

Living with Someone Who Has Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder

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From the outside looking in, things look perfect. That is precisely the impression a person with Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) intends to give. They seem to be the model spouse, parent, friend, and most especially employee. And they have many rewards, honors, recognitions, and promotions to prove it. But like many people suffering from a personality disorder, things are not what they seem from the inside looking out.



OCPD is not the same thing as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). [This article explains the difference between the two disorders.](#)

For those living with a person who has OCPD, life can be frustrating. There is a sense that nothing the spouse or children can do is ever good enough for the OCPD. The constant nitpicking, exactness, narrow-mindedness, and rigidity over insignificant matters can cause family members to feel as though they were going crazy.

12 Ways Life Can be Difficult Living with Someone with OCPD

Here are twelve ways that can make living with a person who has Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) challenging. Please note that not everyone with OCPD will have all of these twelve characteristics, but rather, these are different things you may expect from *some people, sometimes* with OCPD.

1. **Well-groomed and dressed.** The first evidence of an OCPD is their appearance. They are meticulous about how they are groomed and dressed. They don't need to be in the latest style (that is frivolous spending) but they do strictly adhere to dress codes, even ones that are unspoken.
2. **Black and white thinking.** There is no area of grey for OCPD. Things are either one way or another. This often manifests in comparing meals, children, vacations, discussions, projects, and many other areas. It is as if they need things to only be black and white and therefore move anything that appears grey to one side or the other.
3. **Need to be "right".** OCPDs believe there is a right way to do things and a wrong way, and they do the right way. The difficulty is they tend to be analytical and therefore do evaluate until they find the better method. Their primary love language is to be told, "You were right."
4. **Inflexible values.** The black and white thinking frequently results in an inflexible value system which is designed by OCPDs. This is forced tightly on family members without any regard for their opinions because they are "right". They might listen for a minute but then will lecture for hours explaining why their values are preferred.
5. **Interrogates for meaningless details.** OCPDs are obsessed with details. They tend to put little bits of random details together to draw conclusions that are frequently inaccurate. But trying to tell them their perception is in error will only result in more interrogation to prove their point.
6. **Obsessed with rules and order.** If a rule exists, there must be a good reason for it and OCPDs expect everyone to live by it. This includes non-spoken social rules, religious guidelines, dress codes, and body language. There is little to no grace for the individuality of another person because their rule is best.
7. **Workaholic.** Work is a place for OCPDs to excel especially if their job demands attention to detail and strict adherence to standards.

The more positive feedback they get, the more time they invest. If they are unsatisfied at work, this same process can be transferred to a hobby or special interest. Nearly all of their conversations center on this area.

8. **Miserly spending habits.** OCPDs will spend money on things they want, but are miserly when it comes to other members of the family. They frequently do budgets to the penny and like to account for every dollar spent. Any unnecessary spending will be met with an intense discussion.
9. **Combs trashcans for things discarded.** This is the most interesting aspect of OCPDs because it seems so counter-intuitive. They hate to throw things out for fear of needing them again and border on hoarder mentality. In their obsessive thinking and miserly spending, nothing can go to waste. A family member throwing out a worn out item will frequently find it has returned "just in case they change their mind."
10. **Perfectionist.** They insist on doing things so precisely that frequently they are unable to complete tasks for which they cannot do exactly right. The result is unfinished projects all over the house. There is always some excuse for not completing it but they will never admit that it is their own impossible standards that prohibit them from moving forward.
11. **Micromanages.** If an OCPD delegates a task, they insist that it be done their way or not at all. Every aspect of a project is micromanaged by OCPDs to the point that others give up. This then justifies the hidden desire to do everything themselves because no one can do it as good as them.
12. **Stubborn.** Trying to get an OCPD to see that the above areas are problematic is nearly impossible. They literally have to be on the verge of losing a job, marriage, or child before they are willing to see things through another lens. Their stubbornness is so ingrained that all they can see is their rightness.

All hope is not lost. Just because someone displays these symptoms does not mean things can't be different. It can be but it literally is a process of one small area at a time. A person with OCPD cannot change everything at once (their ego cannot handle that blow), rather it must be done incrementally and gradually over time.

APA Reference

Hammond, C. (2018). Living with Someone Who Has Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder. *Psych Central*. Retrieved on August 5, 2020, from <https://pro.psychcentral.com/exhausted-woman/2016/07/living-someone-who-has-obsessive-compulsive-personality-disorder/>
