

# Client Worksheet 11

## The Real Self

You have become familiar with the idea that OCD creates an illusionary self which it says that you might become. This is known as the feared self. As a result, your real self is marginalized by a focus on the feared self you think you could become. This feared self has led you to take all sorts of precautions and to doubt your ability and common sense because you genuinely believe OCD. But the OCD self is just another *story* about only a possibility that can be pushed aside. Now, we need to establish your real self so it can be the focus of your being. On the basis of your vulnerable self-theme, write what your OCD makes you fear you could become.

Examples:

“I fear being negligent”

“I fear being dirty”

“I fear being inferior”

### The OCD Non-Self

The OCD non-self centers on who you are not. With that perception comes many negative ways of viewing the self. These include things like always comparing yourself to others to your disadvantage, never accepting positive comments, and refusing to accept that you possess any worthwhile qualities. In this worksheet, you can practice changing these ideas which will help you to build up an authentic self.

When comparing ourselves with others, it's important to learn to compare the many dimensions and to focus on the positives.

“I'm not as good as him.” → “He has some personal strengths that I do not possess and vice versa.”

“I'm not as strong as him.” → “While I may not be as strong as him physically, I have mental skills that more than make up for that.”

### One-Dimensional World

We usually judge others as better on only one dimension, the person is better than me or is smarter than me. But, in reality, people are multidimensional. Everyone is unique and not limited to just one dimension. Another obstacle is continuously comparing yourself to others regarding abilities you do not possess. “I'm not good at X,” or “I do not have the talent for Y.” When you start to think negatively about yourself, it is important to counter-balance that with positive qualities that you possess. Understanding your real sense of self not only grounds you in who you really are, but also brings other benefits. You are much less likely to worry about what are more or less trivial matters. You will feel more able to accept your place in the world, feel pride in yourself, and navigate criticism and bad moments.

### Real Desires

Recognizing your real self and your attributes also puts you more in touch with your real desires. You may have been living a life of embarrassment and shame because of your OCD. You may have often have felt

that your own wishes and needs were not important or could be set-aside because of a feeling that you don't deserve otherwise. Now you have a defined path to your real wants and desires in life.

# Client Exercise 11

## The Real Self

Note a series of everyday actions you performed today:

---

---

---

Now can you recenter the actions to infer the quality each of these actions requires:

---

---

---

So, putting all these attributes together . . . *who are you?*

---

---

---

### Feeling Who you are

There are a number of sources we refer to in order to know who we are. Obviously, ourselves and our observations of our performance in activities are two sources. But, as we noted previously, knowing and recognizing our real feelings are other sources as well. OCD is very good at convincing you to not trust your senses. You can end up doubting if you really feel an urge to do something or not. This is because the doubt intercedes and disrupts the line of communication. An important part of knowing who you are is accepting your feelings and desires. This means you need to recognize when you have a real intention, inclination and desire for something. Avoid reflecting on what you might or could have felt. Your real desires are you- not OCD, in the same way you now know that your real activities and accomplishments are you, not OCD.

### Exercise

Whenever you are doing an action, slow down and identify your real feeling and desire in that situation.

---

---

---

How does this real desire, intention, or feeling correspond with what OCD says you might be?

---

---

---

Write an autobiography of yourself emphasizing your accomplishments and positive achievements in life. (Try to write about 500 words)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Think what you would need to have done to become your OCD feared self.

---

---

---

Is there any chance of you really being your OCD feared self?

---

---

---

### The Self and Others

Another source of reference as to who you are is other people. But here you must be specific in your questions. Ask your partner or your best friend what are your qualities. You can prompt them if you wish with suggestions. But, usually, they will volunteer traits on their own. After all, if the two of you are friends, they must see something in you that they like. There will probably be a tendency for them to be on the kind side, so you must ask several sources and ask for examples to back up the traits.

---

---

---

How do these observed traits match up with the OCD self?

---

---

---

Finally, it is important to list your own dearly held values and principles in life. It's true that we don't always live up to our ideals. But they constitute a part of ourselves and our understanding of who we really are.

My values are... (e.g., honesty):

---

---

---

My goals in life are... (e.g., to be a good friend):

---

---

---

Principles that I try to live by are... (e.g., respect for other people):

---

---

---

Now, compare how these qualities relate to what OCD would say you are capable of:

---

---

---

Viewing yourself in a non-distorted mirror, what are your strong points?

What do others say about your particular unique qualities?

---

---

---

For what situations, activities, or tasks do others thank or congratulate you?

At home: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

At work: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

In personal relationships: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Combining all three situations above, you can say that you possess the following positive qualities:

---

---

---

### **A Varied Life**

I fulfil a number of roles in life:

---

---

---

Fulfilling these roles makes me proud of myself:

---

---

---

In the past, I have overcome a number of challenges due to my abilities:

---

---

---

In the future, I can see myself continuing to cope and accomplish what I wish:

---

---

---

This is my real (non-OCD) self and I am proud. I have the right to be respected as the person I really am.

---

---

---

It is important you receive feedback from friends and from yourself reinforcing your newfound real self. This means literally going out and being yourself and observing and accepting the benefits. It is important that you make time to do activities that you enjoy and carry out activities which interest you and stimulate you. Not only do these activities give you pleasure, but they also will reward you and increase your self-confidence. If your self-confidence is high, this weakens the hold of the OCD self and helps to ensure your complete recovery.

# Client Practice Card 11

## The Real Self

### Learning Points

Your OCD self is the opposite of your real self.

- o Focusing your actions around your real self grounds you in the here and now.
- o The OCD self hides who you really are behind a mask that has scared you into believing you might be something different.

### Practical Card

- o Whenever you carry out an activity or receive a compliment, ask yourself, “What does this say about me, my real authentic self?”
- o It may say you are competent or resourceful or at least capable. By contrast, OCD said that you were the opposite.
- o So now compare your true attributes as you and others visibly recognize them with your old OCD theme.
- o Note the contradictions.



# Client Quiz 11

## The Real Self

1. My real self . . .
  - o is similar to my OCD self.
  - o is often the complete opposite.
  - o is an unknown quantity.
  - o fluctuates.
  
2. My knowledge of my real self . . .
  - o is built up by observing what I am in real life.
  - o is discovered by personality test.
  - o is too difficult to find out.
  - o is who I assume I am.
  
3. Sources for discovering my real self-include . . .
  - o knowing my feelings and accomplishments.
  - o slips in Chinese cookies.
  - o the latest brain machine.
  - o what I imagine people think of me.
  
4. When I ask people who I am . . .
  - o they will lie to please me.
  - o each will see a different person and I'll be confused.
  - o they will all be wrong.
  - o they may all mention authentic traits which are all different.
  
5. My authentic self is shown by . . .
  - o trusting OCD.
  - o my real goals and values in life.
  - o pretending to be another person.
  - o reflecting and meditating about the meaning of life.
  
6. The OCD self . . .
  - o is partly true.
  - o goes against my real self and camouflages reality.
  - o is the person deep down I might become.
  - o is a person I might become in the future.