# 7. Relations.

## 7.1 Causal relations. The Nature of a Relationship

While all relationships tell about the correspondence between two variables, there is a special type of relationship that holds that the two variables are not only in correspondence, but that one *causes* the other. This is the key distinction between a simple ***correlational relationship*** and a ***causal relationship***.

A correlational relationship simply says that two things perform in a synchronized manner. For instance, there has often been talk of a relationship between ability in math and proficiency in music. In general people who are good in one may have a greater tendency to be good in the other; those who are poor in one may also tend to be poor in the other.

If this relatioship is true, then we can say that the two variables are correlated. But knowing that two variables are correlated does not tell us whether one *causes* the other. We know, for instance, that there is a correlation between the number of roads built in Europe and the number of children born in the United States. Does that mean that if we want fewer children in the U.S., we should stop building so many roads in Europe? Or, does it mean that if we don't have enough roads in Europe, we should encourage U.S. citizens to have more babies, of course not. (At least, I hope not).

While there is a relationship between the number of roads built and the number of babies, we don't believe that the relationship is a *causal* one. This leads to consideration of what is often termed the ***third variable problem***. In this example, it may be that there is a third variable that is causing both the building of roads and the birthrate, that is causing the correlation we observe. For instance, perhaps the general world economy is responsible for both. When the economy is good more roads are built in Europe and more children are born in the U.S. The key lesson here is that you have to be careful when you interpret correlations. If you observe a correlation between the number of hours students use the computer to study and their grade point averages (with high computer users getting higher grades), you

*cannot* assume that the relationship is *causal*: that computer use improves grades. In this case, the third variable might be socioeconomic status -- richer students who have greater resources at their disposal tend to both use computers and do better in their grades. It's the resources that drives both use and grades, not computer use that causes the change in the grade point average.

**Causality** (also referred to as **causation**) is the relation between an event (the *cause*) and a second event (the *effect*), where the second event is understood as a consequence of the first.

In common usage, causality is also the relation between a set of factors (causes) and a phenomenon (the *effect*). Anything that affects an effect is a factor of that effect. A direct factor is a factor that affects an effect directly, that is, without any intervening factors. (Intervening factors are sometimes called "intermediate factors".) The connection between a cause(s) and an effect in this way can also be referred to as a *causal nexus*.

Though the causes and effects are typically related to changes or events, candidates include objects, processes, properties, variables, facts, and states of affairs; characterizing the causal relation can be the subject of much debate.

The philosophical treatment on the subject of causality extends over millennia. In the Western philosophical tradition, discussion stretches back at least to Aristotle, and the topic remains a staple in contemporary philosophy.

A **causal relationship** is when one variable *causes* a change in another variable. These types of relationships are investigated by experimental research in order to determine if changes in one variable actually result in changes in another variable.

Causes are often distinguished into two types: Necessary and sufficient. A third type of causation, which requires neither necessity nor sufficiency in and of itself, but which contributes to the effect, is called a "contributory cause. **Contributory causes:**

A cause may be classified as a "contributory cause", if the presumed cause precedes the effect, and altering the cause alters the effect. It does not require that all those subjects which possess the contributory cause experience the effect. It does not require that all those subjects which are free of the contributory cause be

free of the effect. In other words, a contributory cause may be neither necessary nor sufficient but it must be contributory.

J. L. Mackie argues that usual talk of "cause", in fact refers to **INUS** conditions (insufficient but non-redundant parts of a condition which is itself unnecessary but sufficient for the occurrence of the effect). For example, a short circuit as a cause for a house burning down. Consider the collection of events: the short circuit, the proximity of flammable material, and the absence of firefighters. Together these are unnecessary but sufficient to the house's burning down (since many other collections of events certainly could have led to the house burning down, for example shooting the house with a flamethrower in the presence of oxygen etc. etc.). Within this collection, the short circuit is an insufficient (since the short circuit by itself would not have caused the fire, but the fire would not have happened without it, everything else being equal) but non-redundant part of a condition which is itself unnecessary (since something else could have also caused the house to burn down) but sufficient for the occurrence of the effect. So, the short circuit is an INUS condition for the occurrence of the house burning down.

## Process theories

Some theorists are interested in distinguishing between causal processes and non-causal processes (Russell 1948; Salmon 1984). These theorists often want to distinguish between a process and a pseudo-process. As an example, a ball moving through the air (a process) is contrasted with the motion of a shadow (a pseudo-process). The former is causal in nature while the latter is not.

Salmon (1984) claims that causal processes can be identified by their ability to transmit an alteration over space and time. An alteration of the ball (a mark by a pen, perhaps) is carried with it as the ball goes through the air. On the other hand an alteration of the shadow (insofar as it is possible) will not be transmitted by the shadow as it moves along.

These theorists claim that the important concept for understanding causality is not causal relationships or causal interactions, but rather identifying causal processes. The former notions can then be defined in terms of causal processes.

## Systemic causality

Systemic causation, because it is less obvious, is more important to understand. A systemic cause may be one of a number of multiple causes. It may require some special conditions. It may be indirect, working through a network of more direct causes. It may be probabilistic, occurring with a significantly high probability. It

may require a feedback mechanism. In general, causation in ecosystems, biological systems, economic systems, and social systems tends not to be direct, but is no less causal. And because it is not direct causation, it requires all the greater attention if it is to be understood and its negative effects controlled. Above all, it requires a name: systemic causation.

### 7.2 Other types of relations:

Why are we so attached to our parents and siblings? Why people trust their spouses more than anyone else? What attracts us towards just one colleague, while we keep distance from others? It's because we share some kind of relation and bonding with all these people. Common interests, likes, dislikes, blood, bonding, and attraction are some factors that keep us glued to some people compared to others. As such, we establish relationships with many people, like family members, neighbors, cousins, partners, spouses, friends, and so on. Remember, the experience of love is the same, what changes are our preferences. Thus, the kind of love we receive from different relationships classifies them into different categories. Find out the various kinds of relationships that exist by glancing through the following text.

### Different Kinds Of Relationships

### Family Relationships

Family relationships involve people to whom you are related in some way or the other. They usually include people whom you live with in your household, your immediate family, and your distant relatives. As such, you share a strong bond with your mother, father, and siblings. Further, you are linked to your uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents, and other distant family relations. The bond that you share with your family plays a major role on your overall being. While some people are closely attached to their relations, others prefer to maintain distance from the same members. As such, these affect a person in numerous ways.

### Friendly Relationships

Relations that we share with our friends, peers, fellow workers, and other acquaintances are termed as friendly relationships. Next to our family, these friendly people play a major role in directing our lives towards a correct or wrong track. Further, the type of bonding we maintain with our associates and friends draft us into the person we are. Though many people depend on these relationships

for taking important decisions of our lives, each of us is affected by them in some way.

## Romantic Relationships

We establish relationships with many different types of people, our family members, neighbors, co-workers, friends, spouses, significant others, etc. We've been taught that the love is different depending on who we're loving. We even have different names for it such as agape for spiritual love and Eros for sexual love. The emotion of love is the same regardless of who you feel it for. You want them to be happy, you accept them as they are, and you appreciate some aspect about them.

When and how we express love is determined by preferences. You may prefer to spend more time with someone who is outgoing, rather than quiet, or more serious rather than silly. You may be more physically attracted to someone who is short rather than tall, or younger rather than older. There are an endless number of qualities that we might prefer over others. And those preferred qualities determines who, when, and how we express our love.

A romantic relationship is one where you have a deep feeling of connection to the other person. All systems are go. You accept them as they are, want them to feel good, and deeply appreciate who they are. And vice versa. They fit in with most, if not all, of your preferences in a life partner, i.e.; personality, life goals, beliefs and value systems, etc. One of the ways you desire to express your love for them through your sexuality. Sex is the one key element that distinguishes a romantic relationship from all other types.

A romantic relationship is the most beautiful and rewarding yet complex relationship that one can indulge in. Boyfriends, girlfriends, and spouses are the people who share such relations. These relationships are filled up with lots of love, trust, and understanding as these are the parameters that are responsible for the success or failure of the same. Depending upon the relationship, the two partners can either build a healthy bond or end the relationship in a disaster, if they do not handle the ongoing challenges properly.

## Professional Relationships

People develop successful, productive, and satisfying relationships at their workplaces as well. Colleagues, clients, seniors, customers, and subordinates are

some people with whom these relationships are likely to trigger off. Whether it is clearing an interview, increasing your chances of getting a promotion, or expanding your spiritual awareness on a personal level, work relationships are of paramount importance. Because if you do not meet the right people or build successful relations, you'll not be able to accomplish your dreams and goals. Thus, apart from knowing these people, it is highly significant to create healthy networks for their continuous help and support.

**Pet Relationships**

These days, owning a pet has become a necessity for almost every family. In fact, pets have become a part of our lives, as the kind of relationship we share with them largely influences our well being and happiness. You can find kids playing and snuggling with cats and dogs to find pleasure and pass their leisure time. For adults, these family pooches serve as companions, especially for disable individuals and people with special needs. Pets bring a smile on the faces of millions of traumatized and emotionally challenged children and lonely senior citizens. That's not all. By caring for the emotional and physical needs of these furry friends, we contribute to a healthy society.

These are a few types of relationships that we human beings are involved with, in our daily lives. With some love, care, affection, and commitment, these different relationships can make us happy and relaxed.