

The Option Method Institute

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

www.ChooseHappiness.net

Changing Behavior

“I did it again”

The Two Nows

From

November 11, 1995 Lecture

Bruce Di Marsico

Outline

Changing Behavior

- Behavior is never a problem
- In so far as behavior is caused by an unhappy belief, it will change when the belief changes

“I did it again”

- If your belief has changed, and you are still unhappy, you are unhappy for another reason than before.

The Two “Nows”

- If you *were* unhappy, you can be happy now
- Unhappy people are concerned with how they have been *up 'til now*.
- Happy people are only concerned how they want to feel *from now on*

Introduction

In this lecture Bruce starts by responding to a question about “problem” behavior. He discusses that, in so far as behavior is caused by an unhappy belief, it will change when the belief changes. In so far as the behavior is not caused by an unhappy belief it won't. Either way, the concern of the Option Method practitioner is unhappiness, not behavior.

He then discusses people's concern that they will “backslide” and “do it again” after they have believed they didn't need to be unhappy about something. He makes an analogy to, if you knew water was poisoned, there is no way you would drink it again. If your belief has changed, and you are still unhappy, you are unhappy for another reason than before.

Finally, he discusses the two “Nows”. Unhappy people are concerned with how they have been unhappy up 'til now. Happy people are only concerned with enjoying happiness from now on. The past has no sway over the present.

READINGS

Changing Behavior

Do we care about patterns of behavior? As a practitioner no, but if a person feels bad about their repetitive behavior, I care about their feeling bad. What I help them with is not their pattern of behavior but their feeling bad. Now, if their pattern of behavior, which is a long phrase for being unhappy a lot, is based on a belief of theirs that they're unhappy about, well that might change if they were not unhappy. So it's possible that if they weren't unhappy their behavior might change, in so far it was based on their belief that this was something to be unhappy about.

Some people are very defensive. And they're always asking, "What you do you mean?" and they're very defensive and they're always worrying that somebody's going to judge them as not worth loving. When and if they stop being afraid of not being loved, I doubt if they're going to act that way. So some behavior will automatically change, since it's connected to what people believe will change.

But the behavior only changes in so far as it's connected to the emotion, since it's an expression of a kind of an emotion or a belief or an attitude. And what I like to teach my students is that attitudes are bodily stances. They're the way we hold ourselves in the world. Anyone who's ever learned to pilot a plane learns about attitude. That's the way you maneuver through the sky, by the plane's attitude. Attitude is your approach, your attack, the way you're coming at things in life.

An attitude is a well established set or pattern of behavior that reflects a well established set or pattern of beliefs, because they've long been believed in and never had any reason to be challenged or questioned.

"I did it again"

What about people who do change their beliefs and yet do it again and again and again? What about recalcitrants? What about those kinds of stubborn, crazy people?

Let me tell you something. There's no such thing. I don't care how long you have been believing that your water supply is safe where you live. You may get up in the middle of the night, every night and you get yourself a drink of water. But if you found out today that that water was poisoned, you would not accidentally drink the water, and then say, "Oh, boy. I did it again." I don't think so.

You're only doing it because you think you can get away with it. It's as simple as that. If you know it's not something to be unhappy about, then you were fooling around, and you thought you could get away with it.

Really what it means is you still believe that this indeed is something to be unhappy about for the same but different reasons. In other words, when you stopped being unhappy about it, for the reasons that were looked at when you stopped being unhappy, you did stop being unhappy about it for that reason. But you have since realized another reason to be unhappy about the same thing. And that's why and that's all and you're still unhappy about it for your reason. Perhaps a different reason than you used to have. But a different reason why you still believe you have to be unhappy about that.

I'll tell you an experience of my own. After learning quite a number of times that I didn't have to be unhappy about all kinds of things, I pretty much counted myself very lucky and extraordinarily happy. And indeed, I was. And I felt that way. And all was true. And then I would see myself acting this weird way I didn't like. I mean, similar to the pain in the stomach or somebody coming into a room and my looking away and not wanting to look at them. Why am I doing that? I'm not usually shy. Do I look shy? So all those kinds of behaviors.

And I would look at each one of them and I would realize that they were expressions that I thought I wasn't allowed. What if really what I wanted to do when this person walked into the room was to look away? For reasons I don't understand and don't need to understand, because I agree with myself. And I just thought that I would have been doing that for years, if I felt allowed—this is just the first time I was feeling allowed.

What's it got to do with happiness or unhappiness? It has everything to do with happiness and nothing to do with unhappiness. And yes, it's weird. So as long as you're not worried about being weird, just honest about being weird, you may find that you're admitting some truth that you never did before. And you're allowing yourself some freedoms you never allowed yourself before.

The Two Nows

I've never been one for hitting myself over the head if I found that I was feeling bad, or anything that I would find out later, one could label as bad. All that matters is that I could be done with it if I wanted to be. That was the greatest of all freedoms that I ever discovered. Hey, you tell me that I did it. I'll tell you, well, as far as I'm concerned it's done. I just have to realize I did it. So I questioned myself this way; why would I want to feel that way about that? And I knew immediately that I didn't have to be unhappy. I don't know whether that counts as unhappiness or not. It doesn't matter, you see, because I'm done with it anyway. It's gone.

Another example: after I learned that I didn't need to be unhappy about things, I was talking to somebody in apparently, a very excited intense way. And he said, "Hey, Bruce, don't be angry."

“What? “ I said, "Oh, I'm not angry at you at all."

He said, "Well you sure looked it."

“Well, I'm sorry if you thought I was angry. I really wasn't. And if I was, I'm not. Honestly. And I don't know what I was.”

“I was just being really intense. And if you call it anger, I don't care. I'm not now. I promise you I am not angry. I know I'm not angry now. I have nothing to be angry at you for. I was just making a point. I didn't know you were so delicate!”

And then I realized that people are very sensitive to what they think they see and hear. And they're very much concerned if you're angry. I didn't know if I was angry or not, but I also didn't care because I wasn't any longer. It doesn't matter to me whatever I have been as long as I'm happy now.

I don't want yesterday's happiness. Do you? I don't know anybody who does. I want it fresh. I'm happy now. And that's all I know. And if I was unhappy a minute ago; thanks for reminding me. Because I'm fine now. I can't imagine I was really angry about anything. So anyway, I'm willing to cop to it. As long as you believe me now when I say I'm not angry. I'm really not.

The whole point of knowing the Option Method is to know that you don't have to be unhappy now. Not to find out that you were an idiot for being unhappy in your past or an idiot for being unhappy yesterday or that you didn't have to be unhappy. No, that's not what you're here for.

In the Option Method we've discovered that there are two “nows”. Among people who come with unhappiness there is “*up 'til now*” and every time they're talking about now, they're talking about themselves up 'til now. They always get unhappy about this. They're always tired about that. They're always worried about the other thing. And they're always talking about their past. Everything they know themselves to be up 'til now. Albeit that they may have been happy 90 percent of the last week since I saw them, they describe themselves in terms of only unhappiness they've had in the last week. And that's who they are. They're the one who failed at this. They're the one who's unhappy about that. And that's who they are now.

But there's another now. There's who we are “*from now on*.” Both “nows” are psychological nows. And all we're looking to do is change the “up 'til now” to what we are “from now on.” We don't want to change who our clients have been up 'til now. No need. No reason. They don't either. They just want to feel better from now on. And that's all we're concerned with.

So very frequently people describe themselves in an ever running, continuous past. You know, the past is always present. This is who I am. This is what I do. I do

this. I do that. And they're talking about their past more often than not, and bemoaning the fact that in the future they won't be doing that, implying in some way, "I wish I was going to not be doing that from now on."

So that's another thing that the Option Method does. It helps people change their perspective on time. When people stop being unhappy they are no longer concerned with *up 'til now*, they are really only concerned with from now on.

You probably recognize that in your own life easily. When you're happy you're always looking forward, never looking back. You're always looking forward to the next good thing, the next feeling, the next whatever. And when you're unhappy it's like you've always been unhappy, and you're never going to stop being unhappy. But those are just illusions and that's why it's nice to have somebody ask real questions, somebody who will help you while you are living in that nightmare of unhappiness, that illusion that you're stuck with always getting unhappy over and over again.

Questions for Reflection

Make a list of behaviors you believe you should change.

Make a list of behaviors you *want* to change.

If someone who had the same behavior confessed to you that they were perfectly happy having the behavior, would you be OK with them being that way?

For each behavior you listed, which of these categories does it fall into?

- Happy, having the behavior, and wanting to change.
- Happy, having the behavior, and not wanting to change.
- Unhappy, and having the behavior

Make a list of things that people are often upset about both as children and adults, but for different reasons. For example, when a child drops an ice cream cone on the carpet, they are often more upset about the loss of an ice cream cone. When an adult drops an ice cream cone on the carpet, they are often more upset about the staining of a carpet.

Many people have an historical story about how they got their unhappiness. For example: the way they were parented as children, a prominent unpleasant event as a teenager, the way they were treated at the coffee shop this morning. What historical stories do you tell? What historical stories have you heard others tell?

Meditation for the Week

- If you *were* unhappy, that is past. You can be happy *now*.