



NEWTON'S LAWS & PEOPLE

A LEARNING METAPHOR FOR MOMENTUM, BARRIERS, SUPPORT, AND CONSEQUENCES

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FIRST: THIS IS A METAPHOR

- Newton's laws describe physical objects. They are not laws of psychology.
- These comparisons are a way to think about momentum, barriers, support, choices, and consequences without reducing human behavior to an equation.

LAW 1 - INERTIA

- Physics: an object at rest remains at rest, and an object in motion remains in motion, unless acted on by a net external force.
- People metaphor: when we are depleted, discouraged, depressed, overwhelmed, or stuck in a routine, starting can feel especially hard.
- Encouragement, self-talk, structure, support, treatment, or one small action may help create momentum.

LAW 2 - FORCE AND BARRIERS

- Physics: $F = ma$. More mass requires more net force for the same acceleration.
- People metaphor: chronic pain, illness, disability, childhood trauma, poverty, discrimination, grief, caregiving, unsafe housing, or limited opportunity can make forward movement require more support.
- Needing more support does not mean someone is weaker.

ASK WHAT SUPPORT ADDS FORCE

- What barrier or load am I carrying?
- What accommodation, treatment, resource, skill, community support, transportation, financial help, advocacy, or rest could reduce the load?
- What is one realistic movement from where I am now?



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LAW 3 - ACTION AND RESPONSE

- Physics: forces occur in equal and opposite pairs.
- People are not objects: human reactions are not guaranteed to be equal or opposite.
- Still, choices affect relationships and can have consequences. Kindness may invite connection but does not guarantee kindness back; rudeness can damage trust but never justifies retaliation.

RESPECT RESISTANCE AND BOUNDARIES

- If someone resists control, intimidation, humiliation, threats, stalking, or abuse, they may withdraw, set boundaries, leave, seek help, or protect themselves.
- That resistance is not a signal to try harder to break them down.
- Respect the boundary. Stop harmful behavior. Love does not require domination.

ACTION - IMPACT - VALUES

- What action am I considering?
- What impact could it have on me and other people?
- Does it respect consent, dignity, safety, and autonomy?
- What choice would be more consistent with the person I want to be?

BUILD STEADY MOMENTUM

- Slow, steady, consistent actions often matter more than dramatic bursts followed by exhaustion.
- Progress may include rest, adaptation, asking for help, changing the environment, or trying again at a different pace.
- Momentum should support a life - not become another standard used to shame yourself.