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Disinhibited Thoughts #25

I feel like celebrating! For the first time in my life that I am aware of, I just vanquished my Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) on its own turf. It wanted to spoil a lovely occasion, and I stopped it, dumb-founded, in its tracks! Let me tell you how I did it...

OCD is not unlike Tourette Syndrome (TS). Just as a purposeful movement can be wrenched from any sensible context and made to dance in isolation again and again to oft deleterious ends, the same is true of OCD. Except now the arena is that of your thoughts. This is just harder to divorce yourself from because it feels more personal – both to the afflicted individual and also to those around him or her. After all, what could be more personal than your own thoughts?! Particularly if you DID once own them – these thoughts may be vestiges of who you once were or something you once considered or experienced. I continue to toss my long bangs out of my eyes, years after I cut my hair, because this movement fell prey to my TS. Similarly, certain modes of thought that no longer apply continue to invade my life, but only because they fall prey to my OCD. I didn't realize this parallel until recently though. And that's precisely what gives OCD its strength – its ability to pass itself off as your intentional self. And therein lays the key to beating it.

You may spend a summer hoeing beans. This may give you arm tics that feign hoeing movements. This doesn't mean that you should go back to hoeing beans though. The hoeing movements are mere remnants. They are obsolete. So are the thoughts in OCD. It is *critical* that you not interpret these thoughts as an indicant that you are a person who wishes to think in those modes. Recognize these 'bogus thoughts' for what they are, don't allow yourself to be fooled, and smell the scent of freedom.

Just as a particularly odious tic really entrenches itself only once it has elicited an emotional response from me, so it is with obsessions. Fighting the compulsions and rituals is akin to suppressing tics – it is the wrong battle to wage. It is tiring, ongoing, and typically fruitless. Target the obsessions instead. Because these obsessions are merely symptoms and not reflections of yourself, you can now remove the accompanying fear, loathing, guilt, embarrassment, or horror. Only then have you extricated its claws from your life.

Until next time, my friends!
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