

# **The Option Method Institute**

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

[www.ChooseHappiness.net](http://www.ChooseHappiness.net)

**Wanting to be unhappy to the right degree**

**Wanting vs. Needing**

**Not knowing what you want**

**Shame**

**Getting Happier**

From

**November 11, 1995 Lecture**

**Bruce Di Marsico**

## Outline

Wanting to be unhappy to the right degree

- There are social norms about the right degree of unhappiness in many situations.
- Many people who seek help for unhappiness want to be unhappy in the “right” way

Wanting vs. Needing

- Wanting is being happier if you get it, and not unhappy if you don't.
- Needing is being unhappy if you don't get it.
- Needing doesn't add any effectiveness to wanting.

Not knowing what you want

- The most interesting question is "Now what do I want?"
- If you don't know, wait and watch what happens.

Shame

- True forgiveness is knowing that there's nothing to forgive.
- The point of the Option Method is *not* that we should be happy.

## Introduction

This is the conclusion of the December 11, 1995 lecture. In it, Bruce Di Marsico sums up the attitude of the happy person about his or her future and past.

He discusses social norms about the right degree of unhappiness in many situations. For example, when a student receives a low grade, the teacher often expects the student to be mildly chastised, not either cheerful or suicidal. Many people who seek help for unhappiness feel they are not being unhappy to the socially “correct” degree, and want to be unhappy in the “right” way.

He describes “wanting” as being happier if you get it, and not unhappy if you don't, while “needing” is being unhappy if you don't get it. And, in comparing, for example, wanting to drive home safely and needing to drive home safely, we find that needing doesn't add any effectiveness to wanting.

For the happy person, the most interesting question is "Now what do I want?" And if you don't know, wait and watch what happens. Eventually, you will find that you want to sleep, eat, or do some other natural human function.

Relative to the past, true forgiveness of yourself is knowing that there's nothing to forgive. The point of the Option Method is *not* that we should be happy. Whatever you were in the past, now you can enjoy getting happier.

## READINGS

### **Wanting to be unhappy to the right degree**

Anything you're unhappy about, you believe is worth being unhappy about, so why would you want that changed?

Why does anybody want to have their unhappiness changed? Only because at some point in your life you're not so sure. You always thought your unhappiness was based on a kind of wisdom. And now you're experiencing some unhappiness and you're not so sure it's so wise. Usually people believe they know the right things to be unhappy about, but they've gone too far. They find themselves having symptoms.

They have uncontrollable rage or tears or sadness or something, and their real problem is not that they're unhappy but they're afraid they've gone too far. So when I ask you, why would a person not want to be unhappy about what they're unhappy about? I don't know anyone who doesn't want to be unhappy about what they're unhappy about. I've only known people who've thought maybe they've gone too far and maybe it's causing them to not have right judgment or be the right kind of person that they ought to be. And they're not so sure about its footing and its foundation, and that's what they would like to explore.

So they would like you to tell them, if you're a therapist of any sort, that either it's normal or it's not normal or there's something we can do about it. Everybody who goes for therapy of any sort is going because they're unhappy. But why are they going? Because they're afraid they've gone too far, that their unhappiness has taken a turn that is not good for them. That unhappiness is not all it's cracked up to be.

Unhappiness is supposed to be good for me. And now I find myself lonely or penniless or frightened or without a job or sick. And I have this way by being a miserable cuss or a frightened person, but not because I didn't want to be unhappy. I want to be unhappy but the right way.

### **Wanting vs. Needing**

The difference between wanting and needing is a difference in belief. It's called wanting when you know that you'll be happy if you get what you want or you avoid what you don't want. You'll be happy if you don't get killed going home, and you'll be happy if you get home by a certain time, *et cetera*. That's called wanting. That's wanting to get home safely and wanting to get home enjoyably.

Needing to get home safely is the feeling that you'll be unhappy if you don't get home on time or if you don't get home safely, if you don't get home the way you want. That causes the feeling called need. Now you need to have those things to not be unhappy. Because, see, you threatened yourself, you've believed in being

unhappy if these things didn't happen or they weren't avoided. If you say, boy, if I got into an accident I'd be a mess, mentally somehow, emotionally. Now you need to stay safe and not get into an accident to keep yourself from not being unhappy. All you are is worried. That's unhappiness. That's called need. You're not just simply wanting to get home safely, which is the only thing that's really going to work anyway.

If it was true that worrying would work or needing could work, what would make it true? What would set it into motion? It would be already you knowing what you wanted. In other words, a person doesn't bother putting themselves through the pain of needing, except to achieve what they already knew they wanted. So why do you need the needing? The wanting is the only effective part in there. The fact that you're ever going to do any of those things to get you where you want to be is only going to be because you've been wanting it. You've been wanting to succeed. You've been wanting to be healthy.

You've been wanting to get what you want. And the fact that you use need in order to motivate yourself is just simply nothing. It just has nothing to do with anything and it won't work. But it'll make you feel like you need it. You'll feel according to what you think you ought to feel, and if you think you need to feel need, that's what you'll feel. But it won't make it true—in fact.

### **Not knowing what you want**

You're always doing what you think is best. Now what do you want, is really the only point. Let's say you've been unhappy every day of your life up 'til now. So what? What do you want now? You know what you don't want, lots of times in life. And then you ask yourself, "Well, what do I want?"

"But I don't know what I want." What do you want when you don't know what you want? I want to go to sleep or I want to watch television or I want to eat, or the human things, the family things, stuff like that. Usually the feeling of not knowing what to do is not knowing what you're supposed to do or what you should do, because you don't have to know what you want to do.

Don't do anything and see what happens. You'll do something. It won't be too long before you get up and go to the bathroom, or you'll be at the refrigerator or on the phone or picking up a magazine or writing a note or something. You can always treat yourself very lightly, very gently. Not as a serious undertaking but sort of like a flower that you nurture and let grow and bloom and blossom.

And if some things are in your way, in so far as you can get rid of them, get rid of them. And if there's more that you'd like just because you like it, want it. You want more sunlight? Then want more sunlight. Warmer climate? Want it. There is nothing that was written on your birth certificates about what you are supposed to do after you were born. It just says your name, weight, things like that. And it

doesn't say "supposed to be great success or will be rich, supposed to forgive people."

### **Shame**

One of the greatest problems with unhappiness, when we're trying to help people be happy, is for them to learn how to forgive themselves. There's a saying we have in Option: "True forgiveness is knowing that there's nothing to forgive." You've never done anything ever in your whole lives to be ashamed of. You just believed you have. You've never done anything in your life to be ashamed of. You have merely believed you have. Things like that become axioms when you start exploring and you find out that it's always true.

We never find real shame. We only find people who believe they ought to be ashamed. If you look at your life you can't find anything that you really ought to be ashamed of, only what you believed you ought to be ashamed of. You really, probably could see pretty easily that there are no obstacles to you're being really happy, if you are willing to look. And I think one of the glories of the Option Method is that it frees you up to realize that. Since you're not at fault and you quickly come to know you're not at fault, you can start to see this. So the whole point of the Option Method is to bring us to understand that it's not a mystery that we get unhappy, not to learn that we are at fault for our unhappiness or that we should be happy.

### **Getting Happier**

If you believe you should be unhappy, you will be. If you believe you should be happy, that means you're going to be unhappy. And when you believe you should be anything, you already are unhappy. And the only question is: is that necessary for you to achieve what you want?

And you'll find a very beautiful thing happens as a person works on their unhappiness as they see fit, according to what they want to deal with, they actually physically change and get happier and happier and happier. Nobody has to tell them what they ought to deal with or what they should deal with. If they have nothing to deal with, oh boy, then real work can be done. Then that's lots of fun.

*This concludes the series of study guides based on the November 11, 1995 lecture.*

## Questions for Reflection

Make a list of social events that you have attended: funerals, parties, etc.  
 For each of them, was there a “right” or “proper” emotion for the event?  
 If so, what degree of the emotion (from mild to intense) is considered appropriate?

Make a list of things or circumstances you need.  
 Do you also want these things?  
 What is needing them adding to your wanting them?  
 If you feel that you need something, but don’t want it, ask yourself repeatedly,  
 “why do I need this”, and see if you find a want behind the need.

What do you want most now?  
 And now?  
 And now?  
 Wait and watch for a while what you do. What did you do? Perhaps, breathe?  
 What else?

And what do you want most now?  
 And now?  
 And now?

And now?

### **Meditation for the Week**

- The most interesting question is, "Now what do I want?" And if you don't know, wait and watch what happens.