



The Stories We Tell Ourselves

**Obsessional Story
Vs
Alternative Story**

Adapted by Bronwyn Shroyer from: O'Connor, K., & Aardema, F. (2012). Clinician's handbook for obsessive compulsive disorder: Inference-based therapy. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.



Would you eat
this Apple?



This apple was picked 15 minutes ago after a rainstorm. The person who picked it, brought it inside, washed their hands, then washed the apple in clean water, and put it on a clean towel.

They are now offering the apple to you.

Would you eat this apple?



This apple has been sitting on a counter in a kitchen that has a cockroach infestation. It has been wiped down with a dry paper towel that someone found balled up on the counter. The person bringing it to you has been taking care of a sick child all day and hasn't had time to wash their hands.

Would you eat this apple?

Stories Matter.

They have the power
to make us feel
differently about the same
situation or object.

Your turn to practice.

Tell a positive story
about this picture:





Same picture,
but now tell
a negative story.

Tell a
scary story
about this
house.





Now tell a story
full of hope.

Tell a story about
this scene





Now, what's a different story you can tell about the same scene?

What is this
person's
experience in this
scene?



Now give an
alternative version





Tell a story that would
make you feel safe using
this fork

Tell a story that would
make you refuse to use this
fork





"The stories we tell ourselves have an important effect on our experience, what we believe in, and how real these beliefs feel to us.

In the same manner, obsessional ideas also come about and appear real to us through the stories we tell ourselves."

-- O'Connor, K., & Aardema, F. (2012). **Clinician's handbook for obsessive compulsive disorder: Inference-based therapy.**
Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.