



The 5 Secrets OCD Doesn't Want You to Know About Anxiety



**#5 secret OCD doesn't
want you to know:**

Anxiety isn't bad.

I know...

sounds unbelievable, right?

“Of course anxiety’s bad!” you say (as you start to close this PDF... but don’t leave just yet! I promise you’ll be glad you kept reading.)

“Alright I’ll keep reading, but anxiety feels awful! 🙄” How can it not be bad?

Anxiety feels awful because it’s a by-product of the fight or flight response.

You see a bear 🐻, and the fight-or-flight response kicks in: you get a surge of stress hormones, like adrenaline and cortisol, so that you can either run away fast or (gulp) fight off the bear.

Stress hormones are designed to mobilize energy quickly to get you away from danger. You feel like you can leap tall buildings 🏢 in a single bound!

But if there isn’t a bear to get away from (or a building to jump over), all that adrenaline and cortisol have nowhere to go. So they hang out in a frantic sort of way, making you feel jumpy and antsy and—like something’s wrong!

That’s why anxiety feels bad.

But anxiety is just a bunch of physical sensations.

If you think about it, the symptoms of anxiety are the same sensations you get when you exercise 🏃—heart racing, shortness of breath, sweaty palms, etc. But when you’re exercising, you don’t call these sensations “anxiety” or “bad” because you know why they are there.

When you’re not sure why you’re feeling those sensations, you call them “anxiety” and “bad.” But they’re not “bad.” They’re just physical sensations!

The truth is that OCD is convincing you that these sensations we call “anxiety” are bad for the sole purpose of using them as a weapon against you. 😬 And that brings us to secret #4.

**#4 secret OCD doesn't
want you to know:**

**The reason
you do compulsions
isn't
what you think it is.**

Why do you do compulsions?



- A To keep myself and/or others safe**
- B To disprove the horrible things OCD says**
- C To make things just right**
- D A combination of A, B, and/or C**
- E None of the above**

This is one of those quizzes that isn't really a quiz, right? Because of course the answer must be D!

Wrong.

OCD tells you that you're doing compulsions for some noble purpose, like preventing harm or bringing order or preserving your sense of self.



But that's just OCD content: all the things OCD throws at you to get your attention. This is not about the content. This is about anxiety. The reason you do compulsions is because compulsions bring down anxiety. Not all the time, but sometimes. And not permanently, but at least for a little while.

Because you may not have known secret #5, you probably thought reducing your anxiety—even for a short time—was a good thing. So it made sense to keep doing compulsions to try to get that relief.

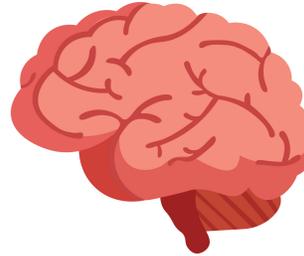
Except, well, that's not actually what compulsions are doing for you.

**#3 secret OCD doesn't
want you to know:**

**Compulsions aren't
relieving your anxiety.**

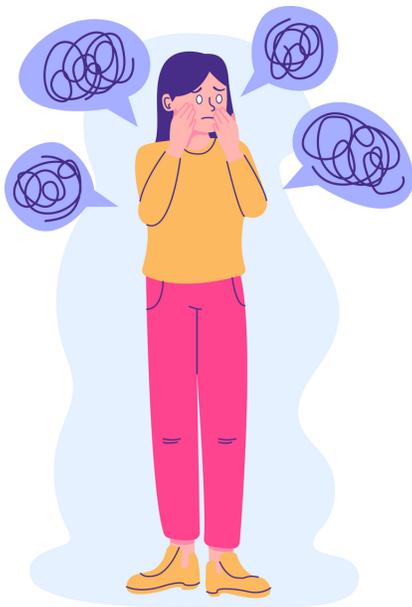
Compulsions are making anxiety worse.

Much worse.



When you do a compulsion, you're acting as though what OCD is saying is relevant. This makes your brain think these obsessions must be worth addressing (or you wouldn't be doing rituals) so it keeps bringing obsessions up. The more the scary thoughts come up and the more you do rituals in response, the more anxious and stuck in the cycle you become, feeling like you're lost in a world where the only thing that matters is what OCD is worried about.

Which is exactly where OCD wants you to be.



If OCD can get you all wrapped up in the scary content and doing rituals as a result, it wins. Every time. When it gets you to do rituals, you might earn a little anxiety relief, but OCD earns a bigger reward. It becomes stronger. Bigger. More powerful.

Which leaves you more anxious, not less.

But ... you have a superpower you might not be aware of that can turn the tables on OCD.

**#2 secret OCD doesn't
want you to know:**

**You can handle your
anxiety.**

Yes, you really can.

OCD is going to tell you again and again that you aren't handling your anxiety and you certainly won't be able to in the future. What's its main rationale? Well, that anxiety FEELS bad, so you must not be handling it or it wouldn't feel so bad.

(Now that you know several of OCD's secrets about anxiety, do you see where I'm going here?)

Yeah, anxiety can feel bad. So what? Being out of breath when you exercise can feel bad, too, and you handle that okay.

**feeling
bad**



**anxiety is
bad**



**you can't
handle
anxiety**

If you think about it and give yourself the credit you deserve, you probably have the ability to handle WAY more anxiety than most people.

It's likely that you haven't noticed this before because OCD always throws a tantrum about how bad the anxiety feels. But I bet you've never exploded into a million pieces and had to be superglued back together, no matter how much anxiety you've had, right? So you **have** handled it.

If you can begin to realize that you can tolerate anxiety (even though it feels bad) and that you really **CAN** handle it, well, then we've just thrown a big ole wrench into OCD's plans.



**#1 secret OCD doesn't
want you to know:**

**Anxiety means
something entirely
different than what
OCD tells you.**

It means you have the chance to

Whenever an OCD trigger comes up and you feel anxious, your instinctive response has been to say "Oh, no!" and do a compulsion.

But as we've seen, that response is not helping you reclaim your life.

Instead, what if we used our superpower of being able to handle anxiety to respond differently to triggers and anxiety? What if instead of seeing them as bad things we saw them as good things, such as ...

**feeling
anxious**



**your
superpower**



**opportunity
to practice
ERP and
beat OCD**

Exposure and response prevention therapy, or ERP, is the gold-standard therapy for OCD. In ERP, you learn to face fears without doing rituals, and in doing so, your brain learns it can handle the uncertainty that obsessions create. In ERP you act as though the OCD is NOT relevant. You dramatically change your relationship with anxiety, seeing it as a sign that there's an opportunity to practice ERP—and to beat OCD—right in front of you.

You learn that anxiety doesn't mean that you need to do compulsions. It instead means that you can tolerate and even lean into discomfort in order to reclaim your life. In essence, you learn to see anxiety as it's described in my favorite quote:

**"Discomfort is the price of admission
to a meaningful life."**

**DR. SUSAN DAVID,
THE GIFT AND POWER OF EMOTIONAL COURAGE**