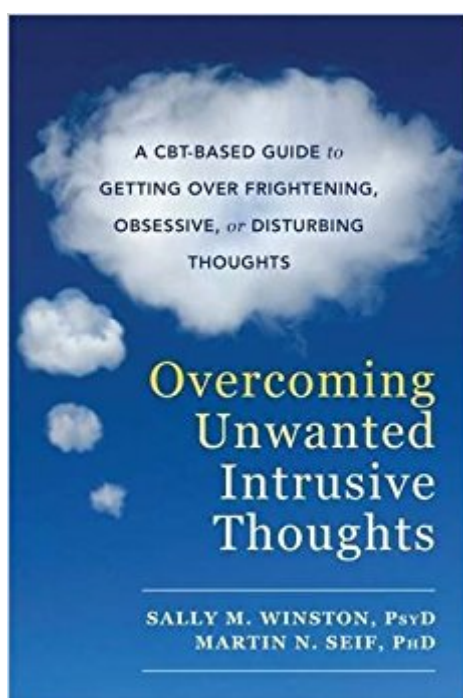


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Overcoming Unwanted Intrusive Thoughts: A CBT-Based Guide To Getting Over Frightening, Obsessive, Or Disturbing Thoughts



Synopsis

You are not your thoughts! In this powerful book, two anxiety experts offer proven-effective cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) skills to help you get unstuck from disturbing thoughts, overcome the shame these thoughts can bring, and reduce your anxiety. If you suffer from unwanted, intrusive, frightening, or even disturbing thoughts, you might worry about what these thoughts mean about you. Thoughts can seem like messages—•are they trying to tell you something? But the truth is that they are just thoughts, and don't necessarily mean anything. Sane and good people have them. If you are someone who is plagued by thoughts you don't want—thoughts that scare you, or thoughts you can't tell anyone about—this book may change your life. In this compassionate guide, you'll discover the different kinds of disturbing thoughts, myths that surround your thoughts, and how your brain has a tendency to get "stuck" in a cycle of unwanted rumination. You'll also learn why common techniques to get rid of these thoughts can backfire. And finally, you'll learn powerful cognitive behavioral skills to help you cope with and move beyond your thoughts, so you can focus on living the life you want. Your thoughts will still occur, but you will be better able to cope with them—without dread, guilt, or shame. If you have unwanted thoughts, you should remember that you aren't alone. In fact, there are millions of people just like you—good people who have awful thoughts, gentle people with violent thoughts, and sane people with "crazy" thoughts. This book will show you how to move past your thoughts so you can reclaim your life!

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: New Harbinger Publications; 1 edition (March 1, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1626254346

ISBN-13: 978-1626254343

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.6 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 29 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #7,289 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Addiction & Recovery > Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) #11 in Books > Self-Help > Anxieties & Phobias #16 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Mental Health >

Customer Reviews

“This important book is essential and mandatory reading for anyone affected by unwanted and intrusive thoughts, and their health providers. The authors crystallize decades of experience into a perfectly clear and readable guide. The solution to this misunderstood problem is in this book.”

• Joseph A. Adams, MD, medical director at Baltimore Health Systems and Step By Step of Maryland, LLC, and past president at Smoke Free Maryland

“I wish I would have had access to this book twenty years ago! Sally Winston and Martin Seif have put all the pieces of the puzzle together to help people understand and overcome unwanted intrusive thoughts. This is a must-read book, packed with information to help people suffering with anxiety-provoking intrusive thoughts, as well as clinicians who are trying to help them.”

• Kimberly J. Morrow, LCSW, maintains a private practice in Erie, PA; specializes in the treatment of anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD); provides training and case consultation for clinicians through www.anxietytraining.com; and is author of *Face It and Feel It*

“It turns out that commonsense approaches to stopping our worries, such as pushing thoughts away, arguing with them, or seeking reassurance, actually feed these worries and help them grow. Sally Winston and Martin Seif—two of the brightest minds in our field—deliver a simple yet powerful two-step process for change.”

• Reid Wilson, PhD, author of *Stopping the Noise in Your Head*

“Finally, here is an effective, neurologically based clinical approach to dealing with unwanted thoughts (without having to use a rubber band). The authors’ clear and distinctive voice should be widely heard by cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) clinicians, and by those engaged in an ongoing and unrelenting struggle with undesirable ruminations.”

• Ronald M. Doctor, PhD, professor emeritus of psychology at California State University, Northridge; author; active researcher; and practicing behavior therapist

“In their book *Overcoming Unwanted Intrusive Thoughts*, Winston and Seif tackle one of the great mysteries of human distress and suffering: the seeming inability to rid our minds of unbidden, unwanted, and disturbing thoughts, images, and memories. Readers are given a rare glimpse into the nature of unwanted intrusive thoughts, as well as their origin and impact on emotional distress. Written in a warm, engaging, yet knowledgeable manner, this book provides new insights for consumers and professionals alike on why common sense fails to soothe the troubled mind. Readers will find practical, research-based guidance on how to subdue unwanted intrusions and overcome their emotional disruption. This book offers much-needed help for those

who struggle with the torment of persistent disturbing thoughts.

•David A. Clark, PhD, professor emeritus in the department of psychology at the University of New Brunswick, and coauthor of *The Anxiety and Worry Workbook and Cognitive Therapy of Anxiety Disorders* with Aaron T. Beck

“Tens of millions of people have bothersome intrusive thoughts, and most often these thoughts are so unacceptable or embarrassing that many people have trouble telling anyone about them—even their closest family members or friends. At worst, these intrusive thoughts are part of severe problems such as OCD, but we know that almost anybody under stress can occasionally experience intrusive thoughts. Now, at last, a state-of-the-art psychological program written by two of the leading clinicians in the country with years of experience treating this problem is available. The program in this remarkable little book may be sufficient to help you overcome your intrusive thoughts, if therapeutic assistance may be needed, to guide you to the best available resources. I recommend this program very highly as a first step for anybody dealing with this issue.”

•David H. Barlow, PhD, ABPP, emeritus professor of psychology and psychiatry, founder, and director emeritus at the Center for Anxiety and Related Disorders at Boston University

“Winston and Seif have done a wonderful job in providing sufferers of obsessive intrusive thoughts with up-to-date and scientifically accurate information about this often crippling problem. This clearly written guide will serve both as a self-help resource, as well as a workbook to be used as an adjunct to psychotherapy.”

•Lee Baer, PhD, professor of psychology in the department of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and author of *Getting Control* and *The Imp of the Mind*

“An interesting and original account of a little-understood phenomenon—intrusive thoughts.”

•Fredric Neuman, MD, director of The Anxiety and Phobia Treatment Center, and author of *Caring, Fighting Fear, and Worried Sick?*

“What a great book for people who struggle with intrusive thoughts! Two highly skilled and respected experts in the treatment of chronic anxiety explain how intrusive thoughts work, what they mean and don’t mean, why they defy your best efforts at getting rid of them, and most importantly, how to change your relationship with these thoughts so they don’t remain a persistent, negative focus. They help the reader understand that intrusive thoughts don’t persist despite your best efforts; they persist because of your best efforts at arguing with, struggling against, and seeking to avoid these unwanted thoughts. Their book offers plainspoken instructions with lots of good examples that will help you let go of the guilt, fear, and confusion that so often accompanies intrusive thoughts. This is a must-read for anyone experiencing such thoughts, as well as the professionals who seek to help them.”

•David Carbonell, PhD, is a Chicago-based psychologist specializing in treating chronic anxiety for over thirty years, author

of *Panic Attacks Workbook* and *The Worry Trick*, and “coach” at www.anxietycoach.com. Winston and Seif have written an important and much-needed book. It speaks to those who suffer intensely from unwanted intrusive thoughts and, as a result, descend into a world of anxious isolation. The authors lift the sufferer from a frightening darkness into a world of understanding and onto a path to freedom. This is necessary reading for anyone suffering from the tyranny of unwanted thoughts, and it should be required reading for helping professionals. • Bruce Shapiro, MD, clinical professor of psychiatry at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons

Sally M. Winston, PsyD, founded and codirects the Anxiety and Stress Disorders Institute of Maryland in Towson, MD. She served as the first chair of the Clinical Advisory Board of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), and received their prestigious Jerilyn Ross Clinician Advocate Award. She is a master clinician who has given sought-after workshops for therapists for decades. She is coauthor of *What Every Therapist Needs to Know About Anxiety Disorders*. Martin N. Seif, PhD, cofounded the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, and was a member of its board of directors from 1977 through 1991. Seif is associate director of The Anxiety and Phobia Treatment Center at White Plains Hospital, a faculty member of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, and is board certified in cognitive behavioral psychology from the American Board of Professional Psychology. He maintains a private practice in New York, NY, and Greenwich, CT, and is coauthor of *What Every Therapist Needs to Know About Anxiety Disorders*.

Clear, practical and very useful information. As always, Drs. Winston and Self present ideas in well-written, direct and jargon-free language that make their work easily accessible to both patients and clinicians.

if you suffer from thought-related anxiety, search no more, this book will defuse it with clear and simple information. helped A LOT! I would like to sincerely thank the authors for allowing me to understand and hopefully overcome one of the worst aspects of anxiety.

A very effective and easy to use book

I've been pleasantly surprised with this book, beginning to know that almost everyone experiences intrusive thoughts that can come to bother us and the reasons that we have them.

The book contains a section detailing all kinds of intrusive thoughts and the way we engage them because the idea is meaningful to us. It has been very helpful to know and understand the ways in which we can turn these thoughts into disturbing recurrent thoughts that affect our lives and take over our minds, so that we have tools to get rid of this problem with personal work. I have lived sporadic situations of intense anxiety due to disturbing thoughts and I can not imagine how difficult it must be for people suffering from a more chronic condition, living with intense worry and anxiety, with fear and feeling threatened by their own thoughts. The good news is that this issue contains self-help strategies to transform this condition, regain balance and reclaim control of your mind, significantly improving the quality of your life. I recommend this book to everyone, since our brains are wired to experience this situation, no matter how intense or how often it is, this book contains very useful information to better understand the functioning of our mind and therefore is information which empowers anyone. Self-knowledge is a key element for achievement, success, healthy and joyful relationships, sustained balance and happiness, and a more coherent life. My gratitude to the Publisher and NetGalley for allowing me to review the book

Winston and Seif have distilled the best of modern treatment approaches for those who find themselves entangled in difficult thoughts. In this accessible guide, the authors explain how thoughts can become stuck, and how many "coping strategies" can paradoxically make things worse. And, they offer an alternative path that walks readers toward meaningful recovery and a new way of understanding their struggles. The approach of this book is both compassionate and direct. It educates, but it also provides concrete practices that really work! The many metaphors and examples keep the book lively and engaging. I am a licensed psychologist, and this is my new first choice for helping my clients who have these concerns. Highly recommended for self-help, and for clinicians who want effective treatment for clients with excessive worry, unwanted, intrusive thoughts, and other anxiety disorders.

This book is the definitive book on intrusive thoughts... I have suffered with various forms of this... diagnosed with ocd or more hip version of Pure-O.. I have read some great books by the Ocd center of LA and also Steven C Hayes that have really helped as well as years of therapy, but this book stands alone as the most compressive book on intrusive thoughts because of its ability to drill down to the very root of the problem and really informs you and convinces you that no,.. you don't have any control of thoughts and gives biological and evoluotinary facts why.. I think for most of us that is one of the root issues that drives the guilt that comes with these incredibly uncomfortable

thoughts,... why cant I NOT think them.....once you can get over that key issue.. you can be on the road to a better life .. I highly recommend this book for all sufferers...

I rarely write reviews but this read deserved it. This book has left me speechless. I am a textbook Pure "O" sufferer. It has been my life on and off since I was 20 and I am now 47. This book is me to a tee. I came upon this book as I was googling once again for reassurance as I am having a rough spell and trying to find something to help me feel not so alone in my struggle. I have read other popular books on this subject but they never totally applied to me. This mental disorder is a tough one to describe to others and for them to really understand without thinking I am going crazy. It is embarrassing at times. My family tries to empathize but when I try to explain it to them, they are very confused as to why I can't shake it off , distract myself or try to be stronger. There hasn't been a therapist able to help me as I don't think they really understand this disorder fully. They all tried teaching me the techniques that "don't work" so I always thought I wasn't doing something right. The good news is I am still here, never have acted on one my intrusive thoughts (I can guarantee I have thought most of the unthinkable, probably today alone) and have a new found hope now. There isn't enough thank you's for publishing this book to get the word out. Humbly, Me

Winston and Seif offer an accessible, salient and essential tool for any person like me who has suffered from the often subtle, overlooked and crippling burden of unwanted intrusive thoughts. The "Worried Voice", "False Comfort" and "Wise Mind" figures that help narrate the work offer a unique approach that guides the reader through the inherently murky concepts of the sticky mind, paradoxical effort and entanglement that are the intransigent hallmarks of this condition. "Overcoming Unwanted Intrusive Thoughts" offers a viable and realistic path toward recovery using a professionally crafted diet of exposure and acceptance, ultimately presenting the sufferer with a means of finding peace of mind through nothing less than a newfound freedom of thought. If the title sounds like it could apply to you or a loved one, then please do yourself a favor and read this book.

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Self-Hypnosis, Mind Control, CBT)

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