

SHIFT, SHIFT, SHIFT... SHIFT YOUR MOVES!



Super large fears about germs

Hanging out with friends

Small obsession about Aids

Going to park

Medium worries about racism

Going on a date

Peek images of jumping out of a bush

Attending a concert

No matter what disturbing, annoying, or weird obsessions show up in your mind, what really matters is what you do with those obsessions, how you respond to them, and how you relate to them. Obsessions are not a choice, but your behavior is.

There are core skills to make a shift from reacting automatically to all the stuff that the content-generator and pattern-making machine of your mind comes up into building the life you want to live.



From the book "Living Beyond OCD
Using Acceptance Commitment Therapy:
A Workbook for Adults"
www.actbeyonddocd.com

Here is a brief, very brief, summary of those skills:

- Watching your mind
You can visualize, say, or physicalize your whacky thoughts, or check the impact of getting hooked on any obsession that shows up in your mind.

- Riding the wave of emotions that come along with obsessions
Obsessions don't come along; instead they come with a cascade of overwhelming emotions -fear, worry, anxiety, stress- that makes it hard, really hard, to let them go.

Instead of fighting, suppressing, and trying to get rid of those feelings, you can watch them as visitors that come and go and as they rise and fall.

You were introduced to two micro-steps for riding any emotional wave:

- Describe to yourself what you feel and what you sense in your body; give it a name (it doesn't have to be a perfect name, but just a name that helps you to recognize the feeling).

- Don't do what you usually do

- When feeling overwhelming emotions, take 5 deep and slow breathes, and focus on how your body is breathing, notice the movements of your chest, diaphragm, and abdomen as you inhale and exhale; notice the sensations in your body and follow it with curiosity.



- Making acceptance moves

It's easy to get busy fighting an obsession in your head or fighting an emotion in your body, so using short acceptance prompts you can coach yourself to make room for the yucky stuff that comes under your skin when dealing with OCD episodes.

Examples of acceptance prompts are "fighting this wave, makes it worst; I'm going to let this one go."

- Tracking all your shift moves

Practicing all your skills - watching your mind, riding the wave, and acceptance moves - and keeping track of your practice is key to keep your momentum going, optimize your learning, and get your life back on track, all the way!

Any form of tracking is welcome: plain tally sheets, changing pennies from one glass into another one, or any other form of tracking that you can check at the end of the day or the week.

Tracking is not to torture you, but to keep you going!

There you go! Please make all these skills yours and practice, practice, and practice again. Keep going!

