

OCD & the 6-Moment Game:

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Self-Help Workbook



Reid Wilson, PhD

anxieties.com/ocd-and-the-6-moment-game-lp

This workbook is part of the online self-help course

OCD & the 6-Moment Game: Strategies & Tactics

Want to take a look at the course? Visit:
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The Learning Quiz

Let's see what you remember...

OCD's Strategy of Domination

- 1. What seems to be Eric's greatest concern regarding Sonya?**
 - A. She hasn't finished preparing the children's breakfast.
 - B. Her OCD is getting worse.
 - C. She hasn't packed the children's lunches.
 - D. She won't have the children ready to leave for school on time.
- 2. How is OCD represented in the graphic?**
 - A. a snake in the grass
 - B. your worst enemy
 - C. a pickpocket
 - D. here to teach you a lesson
- 3. I spoke about perceiving this work as though it's a game that you can win. OCD enters this game dressed as:**
 - A. a master of disguises
 - B. the game official
 - C. a combination of the Hulk and Spider-Man
 - D. the world champion
- 4. What makes OCD so cunning?**
 - A. It takes advantage of our basic human nature.
 - B. It knows the passcode to all your apps.
 - C. It has discovered all your weaknesses.
 - D. It's quicker and more agile than you are.



5. Why is Lee Ann upset with Conrad?

- A. He ruined their breakfast.
- B. He doesn't want to check out the venue with her.
- C. He's never introduced her to his parents.
- D. He continues to have doubts about their relationship.
- E. All of the above

6. Libby can't get out the door until she completes her checking rituals. What did she need to check today before she could leave for her job interview? (Circle all that apply.)

- A. the stove
- B. the contents of her bag
- C. the iron
- D. the kitchen faucet
- E. the front door

7. Sometimes OCD will stop bothering you about one theme and then generate obsessions around a brand-new theme. Why does it do that? (Circle all that apply.)

- A. Because OCD doesn't care AT ALL about any of these themes.
- B. I mean it. The disorder has zero interest in your theme. Zero!
- C. It just wants to grab your attention and hold onto it.
- D. It develops amnesia and can't remember what theme it was manipulating you with.



Our 6-Moment Game

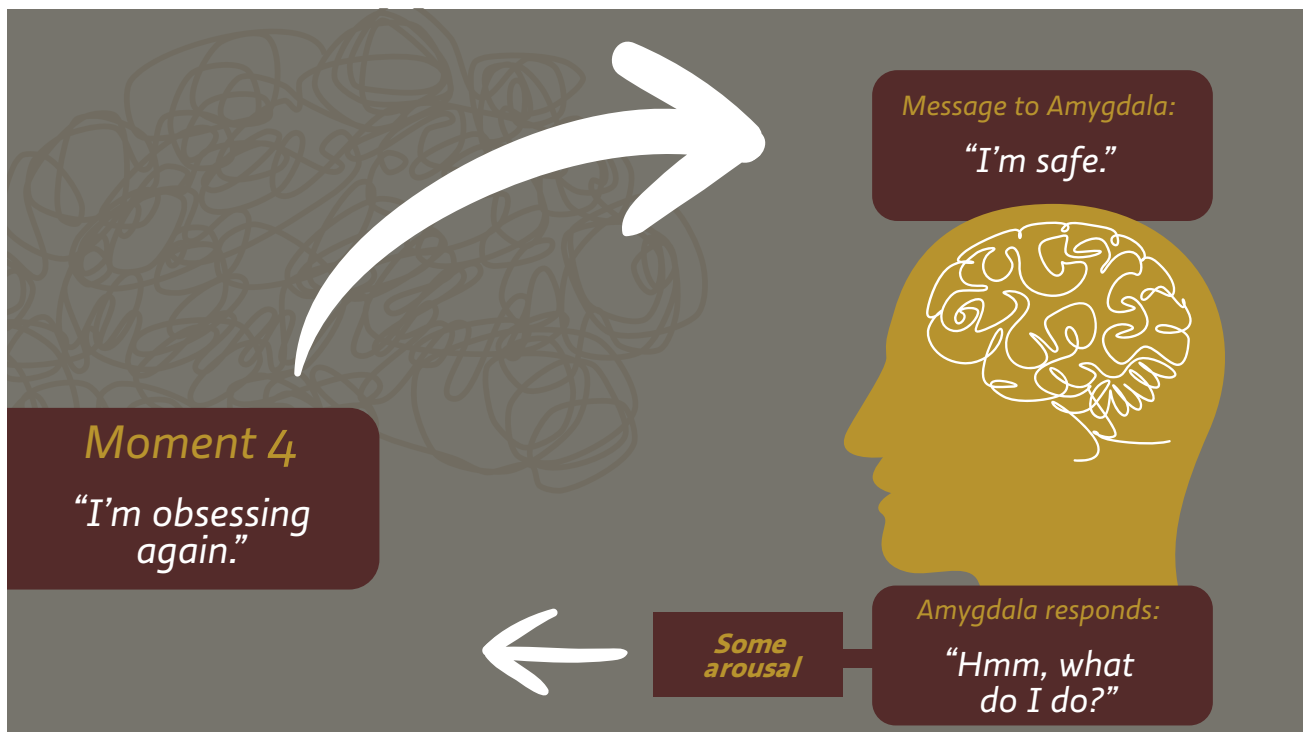
- 8. OCD is a parasite. It depends on you. It needs you. It lives off your responses. It maintains its strength ONLY by your responses. It's nourished – it's fed – by the way you respond to it. OCD needs four big responses from you. Which one of these is not what it needs from you?**
- A. It needs you to take its messages seriously.
 - B. It needs you to focus on the specifics of your theme.
 - C. It needs you to tuck it in bed at night.
 - D. It needs you to become intimidated.
 - E. It needs you to respond urgently.
- 9. I've been pretty emphatic around this topic, and I talked about it for long time here. What is it that I declared you should treat as "Nothing... NOTHING!"?**
- A. the things you value in life
 - B. the theme of your obsession
 - C. your resistance
 - D. worries that are signals
- 10. What is Conrad's first new tactic against his obsessions?**
- A. He raps to them.
 - B. He dismisses them and returns to his studies.
 - C. He puts his headset on and listens to music.
 - D. He concentrates on making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
- 11. OCD's intention is to present itself as an authoritative figure who can influence you and dominate you. What all-knowing, all-powerful figure does OCD disguise itself as?**
- A. Harry the Hippo
 - B. The Wizard of Oz
 - C. Zeus
 - D. Yoda

12. In Sonya's first big practice, she tries a new tactic. What is it?

- A. She asks Eric to stop checking the doors and windows before they go to bed each night.
- B. She allows the kids to come home from the playground without immediately washing their hands.
- C. She creates rules for how she's going to prepare lunch.
- D. She places a knife on her nightstand before going to bed.

13. Moment 4 is a GIANT paradoxical move. Which of these is not part of that move?

- A. You break into a system that has been closed to you.
- B. You assert your conscious awareness into a 100% unconscious process.
- C. You win the moment without taking any action.
- D. Your obsessions instantly dissolve away.
- E. You create choice where there was no choice.
- F. In the face of a strong message of threat, you decide not to treat it as a threat.





14. As I described, in Moment 4, the amygdala will end up feeling confused. Which of these is not part of that explanation?


- A. You've been telling it again and again that this is threatening. Now all of a sudden you're saying it's not a threat.
- B. It's built to protect you. It's going to continue to err on the side of caution. It doesn't yet understand that you're safe.
- C. You're trying to override a message that has been programmed into the unconscious. You'll have to repeat this process many times in order to retrain it.
- D. Even though you're applying the proper strategy, you're going to continue to stay anxious and uncomfortable. I want you to expect that and stick with the plan anyway.
- E. Your body and your unconscious mind both know that this is a threatening situation. They will always reject any attempt to control their responses. They don't know why you're making an effort to influence them.

15. Ideally, what should you no longer experience in Moment 5?

- A. paying attention to your obsession
- B. your urge to engage in your compulsion
- C. your continued feelings of doubt and uncertainty
- D. your distressing anxiety

16. In Moment 6, which of the below interventions is best to use with any of these statements: "I don't know whether I dropped something back there." "I'm not certain if I'm a pedophile." "I'm not convinced that I locked the door." "I'm unsure about the details of that conversation."

- A. Remind yourself that you do know and that you are certain.
- B. Don't allow those thoughts to pop up anymore.
- C. Remind yourself that lots of people have these types of thoughts.
- D. Drop the prepositional phrase.



17. So, you applied our strategies, maybe a tactic or two, and you handled that obsessive moment or that urge to ritualize. However, within eight seconds, the obsession pops right back up again. How should you respond?

- A. Want it!
- B. Freak out!
- C. You should feel disappointed in the strategies and discouraged about applying them in the future.
- D. You should get angry at yourself for not being stronger.

Power Tactics That Push You Forward

18. Treating OCD is never, ever, ever about your theme. This work has NOTHING to do with your theme, your topic, your content. NOTHING! Your theme is completely, totally, absolutely irrelevant to the treatment. With this in mind, what do our characters need to treat as nothing?

- A. Libby needs to treat her fear of locking the door as NOTHING.
- B. Sonya needs to treat her fears about her girls as NOTHING.
- C. Conrad needs to treat that momentary flash of doubt about his relationship as NOTHING.
- D. All of the above

19. What was the most powerful action that Sonya took to aggress on OCD?

- A. She used the same bath towel three days in a row.
- B. Instead of preparing her girls' lunchboxes, she allowed them to purchase their lunches at the school cafeteria.
- C. She purposely rubbed her hands over the kitchen counter and in the sink.
- D. All of the above



Tactics That Mess with the Pattern

20. Our goal is to modify your neurology. We need to change your mind. When you do this work, part of what you're doing is the neurological process that we call "reconsolidation."

What simile did I use to describe the function of reconsolidation?

- A. It's like your phone installing a software update.
- B. It's like getting a haircut that trims what's no longer needed.
- C. It's like recycling to make new uses out of discarded vessels.
- D. It's like putting a jigsaw puzzle back together.

21. Out of her discouragement, Libby moved into creative determination regarding her rituals with the car. What did she do?

- A. She drove back to the mall and then slowly drove through the parking lot as pedestrians walked by.
- B. She returned to the neighborhood where she was having trouble, then moved her mirrors so that she could not see behind her. Then she drove three times through the neighborhood.
- C. She washed the car again, but then only rinsed the car down one time.
- D. She opened all the doors and the trunk of her car and then closed them all and immediately went into the house.

22. In her first big win, Sonya followed the rules she created for herself the day before. As she is preparing the kids' lunches, she pulls the knives out of the drawer, opens the lids of the jars, spreads peanut butter and jelly on the bread slices, and puts the sandwiches into their lunch boxes. Then she goes to the sink and washes her hands thoroughly. Why was this a win?

- A. She messed with her compulsive pattern.
- B. Remember her compulsive pattern? She messed with it.
- C. She took OCD's rigid pattern and messed with it.
- D. All of the above!



The Kind of Practice That Helps You Win

23. Three decades of research tells us the best way to develop skills and to develop them efficiently. What have they discovered? (Circle all that apply.)

- A. You don't have to be gifted, have some natural talent, or have special genes passed down to you.
- B. A good night's sleep is mandatory.
- C. Your brain can grow and change in response to intense training. Everyone's brain is adaptable. Yours, mine, everyone's.
- D. You need to continually push yourself to go just outside your comfort zone, every single time you practice. Create practices that make you feel a little awkward, clumsy, unsure.
- E. Your work is paradoxical. Want to do what you don't want to do.
- F. Develop your verbal cues and use them before, during, and after you practice.
- G. All of the above

Answers to the quiz are on page 37 of this Workbook.



Ready to Practice Our 6-Moment Game?

If you feel motivated to start practicing your skills, then let's go! If you want to take a little more time to get oriented to the project before you start practicing – or if at any time you want to remind yourself of our game plan – then work on the “Learning from the Course” section on page 24.

Preparing for Moment-by-Moment Practice

How do you plan a specific practice?

When Libby didn't make it to her car in those early practices – in those moments when she turned back around to check the stove or the front door – the disorder wins those moments. But it didn't win them all. Do you know why? Because as soon as she begins to walk down the sidewalk, she has already gotten to Moment 5, because she turned her back on that urge to check. By the time she's halfway down her sidewalk, she's probably had several urges. But she keeps turning her back on her theme. She tells herself something like, “No, keep moving.” That means she won all those moments. These aren't failures. These are good accomplishments.

This is what you want to aim for: Win one Moment. Once you win that Moment, try to win the next Moment, then another Moment. Your goal is to keep collecting those winning Moments.

Obviously, you have to start with Moment 4. This is the very first task you should practice. Learn to mentally disengage long enough to name it. “There's my obsession.” When you do that – when you assert your conscious awareness into that closed pattern – you've just modified that pattern. And that's already a win. You win that Moment. Even if nothing else changes, even if you go back to obsessing again, you've just won that Moment. If you can only win Moment 4, then win

Moment 4. Keep winning Moment 4, but at the same time, try to create a way to get to Moment 5. If you get to Moment 5 but can't get to Moment 6, you've still won a Moment. Keep challenging yourself to get as far as you can get.

<i>Preparing for Moment-by-Moment Practice</i>	
Where?	When?
How will you push outside your comfort zone?	
Any rules?	
Verbal cue for Moment 4:	
Verbal cue for Moment 5:	
Verbal cue for Moment 6:	
Verbal cue for motivation/determination:	
Do you want to talk to OCD? If so, say what?	
Do you want to mess with the pattern? If so, how?	
Do you want to try postponing? If so, what's your plan?	
Do you need to add a consequence? What will you do?	

Here's how you complete each of the items.

Where?

Is there a specific location or circumstance where you want to practice? Jot that down. If you want to continually practice this in all circumstances, just write "everywhere."

When?

Either put the specific day and time or simply write "continually."



How will you push outside your comfort zone?

Decide how you want to generate that doubt and distress. [If you're doing it by following new rules, that answer will be in the next line: *Any rules?*]

Any rules?

Decide whether it would be helpful to create rules to support your efforts. If so, then figure out those guidelines before you begin and lock them down. By doing so, you won't have to think about it anymore. You just follow the rules. [Don't start creating rules when you're in the middle of an obsession or having an urge to do a compulsion. Establish rules when you're in the planning stage.]

Do you remember how Conrad started to intervene in Moment 5? He decided that every time he heard an obsession pop up, he'd respond to it by rapping for a moment, and then he'd return to his task.

Think about Sonya's work. Her rituals involved washing and cleaning. Eventually, she needs to decide the acceptable times and ways to clean. Her current goal is to continue to move toward that acceptable level. So she spent time creating rules that move her in that direction. Like Sonya, if you don't feel ready to give up your ritual, then what rules do you want to follow in this practice that move you closer to that standard? How do you want to modify your current ritual?

Verbal Cue for Moment 4

Create a short little message-to-self that will help you step back for a moment. Here are some examples of what you might say. To make it easier on yourself in the future, put a checkmark next to any of the messages below that you imagine might support your intention.

- Oh, I'm doing it again.
- There's my obsession.
- There it is again.
- I'm obsessing.
- Others: _____



Verbal Cue for Moment 5

If you can get to Moment 5, what might you say to yourself to help you turn away? Again, I've provided some examples below. Be sure to find messages that work for you. [I know that our characters spoke their verbal cues aloud, but I suggest that you learn to subvocalize them.]


- Stepping away now.
- And... I'm out of here.
- Wah-wah-wah.
- Nope, not going there.
- None of my business.
- Don't figure it out.
- Leave the room now!
- Keep moving. Don't stop.
- I'm turning my back on that.
- Others: _____

Verbal Cue for Moment 6

When Libby finally made it into her car and started driving away, she made it to Moment 6 several times in a row. She kept instructing herself on the next action: *Stop stalling, keep going. Keep moving. Open the door. Get in the car. Start the car. Drive to the interview.* (By the way, if you look back on that practice, you'll notice that Libby was also supporting herself and motivating herself with verbal cues: "You're killing it!" "I'm taking my LIFE back." "I can handle this." We're talking about them next.)

That's what we're looking for in Moment 6. Give yourself instructions about what to do next. And follow those instructions! That's how you win that moment. Here are a few examples for you. You can also add your own instructions that work for you.


- Now, where was I?
- Getting back to work now.

- 
- Keep moving. Keep moving.
 - I guess it's time to count those ants again.
 - Others: _____

Verbal Cue for Motivation/Determination

Do you remember when Sonya caught herself breaking her own rule by washing her hands? She slammed her hands down on the counter and yelled, “*I want my life back!*” That’s a good example of how you can motivate yourself and feel determined. A few seconds later, she told herself, “*Keep going!*” As she continued to break OCD’s rules, she told herself, “*You are strong, and you want this.*” That’s what you’re looking for here.

- Geez, this is hard! But this is what I signed up for.
- I’m going to be scared and do it anyway.
- I can do this. I’m gonna stay with it.
- My job is to push forward.
- Keep moving, keep moving.
- I’m going to get stronger, whatever it takes.
- I’m going to take my faith back.
- I want to be available for my family.
- I want my life back!
- I want my mind back!
- This is exactly what I want right now.
- I want to do this hard work.
- I want to take OCD on.
- I want whatever scares me.
- I want this struggle right now.
- I want this doubt. I want to not know.
- I want this distress.

- 
- I'm working on wanting this.
 - I'm willing to feel this.
 - Others: _____

Do you want to try talking directly to OCD? If so, what will you say?

- Nice try, OCD. But I'm not going there.
- I'm coming after you, OCD.
- Is that all you've got? Come on—give me your best shot.
- Hey, back off, OCD!
- You're giving me this? Great! Just what I wanted.
- Bring it on, OCD!
- Others: _____

Do you want to try postponing? If so, what's your plan?

[This is covered in the course.]

Do you want to mess with the pattern? If so, how?

Think of these as backup tactics. If you're getting stuck, and having a hard time making progress, you can pull one of these out of your back pocket. They can help you get unstuck, and they can help you get stronger. In just a moment, we'll go into detail about how to do this (see: *How to Mess with the Pattern*).

Do you need to add a consequence? What will you do?

Think back on that scene when Libby decided to open every door of her car and her trunk. She was adding a very small consequence to her ritual. In the section titled *How to Add a Consequence* (pg. 22), we'll discuss this tactic in greater detail.



How to Mess with the Pattern

Every step of the way, you should find tactics to mess with what OCD is giving you. Look for some small ways to be both uncertain and distressed. Some of these changes can make it just a bit more troublesome to obsess or ritualize. These pesky little modifications help build your commitment to eventually end your obsessions and rituals. Expect that at some point you might actually think, “I’d rather just not keep doing this right now if I have to do it THAT way!”

In the course, I detailed two ways to mess with your obsessions, and Libby demonstrated the first:

- Sing your obsession
- Act as a stenographer (write your obsessions down)

Your rituals may include a certain number of repetitions or a particular object, like bar soap versus liquid soap. Some rituals require that you’re always standing or sitting, while others must occur in a certain setting, like at your desk or in your car. All of these can be manipulated.

Why change them up? The most important reason is to create some degree of doubt and distress. Each time you modify some component of your compulsion, you loosen OCD’s hold on you. However, making any change, even if it seems minor, will probably cause you some distress. The pattern will no longer match your previously exacting standards, and that will give you uncertainty and discomfort. Keep in mind that two of your tasks in this self-help program are to seek out uncertainty and seek out distress. So, while these changes will be difficult, they will be contributing to your goal of taking back control of your life.

Be willing to experiment with minor revisions to your ritual, and learn to tolerate these small changes.

Are you concerned that you might create a whole new ritual? That’s not going to happen. Because your job is to keep changing it up until it no longer has a hold on you.

- Continue with a particular change for several days. In doing so, you’ll have time to discover your

growing skills in tolerating a modification to the ritual and in tolerating the discomfort you feel as you bring this ritual under voluntary control.

- As you gain mastery in this skill of manipulation, continue to modify your ritual pattern. Then think about adding *postponing* to your practice.


Rituals can have any number of characteristics. They can all be modified. Here's the list of what I'll cover below.

- Change the order in which you ritualize
- Add something to the ritual
- Change the objects you use
- Change the location
- Change your posture during the ritual
- Change how you use your hands
- Reduce the time
- Change words and tone of voice
- Alter the image
- Reduce the participation of others

Here are some ideas about what you might change. Remember that it doesn't matter how small the change is. However, it is important that you create changes that you predict will cause you some doubt and discomfort.

Change the order in which you ritualize

- ☑ For instance, if you shower by first washing your hair and then methodically working your way down to your feet, you can reverse the order by beginning with your feet.
- ☑ Do you have a set of rituals that you feel compelled to do before you go to bed? Must you first check the front door, then the back door, then all windows, then the kitchen appliances... all in a specified sequence? Change it up. For example, you can write each task down on a little piece of paper and draw them out of a jar to decide the order in which you perform them.
- ☑ If you have to wash your hands to the count of ten, try washing them to the count of five. Then dry your hands off and wash them again for the second set of five.



Add something to the ritual

- ✓ If you must tap each arm three times, then tap each arm twice, clap once, and then tap each arm a third time.
- ✓ If you check more than once that the doors are locked each night, then before each check do a pirouette (a spin in place). I know: That's ridiculous. Are you surprised?
- ✓ Must you pull on the emergency brake of your car four times? Decide to pull on it twice, then wait 60 seconds before you pull on it the next two times.
- ✓ Can you wear sunglasses while you're checking whether the windows are locked?

Change the objects you use

- ✓ If you always clean up with paper towels during your ritual, switch to cloth hand towels.
- ✓ If you wash with liquid soap, you could change to bar soap.
- ✓ If you use a bar of soap, can you cut it up into twelve pieces, use one piece each time you wash, and then throw that piece away?

Change the location

- ✓ If you have to dress and undress repeatedly, you might do each set in a different room.
- ✓ If you wash your hands more than one time, try changing sinks each time you wash (the kitchen, the guest bathroom, etc.).
- ✓ Is it a ritual that you do indoors? Could you do it outside?
- ✓ If you do it in your office, could you choose to do it in your car instead?



Change your posture during the ritual

- ✓ Could you make yourself sit when you normally stand?
- ✓ If you always have your eyes open, can you try doing your compulsion with your eyes closed?
One eye closed?
- ✓ Consider some silly change, like standing on one leg.
- ✓ If you can't change the order of how you dress, could you make yourself get dressed while lying on your bed?


Change how you use your hands

- ✓ If your hands are involved in your ritual, do you mainly use your dominant hand? Can you switch to your nondominant hand?
- ✓ Do you clean a surface in clockwise circular motions with your right hand? Can you clean in counterclockwise square patterns with your left? Can you switch hands every ten seconds?

Reduce the time

How much time does each sequence of the ritual take? Reduce the time you take for each action. Can you create a time limit to complete a segment? Please remember: I'm not suggesting that you simply "go faster." The purpose of making these changes is to feel some degree of doubt and distress.

- ✓ If you force yourself to complete your ritual in an abbreviated manner, you'll feel uncertain about how well you did it.
- ✓ If you stop at your new designated time even if you haven't completed your ritual, you'll certainly make yourself feel distressed.



Change words and tone of voice

- ✓ Must you repeat any specific words either silently or aloud? Can you change any of those specific words?
- ✓ Can you sing those same words in your mind?
- ✓ Can you modify your tone of voice (e.g. change a respectful tone to a silly tone)?

Alter the image

During your ritual, must you purposely see some positive image? How might you change that image?

- ✓ Can you alter its appearance?
- ✓ Can you add purple stripes to the background?
- ✓ Can you change brown shoulder-length hair to short blonde hair?
- ✓ Can you change a color image to black-and-white?


Reduce the participation of others

Do you ask others to participate in your ritual? Must they say or do something specific? Is there any way to change the participation of others? Can you reduce or limit the behaviors of others?

How to add a consequence

You may have a ritual that is so “automatic,” so ingrained, that you can’t seem to catch it in time to change it. One simple change that can greatly increase your awareness is to add a consequence – some additional task – every time it happens that way. Choose a task that requires you to disrupt your normal routine. And, most importantly, if you agree to add this task, then follow through 100% of the time, because that’s how you’ll raise your awareness. For instance...

- ✓ decide to drive to a park and pick up trash for an hour
- ✓ do some kind gesture for someone you’re angry with
- ✓ practice the piano for forty-five minutes

- 
- ✓ hand-copy ten poems from a book
 - ✓ take a brisk 30-minute walk

If these sound like disruptive, time-consuming tasks, it's because they're intended to be! Yet don't perceive them as punishment. To be effective, the consequences must be costly in time and effort. After paying that cost a number of times, you'll start becoming aware of the moment that you're about to ritualize, and you'll hesitate. You'll pause to think about whether it is best to start ritualizing. This moment of hesitation gives you an opportunity to resist the compulsion in order to avoid that costly consequence.

Think about Libby's struggles with the stove. Let's say you must ritualistically check the stove every time you leave the house for work in the morning. You tend to get stuck touching each knob six times before you walk out the door. Later, when you're on the front porch, you doubt whether the stove is off, and back you go for another round of checking – “just to be sure.” This would be a good time to implement a consequence.

Perhaps you decide that, starting tomorrow, each time you check the stove again, touch a knob while checking, or even glance at the knobs again while walking through the kitchen, you must take a brisk thirty-minute walk as soon as you come home from work. You commit to taking a walk before doing anything else. No stopping at the store on the way home. No having a snack after you get home. You'll just put on your walking shoes and go, regardless of whether it's hot and muggy, raining, or snowing. After a few of these thirty-minute walks, you'll be thinking twice before stepping back inside from the porch – “just to be sure.”

This tactic will work whether you're a washer who wants to stop washing your hands a second time, a hoarder who wants to stop collecting meaningless materials, or an orderer who wants to stop straightening up repeatedly. Use your creative thinking, and enlist ideas from your family or friends. Find consequences that cost you some time and effort, and then stick to them. If the consequence you choose does not have this intended effect after numerous trials, then switch to a consequence that seems a little more costly.

Learning from the Course

Let's review to help you get ready.

You Have a Challenger



I described OCD as a pickpocket. What do you think it might've stolen from you?

Let's recognize what your challenger is trying to accomplish, so you know what you're up against. We know that it threatens you about at least one specific theme, and then it often triggers distressing doubt regarding that theme. Take a moment to see how it might be doing that with you.

Do you have a sense of what your obsessive theme or themes are? List them in the left column below. In the right column, jot down what kind of doubts it provokes regarding each theme. To

help you get started, I've listed some major themes below the table and some common doubts for each theme. [If one of your obsessions doesn't fit any of these categories, then feel free to create your own.]

Your theme(s)	Your specific doubts within that theme
<i>Ex. Harm while driving</i>	<i>Did I just hit someone? Did I cause an accident when I merged?</i>

Examples of Major Themes & Associated Doubts

Germs and contamination

- Fear of contamination or sickness
- Fear of spreading contamination or sickness

Harm

- Fear of making a harmful mistake
- Fear that you might impulsively harm yourself or someone else, or want to harm someone, or have already harmed someone
- Fear of losing something or having already lost something of value
- Need for certainty around decision making
- Finding ways to prevent harm by engaging in certain actions or thoughts



Safety

- Need for certainty regarding your home (windows and doors are locked, appliances are off, etc.)
- Need for certainty regarding your family's safety (e.g. checking that children are still safe in the middle of the night)
- Fear that you may cause or may have caused an accident while driving

Memory

- Fear regarding trusting your memory
- Concerns that you may not be able to recall events of the past

Scrupulosity

- Fear of sinning against God
- Fear of going against the principles of your faith

Relationships and sexuality

- Concerns about whether you truly love a specific person, or whether they are the "right" person for you
- Uncertainty regarding your sexual orientation

Unacceptable thoughts

- Unpleasant or even abhorrent thoughts that pop into your mind
- Violent images that pop into your mind
- Perverse sexual thoughts or images that pop into your mind
- Concerns about what those thoughts or images might mean about you

Symmetry, completeness, or perfectionism

- Need for things to be "just right" before you can move on (including unneeded counting or restating messages)

- Fear of unknowingly throwing away something of value
- Posing existential questions that must be answered
- Assigning “good” and “bad” numbers

Bodily sensations

- Fixation on specific bodily functions or patterns

Your challenger trains you to respond to those doubts and fears. The disorder wants you to react in specific ways. For instance, it gives you an urge to get rid of the problem “right NOW!” Think about your different obsessive worries, doubts, or questions. Jot down all the ways you try to get rid of the problem. Then describe the outcome of those efforts.

<i>Ways you try to get rid of your worries, doubts, or questions</i>	<i>Typical outcomes</i>
<i>Ex. Ask family members for reassurance</i>	<i>Their reassurance doesn't last. Have to ask again. They get annoyed.</i>

It also trains you to try to avoid anything that would trigger your obsessions. What do you avoid – what thoughts, actions, places, people, etc. – to keep yourself from starting to obsess? Jot down all the ways you can think of. When you avoid in that way, what does it cost you? What do you miss out on?



What do you avoid to keep from obsessing?	What does it cost you?
<i>Ex. Stopped playing my guitar so I won't have those blasphemous thoughts.</i>	<i>I miss the joy of playing music and I don't improve my playing skills.</i>

Think about your specific obsessions within each of your themes and divide them into two categories: Which ones do you still think are signals, and which ones are you ready to treat as noise? List them below.

Specific obsessions	
I think these are still signals*	I'm ready to treat these as noise
<i>Ex. The pots and pans are still "dirty" after my partner cleans them.</i>	<i>Ex. I may have offended someone in past conversations.</i>

**In this course we are not addressing obsessions that are signals. Figure out what questions you need to answer before you are willing to treat them as noise instead of signals, and then answer those questions as best you can. But remember: This is a disorder of uncertainty. You may never "know" the right answer because the disorder will not allow you to. That's how it controls you.*



I described the disorder as presenting itself as the Wizard of Oz. What lies do you think OCD might be telling you as a way to intimidate and control you?

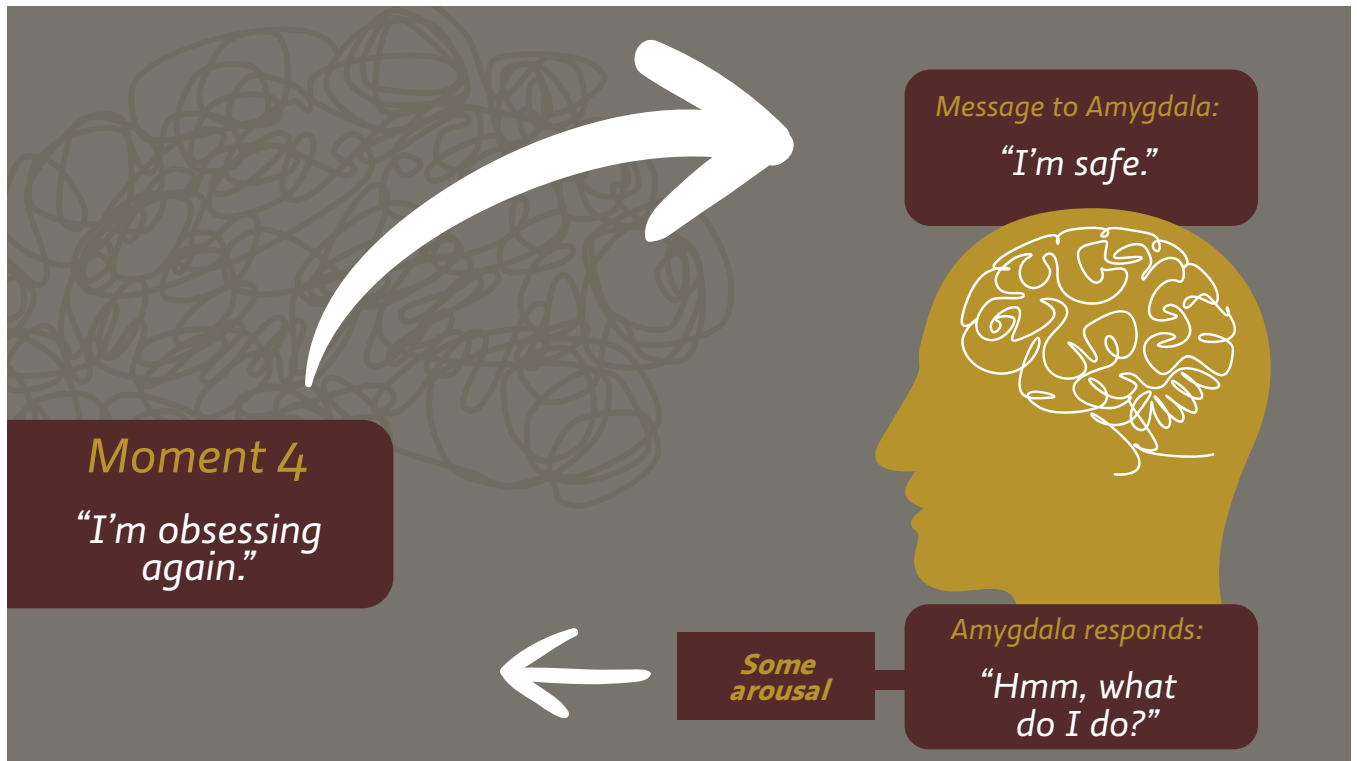
Our Game is Played in 6 Moments

I'm sure that Sonya and Libby can sometimes feel anxious just by walking through their kitchens. Their unconscious mind knows what they're scared of, so it'll signal the amygdala before they have any conscious thought. The same thing might happen with Conrad if he glances at a church without having any conscious thought about a possible wedding with Lee Ann.

Think about the definition of Moment 1, and then look over your first list of themes on page 25. As you reflect on each threatening topic, can you think of any situations (hearing the phone ring, noticing a child walking toward you at the mall, seeing a particular scene on TV, etc.) where you spontaneously feel anxious (as opposed to becoming anxious because a fearful thought, image, or impulse pops in your mind)? List those situations in the table below.

<i>Specific obsession OR theme</i>	<i>Situations where you might feel anxious BEFORE you have conscious thoughts</i>
<i>Ex. Not being able to answer questions, and looking stupid</i>	<i>Every time my smartphone gives a "ding" sound of an incoming email.</i>

Moments 1, 2 and 3 are not within your conscious reach. Moments 4, 5 and 6 are yours to take. That's where you start winning. Before we review how you can begin practicing those skills, let's do a quick warmup...



In Moment 4, what do I mean when I say, “The amygdala is confused”?

Why should you embrace a generic state of distressing uncertainty? Check all the reasons that fit for you.

- Because when I try to become certain, OCD controls me.
- Because I want to take my life back.
- Because as I try to embrace the uncertainty of my specific theme, I don't seem to get any stronger.
- Because every other approach I've taken has not helped me enough.
- Because when I fight against uncertainty, my actions help the disorder get stronger.

- Because when I avoid this state of uncertainty, my world gets smaller.
- Because I'm done playing by OCD's rules.
- Because the future is uncertain for all of us, and I want to move into the future.
- Because right now it's more important for me to feel courageous than to feel confident.
- Because I'm ready to experiment with changing up my responses and see how it affects my OCD.
- Because my carefulness is hindering my progress in taking down the disorder.

What have I missed? Add any other reasons that are fitting to you:

Why embrace uncertainty? Because _____

Why embrace uncertainty? Because _____

Why embrace uncertainty? Because _____

In describing what you need to accomplish in Moment 6, I said, "You have to drop those prepositional phrases." What did I mean?

What specific prepositional phrases do you need to drop?




4 Power Tactics That Push You Forward

Want something for YOU! Let's help you identify what you want in your life in the future. Keeping this outcome picture in mind will help motivate you and drive you forward into the work.

To give you some ideas, let's start here: What have you already given up because of the disorder? What have you missed out on?

- Relationships and family ties? Be specific: _____
- Education? Be specific: _____
- Job opportunities? Be specific: _____
- Your general ability to be productive? Be specific: _____
- Concentration? Be specific: _____
- Mental peace? Be specific: _____
- Physical energy? Be specific: _____
- Anything else? Be specific: _____



Here's another way to help you figure out what's important to you in your future: Fill in the blank lines below. Let yourself brainstorm. See how many ideas you can jot down.


If OCD were not such a problem for me, I would:

Now, look over your responses in the last two exercises. Focus on those items that you feel most strongly about, whether they're short-term desires or long-term goals. Identify one or more areas that feel the most important. These are the ones you want to remember as you face the disorder head-on.

I'm taking on OCD because I want this in my future:

Want what you don't want! One thing you have to take on is your resistance. Everyone in the world experiences internal resistance. When we're thinking about your relationship with OCD, what do you tend to resist?

- I don't want my obsessions to pop up.
- I don't want to feel so anxious and scared.
- I don't want to worry about my theme.
- I don't want to feel lost.
- I don't want to feel confused.



Whether you checked one of these or all of the above, it doesn't matter. What matters is that you recognize that you need to push through your resistance in order to take on the disorder. That means you need to work to get to the point where you can say "YES" to this next question.

Can you begin to confront OCD head-on by wanting what you don't want?

- YES! I'm not sure I can do it, but I'm willing to learn how to want what I don't want.
- NO! I'm not doing that. What a stupid idea. Who in their right mind would want what they don't want!

Read through this list. These are all the threatening uncertainties that Conrad expressed as obsessions. And they all are very powerful messages.

- "What if you let them all down? They'll be furious."
- "You need to be 100% sure."
- "You could ruin her life. Forever."
- "Why did I agree to this? It's impossible."
- "She's perfect. What if I lose her? I'll never find someone else like her."
- "But sometimes I look at her face, and I don't... Why would I even think that? If I'm thinking it, it has to mean something."
- "If I go through with this... If we have kids... There's too much at stake."
- "You're still in school. You can't even support her."
- What if you're stuck in an unhappy marriage? That's for life. You'll both be unhappy forever. She deserves someone who's certain."
- "You want your kids to be unhappy too? It's selfish to keep this going. You know it is."

Conrad found a tactic to handle those obsessions right when they popped up. How?



What's it going to take for you to be like Conrad? What shifts do you need to make?

Take actions as though the theme is NOTHING. “Acting as though” is a significant part of our work here. But you absolutely know how to do this. After all, you do it every day. For instance, do you make any of these assumptions?

- When you're driving, do you act as though you will arrive at your destination safely?
- Do you act as though your refrigerator is continuing to keep your items cool enough?
- Do you act as though Wednesday will come after Tuesday?
- Do you act as though your next breath will provide your body with sufficient oxygen?
- Do you act as though a genetically cloned dinosaur is not about to stomp through your neighborhood?

Applying this concept to our work will take conscious effort. But you have the skills to accomplish it.

Push into the disorder's territory. As I've said, this is an aggressive sport. You'll need to push into the territories that are currently controlled by the disorder. In the table below, call out the territories you'll eventually need to take back and how you might push forward into those territories if you want to take your life back (even if you're not 100% ready to do it yet).

Territories to reclaim	How I can push forward
Ex. <i>Checking on the kids at night</i>	<i>Not going into their bedroom in the middle of the night to see if they're still breathing</i>

Why did Sonya decide to take a walk after preparing breakfast? And why did Libby decide to immediately go into the house after shutting the car doors?

When your obsession or an urge to do your ritual pops up, explain why it might be helpful if you first respond with an attitude of, "I'm glad it showed up."

Answers to The Learning Quiz: 1. B; 2. C; 3. B; 4. A; 5. D; 6. A, B, E; 7. A, B, C; 8. C; 9. B; 10. A; 11. B; 12. C; 13. D; 14. E; 15. A; 16. D; 17. A; 18. D; 19. C; 20. A; 21. D; 22. D; 23. H

On the next page I've duplicated the form so that you can make copies of it.

Preparing for Moment-by-Moment Practice

Where?	When?
How will you push outside your comfort zone?	
Any rules?	
Verbal cue for Moment 4:	
Verbal cue for Moment 5:	
Verbal cue for Moment 6:	
Verbal cue for motivation/determination:	
Do you want to talk to OCD? If so, say what?	
Do you want to mess with the pattern? If so, how?	
Do you want to try postponing? If so, what's your plan?	
Do you need to add a consequence? What will you do?	

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