

The Option Method Institute

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

www.ChooseHappiness.net

Fearing Fear

Guilt

From

Monday Night Study Group, 1973

Bruce Di Marsico

Outline

- Fear itself is often worse than what is feared
- Guilt is feeling bad about feeling good when you think you are supposed to feel bad.

Introduction

In this talk, Bruce Di Marsico discusses three topics.

First, that fear of possible outcomes often drives people to experience what they fear, so that they can relieve their uncertainty. For example, to resolve the question “will I shoplift?”, a person may shoplift, or to resolve the question “will I drink?”, a person may drink.

Secondly, he explains guilt, which is feeling bad about feeling good when you think you are supposed to feel bad. For example, we may feel good about keeping our money, and not giving it to charity. We may believe that we should feel bad about not giving to charity. And then we may feel bad about feeling good when we thought we were supposed to feel bad. This is guilt.

READINGS

Fear itself is often worse than what is feared

What happens with anybody who has a fear? They frequently rush headlong into that fear to undo it. The fear of death is much worse than death itself. No problems are ever really solved by fear, not personal problems, not emotional problems. It's very much like the child with the bad report card. They'll come home and confess, rather than live with all the fear of what will happen if you eventually find out.

The compulsive “addict” (gambler, “alcoholic”, kleptomaniac, etc.), compulsively plays out their addiction just so he can get rid of the fear they are going to do their “addiction”. Because one of the things that happens after you do your addiction, is that you don't feel like doing it again. A compulsive addict is not desiring to do their addiction, but is desiring to be rid of the desire to gamble, drink, steal, etc., and the best way to be rid of the desire to do it is to do it.

Or take a kid who steals. He steals compulsively, tell me his reason for stealing was that he feels so bad when he realizes that he's stolen something. He believes that if he can feel bad enough, he'll stop stealing.

When he steals, he removes his desire to steal. But the desire to steal, in the first place, came from feeling horrible, and the feeling of guilt that comes after is almost a relief: “I feel terribly guilty but I'm glad that I feel guilty about it and that I don't want it anymore.” Until they desire to steal again in response to feeling so bad.

For instance, take the compulsive drinker. Drinking was a way of feeling good that applied very much to their problem, which might have not been feeling good. Not feeling loved, not feeling deserving of any pleasure. Very frequently they don't have a single moment of peace or happiness in their whole day, except when they drink.

The fear becomes that that's going to be all the pleasure they're going to have. The drinking becomes an escape from feeling bad. That, in itself, is something to be feared.

It's coming from unhappiness. Every compulsive drinking, if no one ever told them that it was dirty, if no one ever told them that it was wrong, would make it wrong. Guilt

only exists in our society because it exists in us, as individuals. And it doesn't come from the society. That is just simply a myth. We create guilt every time that we notice any behavior that comes from unhappiness.

So anything that we've ever done or ever do that comes from unhappiness, that we do because we're unhappy, we feel guilty about. And so now, the person saw that this was a relief, something they did from their unhappiness that felt good. They didn't want to feel good about feeling good this way. What they really wanted to be was a happier person. Every drink I've ever talked to, said what he really wanted was to deal with what was making them unhappy, and if they drank, they would have no need to deal with what made them unhappy.

“If I could always make myself feel good this way, why should I deal with what made me unhappy,” that was the fear. What has helped them was if they could see that, they could drink and also not forget that they were unhappy. And as soon as they didn't forget that they had problems, they immediately stopped feeling guilty about drinking, and drinking frequently diminished quite considerably, and when they did drink, they would enjoy it much more.

Guilt

Guilt is feeling bad about feeling good when you thought you were supposed to feel bad. We don't want feeling bad to lead to anything that feels good. We don't want bad feelings in us to lead to something productive or lead to something good. We don't want to reward our bad feelings. Drinking can become a reward for bad feelings and an escape from them, and we don't want that so we feel guilty about resorting to that. A person who's guilty will be very depriving of themselves in many ways. The whole idea of feeling guilty is to not enjoy yourself and feel guilty about every enjoyment, anything that may come from unhappiness.

People, very frequently, will then fear that they won't deal with their bad feelings, and they won't deal with what originally made them feel bad, and that they won't make themselves feel better, expect by a particular method, and that method becomes an addiction. The more I believe that alcohol is the only way that I'm going to feel good, the more I'm going to hate the fact that I drink. The more I hate the fact that I drink, the

more I'm going to fear it. The more I fear it, the more I'm going to desire it, the more I'm going to drink. Nobody hates booze more than an alcoholic. They want to feel bad about feeling good.

And the addiction becomes secret behavior. The big cesspool becomes sex. That's the thing everybody does behind a door with three locks. Nothing kills sex worse than somebody knocking on the door. Have you ever noticed that people who supposedly think that sex is beautiful, sex is wonderful, sex is all kinds of great things, when somebody knocks on the door while they're having sex—they're not so sure...

Example: Guilty about coming on to pretty women

There's a man. Every morning he's standing at the train station and watching the pretty girls go by. Sometimes he'll make a derogatory remark and sometimes he won't. But he feels like he's got to do this and he feels terrible about himself. He believes that somebody who has everything on the ball, like him, shouldn't have to do this. And yet he's doing it.

“I shouldn't have to do this. There should be another way for me to feel good. I disapprove of the way that I'm taking to feel good.” Feeling bad about feeling good about feeling bad.

Look, for some reason he's doing this in order to feel good. What's so horrible about that? He's hoping that the worst he feels about it the better he is, he'll stop. Why does he want to stop? Because he's recognizing that somehow he's doing that to feel good instead of what he really could be doing to feel good, which is—to just feel good! Well, the problem is that he insists on feeling bad about something in the first place. And rather than give up feeling bad about that, he resorts to some other things to make himself feel good.

It makes him feel good to be derogatory toward pretty women. He doesn't like that he needs that. But he is believing that he needs something in order to be happy, for instance, that pretty women are only out to him. And he feels he can't stop believing that because if he did, what protection would he have?

Questions for Reflection

What do you feel guilty about?

What “should you” have done in these situations rather than what you did?

Did you want to do what you “should have done”?

If no one could ever find out what you had done, would you still feel guilty?

What are some things you feel bad about, but don’t know why.

Take a guess as to why.

Meditation for the Week

- Guilt is feeling bad about feeling good when you thought you were supposed to feel bad.