
S4C4. Possibility and probability

We do not need to solve all the doubts our ROCD throws at us. But it seems like the mind will not find relief until we do. There is intolerance of uncertainty which could be both prospective (I would like to know all the answers) and inhibitory (I cannot function until I know the answers) (Pinciotti et al., 2021). Your doubt about your partner's love for you may have been disproved time and again but your mind still keeps asking you, '*what if you are right this time?*'

For example, let us say that your partner has not been able to text you immediately after you text her. This may make you react in an undesirable manner. But after your obsession has passed, you may realize that you did not need to get agitated or upset about not getting the text on time. When you are triggered, though, your mind may ask you '*what if this time she is with another boy?*' The thought may seem real and Kay may force you to try and find the answer. So, how do you resolve this need to always know the answer and learn to stay with the uncertainty?

Let us understand the difference between possibility and probability. When we consider possibility, the only answer we can get is either yes or no. So, is it possible for me to win the lottery? Yes. So, if I buy a lottery ticket should I start celebrating right away? No. Because even if the *possibility* of winning exists, I may still not, since the *probability* of winning it is minuscule.

In ROCD, however, Kay might tell you that even if the probability is low, it still exists and that it should be attended to. If Kay is able to convince you of that, Kay wins. It is like Kay telling you to celebrate your win just because you have bought a lottery ticket. If you can tell Kay that you will wait until you win the lottery to celebrate, you have to tell Kay that you will worry about the disaster only if it happens and not attend to every thought that Kay gives you, since the possibility exists, but the probability is low.

In the next chapter, we shall try to understand why we still see evidence of our fears coming true despite knowing that the thoughts are untrue.