

# This post isn't really about Penn State

We don't know the whole story about the Penn State situation yet. There is already an ethical question at the center of the issue: who knew about the abuse and why didn't they stop it?

We don't have to be referring to the Penn State case to have a discussion on this ethical issue: **ethics vs. compliance.**

**Compliance** is doing what you are required to do by laws or rules.

**Ethics** is doing what you should do because it is right.

We can all probably think of a time when we had to choose between doing what was required or doing what was right. What about doing what we could do versus what we should do?

- What if you saw your child cheating on homework? Would you intervene or allow it?
- How about seeing a co-worker steal office supplies? Would you say something or allow it?
- Did you ever see a friend get bullied? Would you ask someone for help or allow it?

Doing the right thing isn't always easy. The obstacles to good character are numerous. We'll talk a more about some of these obstacles in a post next week. In the meantime, we'll leave you with this popular quote:

**What you permit, you promote.  
What you allow, you encourage.  
What you condone, you own.**

