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## S2C12. The fourth pillar - Acceptance

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What exactly is acceptance? When I pose this question to people, some of them feel that they have accepted their ROCD. Upon probing, it emerges that they do not accept it, but they acknowledge its presence grudgingly and allow it to pull them down. It is more a sense of resignation than a position of true acceptance. It is more like, *‘What can I do? I have it now and I have to live with it.’* Or, *‘I know I have ROCD, and it sucks. I want to be rid of it so that I can live my life well’*. Statements like that may be acknowledgment but not true acceptance. It places a burden on the person to get well before he can start fulfilling his dreams.

So, what is true acceptance? How is it even possible to accept a mental disorder, especially one so debilitating as ROCD? True acceptance is when you say *‘Yes, I know I have ROCD and I am okay with it. I will work to do my best despite it’*. Being okay with ROCD does not mean you will not work towards getting better. You will however work from a better frame of mind - one of strength rather than weakness. In other words, acceptance means “taking a stance of non-judgmental awareness and actively embracing the experience of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations as they occur” (Hayes et al., 2004).

Say, you are trekking in a forest. Unmindfully, you fall into a pit dug up for trapping animals. You do not keep wallowing that you have fallen into the pit and that there is no hope for you. You accept that you have a problem and try your best to come out of the ditch. Let us see what all you are truly accepting in a situation like that, and juxtapose that understanding with your ROCD thoughts, as shown in table 2.12.1.

*Table 2.12.1: Acceptance Comparison Illustration*

<b>N o</b>	<b>Falling in a pit</b>	<b>Having ROCD</b>
1	You are in a pit.	You have ROCD
2	You are going to be delayed	You may take time to achieve your dreams
3	You have to try to come out	You have to try to get better
4	You need to want to come out	You need to want to get better
5	You can come out.	You can get better

## FACTORS AFFECTING RECOVERY

6	You may have to seek help	You will have to use the 12 pillars
7	The process of coming out is difficult	The process of recovery is difficult
8	The process of coming out is worth it	The process of recovery is worth it
9	You will reach point B, but later	You will achieve your dreams, but later

So, if you can accept everything and work towards coming out of the pit, you can also learn to accept everything and work towards getting rid of your ROCD. For example, if you wear glasses, you do not lose sleep over it, and do not hold it against yourself that you wear glasses. (At least I hope you don't). You acknowledge that your vision is not perfect without glasses and you accept the need to wear glasses.

Similarly, when a girl menstruates, she may experience three to five days of discomfort, pain, irritation, cramps, and so on. Yet, girls learn to accept it as a part of their life and do not deny its existence. These are examples learning to accept unpleasantness in our lives. Similarly, ROCD is an unpleasant disorder. But the more we learn to accept it, the better we are at dealing with it. Thus, acceptance is very important to the recovery process in ROCD.

There is a self-administered psychometric test called the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-Revised (AAQ-2; Bond et al., 2011) that has been provided as PT4 in the Worksheets file. The AAQ-2 tests your psychological flexibility, that is, how accepting you are of your situations and how you act when life throws a curve ball at you. Take the test and make a note of your psychological flexibility. Remember that the higher you score, the more inflexible you are. You will need to work towards lowering your score to be more accepting of your situation.

In the next chapter, we shall understand the problem some people have with acceptance.

### **To-Do:**

**Complete PT4 - AAQ-2**