

The Option Method Institute

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

www.ChooseHappiness.net

Applying the Option Method personally

The Option Method compared to other therapies

Arguments against happiness

From

November 11, 1995 Lecture

Bruce Di Marsico

Outline

Applying the Option Method personally:

- You feel what you think you ought to feel.
- Once you understand why you get unhappy, you can decide if you want to be unhappy.
- The Option Method is not a method for people who are trying to get themselves to believe in happiness.
- Being afraid of what you don't want is no substitute for loving what you want.
- You are in control of your emotions by what you believe.

The Option Method in comparison to other therapies:

- No other therapy exists to help people to be happy.
- Other therapies propose an ideal way of living.

Arguments against happiness

- Some people give meaning to happiness so that they wouldn't want to be happy; this is really unhappiness.

Introduction

In this lecture, Bruce Di Marsico explains how the Option Method works in the most general terms and how it compares to other therapies.

He discusses how beliefs create emotions—in response to any event, you feel what you believe to be the “right” emotion to feel. If you are feeling a way you don’t like, it is because you believe you ought to feel that way.

Nothing needs to be believed to be happy—happiness is already your state, but you are not in touch with it when you are believing that you ought to feel a way you don’t like feeling.

All other therapies propose a way of life that is supposed to be equivalent to happiness—for example, to be “well-adjusted”, “more prosperous”, or “a good person”. Only the Option Method exists to help people be happy *as they are*.

Some people argue that if they were happy, they would be bad for themselves. Happiness is defined by the absence of whatever doesn’t belong there. Any “happiness” that was in any way something you didn’t want, would be unhappiness under another name.

READINGS

Applying the Option Method Personally

You people want to be happy in so far as you can stand it, and you're willing to be unhappy in so far as you can afford it, and don't tell me that anything else is true or you're all liars.

You're willing to be happy as if it was some kind of . . . , okay, I'll have a little bit of Schnapps, just a wee drop, but I will only float in churches and I'll never dance down the street. You'll only have as much as unhappiness as you can stand and you're willing to have as much unhappiness as you think you can afford, and ah, there's the rub.

Because what happens is once you get unhappy you get stupid. Well, you do. And before you know it you start trying to make unhappiness the best thing in the world. You want to say how it was needed and how it was necessary and how it in fact helped you get your feet down the street. It kept them on the ground so you didn't float because you don't want to be unrealistic.

Come on! Face it! "This is real life. This is something to be unhappy about. Oh well, wouldn't you (*be unhappy about it.*)" So it's always a lot of fun when we realize oh, when we're not unhappy about a thing, it's like, "yeah, so what? I don't want to hear about that. I'm done with that." When I'm not unhappy about it I don't want to understand why I was unhappy about it. What's that got to do with anything?

We quickly are willing to drop our past when we know it doesn't serve us at all. But when you believe you're living down to an image, like, "this is the kind of thing I got unhappy about or I get unhappy about", you get unhappy about it. So to make a long definition even a shorter one, you feel what you think you ought to feel.

That's all that says up there. You feel what you think you ought to feel. Whatever that "ought to" means, there's lots of ways of saying what you ought to be feeling. Like what you think is natural for you to feel, what you think is necessary to feel. Even what you think is unfortunately necessary for you to feel, you'll feel.

You'll even feel what you're afraid you're going to feel, right. You can't be afraid you're going to get unhappy. Gotcha already, gotcha, alright.

So now the Option Method is a method to question the middle beliefs since they cause results that people don't like. In so far as someone says, "gee, I'm sick and tired of being unhappy", I'll be glad to help them look at then how they got unhappy and why they get unhappy.

Once they look at how and why they get unhappy they're free to decide whether they really believe at that point that that is for them, that it is what they want, that it really does suit them. If they don't believe it does, then they won't be unhappy.

If they no longer believe that they have to be unhappy about a certain thing, they won't be unhappy about it. Now don't try to jump to a generalization. I said a certain thing. What I mean is rotten fish, flat tires, bad checks, losing your jobs. I mean specific certain things. I don't mean oh wow, the universe is good and great and nothing in it to be unhappy about because that's not what I mean.

The Option Method is not a method for people who are trying to get themselves to believe in happiness, but if you truly see that there's no evil and you truly see that there is nothing to be unhappy about and you mean all things generally and in all things particular, well then fine. Then you are an instant mystic and can be instantly happy because there really is no reason why you can't be.

It would seem to me the only reason why we're not all immediately unhappy is because of some beliefs or some belief, one belief, "too good to be true" How about that? Another belief, "takes time, I'm slow. I'm merely human." Things like that.

But I would suppose there'd be no reason why if we all of us individually, personally, for ourselves and ourselves alone didn't think anything could ever make us unhappy that we would ever be happy again. I haven't had the joy much of seeing that, but I've seen a lot of misery on people demanding that of themselves.

One of the things about the Option Method, which I keep not saying what the Option Method is, is that people who experience their first joys of it and are no longer unhappy about something quickly expect that to generalize and to come everywhere. I find that indeed they are unhappier about things than they were before sometimes because they didn't learn, but that only shows us something that we'll find out in the Option Method that there are people who get unhappy about making mistakes and learning.

There are people who are impatient when it's time to learn. They're probably people who curse when they make a mistake on the typewriter and hit themselves on the head when they a mistake on the piano and God knows what they do when they make a mistake sexually. You may never see them again the rest of your life.

Okay. We only know that people hate making mistakes; it is one of the things that they hate. One of the things that I caution my students and my clients about the Option Method is that hating falsehood and hating mistakes is no substitute for loving truth. Hating error is no substitute for loving accuracy. Being afraid to fail is no substitute for wanting to succeed and for loving success.

So anyway, people quickly fall back into unhappiness because they're ashamed or embarrassed that they got unhappy again, but they don't call it that. I've rarely met a person who was embarrassed by something, admit to the embarrassment, even to themselves. They just avoid it.

There are people who will never talk about it, but there are men who will never go to a lady physician and there are women who will never go to a male physician because of an embarrassment. There are people who will die of rectal cancer because of embarrassment. Embarrassment kills, but it also is the biggest secret.

So people don't often tell themselves that what they are is embarrassed. They just act on it, but that doesn't mean that they're not unhappy and they're not greatly unhappy and very unhappy because now they're failing at the thing that they now learned they're in control of. Well no, they didn't learn they're in control of their happiness.

You haven't learned, unless you've learned through the Option Method, you haven't learned in what way you're in control of your emotions. You're not in any more control of your emotions than you've ever been. You're controlling them the exact same way you've always controlled them, but there have always been people who claimed from childhood that they're not in control of their emotions. There are always people who complain that they are over-controlled, etc.

Well, there are people who are always worrying about what they're doing to themselves. But you're not in control in your emotions any more than you've ever been or any less than you've ever been. You're in control of them in the same way, by what you believe.

The only reason it might work, see, once you've learned that you don't have

to be unhappy with this and you're not unhappy about that and you've learned that there are lots of things that you just don't have to be unhappy about, one of the things that might work if you found yourself getting unhappy is to say, "oh, I don't believe in that anymore", see, 'I don't believe in it' is the important part. Or "that's not me" or some version of that which is the way of telling yourself that you don't believe it's necessary for you to feel this way, but it has to be you personally, not "it is taught or it is believed by others that I don't have to be unhappy about this."

The Option Method in comparison to other therapies

Okay. So here we go. The Option Method is like this. A person is unhappy and they come . . . oh, the reason the Option Method was developed is although every form of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis exists with its own rationale, none of them exist to help people to be happy.

But there isn't a patient yet who a psychiatrist, a psychoanalyst, or a psychologist hasn't seen, who they haven't gone to, because they were unhappy.

All patients go into therapy because they're unhappy. All therapists view their therapy on a totally different rationale. Never to deal with what they're unhappy about; only with the normal unhappinesses and normal happinesses and they deal with either adjusting or contracting or realizing or you name it, some other system of reality that they think is the ideal way for this person to live.

Every one of these so called therapies are indeed religions. They all propose an ideal way of living, a standard, an ideal, a norm and it doesn't matter. They all disagree with each other's norms and they have fun doing that.

You can go to a convention of 100 Freudians and you'll have 102-102 interpretations of what Freud meant about something. That's fun. That's all part of it. The real meaning of the convention is to teach other how to make more money; how to improve your practice. "What's the latest test?" Let's say that's certainly true among psychologists. Okay.

So the point is that while every so called therapist has his rationale for therapy, they don't have the rationale for helping a person simply to be less unhappy and to be more happy and let them make their own decisions about their life. What instead they do is they have an ideal of what they think a human being could be--and to see if they can help and they're true humanitarians. I'm not putting them down in any way. They're trying to see if they can help this poor, victimized soul to somehow emerge to this newer, better life.

And up until recently that was the most beautiful thing I could have ever heard for an ideal for helping people and I'm sure you, too; all of you. What could have been nicer?

The thing is it never worked because the newer, better life was their idea of a newer and better and healthier—let's say put in the word healthy in some cases, etc., but never the word happier by the way. Freud himself said the most he thought he could achieve is to bring a person from neurotic unhappiness to normal unhappiness. That's about one of the only times he talks about unhappiness.

So that was one of the goals. Well, why wouldn't it be? The goals of psychoanalysis wouldn't be any different than the goals of what anybody thought, "What's the healthiest kind of person to be?" Somebody asked me if I didn't have the Option Method – who was that? It was a cute question. There, Richard, okay.

If I didn't have the Option Method and there was no Option Method, what would I have turned to? Well, I'll tell you. What I would have turned to is what I did. I would have turned to Catholicism and Buddhism, no form of therapy. I was already a psychoanalyst and I was quite acquainted with every kind of system there was and if I ever wanted help, my form of help was to be religious.

So it's an un-answer because it's not comparing it to any other therapies, but it is because I see Catholicism as a therapeutic religion and Buddhism as a therapeutic philosophy. In other words, if a person wanted to be happy you could find a pathway through those to search for it. At least they were to me the most promising till I knew that that wasn't necessary.

It wasn't necessary to find happiness. Why? Because there was no problem with happiness. We had no problem with being happy. We knew when to be happy. No one ever told us what to be happy about. We knew when to be happy! We had plenty to be . . . whenever we were happy we knew.

My problem and everyone else's problem was unhappiness. Unhappiness is the problem; not happiness. Okay. So, I started to look at everybody. What does everybody call a problem? Well people all want to be happy. They're all unhappy. They want to be at least less unhappy.

Arguments against happiness

Now I know many, many, many miserable people who don't want to be happy. That's very threatening. I often tell my students, "it's like this, if I had a

person who came in and they were afraid of spiders, I don't think I'd say to them, 'okay, listen, when I'm done with you, you will be so not afraid of spiders you'll be able to eat them.' I don't think that's very promising or much of an offer for help. Okay. Even though I might think that's a great idea, you see, that's not the point. There are some people who give meaning to happiness and in so far as they give it that meaning, they certainly wouldn't want to be happy. Some of the meanings they give to happiness are really another form of unhappiness, that's all--somehow being something against their will. But that's unhappiness under another name.

So unhappiness really goes under two names which I discovered. It goes under the name unhappiness and all its kindred spirits from anger to hatred to annoyance to fear to rage to depression. From the slightest negative bad feelings to the most intense negative bad feelings. That's all unhappiness. And then a whole gamut of some things that we would call happiness also fit under what some people consider unhappy.

So the Option Method has this as its start. Someone, a human being who makes up their own mind who says, "I want to be at least less unhappy than I am now." They will certainly not ask for perfect happiness. That's stupid. But they've heard at least that people maybe have problems and something in themselves they could change and be happier or less unhappy. They've heard of phobias and fears and they've heard of manias and things like that. So they've heard of therapies and ways of help to be happier or ways of help that they have interpreted as ways to be less unhappy or happier.

So, that's all you need--thinking human being. We can't use dead ones and we can't use imbeciles. They're perfectly fine, right? They're not making any judgments to question. In so far as they are, okay, then maybe we can help them.

Questions for Reflection

Ask yourself this sequence of questions repeatedly, and write the answers:

- What is something someone else gets unhappy about?
- Why do they believe they need to be unhappy in response to that event?
- Whatever the answer is, why do they believe that? (repeat 2x)

There is a difference between being afraid of what you don't want, and loving what you want. For example, being afraid of pain is not the same as loving well-being. Being afraid of being alone is not the same as loving the company of others.

- What are some fears you have? (for example, fear of poverty, fear of a car accident leading to injury)
- What actions do you take on the basis of these fears? (for example, working long hours, buckling your seatbelt)
- What might someone love that would motivate them to take the same actions? (for example, love of prosperity, love of health)

Consider some therapies that you have participated in.

- How did they propose an “ideal way of living”, or “the right way to be”?

Meditation for the Week

Are there ways you believe you would be *that you wouldn't want*, if you were happy? For example, unsafe, foolish, or bored? If you wouldn't want to be that way, then your happiness doesn't need to be that way.