

# A Short Guide to “Value-Null Antinatalism”

[Antinatalism](#) is the view that bringing new people into existence is morally wrong.

Traditional versions lean on comparisons of pain versus pleasure or on worries about over-population. **Value-null antinatalism** takes a simpler route: it says procreation is wrong **even before** we count pleasures or pains, because the very act of creating a person cannot be morally justified.

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## The three building blocks

Building block	Plain-English meaning
Subject-relativity of value	Only beings who can feel or think can “have” good or bad things happen. No conscious subject → no value at all.
Value-null status of non-creation	If nobody is created, there isn’t “zero happiness” or “zero sadness”; there is simply <b>no value relationship</b> in play—nothing to add, subtract, miss, or regret.
Duty-bearer principle	Every moral duty is owed <b>to</b> a real, identifiable someone. You can’t have a duty to “a possible person” who does not yet exist.

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## The Justification Condition (JC)

**JC:** Intentionally creating a new rights-bearer *S* is permissible **only if** it is necessary to discharge a duty owed **to S**.

Because *S* does not exist prior to conception, no such duty exists.

Therefore **JC is never satisfied**, and voluntary creation is impermissible.

That conclusion arrives **before** we ask whether life will go well or badly, because the missing duty makes the act unjustifiable from the start.

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## Why “good odds” don’t change the verdict

People sometimes say, “But most children grow up happy!”

The value-null view answers:

1. *Happiness* is a good only **after** someone exists to feel it.
2. Before the child is conceived there is no one to benefit, so no duty can arise.
3. Creating the child imposes a lifetime of moral claims (food, safety, health, respect) on the world—claims that need never have existed.

Hence favorable prospects cannot supply the missing duty; they arrive too late.

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## Common objections in everyday language

Objection	Value-null reply
"But humanity will die out if no one has kids."	A duty to an abstract group ("humanity") is not a duty <b>to</b> the person you would create; JC still fails.
"Parents have a right to procreate."	Personal autonomy ends where it imposes a never-consented existence on another being. Rights are symmetrical.
"My child will thank me later."	Gratitude after the fact cannot justify the act; moral authorisation has to come <b>before</b> the imposition.

## What the position doesn't say

- It does **not** argue that life is terrible, meaningless, or full of guaranteed suffering; those are separate claims.
- It does **not** call for ending existing lives.
- It does **not** require complicated probability math or harm–benefit tables.

It rests only on the idea that **creating moral claim-holders without a standing duty to them is unjustifiable**.

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## Take-away

Value-null antinatalism offers a stark, minimal case:

1. If no one exists, no moral value is at stake.
2. Creating someone adds unavoidable moral claims that never needed to arise.
3. Because no duty to that future person exists beforehand, the creation act cannot be justified.

Therefore, choosing not to procreate is always morally permissible—and choosing to procreate is always morally unwarranted.