

How To Do The Option Method

THE FIRST QUESTION

What Are You Unhappy About?

Why would you ask this question?

This primary question, of course assumes that the person being asked may be unhappy about something. In practice it is usually only asked of a person who has first specifically complained of feeling bad. It might be considered intrusive if it were not for the fact that the client has come to see you with the understanding that you try to help unhappy people with their unhappiness.

In order to not make unwarranted assumptions, and to start off on the right foot, which is to speak to a person where he/she is right now; you might initially ask,

"Would you tell me in your own words why you are here?" or

"How may I help you?"

Alternatively, you might introduce yourself by telling the prospective client what it is that you do. By making it clear that your only function is to deal with his or her unhappiness, it allows the client to decide whether he/she will tell you that he/she is indeed worried, bothered or otherwise unhappy and wants help. After telling him/her what you do you then might ask,

"Is there something you're unhappy about that you would like me to help you with?" or some such.

1st

What are you unhappy about? (IDENTIFY the complaint.)

This question seems forthright and simple enough, but certain conditions apply to the proper use of it.

1. *Unhappy* means anything that the person might indicate as feeling in a way they don't like. It is merely a model word. Any description that the client uses is usually the best word to use. For example; worried, annoyed, feel bad, bothered, angry etc.

2. *About* is not as simple as it seems. What a person claims they are unhappy about does not mean they are actually unhappy about it. For example, they may just use another word for a kind of unhappiness: "I feel bad that I get nervous when I meet new people." Before you go on to the second Option Method question you would clarify this answer. You will now use the word *nervous* as the unhappy word.

What do you mean? (CLARIFY the complaint.)

This question, or a version of it; such as, "What do you mean by *he is unfair to you?*" This is a way to ascertain more precisely what the person is actually believing he/she is feeling bad about.

What about that are you unhappy about? (FURTHER IDENTIFY)

This question can have many forms, some more useful or pertinent than others. One is "What about that are you most bothered (worried, frightened, angry, sad) about?" Another might be "If that were to happen, what would you be most afraid of?" or "If that were to happen, what would be the worst thing about it?"

Your main emphasis is to keep the focus on the unhappiness of the person, not on anecdotes or the history of details that are irrelevant to what he is unhappy about.

UNHAPPY means any bad feeling. Use his or her own vocabulary. Vulgarities and Anglo-Saxon are, in fact, desirable when used first by the client.

This process of FURTHER IDENTIFYING the unhappiness is, of course, used in conjunction with FURTHER CLARIFYING when necessary. Whenever you don't understand anything relevant to the person's unhappiness it is usually an essential part of the Method to ask for clarification. For a simple and honest approach to helping someone you will rarely ever hesitate or shirk from asking "Could you explain that?" or "Excuse me. Could you tell what you mean by that?"

On the other hand, it is not FURTHER IDENTIFYING nor FURTHER CLARIFYING to be curious or nosy. Never ask for personal or for selfish information. The important reason for this is not especially out of respect for decorum, but most relevantly to not distract from the subject at hand, the important and personal unhappiness of the client.

2nd

THE SECOND QUESTION

Why are you unhappy about that? (IDENTIFY the belief or reason.)

This question really means, "Why do you believe that you have to (must) be unhappy about that?"

This is part of the Method that begins the enlightening, and is really a teaching and revealing of an Option truth about unhappiness. It presupposes that each person has a reason and is not an unwilling recipient of "natural or supernatural" Unhappiness. This question is even more personal than the preceding ones. It asks the person to realize that he has his own very personal reason for being unhappy about whatever it is. The question can have many forms. The various ways of asking are meant to approach the most direct way of asking "Since you don't want to be unhappy if it's unnecessary, why do you believe that it is necessary in this case?"

For example:

(IDENTIFY)

"What is your reason for feeling bad about not having a boyfriend?"

"Others will think I'm a loser."

(CLARIFY)

"What do you mean by a loser."

"Someone with no self-respect"

(FURTHER CLARIFY)

"What do you mean by no self-respect?"

"Someone who doesn't care enough about herself to get and keep a boyfriend."

(FURTHER IDENTIFY)

"Why would you feel bad if others believed you had no self-respect, which means you don't care enough about yourself to get a boyfriend?"

*WHY?
means
"For what
reason of
yours?"
or
"For what
purpose of
yours?"
or
"Of what is the
value or use to
you?"*

"Because I do care, and don't want to be seen as a loser."

(FURTHER CLARIFY)

"Even though you don't want to be seen as a loser, why does that mean you have to be unhappy if they do see you that way?"

"Because I am a loser."

(CLARIFY)

"What does loser mean in that case?"

"I'm a loser because they don't like me."

(IDENTIFY)

"So, are you saying you are unhappy because they don't like you?"

CONTINUE AS ABOVE

When you arrive at...

"Even though you can't have what you want unless people help you have it or give it to you, why do you have to feel bad when you know you still want it, and don't know how to get it?"

"What?"

REPEAT THE QUESTION. When you arrive at...

"I should have it." or "I should know how." or any version of should, must, ought to, etc., or a form of "Anyone would," or "Wouldn't you?" or "Everybody knows that,"

ASK THE MOST DIRECT FORM OF THE WHY QUESTION, WHICH IS,

"Why do you believe that?" or "Yes, maybe I or anyone would be like that and we would have our reasons, but what is your reason?"

The answer is some version of "I must because my happiness depends on it," or "If I don't, I have to be unhappy."

NOW ASK AGAIN

"Why?" or "Why do you believe that?"

When you arrive at any answer which indicates that he has no current real reason, such as "I don't know," or "I always have," or "I just assumed it," ask the THIRD QUESTION.

UNHAPPY REASONS TO BE QUESTIONED

- Should*
- Must*
- Need To*
- Have To*
- Ought To*
- It's Natural*

HELPFUL EXPLANATIONS OR INSIGHTS

"Not everyone would be unhappy about that. Why are you?"

"Since you believe God wants you to be unhappy in order to really change, why can't you change for God without being unhappy?"

OR

"Do you really believe that, or do you just think you should?"

THE THIRD QUESTION

3rd

"What would it mean if you were not unhappy about that?"

The purpose of this extraordinary question of the Option Method is to help a person see that he assumed that being unhappy was the only way of caring; really caring. In fact, this question and its answer discloses that people assume and are afraid that they are not on their own side, do not act in their own best interest, and are intrinsically motivated by unhappiness and undeserving of happiness when they find the unhappy evidence which they believe proves they are wrong or bad for themselves. The answers are usually a form of...

"It would mean I don't care about myself," or

"It would mean I don't want what I want," or

"I'd be crazy."

This 3rd (Reverse) Question is meant to reveal what all people are basically afraid of;

Finding proof of being bad for their own happiness or self-interest.

RESPOND IN SOME FASHION WITH THIS SUMMARY, ULTIMATE QUESTION.

"Why would it mean you were bad for yourself or your happiness if you were not unhappy?" or the longer version;

"Since you know that you want what you want, don't want what you don't want, care about what you care about, don't care about what you don't care about, approve of and/or don't approve of what you choose; how or why does anything mean you are the opposite of what you choose and decide about you?"

Go to
1st

THE FREQUENT INTERJECTION

"How do you feel?"

Throughout the use of the Option Method it is useful and helpful to both you and the client to frequently reassess the mood of the client. Such questions as "How do you feel now?" or "Are you unhappy about that (the discussed unhappiness) at the moment?" will help to keep your questions relevant to the most current feelings of the client. What frequently begins as a questioning of one fear often becomes a reminder of another, more important (to the client) unhappiness.

When the person seems to be feeling better; double-check!

When the unhappiness changes; start with "What?" again.

There is no greater kindness nor a more loving vocation than to question unhappiness!

Bruce M. Di Marsico,
Montclair, 1992

Helpful Reminders and Affirmations

"How do you feel right now?"

"Of course you want that, but why are you feeling bad...?"

"Others have their reasons for feeling bad about that, but what is your reason?"

"Just a reminder! You would like to feel less unhappy, wouldn't you?"

"Do you want to be unhappy about this?"

"Why does that mean you don't want the best for yourself?"

"What's wrong with that?"

"I am really just asking a question. There is no right answer; only yours."

"Why does that mean you are unhappy?"

"If that symptom did not mean to you that you were unhappy, how would you feel about it?"