

# **The Option Method Institute**

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

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## **The Option Method with Others**

From

**Monday Night Study Group, 1973**

**Bruce Di Marsico**

## Outline

- To work with someone using the Option Method, they do not have to accept its premises.
- To work with someone using the Option Method, you do not have to be perfectly happy.
- To work with someone using the Option Method, you do not have to have been through what they have been through in life.
- To work with someone using the Option Method, you do not have to disprove anything that someone believes.

## **Introduction**

In this talk, Bruce Di Marsico talks about the prerequisites for someone to benefit or to help someone using the Option Method.

There are no prerequisites.

The Option Method can benefit those who do not accept its premises.

The Option Method can be used fruitfully by those who are not perfectly happy.

The practitioner and client do not need to agree about anything.

## READINGS

It's not a pre-condition for the Option Method that you do not believe that your emotions come from somewhere out there. The idea that our emotions don't come from somewhere out there is, if anything, the message of Option, but it's for those people who don't believe that that Option Method would be most meaningful. It's for those people that the Option Method exists, those that always believe their feelings come from somewhere outside. If you asked them why they aren't happy, they have never heard that question before, and every time they've ever answered it before, they've always answered it "Why am I unhappy? Because so and so did this", and they always answer what they're unhappy about. They are the very ones you help with the Option Method the most, the ones you'll find the most dramatic change in. "No, I don't mean *what* are you unhappy about, I mean *why* are you unhappy about that, what is there about that that you believe you have to be unhappy about?" You don't teach them that it's a matter of their belief, you just know that it is, and so all are your questions geared toward that.

For those who are mentally retarded, to the degree that they are capable of being unhappy, in that they are capable of making judgments (which is why their unhappy), they can tell you why they make those judgments. Their reasons might be a little funny, but there they are. I'm not so sure that anyone's reasons that are more conventional are really any different answers. There's different sizes and shapes of delusion, that's all.

*Questioner: some of my patients just want to be unhappy.*

They don't just want to be unhappy. They want to be unhappy for a reason. Ask them "Why you afraid you won't get what you want, if you're not unhappy?"

You can't assure them that they will still want what they want. You don't have to assure them of that. You couldn't. You ask them why they are so sure that they

want that? Your role isn't to assure them of anything except to help them find out how to assure themselves. So when you ask them why they believe they just want to be unhappy, and they say "I don't know", you ask them "well, if you don't know, why do you believe it to be true", and work from there, until they come up with an answer for themselves.

*Questioner: How can I help if I'm not really that happy?*

You can start off like this, even before anyone walks into your office: Anybody who I'm going to see today, if they want to be unhappy, they can. There a prevalent belief that you've gotta get your head together, before you do good therapy. Are you going to do any less good therapy because of where you're at? You would still be doing the best you could right? And you'd still be doing Option that way. All you're pointing out, is that it could be done better. But is ten percent of your potential useful? I suppose even if you were the kind of therapist that when a patient came in, you started yelling and screaming at him, and said "you stupid idiot, you know you can be happy inside!", they can use that to be happy if they wanted to, couldn't they? If they wanted to use it, it doesn't have to be the best.

My not doing my best doesn't prevent them, and anything you do doesn't prevent them from using it if they wanted to use it to help them themselves. It's just that if you change your tone of voice, and you feel a little better yourself, it might make it easier to find out what their beliefs are, and would make it would make it easier to use the Option Method.

*Questioner: I work with some people who have such different life histories than mine, they grew up poor, in jail, and I can't see myself saying, "Why are you unhappy about that?"*

You're afraid they are going to laugh at you when you ask such a question. I think

you'll find that they won't, if you really ask sincerely and meaningfully. I've never had anybody who laughed at me. People tell me about these horrible situations they are going through, and I say, "well why are you unhappy about that?", or rather, that is the model question. I may say "well, what is there about that you're most unhappy about, that gets you most unhappy. What is there about that? And why does that get you down?" "There are words that you can use rather than "why are you unhappy." "What is there about that most that bothers you, and why does that bother you" If you find the slightest objection all you say is, "wait I'm not saying you *shouldn't* be unhappy. We all have different reasons for being unhappy about that, and I'm asking you what your reasons are, so that I can know better what it's all about."

Maybe they don't have the reason you consider justified. They may have some real crazy reason. So ask and find out. Their reasons are not your reasons etc. For example, I have never heard anyone tell me that they were unhappy about being hit, or hurt, or beat, or anything because it hurt. I have got people who were shot, stabbed and were never unhappy because it hurt.

And that's just my own experience and possible somebody would say they are unhappy because it hurts and they you would be on to "Why are you unhappy about hurt or pain?" But that's rare, I haven't come across it.

*Questioner: What if people are not interested in being happy? They are interested in something else?*

So they are after beauty, truth, productivity. You say okay "Why are you unhappy if you don't produce?" That's the relevant part of it. I don't care that everyone says to me I'm not here to be happy. I would say something like "wouldn't be nice if you could produce just as much or even more and did not also have to be unhappy? "Yeah it would but I don't believe it's possible" And I ask, "Why not?"

*Questioner: How about reasons like “I have my parent on one shoulder all the time?”*

They're not saying anything. They accept that they want to change and they have come up with some harebrained reason about why they're not changing. And then, what they have done is, they've invented their own therapy and you go along with them. They say “because I've got my parent on my shoulder,” they could have said “because my libido itches.”, or “my under dog is bothering my top dog”

That's their theory and their reason for believing “I can't change because my parents are on my shoulder.” “What is there about not being able to change that bothers you” is the obvious question. “What do you mean by change? “ You're not there to help them change. Maybe they want to change in order to do something else but ultimately they want be happier. In some therapeutic systems, you have nice contract with your therapist and you say “I want you to help me change this way”, and then everybody agrees that that's a very good thing to change into, and the therapist helps you to become that. But that's got nothing to do with therapy, that sounds like a strategy planer and some kind of behavioral engineer.

“What is there about not changing that bothers you? What is there that you are unhappy about yourself that you want to change?”What you are really asking is “what are you unhappy about and why?” If they say “I can't change because there is a parent on my shoulder and a monkey on my back”, and you ask, “what is there about yourself that you're unhappy about, that you want to change?”

You may have forgotten that you were trying to help him to be happy, and you thought you were going to try help him make a change, you were going to try to help them get their parent off their shoulder. I doubt if you could do that because they probably wanted it there, as a way to explain why they can't change. Did you find out that in their dialog with their imaginary parent that they wanted the parent

to be exactly how they saw them and they really were using them in order not to change? If they are willing to negotiate a mutually agreeable contract, what they are saying is that they willing to change their beliefs, and therefore they go ahead and do change them, because for them to be able to make the contract they would have had to have worked through their beliefs to some extent.

Why shouldn't they believe whatever they believe, how do you know that they shouldn't believe that, how do you know what you're believing is right? What they're believing is not the problem it's their unhappiness about it that's the problem. If they believed for sure and absolutely that the world was going to end tomorrow or ended yesterday, what's that going to do with anything? I wouldn't need to change that belief for them at all. You are not concerned with beliefs, or facts, or experience or about anything other beliefs about why they have to be unhappy about those beliefs.

For example, I worked with a woman that wanted to save her husband before the world ended, and but so what. The point is "why would she be unhappy if he wasn't saved?" We're concerned with is happiness, not sanity. I wouldn't consider it like good Freudian, who would have consider it an obligation to society to talk people out of their superstitions We're not concerned with what people believe. Insofar as those beliefs come from unhappiness they'll change, so I don't have to judge whether they're good beliefs, or bad beliefs, or sane beliefs or insane beliefs or happy, or unhappy beliefs. Otherwise you have to become the worlds greatest authority on everything, and it's totally irrelevant to happiness.

Beliefs about having to be unhappy about something are the only belief we're concerned with. The other things that you're calling beliefs are deductions based on facts and reasoning processes and ways of ascertaining information. They feel that given certain amount of data they can go ahead believing certain things. That in itself does not have anything to do with happiness or not. I could really believe that world is flat, and if I was a happy person I'd also be open to seeing whether it

wasn't flat or not. So certain rigidity in beliefs might not allow for openness. But you don't try to get the openness in order to produce the happiness, you help with the the happiness, which will then allow for the openness.

## Questions for Reflection

Below are some sample statements from those seeking your help. What question might you ask in each case?

“God wants me to be unhappy. It makes me miserable.”

“I’m unhappy, because I’m a quadriplegic burn-victim and incest survivor who gets beaten every day, and it’s all my fault.”

“I don’t believe the Option Method can help me. What do you say to that?”

“There is an alien spaceship docking in the back of my head. It’s driving me crazy!”

### **Meditation for the Week**

- There are no prerequisites for benefiting from the Option Method.