



Interview Questions for Resmaa Menakem, author of *Monsters in Love*

Basic questions, for interviews of 15 minutes or less

- In *Monsters in Love*, you write that when conflicts arise for a couple, nothing is going wrong—that the relationship is working exactly the way it should. What's so right about conflict?
- In *Monsters in Love*, you write, *Having a committed partner always creates friction and problems. Most of us want to keep the partnership and get rid of the friction and problems. That's a fantasy we need to grow out of. Your relationship is about transformation. The friction you experience and the problems you face are the fuel for that transformation.* Unpack this for me. Who gets transformed, and how does this transformation work?
- In *Monsters in Love*, you speak about *clean pain* and *dirty pain*. Explain what these are and how they can save or harm a relationship.
- In *Monsters in Love*, you take issue with therapists who teach couples how to communicate better. What's wrong with better communication?
- Why is paying close attention to your own body so important to creating a strong intimate partnership?
- In your book you speak of *reps*—body practices that can help people make their intimate relationships stronger. You break these down into three types: *life reps*, *invited reps*, and *primal reps*. Can you explain and describe each one?
- One entire section of *Monsters in Love* is entitled "How Therapy Really Works." In that section, you have a chapter called "When Therapists Cop Out." How do therapists often fail couples?
- Is *Monsters in Love* primarily for couples in conflict—or is it for all couples?
- So, how can I stop my own partner from sometimes driving me crazy?
- Where can people buy *Monsters in Love*?
 - You can order copies from any online book vendor, such as bookshop.org, indiebound.org, Amazon, Powells, or Barnes & Noble.
 - You can also buy *Monsters in Love* at any brick-and-mortar bookstore. If your favorite bookstore doesn't already have it in stock, they can order it and usually have it for you within two or three days.

Follow-up questions for extended interviews (15-60 minutes)

- You say that each partner's strengths are also their limitations. Why is this, and how does it play out in intimate relationships?
- You have a chapter in *Monsters in Love* called "Why Everyone Hates Their Lover." Talk about this hatred, please—and what people can do about it.
- At the beginning of Chapter 1, you write, "No matter what you do or who your lover is, eventually your partnership begins to hurt." Why? And how can people deal with it?
- One of the things *Monsters in Love* focuses on is what you call the Five Anchors. What are these, and why are they so important?
- In *Monsters in Love*, you say that couples often face crisis points that are full of peril and possibility. You call these crisis points *critical mass*. Would you explain how this works, and how it relates to the Five Anchors?
- In *Monsters in Love*, you write, *Intimate partnerships are designed to push both people to emotional stalemates or bottlenecks. This is the very place where profound transformation can occur. Instead of pathologizing conflicts, couples and therapists need to understand their value.* Explain what this value is and how we can make the most of it.
- You write, *When each member of a couple raises their own game—and does so with compassion rather than competitiveness or vengefulness—then the partnership can dramatically strengthen and deepen. This is the purpose of an intimate relationship, and of the important conflicts that are part of it.* Give an example of raising your own game and watching it transform a relationship.
- You're a therapist who works with couples, and you've been married for many years. Do you have the same kinds of issues and conflicts as everyone else, or has it been different for the two of you in some important way?
- What's the one biggest piece of advice you have for couples who are going through difficult times?



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