

Whose “Principles” are We Talking About?

Aren't ethics ultimately subjective? Are we just picking the principles that we like? Shouldn't we encourage individuals to find their own relative truth and ethics?

Ethics, or moral principles, are those principles concerned with Right and Wrong behavior.

Many people assume that what's right for one person may not be right for another, and therefor claim that ethics are relative. For example, in the US it's wrong to cut in line, but in China it's normal and accepted (so I've heard). So we often hear “Ethics are simply cultural norms” or “To each his own...”

But consider a “higher crime”, like murder. We're not talking about self-defense or accidents, which have different moral categories. Premeditated, cold-blooded murder. Ask yourself: **is there any place or any time in history when this would be considered right?**

Setting aside what we might do in time-machine scenarios, most of us generally agree that there are not situations when murder is condoned; that it is wrong everywhere for everyone. It's just plain wrong.

But why is murder wrong? What would be the “explain-like-I'm-five” answer? We would say “Murder is wrong because the victim owns himself. His body belongs to him. So nobody else can just choose to destroy it.” If this argument is reasonable and rational to you, we're on the same page. *There are plenty of counter-arguments to this central tenet of self-ownership that we will address elsewhere, but we find that most people are satisfied by this simple explanation.*

But murder is an easy one; it's illegal and discouraged just about everywhere, and we don't get much pushback on that ethical standard. **The purpose of this website, and a study of the NAP, is to identify and act in areas where this concept of self-ownership is openly violated by people and cultures.**

A lot of us here in the West shudder when we hear of female genital mutilation, or child-marriage, or the stoning of the non-religious practiced elsewhere. Although not as universally rejected as murder, we can safely say that these things are simply wrong as well. Even with the consent of the gods and governments of other people, we know in our hearts that these aggressive practices are not only harmful, but morally wrong. And we can make the same argument, that **they are wrong because they violate one's self-ownership.**

To summarize: **our ethical standards arise from our personhood and its inherent self-ownership.** They are self-evident. Not created by governments, not from some “social contract” or norm, and not from any god. **So in answering the question “whose ethics?”, we respond “those with self ownership; humans.”** Ownership of the self and property determines the morality of its treatment or use.

We argue that a person is a person, no matter where or what time they live in, and no matter their age. To initiate aggression towards a person is wrong if they are 100 years old, if they are mentally handicapped, if they lived in ancient times, or across the globe. And our laws generally reflect this: that it’s wrong to aggress against someone because they’re old, or female, or of a different skin color, or of a different religion. According to our laws and cultural norms it’s wrong for us to aggress against anyone... except children.

NAP Parenting is about examining the peculiar relationship between parent and child, and to explore the ethical ramifications therein. We’ve heard every argument under the sun for why one can/should hit or threaten their children, but they all must, in doing so, **redefine children as non-persons.**

We are here to wave the flag of personhood for children. To demonstrate that consistent ethics are fundamental to living a happy and just life, and that these fundamental rights should be extended to all people.

Finally, we are here to offer help and support for people dealing with this epic struggle. We are fighting the momentum of history, and often that of our own behavior or our parents’. To permanently abandon the weapon of aggression against children requires courage and creativity in finding new solutions.

This is the group for whom the sun of equal rights has yet to shine. These families, our friends and neighbors, are the people whose lives we can help the most. Let’s help each other stand up and do the work required for a peaceful future.