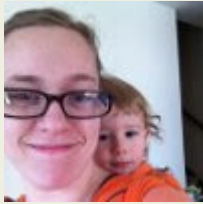


Non-Aggression and Parenting



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"Balancing on My Toes" is an original column appearing every other Friday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Angel M. Ethell. Angel lives in the Chicagoland area with her family: sons Teen (13) and Lil G (2) along with their little sister Cassie Pie (dog), her partner Daddy G and father-in-law Grandpa G. She loves learning new things along with learning that she might not always be right... 100% of the time. Archived columns can be found [here](#). BMT-only RSS feed available [here](#).

This week we are going to discuss the NAP. For those of you that are unfamiliar with this, the NAP is the Non-Aggression Principle. This principle goes hand-in-hand with teaching self-ownership in parenting. Very much like the self-ownership principle there are theories and applications and of course that has changed my view of what it is to be a parent and how to parent.

Is Violence Necessary?

After all, growing up I knew nothing of gentle parenting and only knew that there was an arbitrary "good" that we strove to meet, but always ended up ruining it by just being a kid. My parents were extreme too, but everyone I knew got spanked to varying degrees. Then I had a son. I was 18. I knew that spanking was awful and that it never worked on me, but I didn't have any other tools in my parenting tool box and so didn't know how to not use spanking. But I was still determined not to use it to the extreme my parents did. But I was young and got bullied into believing that it was the only way to make my son "behave" and I did use it. And of course it never worked on him either. Maybe there is a proper way to spank but I do not believe it exists. I have not ever seen a situation where the spanking did not have to escalate to keep kids "in line." I even spanked my son with a belt. A belt. Because I was brow beaten enough to believe it was the thing that was going to change my son's life and make him start acting with respect and accountability. But how is a kid that has never been respected going to learn respect and how is that same kid going to learn accountability if he fears retribution? I ruined my first son and it breaks my heart. I wish I had known about the NAP before then.

What is the NAP?

Non aggression. Its as simple as that. I own my body and no one is allowed to do anything which I don't feel comfortable with as an adult, and the NAP gives children the same respect. "I am important. No one is allowed to encroach upon me and because I own me others own themselves and I am not allowed to encroach upon their space." This principle operates on the theory that we all own ourselves and others are not allowed to do anything which we feel invades that principle. If children are taught that hitting others or acting with violence upon them is not okay and adults enforce this idea by not using violence against them, then we'll have people that feel entitled to safety and security and will not invade others' safety and security.

The applications of the NAP are simple on the surface. Just don't hit your kids, but for some people this is a very ingrained mindset. It takes effort to not use the same parenting techniques that were used on them, but it can be done. There are many violent people in this world and the NAP operates on the thought that if children are taught non-aggression, they will pass that along. This can be seen in the playground, at home with siblings and friends and with future foes. We will all find people that do not get along with us and *vice versa*, but there is no reason for aggression if other tools are taught. The NAP is comprehensive in theory. If parents use problem solving skills and coping techniques, children will learn them too and all possibly future physical altercations can be avoided.

So Remember, Just Don't Hit

I have grown immensely as a person since raising my first son. After 11 and a half years I had another and knew that I was going to be devoted to finding other parenting tools to use in place of spanking, thus coming across the NAP and finding there are so many more parents out there that are not using disrespectful corporal punishment, but instead choosing love and respect. The only way to really learn respect is to be given it as a child. Learning that we do not have to resort to violence but that it is okay to defend yourself is the root of the NAP. Be your own advocate. Be your children's advocate. Violence is not necessary to raise respectful, responsible adults. In fact I may even go further and say the reason there are so many insecure adults is because they were not respected and treated fairly as the person they are. We all own ourselves. No one owns us or owes us and our children deserve to be taught no less.

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