

The Option Method Institute

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

www.ChooseHappiness.net

Being Kind to Yourself

“Should” is a lie

Nothing is “Good” or “Bad” for Happiness

From

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Outline

Being Kind to Yourself

- One way we stay unhappy is by believing happiness is too good to be true.
- The Option Method never implies that you shouldn't be unhappy.

- "Should" is a lie
- In itself, "should" is meaningless
- Believing in "should" is unhappiness

Nothing is “Good” or “Bad” for Happiness

- Nothing is inherently good or bad
- Bad means "bad for your happiness"
- Nothing can be bad for your happiness
- There is never a problem with practical judgments.

Introduction

In this lecture, Bruce Di Marsico discusses three topics.

First, he discusses being kind to yourself. The Option Method never implies that you shouldn't be unhappy. A very common misapplication of the Option Method is to use it to berate yourself, asking yourself "Why the hell am I unhappy?" A variant of this is to, through misapplication of the Option Method, find a new reason for unhappiness: you *should* be happy, and you are not.

Next, he discusses that "should" is a meaningless word in itself. In language, "should" means "you should do *this* for *that* result". Most often, when "for *that* result" is not made explicit, what is implicit is "you should do *this* in order to be happy". Since happiness is not dependent on anything you do, this form of "should" is a lie, and believing in "should" is unhappiness.

Finally, he discusses that nothing is inherently good or bad. "Good" and "bad" can mean either "good/bad for a practical use" or "good/bad for happiness." Nothing can be bad for your happiness. And there is never a problem with practical judgments that something is bad *for some practical use*.

READINGS

Being kind to yourself

There is no mystery about unhappiness. What you're afraid of is that it is mysterious, and that's why you experience it that way. You could be believing that it's all too simple, it's too good to be true, and so therefore, even though you've worked through something and you're no longer unhappy about it—oh, but you *know* yourself! That's already your own belief that you have to be unhappy, or that you will fail yourself if you are not unhappy, or that you can't keep a single straight thought in your body.

The Option Method never, ever implies anything. When we ask somebody, "Why are you unhappy?" or "What about that are you unhappy about?" We really want an answer, whatever the real answer is. But we *only* want an answer. We're never saying, "Why the hell are you unhappy?" That will, of course, never help anybody who thinks that themselves already

When you're using the Option Method wrongly for yourself, you're not as kind to yourself as you would be for someone else. When you keep repeating your unhappiness and you find yourself unhappy, what you're saying to yourself is "Why the hell am I unhappy about this again?" You're not good natured about it and you're not forgiving; you're not understanding like you would be for someone else.

There's a real reason you are unhappy. You're not out to screw yourself. You're not out to hurt yourself. You didn't wake up in the morning saying, "I think I'll drive a nail through my head!" You never set out to be unhappy. You thought somehow, in some way there was good reason and it was necessary for you to get unhappy.

Those people who have had experience with some versions of the Option Method may have learned something about not having to be unhappy about something. But also, every time they looked at their behavior they thought they were unhappy and they judged it. When they were unhappy and didn't want to be, and had no reason to be, they then said to themselves, "Why the hell are you unhappy again?"

Happiness is Freedom

There are all those words that are substitutes for being unhappy: you should, you ought to, you're supposed to—all the contraries to freedom. They're equal to unhappiness. If you believe there's anything that you're supposed to do, there's anything you should do—if you believe you ought to visit your grandchildren, that you're supposed to call your mother, if you believe you should pay the rent and you ought to pay your taxes, etcetera—you're going to be unhappy. You're going to feel a lot of pressure and a lot of stress. Because you're piling up "should's" against "should's" and "supposed to's" against "supposed to's".

As you know, I used to live that life. What school should I go to? What classes should I take? What teachers should I sign up for? What fraternities should I join? What sports will I be able to be good at? And we go through life somewhat confused. Everything is a “should” weighed against another “should”. So we seek smarter friends and wiser counselors, who have their own “should’s” and “supposed to’s” and “ought to’s” and “need to’s”. All of which will make them unhappy. So believing in, there's anything that you need to do, will make you unhappy. Anything you should do; that'll make you unhappy. Anything you're supposed to clear up; that'll make you unhappy. Anybody you have to save; that'll make you unhappy. Anybody you ought to love; that'll really make you unhappy.

All the should's, ought to's, supposed to's have no real article with them. “Should” has a meaning in English. You should use *this* for *that*. If you want to get this, you're supposed to do that. They are formulas with a beginning and an end. Not “you're supposed to shut up.” “You're supposed to be wise.” “You're supposed to be rich.” If these word have any real meanings there's an article attached to them and a preposition, as in *good for* and *bad for*. *Good* and *bad* do not exist on their own.

Nothing is “Good” or “Bad” for happiness

Nothing is good and nothing is bad. Because everything is good if nothing is bad. A knife is bad for use as a hammer. A hammer is not good to use as a wrench. Different things are good for different things. An education is good for certain kinds of success. Certain kinds of education are bad for certain kinds of success. So things in the real world are good for things and bad for things.

And that “for” or “with” goes together with the “good” or “bad”. Nothing is bad by itself. It's bad *for* something. Things are bad? That just means bad for your happiness or bad for your eternal soul. When a thing is assumed to be bad in a moral sense it means bad for your eternal soul or it doesn't have much meaning. And that means, in the long run, you're going to wind up unhappy. That's what bad means. That's what “sin” means, if sin has any meaning. And without anything connected to it, it has really no meaning.

You are really thinking that bad means bad for your happiness. But nothing can be bad for your happiness, but you can believe it to be so. And I don't want to say, “unless you believe it's bad for your happiness.” Because nothing is bad for your happiness, period. Nothing is bad for your happiness but you can believe that things are. And that's all. But you don't realize that all the time. The more you realize it the more you will make it pertinent and relevant to yourself.

And it can be lots of fun to do that. It'll never be a form of disgrace or shame or embarrassment or suffering or effort to go through that wonderful experience of finding out that you were believing you need to do something that you didn't need to. You didn't *need* go to that wedding anyway. You never *had* to pay that

anyway. To find out you thought you needed to do something and you didn't need to, is a wonderful freedom. To think that you weren't allowed something and to find out that you were is a wonderful feeling.

That's all we're talking about. Happiness. Nobody can make you happy. I don't know if anybody wants to. But if somebody wanted to, I think that it would just fit among those characteristics of things that they want. And I don't know if they know what your happiness is. But if that's what they want then they're going to be working for what they want. But the actual happiness that will ever exist for you will only be the one you want. Not the one that someone else wants for you. And if you're waiting for something astounding to happen to make you happy and stop being unhappy – then you believe you have to be unhappy.

I judge everything I feel like judging. I judge things to death. I judge the hell out of things. I like that movie. I didn't like that directing. I liked the color. I didn't like that costume. I judge whatever I want to judge. And I enjoy it. Why not? What am I doing wrong? I'm enjoying myself. That's got nothing to do with unhappiness.

Unhappiness would be sitting next to the lady who says to me, "Shhh." And believing, "oh, I'm sorry; I shouldn't have said that." And believing that I shouldn't be judging all these things and not out loud, certainly. The only unhappiness is to believe you shouldn't be judging.

But who's going to say, "I think I'll feel bad about this, and I think that's something to be disgusted by, and I think this is something to be angry about", if they know they're going to pay the price for those judgments that way?

I will judge a thing on its terms. But not on whether it has the power to make me unhappy or not. It doesn't. Because that's not a judgment. That's a lie. See, a person who wants to be happy doesn't go around conferring goodness on things. You know, this is good. This is something not to be unhappy about. This is good. This is not bad. Where the hell do you get off? These things were all good long before you came on this planet. The only thing you're going to do is *admit* they're good.

Questions for Reflection

Being kind to yourself

- Do you ever feel that you shouldn't be unhappy?
- Especially if you have used the Option Method for a while, do you ever feel that "as someone who practices the Option Method, I shouldn't be unhappy?"
- If either of these is true, do you now feel "I shouldn't be feeling that I shouldn't be unhappy?"

Fill in the blanks below with statements about yourself:

I should ____.

I have to ____.

Fill in the blanks below:

____ is good.

____ is bad.

Now fill in the blanks below with practical judgments of necessity:

I should ____ if I want to ____.

For example, *I should turn down the stove if I want the soup not to burn.*

I have to ____ if I want to ____.

For example, *I have to stand on something if I want to reach the highest cabinet in my kitchen.*

Note, that even practical judgments of necessity, though not causative of unhappiness, are usually false. For example, in the above examples, if you want the soup not to burn, you could also put ice cubes in it. If you want to reach the highest cabinet, you could use a long pole with a hook on the end. In the practical judgments of necessity above, see if there really is only one way to achieve the desired results.

Now fill in the blanks below with evaluative statements of usefulness:

____ is good for ____ .

For example, *a knife is good for cutting.*

____ is bad for ____ .

For example, *a knife is bad for hammering.*

Meditation for the Week

- Nothing can be bad for your happiness, but you can believe it to be so.