

MORALS AND ETHICS; HONOR AND INTEGRITY



What are morals and ethics?

I cannot think of two terms that are more argued over as to their meaning than *morals* and *ethics* while at the same time being very inadequately defined. As an example the Oxford defines them as:

morals

1. (*moral*) A lesson that can be derived from a story or experience
2. (*morals*) Standards of behavior; principles of right and wrong

ethics

1. Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity
2. The branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles

If you want to play around with dictionaries, you will find that the two words are often being defined one against the other. Philosophers since the dawn of Man have pondered about these two concepts and written millions of words on them.

From the aspect of application in everyday life, morals and ethics are entirely separate subjects. I am not going to attempt to redefine these two words, but rather lay them out in terms that can be understood and hopefully applied.



Morals

Morals are a codification of things which man has discovered to be bad for himself and for others at some time in his past, and, having discovered that these things were inhibitive to his own survival, he then made a law about them. It was an arbitrary law. For example, he observed that eating pig meat often made people sick to their stomach. He didn't know why. After observing this enough times, he "knew" that eating pig meat was inhibitive to survival, so therefore he made a law about it.

Morals could be defined as a code of good conduct laid down out of the experience of the race to serve as a uniform yardstick for the conduct of individuals and groups. The origin of a moral code comes about when it is discovered through actual experience that some act is not survival. The prohibition of this act then enters into the customs of the people and may eventually become a law. But before it was made into law it was enforced by superstition or just plain belief that it ought to be just so and that was a moral.

The moral is not based upon reason, honesty, good behavior or anything else. It is based upon the fact that something at some point in the past has been inhibitive to survival, and, the powers that be at that time and their successors adjudicated the fact that it ought to be impressed upon people that they shouldn't do this something.

So they say, "If you do this, something bad will happen to you." But they don't explain what is bad about it, they just say, "Don't do it. It's immoral!" And that ends the whole argument, because if you do something immoral, then the gods or devil are going to get you or something is going to happen – bad. The whole taboo system is simply that. If you want to examine any moral code, you can trace it down to its reason why this moral became a taboo, and you will find exactly how this action inhibited survival.

There was more pain in it than there was pleasure, and therefore it was immoral. Sometimes the action was apparently pleasurable but experience had demonstrated to them that the apparently pleasurable action actually contained much more pain and destructiveness than it did pleasure. Therefore it was immoral. Take pretty much any moral code and you'll find that this reasoning was at its basis.



Ethics

Something which is ethical is a reasonable or a reasoning action or a reasoning behavior which promotes maximum survival for the maximum amount of factors concerned in it.

Ethics relate to survival, but not just for self, but for every other factor in life, including but not limited to your family, friends, city, nation and the planet. If an action means survival for just the person itself but is detrimental to everyone else it becomes unethical because all other factors are being harmed.

The American Constitution includes a concept to this effect: it is for the greater good of the greater number of people. That is ethics. It has nothing to do with moral codes. It is what is reasonable and by "reasonable" is meant the maximum amount of survival for the maximum number concerned in the problem. When we speak of ethics, we are talking about right and wrong conduct. We are talking about good and evil. It is unlikely that any absolute right (good) or absolute wrong (evil) exist as any given circumstance can have an almost infinity amount of factors.

Good can be considered to be a constructive survival action. It happens that no construction can take place without some small destruction, just as the old tenement must be torn down to make room for the new apartment building. Good is survival. Good is being more right than one is wrong. Good is being more successful than one is unsuccessful, along constructive lines.

To be good, something must contribute to the individual, to his family, his children, his group, mankind, etc. To be good, a thing must contain construction which outweighs the destruction it contains. Something ethical might actually include the destruction of one or two people, if it meant the survival of hundreds or thousands of people. Construction is good when it promotes survival. Construction is evil when it inhibits survival. Destruction is good when it enhances survival.

Ethical conduct includes the adherence to the moral codes of the society in which we live.

Robbing and theft are of course completely unethical as well as unlawful and immoral, because stealing something very seldom enhances anybody's survival, even one's own.

A typical teenager grows up in a high school of the modern world. Nobody teaches him anything about ethics. Nobody tells him anything about his own survival or his responsibility to the community or himself or anything else. Somebody comes along and tells him that something or another is "immoral," and he "mustn't do it because it's wicked!" And he of course says, "Gotta try that right away!"

They don't give him any reason. They say, "This is against the law," or they say, "This is immoral," and that is the end of it. Nobody is asking him to think about it. They are just telling him that "this is immoral and it's wicked and bad!" And pending on where he is raised they might tell him something he probably can't believe or think with. They might say something to this effect, "You'll go to hell if you do this!"

And he says, "I wonder where hell is? Is it real? How do you get there?" In other words, he is completely unimpressed. And by being enforced upon without reason, he becomes unreasonable himself. He is being restrained by something he cannot understand.



Unreasonable moral codes

In the absence of extended reasoning powers, moral codes, so long as they provide better survival for their group, are a vital and necessary part of any culture. However, it is my observation that many of the moral codes in the society today are defunct, and yet they are still in force. They have lost any reason for being, but they are still in force.

And people recognize that these are no longer valid rules of conduct, and recognizing they are not valid rules of conduct, they say, "Why should we have anything to do with them?" But the second they say this, somebody will come along telling them that they are now immoral and should go to hell... This practice in itself actually makes people bad. The end result of an arbitrary code is to make people bad; it makes make them antisocial!

Let's look at sexual morality. Sexual morality in most cases came about to safeguard parenthood or to keep the home inviolate. It probably came about because one of the seven plagues of Egypt was venereal disease and a lot of people, when they got out of Egypt, were pretty bad off. And they didn't have anybody down the street with penicillin shots to help them out. There was no cure, except abstinence.

So the fathers of the tribes said, "Sex is wicked. No more sex. Women have to be virgins at marriage!" They had no clue how to handle venereal diseases so their only option was to enforce a lot of prohibition. And God help us, three thousand years later — with penicillin, antibiotics, sulfanilamide and all the rest of it — we still have enforced sexual morality.

I'm not arguing in favor of sexual immorality or promiscuity, but to tell some young girl that she is forevermore lost to mankind because somebody seduced her is a bit over the top. Just go into the high schools and start questioning the girls on the subject of sex. You will find out that many of them consider themselves utterly lost, bad, with something horrible they have to hide for the rest of their lives. This can permanently inhibit them on the subject.

Many moral codes of yesteryear were tailor-made for a specific individual and then applied to the group as a whole.

By the way, I'm not trying to slam religion, because religion doesn't happen to be much the source of it. It is the tribe, the group and later the society itself that have created morality and immorality. It just happens that it is easily enforced on the religious line.

Morality was an effort to first make the group survive and then later on became an effort to control the group which in effect only resulted in inhibiting them and restraining them. I will argue that these consequences were/are not always unintentional...



Justice and criminality

Some law and order is necessary in the society as a small portion of the population is indeed criminally inclined and an even smaller portion consists of pure psychopaths and sociopaths. Martha Stout covers this brilliantly in her book [*The Sociopath Next Door*](#).

This system ought to be in place to protect the individual and his freedoms. Individual rights were not originated to protect the criminals, but rather to bring freedom to honest people. However, into this system of protection of freedom, individuals of very questionable activities and intentions started to lobby for their "individual liberty". And the system in most part of the world has evolved into a one which often protects the real criminal while curtailing liberty and freedom for the honest man.

Only the criminally inclined desire a society in which the criminal is free to do as he pleases.

Many laws have been written to protect man — laws which are good and sensible. But the criminally inclined will twist a law, no matter how well formulated it is. Freedom for man does not mean freedom to injure man. Freedom of speech does not mean freedom to harm by lies, etc., etc.

To restrain such impulses the tribe, group and society implemented some form of justice system. Justice could be considered the adjudication of the relative rightness or wrongness of a decision or an action. A justice system must include a ready, speedy and inexpensive means or the system itself will invite crime.

When an individual fails to apply ethics to himself and fails to follow the morals of the group, justice enters in. Justice is used when the individual's own unethical conduct and destructive behavior begin to impinge too heavily on others.

In a society run by criminals and controlled by incompetent police, the citizens tend to identify any justice action or symbol with oppression. They see "justice" as simply "injustice". Hence the idea of justice and the very word itself carries a bad connotation in many places around the world.

A proper justice system should spot and take action when an individual fails to apply ethics to himself and follow the moral codes. At that point the society takes justice actions against him.

Justice has as its basic intention and purpose the survival and welfare of those it serves. Justice would be used until a person's own ethics render him fit company for his fellows. Justice in the hands of man however cannot always be trusted...

In most societies the subject of ethics is not really taught and applied. Justice is however. Justice systems have long been used as a substitute for ethics systems. Instead of just using justice, the society should focus more on teaching man to become honest and straight; to go through life with a clean heart and with clean hands. If such systems were implemented far less justice would be needed.



Pride and self respect

All you have to do to make a bad human being is to convince them that they no longer have sufficient personal pride to be good, because they have to have personal pride to be good. Similarly, if you can convince them that they are bad, they lose their personal pride. You can trace any criminal to a moment when he became convinced, of his own volition, that he was worthless and no good. He decided it himself. He ceased to trust himself. External pressure and force may have contributed but he will only consider himself worthless at the point where he convinces himself of that – not when somebody else is saying it.

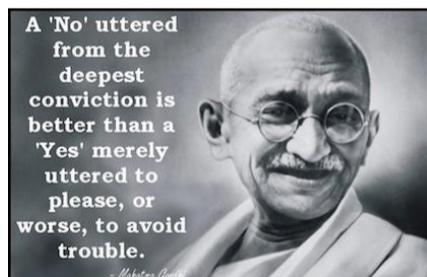
As soon as a person has demonstrated to himself and realized himself that he is indeed bad, he will no longer respect himself at some conscious level, whether this is exhibited to others or not. When speaking of criminality, and the loss of self-respect, one is speaking of a spiritual being who has ultimately betrayed his own essence – who has broken the one contract he must not break: the contract with himself.

Let's say a person stole some money as a kid and then realized he had been bad. Will this kid then forever more restrain himself from stealing more money? No, he will not. The kid "knows" he is absolutely no good. He cannot trust himself anymore. He is worthless in his own point of view. Therefore it is now useless for this individual to further be concerned about his own honesty and respect. And when you get the individual in that position, he is thereafter criminal. He has lost his pride. That is essentially all you have got to lose – your pride and belief in yourself. When that is lost completely, an individual is gone.

To rehabilitate a criminal you have to first get him to gain back his self respect!

The harder you restrain a man and the more you convince him he is no good, the more no-good he becomes. He does the dreadful thing of agreeing with you.

So, morality as a system to make men good has not kept man from making atom bombs and indulging in war and killing millions of innocent people.



Ethics is reason

Ethics, on the other hand, can make man good, because it tells a man that he has a responsibility to himself and to others; a responsibility of encouraging the survival of himself and others. Ethical is reasonable. And whatever is reasonable survival is ethical.

For instance, it is not survival for bank clerks to steal money while they are at work. It is not survival for the bank and it is not survival for the clerk. In the long run, he will lose more time than he is buying with the money he is stealing. It just works that way. It isn't that it is against the law (which it is.) Making a law has nothing whatsoever to do with ethics. It actually has very little to do with keeping a society in good order, in spite of the stress put on it.

Now, this leads to an interesting resolution.

Inherent Code

A basic urge of an individual is in the direction of a code, but not a moral code as we commonly know it. It is a code which really doesn't need to be written because it is apparently inherent in the individual. The sane individual follows this code instinctively. The test of the workability of this apparently inherent code is that every time and every place it has been violated it sticks in the mind of the individual like garbage glued to a wall.

The more he breaks this code, the less self-determined he is. And the less self-determined he is, the more he will break the code, becoming even more "unself"-determined. And this is the dwindling spiral of dishonesty, but it is more than that: it is the dwindling spiral of insanity and the dwindling spiral of ill health.

If you were to dig in and find all the times in an individual's life when he has violated this code, you would most likely find that he has worried about it since and he has been upset about it since — not because somebody is going to punish him, but because it was untrue to his own self-determinism and sense of personal honor.

Thus this code can be used to sort out individuals who have lost their self respect and self-determinism. By orienting a person to points in their life where the code was violated and make them see their own causation in those situations and gently guiding the individual to take responsibility for his actions in the present, self respect can gradually start to become rekindled.

The Code of Honor

Never desert a comrade in need, in danger or in trouble.

Just never do that. Not only is it not survival for comrades; it is not very survival for you.

Never disparage yourself or minimize your strength or power.

Never belittle yourself or minimize your strength or power, no matter how much other people would like you to believe that this is the way to be polite or other such nonsense. I can guarantee you that minimization of yourself, your strength, your power, is the fastest way in the world to make enemies because it says "I'm weak; go ahead and attack me." It says, "Go ahead, knock me down; I'm nobody."

In this part of the world – East Asia – the minimization of one's strength and power is a bit ingrained in the culture. To "save face" the Japanese and the Chinese proclaim "I withhold my foul breath from your face. I, the unworthy one would like to say to glorious you that in my humble and ignorant opinion . . ."

This is viewed by some as a virtue. I believe firmly, it is NOT!

At the opposite end of the spectrum there are the German tribes back around the times of Christ. Were you to ask one of those German knights "Now, come on, admit it: you aren't the strongest knight in five tribes around; you know that..." he would probably have taken his battle ax to you. You would have insulted him.

They had extremely high self-respect and confidence. The Romans learned this the hard way as they advanced north in the conquest of Europe. The Romans were strung along the river Rhine and they would get into a battle with them and some German knight would ride back and forth and he would announce that he was the strongest and he was the most powerful and he was the best and he was worth any 10 Romans, and would they please send out 10 Romans so he could eat them up. So they would send out 10 Romans and he would eat them up. Very discouraging...

Those tribes suffered when they suffered at all because of their tremendous individualism and ego. They would not hang together as political entities to fight Rome. And despite all the downfalls of Rome it still had its legions in good organized marching formation and, as a result, they could hit a solid blow into these thin, individualistic tribe coalitions. This is one of the earliest documented cases of German pride, though their ego made them never expand beyond the Rhine, at least at that time...

Never need praise or approval.

Never need praise or approval; never need sympathy.

Praise and approval are essentially licenses to survive and who wants to go around and ask other individuals "Can I survive?"

Never compromise with your own reality.

If you think it is real, it is real. It doesn't matter what someone else thinks. Don't ever compromise with it. Whether or not you are right actually has little to do with it. Somebody else comes along and says, "Well, that's not right! Actually, the eminent Mr. So-and-So says on page 64 of his thesis that this is definitely not the case!" And if you say, "I must be wrong then..." well, that would be having your own reality compromised with.

Now, it may not be the smartest thing to tell somebody who is insane or irrational (versus a rational individual) that any time he considers something right, it is right for him, and he had better not change his mind about it. But for the majority accepting other realities than your own, against your own assessments, is a certain way to get sick!

Never permit your love to be debased.

In other words, never permit a feeling of affection you have to be tampered with by somebody else. You can tamper with it yourself if you want to, but don't let somebody else come along and tell you that the reason why you shouldn't like So-and-So is because . . .

And don't let anybody come along and tell you that you have to like Mrs. So-and-So, like they used to when you were a little kid. "Yes, you have to like Aunt Betty. Yes. You know, she has a lot of money." (They don't tell you that.) "But you have to like her. It makes her feel so bad when you don't run in the room and kiss her when she comes in. You must run in and greet her" That is a way to "handle" Aunt Betty. But it is also a way to lessen yourself.

By the way, from my experience of being direct and straight forward, if you don't like Aunt Betty, you will get a lot further with Aunt Betty by saying, "I don't like you! " She will immediately get confused and say, "Why?" This will worry her. "Well, I don't like your nose. I don't like the way you're wearing glasses. And I don't like those clammy kisses you give me." (Whatever the reasons are.) Aunt Betty would probably respond, "(sniff, sniff) You are very cruel to me." You just say, "Well, I don't mean to be cruel; I just want to tell you the truth."

And lo and behold, Aunt Betty would only be interested in one person in that family. That is the boy who would say those honest things to her. Fascinating...

Do not give or receive communications unless you yourself desire it.

This doesn't need much explanation. If you want and should communicate – do so. If you don't want to – don't.

Your integrity to yourself is more important than your body.

By this is simply meant that keeping your integrity is one of the most essential things you can do to stay mentally healthy and sane. No happiness can ensue where there isn't a high degree of integrity!

Personal integrity means knowing what you know, and, to have the courage to know and say what you have observed.

Never regret yesterday. Life is in you today and tomorrow is for you.

If you're stuck in the past, you won't last...

Never fear to hurt another in a just cause.

I'm hesitating to write this one down as it can be very misinterpreted and misapplied. This is not a "means justifying the end" sort of thing. It is an ethical point of integrity in cases where survival is threatened.

As an example, a manager needs to be able to tell a person off when a situation requires it.

It isn't so much a necessity of force (which on the surface it can appear like) but rather one of honesty. How come? Because the individual who is afraid to hurt people is going to be dishonest to those people! If he is afraid to hurt them he will wind up actually hurting them far worse.

Don't desire to be liked or admired.

Don't give a damn. Because if you start really giving a damn about being liked, you certainly won't be. The only way to really be liked and admired is not to care whether you are liked or admired and to just be yourself. And you will be surprised how many people will like and admire you, but that isn't why you should be yourself. You are the way you are and act the way you do, as you should, because it is honest to. It is kind of a lie to be one thing and act like another just because it is polite.

Be your own advisor, keep your own counsel and select your own decisions.

You are educated from childhood to listen to the opinions of others. To you they are worth little besides advice to possibly consider, because only you have enough data to evaluate you and your actions. You can sit down and communicate for days, weeks, months, to a person and not even then give him all the data you have about you. Only you have those facts about you. So you only get along well if you are your own advisor. If you first take counsel with yourself about what is right and what is wrong, you can then take counsel with others in order to find out if your data agrees with theirs, or consider new data that you can agree with so as to make a new conclusion.

Be true to your own goals.

To cause things, one must be causative. And the primary requisite of being causative is a statement of intention and goal; to make a clear statement of what you are trying to do. Only when you clearly state it can you avoid being yourself an eventual effect.

What am I trying to do? If you can't answer that you will fail!

A poor goal is better than no goal!

You can find yourself confused. You don't know which way you are going because you decided all the goals you could put your eyes on were too vague or too poor or too unwanted to try to attain. And that in itself is not survival and irrational at best. It shows a bad estimation or a lack of understanding on your own part of what you are doing.

There is no goal vast enough to absorb your total capabilities, because your total capabilities are so vast that they make goals. You are yourself cause. This concept is thoroughly covered by Lao Tzu in the *Tao Te Ching*.

Unhappy is the one who had a goal but didn't pursue it because of social pressure or lack of approval from parents, etc.

Never veer off from your own goals!

*"Your own positive future begins in this moment.
All you have is right now. Every goal is possible from here."
— Lao Tzu*

