


**The Art of Persuasion:
Changing the OCD Mind**

ADAA
La Jolla, CA
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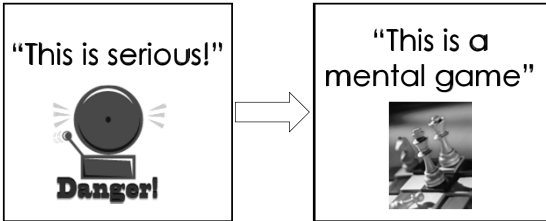
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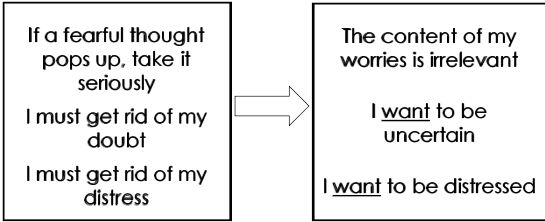
Disclosure

I have no conflicts of interest.

Change your frame of reference



"This is serious!" *"This is a mental game"*




Leveraging the Habituation Model

Frequency

Intensity

Duration

Honest Stance toward symptoms/worry/ uncertainty...

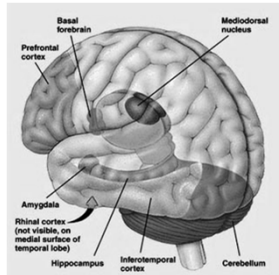
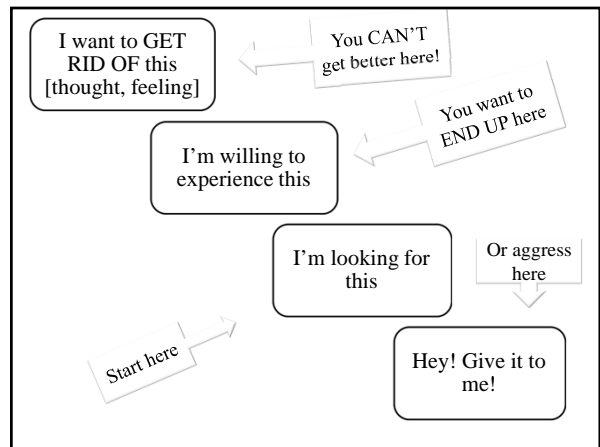
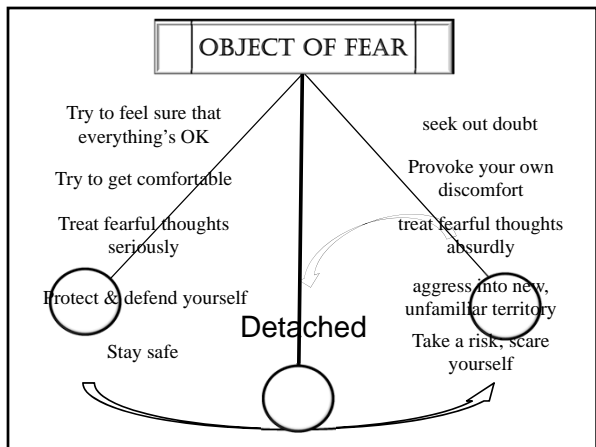
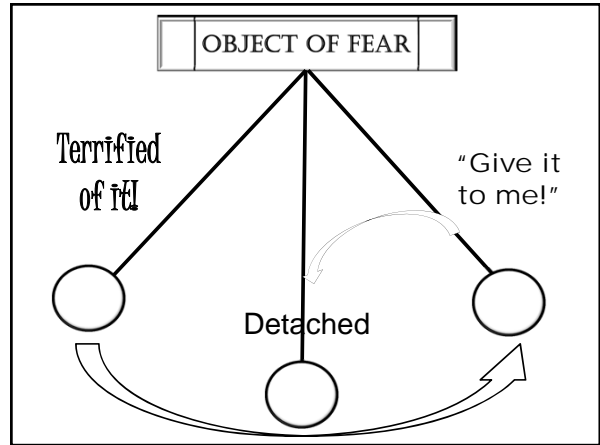
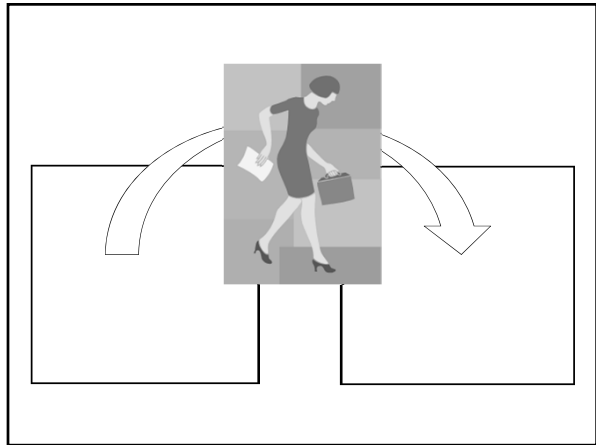


Purposely, voluntarily, choose to want it!

- ✓ want more of it
- ✓ want it to last
- ✓ want it strong

The amygdala

"I want this"

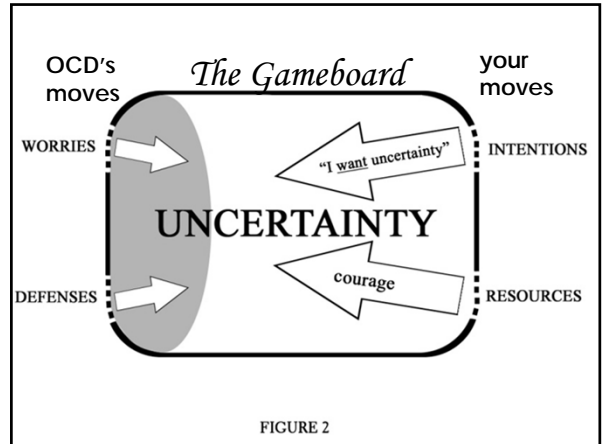
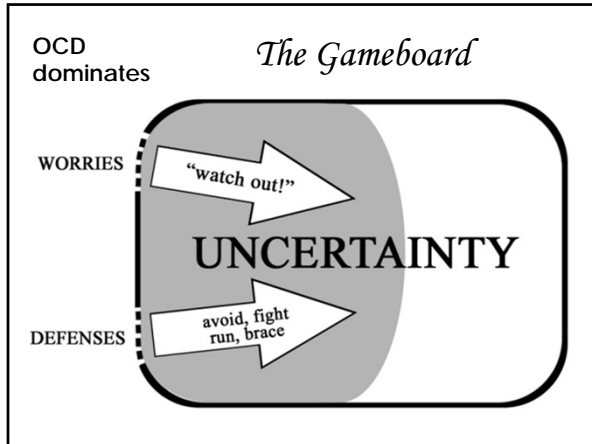
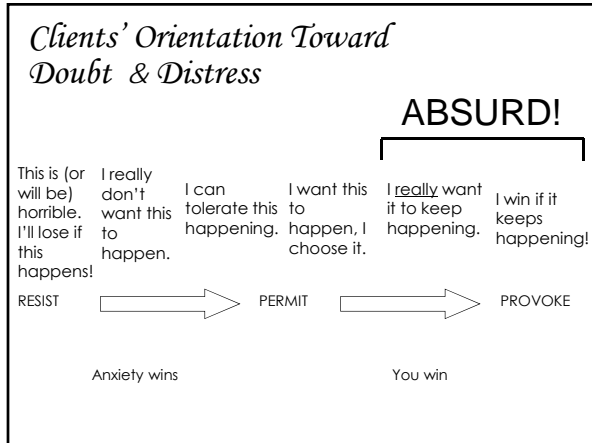


FIGURE 2



Your challenger—OCD—taught you rules so IT could win

Here they are...

- OCD Rules**
1. Be careful or you might cause a horrible problem
OR Be worried that you've already caused one
 2. If a fearful thought pops up, take it seriously
 3. Feel absolutely certain
 4. Use your anxiety as a gauge: if you feel uncomfortable, then there is still Danger
 5. Always act defensively

- Winning Strategy**
1. Do NOT pay attention to your content
- Contamination
- Poor grades
 - Be abandoned
 - Lose something valuable
 - Loved one dies
 - Be rejected
 - Go to Hell
 - Going crazy
 - I harm or kill someone
 - Get sick

It's NOT about the content

It's about purposely choosing to feel the generic sense of uncertainty & anxiety

Poor grades
Loved one dies
Going crazy
Be abandoned
Be rejected
I harm or kill someone
Lose something valuable
Contamination
Go to Hell
Get sick

Winning Strategy

2. Accept obsession when it pops up

"It's fine I just had that thought."

"There's OCD, giving me that obsession again. I expected that."

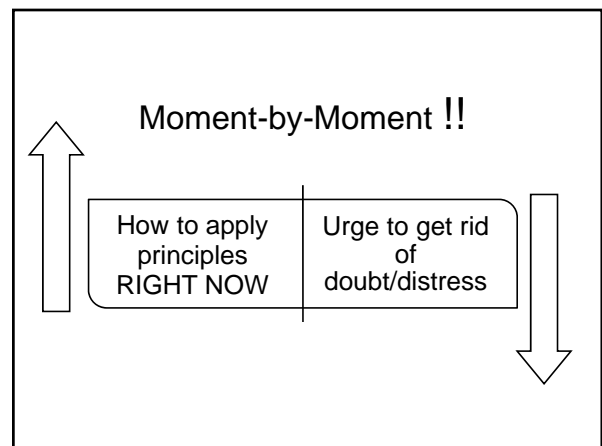
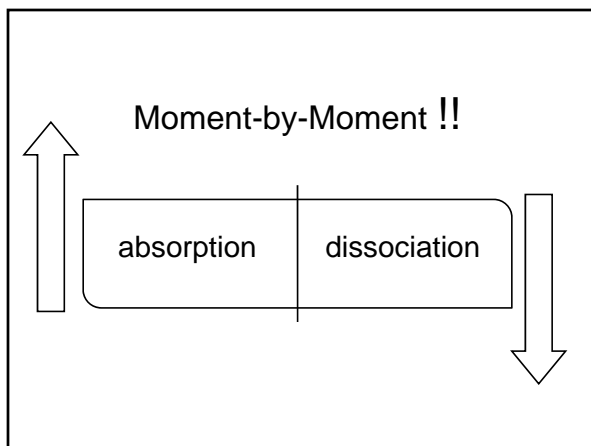
Poor grades
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Get sick

Winning Strategy

3. WANT to make yourself uncertain

Winning Strategy

4. WANT to be anxious & stay anxious



It's where you put your attention

Awkwardly, clumsily, courageously follow protocol	Harm someone/ something? Contamination? Terrible mistake?
--	--

focus attn. here? Or here?

Zero-sum Game

attn. will fade

"This is hard, & I want it." "I can handle this."	"I'm too afraid!" "This is a very bad idea!"
--	--

focus attn. here

To seek out doubt & distress...

*How it might sound
in the moment...*

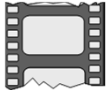
"Did I do something wrong?"

"Oh, no! I need to find out!"

Good. There's my obsession. I'm not answering that question. I WANT to not know."

"I'm scared!"

Good. I'm looking for anxiety too."



"Could I really act on that thought?"

"Oh, no! I need to find out!"

Good. There's my obsession. I'm not answering that question. I WANT to not know."

"I'm scared!"

Good. I'm looking for anxiety too."

Behavioral rehearsal

Hebb's Law:

"Neurons that fire together
wire together."

“No, but, really... what if it
DOES happen?!”

“BUT, wait... it IS possible that that
COULD happen!”

“BUT... what if it really means
something this time?”

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“Oh, well.”

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PRACTICE: Look for chances to feel doubt & distress

Can I create some doubt here?
Can I practice being willing to be uncertain & anxious here?
Can I invite OCD to make it stronger?
Can I invite OCD to make it last longer?

Points
1 point **each time**—while you are feeling anxious or doubtful—
you say **any** of these statements and **mean** it:

“I can handle this” “I want this”
“I can take this hit” “I want [my life back]!”
“I want this to stick around” “I want this to feel
“I’m willing to feel anxious right now” intense”
“I’m willing to feel unsure right now”
“Give me your best shot!” OR WRITE YOUR OWN
HERE:

How do you know you’re practicing?

You'll be saying,
“This is a very bad idea.”

Talking to yourself

- “... Good opportunity to practice”
- “I want this”
- “I want to take this hit”
- “I can handle this”
- “I want to be uncertain”
- “I want to be clumsy”

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I’m willing to feel unsure <u>right now</u>	I want this to feel intense	I can handle this
I’m willing to feel anxious <u>right now</u>	Gimme your best shot!	I can take the hit
Be scared & do it anyway	This is a good opportunity to practice	Seek out discomfort
Go <u>toward</u> what scares you	Risk losing <u>something</u>	I want this
Do the <u>opposite</u> of what anxiety expects	Seek out uncertainty	I must risk
Choose active over passive	I’m <u>willing</u> to feel awkward & clumsy	Love the mat
I <u>want</u> this to stick around	I want my life back!	My job is to push forward

Follow your commands

- “Don’t figure it out”
- “Leave the room now!”
- “Don’t go into the bathroom”
- “Call someone”
- “I must risk”
- “Keep moving; don’t pull over”
- “Gimme your best shot”

“Run hills hard”

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Step 1: Create Your Strategy

- 1) get body forward by dropping head & raising arms
- 2) apply energy to task
- 3) push forward & up
- 4) get faster turnover of legs

Step 2: Generate Commands

- “Raise the arms” • “Look 5-6 feet ahead”
- “Swing the arms” • “Shorten stride”
- “Pick up tempo”

Once commands relegated to unconscious...

Step 3: Frame the Action

“Run hills hard”

Step 1: Create Your Strategy

1. Act as though the content is irrelevant
2. Accept the obsession when it pops up
3. Seek out uncertainty
4. Seek out anxiety
5. Create rules if you need them


Step 2: Generate Motivations or Commands for each practice

like...	• “Let go”
• “I want this”	• “Give me your best shot”
• “Stop washing”	• “I gotta risk something here”
• “Don’t figure it out”	

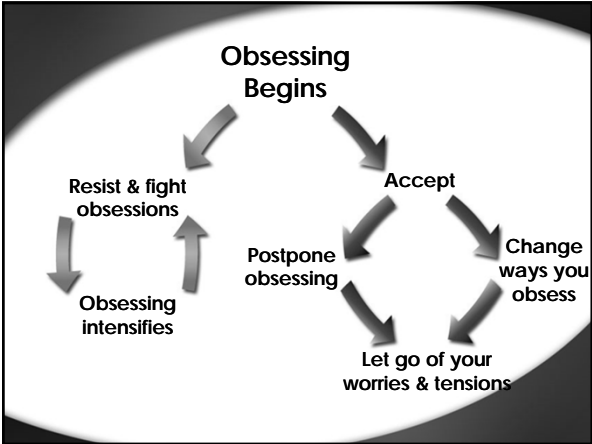
When you are ready to simplify your message...

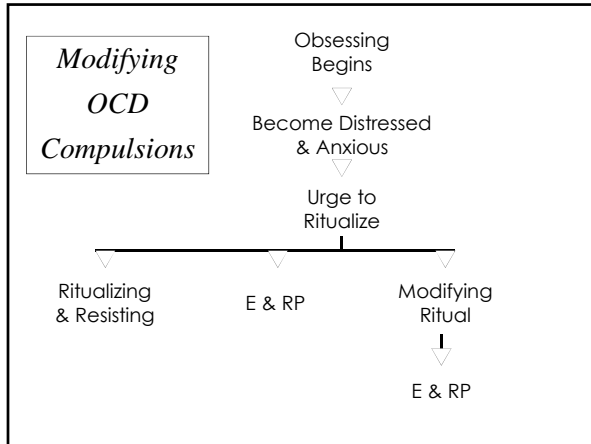
Step 3: Frame the Action *“I want this” or “Let go”*

Modifying the Obsession or Ritual



1. Make sure they are “on board” with principles
2. This is collaborative treatment
 - “What do you think?”; “Does this make sense to you?”
3. “Our goal is to look for patterns and mess with them”
4. “We’re going to throw the symptom cluster a bone. OK?”
5. As part of homework: create commands






*Characteristics of rituals
which can be altered*

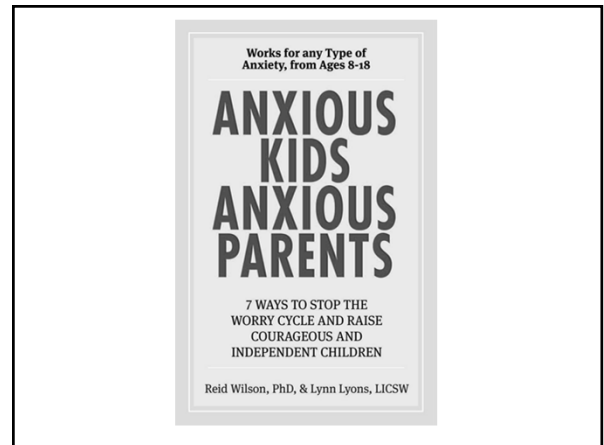
- ✓ Specific actions
- ✓ Specific thoughts
- ✓ Order of action
- ✓ Number of repetitions
- ✓ Particular objects used
- ✓ Physical stances
- ✓ Corresponding emotions
- ✓ Locations
- ✓ Special triggering thoughts or events

Modifying the Ritual



Collaborate!

1. "Our goal is to mess with the pattern"
2. "Your goal is to find ways to be uncertain (& therefore uncomfortable)"
3. Outline the steps of the ritual
4. Brainstorm ways to interrupt the pattern... to generate at least some uncertainty
5. From that, decide on the homework
 - As part of that: create commands



Free Self-Help Site



Anxieties.com

Free E-Newsletter