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What Is OCD Telling You?

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To someone who has never experienced the heavy burden of OCD, the condition may be challenging to understand. People who struggle with obsessive-compulsive disorder are fully aware of their issues and oftentimes, they desperately try to fight back. Imagine that every time you try to overcome the need to engage in compulsive behaviors, your inner voice keeps whispering negativity.

In a way, this inner voice makes perfect sense. Your mind probably got used to the idea that there's no escape and that OCD will always "haunt" you. But the voice of negativity doesn't have to turn you into a victim. As clichéd and unrealistic as it may seem, it is indeed your choice. A good way to start coping with OCD, is by learning what your inner voice of negativity actually wants to say and why you shouldn't believe it.

The banner features the Explorable logo at the top center. Below it, three quiz cards are displayed in a row. Each card has a white border and a central image. The first card shows a pair of red roller skates on a wooden deck, with the text 'Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2' below. The second card shows a fan of colorful pencils, also with the text 'Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2' below. The third card shows a Ferris wheel at sunset, with the text 'Quiz: Flags in Europe' below. To the right of the cards is a red button with white text that says 'See all quizzes =>'.

“You’re not strong enough!”

Fighting against OCD can sometimes feel like a never-ending battle. Day after day, you struggle to overcome the disorder by resisting to engage in compulsive behaviors and rituals meant to reduce anxiety. Most people who struggle with OCD fail to control their obsessions which inevitably leads to frustration and self-doubt. After hundreds of failed attempts, you grow tired of trying. Something deep down keeps telling you that you're not strong enough. A distant voice, “encouraging” you to give up and accept your condition.

You Are Your Own Hero

There are many reasons behind this kind of attitude, but whatever they may be in your personal case, it is crucial to keep in mind that you are, indeed, a strong individual, who is very much capable of coping with OCD. After all, you have taken a decisive first step- you are here, engaging and learning, which is half the battle.

“I know what’s best for you”

If we could personify OCD, it would be like a dysfunctional and abusive life companion, who keeps following you around everywhere and knows everything about you.

Let’s say you’re obsessed with cleaning. In general, being neat and tidy is desirable. Who wants to live in a messy house or wear dirty clothes? However, there’s a huge difference between a neat person and someone who is obsessed with cleaning. Sadly, we don’t always see the difference because we may believe, even if we don’t realize it, that our obsessions “know what’s best for us”. Once again, OCD tricks us into thinking that our intrusive thoughts and compulsive behaviors make perfect sense because they keep us away from potential dangers - in this case, contamination.

Healthy Behaviors Keep You Safe

In reality, by trying to keep yourself away from danger and engaging in certain rituals, you may be inflicting more physical or mental harm on yourself. Healthy behaviors, on the other hand, are usually based on rational and realistic conclusions. Very soon we’ll suggest some strategies for substituting the former with the latter.

“You’re nothing without me”

Those of us who struggle with OCD know that this condition can also provide a series of benefits. For instance, it can turn you into a perfectionist who’s able to create the most amazing designs at work, or it can motivate you into pursuing a goal, in spite of failures and obstacles. In short, OCD can make you extremely successful. It’s hard to part from with the disorder, if you believe that all of your achievements depend on it.

Your Disorder Doesn't Define You

Circumstances of this kind tend to evoke thoughts, such as “we are nothing without our obsessions”. However, success depends on a whole array of personality traits. Once you get rid of your obsessiveness, you’ll still have plenty of resources to get the job done and even more resources to enjoy your success.

If you find yourself trying to decide how useful your obsessions may be, try creating a list of pros and cons. If you’re truly honest with yourself, you’ll see that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages. Are you willing to sacrifice your health, well-being and long-term happiness in exchange for success?

“Without me, you’ll lose control”

If we were determined to reduce all obsessions to one central element, it would be the need for control. People who struggle with OCD may often feel frightened by uncertainty, and so to them, it may seem as though the only way to function, is by controlling everything around. Chaos, uncertainty and lawlessness may feel intolerable.

You Control Yourself

In that, OCD may seem useful, since it may look as if obsessions point out the problem, while compulsions take care of it. However, that doesn’t give us the chance to face the circumstances, learn from them and improve our self-perceptions.

Although it may seem as if OCD is giving us control over our lives, it is in fact taking our control away from us, since the disorder is what dictates our behavior, rather than our conscious choices.

Very soon, you will learn how to fight these inner demons by adopting a rational perspective on life.

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