

The Option Method Institute

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

www.ChooseHappiness.net

Negative Judgments are not Necessary

From

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Bruce Di Marsico

Outline

- Everything is good, in the sense that it is not bad (can not cause unhappiness).
- Judgments often are stated as if they are objective observations.
- Judging things as good or bad for happiness causes unhappiness
- Nothing ever needs to be decided against.
- Not having reasons against doesn't require you to decide for.
- Decisions against something are really decisions for something else
- Sometimes what we are deciding for is for things remain as they are.
- No reasons are necessary to justify your choices.

Introduction

In this talk, Bruce Di Marsico discusses the problematic and unnecessary nature of many types of negative judgments.

He starts with the proposition: Everything is good, in the sense that it is not bad. And everything is not bad in the sense that it can not cause unhappiness. Judging things as good or bad for happiness causes unhappiness; if something is bad for happiness then we will be unhappy if it happens; if something is good for happiness, then we will be unhappy if it doesn't happen.

He then discusses how many judgments that things are good or bad for happiness are often stated as if they are objective observations (especially character traits), for example: "He is shy", "She is talkative", often mean "In my experience, he hasn't wanted to spend time with other people, and that is a bad thing", or "In my experience, she speaks more than other people I know, and that is a bad thing."

Concerning negative judgments: nothing ever needs to be decided against. For example, in choosing health, we do not need to explicitly not choose every kind of sickness. A decision against cancer is really a decision for well-being. A decision against going out to party is deciding for things to remain as they are.

No reasons are necessary to justify your choices. You can like vanilla ice cream, because you like vanilla ice cream. Period. And not having reasons against doesn't requiring you to decide for. If you think that sex is wonderful in everyway, and have nothing against it, that doesn't mean you have to have sex.

READINGS

Everything is Good

So everything that is, is not bad. Bad would not be a quality of anything that exists. Things don't have intrinsic qualities. An object is what it is, and we invest in its qualities. Now, rather than seeing them as neutral, we can see them all as good.

Everything is good, in the sense that it's not bad. We use judgments very frequently in order to help make these decisions about whether a thing is good or bad, and I would like to talk about the whole nature of judging at all.

Judgments masquerading as observations

Judgments are often subtle and try to pass for objective observation. Very frequently, we'll be making a judgment and we'll try to palm it off on ourselves and on others as an objective observation. But, in so far as they are judgments, they will cause unhappiness. Some examples of judgments that kind of try to pass for observations:

Somebody was told that their daughter was immature. She said “that's a judgment”. The reply was, “no, no, that's a fact.” So it depends. One could say immature and mean it as not a judgment, if you were referring to a biological fact: she hasn't hit puberty. But there's a good chance that what a person means is that there's something not particularly good about being “immature”. To say someone is talkative. Why would that be pointed out if it wasn't some kind of a judgment? It isn't an objective observation. And yet it is an objective observation, in the sense that, if somebody is talking, then they are talking. But to say that they're talkative implies some constant state of being, and that there's something other one could or should be. Why would that even be mentioned as something else you could be? Why do we go around saying to people anything that would imply there's something else you could be, if we weren't making a judgment, as if you're not good enough yet?

You're tall. You're angry. All of these things that I'm saying, could, in themselves, be observations, but almost always they're judgments trying to pass as observations. You're very quiet. You're fat. Why would you tell someone that they were tall or fat unless you were a doctor somehow trying to tell somebody something that you didn't think they

knew? These are often judgments often try to pass themselves off as simple observations. “Oh, I’m only stating a fact.” The question, of course, will come up is, why even make an observation? We make judgments on the value of things in order to make a decision. And that would also be why you would make observations.

In order to make a decision, we needn’t have our frame of reference be good or bad. So what kind of judgment is being made if you’re making a judgment on somebody that they’re fat? Various people mean different things by it. One of the judgments that might be made on somebody being fat is that that is bad. But another judgment may be, no, that’s not bad, but it is better not to be fat. That may be more the judgment. So there would still be some kind of judgment involved. And we want to look at the nature of the judgment; very frequently by good and bad, what we’re really talking about is our happiness.

Judging things as good or bad for happiness

When we make judgments on things, on people, especially, but on anything, we’re often saying something like: this thing is helpful versus destructive to my happiness. Things are constantly being judged as whether they help for our happiness or they destroy our happiness or prevent our happiness or effect our happiness in any way. And, of course, the obvious middle judgment is that they have nothing to do with our happiness, which is what most people would see. So we could improve on that by having another system, which would be something like, well, it’s not helpful to my happiness or it is helpful to my happiness or it’s more helpful than something else.

There isn’t a negative implied there, a negative judgment, which then leads us to saying its bad and feeling bad about it occurrence. We could just say it from where I’m at, it’s not helpful for my happiness. That wouldn’t necessarily be anything to feel bad about. To say certain things are not helpful to our happiness don’t make us feel bad unless we believe they ought to be. Then, if we believe they ought to be, we’re not really saying that they’re not helpful. We’re saying that they’re destructive, or that the absence of them is destructive to our happiness and the fear of losing our happiness is unhappiness.

So if I believe there ought to be something here right now and there isn’t, I could say it’s not being here is not helpful to my happiness. But what I really mean is that it’s not being

here is preventing me from being happy. If you don't have negative judgments, everything is either going to be helpful, more helpful, or irrelevant to our happiness.

Nothing ever needs to be decided against

If nothing *makes* me unhappy, then why shouldn't I do it or allow it to be done? For example, somebody might ask you for something, and it wouldn't make you unhappy to give it to them. Perhaps you're not into making those kinds of feelings for yourself, making yourself feel bad. But very frequently, what happens is "if I don't have a negative reason for not doing something, then I *must* do it."

We're bypassing the whole question of our desires when we jump to, "if I don't have a reason not to do it then I should do it." Because we're so used to doing things and not doing things because they're bad and using unhappiness as the rationale, that when the unhappiness is gone we forget, in a way, that there are other reasons for doing things.

Example: Giving money

We may really have some reason for desiring not to give you money. You may ask me for \$10, and I would not be unhappy to give you \$10—and then I could play a game with myself, which says, "Therefore, I should give you \$10". In that case, what I really have noticed is that there was slight desire in me to do it for a reason, for instance, that you thought it would make you happy. The reason is that you wanted it and that would make you happy and that would make me happy.

But we bypass that reason and it become totally ignored. And we can't even decide on whether that reason is a good enough reason or not for us. Then we come up with guilt feelings. I should do it and I'm bad if I don't, because I'm not going to be unhappy without it.

And that doesn't only extend, of course, to give money. It extends to love-making, to sex. It extends to sharing something. It extends to being honest. "It wouldn't make me unhappy to be honest. So, therefore, I *should* be honest.", and so you have people who let it all hang out everywhere.

Example: Sex

People may find that in sexual liberation, for instance, they struggle to be free of all of their “should nots”. They struggle to be free of all their ideas that sex is dirty and is wrong, all of which they try very hard to see as illogical, nonsensical, irrational. And they try to tell themselves that it's not true that sex is not dirty.

After struggling with that for a long time, they have tried to throw out every reason that might possibly prevent them from having sex if they wanted to—and what very frequently would be overlooked by a person who has strived so hard to overcome fear, is the “I want to” part! So now they feel I *must* have sex whenever there's no reason not to. That I ought to have sex because otherwise, it would be like saying it was dirty. It would be like making up a phony reason for not having it, like I used to do. And so, therefore, if someone wants to have sex or it occurs to me that I might want to have sex, I should, therefore, have it, because if I don't have it I'd be playing into my sex is dirty game.

See, we're forgetting that we believed that the only reason not to have sex is because it was dirty. That was the only reason we ever used because, well, once you have that, you don't need other reasons not to have it. That *could* suffice, although there could be lots and lots of other reasons for not having sex. But when the one predominate reason is taken away, we think, well now there's no good reason not to anymore because that was the only reason that ever mattered.

Such questions as disease, such questions “as I want to go to sleep instead”, such questions as “there are other things that I want in a relationship”: all of those somehow just can't be seen for the fear that they will be a copout, that we'll be playing back into our own fear and using these reasons as an excuse. What is being overlooked again is that, perhaps, just perhaps, nothing ever has to be decided against. And that we do not have to make judgments ever against anything. That really what could be going on is that we will make judgments for things, for other things than what we used to decide against.

Example: Dessert

For example, a person is eating a meal and is finished and they feel satisfied, and they've enjoyed the meal. Someone says to them, would you like some dessert? “I couldn't”,

becomes the expression. “I couldn't eat another bite.” All kinds of negative reasons would have to come up against having the dessert. Rather than just simply, dessert would be nice, but I more want where I'm at now, and that there needn't be anything bad about having dessert. It could be a judgment for where we're at, a choice or a preference for what we're doing, rather than for making the change, and not a choice against making the change.

One does not have to decide against chocolate ice cream in order to have vanilla ice cream. One does not have to decide against anything. So you don't even have to decide against sickness because really, what's the decision? The decision is really for health. And if you look at it, you'll find that all negative decisions and all negative judgments are always secondary. They always come second because somewhere there was a preference for something else first, which we never used to feel free to express the desire for, when we were unhappy people.

The only possible reason you ever could have to decide against anything is because you already decided for something else. You would only decide against being uncomfortable because somehow you've made the decision for being comfortable. After you've already decided for something, you are, in effect, pretending that you're deciding against something, as if you needed that additional reason in order to follow through with what you've decided for.

You could fool yourself into thinking that you've been deciding against all these other things and then see yourself as somehow good for yourself; then we have to come up with reasons: if I'm going to decide for something, then somehow I have to give a reason for deciding against the other thing. And if you notice, the reason is never that I decided for this, it's got to be some other made up reason.

So if I decide for vanilla, I have to make up a reason for not wanting chocolate: “I had it last week.”, as if you had to explain why you didn't choose chocolate to yourself, or to anybody. Once we don't admit that we've decided already, we have to find reasons for deciding against other alternative. We have really made a positive decision, but we're pretending that we're using negative reasons.

Decisions against, are decisions for something else

I'm not talking about avoidance behavior. I'm talking about negative decisions.

Decisions against things are really decisions for something else. If I touch something hot and I withdraw, I am aware that I could not withdraw if I wanted to—I could keep my hand on the flame. But there is a mechanism whereby my body will constantly try to return to its equilibrium and its health, and what looks like avoidance is a desire to return to a desired physical state.

Chocolate or vanilla? Without a rationale, who's to say what you would have gone for? You could transcend all of that and behave without reasons at all, whatsoever. Then there would be another rationale but it would hardly be rational in the sense of intellectual. You just do what you do.

For the unhappy, without a prerequisite belief, you wouldn't act a certain way, but with that belief you can. An angry person may say that the anger just happened. But why is it that anybody who I've ever seen angry, was angry for a reason? Maybe the reasons were concocted, and angry was just what they were destined to be at that moment, maybe not.

Choices are always for.

The major point that I wanted to make was the way we use judgments. And that we use judgments. And that frequently we fool ourselves into thinking that we're deciding against.

And we can be much freer and much more happy if we realize that there really is no such thing as deciding against. That's an after thought. That really what's happening is that we're deciding for something. And that's good. It doesn't have to be defended. It doesn't have to be justified that we're deciding for something. And that is good. And that all the things, that because we've decided for that, yes but in affect, we haven't only decided against one, we've decided against the whole infinite universe of things when we decide for one thing. And who wants to be in that position? I assure you, when I make a decision, I'm not deciding against the whole universe because I'm deciding for one thing.

How often do we then believe we have to live up with our decision against something? For instance, if I say I don't want chocolate because it's too sweet, I can never have

chocolate again because it's going to always be too sweet, if it's the same chocolate somehow.

“No, I don't want to lend you \$10. Or really, I want to keep my \$10”, is the decision. Somehow it's implied I could never lend it to you again. You could never ask me again. I have a reason for not giving it to you now that will always be a reason for not giving it to you, which is not true. There may not always be a reason for keeping it.

So there's a choice *for* something always. There was another principle operating rather than, you hate this, you dislike that, and that is: there's something else you like better.

No Reasons are necessary

You don't have to desire anything if you're already doing it. You only desire it as a reason to do it. Ultimately, you just do what you do. Very frequently, we view ourselves with a teleological approach. We say that roses need thorns for their existence and protection. It's just not so. It's just that the roses with thorns are the ones that have survived. Roses without thorns didn't survive in an evolutionary sense. No rose made a judgment that it's better to survive.

Questions for Reflection

What in this world, in others, or yourself do you consider bad or evil?
For each of these, do you believe that these can make you unhappy against your will?

What are some judgments you hear people make that pass as objective observations (especially focusing on descriptions of the way people are, such as “He is shy”, “She is talkative”)

What don’t you want?

What do you want even *less*?

If you had a choice between what you don’t want and what you wanted even less, would you be happier to choose what you don’t want?

What do you want, *instead* (Perhaps, things to continue as they are?)

What reasons have you used recently to justify your choices? Listen for reasons in your most trivial choices, like what you have for dinner.

Could you still claim to have reasons if it was useful to you, even if you were not aware of any reasons for making a choice?

What are some of the ways you have heard this phrase completed? “He or she has no good reason not to...”

Do people need reasons not to do something?

Meditation for the Week

- Decisions against things are really decisions for something else.