
S2C13. The problem with acceptance

When I talk to people and mention acceptance to them, sometimes the skepticism is so palpable, I can almost touch it. The apprehension is ‘*What if my acceptance of my thoughts leads to its manifestation due to the law of attraction as laid out in Rhonda Byrne’s book, The Secret? What if I actually cause my thoughts to come real by accepting them?*’ You may feel that even the thought of committing an action increases the possibility of committing it, a belief observed in people with OCD (Butchler et al., 2013). I am going to try and address that ‘what if’ in this chapter.

First and foremost, this thought itself is a Meta OCD thought. It starts with a ‘what-if’ and it causes anxiety. If you try to accept your ROCD thoughts, this worry about the law of attraction becomes dominant and sticky. You may feel an urgent need to do something about it and dispel it. Hence, it is a Meta OCD thought and needs to be handled like any other obsessive thought.

Second, the law of attraction propounds that we attract only when we desire and expect the same thing together. When the desire and expectation do not match, the law of attraction does not come true. In the context of your ROCD, your desire may be to accept the thoughts but you may expect them to come true (and hence the fear). So, if the law of attraction has to truly work, your thoughts in ROCD cannot come true because of the difference between your desire (to get better) and your expectation (that you won’t get better).

Third, consider this example. Let us say you want to attract career success. When you say you are expecting to succeed and you desire to succeed, everything you do, becomes goal directed. If you want to succeed but your efforts are missing, you do not desire to succeed enough. On the other hand, if you keep putting in efforts recklessly, you probably do not expect to succeed and hence keep the excessive effort.

Since one of the elements is missing, success becomes elusive. However, if you put both of them in the right measure, success is inevitable. So, the law of attraction is not magic. It is goal directed effort. You will not attract a million dollars out of nowhere. Similarly, you will not attract your obsessions to come true simply if you accept them. On the contrary, you will attract recovery if you desire to recover and expect to recover through acceptance. With this understanding, the law of attraction can be actively used to aid in the recovery process through complete acceptance.

One of the common questions on acceptance is - *does that mean I should accept an abusive relationship?* The answer is a loud no. Of course, abusive relationships are not to be accepted. What is to be accepted is the psychological aspect of it, that is, your response to it. If you are in an abusive relationship and you sulk, cry, and lament that your relationship is bad, you are accepting the abusive relationship,

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not the psychological aspect of it. If you do not accept the abusive relationship, but understand that if you continue to keep it unchecked, the abuse will continue, you accept the psychological aspect. Then, you feel more empowered to change the equation by standing up for yourself or ending the abusive relationship. Hence, when we refer to acceptance, we refer to accepting the effect the problem has on us and changing what we can to make it better.

In the next chapter, we shall discuss the concept of gratitude, which is the fifth pillar.