

# **The Option Method Institute**

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

[www.ChooseHappiness.net](http://www.ChooseHappiness.net)

## **Forms of Love**

From

**Monday Night Study Group, 1973**

**Bruce Di Marsico**

## Outline

- I cannot help someone be happier, they can only help themselves
- Love is being happy with
- Love as protection
- Love as giving
- Love as not being unhappy
- Love in a therapeutic relationship

## Introduction

In this talk, Bruce Di Marsico discusses the nature of love.

He first discusses the foundation understanding that “I cannot help someone be happier, they can only help themselves.” At best, someone may find our presence, behavior, or actions useful for their own happiness.

He then discusses forms of love, happy and unhappy. Fundamentally, a person feels loved when we are not unhappy with them, because when we are not unhappy with them, we demonstrate to them how to be not unhappy with themselves.

He also describes unhappy loving: love as protection (protecting the loved one from what they believe will make them unhappy) and love as giving (giving the loved one what they believe will make them happy).

Finally, he discusses that love in a therapeutic relationship is when the therapist offers the client happy love (that is, finds no reason to be unhappy with the client), and the client offers the therapist something the therapist wants other than love, such as money.

## READINGS

### **I cannot help someone be happier**

The theme for my talk tonight is the freedom to be happy, and all freedoms that implies, for instance the freedom that we have in being happy, the freedom that we have in wanting others to be happy, the freedom we have in letting others be happy, the freedom that we have in letting others be unhappy, etc.

The basic attitude of the Option Method guide, therapist, or practitioner is to realize that I have no responsibility for the unhappiness of my client. That's essential, and is also one of the biggest hang-ups that helpers often face. I'm here only as a servant to do what I can. For whatever reason I may not help someone become happier, the worst that I have done is to leave them wherever they choose to be.

If they choose to be unhappy, they chose to be unhappy before they came to be with me. They may even choose to be more unhappy while they are with me. That is their right, their freedom. They do not have to be happier for my sake. If I want somebody to be happier for my sake it will be me—I will be happier for my sake. I do not have to be happy for their sake. If they want somebody to be happy for their sake it could be them—they can be happy for their own sake. Everything that they do is for their sake, and that cannot change. Everything I may do is for my sake in some way.

We meet each other with our own personal beliefs and the desires that go with those beliefs. They're ours. We may change them, but each of us change them for ourselves for our *own* sake. If they are happier after being with me it is because they chose to be happier. Their happiness is totally of their own creation. They do whatever they do for their sakes, not mine.

### **Love is being happy with**

Love is being happy. I'm loving you if I'm happy with you. Love, though, is what I'm doing for me: I'm being happy. Love is so universally admired and approved of and feels so basically good because when someone is loving another they're not presenting them with an event that the other feels they must be unhappy about. Somehow we feel we're loved because the person who is loving us is just not presenting us with things that we feel we have to be unhappy about.

After people are like that with us, then it is possible to be happy with all the other presented events they give to us. So in a loving relationship we find that we're not unhappy about what they present to us, which then leaves us free to be happy and happier about what is presented to us. Then it's possible to be open to your presence.

### **Love as Protection**

Often it is called love when the lover removes the event that the beloved believes they must be unhappy about. Sometimes it is seen as a role of the therapist, or *the* role of a therapist, to love. And sometimes it's seen as a function of loving to take away the thing that the person is unhappy about. That kind of loving is protective.

If you're afraid of spiders, the protective lover will go around killing all the spiders. Whatever it is that you're unhappy about they'll take it away. If I'm unhappy about your drinking, "if you love me you'll stop drinking" might be a way of doing that.

This is usually the romantic ideal of a lover: a servant protector of needs and fears, like a knight. It's often called love when somebody just protects and serves the needs and fears of another person. In this kind of relationship it is also called love when a lover presents tokens that represent that original serving, protecting, need-fear relationship. For instance if a lover gives candy, flowers, or other non-practical special gifts, it affirms to the beloved that the lover wants them to be happy and is willing to protect and serve even when it only seems like whimsy on the beloved's part. "You have no need for flowers really but I'll love you, I'll give them to you. You have no need for candy. These things are not practical and I'm trying to show you by giving you impractical things that I'll protect you and I'll be with you and I'll care for you even when there are things that I don't value, even when they're just whimsy on your part."

In this relationship the most loving lover would be the one who would tolerate the silliest fears and protect the beloved from their most self-defeating behavior. A woman says, "Oh, I just can't stand that," and he says, "Oh, don't worry, dear, I'll take care of it," no matter how silly he may think it is, that makes him a lover, and the more silly she may get the more protective he seems especially if he starts protecting her from things that he knows that she wouldn't ever have to really be afraid of.

A lover would protect even from things that he saw no need from someone to be protected from—this is the medieval romantic ideal. They might even make up and invent challenges and trysts and searches in order to prove one's love even when they're not there, just to show that they'd be ready in case they were. And so the romantic knight might very well go fight another man just simply because that other man was there to fight, and say he was doing it for his beloved. Do all kinds of things—maybe climb a high mountain and come back with a flower, and he'll go through many trials and tests and challenges.

### Love as giving

We have a modern counterpart to that too, and it's still called love. In this kind of relationship it is also called love when the lover gives presents that not only remove the original fear and need, but also extend that removal to a great emotional distance. Remember we said it was loving if we take away the things that the lover is afraid of. Well now we not only take them away, but we start giving presents and gifts that symbolize that taking away and show that the fears are even further away, and there is even less reason to be afraid. So for instance, if the beloved fears poverty, the lover would give the beloved more and more substantial safeguards and proofs of their distance from poverty: for instance a house, a second car, a maid, insurance, anything that would then remove the beloved further and further away from the thing they feared. They would all be seen as gifts and presents, and proof of love.

Although these presents may sever the lover's needs, they are presented basically though as being for the beloved. "Here's a new refrigerator, dear, for *your* kitchen." Now it sounds like I don't even eat. The whole idea being, it's got to be for that *other* person, even though *I* would like a new refrigerator in my kitchen or in our kitchen.

Often a present is valued only in proportion to its lack of value to the presenter. If you valued it very much, the person you were giving it to would not value it as much, and would not see it as much of a gift, as if the husband said on a Sunday afternoon, after he washed the car, "I washed the car for you dear," and she never even drives it. Somehow she wouldn't feel that was a present. In this kind of a relationship the gift would have to be seen as not being for the lover but for the beloved. Let's say if she were constantly complaining about the kind of ties he wears, and then she went and bought him a new tie that she liked and she said, "Now here's a nice tie for you." He's liable not to feel that that's not much of a gift, in fact he may even resent it because she values the gift too much.

So when the presenter values the gifts, it proportionately takes away from its value as a love token. And this relationship, it's also called love when the lover gives sexual pleasure to the beloved without regard to their own pleasure. Often if it seems that the lover values the activity more than the beloved, then the beloved may even resent the gift in proportion to the value for the giver. These are the two factors: a present is valued in proportion to its lack of value to the presenter, and resented in proportion to the value for the presenter.

I have not found any relationship based on this that hasn't had sexual problems involved in it, because if for one reason or another one of the partners in a sexual relationship just isn't turned on they will start to resent that the other one is turned on. They start to feel that they're being used: "He or she values sexual activity more than I do."

This kind of love's greatest test is when the beloved needs something contrary to the lover's need, which may be most of the time. This love has sacrifice, duty, responsibility, disappointment, selfishness, etc in its vocabulary.

### **Love as not being unhappy**

This unhappy fear-need-love is sometimes changed into a happy, wanting love where the lover wants to give the gift of self and wants to help the beloved to enjoy that gift more fully. This lover will desire to protect and serve the beloved's happiness, not only by removing the bad but by helping the beloved to stop fearing and being unhappy with the bad, the not desirable. This lover will help the beloved to be happy not only by giving the good things but by helping the beloved to be more and more open with the good things and the desirable things. And we define good and bad as: "bad" are those non-desirable things and "good" are those desirable things.

This lover is happy with the beloved's loving behavior and not unhappy with the non-loving behavior. Not threatened, not scared, not frightened. This lover is happy with the beloved's hopes and not unhappy with their fears. This love may not have any vocabulary.

### **Love in a therapeutic relationship**

Now this is the kind of love an Option Method guide will have for his or her clients. Because I love my clients I will not pretend that their unhappiness is not theirs, and that they need to be protected from the things that they're unhappy about. I will not bail them out by giving them what they believe they have to have from me before they will allow themselves to be happy with me. Since I love them, I will not pretend to save them. I will not pretend that they are not totally responsible for their judgments, their beliefs, and their concomitant emotions. If they hate me for being who I am I will not hate them by pretending that I am responsible for their self-imposed hate. It is not love to help another believe that they are helpless. It's not love to help another believe that their happiness depends on who I am and how I behave.

If I do not think of the right questions to ask them in our sessions, it's not their fault in any way, but neither is it my fault if their unhappiness and happiness depend on my questions. If I've blocked, if I've forgotten, if I'm distracted, if I'm confused, if I'm unclear it's not their fault regardless of how they may have acted. But neither is it my fault or my responsibly in any way if their happiness depends on my questions. I did not set up their lives so that their happiness has to depend on my questions.

This is the therapist's freedom to not do therapy. If I love them, I will not play games to satisfy their demands. I will give them absolutely nothing on the basis of that they're unhappy with my not giving them what they want. If they're unhappy with my not giving them something, I'm not going to give it to them just because they're unhappy with not having it. Maybe I'll give it to them, maybe I won't, but

their unhappiness won't be my reason. Perhaps I'll be the first person in their lives to not be afraid of their threats against themselves to make themselves unhappy if I don't do what they want.

It is not love to show them that their unhappiness pays off, that their unhappiness with me gets them what they want. If on the other hand I do give them what they want it will be in spite of their unhappiness, and if they want to believe I've given in to their threats, so be it. I'm not obliged to give them what they demand, nor am I obliged to not give them what they demand. I'm totally free, and I will be totally free. That is loving them. I do what I wish; they will behave as they wish.

I'm loving my clients by giving them only exactly, no more, no less, than what I'm happy to give. In time they may realize that they are really being loved. They will know that when I am giving something it is truly, freely, happily given and that whatever I do give there is no resentment behind it. And so then they will know that I could never resent their asking or demanding for what I don't give since I am freely and happily also refusing to give and not give it. If I am happy they may know that they're loved; I know that they're loved.

I'm an Option Method guide because people who want me to help them to be happier motivate me to do that. I'm a guide or a therapist to some people and not for others because those for whom I am a therapist are the ones who have motivated me to be that way for them.

The difference between being an Option Method practitioner *and* lover, and a lover in other relationships is simple: essentially there's no real difference. I love and I'm happy with everybody. Some motivate me to be with them in some ways, others in other ways, and still others not at all. I love or I'm happy with all. In an Option Method session I am the lover by helping the other to be happy. In what we might call a mutually loving relationship I am also the beloved and am being helped to be happier.

In the Option Method session I agree to not seek help from this person but only to help and that in form or in style would be the only difference, and so that the difference between a professional or an unprofessional relationship is that in friendships I'm motivated by whatever there is in that friend, in that person to be with them for whatever there is to be with them. I will help them, they will help me. I will love them, they will love me. I am the beloved as well as the lover to one degree or another. In the session I ask none of that from my client. I do not ask them to love me, I do not ask them to be happy with me, which is something I might ask from my friends. I do not ask them to understand me, appreciate me, applaud me, hug me, or to do anything for me that helps me to be happy with them. I do not ask them to do anything that has to do exactly with that lover-beloved relationship.

A professional session is one where I ask for something other than love in return for my help. And that's perhaps what makes all "business", or professions and their relationships, other than friendship relationship. When I go to the butcher he doesn't ask me for my love, I don't ask him for his love. I ask him for his meat, he asks me for my money, and that's it. We're not asking for love from one another. In this relationship I am being asked for love but I'm not asking for it in return.

In each I am happy; in each I try to help the other to be happy. In each I may receive many things I want. In the therapeutic relationship I am only wanted for one particular skill or task. In other relationships, I may be wanted for other abilities, other qualities of mine. What makes the professional relationship *professional* is the desire of the seeker, the desire of the client, the desire of the petitioner, of the beloved. All they want from me is my skill. All they ask of me is that task. They want to use me that way, so that is going to delineate, perhaps, the relationship. It's not so much that I'm going to approach it different but that the client is basically approaching it differently.

## Questions for Reflection

Consider your circle of relationships (with intimate partners, parents, children, friends, professional associates, etc).

Consider each of these ways you love them:

By being happy with: specifically, for each of these relationships, what are behaviors that you don't like (are not to your taste) that person does, but you don't find a reason for unhappiness? For example, "I like the window open at night. My wife likes it closed. I have no unhappiness about her actions"

By protecting: what needs or fears of the relationship do you serve by trying to fulfill the (apparent) need or removing the reason for fear? For example: "My child is afraid of the dark, so I provide a nightlight."

By giving: how do you give the person things in order to make them happy? Birthday presents are a common example.

For which of these relationships, do you expect to be loved in return?

### **Meditation for the Week**

- I'm loving you if I'm happy with you. Love, though, is what I'm doing for me: I'm being happy.