

"DEDUCTIVE REASONING"

PHILOSOPHY III

Deductive reasoning: The sum of the parts is MORE than just some of its parts!

As we saw in Philosophy II, inductive reasoning goes from the small to the large. That is, it makes observations about individual parts and, based on that knowledge, draws conclusions about the whole. **Deductive reasoning** turns that thinking around. It starts with major premises and, based on those ideas, deduces the truth about each individual part of the whole.

For example, let's assume that we accept, as our major premise, that telling a lie is wrong. Once we decide that this premise is "true," it automatically follows, by deductive reasoning, that it is wrong if you lie, if the man down the street lies, if the leader of a foreign country lies, if **anyone** lies. The basic premise applies to everything, everywhere at every time – without exception.

Many of the premises upon which we base our deductive reasoning are universally accepted because they are considered "self-evident truths." These are the axioms which must merely be taken for granted because they cannot or need not be proved.

One of the most commonly-known premises is that "all men are created equal," a statement of fact which formed the very basis of our Constitution. The founders of our country recognized the validity of this precept through an inborn sense of morality and humanity. They did not feel they had to "prove" it.

Other premises are arrived at through long, careful analysis and study. For instance, scientists formulated a theory about "black holes" based on basic premises regarding gravity and mass. For many years, they never found a single example of such a phenomena, but that did not lessen their belief in the premise. If the over-riding principles were correct, then the premise HAD to be correct. Finally, they were able to find the physical evidence which verified the premise.

The single most important premise of chiropractic philosophy is that **there is an intelligent order to the universe, which gives to matter its properties and actions, thus maintaining its existence**. It is becoming equally accepted by the "new" quantum physics, astronomy, biology, and many other sciences. No longer can anyone study the universe and believe it, and each part of it, is random. There is an order which organizes it and allows it to survive and continue.

Once we accept this major premise – that the universe as a whole is guided by an intelligent order – we may logically conclude that each part of the universe is also guided by that intelligence. This applies to everything, everywhere, at every time.

Just as there are weaknesses with inductive reasoning, there can be flaws in deductive reasoning. The most obvious danger comes in formulating and accepting the major premises. The assumptions must either be so self-evident that no reasonable person could possibly object (*all men are created equal*), or one which can be proven by clinical studies or physical observations (*black holes exist*). These premises cannot be adopted merely as matters of blind faith which fly in the face of all evidence (*the earth is flat – a premise which once was considered a known "fact"*).

To arrive at truth, it is best to use a combination of both deductive and inductive logic. Starting with deductive reasoning, we can formulate a basic premise upon which all else can follow. Then, through clinical studies and inductive reasoning, we can verify the accuracy of that premise.

Unlike much of modern medicine, chiropractic uses this ideal combination. It starts with the major premise that there is order to the universe. Spreading out from that point, we can assume that each part of the universe, including the human body, is also organized in an orderly, intelligent fashion.

Based on this premise, chiropractic was developed as a way to minimize the interference to this natural order in the human body. But chiropractic does not stop there. It also uses the inductive method to study individuals and relate those specific cases to the "bigger" picture. Its extensive clinical and survey research has helped to prove, in concrete and scientifically acceptable terms, both the efficacy of chiropractic and the truth behind chiropractic philosophy.

But, for chiropractors, the emphasis is on "**The Big Idea**," the major premise in which all knowledge and conclusions are rooted. For it is only when we see that **big idea** clearly that the truths about each one of us, and every living thing in the universe, can be known.