

The Non-aggression Principle (NAP)

(Roy Minet – Rev. 2023/10/02)

Nobody* may deal fraudulently with anybody* else, and nobody may initiate the use of force (or the credible threat of force) against anybody else for any reason, excepting that minimum amount of force which may be necessary to enforce this non-aggression principle.

* Individuals are the “atoms” of society. Therefore, an individual is the smallest “societal entity.” Larger societal entities (organizations, businesses, corporations, governments, etc.) are built from and comprised of one or multiple individuals. A societal entity is normally considered to include the entity’s justly-owned property. The words “nobody” and “anybody” in the NAP actually mean *any* societal entity.

The NAP minimizes the use of force on peaceful and honest people. It is just a rigorous and formal statement of the old “live and let live” saying. Note that minimizing the use of force on peaceful and honest people is substantially the same as maximizing their freedom.

A very simple way to think of the NAP is that it is basically the same as the instructions you might give your child the first time she or he plays on a playground with other children: “Don’t hit any of the other kids, don’t take their stuff and don’t cheat playing games; but if another kid hits you first, you certainly may hit them back to defend yourself.”

If you analyze any issue carefully in the light of the NAP, you are certain to unravel it, understand it and come down on the right side of it.