

**18+** CONVERSATIONS  
WITH THE PSYCHOLOGIST



**Semenova Veronica, Ph.D.**

# Veronica Semenova Conversations with the Psychologist

*[http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio\\_book/?art=56559433](http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=56559433)*

*ISBN 9785005113412*

## **Аннотация**

This book was created on the basis of periodic publications in the newspaper “Vestnik Kipra” (Cyprus) and the most interesting broadcasts on the Cyprus radio station Russian Wave for 2016—2018. The author answers questions from readers and listeners, while the topic of the discussion is obviously interesting to a wide audience. The book is addressed to anyone who is interested in psychology, as well as readers looking for solutions to their particular problem.

# Содержание

Important Note	5
Chapter one. Problems of a Personal Nature	6
Irritation, Anger And Rage: How To Break The Vicious Circle?	6
Life Revision	16
Midlife Crisis	23
Mistakes: How To Move On	30
Learning To Think Positively	33
About Forgiveness: How To Forgive And Let Go	39
Tips for Getting Back Refreshed After A Vacation	46
Fears and Phobias	52
Fear of Flying	62
Fear of Aging	72
Fear of Death	78
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	79

# **Conversations with the Psychologist Veronica Semenova**

© Veronica Semenova, 2020

ISBN 978-5-0051-1341-2

Created with Ridero smart publishing system

# Important Note

This book is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or treatment.

Any person with a condition requiring medical attention should consult a qualified medical professional or suitable therapist.

Veronica Semenova, Ph. D. is a private practicing psychologist, a psychotherapist, and is a member of the American Psychological Association, Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology, and the Association for Psychological Therapies.

Dr. Semenova is the author of numerous articles and several books (“Faces of Grief”; “Learn How to Cope with Death, Loss, Grief, and Bereavement – Helpful Tips from the Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy”). She is a regular guest on a weekly radio program on psychology and a member of the editorial board of the peer-reviewed journal “Journal of Social, Behavioral, and Health Sciences” (JSBHS).

Visit Dr. Semenova’s website at for more information.  
[www.vsemenova.com](http://www.vsemenova.com)

# **Chapter one. Problems of a Personal Nature**

## **Irritation, Anger And Rage: How To Break The Vicious Circle?**

**Question: “Recently, I get irritated with everything. I get mad with everyone around me, and I yell and insult those who upset me. I even fought with my boyfriend. At the moment of anger, I feel that I cannot control myself. After an outburst of anger I feel better – but then I feel ashamed and guilty for my behavior and for upsetting those close to me. What can I do? How can I learn to deal with anger and control myself?”**

Irritation, anger, and rage are links in one chain – emotional reactions to the environmental discrepancies between a person’s inner requirements (that is, the discrepancy between the desired) and the reality (the actual). We expect that we will be treated fairly. For example, we expect that our relatives will respect us and listen to our opinion. We expect that government employees will do their work correctly and in the specified time.

Every time our expectations fail, the gap is filled with irritation and anger. Every time someone breaks our rules and

the terms of our agreements, or acts against our will, we are challenged to react and show irritation. We may accept this challenge or we can reject it. The choice is ours.

The intensity of irritation can also be estimated on an emotional scale from 1 to 10:

1. Light irritation
2. Irritation
3. Discontent
4. Disappointment
5. Unwillingness to accept the situation
6. Anger
7. Resentment
8. Hatred
9. Rage
10. Fury

When we accept that the outside world can control our emotions, we allow for a very easy and convenient excuse not to assume responsibility for our own actions and reactions.

“I’ve had enough! He drives me mad! I can’t take it any longer!” This is how we often summarize the unpleasant experience of our own anger.

When you accept that other people have the power to influence the situation and your emotions, you are not only shifting the blame onto them, but you waive your right to influence the situation and have a choice of how to react. You put yourself in the position of being a victim.

We must avoid feeling like we are victims of external factors. Of course we can't influence what other people are doing, but it is within our power to control how we react to events, and what decisions are made. So, freedom lies within this small space between the stimulus (the event) and our reaction to it. We should not surrender this freedom to those people or events that irritate us.

Next, I will describe how we can work with anger problems using cognitive-behavioral therapy.

### **PREPARATION: Weighing the Pros and Cons**

The main thing to realize when dealing with anger is that you have the right to choose. In our lives, there are a huge range of things and events that we can not control. These include the weather, the past, other people, intrusive thoughts, physical sensations, and emotions.

But there is something that we control-our ability to make choices. We choose what to do in bad weather (for example, take an umbrella with us); we choose what lesson to learn from the past; and we decide how to respond to other people and what to do with intrusive thoughts, physical sensations, and emotions. The main idea is that we can either choose to focus on what is beyond our control, or on what we do control. *can*

I guess that you, like me, will choose the second option.

We may not be able to control anger, but we have full control over what we do with it. We can be angry and passive, angry and aggressive, or angry and assertive in our actions. The choice

is ours. Anger speeds up our reactions and can give the illusion that there is no choice involved. But there is always a choice, and when we recognize our right to make a choice, we become stronger.

### **1. Destruction of the Rules “Should/Must”**

The first step is to recognize that the rules “should and must” should be destroyed. We apply these rules to our own reactions as well as to the behaviors of others. We also try to comply with other peoples’ rules. For example, we demand: “He must listen to my opinion,” or “They should not interfere in my life,” or “I must control the situation.” But in reality, people don’t listen. They often interfere in our lives, and we don’t control situations and the results of our actions.

To begin with, we can acknowledge circumstances as they are, accepting reality rather than fighting against it, trying to change it, or denying its existence. We do not control other people, but we control our choices. *do*

Furthermore, based on our values, we choose the direction in which we will move. How do we understand our values? Values are the basis of the rules “should/must,” the breaking of which angers, frustrates, and enrages us. Ask yourself: “What positive value was included in my rule?”

“He must listen to my opinion” may imply the importance of communication, understanding, and cooperation. “They should not interfere in my life” may imply the importance of values such as freedom, respect, and self-development.

We are not in a position to control or force other people to follow our rules. We only control whether *we* do.

And, finally, we begin to act according to our values. Ask yourself two questions: 1) What do I want to get in the long run? and 2) What constructive steps can I take towards this direction?

People can ignore your demands and wishes and violate your rules. What can you do when this happens? You can continue to adhere to your values, respecting your own rights and principles and cultivating honesty in dealing with other people. Thus, you will be part of the solution, not the problem.

## **2. What Causes Pain?**

The second step is to analyze what hurts when your rules are violated. Breaking some rules directly hurts self-esteem, affecting one's sense of self-worth and worldview. For example, when your rule is violated, you may think: "I am a victim," or "I am helpless in this situation," or "The world is unjust."

And, of course, most of all, we are hurt by our inability to change the behaviors of other people.

At this point, it is useful to think about the following: "There is no reason to believe that I can change the behavior of other people. Everyone is responsible for their own actions and beliefs. Everyone has their own values and rules. Perhaps the behavior that I regard as violating my rules is actually an attempt to help me, from this person's viewpoint."

Then I can consider myself not as a victim, but as a person who is offered help.

### **3. Negative Automatic Thoughts**

The third step is to develop answers to negative automatic thoughts arising when anger strikes through the formulation of more rational, balanced arguments.

Negative: "How dare he!"

Rationality: "He thinks he can help me."

Negative: "He must be so stupid."

Rationality: "We are all people, and no one is perfect."

### **4. Anger**

The fourth step is to respond to the anger arousal itself. We can practice relaxation (progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, and music relaxation). Or we can change the meaning of anger for ourselves, perceiving anger as an energy useful for problem-solving. It is the energy to achieve the right result and to do the right thing that corresponds to our values and principles.

Anger becomes a problem if we use it in violation of these principles. It is a problem if we use this energy to treat people other than we would want to be treated. It is a problem if this energy fuels aggression. Anger can be used for creative purposes and for positive and principled actions.

### **5. Moral Reinforcement**

The fifth step is to analyze what beliefs turn your anger into aggression. This rationalization justifies destructive behavior. "He deserved it," "I want them to be hurt as much as they have hurt me," "This is the only way they will understand that they

can't do this to me," "To hell with them-I've had enough," or "I do not care" are examples of these rationalizations.

We must admit that these beliefs are counterproductive and contrary to our moral values as they involve threats, sarcasm, accusations, and insults. We can remind ourselves of the costs of such strategies and turn to others (such as patience, understanding, compassion, and tact) which reflect our values and beliefs more accurately.

## **6. Aggression**

The sixth step is to analyze the individual types of behavior that arise with anger. It is important to understand that by allowing ourselves to act aggressively, we violate the rights of others. We can change this by trying to empathize with those who cause our irritation and anger.

Put yourself in their place and imagine what they think and feel, then try to understand their point of view.

This will help:

1. To reduce anger.
2. Reduce the anger of the other person.
3. Increase the possibility that we will be heard.
4. Increase the possibility that we will be able to enter into a rational and reasonable discussion about the situation or behavior causing our anger.

## **7. The Result**

The seventh step is to reduce feelings of shame and guilt. Many people consider every episode of anger as a recurring

failure, a defeat, and an inability to cope and control themselves. But every episode of anger can be turned into a step towards victory over failures if we analyze and change our non-productive “should/must” rules, anger-supporting beliefs, and the negative automatic thoughts and behavior we use when we feel anger. Thus, the episodes of anger will occur less often and become less intense.

This seven-step program is a mechanism for dealing with aggression. Anger is usually perceived as an instant reaction and loss of control. But we can learn to see anger as the energy arising when our expectations are not met, when they conflict with reality. This energy can help correct the discrepancy. Thus, the most important decision that we need to make is how to use this energy.

Separating the work with anger into step-by-step process will help you realize that you choose to not lose control, and are able to cope with anger episodes to prevent future outbursts.

Even a very conscious person sometimes falls into the trap of his own anger. How he then feels will depend on his ability to use special tools.

Self-development and understanding how to control anger and how to keep your cool will be achieved gradually, step by step, year after year. Practicing anger management gives us the experience to effectively manage our emotions.

Good luck!





# Life Revision

**Question: “Recently, I heard that in order to attract success in your life, you need to get rid of all that’s unnecessary to clear the space for new and better things in your life. It’s easy to do that in a house by clearing the clutter and making space for new things. But how can I make a revision of life? When should it be done? And what if the results are still not satisfactory?”**

Our lives are hectic. Days pass with routines, vanity, and haste. We have so many commitments and tasks to complete that we hardly ever get to think about our own lives. But the truth is: we only have one life. Today is not a dress rehearsal for tomorrow, which means that we must live well, happily, and in love and joy, today. In order for this to happen, it is useful to periodically conduct a so-called “revision of life,” asking yourself a series of questions aimed at identifying problematic aspects in this or that area of life.

Here are the areas that I recommend you analyze.

## **Relationships With Oneself**

We can analyze how we care for ourselves and our health, our self-satisfaction, and the presence of fears and anxieties, personal goals, aspirations, and motivation. Here is a recommended set of questions that you can ask yourself to help analyze your relationship with yourself.

Am I comfortable being alone with myself? Do I know my real self, hidden under many layers of habits and psychological defenses?

Does the image of myself that I demonstrate to the world suit me? If not, why am I afraid to show my real self? Is it the fear of being judged? Or is it a fear of being rejected?

With whom is it easy or difficult for me to be sincere, and why?

How do I take care of myself (eating, sleeping, walking, exercising, medical checkups, beauty treatments, shopping, talking with friends)? Can I allocate more time to doing things that are good and useful for me, and less to things that bring no value or which don't benefit my health and wellbeing?

To live a full life, you need to discover a true self. To live happily means to be who you really are, not what you or someone else would like to see in you. We all have fears. We often deceive ourselves and not accept who we are. But harmony and happiness come when inner tension from rejecting one's self is replaced by an understanding of one's own characteristics and awareness of one's uniqueness.

Having understood your "self," you can evaluate what aspects of your life suit you and how to change your life so that your outer self corresponds better to the inner self.

### **Personal Life**

What do I feel about my current situation (in a relationship, in a marriage, or without a partner)?

What do I like or do not like about myself in the context of my relationship with my partner?

What aspects of our relationship cause me discomfort (financial issues, sex, disrespect, or the lack of attention)?

Do I like us as a couple?

Do we listen to each other? Are we able to hear each other's needs?

There is a saying that "relationships are multiple mirrors." In these mirrors, we see how some aspects of ourselves are reflected in our partner. We love and appreciate what we like, try not to notice what causes discomfort, and when we want to break up the relationship, we start "throwing stones" at the mirror, saying: "This relationship doesn't work for me, because he/she..."

It is useful to think about what causes discomfort because this will help you to better understand yourself and your own way of life. It is necessary to focus on yourself and not on the apparent shortcomings of your partner.

Try to identify repetitive patterns in your relationships, and change the situation or your attitude towards it. When discussing the situation which upsets you with your partner, avoid accusations. Instead of "you do/do not do...", say, "I feel that..." or "I feel hurt when..."

### **Relationships With Others**

What kind of relationship did I have with my relatives, as a child? Could I express my feelings?

What impression do other people usually form about me? Is it consistent with my own self image?

What common themes constantly emerge in my relationships with other people?

Am I satisfied with how I communicate with others? Am I able to listen or help? Am I inclined to judge? To obey? To envy?

Our past experiences influence relationships with our children, relatives, friends, and colleagues. World outlook, attitudes, and behaviors form in our childhood. The care that a child receives early on lays the foundation of trust he develops for others. The values that are instilled into a child during childhood shape their self-esteem, which later affects relationships with others.

To analyze your current problems, it is important to remember what the emotional climate was like in the family in which you grew up; how those important to you reacted to your victories and failures; and what worried or frightened or upset you when you were a child.

Try to identify topics that constantly emerge in your relationships with people. Perhaps there are some repetitive patterns and unconscious reactions to the actions of other people that cause you discomfort.

### **Work and Self-Realization**

Do these two concepts dovetail, for me? Am I able to achieve both in my work?

Am I satisfied with my current job?

What was most important for me in my job at the beginning of my career: recognition, demand, income, interest, creative aspects, communication, or leadership? And what is more important at the moment?

Work is a huge part of our lives. Dissatisfaction with work can easily spread to other aspects of life. Analyze what's bothering you in the workplace and try to distinguish between the problems associated with people you have to work with every day and the work itself.

Our values and priorities change over time. For example, at the beginning of one's career, ambition and the desire to receive the necessary compensation for work are quite normal focuses. But, over time, something else may come to be important – for example, self-realization, recognition, team support, or independence.

### **Financial Position/Interests – Hobbies, Leisure, Travel**

These facets of life can also be analyzed, as others in the examples above, to answer questions about the degree of comfort and satisfaction a person feels over their existing state of affairs. If satisfaction leaves much to be desired, think about what specific actions can be taken to correct this.

In conclusion, it is important to remember that anything, even desirable changes, can bring stress. Take time to conduct a “revision” of each area of life, but do not rush to answer all questions. Give yourself a few days to think and listen to your

thoughts and feelings.

Take one facet of life at a time. You can start with anything: the one where things are most “painful” or the place where, on the contrary, you feel most satisfaction. Analyze what you are satisfied with and what you would like to change or improve. What do you want to get rid of? What habits or people have overstayed their welcome?

Sometimes, in order to solve a problem, it's enough to just realize that one exists. Make a realistic step by step plan of change and gradually make it happen.

Good luck!



# Midlife Crisis

**Question: “I often hear about the concept of a ‘middle age crisis.’ Tell me, please: what is this and how is it defined? Does it only occur in men, or does it affect women, too? How does someone get over it?”**

A midlife crisis is a long-term emotional state that occurs in middle age (from 35 to 55 years) and is caused by a reassessment of life experiences. Sometimes it is accompanied by depression. This crisis demonstrates that there are regrets about irreversibly missed opportunities, as well as anxiety associated with the advancement of a person’s age and awareness of mortality.

For example, a forty-year-old man can, for no apparent reason, give up a well-paid job, become depressed, start an extramarital affair, or even leave his family while isolating himself from all previously enjoyable activities and social connections. Often, neither the man himself nor his loved ones or friends can understand or explain such behavior.

Midlife crisis is a conditional definition. For some, it passes unnoticed, but others are struck by it with the force of a tornado. As a rule, dissatisfaction with one’s life accumulates gradually, drop by drop, until at some point the cup is overflowing. In addition, the crisis does not have clear boundaries. It can last for one year or can drag on for decades.

Symptoms of a midlife crisis include:

- feeling self-pity

- a sense of injustice in life, or feeling trapped in marriage

or work

- depression and loss of interest in many previously significant

aspects of life

- changing one's circle of significant people

- change in value guidelines

- becoming eccentric

- sensing the meaninglessness of life

People of middle age perform a connecting role between the older generation of parents and the younger generation of children. They carry a load of social responsibility on their shoulders. This responsibility also brings with it social conflicts.

People regret that they did not achieve certain goals, have not completed what they planned, and that many goals have remained a dream. However, middle-aged people understand that they must live with problems and everyday concerns. They cannot either live in the past like their parents or, like their children, live in dreams about the future.

The first possible reason for a midlife crisis is the fact that the kids grow up and leave into separate, independent lives. While, on the one hand, parents get more free time for themselves, the problem is that, by then, many of them have lost or had to sacrifice most of their significant interests, and are not motivated to develop any new ones.

The second possible reason for a crisis is associated with relationships with aging parents. It is even more difficult if the parents suffer from cognitive impairment or are weak. So, any free time the parents get from not having to take care of their kids is transferred to taking care of their own aging parents.

This brings on a new wave of dissatisfaction and a feeling that life is passing by and that, even at midlife, there is no time for themselves. Old friendships also start to wane as people become preoccupied with their problems and don't have enough time to devote to seeing friends.

### **Middle Age Crisis In Men**

A midlife crisis in men often involves a rebellion against imposed rules. Men in this state are actively engaged in finding the answer to the question, "How do I find myself in life?" And this brings to the surface the old teenage complexes where "I want" replaces "I should."

A middle-aged man reassesses his own life through the prism of missed opportunities. Looking over and rethinking his life values, he tries to find himself, but often follows a false path which leads nowhere. The conversations of men acquire a somewhat doomed and philosophical nature where life appears transient and short-lived and the end feels too near.

During this period, there is a reassessment of life values as well as career goals. Having achieved the desired social role, a certain status, and financial well-being, men undertake an "inventory" of values as well as their achievements, as financial

wellbeing no longer gives a sense of stability and reliability.

Often, men start worrying about their health at this stage. They begin medical checkups, exercising, and dieting. This is caused by the fear of death and old age. Some may feel depressed or overly anxious, suffering from insomnia and mood changes that occur several times a day. For many middle-aged men, a moment of truth comes when, looking in the mirror, they discover they have a belly, wrinkles, or grey or thinning hair. These discoveries bring sadness and despair.

### **Midlife Crisis In Women**

Midlife crisis is a definition not only applicable to men, as was previously believed. Women also face a phase of reassessment of their life experiences that can cause pain and a sense of emptiness. These lead to the feeling that many opportunities have been lost; that the best years have past; and that the future looks gloomy.

Many women regret that they sacrificed their careers to rise a family or, alternatively, that family life was sacrificed to make a career if the woman did not become a mother.

Often, a woman is saddened by her reflection in the mirror. Grey hair, extra weight, wrinkles, cellulite, and other numerous changes associated with ageing are experienced with much more pain than they are in men.

### **What Can Be Done?**

Crisis is not the end of the world, but a reassessment of values. It is important for the people close to the “person in crisis”

to understand this, and support a person who is transitioning to a new life stage.

Do not try to rush a person through this natural process. It will be helpful to remind the person of his achievements and to let him feel how important and needed he is. It is important for couples to re-evaluate their values in the relationship together, discussing how to bring diversity into their lives.

The person in a midlife crisis needs to be realistic and not exaggerate existing problems, but should also not deny them. Try not to cultivate a longing for years past, but rather, look for the right direction and don't get stuck in your reflections.

It is important to nurture your love for yourself, find an occupation to your liking, and praise yourself for all of your achievements. Do not become isolated, and take care of your health and looks.

It is important to remember that age does not influence the quality of life. Do not look for evidence of your past irresistibility, but rather, devote yourself to working on your body and appearance – exercise, diet, and a healthy lifestyle. Women may find it helpful to change their hair style and update the clothes in their wardrobe.

Your youth can be significantly extended by devoting a little more time to taking care of yourself. Cheerful, active, energetic people look much younger and more attractive than those who are lazy, pessimistic, and gloomy.

Try to honestly and objectively answer this question: is

everything really so bad in your life? Are you really ready to leave this job, or your husband/wife? Undoubtedly, there are moments that you can be proud of in your profession and in your life together. Perhaps you can try to change your attitude towards your work and your routine, or talk with your spouse, first, before destroying a well-established life.

After the end of the crisis, the person's self-pity will disappear. He/she will reconsider social roles at work, in the family, and with friends, and will have completed a deep reassessment of values to achieve emotional stability, maturity, and a conscious acceptance of life.

Good luck!



# Mistakes: How To Move On

**Question: “I recently read that we need to be grateful not only for the wins in our lives, but also for the failures and mistakes. What a strange feeling... How can one be grateful when there is nothing to be grateful for?”**

We all make mistakes. But, we do not like to remember them. We feel ashamed and bitter as we think about how mistakes hurt our self-esteem (“How stupid and naive I acted! I was such a fool!”)

And we either try to bury the negative experience deep inside, or create the excuse that the circumstances of the situation or actions of other people were beyond our control. The other tactic is to constantly blame ourselves for feeling disappointed and upset.

I do not belong to the group of people that will advise you to forget your mistakes or concentrate on living in the “here and now,” as I do not believe this is the right strategy for working through a negative experience to extract a useful lesson from it.

The past gives us indispensable and very valuable experiences, from which we learn to make rational decisions. We learn from our mistakes, and therefore, forgetting them is not a correct path of action.

Our mistakes remind us of the actions that led to failure, which we should not repeat in the future. They also demonstrate what

beliefs and thoughts we need to restructure. If that internal work does not happen, we'll continue to operate in a vicious circle of bad luck, repeating old mistakes again and again.

In order to turn the bitterness of a mistake into the joy of the lesson, we need to:

- recognize that mistakes are an integral part of every person's life and that no one is immune from them

- take responsibility for mistakes and faulty beliefs. Admit to yourself that, in all honesty, you were wrong, and analyze what actions or beliefs led to this unfortunate outcome

- distinguish small errors from serious mistakes. We often overestimate the significance of small things and underestimate the real dangers. You do not have to reproach yourself over little things, especially if your mistake caused no harm, but it's important to seriously evaluate mistakes that have caused major problems in life

- reason logically and reasonably. When the situation which once led to a mistake repeats itself, analyze your next steps. Ask yourself how you could act differently, and how you could avoid the expected negative outcome.

- do not naively assume that the mistake will not happen again just because the participants in the situation are different. The mistake was yours, and therefore, you need to change your behavior or belief

- find support from people who are able to help you understand the situation where you made a mistake or suffered

from a faulty belief. This can be your loved ones or friends whom you trust, or a professional psychologist.

Good luck!

# Learning To Think Positively

**Question: “Recently, everyone is talking about the need to think positively... But how can this be achieved? It’s not as if everyone is born an optimist. How can one learn not to pay attention to various little upsetting things and annoying troubles?”**

It’s common knowledge that our physical and psycho-emotional state directly depends on the way we think and what we talk about. Our thoughts define our lives. Many negative things happen, but focusing on the negative is wrong. If life is given to us for happiness, so it must bring joy and pleasure.

Positive thinking is a conscious choice made by each person. Life does not always bring happy moments. Everyone has the right to choose those thoughts that will help them find a more constructive way out of a difficult situation and reinforce the fight against hardship.

Even in the most difficult life moments, you can still find something good. You just need to be able to see it. When you choose positive thinking in life, you can free yourself from the restrictions of negative thoughts and can see that life is filled with opportunities and solutions, not just worries and obstacles.

Positive thinking affects one’s physical as well as mental state and the ability to adapt to circumstances and unforeseen changes in life. When a person realizes this, he receives an ongoing

motivation to think positively.

Attitudes towards life depend only on personal choice. If someone is used to depending on the negative emotions of other people, then this is also a personal choice. One needs to realize that thoughts and feelings can be controlled. Once this realization is made, it becomes clear that one can also change thinking patterns.

Often, things seem more significant than they really are, and certainly do not involve as much anxiety as a person actually thinks. Do not allow yourself to succumb to anxiety. You need to calmly think about and make a weighted decision.

### **Working With Negative Thoughts**

It is important to identify those negative subconscious thoughts which do not allow you to look at the world in a different way. When you learn to quickly identify them, you can then challenge and block them. When you identify a negative thought and understand its origin, you are able to counteract it with positive responses.

### **Black and White Thinking**

In this type of thinking, everything that a person encounters is perceived as either “all” or “nothing,” with no other possibilities. For example, if something goes wrong and life is not like a person wanted or envisioned things would be, the situation can immediately fall into the category of being terrible, unsalvageable, and hopeless. Such a person thinks only in two extremes-positive and negative.

But in order to judge a situation for what it is, it is necessary to make a list of all possible outcomes. This approach enables one to see that everything is not as terrible as it seems. If you can see shades of grey in situations, and not just black and white, you can grow to understand that negative situations are not the end of the world.

### **Personalization**

In this type of thinking, a person thinks that if something went wrong, then he himself is the cause of failure. This approach leads to feeling terrible in any situation, or responsible for everything.

To avoid this trap, it is necessary to be rational and think carefully about the causes and all possible factors that could have contributed to a situation's negative outcome.

### **“Filtered” Thinking**

Some tend to focus on receiving only negative messages, given the information provided to them. For example: your boss praises you for the work you've done, but also mentions what could be improved next time. Although your boss is trying to help, you perceive this as a harsh criticism.

If you continue to think this way, it is likely that you will never see anything positive in any critical remark. Meanwhile, after a moment's reflection, you could have come to the conclusion that the boss's positive comments significantly outweighed the negative ones.

### **Catastrophic Thinking**

This is the viewpoint in which a person is completely pessimistic and believes that everything is doomed to fail. To counter this type of thinking, one must become a realist and seek evidence against negative beliefs.

### **Predictive Thinking**

Someone may think that if their past relationship failed, any new relationship is doomed to fail, too. And it will most likely fail because that person has already programmed such an outcome in his mind, and the human subconscious will do everything to prove him right.

Instead, it would be helpful to learn from each individual life situation and apply your knowledge to new situations to avoid making the same mistakes.

An effective method to start restructuring negative thoughts is to question yourself. For example: “Is this situation as bad as I imagine it?” or “How can such bad thoughts help me?”

Positive thinking, like any other skill, requires practice. It takes time to cultivate positive thinking, as learning to think positively requires that we develop certain skills and abilities. Learn to praise yourself regularly and make a list of what you could thank yourself for every day. This will have a positive effect on your thoughts and emotions. Try to find something good in all events, things, and people. Praise yourself for the work you have done and do not blame others or yourself for mistakes.

This way, you will be able to reinforce your self-esteem and will clearly see what you were able to achieve through your own

efforts.

Learn to perceive problematic situations and people as opportunities that give you the chance to learn and grow. When you see something positive in other people, you can let your thoughts and feelings move in the same direction.

Developing positive thinking will bring you closer towards being able to control your own life.



# **About Forgiveness: How To Forgive And Let Go**

**Question: “By nature, I am a very sensitive person. I always have the feeling that life is unfair and that it constantly throws unpleasant surprises at me, either through other people or through situations. I can’t help but feel offended all the time. This accumulated resentment gradually begins to eat at me from within. I really want to change something, but I do not know how to do that. Tell me, please, what I should do.”**

Each of us, regardless of age and life experience, has been faced with situations in which we were hurt by the people around us. Some have had more situations like this in their lives and some less, but each of us has our own experience with them.

As a result of such painful situations, we experience very unpleasant feelings. We may feel offended or insulted, and these painful emotions can live within us for many, many years, badly poisoning our lives. Prolonged exposure to strong and destructive emotions can cause significant harm to health. Suppressed moods, low self-esteem, feelings of guilt or helplessness, depression, and psychosomatic illnesses can pave the way to developing malignant tumours in our bodies as a physical response to the ongoing pain.

This is why it is very important to learn how to forgive and stop

holding grudges and the negative emotions connected to these situations, making room for positive emotions and sensations and for joyful events in life.

The importance of forgiveness is affirmed by representatives of various religions as well as numerous psychologists and teachers. All of them speak as one, maintaining that if an offender appears in a person's life, this may not just be a coincidence. For some reason, we need to go through difficult and painful experiences, learn to love regardless of the circumstances, and learn to forgive and change something in ourselves.

For example – often when women are hurt by men in their lives, this is a sign that a woman does not love herself enough, or is so immersed in caring for others that she completely loses her true self. She might experience a subconscious, implicit aggression towards men.

### **Before forgiving...**

It is worth mentioning that forgiveness is a hard work. You almost always have to relive the pain that was once experienced, or it can become impossible to let go and forgive. The result that can be achieved, being freed from that heavy weight, is worth it. You will feel freer and easier, and life will shine with new possibilities.

When we free ourselves from the pain of feeling offended, then a place is vacated in our hearts for the creative energy of love. A person then shines from within, and this becomes

noticeable to others. If we are able to accept and forgive, then everything becomes much more comfortable and joyful. Before deciding to forgive (and, for this, there are numerous techniques), I recommend taking the following steps.

First, try to understand that, no matter how painful and difficult it is for us, there is much to be learned from this situation. And while we may not feel this because of strong emotions and the feeling that we have been unjustly treated, there is a deep meaning and opportunity, by passing the test, to become better and improve our lives.

Secondly, try to remember all the people that have offended you, who you feel insulted by to this day. Make a list of them and then select those with whom your strongest emotions are connected. You will then have two groups of people.

Now choose someone to forgive. It is easier to work through insignificant insults first and then move to stronger and more painful ones, but some may feel it's easier to do this the other way around. You can forgive and say goodbye to both a living person and the ghosts from the past that prevent you from living in the present.

### **Potato Bag**

When working with forgiveness, I often tell a story about a Chinese mentor who was consulted by a young man who wanted to learn a bit of his wisdom.

Young Man: "You are so wise. You are always in a good mood, never angry. Help me to be like that! Teach me!"

The mentor agreed and asked the student to bring some potatoes and a bag.

“If you get angry with someone and feel offended,” the teacher said, “then take one potato. On one side, write your name. On the other, write the name of the person who offended you. Then put this potato in a your bag.”

“And that’s all?” the student asked in bewilderment.

“No,” answered the teacher. “You should always carry this bag with you. And every time someone offends you, you should add a potato to it.”

The student agreed.

Some time passed. The student’s bag became quite heavy. It was very inconvenient to always carry it with him. In addition, the potatoes that he put in first were beginning to rot. They were covered in slippery slime, had sprouted, and began smelling foul.

The student came to the teacher and said, “It’s impossible to carry this bag around anymore. Firstly, the bag is too heavy, and secondly, the potatoes are now rotten and they smell...”

Do you think you need to carry a bag of rotten potatoes inside of you?

### **Farewell To The Role Of The Victim**

Feeling offended destroys you from within, endlessly bringing back the trauma of the situation and causing you to experience being a victim again and again.

Often, holding a grudge is used to justify both the situation in the present and inaction. For example: because I was cheated

by my ex back then, I will not even attempt to try and build a relationship with anyone else. Or, I was deceived by my business partner once, so I will not do any more business.

Thus, forgiveness becomes a conscious decision to reject the willingness to suffer any further. It lets you say goodbye/farewell to the role of the victim.

Most of the time, we get hurt when what is happening does not coincide with our expectations and what we consider to be “right.”

The “right parents” are loving parents; the “right friends” are those who will never betray us; the “right partner” is the one who will always be by my side.

And, if not? If the situation did not live up to my expectations, maybe I’m wrong. I am a wrong child, friend, or partner? Maybe the reason is within me, and it is all my fault?

This is how pain and guilt become a part of one’s personality. Forgiveness allows us to complete the cycle of pain and say goodbye to feeling like a victim. It means forever freeing ourselves from hurting.

Forgiveness is a movement towards a new and better life while holding on to all of our life experiences and lessons gained from that painful situation.

When you analyze the pain caused by someone, stop asking “Why?” Instead, ask yourself: “For what? Why was I given this situation in meeting with this person, and what can I learn from these events?”

The past is our heritage and our experience, and is very valuable, whatever it is. We need to extract all the important lessons from our past, be grateful for them, and accept that this experience was needed for our development.

Hold on to the experience, but let go of your grudge against the person who caused you pain. That person was just a pawn in the development of your soul, necessary to move you to a new level. And if you think that those who offended you and caused you pain do not deserve forgiveness, remember that you forgive them not because they deserve it, but because *you* deserve it.

Good luck!



# Tips for Getting Back Refreshed After A Vacation

**Question: “August is finally here, and it’s time to think about a vacation. My husband and I work hard all year and feel we need to get some rest. Unfortunately, no matter how well we plan our vacation, we come back from the trip tired every time, as if we did not rest. What is the problem? What should we do to ensure that long-awaited holidays will really allow us to rest and come back refreshed?”**

Our life itself is one great journey: a journey where we learn, grow, and get experience. Traveling on vacation can bring pleasant emotions and help you rest. It’s a chance to see the world, change your point of view, and expand the boundaries of your personality. And, finally, the journey is the best lesson you can afford.

When we travel, we expand our outlook, gain new knowledge, change, and get rid of outdated beliefs.

Some more advantages of traveling:

- Travel will help you become more self-confident. You will see and, perhaps, get acquainted with people who are different from you, behave differently, and live different lives. Some things may surprise you and some may cause you to feel grateful for the life you are fortunate to live. Meeting new people during a journey is always interesting and informative, as the people we

meet have different experiences, worldviews, perhaps come from quite different environments.

- You will improve relationships with your loved ones. Often, conflicts and relationship problems happen because we get tired of our routines. Changing the environment and getting new, bright experiences during the trip will allow you to look at your relationships from a new angle.

- You may give up judgments such as “I’m too old/poor/stupid/sick” in order to travel. You will see that not only do young and strong people travel around the world, but also old people and the disabled, mothers with children, and so on. Travel demonstrates that life is worth living. It beats finding excuses about why this or that cannot be done.

- After each trip, you will feel as if you have completed one more lesson in the school of life. Besides, you did it with fun and excitement. You immersed yourself in another culture, met new people, tasted unfamiliar food, and gave yourself a chance to change your outlook on the world. You will also see your life from a completely different perspective, and may notice many new opportunities for self-development.

But in order for the vacation and your planned travel to really become a holiday, try not to forget about certain rules.

- Before you leave, try to finish all the important (and not very important) things at work and at home. Most of all, we get tired of unfinished business. If it is not possible to complete all pending tasks, then try at least to leave that unfinished business

at home and not carry “worrying” about it with you on your trip. This could cloud the joy of your vacation days.

- Do not make too many plans for your vacation. Let your vacation life be a bit spontaneous. Do what you want, and if something was planned but you do not want to do it, ask yourself: “Do I really need to do this?”

- Try to rid yourself of hustle, at least during your vacation. We are always in a rush – we try to do several things at the same time, and feel guilty if we don’t. But, after all, vacation is for rest, not for continuing an endless race.

- Go to bed and get up when you want. Forget about the alarm clock. And eat meals only when you’re hungry, not because it’s time and you have nothing better to do.

- Try not to overload yourself with excursions and sightseeing—they require a lot of energy and may tire you more than a full day of work.

- The most important approach is to learn to enjoy ordinary things – the sun, the nature around you, the company of your loved ones, your health. Don’t focus on everyday troubles. The ability to enjoy life helps you live your life with joy all year round, not just during vacation.

Also, do not allow any familiar “role” dictate how you should behave. We take on social roles in life that support our self-esteem, allowing us to look good in our own eyes. For example: someone you know may like to travel and travels a lot, but after each trip, he does not talk about wonderful things and places

he has seen, but only about how much hassle and troubles he encountered.

His baggage was lost, the plane was delayed, the hotel service was bad, the weather wasn't good, he was cheated at a restaurant, and so on. Most likely, this person is using such descriptions of his travel to criticize these experience and thus feel better. And the social role this person bears doesn't allow him to enjoy the trip, but rather leads him to travel in order to have a reason to complain and receive sympathy from those who hear these stories. After all, in any such story, there are two themes: "how much I suffered" and "what a hero I am."

Optimists and pessimists look at the same world, but see it very differently. Anyone who travels with a positive outlook will find something interesting and exciting even in the poorest of environments. A more optimistic person will most likely have a more enjoyable and successful trip than a pessimist. In this sense, "lucky" and "unlucky" travelers are in an equal position—everyone just finds their own role.

The key to emotional wellbeing in life and on a short journey equally depends on being able to accept yourself as you are, defining any experience or new meeting as being positive, valuable, and welcome.

The Greek poet Constantinos Cavafy wrote, in his poem "Ithaca" (on Odysseus' travels as depicted in Homer's ancient Greek epic poem "Iliad and Odyssey"): "As you set out for Ithaca, pray your road is a long one, full of adventure, full of discovery..."

But don't hurry the journey at all. Better if it lasts for years, so you're old by the time you reach the island, wealthy with all you've gained on the way, not expecting Ithaka to make you rich."

It is all about the journey, and our life is a journey itself that is more important than reaching the final destination. And thanks to this view of life in general and every journey in particular, one can work out a positive outlook for travel.

No matter where you go (whether to a five-star hotel; on a hike with a tent; or a hitchhiking tour of Europe), what's important is the experiences and knowledge you will bring back from those journeys.

Travel is not a way to escape from yourself and your problems. As the old saying tells us, "No matter where you go, you will always take yourself with you." Our life is a physical reflection of our thinking. Therefore, by improving our inner world and filling ourselves with a positive outlook and interest in our own life and the lives of others, we begin to see and understand more, and our life becomes more rich and happy.

Safe travels and good rest!



# Fears and Phobias

**Question: “Recently, I began to realize that my life is governed by fears. I have a lot of them... I’m afraid to ride the elevator; I’m afraid to be alone; I’m afraid that I will become ill and no one will be around; I’m afraid of losing consciousness while driving a car; I’m afraid of flying on planes; afraid of viruses, and so on. Tell me, please, how to get rid of these fears. How can I convince myself that I am stronger than my fears?”**

We all experience fears in our lives. Fears can be different, but they all have a common base.

Fear is the internal state of a person, caused by imagined or real threats. Psychology considers fear to be an emotional process of a negative nature.

Fear refers to a basic emotion. In other words, it is an innate function. Its physiological component, mimicked manifestations, and specific subjective experiences are genetically conditioned.

It is fear that prompts a person to avoid danger, adjust his behavior in a certain way, and perform various actions that, in his opinion, are capable of protecting him. Thus, fear is a function of self-defense, which is genetically involved in the evolutionary process of the survival of the fittest and most intelligent individuals.

Fearless ancient man had no chance to survive if he did not

hide or did not protect himself from predators and bad weather.

Each person has his own fears, from the banal fear of insects or mice to the fear of poverty and death. There are even phobias—persistent, irrational fears. In short, there are as many different fears as there are people. But some fears are common in many people.

Here are some of them.

Verminophobia is the fear of various microorganisms and bacteria. People with such a fear constantly wash their hands, clean their homes, and are afraid of touching “dirty” things and becoming infected by them. People with verminophobia are almost always intellectuals. For example, they may be inventors, accountants, or lawyers. Fear of bacteria can develop into an obsessive-compulsive disorder and can seriously complicate one’s life.

Fear of public communications, speaking in public, or social phobia is known to almost all people, since from time to time each of us is afraid to demonstrate emotions or feelings in public. Often, this fear becomes obtrusive and grows into a phobia.

When aggravated, a fear of public speaking can be supplemented by the fear of open spaces. People who suffer from such fear very often have the ability to be great speakers, but they are lacking self-confidence and do not trust their intuition and any facts confirming that they can cope with their anxiety.

Fear of old age is almost never found among young people, but occurs in men over 50 and women over 40. Women are afraid

of losing their beauty and, as a consequence, the life they are used to, while men are afraid that they will not be able to realize their ambitions and/or produce offspring.

Fear of death. You might think that the fear of death would be the most common, but this is not entirely true because many are afraid to admit that they have this fear. Fear of death is associated with many other fears and, in reality, is hidden behind each of them.

The fear of flying on an airplane, of being poisoned, of a snake bite-all these fears have one fear in common: the fear of dying. When you recognize that a fear of death is behind your fear of “heights, water, snakes, and spiders,” you can work towards resolving that fear.

By accepting the fact that all people on this Earth are mortal and that we are not able to predict or foresee how and when we will die, you may come to the conclusion that it is totally unproductive to be afraid of something specific.

It is more important to live your life to the fullest, enjoying new and bright experiences and being surrounded by those you love, and those who love you. That way, by the end of your life, there will be no regrets about not having done, seen, or enjoyed any of your dreams.

Fear of loneliness is also among the leading fears, as this worries most people on the planet. If we look at ourselves, we will be able to see that we are constantly longing for someone to be with us, even if we sometimes really want to be alone with

ourselves.

The basis of this fear is that all human beings strive for happiness. And given the fact that we are social beings, it is inherent in our nature that we can find happiness only when we are among our own kind.

The fear of failing or showing weakness and the fear of appearing weak is pertinent to men with a hypertrophied sense of responsibility for others. Most likely, these men will already be strong, serious, and charismatic. But women who hold great responsibilities are also sometimes afraid to appear weak.

However, this phobia often helps people hold themselves together so they remain strong and persistent.

Fear of intimacy. Contrary to the popular belief that this affects only 16-year-olds, it is quite common in adult men and even some women. But more surprising is the fact that the fear of intimacy affects people with increased libido. The reason for this phobia can lie in unsuccessful former experiences, childhood trauma, or suppressed emotions.

Fear of madness is another peculiar but stable and widespread fear. However, it is particular only to those people who think abstractly. In most cases, they are spiritually developing, religious personalities, as well as physicists and philosophers.

Other fears include the fear of airplanes, snakes, cockroaches, spiders, rats, mirrors, ghosts, monsters, clowns, etc. All these seemingly completely different fears have something in common: people suffering from them have a well-developed

imagination. For those who think in images and emotions, fear causes the strongest sensations. Therefore, they can be afraid of absolutely simple things.

A phobia is a disorder in which a person experiences a painful fear that forces him to avoid relatively safe objects or situations. All the varieties of phobias (and there are about five hundred) are divided into two types: simple and social. Simple phobias are fears of certain objects (or animals). Social phobias are fears of being in certain situations such as a fear of crowds, fear of eating in front of others, or fear of being ridiculed.

When a person gets into a situation that causes a phobia, he enters a state of panic. Later, foreseeing the repetition of such a situation, he automatically feels fear and begins to avoid it. Panic attacks can be accompanied by disorientation and a sense of unreality about one's condition or external environment. Physical sensations are also possible: dizziness; loss of balance; severe heart palpitations; visual, hearing, or swallowing and breathing problems; nausea; abdominal pain; muscle tension; and trembling or numbness.

In the phobic stage, fear grows uncontrollably and intensifies as the danger grows in the imagination. The person affected concentrates increasingly on the discomfort caused by their reaction to fear, and is less and less guided by what can calm him down. There is a conviction that something terrible will happen - death, heart attack, or insanity. *now*

This is a panic state. It is so painful that a person tries to avoid

any stimulus situations, including words, images, and memories, that can trigger such a reaction.

The treatment of phobias focuses on developing a person's ability to face the situation that causes fear and stay in it. It also involves convincing him, through exposure, that the situation is not really dangerous. With the help of the therapist, gradually increasing tasks, the patient learns to react to the real calming reasons explaining the situation and not to the imaginary threat.

A few tips for dealing with fear follow.

First: in any situation where you feel that you are overcome by fear, do not let it take over, and do not begin to panic. You need to learn to accept and control your fears, and this is the most important approach to dealing with them.

The second thing that should be done is to try to analyze the situation to see its scale and seriousness, and also think about whether there is an opportunity to get help.

The third is purely physiological: if you are afraid, start breathing deeply. Take a deep breath (for example, counting to 4), hold it while counting to 3, and then exhale fully, counting to 7 or 8. Repeat this at least ten times. This will help you to concentrate, think the situation over, and calm your mind. After that, finding a solution to the problem will be much easier.

The fourth is talking to yourself. If you are afraid of something, start talking to yourself in your mind. Say your name and tell yourself to calm down. Try to understand what is happening, who and what surrounds you, what you feel, etc. As

you calm down, your blood pressure and heartbeat will go back to normal and the sense of panic will disappear.

If you still can't get rid of the fear, use a trick. Become angry with yourself or with what is happening to you, the circumstances of the situation, or someone. Remember that anger will replace your fear and neutralize it. Instead of fear, you will feel the desire to take action and change the nature of things, or you'll find a solution to the situation.

If you are overcome by mental fear, remember that you are human, and fear is one of our normal reactions to stimuli. Also realize that it is temporary. You deserve joy, happiness, and wellbeing, not fear. Think about that and watch your fear levels go down.

If your anxiety becomes obsessive, it may be your intuition trying to give you a signal. Think about what your fear is telling you, and find the answer to this question. In many cases, fears point us in the right direction for self-improvement.

In order to get rid of fear, it is necessary to develop the courage and skills for an "inner dialogue" with fear. Do not be afraid to get into situations that cause fear, but use them as a new opportunity to practice courage and the ability to cope with fear.

Imagine that this kind of training is similar to working out in the gym and building muscles. First you train with light weight, gradually switching to a heavier one. Similarly, with fears, we should initially exercise with a little fear, and then switch to a stronger one.

For example, the fear of public speaking in front of a large audience can be eliminated by practicing in front of a mirror at home, in front of a group of friends, and then in front of a small number of people, gradually increasing the audience size.

A fear of using the elevator can be gradually overcome by using the elevator with someone first, then asking someone to wait for you on the floor to which you will arrive, only afterwards using it independently. Patience and consistency are the main helpers in these exercises, which are designed to develop courage.

Finally, do not forget that when a person overcomes fears, he discovers new opportunities, becomes stronger, expands the boundaries of his personality, improves and moves forward, and also begins to see the world in new colors. So don't let your fear take those chances and opportunities away from you. When you overcome fears, you become a different person.

Go ahead and face what you are afraid of!





# Fear of Flying

**Question: “Hello! I’m very afraid of flying. After the birth of my children, this fear has turned into panic. On board the plane, especially when taking off, landing, or during any turbulence, I immediately think that the plane is going down and we are all going to die. I begin to tremble, break into cold sweat, and have difficulty breathing. I understand that this is an exaggerated reaction, but I can not help myself. On the plane, everyone feels sorry for me. They try to calm me, and my children look at me in horror. I understand that I am probably transferring my fear to them. What should I do?”**

According to statistics, every third person is worried about traveling on an airplane. And every ten will never overcome the fear of stepping on board a plane. Fear of flying, or aerophobia, is one of the most common fears.

We are afraid of flights because we do not have control on the plane. We cannot stop the aircraft to get out, as we could do when riding in a car. But ask yourself, what do we really control in life? Are we able to influence all events?

People may be run over by cars on a pedestrian crossing not because they were crossing the road recklessly, but because they are not able to control the actions of the driver of a car rushing into them. A short circuit may happen in your neighbor’s

apartment, starting a fire in your apartment building, and again, you are not able to control these events or change them.

You may be pick pocketed by thieves in the supermarket or, as the banal proverb says, “On the street, a brick may fall on your head.”

Dangers surround us from all sides. Does this mean that we need to build a fireproof, waterproof, anti-radioactive, hermetic, sterile bunker, lock ourselves in it, and stay “safe”? Or would we better live our lives, no matter how long or short they may be, enjoying the company of our dear family and friends and being able to travel, learn new things, work, do our hobbies, watch our children grow and succeed in life, taste delicious food and wine, and enjoy beautiful sunsets and sunrises? None of us can be fully sheltered from troubles, illnesses, or accidents. And we can not keep everything under control.

They say that the risk of dying in a plane crash is 500,000 times less than the risk of dying in a car accident. Comparing the number of daily flights and passengers with the number of airplanes accidents and deaths, you will find that airplane crashes are very rare. According to statistics, on average, more than 5 billion people fly on planes each year, of which 400—500 die in airplane crashes. That is only one out of 10 million passengers. It’s as if one person per year died in New York, Moscow, or London!

But, for some reason, even when studying the statistics, many people who are afraid of flying think that, despite the calming

data, misfortune will happen specifically to them. They will be among those 400—500 people who will die this year, and it's their plane that will crash. And the fear thrives!

Fear is a natural psycho-physiological reaction, the purpose of which is to help a person mobilize when an unusual or unsafe situation happens. It is normal when the emotion of fear occurs as a response to a specific threat or a source of stress, and it intensifies when you are called upon to make a choice.

Anxiety disorder and fear of flying can be counted as one. It is an excessive, frequent, and unreasonable level of anxiety in the process of expecting or finding yourself in a certain situation causing anxiety.

Among anxiety disorders, the fear of flying is quite common. There are two types of anxiety associated with flying: the natural excitement before the flight, which is a manifestation of a healthy instinct for self-preservation, and a pronounced pathological anxiety. When the intensity, frequency, or duration of fear before flight exceeds the conventional limits of the norm and the fear becomes permanent, and when a person is not able to control, adequately perceive, or logically assess what is happening, we talk about a clinically significant manifestation of aerophobia.

### **Manifestation of Phobia**

Aerophobia in most cases manifests itself in the same scenario. A few days before the upcoming flight, the person begins to experience fear, nausea, and stomach cramps. Once at the airport, the sticky sensation of fear increases. There is

a heaviness in the legs, and cold sweats break out. When on the plane, the heart pounds, the head feels empty, and there is the sensation of a lack of oxygen. With every flight, the sensations become more and more frightening and all-consuming. At that stage, the person is even afraid to that he has to fly. *hear*

True fear does not give a person a chance for self-control. That is, it completely absorbs the individual. Then this fear governs the person, forcing him to avoid flying. If traveling by air cannot be avoided in any way, then the person's nervous tension reaches its limit during the flight.

However, anxiety in aerophobia is not directly related to the instinct of self-preservation. It is almost always not related to reality, but is aimed at the future. Anxiety is completely irrational and focuses on an "imaginary" threat. Often, aerophobia manifests itself in people who have never traveled on a plane and who have never witnessed an air crash. Nevertheless, their anxiety is enormous, intense, and firmly fixed in both the consciousness and subconscious.

The symptoms of aerophobia include:

- racing heart
- chest pain
- increased sweating
- nausea and the urge to vomit
- a frequent urge to urinate
- tremor of the extremities
- difficulty breathing

- headaches
- pallor or redness of the face
- difficulty focusing
- irritability, nervousness, and restlessness
- difficulty falling and/or staying asleep, or “nightmares”
- feeling lightheaded

With an attack of aerophobia, the symptoms intensify, rapidly progress, and, reaching a peak, manifest as a panic attack, the repetition of which develops into a panic disorder.

What can help?

### **Before the Flight**

First, ask yourself: why did you decide to be afraid of planes? Why did you decide that you would die in a plane crash? Our fate is unknown to us, and it is impossible to predict when and where our lives will end. An awareness and acceptance of the fact that in some situations the outcome does not directly depend on us can significantly reduce anxiety. Surrender control over how and when you leave this world to the discretion of your destiny and focus on living your life fully, joyfully, and with pleasure.

The human mind is structured in such a way that when a disturbing situation is discussed out loud, anxiety and emotional tension are significantly reduced. Therefore, it is important to establish the primary cause of the anxiety associated with the fear of flying, discussing this matter in a calm environment.

What exactly are you afraid of? Early death? Pain and

suffering? The fact that your affairs (financial, property, personal correspondence, “skeletons in the closet”) will not be sorted out at the time of your death? Perhaps you did not have time to say “I love you” to your family, or did not have time to ask someone for forgiveness? Not sure who will raise your children (if they are still small)?

You can find solutions to each of these fears. In some cases, accepting and preparing for the worst case scenario helps get rid of fear. For example, the solutions could involve drafting your will and informing relatives about where this will be kept in case of your death. Or letting go of grudges and reconciling with the people you regret having had conflict with. Or reminding your loved ones of how much you love them.

Logical reasoning will also help you realize that a plane crash death is instantaneous and is not associated with pain or suffering, unlike, for example, what people experience when they are dying from cancer.

Today, many mobile applications are available that allow real-time monitoring of all planes currently in the air, charting their arrival at each airport. Thousands of flights a day are simultaneously in the air, taking off and landing at destination airports. Your flight is not the only one and certainly will not be the last in your life.

Those experiencing aerophobia should study how planes actually fly. You can watch documentaries or go to a special center with air trainers. After such training, you will not be

disturbed by strange sounds you might hear either upon takeoff or during the flight. You will learn that turbulence zones and making several turns before approaching for landing are standard flying situations that are not dangerous.

### **During the Flight**

Don't be afraid to inform the flight attendants of your fear. Say hello to the pilot, if you have an opportunity. It is usually calming to see a professional in uniform who is behaving confidently.

It's good to plan in advance what you will be doing during the flight. For example, you can watch a movie, listen to music or an audiobook, read a magazine or a book, or take a computer with you and work. The idea is to give yourself a distraction.

Many people are able to calm themselves with a tasty snack or drink. However, beware of drinks containing caffeine, as they may stir up an already-agitated nervous system. Try to drink a lot of water, because the cabin air is very dry. Some try to calm their panic by drinking alcohol. This is unlikely to help, and it can really make you feel worse. It is also not advisable to take strong medication on board, as medicines can affect you differently at high altitude. Remember: the fear of flying is not a disease that needs to be treated with medications.

Take a walk down the aisle and stretch your legs and arms. Such exercises will help restore your blood circulation. When you sit down, do some exercises for your feet, hands, arms, and shoulders.

If you feel that panic is beginning to overwhelm you, try to talk

to the passenger next to you. Share with them that you have a fear of flying and that it's hard for you to overcome it. Perhaps your new acquaintance will tell you something interesting and help distract you from frightening fantasies.

If none of these tips helps, close your eyes, take deep breaths and make even deeper exhales, focussing only on the positive experiences that this trip will bring.

### **After the Flight**

If the fear is turning into an anxiety disorder, consult a specialist psychologist who works with fear. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is especially helpful in coping with irrational beliefs and anxieties. The task of the psychologist is to give an accurate, logical explanation for the physical symptoms associated with fear.

For example, a person should understand that rapid heartbeat is not a sign of a heart attack, but the result of an exaggerated reaction to a stressor. A fearful person needs to completely get rid of the uncertainty and ambiguity of what is happening to him before there can be a clear plan for reducing anxiety. Therapy will teach you to control your condition instead of trying to control the situation. The most effective way of getting rid of the fear of flying on an airplane is to fly as often as possible to retrain your internal response to fear.

Have a good flight!





# Fear of Aging

**Question: “In recent years, every time I look at myself in the mirror, I feel a pang of fear. I see new wrinkles every day. I’m afraid of getting old. Every day, I just think about what procedure, therapy, or treatment I can do to stop my face and body from ageing. I feel sorry for and pity women older than me. I notice wrinkles on their faces, withered skin, and then I remember that I, too, will soon become like them. What should I do?”**

We live in a very interesting time, when the stereotypes of many previously clearly defined concepts have been broken. One of these broken stereotypes is about age and how and when old age comes. People today live longer, and they feel better. Medicine continues to develop and improve. We have learned how to treat incurable diseases, prolonging the lives of previously untreatable patients. Economic conditions are better than centuries or even decades ago, we do less manual labor, we have more free time, and we preserve our health.

Today, people in their 50s and 60s can expect to live at least another 30 years. This is a time for feeling active, being in good physical shape, and leading a busy life.

Just 20—30 years ago, women were retiring at 55, and men at 60. Retirement was synonymous with old age-wearing relaxed clothes, walking with difficulty, and moving to a country home

or a retirement facility. This was viewed as a quiet, serene time in keeping with the end of life.

A 50-year-old man, athletic and running, was an exception to the common rule, and a 50-year-old woman who was engaged in sports or dancing would have been perceived as somewhat odd. Those who gave birth after 40 were the rarest phenomena, and travel was reserved only for the “young.” Pensioners had to live quietly and calmly, visit doctors, help their children, and live out their lives.

A modern man of fifty years feels well. He has a lot of strength. Some still have young children. And it is now “in fashion” to stay eternally young, because the only image of old age we have today is that outdated one from 30 years ago. The new image of an old person’s makeup has yet to be formed. We now witness the formation of a new generation, “the golden age,” consisting of people who are still active, who have opportunities and practically no obligations, and who conform to no social expectation.

There is not yet a clear example of the “new old age,” so the choices of those who are over 50 are very limited. Either prepare yourself for the traditional view of old age in the form of homebound and quiet living, or pick the model of young behavior (which is, in fact, inadequate, because the experience of older people is different from the young, and their desires are different, too).

And here we must ask the question: Is there really no

alternative? And why is the choice so limited – that you are either young or old? What happens between youth and old age? After all, between these stages, there is a wonderful (and, by the way, the longest) stage of life called ‘maturity.’”

Maturity is a stage of life where you are affected by the experience of your past years and the mistakes made as well as by your achievements in work, and by the mature and stable relationships in your life which influence your ability to fulfill many of your desires.

But many try to ignore the maturity stage. They may dream of being forever young and are afraid that by taking a step from youth to maturity, they will inevitably move closer to old age. Growing old is considered to be bad, awkward, and difficult. But it is also hard to be born, and it’s not easy to grow up. Life involves hard living – but how interesting and exciting it is!

The desire to look young, in general, has reached its peak. Advertisers are pushing products, goods, and services designed to help us look young at any age. But why try to look 20 when you’re 50 or 60? Do we really always have to look like University students? Why don’t we try to look like kindergartners when we are in high school?

We only have one life, and it is multifaceted. We live through many stages of life, and each stage is beautiful in its own way whether it be childhood, adolescence, youth, maturity, or old age. They are similar to stations on a wonderful train ride – the train ride of our lives. If you get stuck at one of the stations, you do

not have time to enjoy all the pleasures of the next.

True maturity proposes a different behavior: awareness of oneself as a formed personality, at the same time developing an awareness of respecting one's health, appearance, and clothing style. It is ridiculous to watch an adult dressed like a teenager, because he is trying to look 20 years younger. It may be more correct to try to look good and elegant, dressing in a style in keeping with your age and inner state so that your appearance doesn't look funny, but instead looks natural.

Be yourself, love yourself, and take care of your appearance not to look like a high school girl, but to look like YOU. Be beautiful, charming, loved, and adored. Dream not about eternal youth, but about being independent, strong, and self-confident. And look at every wrinkle while remembering the unique experience and emotions you lived through – love, grief, joy, happiness, excitement, laughter, and tears. Should these all be erased from your life and memories?

Oscar Wilde wrote about the tragedy of Dorian Gray: “It was his beauty that had ruined him, his beauty and the youth that he had prayed for. But for those two things, his life might have been free from stain. His beauty had been to him but a mask, his youth but a mockery. What was youth at best? A green, an unripe time, a time of shallow moods, and sickly thoughts. Why had he worn its livery? Youth had spoiled him.” (Oscar Wilde, ) *Portrait of Dorian Gray*

Maturity is the time to enjoy life, update your wardrobe,

pamper yourself with pleasantries, travel, and relax more. Don't keep rejuvenating yourself but, rather, focus on looking elegant and well-groomed. After all, a mature person does not need to prove anything to anyone. In maturity, much has been lived, experienced, and also acquired. You have experience, strength, and wisdom. You've passed many tests of life, and you can just be yourself.

At this age, you can listen to yourself and organize your life the way you want. After retirement, you can find a new occupation for yourself that doesn't necessarily have to be in your profession. Perhaps it will be an exciting hobby or a new business where you will be your own boss. The main thing is that what you do brings you pleasure, stimulates and motivates you, and makes you feel active and needed.

Yes, our appearance changes when we cross a certain threshold in life, but if you lead a healthy lifestyle, eat well, get enough sleep, exercise, and take good care of your face and body, your aging process will not be catastrophic. The fear of aging is particularly strong among those who are not sure if they can offer something to the world other than their appearance.

It's important to feel the power of your personality and be proud of yourself no matter how many wrinkles appear around your eyes. Have you ever met a person who was not attractive in the usual sense, but who radiated so much charm that he charged those around him?

Do not worry that the beauty of youth and physical

attractiveness will disappear in maturity. Worry that wisdom will not appear. The beauty of maturity and your confidence in the attractiveness of your charm, smile, personality, and respect and love for yourself are stronger than any “beauty boosts.”

Be happy!

# Fear of Death

**Question: “Recently, I often think about death. My parents died ten years ago. As I grow older, there are more and more deaths in the circle of family and friends around me. I am frightened by the unknown threats of death, and terrified to think that life passes so quickly. How can I cope with my fear?”**

Death is difficult to ignore. One of the founders of existential psychotherapy, Irvin Yalom, in his book wrote: “The issue of death ‘itches’ continuously, without leaving us for a single moment, knocking at the door of our existence, quietly, barely perceptibly rustling at the very borders of the conscious and unconscious. Hidden, disguised, breaking out in the form of various symptoms, it is the fear of death that is the source of many worries, stresses, and conflicts.” *Staring at the Sun: Overcoming the Terror of Death*

It is very difficult for a person to imagine his own death. We imagine the process of dying from the words of dying people, but the state after death can not be imagined. Death refers to the predefined destiny of a human being, but one’s attitude towards death is different for each person, as this is represented by his own philosophical idea of death, formed by his previous life experiences. In addition, attitudes towards death change with age.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «Литрес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на Литрес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.