

How to Identify an OCD Thought

As an OCD sufferer you know that OCD is a disorder composed of obsessions and compulsions. However sometimes it is very difficult to know when a “normal” thought ends and an OCD thought begins. During my battle with OCD I had a very hard time figuring out which thoughts were OCD thoughts and which were real life fears and concerns.

This chapter will show you how to clearly identify OCD thoughts.

***IT IS AN OCD THOUGHT IF
YOU GET A THOUGHT AND YOU QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT THE
THOUGHT IS OCD. THIS MEANS THAT IT IS AN OCD THOUGHT.
IF IT WASN'T OCD YOU WOULD NOT QUESTION IT.
THIS IS THE RULE.***

Here is a list of other OCD thought characteristics.

OCD Thoughts Are Repetitive

When an OCD thought is created, the person often has a very hard time getting rid of it. It is almost like a song playing over and over again in the mind. Many times the sufferer understands OCD's faulty logic but the thought doesn't go away.

OCD Thoughts Distractive

You can notice that whenever an OCD thought enters your brain your concentration drops significantly. It can suddenly become very difficult to focus on anything else other than your thought. The amount of time spent on

thinking about the obsession can be hours and can actually take up most of the day. Even your real life problems can seem less important than the OCD thought.

OCD Thoughts Are Unwanted

What I mean by that is that you do not like your thought. When you get it you want it to go away.

The Thought Goes Against Your Core Beliefs

If you are a very sensitive and kind person, you may get thoughts that are violent and aggressive. If you love your significant other, it may make you doubt those feelings. It always goes against your real thoughts. This is what creates the anxiety. After all, if it went along with your real thoughts, it would not cause anxiety.

OCD Thoughts Cause Anxiety

The amount of anxiety that is caused by the thoughts can vary from extreme to moderate, but anxiety is always present.

The next two characteristics are not always present but you need to know them in case they do come up.

OCD Thoughts Can Begin With “What If”

Have you ever had an OCD thought that “what if-ed” a worst case scenario? It goes something like this: A woman is leaving the house. She suddenly gets a thought; “What if I didn’t turn off the oven and the house will burn down?”

OCD Thoughts Can Follow Your Particular “Theme” of OCD

What I mean by that is that if, for example, your OCD is always about catching AIDS from touching doorknobs and you suddenly get a thought that you may have got AIDS when you touched a handle, then it is OCD.

What helped me is to make a chart of all my OCD thoughts and keep adding to it every time a new one comes up. Also note what triggered the thought and the time it took to get over a thought. Note your level of anxiety (1-10).

Here is an example of what it should look like:

	OCD Thought	Thought Trigger	Anxiety Level	Time To Get Over the Thought
1				

Remember that themes often change so just because a thought doesn't follow your usual OCD theme there is no need to doubt it.

It is important to note that when your OCD starts to improve you will get more thoughts but they will cause less anxiety and will change often. During recovery you may get as many as 10 different thoughts a day, whereas before you may have gotten only one or two that “stuck” all day. I believe this happens because the brain is so used to the constant state of high alert and anxiety, that it tries to give you more thoughts to return to a familiar level of high stress. After some time it will fade and the brain will get used to your new calmer state.

**REMEMBER, IF YOU ARE EVER IN DOUBT WHETHER THE THOUGHT IS
OCD KNOW THAT THE VERY ACT OF DOUBTING YOUR THOUGHT
MEANS IT IS AN OCD THOUGHT.**
