

The Option Method Institute

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

www.ChooseHappiness.net

Understanding the Option Method

Bruce Di Marsico

Unhappiness Is Not Wrong

UNHAPPINESS IS SUFFERING

First, in the personal experience of it, unhappiness is suffering. Unhappiness is feeling bad. It is for many the feeling of experiencing evil in their lives. It is a distressful state for the person who is unhappy. Unhappiness is feeling, to some degree, helpless in the face of the "unhappy" event. People feel threatened, hopeless, confused, powerless, lost, or in some way that something is "really wrong". They can feel unlucky or otherwise vulnerable to whatever chance brings their way. They worry that they'll never know when misfortune will strike. They're scared, nervous to a degree, and probably "coping" every day, ignoring the fear in the back of their minds which we are all supposed to live with as a part of life. No one has all the power they need to make sure they will always overcome the things they fear. People suffer in their hearts and minds and bodies from the uncertainty of eventual unhappiness. The world of suffering people believes that some unhappiness is inescapable.

UNHAPPINESS IS NOT A BEHAVIOR

Although there are many kinds of unhappiness,, each demonstrates the suffering of the- unhappy person. If the behavior of the unhappy person is expressive of unhappiness, then it is. If the physical expression is not indeed an expression of an unhappiness believed in, no matter how it looks, then it is not unhappiness. Unhappiness is first and foremost, and only, a way of thinking. Although thinking for the human always has a physical counterpart, the physical manifestation (be it an interior feeling and/or an expressed behavior) is nonetheless caused by the believed way of thinking of the human.

UNHAPPINESS DOES NOT CAUSE UNHAPPINESS

In any case, no matter how unattractive an unhappy person may seem, or the expressions of unhappiness, no matter how dangerous they seem, unhappiness is still unhappiness, not evil. Unhappiness no matter how expressed, or what kind, or style, or nature can never in itself cause further unhappiness, save to the fearful, and then it is their own belief that is the true cause. Although one kind, or many kinds, of unhappiness may touch on your fears or beliefs, it is still merely unhappiness

PEOPLE DO NOT CAUSE UNHAPPINESS

My point in stressing this is to warn against the error of believing that an unhappy person is a cause of unhappiness in others, or even to herself or himself. It is an error to think of unhappiness as a truth about a person. It is, of course, an error of belief of the person about herself/himself. The person as whole being cannot cause unhappiness any more than can any other thing.

UNHAPPINESS IS A BELIEF ALONE

It is the belief alone which makes the person experience what seems like unhappiness to herself/himself. If there is anything we know to be wrong it is the belief that is held by the person, not the suffering human. The belief in evil and unhappiness is not wrongfully held, the belief is what is wrong. It is held like humans are rightfully able to hold any belief they believe in.

IT IS NOT WRONG TO SUFFER

If we came across a broken, bleeding person who fell from a building, it would be a rare person who would believe that the person was wrong to be lying there suffering. We would not believe he was wrong to be suffering since he fell from such a height. We would not question his suffering. It is not wrong to fall down once you've slipped over the edge with no support. You may have believed that you will not have an accident, but will stand firm. It is a mistaken belief in this case, and there are consequences of being in error like this. The actual damage and hurt of falling is not the fault of the victim.

HOLDING A BELIEF

Once a belief (like the one about unhappiness) is held to be true it is held as a truth, not as if it were merely a belief. The truth that is indeed true is that unhappiness is merely a belief, and therefore it can be questioned authentically, innocently, and objectively. The objectivity with which we will question that belief is not to be considered contrary to the compassion and understanding we have of the suffering person. We do not in fact, and in reality, question a person.

We do not question their right to any thought or belief or way of being, or even their way of feeling. What we question is a belief. We, by questioning it, expose it as a mere belief that can, indeed, be questioned.

PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BE HAPPY OR UNHAPPY

To be impatient with unhappy persons because they continue in their unhappiness may be believing that people should rid themselves of unhappiness. That would be to deny or forget that they are unhappy because they believe it is a necessary and inescapable truth about themselves. That they don't have that belief is an impossibility. Who would or could ever be unhappy otherwise? All unhappy people believe it is necessary to be unhappy. That's why we ask, "Why...?" etc.

TWO UNHAPPY BELIEFS

There are two judgments one can make about unhappiness, either of are merely another form of unhappiness. These two opinions of unhappiness are the perpetrators of unhappiness. They each make unhappiness seem other than what it is, and therefore perpetuate the mystery of the Unhappiness is simply what it is, no more, no less; no other than feeling a way you don't like. Unhappiness is not good, nor is it bad.

NOT GOOD, NOT BAD, NOT REAL

The belief that it is good only praises it, and proclaims a value and usefulness to that very most undesirable state that mankind has always wanted to escape. The belief that it is bad only promotes hate for it, and proclaims it to be something fearful and mysterious. Both attitudes fail to acknowledge that any unhappiness is merely a belief and an illusion of the unhappy, fearful person alone. It is not something real to fear. To fear that something is real does not make it real. It is, at most, undesirable: period. That we don't want it is the second most honest thing we can say about it. That it is not real is the most honest acknowledgment.

PRAISING THE CAPTOR

To praise unhappiness is to deny that we don't want it. It is like the Helsinki Syndrome. We have

been captured by an enemy (which we believe is inescapable), so we try to come to good terms with our captor; even to loving it. The worst fear and greatest fantasy of escaped captives must be that their beloved captor may come to visit again and be welcomed with open arms.

HATE IS FEAR

Likewise, to hate unhappiness is also to deny that we simply don't want it, and believe it is something, in itself, to fear.

To fear unhappiness is another fear, It will never eliminate unhappiness. To find good in unhappiness is also another fearful stare wherein we condemn ourselves to believing we actually desire it, and therefore we will have to fear its reappearance whenever it might be "good" for us.

CHOICE

To believe that we either welcome unhappiness as a good, natural sign of our caring and sanity, or fear that we will be visited by unhappiness against our wills; are both the same unhappy belief.

We have believed that it is good and naturally necessary to be unhappy; we believed we needed it to be saner, and therefore happier in the long run. We have, therefore, had to fear that we will get unhappy even when we don't want it, because it is natural to our desire not to be crazy.

CRAZY VS. HAPPY

Because we have believed that happiness is antithetical to our values when we don't get what we desire, we have believed that if we maintain our desires in the face of threat or loss we would be crazy (somehow against ourselves) if we were still happy. That belief is what we question by using the Option Method.

THE TRUTH

Therefore, the beginning point, the Great Truth we start with, is that we know that people believe that unhappiness is necessary, and that is why they are unhappy, it is almost beside the point to believe that people get unhappy, or make themselves unhappy. Maybe in some enlightened sense you might someday benefit in seeing it that way, but never instead of, or before, you fully understand that they believe they must be unhappy, and are suffering because they believe it is an inescapable truth. Unhappiness is simply believing; not being, or getting, or making, or doing unhappiness.

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On Owing and Debts,
And Freedom, Forgiveness and Gifts:

CHARITY

One does not have charity (gracious love) *toward* another. One has charity, or not, in oneself, as oneself.

Charity is an attitude, a characteristic of the possessor; not a garment to be displayed, or a performance to be given for someone. Charity is not an action or a behavior, albeit sincere.

The concept of turning the other cheek, or walking the extra mile, is charity, not because the acts are a kindness to another (Who knows if they are?), but because they come from an attitude of peace and happiness that is free to see the other as not frightening or not owed these freely given gifts.

Gifts, in order to be gifts, are precisely NOT OWED. Otherwise, they would be payment of debts. Charity (Xaris or xarisma) means free, gratis, grace, a gift of freedom for the one who possesses it. He or she who possessed this grace was seen as charismatic, inward qualities shining out attractively and noticed by others. This was sometimes portrayed in art as a halo or aurora. By extension it meant to the Greeks (and Christian Greeks) comeliness, beauty, loveliness, lovingness, etc. In all cases it was known as the quality of the gifted one, not as it might be expressed to another in gifts to them.

Not as the modern notion of GIVING, GIVING, GIVING. That is exactly what the unloving would want it to mean; for others who are charitable to give to them. Since when is any grace defined by those who do not have it? Those without charity are the least competent to define it—and the most likely to define it as another's giving. The truly charitable do not presume to define it for others; they just are free and expressively grateful.

Giving to the poor is not charity because the poor are needy or deserving, but because the giver is free to give whatever they give, in fact, the giver may be as poor as the poor they give to. There is no reward for charity because it is not a task or an earning work. It is like throwing fish into the sea. What is the reward? It is more like a laugh, a smile, a song. It is an inward state that seems to be expressed, and others may notice, sometimes because they are the recipient (dare I say, inadvertently, by time and circumstance) of the grateful expression. Certainly giving to the poor, or otherwise taking care of the needy, is not notable for what is done. The "contribution" is infinitesimal to the whole body of possibilities.

The person with Charity feels grateful. Only they know what form that gratitude takes. If they give, it is from that gratefulness, not because the other "needs" or deserves something from them. Ultimately defined, Charity means nothing if not happiness in the individual Expressions of so-called charity mean nothing like charity unless they come from freely, happily, choosing one's own expression of joy.

No One Owes Anyone Anything

If I can have no more than what I can get (and keep) by myself, then no one is to blame. There is nothing that anyone should do for me. If I trust another, then that is my choice. They do not owe me to perform or deliver for me, or be as good for me as I believe I would be for me. Neither do they owe me to be as good for me as I think they should. Each person can only act as he believes

is best for himself.

Happiness is releasing the world from its so-called obligations to me. Nothing and no one is supposed to be better for me, or is supposed to be in any way different than what it is.

This is true forgiveness: there is nothing to forgive because there are no debts, nothing that any should do for me.

To be really happy; forgive everyone for everything in the past, present and future. They have done, are doing, and will do all they can; the best they know how.

Bruce M. Di Marsico,
Montclair, June 12, 1993