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## S5C11. The backdoor spike

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One of the sneakiest features of OCD is the backdoor spike. When you get into therapy, you learn to handle these doubts. You also understand that your doubts are not rational. The fact that they cause anxiety is an indication that these thoughts are irrational. With sufficient exposures and response prevention, you soon reach a point where the thought of being attracted to another person affects you very little or not at all.

However, your ROCD may not want to let go. It may want to latch on to you for some more time. So, when the core obsession of being attracted to someone else stops causing anxiety, your ROCD may add another layer on top and cause fresh anxiety. Your new obsession may be *‘Since the thought of being attracted to that new girl is not causing me anxiety, it must mean I secretly never loved my girlfriend. What if it has never been ROCD?’* Thus, the thought about not being anxious anymore about an ROCD obsession begins to cause anxiety. This anxiety has been called the backdoor spike, and is a part of Meta OCD. The backdoor spike is ROCD’s desperate last-ditch attempt to keep you hooked.

Just as you got over your original obsession by accepting the uncertainty and facing your fear head on, you also need to accept the uncertainty of the backdoor spike and face the fear head on. Just as you said *‘Kay is telling me I am attracted to another person. I’m going to accept this uncertainty and live with the doubt even if things go wrong eventually’* you now need to say *‘Kay is telling me I may never have had ROCD. I’m going to accept this uncertainty and live with the doubt even if things go wrong eventually.’*

Acceptance of uncertainty, regardless of the nature of the doubt is the only way out. Recognize the layers and stay one step ahead. Particularly for the backdoor spike, do realize that no anxiety is in fact proof of recovery from ROCD.

In the next chapter, we shall look at the concept of anticipatory anxiety.