

# ARE WE AT A MORAL TIPPING POINT?

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Throughout western civilization, there have been waves of moral relativism, periods when “non-judgmentalism” reigns supreme. Never mind that the decision not to judge moral behaviors is indeed a judgment call, the most recent American iteration of this “live and let live” moral landscape began in the 1960s.

The Sixties was a time of “situation ethics” and a rejection of moral absolutes. It has not let up since, though there are signs of moral exhaustion. “Tune in, turn out and drop out” proved to be more attractive rhetorically than it did behaviorally.

A recent Gallup poll found that Americans are less enthusiastic about approving a host of behaviors now than they have been in recent years. There are eight behaviors that the public considers to be morally wrong: sex between teenagers, extramarital affairs, cloning humans, polygamy, suicide, cloning animals, pornography and changing one’s gender.

Five of these behaviors speak to sexuality; two to cloning; and one to suicide. That makes it clear that despite all the chatter about everyone being free to express oneself sexually, there is a growing reluctance to embrace libertinism.

Two of the behaviors—extramarital affairs and polygamy—suggest that cheating is still verboten. Three suggest that the public recoils at behaviors that cause social problems, namely sex between teenagers, pornography and changing one’s gender. From the perspective of religious Americans, who hold to traditional moral values, these are good signs.

What's driving these changes? Though the poll does not address this issue, women, in particular, will never be inclined to take kindly to cheating; they want the undivided love of their husband. This explains their animus to adultery and multiple wives. Men and women alike have witnessed the real-life consequences of teen sex (e.g., abortion and illegitimacy), porn (dehumanization) and inane attempts to switch to the opposite sex (which don't work anyway and are self-destructive).

In other words, a reality check is underway for many who fancy themselves as liberal Democrats. But it is also true that Democrats morally approved 14 of the 20 behaviors included in this survey, making them the most accepting. No matter, when it comes to cloning animals, changing one's gender and polygamy, Democrats are significantly less likely to find them morally acceptable today than they have in the past.

The big news is the moral rejection of changing one's gender. Finally, liberal Democrats are catching up with the rest of the public. Unfortunately, many people—mostly young girls—have suffered grave physical and psychological problems as a result of this sick fad.

All of this makes sense when we consider that just last month, Gallup found that a record-high 56 percent of Americans rate moral values in the U.S. as "poor" and 86 percent say moral values are "getting worse."

So what's the answer? The most recent Gallup poll, released June 16, found that two-of-three respondents believe it would be positive for society if more Americans were religious; 22 percent disagree (only those who are not personally religious believe that religion is not a good sign).

It is not likely we will see a wholesale return to traditional moral values any time soon, though the vector of change is moving that way. Are we at a moral tipping point? We can only

hope so.