

TOP 20 FAQs

These are the questions I am most asked by my clients - Dennis Fitzpatrick

1. How can I be happy in a difficult relationship?

I have 100% control of my own thoughts and actions. I do not have control or responsibility for my partner's thoughts and actions. Rather, I have a responsibility for my own state of mind. By using the skills taught in the 7 peaceful answers to conflict, I can maintain my inner center of peace no matter how dysfunctional my partner chooses to be at that time. For more detail, see the **2nd Living Skill: Handling Conflict**.

2. Don't we both have to learn to resolve conflict for it to work?

No. People do not change two at a time but one at a time. It is easier if both know Fair Fight Negotiation. But one person can use it and still have a victim thinker negotiate. It takes about three months of modeling for the other to learn it too. See the section on Fair Fight Negotiation in the **2nd Living Skill: Handling Conflict**.

3. Why do you say that a person misses half their life unless they meditate?

We spend most of our efforts in life to pay bills and make relationships work. The only time we spend creating what we really want is when we meditate. I teach a simple and effective method of meditation. **See the 6th Living Skill: Meditation**.

4. What are the most important Living Skills?

The most important living skills are the first two: the Second Thought and the 7 peaceful answers to conflict. When I learn not to react to others and how to use conflict to get closer to others, I can make any relationship work provided there is no active addiction like alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling or raging. The remaining living skills will enrich my life.

5. How can I change my emotion from depression to joy?

I have 100% control of my thoughts and actions. My thoughts and my actions control the emotions I feel and they in turn impact my health. If I think of doing something I enjoy like dancing, immediately my emotion changes from depression to joy. For more detail, see the **1st Living Skill: the Second Thought**.

6. How can I be happy when I am in debt?

If my happiness depends upon my mate, my job or my bank account, I am choosing a sure way to never be happy. My happiness depends upon me and my inner life, not my circumstances. See the **6th Living Skill: Meditation**.

7. What should I know about my partner before marriage?

I teach that there are 13 key questions to be asked in the dating phase of a relationship before living together. I also teach an exercise to do on the first date that will help you to get to know the other person in an authentic manner. It is also worthwhile seeing how the relationship will fare in the 5 barometers of any successful marriage. **See my book on *Dating by Brain Type***.

8. Why is dance the most important social activity we can do?

There are 9 reasons why dance is the best choice for mutual activity in a relationship. The prolonged touching in a dance is really extended foreplay. One of the most compelling reasons is a study that was done showing that only dance over swimming and other team sports offset dementia. **See my book on *Dating by Brain Type***.

9. How can I convince my mate to stop their addictive activity?

You cannot. What you can do is to stop enabling their addictive behavior. In the case of life threatening addictions such as alcohol, drugs, gambling, raging or jealousy, I recommend a 90 day separation. **See the section on *Setting Boundaries in the 2nd Living Skill*** for more details.

10. What is wrong with trying to change my partner?

It can't be done. I only have control of my own thoughts and actions. I do not have control of my partner's or my children's thoughts and actions or anyone else's. I end up spinning my wheels and driving loved ones away from me when I try to change them. I can only model the behavior I want to see in others. For more detail, see the **1st Living Skill: the Second Thought**.

11. What is wrong with complaining or venting anger? I get it off my chest.

Studies show that when I vent my anger I create more of it. The more I complain the more I find to complain about. I become an injustice collector of wrongs. What I do is what I create. See the 20 Question Forms on **Raging and Complaining**. Also see the **1st Living Skill: the 2nd Thought**.

12. Isn't the first thought that pops into my head the best one?

The first thought that pops into most people's head comes from the lizard brain (also known as the survival brain) in the cerebellum. It is usually an impulsive thought. It is the second thought from our pre-frontal cortex that distinguishes human beings from animals. For more detail see the **1st Living Skill: the Second Thought**.

13. What is wrong with sarcasm?

Sarcasm is really stuffed anger. Even in jest it drives people further apart instead of closer together. See the Experiments in the **1st Living Skill: the Second Thought**.

14. How can I free myself from worrying?

Worry is the first addiction. It precedes the other addictions. It is usually modeled by a parent or family relative. The worrier will always find something to worry about. It is a mood altering activity. If I worry, I do not have to face and solve important relationships in my life that are not working. For more detail see the **1st Living Skill: the Second Thought**.

15. Isn't the depth of our love for each other enough to make our relationship work?

No. Romeo and Juliet had a deep love for each other but their parents, the Montagues and the Capulets, could not get along. Their relationship ended in a double suicide. We can win love and lose love. Our skill in handling conflict is more important because when we resolve an important conflict we become closer than we could by sharing sunsets or any other way. The paradox is that resolving conflict produces emotional intimacy. We cannot get close to each other without conflict. See the **2nd Living Skill: Handling Conflict**.

16. Does the "power of surrender" make me a doormat to be walked on?

No. I teach that the "power of surrender" is to be used in non-abusive or unimportant situations such as going to a restaurant I don't like that my partner does like. It is one of the most important skills in developing a good relationship. I seek it out constantly. I tell my partner, "You know I do not like that restaurant but our relationship is more important so I will take you there." It produces these three benefits that cannot be gotten any other way: I stay peaceful instead of upset; I model the behavior I want my mate to use by changing the dynamic of the relationship from "I want it done my way" to "let's do it your way;" and I open the doors to my own emotional growth. See the **2nd Living Skill: Handling Conflict**.

17. Shouldn't I suffer in silence rather than set boundaries?

No. The person who suffers in silence over abusive or important issues will blow up after a while. This "peace at any price" person needs to learn to set boundaries as follows: "You are free to say anything you want. However, I will not stand here and be insulted. This does not mean I don't love you or want a divorce. It means, I won't stand here and be insulted." For more detail see the **2nd Living Skill: Handling Conflict**.

18. What's wrong with using my partner to overcome my loneliness?

We each have 5 genetic needs first identified by William Glasser, M.D. (see his book, *Choice Theory*). The first of these is Love and Belonging. There is a right way and a wrong way to meet these genetic needs. The wrong way is to use my partner to overcome my emotional neediness. The right way is to be

with my partner because I want to not because I need to because I am so lonely. For more detail see the **4th Living Skill: the 5 Genetic Needs.**

19. Why should I forgive someone who has harmed me?

There are 10 reasons that are in my self-interest to forgive. If I do not forgive my growth in life is paralyzed. There are emotional consequences and even physical ones for lack of forgiveness. For more detail see the **5th Living Skill: Forgiveness and Grieving.**

20. How can I tell the degree of my emotional growth?

I offer the reader two tests to approximate a person's growth in life in terms of emotional growth and lessons learned. Also, many people underrate their own hard wired abilities and that of the partner and children. See the last chapter on Brain Types. All are contained in the **7th Living Skill: Service.**

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