pass homework to our friends or we pass them answers to a test, we may think we’re helping them, but the truth is we’re only hurting them, because they’ll never learn how to do things on their own. Our Heavenly Father is always looking at what we do, and what He wants for all His children is to be honest and help each other to be better here on earth in order to live with Him someday. Plus, honesty helps a person conquer problems and excel in life.

Vanessa J., 18, Mexico



Recognize What It Really Is

Letting others copy your work is plagiarism. Helping them steal your work and claiming it to be their own is lying to the teacher. Also, they won’t learn anything and will start depending on your work so much that on a test they’ll likely fail.

Hyrum L., 14, Arizona, USA

Don’t Defeat the Purpose

Helping someone cheat is dishonest academic performance, is unfair to those who didn’t cheat, and defeats the purpose of the assignment or test. Cheating to help someone isn’t helping them at all; it encourages sin in their own life and is the opposite of being a light on a hill. When I was

tempted to help a classmate during an exam, I realized that politely declining his request was the only way I could be a Christlike example for him. A year later, I can see that helping him cheat then would have had no benefit to him in the long run.

Jami H., 18, Canada



Offer Real Help Instead

It's so easy to use the word "helping" as an excuse to cheat. We're deceiving ourselves when we say that. They're missing out on the opportunity to learn something that will help them later on. Don't give in to the peer pressure either; offer to help instead.

Annie R., 17, New Mexico, USA



Help Them Study

Like the thirteenth article of faith says, "We believe in being honest [and] true." Cheating goes totally against that, even if it's for our best friend. We have to do the right thing, which will be to not tell him the answer and to encourage him to do his best.

It will be better if he starts studying more and paying more attention in class. We can help him remember to study, or we can study with him in the afternoons.

Daniel R., 18, Mexico

Look at the Consequences

Whenever you're faced with a question like this, take a moment to think through possible consequences. At first, it seems like cheating with the intent to help someone will have good consequences! Both of you can get through the assignment with a good grade, right? But by looking at the negative consequence as well, you can come to realize that cheating is definitely not worth it. Not only does it give you dishonest habits, but it also doesn't let you learn the importance of being prepared! Besides, it not only affects you but your friend as well. Have the courage to refuse to cheat.

Naomi W., 17, Utah, USA

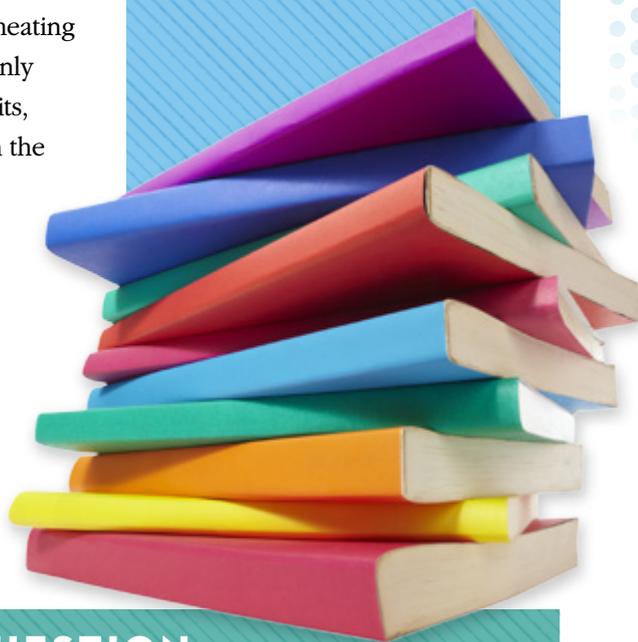
Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.



NO EXCUSES

"'Everybody's doing it' is often given as an excuse. No society can be healthy without honesty, trust, and self-restraint."

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895-1985), "A Report and a Challenge," Oct. 1976 general conference.



UPCOMING QUESTION

At school, people say rude things about me. How can I react without getting upset and not let these comments affect my confidence?

Send your answer and photo by October 15, 2016.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Work," sign in with your LDS account, and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and your photos, and then click "Submit" to upload.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.