

# **The Option Method Institute**

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

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## **Wanting is Sufficient**

From

**Monday Night Study Group, 1973**

**Bruce Di Marsico**

## Outline

- When a person fears losing something, what they are fearing is realizing that they do not need it to be happy, and will get along without it.
- The feeling of “need” is used to justify our wants.
- You know your priorities, therefore there is no need to fear getting your priorities wrong.
- When you realize that you are not doing as you want, that can be the start of doing what you want, instead of wondering "What's wrong with me?"

## Introduction

In this talk, Bruce Di Marsico discusses how wanting is sufficient for our lives; fear is not necessary.

When a person fears losing something, what they are fearing is realizing that they do not need it to be happy, and will get along without it. Fearing losing money is fearing that you could be happy without it; fearing losing love is fearing that you could be happy without it. And if you could be happy without it, the fear is, why would you want it? Because you do! That is the only reason.

You know your priorities, therefore there is no need to fear getting your priorities wrong. For example, if you know you want to spend money on a vacation more than a car, then you know that. And if you want to spend you money on a car, more, then you know that. How could you get your priorities wrong? Sometimes, what you want is more information before deciding.

When you realize that you are not doing as you want, that can be the start of doing what you want, instead of wondering "What's wrong with me?" For example, if you are not being what you consider healthy, at the moment of realization, you can start being healthy. No self-criticism is necessary or useful.

## READINGS

### **Fear of not needing something you want**

When a person fears losing something, what they are fearing is realizing that they do not need it to be happy and will get along without it. They are fearing that when they realize they don't need it, that they might not want it, and since it is an apparently good thing to have that thing, they fear not wanting it. It is the fear that they will not want what is good for them; this can be a terrifying realization for someone.

#### *Example: in childhood*

Let me illustrate the underlying dynamic that's behind all of that: as a child grows up and begins to see that they really do not need their parents as they used to, they often become very afraid of their parents dying. Most of their wanting of their parents, up to that point, has been based on needing them. Even simple wants are often expressed as needs in their relationship. "I need you to feed me. I need you to allow me to go out to play, to stay up late"; parents encourage and reward this belief that they are needed for just about everything.

When a child begins to realize that they don't need their parents, that is tantamount to no longer having any excuse for wanting anything from them. A child has been almost incapable of wanting something from the parent that hasn't actually been only the domain of the parent to grant, and so it's easy to see the parent as needed for the thing you want, and therefore, needed for your happiness.

When a person fears losing something, what they're fearing is realizing that they don't need it. So that when the child fears losing his parents, what they're afraid of is realizing that they really do not need their parents in order to be happy and they don't want to believe that they don't need their parents.

Parents also want to encourage the belief that they're needed for just about everything. And parents don't want to believe that they don't need their children, either. The parents are afraid that once the children lose their need for them, and the parent's lose control of

the children, they, as parents, will have lost everything. When you're afraid of losing something, it's because you're afraid of knowing that you could be happy without it, and they don't want to know that they could be happy without control.

In the extreme, just about every time that the child wants something that they perceive that they can only receive from their parents, they will choose to need it and express it as a need, even a new toy that they were perfectly happy without a moment ago. The child will act as if they need the new toy. The child will cry and thereby, by crying, they're acknowledging the parent's belief that they are needed by the child. And that their denial is capable of making the child unhappy.

The child has well learned that unless he plays the game with his parents and continues to encourage them to believe that he needs that, what is liable to happen? If you live with people who will not give you anything unless they believe you need it, what are you going to? If you're an infant and you wet your diaper, do you think anybody would care if you didn't cry? And if you were hungry, do you think anybody would care if you didn't make a stink about it?

You quickly come to perceive that nobody really cares about you, except that you bother them. It doesn't take much for a child to come to that realization. Originally, the sound of the cry is just simply one of communication. In subsequent months of the infant's existence, that cry changes and becomes a cry of pain and a cry of need, which wasn't there in the first place.

A parent assumes that if a child is crying, the child is unhappy. They're not unhappy. What are they going to do? Write you a letter? How else do they tell you that they want to eat? Type it out on a typewriter? Whistle? They do what they're biologically capable of doing and that's making sounds from their mouths, that we call crying.

Can you imagine a child that asks for a toy and the parent said, "No", and they just walked away happily? Do you think that kid would ever get another toy, knowing most parents? Hardly. He doesn't need toys. And, to the degree that the parent needs to be needed, every time a child cries, the parent has got to feel glad to be needed. It was one of their motives, in fact, in having a child. They wanted somebody to need them.

Feeling happy that your child is crying can be seen to be a contradiction to some people. A parent who doesn't feel much of that joy could really be very firm in their denial. And they can see it as a rational and suitable thing. No, you can not play with matches. And no, you can not play with the razor blades. And no, you can not go out and play in the street. They'll feel really okay about that, and there's no secret joy in the child's crying.

Apparently the worst thing any parent can say to a child is "you're being childish": you just simply accuse them of being who they are, and that's the biggest put-down somehow. So you can berate the child for being a child, for being childish or you can even acquiesce and give the child everything it asks for because you want to be needed as a loving parent, because you really need to be seen as a loving parent.

So that's the dynamic of being afraid of not needing something you want, in childhood.

### **Using "Need" to order life**

If you fear losing a friend, what you're really fearing is finding out that you don't need that friend in order to be happy. If you fear losing money, if you fear being poor, what you fear is realizing that you don't need things that money buys you to be happy. You can be afraid of losing your health because you don't want to know that if you were not healthy, you could still be happy. You could be afraid of being stupid, because you don't want to know that you could be happy without being smart.

In other words, I'm afraid of not being loved because I believe I need it to be happy. But I believe I need it to be happy because I'm afraid that if I don't need it, then I might not want it. And I'm afraid of not wanting it because I do want it.

Deep down inside, I know I don't need it in order to be happy. So there must be something wrong with me for needing something I don't need. Now if I could need something I don't need, I could also want something I don't want. Or not want something I do want because I really don't need it. And so since I don't really need anything, I could want what I don't want, not want what I do want. Want it, not want it. My God, I could go crazy!

If I don't need anything, how do I order my life? How do I justify my wants?

### **What's wrong with me?**

If I could be happy not having what I want, I might not want it enough to get it, and there would really be something wrong with me. What's wrong with me is that I don't have enough freedom, that's what's wrong me, that's why I'm unhappy. What's wrong with me is that I don't have enough mobility. What's wrong with me is that I don't have enough success. What's wrong with me is that I don't have enough money. What's wrong with me is that I'm stupid, I'm thick. I don't learn very well. I don't change very easily. That's what's wrong with me. What's wrong with me is that I'm lazy. What's wrong with me is I'm unkind. I'm unloving. I'm selfish. That's what's wrong with me.

I know what's wrong with me, I'm not loved. I'm afraid of being alone. What's wrong with me is that I'm weak willed. I don't want to know that this is not what is wrong with me, that I could be happy without some personality attribute. When I fear losing something, what I'm really fearing is realizing that I don't need it to be happy.

If you fear a thing enough you run head long into it, in order to relieve the fear or to relieve the anxiety. You're somehow wanting to prove that you don't need it in order to be happy. And at the same time, you are afraid of seeing that you don't need it in order to be happy, and believing that the only way to see that you don't need it in order to be happy is to actually make it happen and deprive yourself and then live through it, knowing that you'll get over it eventually. And then, of course, since you're doing it with that fear, you live through it miserably and unhappily, too.

### **What if I give up wanting to live?**

My only answer to those of you who are afraid you will give up your wanting to be healthy, is that although you say that you know you wanted to be healthy, I say to you that because you're unhappy, you're lying. That an unhappy person lies even when you're telling the truth. Sure you want to be healthy but you are more concerned with being unhappy than about being unhealthy. You're more concerned with being afraid of being unhealthy, and you're thinking that's the same as wanting to be healthy. So to the degree that you're unhappy, to that

degree you may be considering and believing that wanting not to be unhealthy is the same as wanting to be healthy.

We will turn to things that, even though they destroy our health, will make us happier. How do you account for drug addicts and alcoholics? When you're in touch with wanting to be healthy, you are becoming healthier. You are tending toward health. When you're wanting to be healthy, you're not going to do things to be unhealthy. You can only do things that would be unhealthy when you're wanting something else, and, perhaps, at the same time, not wanting to be unhealthy.

Wanting is only in terms of when there's still a question about it; it's only in response to that questioning that you could not want it. How can it always keep coming to be a question, "do I want to be healthy?" Because my unhappiness has led me away from it, that something that I have wanted has been exactly opposite to it.

So if you're not tending towards your health, when you're realizing that you're wanting to, that's all you need to do. And that's it. Now you want to again. That never will be contradicted until you actually contradict it. That will continue to be so until you contradict it by wanting something else when you want not to be unhappy.

And if there's something you want in order not to be unhappy that contradicts your health, you'll choose that if you believe you need it not to be unhappy, to save you from your unhappiness, drugs for example.

## Questions for Reflection

What do you fear losing (e.g., your money, your health, your intimate partner. . .)

If you knew that you could be happy without what you fear losing, would you still want what you fear losing, knowing that *nothing* makes a difference in your happiness?

Listen to your conversation for a day. Do you justify your wantings in any way, however trivial (“I want to eat lunch now, it’s about time.”)? Upon reflection, are you justifying your wantings to yourself, or are you making a communication to whom you’re speaking to, purely for their sake?

What do you want to do that you feel you need a *reason* to do?

### **Meditation for the Week**

- If you're not tending towards your health, when you're realizing that you're wanting to, that's all you need to do. And that's it. Now you want to again.