

The Option Method Institute

Education based on the teachings of Bruce Di Marsico

www.ChooseHappiness.net

Going off to College

Bruce Di Marsico

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What causes unhappiness? Why are we unhappy? Well, the Option Method helps us to see that all behavior comes from our feelings, our emotions, which are themselves judgments. Our emotions do not happen to us. Now, we have in our vocabulary that our emotions happen to us: "That really hurt me." "It made me feel bad." "You made me feel this way." "You made me feel that way." We speak about all of our feelings as very passive things that we happen to receive and they just happen to us. Our unhappiness just happens to us. That's always our experience whenever we're unhappy. That it happened to us; we didn't choose it. But it didn't happen to us. It was a judgment that we made, and perhaps I could demonstrate that.

There's a family of a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, and I'll throw in one other person who's not part of that family, a stranger who is walking down the street. Outside the family home, the older sister is going off to college. That's the simple event. She's leaving for school, and she's saying goodbye. To that event, there are many emotional reactions, and each of those four people that are left all have a different emotional response. Now, to show that the emotions just don't happen to them, let me show you that it's based on their judgment of what they see happening.

The mother of the daughter is crying. She's really feeling bad. Why? Because all she's able to see is that she's losing her daughter. She doesn't believe she needs to go off to college. She's going to miss her, and she sees the whole situation as one of loss, so she feels bad. The father, he has sort of mixed feelings. He feels good about it, and he feels bad about it. He has both feelings. Why? Because he sees it's really a good thing, and it's good for her. She's going to meet the kind of people she wants to be with. She's going to get an education. It's going to help

her, and he feels good about that. That's why. And he feels bad because he is going to miss his little girl. They've loved each other very much, and he sees that there's going to be sort of a gap, and he sees some loss, and he feels bad about that, but he also feels good.

Her younger brother, who's about ten years old, is just absolutely overjoyed. The big pest is going away to school. Now he can use the telephone whenever he wants, and he's really just very happy about it. The stranger walks down the street, and he sees this whole thing going on, and he feels absolutely nothing about it. Why? He has no opinion. He has no judgment about what's going on, and he just continues on his way.

Each of the emotional responses is seen very clearly in this example. I picked it and made it simple and set it up that way, and I loaded it to show that each emotional response came from the judgment that was made. When we judge the event as bad, we feel bad about it. When we judge it as good, we feel good about it. When we judge it as both good and bad, we feel both things about it. When we don't judge it at all, we feel nothing about it. That's really where it's at. And so we try to take this view consistently and see that kind of phenomena in all of our behavior. That whenever we're feeling bad, it's because somehow we have judged something as bad. That we cannot feel bad without having first made the judgment, the decision, that it was bad and that all of our unhappiness comes indeed from that phenomenon, from that dynamic of seeing events and calling them bad.

That's why both you and I could witness something, and something identical could happen to both of us, and I might feel bad about it, and you might feel fine about it. It might not bother you at all. In fact, you might even feel good about it. We could both go to the same play. You might think it was great, and I might think it

was horrible. You really had a good time and feel good about it, and I really feel bad about it. We might be married, we might have two different feelings about our child. It goes on that way. If it's true that we, then, are the ones who make our emotions by our judgments, then it simply cannot be true that things make us feel that way. It simply is not true, for instance, that that daughter, that daughter who was going off to school, made her mother feel bad. Which very frequently, in many situations, would be very much what she'd be prone to thinking, and some would say to her, "Boy, you really made your mother feel bad," and it was somehow her fault.

If that were true, then how come her father didn't feel bad and her brother didn't feel bad and the stranger didn't feel bad, if she's the one who made the emotion? Was it the daughter who made the mother feel bad? Or the mother's view, her own personal judgment and belief about what happened?

So what we find is that it's our beliefs about things that cause our emotions.