**Moral vs. Ethics**

Morals and ethics are not one in the same, although we may often confuse the two. A person’s idea of morals tends to be shaped by their surrounding environment and/or belief system. They drive what we believe about right and wrong, and they are the guiding ideas behind ethical systems; they are often the BASIS for ethics.

However, ethics or ethical codes DO NOT have to be moral. Ethics are a set of rules for people to follow. Many professional organizations such as the American Bar Association, the American Medical Association, and the National Education Association have created specific ethical codes for their respective fields. In other words, an ethical code has nothing to do with our personal beliefs of right or wrong although the personal morals of the individuals designing those codes may have influence upon them. In the case of these organizations, their ethical codes are a set of rules that are drafted by individuals who belong to these organizations to ensure their members stay out of trouble and act in a way that brings credit to the profession.

It is why a member of the military whose personal morals do not align with murdering someone, can align with the ethical expectation of killing someone in combat.

Examples of the differences between morals and ethics:

* **When ethics are not moral…**
  + Omerta, is a code of silence developed among members of the Mafia. It was used to protect criminals from the police. The omerta requires members to follow the rules of ethically correct behavior for the organization, but it can also be viewed as wrong from a moral standpoint.
* **When morals are not ethical…**
  + A lawyer who tells the court that his client is guilty may be acting out of a moral desire to see justice done. However, this is deeply unethical because it violates the attorney-client privilege.