



# What is the Foundational Layer of NHE?

By Eric Jacobson

Neohumanism is the foundational layer of our education movement. As such, we must strive for a deeper and more complete understanding of that layer. And as we achieve that understanding, we must then be able to paint a picture of it to the world using our many voices, in so many words, through songs and deeds, artistically and scientifically, but always with a uniform ideology.



This article is one voice, an attempt to prepare the canvas. Though our canvas will be painted with many colors, in the end the picture must be clear and unambiguous. This particular voice is a practical one, born of years of working in Neohumanist education.

I submit to you that the foundational layer of our schools does not vary from place to place, person to person, time to time. There must be at the core, an identifying Idea that is NHE. There can be no compromise on that Idea, and it should transcend the realms of transitory objective reality. Other movements have been founded on an Idea, even a very lofty Idea, but when too much emphasis is placed on methodology, over generations teachers can lose sight of their guiding compass. In time, those movements became more about the objects in the room and how to use them—objects and techniques that become obsolete in the quick march of time. We must therefore, always stress training in the understanding of our foundation, and practice communicating it. If we do so, our ability to implement Neohumanism shall grow and change over time to be better than today. In this way, future generations will be able to know easily what is Neohumanism by observing our schools, and not have to go searching for it like a silver needle in a haystack of old supplies, moth-eaten posters, and rotting lesson plans.

While we may approach that foundational layer of NHE schools from various angles, our understanding of that layer should be a global consensus, a collective unity of understanding. We cannot create a lasting movement wherein each individual has their own idea of the foundational layer. However, we can create a powerful, lasting movement that allows for flexibility in the application of a guiding philosophical truth, Neohumanism, to all the other elements of a school. That application can and should vary according to time, place and person. Such a movement will have locally controlled schools that reflect their people and surroundings in unique ways, while all are illuminated by the same light of Neohumanism.

What then is our foundational layer? What exactly is Neohumanism when it is applied to education? Let me try to answer this question from three separate angles.

- From the angle of major school elements: the personnel, the curriculum, the methodology and pedagogy, the facilities, and the philosophy, it is The Philosophy. What is the guiding principle that influences all the other elements? Through which lens am I observing and evaluating all the other elements?
- From the angle of practical questioning: the whos, whats, hows, wheres, and why of everyday functioning, it is The Great Why. Why am I doing this, why are you doing this, why this decision, why this book, why this policy, why come to school at all?
- From the angle of process: the plan, the implementation, the resources and equipment we will use, the goal we are trying to achieve, it is The Goal. What is our goal for the individuals this school will touch? What is our goal for the institution we shall create?

**First let us look at The Philosophy.** Neohumanism is Sarkar’s answer to Humanism. Humanism has attempted to end global wars and cure the world’s ills through charitable work. But while world war has been avoided, and charity has been applied, other problems have surfaced and increased. This is because Humanism has elevated people above other expressions of the Great Spirit, and it has done so while neglecting the very nature of humanity. Sarkar says that the nature of a human being is physical, mental and spiritual, and that any system or practice or philosophy that neglects one of these is doomed to cause harm and to fail. Through Humanism, we are encouraged to tolerate all and live in peace. But we can never achieve unity and justice as long as we are not seeing the sameness, and therefore continue to act out of narrow minded sentiments. Consciousness is the same in everyone and everything. By cultivating a knowledge of our Consciousness, or spirit, we can not only find ourselves in everyone, but in every living and non-living thing. So, Neohumanism is love for all humanity, animals, plants and non-living things. It is an effort to continue to expand the circle of our love so it includes all, like the circle of love that is the Great Spirit’s. It is based on the understanding that our nature is three fold, and that all three aspects of our nature should be developed: our physical health and well-being, our mental knowledge and power, and our spiritual awareness and understanding. Neohumanism attempts to develop these three aspects using specific guidelines in each area such as: yoga and diet in the physical, developing awakened conscience in the mental, and meditation in the spiritual. So, the simple answer to what is The Philosophy is: Neohumanism is an ever expanding circle of love, and love in action, based on the increasing awareness of one’s spiritual nature.

**Next, let us look at The Great Why.** The ultimate answer to Why is Because. That is, I do it due to The Cause. The only Cause is the Great Spirit. So I can’t help doing it, it is my mission. My mission is to become One with the Great Spirit, and bring others along. My mission as a Neo-Humanist is to see that everyone and everything is a reflection of the Great Spirit. To accomplish this mission, we must build a world that is healthy and happy, just and prosperous, reflecting cardinal human values and goading its citizens to evolve in a positive way. We need Neohumanism! Religion has separated people, and Humanism has caused them to neglect their very nature, and exploit or ignore the rest of life on the planet. State run schools around the world are designed to promote the interests of the state. Therefore, state schools create individuals who are trained to do only certain jobs, or are dominated by narrow sentiments, or are addicted to material consumption, or are without individual initiative, depending on the state in question. If we want to build a better world, we must start at the beginning: build better people. An education movement is needed that is outside the state’s influence. This movement will begin building more universally minded individuals from childhood—individuals who will love all, overcome differences, embrace humanity, and extend that embrace to animal, plant and inanimate objects. Such individuals are desperately needed, ones who think of themselves as part of a larger whole, as missionaries for the whole. Then perhaps, we will not end up with a world of inequities, war, and environmental destruction. So, the simple answer to Why is: The world needs a new system of education to cure it of its current ills.

**Finally, let us look at The Goal.** A river carries many things to the ocean. Ultimately they achieve their destination. But all these achievements depend on one thing, the current. Similarly, we may have many goals for our students, but all of these goals can be easily achieved if the current remains stable and strong. And what is that current? That current is a sense of mission in life. My students, my teachers, and by contact, my community, should develop a sense of mission. Their sense of mission will carry them to all their goals, and will positively affect the world around them. That sense of mission has three parts. The first part is awareness that each one has a gift. A gift implies a Giver. What has been given to you? What are you good at? What do you enjoy? Children must be given the opportunity to explore the many aspects of human intelligence and expression in order to discover their gifts. The second part is to develop that gift. Children must be given the opportunities to develop their innate talents and interests above and beyond the basic curriculum. The third part is overcoming whatever obstacles my lie in the path to offer those gifts to the world. These obstacles may be internal or external. Children must be given the opportunity to use their gifts in a way that benefits the society of life around them. If these three things happen in childhood, something magical occurs. A divine feeling begins to arise in the child’s heart: is it incumbent upon me to know myself, develop and offer my gifts. The world is waiting for me to do it with baited breath! This sense of mission carries young people to all sorts of achievements while at the same time providing them with the self-esteem and resolve not to act self-destructively during their teenage or adult years. Students with a sense of mission continue to learn at the very age when their peers are expending every effort to forget what they have learned. We may have many specific goals for our graduates, goals for their moral education in the ten principles of NHE, goals for their intellectual freedom from geo- and socio-sentiments, goals for specific academic standards. These we need to discuss and clarify. But for the purpose of this article, which is to clarify Neohumanism, we can focus on the simple overriding goal: Our students should develop a sense of Neo-Humanistic mission in life.

I’m sure there are other angles to approach this question of: What is Our Foundational Layer? In the process of clarifying our Neohumanism, let us stay focused on the universal, the unchanging, that which cannot be compromised. All our schools, and their Principals, Teachers, and Directors, should be able to understand and express our philosophy, and I hope the preceding ideas have helped in that department. When we all have a clear and uniform Idea at the core, our application of that Idea through all the aspects of our schools can move with great speed and confidence.

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