

# CHECKING WHAT REALLY WORKS WHEN DEALING WITH OBSESSIONS IS KEY!



When urges to do compulsions, avoidance, and acting on urges hit, it's hard, incredibly hard to not give into them; even if I offer you a million dollars if you don't do a compulsion or avoid a triggering situation right now, as tempting as it sounds, it's hard to not engage in old behaviors.

And yet, here is what psychological science has demonstrated over and over again when we need to change our behavior: (a) doing what matters is much more powerful than getting paid, (b) learning specialized skills is necessary, and (c) having progress markers keep us moving in the direction we want to go in.

It's your turn to make a shift from being off track, from making reactive moves based on what your brain pushes you to do and get your life back. And to get your life back on track, you're going to need to develop a new relationship with your mind too.

Learning to be in a romantic relationship that is full of love, caring, tenderness, and commitment requires to learn other skills: how to choose a partner how to handle our hurts and our partner's hurts, and basically how to show up to it when there are disagreements, fights, upsetting moments and so on. Not an easy thing to do at all, but because we care, we commit to do so, and as an impossible as it sounds, we learn skill after skill.

Getting your life back on track requires to step back and watch what you're doing and how is working in your life. Here are the key take-home messages from it:

- When feeling scared, having disturbing thoughts, bizarre images coming at the speed of the light into your mind, of course, you're going to do what you can in your power to get rid of them immediately. Who wouldn't? And yet,



compulsions, avoidance, and holding with white knuckles to ruling-thoughts add misery into your life.

- Compulsions can be public and private behaviors, or behaviors that are inside and outside your head with the solely purpose to minimize, get rid of, and neutralize obsessions.
- Mental compulsions can vary in form from the simple to the most complex one: saying words, counting words or letters, repeating phrases, repeating lists, repeating prayers, reviewing past situations, reviewing past situations with what if scenarios, anticipating future situations, anticipating future situations with what if possibilities, figuring out the meaning of thoughts, feelings, sensations, and figuring out life issues.
- Checking the impact of avoidant, compulsive behaviors and holding into ruling-thoughts is key to get your life back on track. Important clarification: Checking the consequences of any behavior -compulsive behaviors, avoidant behaviors, or doing what you usually do because of a ruling-thought, doesn't mean checking whether that obsession is true or that ruling-thought is accurate or false, but to step back for a moment, and check if doing that particular behavior, doing that particular action, or taking that particular step is going to help you to show up to life as you want to show up? You can ask yourself questions like: is doing that "X behavior" helping me to be the person I want to be? If I take that "x action" am I the friend I want to be?
- Obsessions are not a choice, they just happen.  
Letting obsessions be, dropping all those strategies to get rid of your obsessions, noticing them, watching them as things that show up in your mind, dropping any



fighting tactic you have against obsessions, while may not sound popular, easy or an exciting thing to do, is the first step to get your life back on track. Doing nothing when those obsessions show up is key!

- Trying to control obsessions is a fantasy!  
As annoying, disturbing, and bizarre obsessions are, trying to control, get rid of, fight back is pure fantasy!
- OCD episodes, regardless the theme of obsessions your reactive brain comes up with, continue happening because of reactive moves: compulsions, avoidance behaviors and doing anything that comes along with ruling-thoughts.

