

Are *you* an **ATHEIST?**



You may *also* be a
HUMANIST!

HUMANISTS
believe in **GOOD.**

THE AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

provides a humanist perspective in strong support of separation of religion from government, preservation and restoration of the environment, protection of civil rights and liberties, and promotion of personal choice regarding introduction of new life, family structure, and death with dignity. Though humanists are not monolithic on every issue—this is a community that encourages tolerance and nurtures diversity—we directly challenge human rights violations and discrimination.



1821 Jefferson Place NW, Washington DC 20036
800.837.3792 | www.americanhumanist.org

ATHEISM has a long history that can be traced back to Ancient Greece. Diagoras of Melos is often referred to as “the first atheist.” Others include Epicurus and Lucretius, who believed that gods existed but did not impact human affairs, a position later described as deism.

Modern atheism did not begin until the Enlightenment. Baron d’Holbach’s *The System of Nature* (1770) was the first publication that explicitly rejected the existence of God. A French-German author and philosopher, d’Holbach is noted for the following humanistic statement:

What, indeed, is an atheist? They destroy delusions which are harmful to humanity in order to lead people back to nature, to reality, to reason. They are thinkers who, having reflected on the nature of matter, its energy, properties and ways of acting, have no need of idealized powers or imaginary intelligences to explain the phenomena of the universe and the operations of nature.

The Pew Research Center indicates that the number of people who identify as atheists in the United States has been rising, modestly but steadily, in recent years. Data from 2014 indicate that 3.1% of American adults identify as atheists when asked about their religious identity, up from 1.6% in 2007.

Some atheists are unaware of the compatibility of atheism and humanism, but the groups overlap to a great extent. A survey of American Humanist Association members found that over two-thirds also identified as atheist, and that more still held convictions consistent with the definition of atheism. Humanism can be the logical next-step for many atheists who wish to move beyond non-belief, toward believing in the powers of rationality and ethical responsibility to our fellow humans.

HUMANISM is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

“...We are each free to believe what we want, and it’s my view that the simplest explanation is: there is no god. No one created our universe, and no one directs our fate. This leads me to a profound realization: There is probably no heaven and no afterlife either. We have this one life to appreciate the grand design of the universe, and for that I am extremely grateful.”

—**Stephen Hawking**, theoretical physicist, cosmologist, author

“A humanist is a person who contends that belief in a supernatural being is not essential and not needed to be a good person and live a good life. A short definition is ‘being good without God.’”

—**The Humanist Community at Harvard**

“Men created gods after their own image, not only with regard to their form but with regard to their mode of life.”

—**Aristotle**

“An honest God is the noblest work of man.”

—**Robert G. Ingersoll**, an American politician and orator who popularized criticism of the Bible and scientific rationalism

But *how* can I be an **ATHEIST** and a **HUMANIST**?

Are you a humanist perhaps without realizing it? If you agree with the following positions cited in Lloyd and Mary Morain’s *Humanism As The Next Step*, you are a humanist as well as an atheist.

- Humans are, in every respect, a part of nature. They are a natural product of evolutionary processes.
- We humans, like all other living things, must rely upon ourselves, upon one another, and upon nature. There is no evidence that we receive support or guidance from any immaterial power with whom we might imagine we commune.
- We are able to meet the challenges of life in constantly more satisfying ways provided we are able to make fuller use of our capacities.
- The meaning of life is that which we assign it. Happiness and self-fulfillment for oneself and others are richly sufficient life goals.
- Moral codes are made by humans. Values and ideals grow out of the experience of various cultures, societies, and individuals.
- The supreme value is the individual human being. Each person, of whatever race or condition, merits equal concern and opportunity.

“By definition, identifying as atheist indicates that one doesn’t have a belief system that includes a god, nothing more. It doesn’t encompass all the views that a person has when it comes to personal values, which is why terms like ‘humanist’ and ‘secular Jew’ are so important. Nonreligious Jews might not believe in a god, but they may base their ethics or culture on elements of Judaism that they find to be meaningful. The same goes for humanists who find that a simple negation of belief in a deity is not enough to live life ethically and fully, and that the progressive values of humanism complement their skepticism.”

—**Roy Speckhardt**, AHA Executive Director, from “Atheist, Humanist, Secular: Why Fight Over Labels,” published at *The Huffington Post*

Atheists, non-theists, and humanists share the common worldview of naturalism, “the philosophical conclusion that the only reality is nature, as gradually discovered by our intelligence using the tools of experience, reason, and science.” Moreover, we work together toward the same goals. For example, the American Humanist Association and the Atheist Alliance International are partners with other organizations in both the Secular Coalition for America and the International Humanist and Ethical Union.

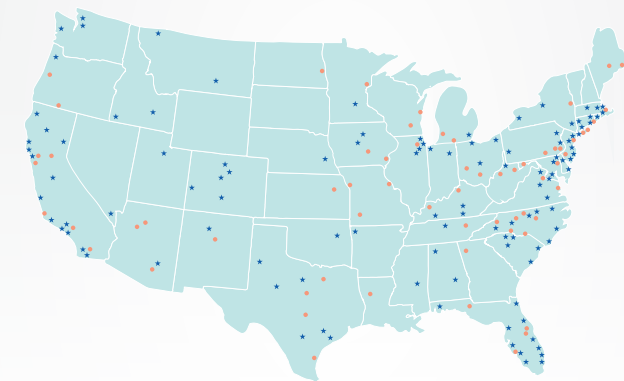
See more at www.americanhumanist.org/paths

Be a part of the *growing*
HUMANIST
MOVEMENT!

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

Membership: New members receive a free book about humanism. All members receive voting privileges, the *Humanist* magazine, and discounts on AHA conferences, seminars, books, literature, and more!

Local Communities: Start or join a local AHA Chapter or Affiliate to connect with humanists in your area and build the humanist community.



Local AHA communities: ★ Chapter ● Affiliate

Education: Enjoy our Center for Education’s innovative online and in-person resources designed for individuals, professionals, and groups across the humanist spectrum.

Advocacy: Help us protect the separation of church and state and advocate for social justice and universal human rights.

Visit us at AMERICANHUMANIST.ORG for details.