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## S4C6. Self-fulfilling prophecy

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A self-fulfilling prophecy is the phenomenon where someone 'predicts' something bad, and ironically the person's behavior to prevent the bad from happening results in causing the bad to happen, thereby making the 'prediction' come true. For example, if I think my wife is angry with me for some reason, and I constantly badger her to tell me why she is angry, even if she is not angry when I first had the feeling, I might cause her to become angry with my constant badgering.

Now, no matter what the presentation, OCD always lies. The intrusive thoughts portend a danger that does not exist. For example, contamination OCD may tell you a surface is still dirty but it may already be clean. Harm OCD may tell you that you are a psychopath, but you may be a kind person in reality. Religious OCD may tell you that you are a sinner but you may not be. So, your OCD tries to convince you of stuff that is not true. Others may be able to see it, but your OCD may not allow you to see it clearly.

Similarly in ROCD, your OCD makes you read too much into innocent acts of your partner. If your partner is a few minutes late, you assume the worst that your partner may be cheating on you. If your partner does not text you right back, or in the way you want her to, you assume the worst again. If your partner has free time, it has to be spent with you, and if she doesn't or can't, you assume the worst.

If your partner is meeting friends without you, you again assume the worst and need to know whom she is with. Sometimes, in your attempt to find out, you may lash out at her. Or if you are triggered when you are with her, you may get her to modify her behavior to suit your wishes.

What impact could this have on your partner? As you can well understand, it may start with your partner reassuring you that what you are thinking is not true. But the reassurance may not satisfy you or only satisfy you in the moment and may make you repeat your unhealthy actions. It is likely that when your actions cross your partner's tolerance threshold, she may get annoyed and lash out. It is possible that she may feel that no matter what she does, she is not being trusted and may start resenting your behavior and your treatment of her. When she becomes resentful, she may begin to feel that it is not worth the effort to keep reassuring you of her fidelity and honesty. She may end up liking someone else over you who does not put her in the interrogation chair all the time, and she may cheat on you or break up with you.

This may seem like your fears were true all along. It may seem like you were always right in thinking that you may be cheated on or dumped by your partner. But she may have been pushed into a corner and forced to retaliate by your actions. While not justifiable at all, her actions are understandable. Her action was a retaliation of your continued suspicion and lashing out or neediness. Your behavior created a self-

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fulfilling prophecy. It is this behavior that made your partner act the way she did. Being aware of this quirk of ROCD may help you in avoiding getting caught in this trap.

In the next chapter, we shall try to understand why being attracted to others is okay and why not being attracted to your partner all the time is okay too.