

The Option Method Institute

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

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Being tempted by what we want less

Staying in touch with what we want more

From

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Bruce Di Marsico

Outline

Wanting is more important to us than getting

- Wanting is more important to us than getting, because getting what we want is not guaranteed.
- Wanting is our best hope for eventually getting something close to what we want.
- "Needs" are wanting, combined with unhappiness.
- To stop the pain of needing, we could stop wanting, and so we become afraid of giving up wanting.

Our lesser desires tempt us to give up our greater desires

- Our degree of unhappiness is in proportion to the temptation to stop wanting.
- Unhappiness is believed to be necessary to counteract desire for what is wanted *less*.

We want to stay in touch with what we want *more*

- If you actually want *more*, what you only *thought* you wanted less, then there is no problem.
- Unhappiness is used to stay in touch with what we want *more*.
- Unhappiness uses fear instead of desire.

Introduction

In this lecture, Bruce Di Marsico discusses more about how unhappiness is used (unnecessarily) to stay in touch with desires.

Wanting is more important to us than getting, because getting what we want is not guaranteed. For example, if I am single, and I want to be in a love relationship, my only hope of finding a partner is my wanting to find a partner, and getting a substitute (a platonic friend, for example) does not diminish my wanting.

"Needs" are wanting, combined with unhappiness. To stop the pain of needing, we could stop wanting, and so we become afraid of giving up wanting. For example, if I am single, and I feel that I need to be in a love relationship, then if I am not in a love relationship, I feel the apparent dilemma of either being single and needing a love relationship, or of giving up my wanting to be in a love relationship.

Our lesser desires tempt us to give up our greater desires. For example, my desire to not go on failed romantic dates tempts me to give up my desire for a love relationship. Our degree of unhappiness is in proportion to the temptation to stop wanting, and so the more failed romantic dates I go on, and the more unpleasant they are, the more unhappy I will be, as I become more strongly tempted to give up my desire for a love relationship.

Unhappiness is believed to be necessary to counteract desire for what is wanted less. So, for example, fear of loneliness can be used to counteract the desire to stop going on failed romantic dates, which is wanted, but wanted *less* than the desire to find a love partner.

If I discover that I actually find going on failed romantic dates truly more unpleasant than the prospect of not having a love partner, then there is no problem: I stop dating. Unhappiness is used to stay in touch with what we want more, but uses fear (in the example above, of loneliness) instead of desire (in the example above, for a love partner).

READINGS

Wanting is more important than getting

Wanting in itself is much more important than getting. What is it you really want? To be happy. So why go through unhappiness to get what you want in order to be happy? Perhaps by the time we're done you'll see more clearly why any of this has to even be talked about.

Wanting is more important than getting because getting is not guaranteed, and the only key you have to *getting* is to continue wanting. The getting is the goal, your only hope is to continue wanting.

For instance, I could be married to you and I want us to be closer, and I put us through hell. Before you know it, we stop wanting to be closer and I look at you and you don't seem very attractive. My relationship with you is not as painful. What did I do? The only way out was to stop wanting. I loved somebody, I wanted to be closer, and before you know it I'm not with them anymore.

You can't really stop wanting, exactly. But you can force yourself to where the choice becomes (but only because you coupled the wanting with unhappiness), do you keep up the unhappiness or stop wanting? And sometimes you *do* appear to stop wanting and then start the whole pattern all over again with somebody else.

As prerequisite preparation for what I want, being assured *that* I want is much more important to me than actually getting what I want, because as long as I keep in touch with *that* I want things, and I keep my wanting alive (even though I'm not getting it), I have the hope for getting something "just as good" in the future then—but I couldn't begin to get *anything* if I didn't start by wanting it.

All of these wants that are used with unhappiness are what we'll "needs", for convenience. They start off perhaps purely as a desire, as a want, but once we play the unhappiness game with them, then we're into needs and fear.

What we do to stop needing is to stop wanting, and so we become really afraid of giving up. In a self-defeating situation where my unhappiness is just not getting me what I want, what's really going on is fear of giving up. That's why we use the unhappiness, even though it apparently doesn't pay off, because it is paying off in a larger sense: at least I'm not selling myself out. "The hell with you, I'll leave you, but I won't sell out by stopping wanting what I want." I'll screw myself left and right but I will not stop wanting what I want, because if I stop wanting what I wanted I'd even be screwing myself more.

Example: A job with an unpleasant commute

An example: My job requires me to work at things I don't like or with circumstances I don't like. To keep the job, and the money that comes from it, which is the benefit of the job, I must sacrifice other good things. Since it is attractive to me to not give up the other good things, I fear that if I want to keep my job that I'm also kind of wanting to give up those good things—which I also want. It looks to me like I'm wanting bad things for myself. I don't like the circumstances of my job, yet I want the money; I'm afraid that I want money more than I want happiness. Sometimes it starts to seem to me that I hate the job, and yet I keep going, and I'm also afraid that I want to quit the job more than I want the money, which I really want to be happy, too.

The more I am tempted to stop wanting what I want most (and what I want most is clearly the money, which was my motive for taking the job in the first place) then the more unhappy I become about the conditions that tempt me to quit. Therefore I become afraid of my desire to give up wanting the money as much as I do, and afraid of my desire to give up wanting better conditions as much as I do, because either one would relieve my pain. If I could just give up wanting the money I could quit and I wouldn't have any more pain, if I could give up saying, "I want better conditions," that would be okay too, and I would have no more pain. But I want to want what I want, and I can't give up my wanting, so I have to have pain, I believe.

I become more unhappy and eventually drive myself away from the whole situation. Since I want to keep wanting money, I want all the help I can get to motivate myself to go to work to get that money, and I resent anything in my job that decreases my motivation: lousy coworkers, long hours, traffic, whatever. I'm unhappy about anything that would make it easier for me to not want what I want. The reason I resent the things that go on in my job, and I hate them so much, is because they're making it very easy for me to stop wanting that job, and I'm scared of not wanting what I *do* want.

My degree of unhappiness will be in proportion to my temptation to stop wanting. The more there is that motivates me away from my greater want, the more repellant factors there are connected to my goal, the more I fear I will give up my goal in order to counteract the repellant factors. My unhappiness will be in proportion to what I think is required to counteract the other unhappiness I use to want or not want the other factors associated with the greater desire. This associated unhappiness is what is meant by, and constitutes, the temptation to give up the greater desire.

More specifically: I don't like traveling to work in the morning. The distance, the time, the traffic, etc. are things I'm unhappy about. I otherwise like my job and the money inducement. The traveling factor constitutes a temptation to not go to work. In order to assure myself that I keep wanting to go to work, I become afraid of what will happen if I don't go to work. Now I institute another fear to counteract it: I become afraid of losing my job, I become afraid of poverty in order to get me out of bed in the morning, to go through that traffic that I hate, in order to get to my job. And I only go through the fear, and I only start fearing losing my job, because I've started tempting myself to quit it, because I've gotten unhappy.

The whole idea of not traveling in traffic, that's a temptation, a slight one maybe, but nonetheless it is removing some of my motivation to go to work, and we're beginning with the premise here that what I'm most scared of is giving up wanting what I want more than anything. And the commute is eroding my desire; it is eroding my wanting to go to work. So in order to assure that I'll keep on wanting to go to work, I become afraid of what will happen if I don't go to work, for instance, by means of a fear of poverty.

Staying in touch with what we want more

What you are scared of is that you would lose your wanting, like you lost your getting. That's what you won't let happen, that's why you keep your unhappiness alive.

And here's what I mean by the traffic jam making it easier for me to not want my job: it is something I'm unhappy about, and it's connected and associated with my job so that's one of the factors of my job. What I'm unhappy about could, of course, be another factor at work, such as my boss.

In order to stop the pain, we stop wanting. In the example that I just gave you, it becomes so painful that a way out is to just give up the wanting. In terms of a job, you can make it so miserable that when we get fired or when we quit we say, "Whew, at least I don't have to go through that traffic anymore." And I can stop wanting the job.

We're starting with the premise that I want the job more than I want to quit it. Now, if I want to quit it more than I want to keep it, then there's no problem, and that's not our example—that's a nice calm, easy way: "The job is not worth it, so I'm not taking it", or "I quit." One doesn't go through a whole lot. That solves it. I'm staying in touch with what I want more.

The idea is to stay in touch with what you want more. That's what the unhappiness is all about: to make sure that we keep wanting what we want *more*, that we won't go ahead and want *less*.

Any time there is a fear, there is a corresponding wanting of something that looks very similar to the thing that is feared, or almost as good, or almost as attractive. The *desire* to quit work is very similar to the *fear* of quitting work and the *fear* of losing the job and the *fear* of poverty. In order to keep the desire to quit work from overriding your desire for money, you used the fear of poverty.

If a good thing, for instance a job, requires giving up, for example, the conveniences of traveling, in order to have the job I will have to want to give up those conveniences, and I fear that I won't want to do that. I fear that I may just not want to go through all that traffic. And so I have a desire to stop wanting my job, a building, growing desire, every day when I go to work I have more of the desire to not want the job that I really do want. I fear that I'll stop wanting what I really want and that's a horrible thing to feel, and it is a horrible place to be, because I do want it.

This is similar to a lover getting angry at the loved one because they might leave. It is a fear that I'll stop wanting what I really want. I want you to be closer to me, and I'm afraid I'll stop wanting that.

Questions for Reflection

Feeling stressed is often a very pure form of using unhappiness to stay in touch with desires.

What are things you feel stressed about? (For example, “My budget”)

In each case, what desire does the stress emphasize? (For example, “My stress about my budget emphasizes my desire to spend less than I earn”)

My stress about _____ emphasizes my desire to _____

In each case, what are you tempted to do instead of what you are desiring? (For example, “I am tempted to spend more than I earn instead of spending less than I earn”)

I am tempted to _____ instead of _____.

Get in touch with your desires. Do you authentically desire to do what you are stressing about *more* than what you are tempted to do instead? For example, “Do I truly desire to spend less than I earn more than I desire to spend more than I earn?”

Do I truly desire to _____ more than I desire to _____?

If so, then contemplate: why do I need stress to help me do what I most want to do anyway?

If not, then contemplate: do I want to use stress to motivate myself to do what I don't really want to do?

Meditation for the Week

- The idea is to stay in touch with what you want more. That's what the unhappiness is all about: to make sure that we keep wanting what we want *more*, that we won't go ahead and want *less*.