



# Reasoning with Ethics

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*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 ethical values.
3. Recognize skills in support of SEE's Tri-Factor Model of ethical functioning.

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## ***The Ethics of Whistleblowing***

Former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden claims he was driven by an ethical responsibility to expose what he claims were the US Government's illegal activities in 2013.

The CBS News interview linked to this story reveals Snowden's

motivation to stop the privacy violations he believed were taking place in his work with the NSA. He ultimately chose to release thousands of documents to news outlets that included the Washington Post. He then fled the US to seek asylum in a foreign country. He insists that his status in Russia is only due to the US pulling his passport.

At no point in the interview was Mr. Snowden challenged to address why he didn't go through legal whistleblowing options that were available to him. He frames his dilemma as one of ignoring government illegal activity or exposing it to the press.

While SEE is in no position to know all the risks and options available to Mr. Snowden, we ask students to consider, if they knew about illegal activities in government or the private sector, what core values would guide their actions?

Would they follow legal whistleblowing procedures or pursue other options like Mr. Snowden? In addition, are there social or professional skills that would help one to navigate a dilemma like this?



## **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](http://www.ethicsed.org) Please reply with "unsubscribe" in the subject heading if you want to be removed from this Reasoning with Ethics Blog.