

Libertarianism Works in Real World

When you take a libertarian and whittle away everything nonessential — all the philosophy and politics — what is left is the understanding that no one has the right to use violence against those who aren't harming someone else, and no one has the right to violate the property rights of others.

This simple idea is often phrased as “no one has the right to initiate force.” Another name for the initiation of force is “aggression,” so the definition of a libertarian is anyone who rejects aggression.

Even most children understand this concept. It's why they say “He started it!” rather than admitting they threw the first punch. Children instinctively know libertarianism is the right way to live among others, even though they often fail to follow it very well. Come to think of it, the same could be said for most adults.

Property rights violations are sometimes counted as aggression but are more commonly called theft (including fraud, taxation, and fines), trespassing, or vandalism. Either way, they are still wrong.

What's wrong with aggression?

Aggression is offensive force. You have the human right to use force – violence — as long as you use it in defense of yourself or someone else. Violence used in defense is not aggression. Every living thing on Earth has the natural right to violently defend itself. Legislation can't overrule this right, nor can it legitimately forbid or control the tools of defense, be they claws, horns, fangs, knives, or guns.

Most people have been fooled into accepting aggression and property violations when committed by those who claim it's their job. These are the people among us who live by “the political means” where one person wins at the expense of another, rather than by “the economic means” where everyone comes out ahead and feels they got the better end of every deal.

If you use force against someone for not wearing a seat belt or for offending you with their words, you have used aggression. You've done something no one has the right to do. I consider those who do this to be the bad guys, no matter what justifications they use.

Libertarianism works in the real world, every day, without being forced on anyone. The alternative only works when most people have been tricked into believing aggression and theft are the only way to get things done. For a growing number of people, the trick isn't working anymore.