

The Option Method Institute

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

www.ChooseHappiness.net

On Fervor

Acting Unhappy

June 22, 1992

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Introduction

In these two essays, Bruce Di Marsico considers two complementary issues:

- 1) Day to day life in a society where conventional symbols of unhappiness are the norm*
- 2) Acknowledging to oneself that to be happy is not the norm.*

And offers two happy choices:

- 1) Choose to no longer show the conventional symbols of unhappiness*
- 2) Act unhappy, knowing that it is only an act, and that you are truly happy*

Relative to the conventional symbols of unhappiness, language is a primary sign (though not a cause) of unhappiness. Below are some examples of how language is a sign of unhappiness.

These words are self-contradictory when used to mean “necessary for happiness”. Since nothing is necessary for happiness, they are impossible and meaningless words:

should, must, need, have to, obligate, owe, duty

These words are self-contradictory when used to mean “affecting happiness”. Since nothing can make you happy or unhappy, they are impossible and meaningless words.

right, wrong, good, bad

These words are used to describe behavior as unhappiness-causing

fault, sin, evil, immoral, inappropriate, crazy

These words only have a sense when referring to a demonstrable capability. For example, a “power” that cannot be demonstrated is no power at all!

rights, power

These words describe specific actions as “unhappiness causing”

theft (unhappiness-causing taking), ***murder*** (unhappiness causing killing)

These words are personifications of “unhappiness causing”

devil, demon

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The symbols and styles of other belief systems, religions, philosophies, etc. are not necessarily well-suited for our quest for a satisfying self-image and behavioral style that would signify our new life.

The language of other people is replete with the meanings inherent in their belief in unhappiness. We have gladly dropped much of our old vocabulary of unhappy judgment and fear, and we have no need for new jargon. Yet, some of us do want ways of reminding ourselves that we, indeed, do know the truth. We want ways of appreciating that we are happy and new. The idea of being constantly in touch with our new identity as happy people, we realize, is the same as joy for us.

Many newly happy people do not hesitate to continuously reflect on their good fortune in discovering the freedom of happiness. After a while the initial fervor wanes, and we feel we fit in normally with our unhappy society. We want to *seem* normal, but do we want to *feel* like their kind of normal?

One cause of this feeling of tepidness, which opens us up to relapses of old unhappiness's, and feeling unworthy to be special (in the sense our relative rarity as happy people), is a certain belief about "relapse" itself. If you believed you would never get unhappy again (since you saw how real it was to be able to not be unhappy), you were not wrong to believe (or know) that.

The fact that you got unhappy later doesn't mean you were wrong or did something wrong. That is a belief of unhappiness. If you got disappointed that you got unhappy "again", you did nothing wrong. You just merely got unhappy *about* getting unhappy, instead of just wanting to be happy (as you would really like to be).

When you got unhappy (if you did) you were believing you were supposed to get unhappy, even though you have no liking for it. When you treated yourself as if you failed at something you were also supposed to be (in this case, happy) you were being unhappy about your failure. The truth is that you love happiness more than *anything*; you would never give it up unless you thought you had to. When you realized that you made a mistake, the mistake was over. Nothing had to be done. Nothing. You didn't have to even bother being disappointed, as if your original unhappiness still existed. It didn't.

Once you believe or realize that you *have* been unhappy, since you don't want to be, and you don't believe it is necessary; it is over. Now, you may be unhappy about *having been* unhappy. That's a new one. You are unhappy because you believe something must be done. That will make anyone unhappy. It doesn't matter how noble or important the cause. The belief that something must be done to be happy is, in itself, unhappiness primeval.

Once you realize that you don't want to be unhappy, you are still happy. Your original happiness has not left you. You just were feeling it was gone. You can continue appreciating your happiness, and continue appreciating that you don't value or need unhappiness.

Many newly happy people accept the unhappy belief that we shouldn't feel specially blessed, or special at all, especially if we "failed" to be always happy. This egalitarian false-modesty stems from the old belief that since all people are sinners (or some modern version of imperfect), none have any special claim to happiness or wisdom. This fear of being "holier than thou" is everywhere promoted by the fear and jealousy of believers who remain faithful to their notion of the universal lowliness and wretchedness of humanity in this mortal world.

Do we want to learn from frightened people what happy people "should" be like? Does true happiness consist in denying our incredible gratitude? These fearful people believe that it is crazy or wrong to even *hope* to be happy always. They would not even dare to admit that they would love to be happy, no matter what happens. For those who do dare to want happiness, are they honest to see themselves as no luckier than the others who don't? Does wanting to be always happy become invalidated by mistakes? Does the desire disappear, or, rather, are we ashamed to admit we still want it?

The freedom to be always happy is the right of all people, and all other unhappy people deny that. You are the ones who know that. This is most relevant and pertinent for us who got unhappy after knowing better.

The freedom of happiness also means that there is not a way you should not be. You are free, especially, to know that you are happier than those who believe they must be unhappy. That's obvious. You would have to lie to say otherwise. "Happier than thou" is not a petty, fearful attitude, nor an attempt to denigrate another's right to be happy, far from it. If you think you are happier than any of your acquaintances, then that is not a rebuke, but simply an honest opinion, and an invitation. You are not feeling that others are bad, but only that you are grateful to be lucky to now know that unhappiness is unnecessary.

Acting unhappy

The difference between acting as if you were unhappy, for whatever reason, and being unhappy is that acting does not include believing that it would be bad or wrong to be happy. An actor doesn't believe he is not really happy. He denies his happiness to another but not to himself.

When you are done being unhappy you can just admit that you made yourself "feel" that you were, and are not really unhappy. There is no being really unhappy. There was only believing it was wrong to be happy.

"Wrong" is a model word meant to be equivalent to any concept that means bad, crazy, contradictory, insincere, lying, immoral, inappropriate, undeserving, no right to be, unworthy, sinful. All these ideas mean "bad for you to be happy". The implication is that you will be more unhappy later if you're not unhappy now (because you are not being the way you should – unhappy!). But that only repeats the imperative that you not be happy in the future after being happy now, when you should not have been.