

# **The Option Method Institute**

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

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**If you loved me, you would. . .**

From

**Monday Night Study Group, 1973**

**Bruce Di Marsico**

## Outline

- The only reason lovers split up is because they fear unhappiness
- Lovers fearing either not being loved enough, or not being loving enough.
- Lovers propose proofs that they are not loved: "If you loved me, you would..."
- Lovers try to motivate those they love by either giving them what they "need" to be happy, or "punishing" them for being unhappy.
- The root issue is fear of the other's unhappiness; that is, not allowing others to be unhappy.

## Introduction

In this talk, Bruce Di Marsico discusses issues in love relationships. In this part, he outlines the problem, and in the next study guide, the solution.

The only reason lovers split up is because they fear the unhappiness. They either fear not being loving enough to prevent their partner's unhappiness, or not being loved enough to prevent their own unhappiness.

Those lovers who fear unhappiness will propose proofs that they are not loved: "If you loved me, you would do this, that, or the other, or be some way." These "proofs" are all false proofs.

The root issue is fear of the other's unhappiness; that is, not allowing others to be unhappy. As a result of this fear, lovers try to motivate those they love by either giving them what they "need" to be happy (so that they will always be happy), or "punishing" them for being unhappy (so they will "learn" not to be unhappy). Both paths are destined to failure.

## READINGS

### **Why lovers split up**

I have never known two lovers to split up for any other reason except fearing unhappiness. I've never seen two people who have gotten divorced for any other reason. There may be other reasons but they're not the ones I've ever come across.

I think the confusion between loving and *wanting* to love is the basis for much of the difficulty in relationships. When two or more people are unhappy with each other, it generally manifests in two ways.

First, they are unhappy that they're not getting what they expect from the other, which is another way of saying that they're not getting what they believe they need, or they're not getting what they “should”. What they believe they need could be functions and things from the other person, or good feelings from the other person, such as approval of love, happy with me, etcetera.

Second they are unhappy about not being or not giving what they should to the other. That's the unhappiness about not being what one “should” be for the other, or what one expects oneself to be or what one is expected to be. And that also regards functions and things, or good feelings. In my experience, this is the person who will ultimately leave the relationship.

Even if the first feeling is predominated, that they're not getting what they want, and that has been predominant, there will be a point when that feeling converts to the second feeling, which is the feeling that they're not giving what they should and they're not being what they should. And it's when that feeling becomes strong that the person leaves the relationship. Both are feelings of powerlessness: in the first case the person believes and experiences that they have no power to motivate the other to give, and in the second case, they believe they have no power to motivate themselves to give.

### **If you loved me, you would...**

Each is using the other or expecting the other, to affirm their worth. It usually starts off with this one cardinal belief upon which on everything else hinges: “If you loved me, you

would X.” From that starts all the difficulties in relationships. We'll take a closer look at that sentence later, it's got a number of inherent contradictions and pitfalls, and in some ways it's really an impossible sentence, but, nonetheless, that's the experience of people who have problems in their relationships.

“If you loved me, you would... Since you don't do this or feel that or be this way, X, it's because you don't love me enough. Why don't you love me enough? I do this and that and that. And I do all of those things. Why don't you love me enough? Why isn't who I am, what I do, why isn't that enough for you to love me more? Why can't I get you to love me more?” And it's a question but the answer is often implied. “What's wrong with you that I can't get you to love me more? What's wrong with me?” becomes the immediate corollary. “I'm unhappy that you have made me feel that there's something wrong with me by your actions, by your behavior, by what you do. You've made me feel that there's something wrong with me.”

“You've made me feel that there's something wrong with me. I'm unhappy that you have made me feel that there is something so wrong with me that I can't get the only and the simplest thing that I want, which is for you to be happier with me and to love me more. That's all I want.” Of course, the feeling was not caused by the other, but follows from the premise “if you loved me more, you would X.” This could be totally unspoken between a person and another person.

For example, I could just observe you sitting there with your legs crossed, and writing. And I could just say to myself, totally within me, “if you loved me more, you wouldn't be doing that.” That's all. It doesn't take any more than that to start the whole thing. Then I could follow with, “since you is doing that, you don't love me more. That's because you don't love me enough. Why don't you love me enough? What's wrong with you? What's wrong with me?” And now I'm unhappy that you are making me feel that I can't motivate you, that there's something wrong with me.

Then there is the second frame of reference: “If I loved you more I would have X, if I loved you more I'd feel such and such, or if I loved you more I'd do this or that. What's the matter with me that I don't love you more? Why don't I love you enough?” The same

reason would continue using myself as the one I'm expecting something from. Now the whole dilemma is based on the belief that my wanting you to be happier should make it so.

So it's all based on the belief that my wanting you to be happier should make it so, the myth that I should be able to motivate you to overcome every fear and hang up you ever had. And you'll find that this is usually what the parties are saying in a relationship that they're unhappy with.

### **Proof that you don't love me**

I had a patient that reasoned like this: My mother is afraid of mice. If she loved me, she would not be afraid of me if I dangled a mouse at her. That may seem patently absurd to you but that is what you'll find some variation of in any relationship that you find is in trouble. So he dangled a mouse at her, she got frightened, then she got angry. And he was satisfied that he had proved that she didn't love him at all. And he was very satisfied. He was sure he now had proof that she didn't love him at all or, at least, not as much as he needed.

This model, although it's extreme, I think you'll see you can fit anything into it. So and so is afraid of such and such. So and so is threatened by such and such. My husband, my wife, my children, parents, whatever. If they really loved me they would not be afraid of such and such, if I did it. When others fail our test for love - this test being, "if you loved me more you would. . .", we believe that we have seen evidence that we're unlovable or evidence that we're not worthy of being loved, or evidence that we're not good, or evidence that we're really unable to motivate others. It's all basically the same evidence.

When others fail our tests for love, all that is happened is that we have discovered the basic reality of human relations dynamics, which is this, people love only to the extent that they are happy. That's all we ever find out when we test love.

Love means happy with. If we are or do what others are afraid of, to that extent, they can not love us. That is, if we are or do what others are afraid of, to that extent, they can not be happy with us. People can only love what they are happy with. Now we could say if

they are usually happy with us, then I think we could say they are usually loving us and vice versa. If they are usually unhappy with us, then they are usually not loving us. Because they're really one in the same thing.

### ***Not allowing others to be unhappy***

If we are, or do, what others are afraid of, to that extent, they cannot, absolutely cannot, love us. They're mutually exclusive terms. One cannot be afraid of and love at the same time. I do want to point out something we'll get into later. That doesn't mean they can't want to love us, which is usually the confusion. But they certainly cannot love us at that time.

If I discover that people will not be happy with me and cannot be happy with me if I scare them, that bothers me because I believe I need them to be happy with me. The only problem I've ever seen in relationships is that people will not allow others to be unhappy. We have all kinds of ways of not allowing others to be unhappy; they're as varied as attacking them or leaving them alone and everything in between.

If we want another to be happier, for whatever reason, that's one thing. If we want another person to be happier with us, for whatever reason, that's one thing. But if we need them to, we are resorting to trying to motivate ourselves with unhappiness, in order to motivate the other to be happier.

Once we need someone to be happier with us, we'll try to motivate them in one of two ways. One, by giving what they "need or want", for example, being really being nice and giving, or two, by denying them, and depriving them of what they need or want, hoping to motivate them by unhappiness. So we're either hoping to motivate them by happiness or hoping to motivate them by unhappiness. But there's a built-in pitfall in either of these, a seed of destruction in either of these approaches when it comes from our own need.

Anything that we may do to get someone to love us from our own need is doomed to failure. When we're trying to motivate the other person by giving them everything and removing fears, we come to feel that we are catering and placating, and that, eventually, we're going to feel that we have to continue this behavior or we'll not get what we need.

We're going to feel that we have to keep giving to them, that we must. It's going to become a feeling of a "should". We eventually resent them for having their fear. We resent them for having their need that we keep catering to. And we wind up only realizing that we were confirming our original fear in the first place, which is, you'll only love me as long as I do this or that. You'll only love me as long as I'm and only if I'm generous, kind, patient, always looking the other way, never criticizing, always bringing home the money, never yelling at the children, whatever that is. That's the only reason you love me. And we wind up not feeling loved at all, because the only person is only happy conditionally and we encourage that and we played with that, and we never really dealt with it.

The other approach by which we try to motivate the other is by making them more unhappy. In trying to prove that if they need something from us, they will never get from us what they're unhappy about or while they're unhappy. We try to prove to them that if they need us or need something from us, that they're going to be making us unhappy, which, of course, was their fear in the first place. So we punish them.

And this is very much like training a person to not need anything from us with the hope that if we succeed, they can't be unhappy with us because we could never fail them then. So if I could train a person by making them feel very bad anytime they've ever needed something from me, every time I've ever disappointed them, and somehow punish them for that, my hope would be that I would train them not to need anything from me. And so if they don't need anything from me, I can't fail them and they can't be unhappy with me.

Both of these approaches begin with an absolute terror of anybody being unhappy with us. That is the thing that is just not allowed, which is what I began with in the first place: we just cannot allow people to be unhappy with us. And we resort to any extreme to prevent it. We'll either sell out and sacrifice everything and deprive ourselves and constantly give, give and build up feelings of resentment, or we'll do just the opposite and try to show them that we'll give nothing and we'll just give them more misery, more unhappiness and anger until they learn to stop being unhappy with us.

Both of these approaches only continue and increase unhappiness. They never solve anything. If these approaches were truly adhered to and stuck to rigidly, to an absolute

degree, it could be lead to death within hours or minutes--each person believing that, they would kill each other and they do. Most times, though, with people they'd rather give up their relationship. They'll kill the relationship instead of killing the other person.

The new belief that can make the crucial difference: that in a relationship, no matter how you try to test love, you are never proving, really, that you are unlovable or that you're unloved. All you prove is that you know how to tap another person's fears. In a sense, it was proved that one wasn't loved more or enough at that point. But a person wouldn't be unhappy if they had another corollary belief to go along with that. So when a person says, you know, "This proves that I'm not loved, this proves that they don't love me", you can point out that doesn't prove that they don't love them. It only proves that in that moment, in that place, and in those circumstances, they can't be loved because the person is afraid of them.

## Questions for Reflection

List out your love relationships (whether sexual intimacies, friendships, or familial):

Who do you feel doesn't love you enough?

How, specifically, can you tell that they don't love you enough?

Who do you feel you don't love as much as you should?

Who do you give things (and what do you give them) that make them happier because you want to, and who do you give things that makes them happier because you fear their unhappiness? ("things" includes ways of being)

Who do you not give things (and what do you not give them) that make them happier because you want to, and who do you give not give things that makes them happier in order to teach them not to be unhappy, or that you will give them no benefit as a result of their unhappiness?

Who do you feel uncomfortable with when they are not happy?

### **Meditation for the Week**

- Are people allowed to be unhappy?