

This I Do For Me

By Karen M. Curran

I would like to share with my fellow OCD sufferers a little bit of my successful recovery. I call it my successful recovery, even though at times, I must work at it every day. This is just one aspect of different things I do, but it works so well for me that I really want to share it. The fact that I am able to sleep peacefully, get up in the morning, go to work, and be a wife and mother (like most people do without even thinking about it) is my success. What I have accomplished in the past two years will hopefully get me through my OCD struggle for the rest of my life.

The secret to my success is ATTITUDE—going after it as much as it goes after me. Being the master instead of the victim. "It" being anxiety, distressful thoughts, fears (and everything else that goes with this disorder). On days when I really think I cannot handle it anymore, I do not give up. When it chase me, I chase it right back. In other words, when I start to feel the anxiety coming on, I play its own game. (That's right, think of it as a game, the game of life.) I accept it for what it is. Not real, just thoughts. "Go ahead, thoughts, anxiety, whatever, come and get me." Once I feel anxious, I accept it and actually play a role. My role is to keep acting normal, keep doing what I am doing, even though I may not feel like it at the time. Keep going, keep striving. I actually say: "Alright, anxiety, if you want to come and get me, well come on and get." You will be surprised

how soon your distressful feelings dissipate. When I start having a really rough time, I schedule anxiety periods. I schedule three anxiety practices a day. Actually me planning my anxiety instead of it planning my life. Turning the tables around and making myself anxious instead of OCD making me anxious. If I start having fears, anxiety, etc., when it is not a scheduled time, I remind myself that I must wait until the scheduled time. I can't worry about this now, I must wait until one o'clock. Then at one o'clock,

I voluntarily bring on my fears, for at least 10 to 15 minutes. Whether I feel like it or not, I do it anyway. Then I say something positive to myself after each exercise. You can get through this; You deserve to be happy; You are a good person; Hang in there. I promise myself I will do these scheduled anxiety times at least for a week until I start feeling better. However, whenever I need to do that, it never even lasts a week. I actually forget about doing my anxiety practices. Believe me, this works. I can go for months at a time without any practices. Also, there are times when I must do them a lot. Sometimes, I don't even need the practices when I feel anxiousness or fears. I simply accept it, play my role of being normal, get on with whatever I am doing, and simply ride it out. You'll be shocked at how soon your anxiety goes down. I know it seems unlikely, but give it a try. I bet you will have a success story too.

I have learned to live with OCD! I can finally feel comfortable with my OCD fears and accept them for what they are. THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, that's all, nothing more. Feelings felt, whether bad or good, are a part of life, and we must do with what we can to get through them. WE ARE GOING TO MAKE IT! ■

REMEMBER:

- ACCEPT YOUR FEARS
- LET THEM COME, KEEP THEM GOING
- DON'T FIGHT THEM
- SAY SOMETHING POSITIVE TO YOURSELF
- GET ON WITH WHAT YOU ARE DOING
- KEEP GOING, KEEP STRIVING