

Section Two

Ethical Culture/Ethical Humanism starts with individual **HUMAN EXPERIENCE** – the individual in relationship. When asked for an Ethical Humanist metaphysic, I often say that the first three of the Eight Commitments encapsulate our understanding of the nature of reality. Rather than connecting to some eternal truth or understanding, we start with what we know and that is each person's personal, subjective experience. It is an ethical experience between individuals of worth.

Each human being arrives into an objective natural experience that remains for each a subjective human experience of relationship. Even in existential loneliness we take our whole relational experience with us. It is the quality of our relationships that causes psychological pain and sense of disconnection. In the natural, relational reality, each person must decide who they are among others in what they bring to the relationship and that of course is an ethical experience; an experience of choosing how to treat others, including all the individual aspects of life around them. Life is a journey of personal creation and an inter-relational journey of world creation. While each person has a genetic predisposition to certain personality characteristics, that is only the beginning. We actually create ourselves in interaction. That is a learning process in which we are also helping to create the personalities of others.

So, we start our understanding of life by situating ourselves in a relational process that is both personal and objective.

NATURALISM – Ethical Culture/Ethical Humanism accepts that human experience is within the natural experience; everything we know is part of the natural process. We start with natural experience and until we are confronted by evidence to the contrary, we stay there. While it is possible that there is something beyond the natural universe, so far it is either unknowable or actually part of nature. Human beings have created ideas about gods and spiritual forces beyond humans in an effort to explain aspects of human experience but for us there is no supernatural.

The human mind does create marvelous ways of responding to human experience that enhance and expand our appreciation of living. Human consciousness's emotive side can take daily living to sublime levels of connection with the natural experience. A poetic and aesthetic approach allows us to transcend what seems ordinary and add depth, meaning and beauty but all of that remains part of the natural experience.

Reference - appendix page 5.