

# Overcoming Your Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

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If you are like millions of people with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) you know how your OCD has created problems for you. You feel persecuted by your thoughts about making mistakes, contamination, harm, or losing control. Your OCD prevents you from living freely, including using public rest rooms, shaking hands, feeling comfortable and satisfied with your work, and having the feelings, thoughts and images that the rest of us don't worry about. You are constantly battling yourself. And you feel you are losing the battle.

What can you do?

In my previous blog [How do Obsessive Compulsive People Think?](#) I describe eleven characteristics of OCD thinking:

- 1. Triggers for your obsessions**
- 2. "Odd" thoughts or images**
- 3. Negative evaluation of thoughts**
- 4. Self-monitoring**
- 5. Demand for certainty**
- 6. Thought-action fusion.**
- 7. Thought-suppression**
- 8. "I've lost control"**
- 9. Compulsions**
- 10. Felt sense of completion**

## 11. Avoidance of triggers

You probably have seen a lot of your own thinking in this. But what can you do about this? In one of my blogs, [Those Damn Unwanted Thoughts!](#), I describe your "failed strategies", and why they fail. Just as you can't run away from your hips, you can't get rid of your thoughts. Thought control and thought suppression don't work. Worse---they make you feel more hopeless.



In my new book, [Anxiety Free: Unravel Your Fears Before They Unravel You](#), I help you understand that OCD is largely a problematic theory of your own mind. Your perfectionistic theory of your mind is that you should only have pure thoughts, pure feelings, certainty in what you think, comfortable feelings, and control over what you imagine. You also have a problematic theory of how to make things better. All of your failed strategies to control your thinking and eliminate "unwanted" or "odd" thoughts and images are because of your theory of your mind.

I lay out a number of ways of changing the way that you relate to your thinking. Rather than view your thinking as the "enemy", you can try the following:

- 1. Prove that thought suppression doesn't work.** Example: Try not to think of white bears for the next thirty minutes. Oops. There's another white bear. It won't work.
- 2. Prove that thoughts don't control reality.** Example: If you think that Satan will possess you, beg him to possess you. It won't work.



**3. Modify your image of the obsession.** Example: You may imagine your obsession as some ominous, powerful, dark, large, all-encompassing cloud that engulfs you. Change the image to one of a silly looking clown. It's less frightening. Imagine he has a

high-squeaky voice. He's silly.

**4. Float your obsession.** Example: Rather than trying to get rid of your obsession, imagine it is a tiny piece of wood floating ever-so-gently down a stream. Watch it in your mind's eye. Imagine yourself breathing out as it floats away. Let it return and float past once again and breathe it away. (I'm imagining that if you do this enough you will get sleepy.)



**5. Bore yourself.** Example: Repeat your obsessive thought very, very slowly. Imagine that you are a zombie. "I am contaminated". Repeat it as if you are slowed down and you are watching the words go by. Over and over. Hundreds of times. Boring.

In future blogs we will look at how you can change your [relationship](#) to your obsessive thoughts-rather than trying to suppress them, we will see how you can "make space" for them. It's like a relative at a big picnic--- you can tolerate him without feeling like he occupies your entire mind.

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[1] [http://www.amazon.com/Anxiety-Free-Unravel-Fears-Before/dp/1401921639/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1234617493&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Anxiety-Free-Unravel-Fears-Before/dp/1401921639/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1234617493&sr=1-1)

[2] <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/anxiety-files/200906/how-do-obsessive-compulsive-people-think>

[3] <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/anxiety-files/200906/those-damn-unwanted-thoughts>

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