

*The*  
OPTION METHOD

# The Myth of Unhappiness

*The Collected Works of Bruce Di Marsico  
on The Option Method and Attitude*



An Overview of The Option Method \* Happiness \* Unhappiness

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on

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Edited and with commentary by Aryeh Nielsen

Foreword by Frank Mosca

Introduction by Deborah Mendel

With contributions by Wendy Dolber



**The Option Method: The Myth of Unhappiness**  
*The Collected Works of Bruce Di Marsico on The Option Method and Attitude*  
Volume 1

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Dialogues in Self Discovery LLC  
P.O. Box 43161, Montclair, NJ 07043  
[www.DialoguesInSelfDiscovery.com](http://www.DialoguesInSelfDiscovery.com)

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Design by Williams Writing, Editing & Design  
[www.williamswriting.com](http://www.williamswriting.com)

**Volume 1**

Paperback, ISBN 978-1-934450-01-7

**Volume 2**

Paperback, ISBN 978-1-934450-02-4

**Volume 3**

Paperback, ISBN 978-1-934450-03-1

Printed in the United States of America

*Listen to your heart,  
for that is where knowledge acts.  
Do only what attracts you.  
Do what you feel like.  
Cor Super Ratio. The Heart above logic.*

—Bruce Di Marsico

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## *Foreword by Frank Mosca*

THE READER OF THESE WORKS IS GOING TO FIND A ROADMAP TO THE vast and varied workings of Bruce Di Marsico's mind. But despite the sometime appearances of complexity, there will be a road sign pointing always, always in one direction: to your happiness. That is the key to remember as you set out on your journey. I know that this is what has sustained and enriched my own journey, one that began decades ago when I was fortunate to come upon Bruce's ideas and then had the great fortune to meet and learn personally from him. This brief introduction is really simply one person's experience of Bruce, of The Option Method and what that has meant in my life.

First at the core, it has meant everything. It has meant ongoing happiness to the degree that I learned to remember my happiness should I forget it. It has meant the disentangling of what seemed to be impossible knots of contradictions, complexities and conundrums that seemed never to yield to whatever I would bring to bear to try and help myself. The image of Bruce like Alexander cutting the Gordian knot of human misery comes to mind. But it was not an act of hubris, but one of immense insight that allowed him to see through the apparent insurmountability of the problem of human happiness. He could then dissolve what stood in the way and open to view that most profound but simple truth: your happiness is always yours; it is in fact what and who you are. Beliefs are the artificial blockages to that direct and incredible knowledge. Questions are the key to removing them.

Like Socrates, from whom he drew some inspiration, Bruce relished the dialogue and the coming to the key "I don't know" moment. The moment when we stand on the edge of two worlds. The one we could now leave behind. The one we have constructed with the aid of culture in all its forms and configurations. Once the veil

of our dedication to the pseudo certainty of what we think we know is rent, we are naked to the possibility of taking that giant step to acknowledging the unshakeable truth of our own happiness now and in every moment we are privileged to allow ourselves to know it.

As you read these volumes it will at times seem that Bruce may be going off in endless tangents of discussions. But these are not tangents at all. Remember, that one blinding truth about happiness is resisted by us in almost endless ways. His students and clients raised doubts and difficulties at every turn as they wrestled with the import of surrendering their beliefs in some apparently necessary miseries, some absolutely irreducible requirements to be unhappy. Remember, our whole world rests upon these assumptions. It is no wonder then that Bruce brought his particular eloquence to elaborate and draw out incredible subtleties of argument, wit, pure intellectual power to counter these objections and to continue thereby to hold out hope to those who continued to bury themselves in needless labyrinths of their own making. But he was patient; it was his signature strength. He knew what seemed to us to be at stake, and he wanted for all who would to hear that joy that he himself was living.

So, don't hold back in your engagement with Bruce; he will not disappoint you. In all these decades, he has been my constant companion in life and even in death. His words, his vision, his immense verve in being willing to take on your fears and doubts with extraordinary intellectual skill will get you to that place you yearn for. So it has been with me, through so many unexpected turns and twists my life has taken.

Now in my seventies, I am filled with joy at the prospect of his work being made widely available. He has shone a bright, inextinguishable light into the shadows and darkness of the human condition. Do not fear it. It will not consume but will enlighten and elevate. I am so glad you are taking this opportunity to discover this for yourself. Written with deep gratitude,

*Frank Mosca  
May 5th, 2010  
Hampton Bays, New York*

## *Guide to the Collected Works*

*The Collected Works of Bruce Di Marsico* SPAN THREE VOLUMES, which together constitute his explanation of the truth about happiness: that we are already perfectly happy, and unhappiness is merely the belief that we could somehow not be.

These writings are created from lectures and writings created over a period of a quarter century. Bruce taught a number of extended courses on Option, and this book attempts to follow the general order of presentation in his teaching work, and to serve as a course in The Option Method and Attitude for those who were not able to experience Bruce firsthand.

The course progresses in this manner: first, an introductory overview is presented (*Overview of The Option Method*). This is followed by core Option concepts (*Happiness, Unhappiness, Feelings, Beliefs, Desires, Emotions, Motivation, Wanting, Doing, Knowing*).

Next are the most immediate, everyday implications of these teachings (*Relationships, Believing Yourself, Forms of Unhappiness*), more advanced implications (*Arguments against Happiness, Behavior, Myths*), and then the most esoteric implications of Option (*Happiness without Reason, Enjoying Your Happiness, Option Mysticism*).

Only at this point is *Practicing The Option Method* considered. The Option Attitude is the foundation of The Option Method. Just as “technically correct” music empty of emotion is an empty exercise, so is The Option Method practiced without the Option Attitude. Bruce did not cover the practice of The Option Method until well into his courses, so that the fundamental Option Attitude was well-established in those who used the Method. He demonstrated and taught that once the Option attitude is well-understood, the practice of the Method flows organically.

Finally, *Stories and Meditations* and *A Comprehensive Overview* provide a summing up and review of Option teachings.

The material, while presenting an overall arc of argument, has many loopbacks and repetitions. Bruce often said the same thing in many different ways so that everyone would have a chance to understand the implications of knowing that unhappiness cannot happen to us.

The truth of happiness is simple. Why does it take three volumes to explain? Because the belief in unhappiness takes many forms, and is incredibly complex. But to be happy, there is nothing to know. All the medicine contained within these volumes is to help release unhappy beliefs, and as they fall away, they become of no importance. After studying the *Collected Works*, you will know far less than you did when you started. What you will no longer “know” and believe is that you have to be unhappy. And you will find that, without these beliefs, you will know your own happiness.

## The three volumes of *The Collected Works of Bruce Di Marsico*

### *Volume I*

An Overview of The Option Method  
Happiness  
Unhappiness

The first part of Volume I provides an overview of The Option Method, and touches on all aspects of Option, to provide a framework for understanding the details. The remainder of this volume explains happiness and unhappiness: happiness is what you are. Unhappiness is believing that what you are is somehow wrong.

### *Volume II*

Feelings, Beliefs, and Desires  
Emotions  
Motivation  
Wanting, Doing, and Knowing

Relationships  
Believing Yourself  
Forms of Unhappiness  
Arguments against Happiness

Volume II starts by explaining how unhappiness happens. Believing, or predicting the consequences of an event for how you feel, is how emotions happen. Why does unhappiness happen? It is the (unnecessary) use of emotions to motivate your wanting. It also discusses happiness in the context of relationships, how happiness is synonymous with perfect self-trust, and the forms that unhappiness takes. It concludes by dismantling arguments commonly made against happiness.

*Volume III*  
Behavior  
Myths  
Happiness without Reason  
Enjoying Your Happiness  
Option Mysticism  
Practicing The Option Method  
Stories and Meditations  
A Comprehensive Overview

Volume III addresses myths: the myths that behavior has anything to do with happiness, and myths such as “the meaning of life.” It continues with discussing how we need no reasons to be happy, and then discusses enjoying your happiness, as you get more and more in touch with it (perhaps ultimately manifested as a form of mysticism). It explains how to practice The Option Method to help you or others get more in touch with their happiness. It concludes contemplations on happiness in the form of stories and meditations, and two summaries of Option teachings, one comprehensive and one reductive.

# An Introduction to Option

*April 1, 1973*

In this talk, Bruce Di Marsico introduces The Option Method.

He illustrates, via a story of a young woman going off to college, that whenever we are unhappy, we believe there is something to be unhappy about. He describes a mother unhappy about the event, a sister happy about the event, and a stranger neither happy nor unhappy about the event, demonstrating that the event does not cause happiness or unhappiness, but rather the judgment of the event does.

He further clarifies that, even in situations where almost everyone would be unhappy about something, everyone has their own reasons. For example, of three married people who are unhappy about their spouses' extramarital intimacies, one might be sadly unhappy that they were not "attractive enough" to "prevent" their spouse from straying, a second may be fearfully unhappy that they may catch a disease, and a third may be angrily unhappy that their spouse violated an implicit agreement.

He then discusses that, while unhappiness is often a successful motivator, happiness can always be a better motivator than unhappiness: love of wealth instead of fear of poverty; desire for changes in society instead of hatred for society as it is.

He also discusses some of the fundamental reasons for unhappiness: unhappiness often arises because of a fear of not being motivated to want what we are already motivated to want. Unhappiness is also used to prove that we're "good" people to ourselves.

We often recognize that other people don't need to be unhappy about what we do, but not that we don't need to be unhappy about what they do.

Not being unhappy about something does not imply being happy about it. Regarding things we don't want, we can be neither happy nor unhappy with them.

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ALL of us in one way or another are striving for happiness. We may all have different words for it; we may all describe it as a search for truth or the search for fulfillment, for meaning, for inner peace. But beyond all of that, I guess the word that we use is happiness. So I'm going to sort of use that word happiness as a catchall word. What I mean by happiness is for you to define, that which you are always endlessly searching for, that which you are always endlessly striving for. Some people call it self-actualization; some people call it the fulfillment of human potential; some people call it joy.

Since we all strive for happiness, I guess the big mystery to most of us is, why are we unhappy? And by unhappiness, I mean just what it sounds like: that which is not conducive to happiness, that which somehow prevents happiness; those experiences, those feelings that are negative, that are uncomfortable, that are debilitating, those experiences that are self-defeating. Unhappiness. We have thousands of words to describe it, ranging from mild irritation or a slight disappointment to war and rage, depression, suicide. We have all kinds of words to describe what we feel when we feel unhappy. I guess we're a little deficient in our vocabulary regarding happy feelings. I've been told, by semanticists, that the words for unhappiness far outweigh the words for happiness.

The Option Method is a method of searching for happiness and achieving it. And we begin with a certain kind of exploration of ourselves. We find that unhappiness is not so mysterious; that it refers to some very basic phenomena, which are based on a judgmental approach we have to ourselves and to our life. And if we think about it, whenever we're unhappy about something, somewhere behind that, no matter how quietly, is a voice in us saying: That is indeed something to be unhappy about. Unhappiness, and the experience of unhappiness, proceeds from the belief that there is something to be unhappy about. Now some people believe that there are lots and lots of things to be unhappy about; some people don't believe that.

We've had a tradition in our Western society to label those of us who have been most unhappy with such labels as sick, crazy, psychotic, neurotic—all the psychiatric psychoanalytic jargon—all various ways of describing people's unhappiness. And very frequently we lose sight of that fact, that what we're talking about are unhappy people. And in understanding that, we can understand why that might be so, if

we begin with unhappiness, if we begin to look at what troubles us, what disturbs us. As a fundamental concept of unhappiness, we can begin to explore it.

Now like I said, behind all unhappiness, there's a quiet voice—sometimes not so quiet—but nonetheless very frequently a still voice saying: This is something to be unhappy about. And this we call a belief. In *The Option Method*, we describe this as the beliefs of man. People behave as they believe. Emotions are a kind of behavior. Feelings are behavior; we feel as we believe. We behave as we believe. And in looking at these beliefs, we find that some of them could have been picked up from childhood. And how many of us, as young children, learned that something was bad? Such and such a thing was something to feel bad about. And lo and behold, if that thing happens, what do we do? We feel bad about it. See that it's perfectly consistent for us to feel bad, because behind that bad feeling there's a belief that we ought to feel bad. And so when we feel happy, it's also likewise consistent because what's behind that behavior is the belief that there's something to be happy about.

I'd like to try to make clear how the belief affects the feeling. Let's say you have a situation of a young girl going off to college. She's out in front of her home with her mother, her father, her younger sister, and there's a stranger passing on the sidewalk. And she's saying goodbye to them and she's going to college. Her mother is very distraught and very unhappy; there are tears in her eyes; she's feeling very sad. She's going to miss her daughter. She believes that what's happening is really kind of bad; she can't understand why she has to go away to school—there's a perfectly good school in town. Why she has to leave her family, etc. And the mother sees the situation pretty much as something that's to be unhappy about. And so she feels unhappy about it.

Her father, on the other hand, is kind of mixed. He feels that he's going to miss his little girl a little bit and he kind of wishes she was staying home; he was just getting to know her and they were just becoming friends. But he also sees that she's going to be off with her friends at a school that she's very much looking forward to being at, and how it's going to be really helpful to her for her maturity and her intellectual growth. And so in a way, he's kind of glad, too; he's a little sad and he's a little glad that she's going away. And of course

the younger sister is overjoyed! She's just imagining having the room all to herself now, and the telephone all to herself, and nothing could be better than her big sister's going off to college. And the stranger walking down the street, he looks at the situation and he feels nothing and just walks by.

Now I use that to show you that there's one event taking place: A young woman going off to college is the event. And yet there are four different emotional reactions to that. There's a feeling good and a happy feeling about it, which the young girl felt; there's a feeling bad or an unhappy feeling, which the mother felt; there's a feeling good and bad, which the father felt; and then there's feeling nothing, which is an emotional state, which the stranger felt. The one event occurred and yet there were four different emotional responses. How do we explain that? If it was the event itself and the event itself was a good event, then everybody should have been happy about it. If the event itself was a bad event, then everybody should have been unhappy about it. If it was neither good nor bad, then everyone should have felt neither good nor bad about it.

We explain it by saying that the event in itself was just an event. The feelings about the event are based on the judgments about the event. And that the feelings we have are a result of the judgments that we make. So that if we believe a thing to be good, we feel good; if we believe it to be bad, we feel bad. Now sometimes we feel that when we feel bad, we have no choice; we just simply must feel bad. That's in the nature of feeling bad. That's exactly what it's all about. Part of feeling bad is believing that we have no choice, that we must feel bad, that we have to feel bad.

There are a number of reasons for this, which we'll explore. What stands in the way of further growth and further happiness? There are lots of things, like lack of self-confidence, despair, and depression, whatever. Almost all these phenomena are a result of some kind of judgments that we're making. And sometimes they're very mistaken judgments; sometimes we assume that we have to feel bad. We just simply assume it. And so since we assume we have to feel bad about a certain situation, we go ahead and do that. Like I said, it's inconceivable that we could do otherwise. Once we believe the thing is something to feel bad about, we are going to feel bad about it. Once we believe the thing is something to feel good about, we

will do that. But that isn't a problem for anybody—none of us are suffering from too much happiness. But a lot of us are not as happy as we'd like to be, and we never will be. And that's part of a whole search for happiness—to be happier and happier and happier. No matter how happy we are, we want to be happier.

The Option Method for achieving that is to look very carefully at what we say we're unhappy about—identifying it, whatever it is, however obvious it may seem or however subtle it may seem. Look at it; what am I unhappy about? Is it the weather? Is it the look on that other person's face? Is it the insult, the rejection? Is it the way my boss acted, the way my children acted? Whichever those things are, look at them. What are we unhappy about? And try to identify it.

So in The Option Method, what we try to do is have a person very clearly identify what they're unhappy about. Give it clarity; do not be afraid to identify it. Bring it out, look at it, somehow articulate it. Then after identifying it, we ask the most outrageous question of all, the most ridiculous question you've ever heard: Why are you unhappy about it? And I say it's ridiculous and outrageous because most of us respond: What do you mean, why am I unhappy about it? Wouldn't you be unhappy about it? Wouldn't anybody be unhappy about it? Oh, but that's the secret—that's the point. *Would* everyone be unhappy about it? And even if they were, they might all have their reasons. What's *ours*? Why are we unhappy about it? Just what is behind that?

Without assuming that we have some kind of a fantastic compelling reason, let's look and see why we'd want to do this; why would we want to look at why we're unhappy? Not because we shouldn't be unhappy. No. Because we want to be happier. Because we don't like it; unhappiness doesn't feel good on us. Oh, of course, it bothers other people, and other people would all like us to be happier and we could all go around saying: I want you all to be happier. I mean, now you fix yourselves up and you all become happier, and this is going to be a better world for me to live in. "See, now everybody just go around becoming happier." But that's not where it starts; it starts here, with each of us. If we want a better world to live in, let's at least contribute one happy person to it, one more happy person—ourselves.

And so let's remember when we begin to look at ourselves and we begin to look at why we're unhappy, we're not doing that for anybody else but ourselves to start. If this is going to be a better world,

it's going to be better because we're a happier person. So we look at ourselves because we don't like the way it fits. We don't like the way our feelings fit us; they make us uncomfortable.

I had a class this week, and it comes to mind now because I was trying to demonstrate this point. And we used an example about something that most people would be unhappy about. And it was everyone assumed that the person they loved—I think the way it was phrased was: Your wife or husband or lover was “fooling around” with somebody else. In other words, was, according to some concept, being unfaithful or falling in love with another person. And everybody agreed that they would definitely be unhappy about that, if the person they loved was fooling around with somebody else. Okay, fine. So that was a good example; almost everyone agreed that that would indeed be something for them all to be unhappy about.

And the immediate reaction to the outrageous question was: What do you mean, why am I unhappy about that? Wouldn't you be? Isn't everybody? And there was agreement; everyone was. Of course! Why not? So what we did is we had a go-round; I guess there were about 10 of us sitting there. And each person went around and said why that made them unhappy. And the reasons that each person gave were as individual and as personal and as distinct and different from every other person's there, as you can imagine. One person was unhappy about it because it made them feel insecure; it made them feel inadequate. They said they would feel that they weren't really an adequate male if their wife were fooling around with someone else, and that they felt resentment.

Another one said: I'd feel bad because I feel a kind of relief, and that makes me wonder whether I ever really loved her in the first place, and that makes me feel bad. And each person had a different reason for feeling bad—very, very different. One person said he felt bad because he might get a disease. Okay. We can't assume that everyone feels bad for the same reason and that is often a big assumption that we make. And we can't assume it about ourselves. We often do. We assume: Hey, I'm unhappy for the obvious reasons. What are the obvious reasons? The obvious reasons are sometimes not so obvious. And that exploring that can make a fantastic difference, because after we identify the first why, why we're unhappy about this, we get a chance to go further. Okay, well, now why does

that make you unhappy? What is there about that? And in exploration, sometimes this is what happens. It comes all the way down to: Hmm, I'm afraid that if I don't get unhappy about this situation, I'll never do anything to change it. And very frequently that becomes the response. "What do you mean? If I wasn't unhappy, I'd be some kind of a rotten person."

An apparently obvious thing, "Why are you unhappy that someone you love died?" brings all kinds of responses from: "Now I don't know what I'm going to do with my life" to "I don't know where my next meal is going to come from," or "If I wasn't unhappy, everyone would say I was no good and that I never loved him, and in fact, maybe I would even think that myself and it would bother me, and if I didn't mourn and I didn't feel terrible, I would be afraid that maybe I never really loved him." And so very frequently, unhappiness is some kind of a proof to us, but "Is it a proof that we need?" we can ask ourselves, since it has such disastrous effects so often, since it's a matter of destroying ourselves, eating ourselves up from the inside, damaging the things that we love around us.

On a grand scale, we know what unhappiness does socially. There's a good chance that if people were happier, there wouldn't be stealing and killing and exploiting and warring. If people were happier, they wouldn't be shooting up on dope. So unhappiness takes a very heavy toll. And maybe it does achieve some ends; maybe it is a motivator. If enough people claim it, it must be true, that because of unhappiness, we achieve quite a bit. Many a man has become a millionaire because he was afraid of poverty. But after he became a millionaire, he never gave up that fear of poverty. And he keeps his million dollars, scared to death of losing it. The fear that we use works against us, even though it works for us. The question we ask in The Option Method is: would it be possible for you, for me, to achieve the same things without using unhappiness to get it? Could that man become a millionaire because he wanted to be, because he really wanted it, not because he was scared to death of being poor? Did he have to be afraid of being poor in order to desire to be rich? How many of us will not go to a doctor because we're afraid? Do we have to be afraid of being sick before we'll want to be healthy?

And there are lots of those examples in our lives, where if we look very closely, we may find that we use unhappiness as a motivation

and we become very afraid that if we're not unhappy, we just won't be motivated. The civil rights movement in America is a good example of that. Lots of leaders in the civil rights movement used anger, used a very heightened sense of injustice and outrage; they looked around and they saw injustice. To see injustice is one thing; they got outraged about it. And they did that and it motivated them. It moved them to want to change things. Because they have this fire burning inside of them, this acid eating out their stomach, they wanted things to change; they used that to motivate themselves. The question is, could they have been motivated without the anger, without the outrage? Could they have been better leaders then?

Now this becomes a very real question, because what happened with many of these leaders is they burnt themselves out. Their anger and their fury and their outrage and their great sense of all the injustices got them angrier and angrier, made them more and more reckless, made them more and more alienated from the very people they were trying to help. Some of the most famous civil rights leaders found themselves turning against their followers and saying: You're not motivated enough to change things. I am sick of you; you're just as bad as those who oppress us. Angry at others for not sharing their anger. Turning people away. Before you know it, reducing to a very small radical group. The greatest achievements in civil rights came in the beginning. And since then, not that much has happened. And what has been most productive has been peaceful determination. That is the question: Does anger take the place of determination? Does unhappiness really take the place of determination?

And so if we explore some of the obvious things that we're unhappy about, we just may find that we don't have to be unhappy about them, that we were mistaken. It's pretty much like this: When we were a child, we tasted a certain food and it tasted horrible to us. We thought it was bad; we thought it was bad for us. We thought we would get sick on it, so we affirmed in ourselves and we took on the belief we'll never eat it again because it's bad. Okay, fine. As a child, that worked. It kept you from throwing up.

Now as an adult, is it still true though? Is it still true that we gag on spinach if we ate it? Many of us have been in for pleasant surprises; we found ourselves eating things as adults that we were surprised we could like. We were surprised that they could taste good. Beliefs

change; experiences change. Many of us are stuck with beliefs that we've taken when we were one year old, two years old, beliefs that we've inherited from other unhappy people—a whole list of things to be unhappy about. You should be unhappy about this, about that, about the other thing, and we've accepted them and we believe them, never questioning them.

We get lots of support, of course; we just look around us and find everybody else is unhappy about the same thing and we assume they have the same reasons. It just seems so obvious. So we suffer and we take our unhappiness into us and we walk around with it, and it's constantly there and we try to fight it. And once we've agreed that we have to be unhappy about something, there isn't much else to do but to blame. If I'm not going to say and I'm not going to admit that the reason I'm unhappy about something is because of some belief of mine—and I want to be happier, remember; we're all striving to be happier, that's all I really want—and if I'm not going to see that some belief of mine that's causing me to be unhappy, what's the first thing that happens? My finger starts to point. Before I know it, I'm going around like this, saying: "You make me unhappy; you did; this did; that did; the other thing did." And the fingers go flailing outwards and we're blaming everything and everybody for our unhappiness, never looking at the belief that maybe we've outgrown, that maybe doesn't fit anymore, that maybe we don't need.

A well-known therapist said that the whole neurotic struggle was simply one of the neurotic trying to convince everybody else that they're making him neurotic and getting them to change and getting power over them. Convincing everyone of that changes the world. And he said we were faced with two alternatives: Change the world, or ourselves. So many people say: Oh, it's easier to change the world than it is to change me! And we act that way, and we go on a life struggle trying to make our world very small—let's say maybe consisting of a husband, a wife, a couple of kids—making the world as small as possible and getting as much control over it as possible. Maybe a little fiefdom called a business or something and getting control over that. Narrowing the world and then getting the control over it. It seems like the way to become happy, yet it never works because it's the beliefs inside that are going to determine the happiness.

We can spend a lot of energy trying to get somebody else to change

so that we can be happy, by using our own unhappiness and telling them they are responsible for our unhappiness, that what they do makes us unhappy. Well, if that's true, you know, then in my story, that little girl that was going off to college, what she did was making her mother unhappy and she was at fault for that. Is that true or not? Well, then she also gets the credit for making her father happy, I suppose, and her sister happy. And of course I'm sure she could take the credit or the blame for making the stranger feel nothing, for being irrelevant to him—that's her fault, too.

So we have a kind of question: does our happiness or unhappiness come from us, our beliefs, or is it actually coming from the events that we say it's coming from? So we look at our own relationships. When we're unhappy with someone we love, our tendency is to point and say: If you'd only change, I'd be happier. Well, of course—no doubt. Because what we're really saying is if you change to suit my beliefs, we'd have no problem, because then my beliefs wouldn't be challenged. But see, I have a belief that when you do a certain thing, I should be unhappy about it. Now isn't it funny that if this were true, that it's the event, how come they don't agree? How come the wife says: "But you don't have to be unhappy about that when I do such and such." How come the husband says: "Yeah, well, you don't have to be unhappy when I do such and such." And we recognize it for the other person.

How many of us will really admit, and agree that that other person really *has* to be unhappy with what we do? Because they love us, do they really have to be unhappy if we're in a bad mood? Do they have to be? Couldn't they understand? Do they have to be unhappy when we're this or when we're that? When we do this or that? Most of us will not grant them that. No, they don't have to be unhappy; they could be understanding. Do we ever ask ourselves this though: do we have to be unhappy? Usually we don't get any further than: "Do we—," and then we say: "Yeah! Of course I do!" But do we? I know we've lived with these beliefs for a long time and so they become kind of obvious, we think. And we think the reasoning behind them is all well thought out, but is it?

And so one of the most fantastic things we can do for ourselves, and it's really a fantastically joyous thing, is to take something that we're unhappy about—it doesn't make any difference what it is. We

don't like feeling unhappy, right, so take whatever it is that we're unhappy about—and really go into it. Why am I unhappy about that? What's there about it? What am I getting from being unhappy? Do I really need to be? Why am I unhappy about it? And getting back to some kind of a basic belief, which may boil down to something like: I'm afraid that if I'm not unhappy about it, I'm in worse trouble. That if I'm not unhappy about it, I won't be motivated to do anything. If I'm not unhappy about it, I'm really not a good person.

And so many of us try to prove that we're good people by being unhappy. And unhappy people are unhappy people and they don't contribute much in the way of happiness to others. And we may build things; we may even build a hospital because we're terribly guilty or terribly unhappy. But how come nobody likes us? How come nobody seems really grateful for all these wonderful things that we do for other people? I was such a good person; we suffer so much. How come nobody appreciates our suffering? We've got to drum it into their heads: Look at me! Look at how much I've sacrificed to you. Look how much I've suffered for you. See how good I am! Love me. Love me for making you feel guilty. And we expect love when we give guilt. We place blame and we expect love in return. And it doesn't work and we're amazed. "Hmm, I'm such a good person." And we are good, but the thing is that we make ourselves miserable and no one else notices that we're good. One thing, you know, unhappy people just don't make your face light up. Unhappy people just don't seem to attract other people. So often in our striving to be good we think we have to be unhappy. No. Does that really have to be that way?

So what I'm hoping most to share with you is a question and that's The Option Method; it's a method of questioning. I am definitely not stating that we should not be unhappy. But what I am saying is, don't we all want to be happier? And the question that I'm sharing is, is our unhappiness really necessary?

I'm not suggesting that we have to be happy with disaster. What I was suggesting is asking: Do we have to be as unhappy as we are with it? Do we have to be unhappy at all? There are many things, which we may or may not be happy with, which we may never be happy with, but need we be unhappy with it? And I don't know that we know yet unless we look, unless we ask. Not do I have to be happy, but do I have to be *unhappy*.

Do we need the unhappiness to motivate us to do something about anything? Can we go ahead and do something about it without destroying ourselves as well?

Unhappiness *is* a fantastic motivation. Fire at your backside is a fantastic motivation. But something beautiful in front of you also works very well, and it hurts much less. Because unhappiness does sometime work very well, the next time we want something done, we'll use it again and again and again. And unfortunately, we have a history of that. Wars must work; they must work for some people or nobody would bother. But could being attracted to a more desired state of the world be better than hating the current state of the world?

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