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Think Outside The Box

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Success and OCD

Even though, OCD still remains a serious mental illness, there are some who managed to take the “good” out of the condition and use it to their advantage.

We often hear that people with OCD are destined to achieve greatness in life. One example would be Steve Jobs who although wasn't diagnosed with OCD, still showed classic signs, such as extreme perseverance and perfectionism. You already know about perfectionism and how it can be helpful, in small doses. Now let's try to focus on using OCD to your advantage, rather than trying to ignore it.

The banner features the Explorable logo and the text "Quiz Time!". Below this are three quiz cards:

- Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2** (Image: A pair of red roller skates on a wooden deck)
- Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2** (Image: A fan of colorful pencils)
- Quiz: Flags in Europe** (Image: A Ferris wheel at sunset)

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Perfectionism

We've already discussed the issue of perfectionism so it's more than clear how this trait can boost your performance, as long as you don't allow it to rule your life. People with OCD are well-known perfectionists. For them, perfectionism is something that usually applies to both personal and professional activities. It's what allows them to achieve high standards of quality. Who would want to give up on such a remarkable skill?

Using It to Your Advantage

As you already know, you don't have to give up on your perfectionism all together. You just have to learn how to distinguish between critical and trivial tasks, and embrace some disorder, as you have already learned. Perfectionism can be a heavy burden, if it is not balanced by some disorder, to make sure you focus on learning how to tolerate the latter.

Attention to Detail

People with OCD have a keen eye for detail. Some experts agree that this trait is the result of anxiety, which makes them hyperaware of their surroundings. For instance, if you're obsessed with order and symmetry, you'll immediately spot any sign of imperfection. This can be extremely useful in jobs like surgery or architecture, where details make the difference between success and failure.

Using It to Your Advantage

However, the downside of scrupulous attention to detail, which cannot be ignored, is anxiety. If you are tense and worried all the time, it is difficult to enjoy life and its small, everyday pleasures. Relaxation techniques can help you ease up, and pay close attention to detail only when necessary.

Perseverance

To be perseverant means to continue, despite the obstacles and roadblocks that lie ahead. It is something that comes from our intrinsic desire to be better. For people who struggle with OCD, perseverance is something that goes hand in hand with obsessions. In other words, when they put their mind to something, they must succeed at all costs, otherwise they feel anxious and may engage in self-loathing. Nothing stands in their way, not even self-preservation instincts. This is the main reason why perseverance can sometimes be problematic.

Using It to Your Advantage

However, perseverance can also help one succeed, as long as it is balanced. This balance is achieved by observing yourself and dealing with preoccupations, rather than allowing them to overpower you. Although perseverance can help you succeed, it should be something that you consciously choose and that doesn't get in the way of your other activities and social life.

Dominance

You might find it hard to believe, but some people who experience OCD are also extremely dominant. This helps them apply their high standards and ask others to do the same, even if that causes distress to both parties. Still, these individuals don't assert their dominance in a tyrannical or authoritarian way. Oftentimes, they will elegantly explain why their methods and standards are better.

Using It to Your Advantage

Dominance can be extremely useful, especially in the competitive world of business, where everyone is desperately trying to emerge from anonymity. However, there is a lot to be learned from other people and their methods as well. You can use your dominant traits, while not allowing them to take control of you, by opening yourself up to other points of view and making the effort to try strategies that other people suggest.

Does OCD Equal Success?

As you can see, there are several traits that make people with OCD highly productive. Based on these traits we could argue that OCD goes hand in hand with success. However, let's not forget that obsessive-compulsive disorder still remains a disorder, which means that it does more harm than good. Refusing to cope with OCD may have detrimental effects on one's overall happiness, could lead to low self-esteem and an isolated lifestyle. That is why it is crucial to strive cope with OCD in a healthy way.

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