

SOME SLOGANS AND HELPFUL SAYINGS FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDERS

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*Some slogans and sayings are adapted from Obsessive Compulsive Anonymous and Workaholics Anonymous

Statistics suggest that even with carefully targeted medication and cognitive-behavioral therapy, a substantial percentage of OC-Spectrum patients do not receive significant relief from symptoms. It becomes important, then, to develop strategies for long-term self-care and lifestyle management. One such tool is the use of daily meditations.

Meditations and affirmations can serve multiple roles. They can act as reminders of skills that one is developing through the exposure and response prevention behavior therapy process. They can reduce feelings of isolation and hopelessness. They can assist in developing and embracing new perspectives on living without the protection of OCD anxiety reduction behaviors. They can assist in keeping a steady pace in the recovery process. Most importantly, they can support us in detaching from obsessions so that we can see OCD for what it is – a trick of the mind.

Here are a few of the affirmations we have found helpful at the OCD Recovery Center. We recommend choosing several that are good personal fits and carrying them in a wallet or purse for ready use when OCD strikes.

- Good and bad things will happen in life and, yes, we all die eventually. The only choice for those of us with OCD is whether to spend the life we have as a slave to our obsessions and rituals - or as a free, spontaneous and alive person.
- See that your OCD can potentially connect you to a greater spirituality and provide an opening for self discovery.
- You can't put out fire with gasoline! In OCD more is often less.
- To beat OCD is to choose to live with uncertainty.
- Trust God (Destiny, The Universe)...and tie your camel! Know the difference between what you can do something about, and what you just need to have trust about.
- Recovery is about trust. The antidote for that "holding-on-fear-of-everything-syndrome" is *really* trusting (God, the Universe, your Higher Power). We trust that things will turn out as they are destined to.... not "perfectly" or even as we wish they would, but as part of a bigger plan.
- Don't do the ritual *and* breath and relax.
- Get anxiety under control before OCD happens!
- Thoughts do not make reality and feelings aren't facts.
- If your magical thinking was real then the rest of the world's population would be dead!

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- Serenity Prayer: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.
- Remember that OCD is a problem with the functioning of the brain - not with our character!
- Sometimes you will be riding along pretty smoothly and *then* notice “Oh, I did that without OCD rituals!”..... and then the OCD will come riding up and say “Wait you forgot me!” When that happens don’t stop and give it a ride - just keep going!
- We all have within us a “good dog” and a “bad dog”. The one we feed is the one that becomes the strongest. Don’t feed the OCD dog and it will grow weaker.
- Surrender to the anxiety feeling. Feel it and it will get tired of bothering you.
- OCD recovery is like a diet. When we act on a compulsion (to eat or perform a ritual) we are practicing avoidance of (anxiety). The result is for the anxiety to grow stronger (or our stomach to grow bigger!).
- Giving in to “shoulds” tends to encourage the OCD. Ask instead what is right for you in your heart and follow that to greater choice and spontaneity.
- Admitting powerlessness over OCD is the 1st Step in recovery!
- Obsessions live in the future and the past. Keep your mind in the *now*!
- When we have a disability (the World Health Organization says it’s one of the top ten medical problems) it is so easy to get down on ourselves. We tend to see our limitations rather than our strengths. Be proud of all you have accomplished and will accomplish. Even more important, know that you are lovable and valuable just because you are a living spirit in the world!
- OCD thrives on habit and ritual. When fighting OCD, what works one time may not the next. Sometimes we need to alternate interventions so the OCD doesn’t catch on to what we are doing and use our recovery tools against us.
- Where there is life there is hope.
- If all else fails, lower your standards.
- If it’s not broken, don’t fix it.
- Find a neutral zone, or safe place in which you feel comfortable and at peace. Use that place to recenter yourself when every you need it (but resist the temptation to hide there).
- OCD is like a pile of junk mail in your brain covered with a sticky ooze of anxiety. Live in the rest of your mind where truth resides.
- You can’t stop bad things with your rituals. Life is inherently risky and none of us come out of it alive!
- Live on the Universe’s plan - which is always simple.
- Too much compulsive control leads to being out of control. If you fear suffering you are already suffering.
- OCD is a guide to learning about self-ownership.
- OCD is not related to the illness or disaster it promises. You do indeed *have* a disease.... and it’s OCD! You also have a body and it has both health and ill health. OCD does not protect you from illness. There is no connection.

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- If you give in to the OCD it ruins the time you do have to live your life.
- You can *never* do *any* “good” OCD behaviors.... half measures avail nothing.
- It cannot be that ALL the obsession and compulsions are “real” can it? What would be happening to all those people who are not living by the OCD rules?
- Seldom is there just one solution. Usually we must combine several positive elements to achieve lasting healing. In the case of OCD most of us combine self-care + behavior therapy + biology/medication.
- Say, “It’s a brain disorder. It’s a false message coming from my brain”
- Do not resist. Develop a “spectator” approach. Say “It’s not me it’s the OCD.” Call it what it really is - an obsessive symptom. It’s not a real feeling, or need.
- **Enjoy** breaking the OCD barriers deliberately! It feels good!
- Remember some of us get tend to get a little manic-like when we come out from under the OCD-depression and start to feel our spontaneous energy again. At such times - go slow and stay grounded-connected.
- Say “I can do the ritual in 15 minutes if I still feel I need to.” Then move on. Do something else instead.
- OCD is just a medical symptom. It’s too strong to resist unless you know what it really is. It doesn’t “just go away” because it is a real physical brain problem.
- Others around you do not have to do these rituals to be ok so you don’t either!
- You didn’t always have to do these same rituals so why should you now?
- Don’t wait to feel like the desire is gone to not do the behavior! Your behavior will never change if you wait for the urge to change first. Change your behavior so that the feeling/urge will change.
- Keep it simple.
- First things first.
- Learn to “take the hit as a gift”. Temporary discomfort is the price of freedom. Keep going forward.
- OCD does not protect against bad results. Self-care and relaxation does.
- There is no quick easy solution. Take the long-term road of not giving in versus the quick fix that OCD offers.
- One day at a time.
- Escaping risk leads to greater (real) risk. There is often less danger in the things we fear than in the things we desire.
- Refuse to act on an obsession and it will die of inaction.
- You can’t have your symptoms and behaviors and have your life.
- Paradoxes are the major reason for getting stuck in OCD.
- OCD recovery is measured by living according to your values.
- Change occurs when one loves what one is not when one becomes what one is not.
- OCD will isolate you. You have to choose between OCD and a happy life and relationships. Treat OCD as an opponent in your pursuit of happiness and fight against it daily.
- You cannot control what thoughts pop into your head. You can control what happens next!

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- If nothing changes, nothing changes.
- If we keep one foot in tomorrow and one foot in yesterday we step over today.
- Never trust OCD. It always lies.
- If you ever doubt what to do – ask what the “average” person without OCD would do.
- Things turn out best for people who play the cards they got.
- Pain may be inevitable, but misery is not.
- If you want to make God laugh, make plans.
- The life tools you pay most dearly for are the ones you don’t use.
- If you must suffer, suffer for a purpose.
- Just because you *think it* doesn’t mean you *did it* (or want to do it). Actions are actions and thoughts are thoughts.
- It only looks risky. Only risks will bring rewards.
- Progress always has detours.
- Easy does it – But do it!
- Don’t stop a minute before a miracle.
- Let go and let God.
- Progress not perfection.
- Avoid H.A.L.T. (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired)
- The disease is not fair and life is not fair.
- You cannot perfect your symptoms.
- Logic and reason don’t make the OCD drives go away, but they can help us decide whether not to listen to them.
- Reorient to (1) self-care and (2) finding your center by detaching.
- Change your behavior so that the feeling/urge will change.
- There is no quick easy solution. Take the long-term road of not giving in versus the quick fix that OCD offers.
- Escaping risk leads to greater (real) risk. There is often less danger in the things we fear than in the things we desire.
- Refuse to act on an obsession and it will die of inaction.
- You can’t have your symptoms and behaviors and have your life.
- Paradoxes are the major reason for getting stuck in OCD.
- OCD = “What if?”
- OCD recovery is measured by living according to your values not your obsessions.
- Change occurs when one loves what one is not when one becomes what one is not.
- Our discomfort with an uncertain existence leads to perfectionist control and that leads to rigidity and depression of spontaneity. We want to control what cannot be controlled and play god in that way.
- OCD will isolate you. You have to choose between OCD and a happy life and relationships. Treat OCD as an opponent in your pursuit of happiness and fight against it daily.
- In dealing with obsessions (1) shift your focus inward and then (2) relax!
- “Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength!”

- Corrie TenBoom (Nazi concentration camp survivor)