



Reasoning with Ethics

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A Project of The School for Ethical Education

www.ethicsed.org

*Ethics in action
creates character*

Use this blog to:

1. Lead class discussions in social studies, civics, ethics or advisory classes.
2. Teach students skills to analyze cases with core values.
3. Teach students about the four-components of ethical functioning

Paying Ransom for Hostages?

Should the US Government ever pay ransom for US citizens held hostage by terrorists? This difficult question is addressed in a recent CBS News 60 Minutes broadcast with a brief introduction in this video link -- <http://bit.ly/PayingforHostages>. The 60 minutes story personalizes the



question with the capture of journalist Steven Sotloff by ISIS.

The Sotloff case creates a challenging ethical dilemma that includes the desire to save a hostage versus the argument that paying for any hostage will only endanger more US lives in the future. It should also be recalled that a military rescue attempt was made but failed to find Sotloff and other hostages.

In this story, the individual tragic outcome for Steven Sotloff, and other US citizens caught up in the ISIS barbarism, pushed the US Government to review its long established policy to not pay ransom to terrorists.

Students are asked to consider the Sotloff family request for the government to change its policy and begin to negotiate and pay ransom for hostages.

Does the current policy support the core value of a responsible government to protect other citizens in the future from hostage taking? Or, should the government demonstrate more compassion and respect for individual lives and negotiate with terrorists?

Students may post responses to these questions on our website at - <http://bit.ly/SEEethicsblog> where more information is available in support of *Reasoning with Ethics*.

Contact information

The School for Ethical Education is a not for profit teaching agency in Milford, CT with the mission to advance strategies of placing ethics in action to create character. As a non-sectarian 501(C)3, SEE is supported by fees for service, grants and donations. For more information visit our website at www.ethicsed.org

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