

THE GIFT OF OCPD

Restoring the gift that lies beneath the obsessive-compulsive personality disorder

WHAT IS OCPD?

Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD) is a condition characterized by the anxiety of one's own emotions and addiction to negativity. (The Gift of OCPD definition)

CAUSE

Some people (the highly sensitive and gifted) are born with a highly sensitive nervous system – there is nothing wrong or abnormal about this. They most likely inherited their high sensitivity from their parents (one or both may be highly sensitive). Those with a highly sensitive nervous system are predisposed to feeling their emotions intensely (emotional overexcitability). This intensity makes it more challenging to accept, endure, and recover from uncomfortable life experiences, hurt, and disappointments. While undergoing emotional pain, it is not so uncommon for people to come to conclusions that draw out a response, both emotional and behavioural, that adds to the human experience of melancholy. For the sake of simplicity, I refer to these conclusions as “negative” thoughts. Although it may be normal, even human, to have a negative thought in difficult times, highly sensitive people who feel their emotions intensely are often driven by their emotions to replay their thoughts in their head in frequencies that cause problems in the long run. This replaying of thoughts is what the clinical world of psychology calls “obsessions.” After some time has passed, during which repeated thoughts and responses have strengthened neural connections within the brain, the highly sensitive person then becomes addicted to his or her many ways of thinking and coping.

“Giftedness is a dual diagnosis with Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder since intellectualization may be assumed to underlie many of the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for this disorder.”
(Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnosis of Gifted Children)

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM OCD?

The main difference between OCD and OCPD is that OCD is characterized by the anxiety of one's own imagination while OCPD is characterized by the anxiety of one's own emotions. Read my theory in more detail on “OCD vs OCPD: Restoring Our Imagination and Heart.”

SYMPTOMS

The Gift Of OCPD Criteria. Not all symptoms have to be present

1. THINKAHOLISM

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *“I need to figure out how to be ok or else I will not be ok.”*

2. WORKAHOLISM

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *“I am not good enough as a person.” “I need to create my value.” “My value comes from what I do.” “I am on my own in the pursuit of feeling good about who I am as a person.” “My future will not be ok unless I work as hard as I can now.” “Things will not be ok unless I use my time perfectly.”*

3. PERFECTIONISM, ANGER, GUILT

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *“My high standards must be met or else things will not be ok.” “I will be rejected by others if I am not perfect.”*

4. REGRET, RESTLESSNESS, INDECISIVENESS

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *“I am worse off because of the things that I have and have not chosen to do.” “Unless I make up for my lost time and choose perfectly, I will always remain in regret.”*

5. RESENTMENT, UNFORGIVENESS

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *“I am worse off because of the way he/she/they treated me.” “He/she/they do not care.” “The world would be a better place without him/her/them.” “I expect him/her/them to fail and disappoint me.”*

6. ISOLATION, INABILITY TO DELEGATE

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *“It is better to be safe by myself than to get hurt and rejected by others.” “Doing things on my own is the only way to get things done right.”*

7. MISERLINESS, HOARDING

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *“I will not have enough for myself in the future unless I save now.” “Others will just take advantage of my generosity.”*

FOR THE MORE SEVERE CASES OF OCPD:

8. PURPOSELESSNESS, IDLENESS

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *"There is no purpose/point in life." "We are merely like the animals on the earth with no greater purpose than to go along with this perpetual pointless cycle we call life." "There is nothing more."*

9. HOPELESSNESS

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *"There is nothing that I can do." "I am powerless." "I cannot bring any sort of positive change to my condition/the world."*

10. ANTINATALISM

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *"Life sucks." "Life is not worth living." "I rather have not been born into this world." "It would be cruel to bring children into this unfair wretched world." "I rather not have children so that I do not pass down my illness to them."*

11. MISOTHEISM

UNDERLYING NEGATIVE BELIEF: *"There is no such thing as good." "There is no God." "If there is a God, God does not care."*

CURE?

Short answer... no, there is no cure. There is more evidence in the study of addictions to support the idea that previously built neural pathways remain in the brain for life. Dormant neural pathways can be reawakened at any point in time, causing relapse.

RECOVERY

While being cured of OCPD may not be an option, recovery from OCPD is very possible. Successful long-term recovery from OCPD is a two-part challenge:

1. Elimination of the anxiety of emotions by facing them (not denying or escaping them) and personally experiencing that everything will be ok in the end.

THE CHALLENGE: Many people with OCPD have built a dependence on that which prevents them from facing their anxieties (all of their many mechanisms of control).

2. Life-long commitment to sobriety from negative thinking.

THE CHALLENGE: Old habits are extremely difficult to break and relapse can happen so easily.

GETTING PROFESSIONAL HELP

As highly intelligent people with a gift for figuring things out, people with OCPD are very well equipped for self-therapy. It may be difficult, however, for them to recognize all their mechanisms of control on their own because they have lived the majority of their lives thinking that those things were normal. For that reason, it can be a very good idea for people with OCPD to get additional help in checking their "blind spots" with a professional. The ideal professional is one who helps his or her OCPD patient work on the above two-part challenge. The ideal professional is able to be a strong voice of positivity in the OCPDer's life. Avoid professionals who are quite negative themselves, who offer advice based on their own negativity.

MEDICATION?

As explained above, OCPD is not a result of any chemical imbalance or insufficiency. In fact, it would be more accurate to say that the hyper-functioning OCPD nervous system runs much more powerfully than that of the average person. There is nothing chemically that needs to be balanced or supplemented. Despite the questionable beginnings of the mass implementation of medication as treatment for mental health issues, there are still many users who promote the efficacy of medication in controlling the symptoms of OCPD. Symptom control, though, is not something that I am interested in promoting. I am much more interested in helping people with OCPD experience full recovery, recovery that requires no more symptom control because all symptoms have been eliminated as a result of addressing their root issues. Symptom control can also lead to dependence in the long run. People with OCPD need to learn how to think positively (or at least not so negatively) when they feel "bad." Removing or dulling the initial "bad" feeling through the use of medication is only a temporary quick fix.

THE GIFT UNWRAPPED:

Profile of the Recovered OCPDer

You are a champion of excellence. Your standards are so high because you know what excellence looks like. When you see excellence, your heart leaps with excitement!

The way that you live your life is a testament of your passion for excellence. You cannot bear the thought of compromising your high standards for life by settling for "comfortable" or "good enough" as most other people

do. That kills you inside. You would rather die trying to have the most enriching, fulfilling life.

The way that you work is a testament of your passion for excellence as well. You work so diligently because excellence takes a lot of time and effort. As a result of your consistent hard work, you have ingrained in yourself a superhuman work ethic. When you find that one thing you love to do more than anything else in the world, nothing can stop you. What others might consider a chore, you consider a joy. While others count the hours that they work, you lose track of time. When excellence is delivered by the work of your hands, it inspires the world. It opens people's eyes and makes them say, "Wow! So this is what excellence looks like!" Oftentimes, financial success follows excellence. But money can never supersede your uncompromisable love for excellence.

The way that you love your romantic partner is another testament of your passion for excellence. When you find that one person you love more than anyone else, you really give your life to them. While others let the passion in their romantic relationships fade too easily, you work hard at making yours exhilarating. You fight everyday for your partner's heart. You are like the knight in shining armor whose love for his princess is so powerful that you would slay dragons everyday for her.

You pursue excellence in your other close relationships as well. Rather than spreading your attention thin over multiple surface-level relationships, you zero in on all your energy to a few friends to experience deep, meaningful friendships.

You have a gifted mind that aids you in your pursuit of excellence. You are highly intelligent, especially in logical reasoning and problem solving. You are a talented strategist. Your mind has a knack for understanding things that have an orderly structure to them. If a complex machine from outer space was designed in a logical manner and given to the people of Earth to try to figure out its use, you would be the first one to master it.

But the most amazing thing about you is your big heart! You experience heights of joy and depths of sorrow that remain a mystery to most people. Your greater emotional range gives you the ability to empathize with others so well that your relationships reach such a deep level of intimacy. Your heart not only senses the pain in others, but it also knows how to deliver the right comfort and healing. When this awareness is combined with your abundant care and generosity, people's lives change. Your heart is so big that it has the capacity to care for humankind on a larger scale. While most others might

easily dismiss the needs of the world in order to focus on their own needs, you lay your life down for the benefit of the world. Your heart breaks when you see injustice happen as a result of the absence or lack of moral order. You passionately fight for what is right and make the world a better place.

YOU ARE A BEAUTIFUL MASTERPIECE!

The above description is the true identity of people with OCPD. This identity, however, gets lost and distorted by trauma, fear, and lies. Fortunately, these things can all be worked out and the true identity of people with OCPD can be restored.

If you are a person with OCPD, read the above character description to yourself frequently and believe in it. If you care for someone with OCPD, help him or her find his or her identity by affirming the above truths in his or her life.

READER COMMENTS

I think people with OCPD are "normal" or whatever "normal" is defined as, just that there is an exceptionality to them of setting up too high a standard that not many can meet. Then they give off the impression that they are disappointed in the person and it presents itself as self-defeating. Some of the ocpd traits can be viewed as a positive trait to have until it sets itself up for disappointment when it cannot be met. That's what makes someone with ocpd in denial of being anything wrong with having these exceptional standards. In their eyes, it can be easily argued that there is nothing wrong with possessing these traits ...until the high standards fail to be met and anxiety and stress sets in ...

It's a shame that OCPD has the name that it has, because it is an incredible misnomer. It really is completely distinct from OCD, and while I've suffered from all sorts of depression and mental distortions thanks to being an OCPDer, I don't think that this condition really deserves the label 'disorder'. It can cause trouble, but I think that a person can learn to control the 99% of the negative aspects of OCPD and still keep all of its upsides. I wouldn't want to be anything or anyone else.

"that doesn't sound like a disorder, it sounds like some good groundwork for everyone else to follow." Your link on Intellectualization completely nailed me! Looking forward to finding focus instead of some medication to help with my relationships.

the biggest problem with OCPD is the inability to feel our difficult emotions. Those emotions can be so overwhelming that many of us run away from them. We

might be completely fine with “running away” and using all our coping mechanisms to avoid our difficult emotions for the rest of our lives, but that’s not so fine with other people who are emotionally involved with us (romantic partner, children, etc.).

I can finally stop being accused of being in denial... I didn’t deny the fact that I had something different (or for lack of a better word “wrong”) with me, it was just the way it was presented to me... my relationship was broken up by it. My partner’s friend basically helped with it instead of trying to find the root of my stress, working on that, my behavior escalated until I was noticing things, but was increasingly agitated because I couldn’t control everything and it was all falling apart. My OCPD was thrown in my face, diagnosed by my partner... and I was left to deal with it. I felt alone. And I personally would prefer to deal with it as much as I can on my own...possibly an OCPD trait... I want to see if I can accomplish this on my own. I don’t feel depressed, have a substance abuse problem, I am outgoing, have a great circle of friends, and I think I can take the first steps. I always knew I was over-striving for perfection, control, and like one of the posts above, belittled those who lacked “common sense”... At 53, I have had a long history of being opinionated and always seemed to feel on the “defense” but never knew why. About 25 years ago, I learned to stop being a perfectionist, and also to accept mistakes and learn from them. It was such a great achievement that affected me profoundly. I still remember where I lived and what job I had. Having a good memory is not always a blessing like that, either. I wish I could turn it off some days. But I think this site explains the positive sides of having this “disorder” and will help me strengthen the weaknesses to turn them to positive. I always wondered who’s brain was studied to become the base-line brain to diagnose things. Are there people out there who are perfectly balanced? I was resenting being called OCPD because it was not in a nice way. I did argue, and was accused of JADEing and I thought it unfair that I am diagnosed with the problem and felt like I was being cajoled and cornered by someone who played the victim. My stress escalated with heavy financial burdens, household burdens, emotional balances while my partner was not very supportive: wasn’t working, wasn’t helping around the house, was emotionally upset which led to depression. So we both were spiraling down, my partner’s depression was not helping my stress... my escalating behavior was not helping my partner’s depression. I didn’t know it at the time, but my partner had been looking into my disorder since March ’11. We split up in Oct ’13. I don’t know how I would have taken to the idea that maybe I had a disorder, but I do know that I need to

do something. But I am not alone in this relationship, and if it is over, it is over. I will learn from this and try very hard to work with what I have instead of fighting it. I am creative: I paint, draw, photography. I have strong emotional ties with my pets, I do love deeply... I may have separation anxiety stemming from my father’s death when I was only 7. I thought I got over it. Maybe it was the catalyst... My mother was very overbearing...a perfectionist to the end. It was hard growing up under her rules... and yet, I have rules too. I have a hard time bending them! And I don’t know why!!! This page is very helpful and I know that I can do it...I’ve already made some changes over the years, and there is so much more work to do. I try to live with the notion that I can always learn something new each day, and to try to learn from others. I really hope I can learn from myself, too. Thanks so much for having a page that helps me see myself not as a monster, but with such great potential when channeled in the best direction

OCPD is a precious gift. People who don’t have it are the handicapped ones. They live in a sepia world, whereas ours is high definition Technicolor. We see the details.

Having an OCPD boss is a nightmare. Nothing anyone does is perfect enough, even her handpicked compliant favorites. Never knew what micromanagement was until I got this ultimate practitioner. So many projects that required hours of lists, charts and excel spreadsheets and reports before, during and after. Then they were mysteriously put on hold forever. Or when they were completed it was basically useless stuff no one would read. Drove me out along with others. The survivors are in counseling or on antidepressant/anxiety pills.

First of all, sorry for my bad English, I’m from Romania and English it’s not my natural language, of course. I’m stuck with OCPD for the twelve years now, but I think I have made some progress. You are so true about control (defense) mechanisms, I’m so grateful that are people who understand. I love you guys! Today I found out that is a great difference between control mechanisms and motivation and organization. This can be the best day of my life. I feel free like never before because I couldn’t live any longer with those demons inside my head. My perception has been that I have needed control mechanisms for assuring my motivation to do whatever I want, but now I’m sure that’s not true. I don’t need them!!! I will be fine. I can do anything if I follow my dreams, I’m not a loser

<https://giftofocpd.wordpress.com/what-is-ocpd/>

I have had OCPD since I was three. They used to call it OCB- B for Behavior, but when I was 20, it went to "D" for Disorder, and added "P" for Personality. Through life, it evolved. Fortunately, my mom was very familiar with it, because she had it, and so did her father. Since she was familiar with it, she was always supportive and helpful to me. I do recall the negative side to OCPD of always being afraid of something, and for me, it was fear of doing something wrong, even though I was highly disciplined. It did have a few spin offs of a few other disorders, such as anorexia, and anxiety. I was on medications for OCPD for 6 years, but seeing the medications only made me worse, I made the decisions to stop all medications, and get to know who I really was. Once I accepted me, and as put the "gifts" I have, I accelerated. I do have very different ways of doing things, but they are not dreadful, but playful for me. I had to accept the fact I am different, and most people will not accept me, and for me, through art and the art that I do, I live a productive and happy life. Most people do not understand me. The family I have has rejected me, because I am different. I am peacefully okay with that, because I have realized they have problems they have to deal with that have nothing to do with me. There was a time I used to be blamed for everything, and I used to self blame, but through years of experience, I am responsible for me, and they are responsible for themselves. My mom died two and a half years ago, and the first year was extremely hard for me, but instead of getting locked into depression and staying home, I went out. There was a few times in life I was in an OCPD isolation mode, and I knew without my mom, I had to not get stuck like that. I did find a significant other who loves me and supports me, and understands me just the way I am. Just because I don't function like the rest of the world does not mean there is something wrong with me. I am finally not embarrassed or ashamed of who I truly am. I hope society finally recognizes the gifts and tosses the curses away, because I believe we are all uniquely gifted.