



Volume 64 | Issue 2

Article 30

12-1-2021

Dennis' "Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Diary: A Self-Help Diary with CBT Activities to Challenge Your OCD" (book review)

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Recommended Citation

Ruleman, Alice B. (2021) "Dennis' "Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Diary: A Self-Help Diary with CBT Activities to Challenge Your OCD" (book review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 64: Iss. 2, Article 30.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2572-7478.2312>

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Book Reviews



Dennis, C. (2020). *Obsessive Compulsive Disorder diary: A self-help diary with CBT Activities to challenge your OCD*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley. 143 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 978-1787750531

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, “Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a common, chronic, and long-lasting disorder in which a person has uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts (obsessions) and/or behaviors (compulsions) that he or she feels the urge to repeat over and over” (<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/>).

The author of this book, *Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Diary*, understands these feelings very well as she has lived with obsessions and compulsions which are a part of this disorder her whole life. For instance, she struggles with a compulsion to make sure she had closed the bank app on her mobile phone so she would reopen and close the app multiple times to make sure it was secure. She tells the reader, “My obsessions came from the fear of doing something inappropriate or accidentally harming others, my compulsion was to check I hadn’t or wouldn’t” (p. 15).

Dennis candidly shares not only her own struggles with this order but the *Cognitive Behavioral Therapies* (CBT) tools that have helped her to cope. The book is designed as a workbook in which she lays out the strategies of CBT that she uses and provides “worksheet” type pages for the reader to write their own comments and issues related to that topic.

Here are some examples:

- Without thinking, write any words or phrases related to OCD.
- Draw the items or situations which feed your OCD. Why are these actually useful/positive?
- In no particular order, write down your obsessions/compulsions.
- List worst and best case scenarios [people with OCD tend to focus on the worst!]

As the reader works through the book, Dennis provides additional tools to help them deal with their anxieties such as setting targets to deal with obsessions/compulsions. Sometimes it is as simple as understanding there will be circumstances in which they can *expect* their OCD to be worse. In one scenario the reader is to think about what might happen if they leave their car door unlocked (an issue with which she has struggled). Her train of thought was, “It will be stolen, I won’t be able to get to work, and then I will lose my job!” She encourages the reader to consider other possibilities such as “nothing will happen. The car will still be sitting there when I come back.” Facing their fears is an important part of *Exposure with Response Prevention* (ERP).

Although this book is designed for individuals who have OCD to use as a workbook, it would also be helpful for family and friends to read to understand the depth of the struggles these people go through in everyday life.

Reviewer

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