

THE ETHICAL BAROMETER EXERCISE

PURPOSE

- To explore the ethical aspects of day-to-day events
- To begin to ask if ethics is any more important today than it was in earlier times

PREPARATION & MATERIALS

Have available at least one flip chart or white board, several markers, and masking tape. Prepare and distribute copies of The Ethical Barometer handout and Ethical Barometer Worksheet. Divide into groups of five or six participants.

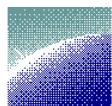
PROCESS

- Introduce the concept of an ethical barometer using The Ethical Barometer handout. Ask: What might we mean by an "ethical barometer"?
- Divide into small groups of five or six participants, giving each person a copy of the Ethical Barometer Worksheet. Assign each group the task of coming up with a list of possible answers for each of the worksheet's three questions. Allow five to ten minutes for each question on the worksheet.

Then, do one of the following:

- Have each small group list their answers, which will be discussed by the whole group, on a white board or page of flip-chart paper taped to the wall.
- Solicit ideas from each group and record them on flip charts or a white board at the front of the room. Label three flip-chart pages as follows: "Ethical Barometer UP," "Ethical Barometer DOWN," and "What Each of Us Can Do."
- Finally, discuss the overarching question: Is our society's ethical barometer rising or falling? (Are people any different today than in the past? Are we just more aware of things now than we used to be? Is there anything about today that is significantly different from the past?)

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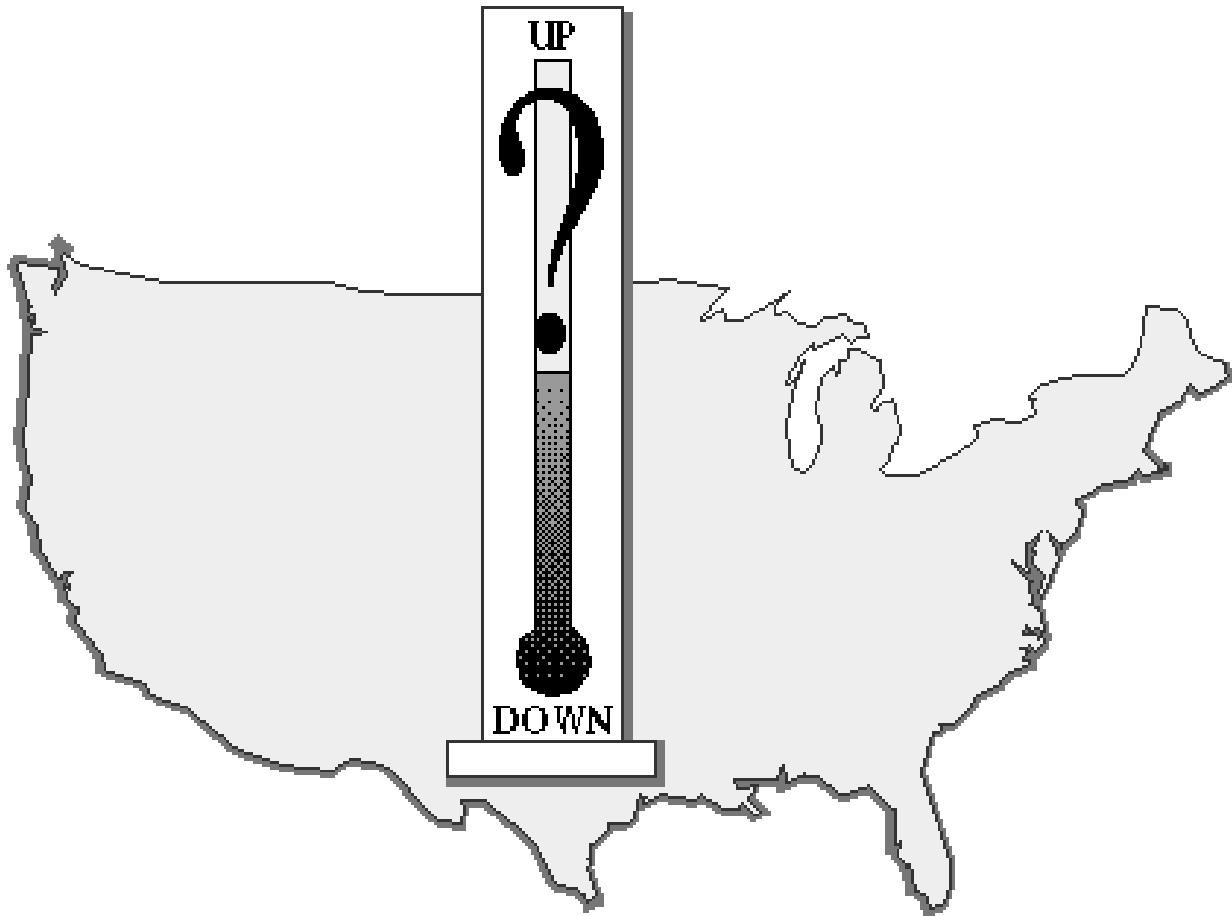
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THE ETHICAL BAROMETER

ETHICAL: having to do with standards of right and wrong

BAROMETER: (1) instrument for measuring atmospheric pressure to forecast changes in weather; (2) anything that indicates change

ETHICAL BAROMETER: instrument to indicate change in standards of right and wrong





ETHICAL BAROMETER WORKSHEET

Is Our Society's Ethical Barometer Rising or Falling?

1. What evidence do we have that it is rising? (What are our sources of hope?)

2. What evidence do we have that it is falling? (What are our greatest areas of concern?)

3. What can each of us do about it?