
S4C7. Attraction is okay

Being attracted to others is okay. We do not have to be attracted only to our partners. We also do not have to be always attracted to them. Let us see why. We shall take the example of a cisgender female (let us call her Judy) as the ROCD sufferer. Judy has five men in her life - her boyfriend Tom, her brother, her father, a childhood male friend, and a male office colleague. She loves Tom, and has always been supported by her father, brother and male friend. Her office colleague is intelligent and she looks up to him. When Judy develops ROCD, her intrusive thoughts revolve around her partner's inadequacy. Her ROCD sends her the following intrusive thoughts:

- Tom is not as intelligent as my colleague
- Tom is not as much fun as my childhood friend
- Tom is not as strong as my brother
- Tom is not as supportive as my father

Judy struggles to understand that Tom does not have to be the best at everything. When Tom decided to get into a relationship with her, he did not use any checklists to determine if she was the best at everything that he wanted from a girl. He looked at her as an amalgamation of various qualities in different proportions that made her unique and dear to him. Perhaps he liked the fact that she had an imperfectly protruding canine. Perhaps he liked that she was not interested in politics. Perhaps he liked that her laughter sounded funny sometimes. He chose to like her with all her '*imperfections*'. Before her ROCD, Judy chose to like Tom with all his '*imperfections*' as well. Her ROCD has made her break down the composite and evaluate Tom only as the sum of all parts.

Judy's ROCD tells her that she should have a checklist of qualities that an ideal boyfriend should have, and she wants Tom to be perfect or the best at all the items in the list. But for a moment, visualize a music equalizer as shown in figure 4.7.1.

The music you play would sound cacophonous if all the bands are turned right up. All the bands need to be set in a specific order to attenuate the music. Similarly, what make Tom who he is, are all his qualities, good or bad. If Tom were to be the best at everything, would he choose Judy?

What if he did not like her ROCD? What if he did not like her comparing him to her friends all the time? What if he did not like how short she was in comparison to him?

If Judy understands the way her ROCD works, she would realize that it is

THE RECOVERY PROCESS

okay for her to like some qualities of other people more than she likes them in Tom. She may love her father more for his support and that is different and it is alright. She may love her brother more for his strength, and that is also different and alright. She may love her friend more for his fun quotient, which is again different and absolutely okay. Lastly, she may love her colleague's intelligence more and again that is different and totally acceptable. She needs to be able to tell her ROCD that even if Tom is not the best at everything, and even if she does love other qualities in other people more, Tom is still right for her and she wants none other than Tom, despite his many '*imperfections*' or inadequacies.

Figure 4.7.1: Music equalizer



In the next chapter, we shall see how we can learn to grade our fears using the subjective units of distress scale - SUDS for short.