

# **RELATIVELY SPEAKING**

*The Philosophy of Individualism*

---

Number 14

Editor: Gordon F. Brown, PhD

May 1982

---

In this month's issue

<b>HERE WE GO AGAIN!</b>	1
<b>BRIEF REVIEW</b>	
What does "SOC" Stand for?	2
<b>TALK BACK</b>	3

## ***HERE WE GO AGAIN!***

The last newsletter was sent in October 1979. Beginning now, we hope to get between 4 and 10 newsletters out annually.

A note of explanation is due those of you who have previously indicated an interest in the newsletters and given your support to their publication lonely to seemingly be forgotten.

First, I personally value your interest—I think that the concept of relativity is the most exciting concept for personal problem solving on the market today. It is not new, but its relevance to present-day problem solving may be greater now than even before.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***Relativity: The Philosophy of Individualism***

\*\*\*\*\*

Now, here is what has happened to the newsletters for the past 2 years. At about the time of that last newsletter, I started writing a series of similar newsletters to my colleagues at Pasadena City College. The concepts were applied to college governance. As some of you might well guess, the initial response was rather emotional and negative, and then the tide turned and focus was more on issues with the emotions highly supportive.

In and around January 1908, I was asked by several of my colleagues to run for Faculty Senate President (that is an official position provide for by the California State Legislature which represents the faculty on a campus to their Board of Trustees). I agreed to run; I ran; and I became the Faculty Senate President for the 1980-81 academic year.

Well, I got excited over the governance issues that arose and simply gave the job my full attention. Those responsibilities are now substantially over, and I am now looking forward to getting these newsletters going again. I hope to hear from those of you who still have an interest that can be rekindled.

\* \* \* \* \*

***A BRIEF REVIEW: WHAT DOES “SOC” STAND FOR?***

“SOC” stands for the “School of Communication,” started about 10 years ago by five individuals—3 teachers from Pasadena City College, 1 probation officer, and 1 attorney. The common element was that all were involved in youth programs in the Los Angeles area. SOC is a non-profit, educational organization incorporated in the State of California. We specialize in the teaching and researching of communication and small-group decision-making skills. SOC has a tax exempt status with the State and Federal governments which makes contributions tax deductible. SOC has no paid employees—all participants are volunteers.

***What is the Relationship Between Youth Work and “Relatively Speaking”?***

Ten years ago, SOC’s main focus was youth work emphasizing the teaching of communication skills to youth (small group, “rap”-type meetings with a behavioral emphasis). Results were significant leading to a research emphasis to identify what it was we were doing (about 30 leaders and 300 youth were involved at that time).

Research efforts led to a theory which describes some of the dynamics people are involved in when solving problems. The principles seemed applicable whether you were talking about problem-solving in a business, family, educational, or religious setting. The youth program gave way to research, and the locus of geographical interest from Los Angeles to the Pasadena area. Corresponding to the research emphasis was an increased interest in establishing a newsletter file of interested persons, and an interest in applying the ideas in social settings.

Currently, we have two Pasadena/Monrovia area youth clubs (two leaders in two different schools; one male club and one female club serving about 20 youth total). We hope to expand the youth program during the next 2 years, but our present emphasis is on research and establishing a newsletter file of interested persons. All of SOC’s activities are performed by volunteers—no one gets a salary. More on this later.

***Are these Programs Committed to “Relativity”?***

No. Relativity is a logical tool—to be used not worshipped. Like any mental pre-organizer, it suggest ways of looking and analyzing problem situations. It tends to give rise to questions that would not otherwise be considered.

\*\*\*\*\*

***Relativity—has something for everyone to disagree with...***

\*\*\*\*\*

A view of relativity initially gives rise to considering alternative views from three perspectives: Relative, Absolute, and Mixed (making the acronym RAM).

The relative model assumes all knowledge is relative to the sensory system and/or past experience of the perceiver. The absolute model works on the assumption that some knowledge (truth) is knowable as it exists independent of the perceiver and thus is applicable to all people for all time. The mixed model combines the two views in favor of achieving emotional rewards but at the expense of logical consistency.

The newsletter is called *Relatively Speaking* simply because it is a catchy title and because this editor considers that the preponderance of current thinking (but not practice) supports the relative position. As used in these newsletters, the term "Relativity" can virtually be interchanged with the term "Individualism," and the term "Absolutism" with "Collectivism." The topics for analysis include but are not limited to: politics, education, international relations, sexual behavior, religion, semantics, law, and governance systems.

\*\*\*\*\*

*...the fewer ideas that men have,  
the surer they are that  
they are right."*

**Clarence Darrow**

\*\*\*\*\*

\* \* \* \* \*

**T A L K   B A C K**

Since we are going to continue our "Talk-Back" section,  
your comments are welcomed!

\* \* \* \* \*

***Who Pays for the Newsletters?***

Volunteer donations pay for the newsletter, which costs about \$80 for paper, printing, and postage to the 300-400 on our mailing list. The newsletters are not dependent on donations—two of the participants are prepared to underwrite the difference between the costs and donations. The donations are primarily an indication of the service rendered by the newsletters as perceived by the recipients.

\* \* \* \* \*