

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Rosemary Pavey offers hope to sufferers of O.C.D. and discloses that she suffered with O.C.D. in varying degrees for about 15 years.

"Now my freedom has lasted for more years than the time I was in the dreadful place of bondage. One of the most releasing things for me was to know that I am made in God's Image and so are you."

Obsessions are persistent ideas, thoughts, impulses or images that are experienced, initially, as intrusive or senseless and that cause anxiety.

Compulsions are repetitive, purposeful, intentional behaviours that are performed in response to an obsession, according to certain rules, or in a stereotyped fashion. They may be designed to neutralise or to prevent discomfort of some dreaded event or situation. (summary taken from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder) (DSM 1V)

Many people today are struggling with O.C.D. in one form or another and have probably been battling with this disorder for a number of years. Most people have habits or ritualistic tendencies but when these take over someone's life, to the extent that the individual can barely think of anything that isn't obsessive, they need professional help.

(cont'd on page 2)

I Want to Tell You a Story...!

What lies at the heart of modern anxieties? It is clear that human society is adapting to a whole range of new things.

We travel around more. We can connect with others right across the world in an instant. We spend a serious proportion of our lives in front of computers or watching television screens. Each of these is forcing a serious change in our lives and much of it we positively enjoy. So where does the anxiety come from? Daniel Taylor wrote these words in his book 'Tell Me a Story':

"Our greatest desire, greater even than the desire for happiness, is that our lives mean something".

(cont'd on page 4)

How Was it For You?

For all of us, our experiences of making love are a three-fold interplay of physical factors, psychological or cultural influences, and relational dynamics. As Christians, we need to ask ourselves: how has church culture shaped the marriage bed?

I apologise to any readers who may not be married and to whom this article may seem irrelevant or exclusive of the many sexual issues facing you. However, I wish for once to focus on the important issue of sex in marriage.

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(cont'd from page 1) Over 2 million people are known to be suffering in this way and this number could be considerably more. There are Christian sufferers who cannot reveal the kind of rituals which have become a part of them in case they are thought to be "crazy" or "unspiritual". I use this latter expression as guilt and fear are often experienced by a person who is compulsive.

The most helpful way to support people with O.C.D. is to unconditionally love them and let them know that they are accepted with all their fears, and to empower them with the knowledge that God sees them this way too. My personal opinion is, before applying Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (which at the right time can be beneficial), the counsellor needs patiently to empathise, drawing out of the client the details of the obsessive thoughts and compulsions. The client has a need to be heard but finds difficulty in "owning" and expressing thoughts, feelings and actions. It is very unhelpful to quote scriptures about not worrying, in a condemning way. Jesus said, "Don't be afraid" – which means that there is no need for a sufferer to worry as He will

always be there for us, loving us perfectly and unconditionally.

The Person Centred Counsellor must put Rogers' core conditions of acceptance and unconditional positive regard in place, and keep them there, to enable the client to begin to accept themselves and every part of their being.

A major part of counselling is to ensure the client's self esteem is built up, to the point where their worth is realised and believed by them. As they begin to believe in themselves, so they can begin to feel strong enough to let go of the rituals that are "holding them together". It is then, and only then, that it will be profitable to 'teach techniques'.

There are many systems and techniques used which aim to break the habitual pattern of the O.C.D. These include:

- **'Flooding'** (Where the sufferer is exposed to the feared situation all at once)
- **Going at the pace of the client - a much preferred way.** (Allowing the client to choose a time scale where they

feel they can cope with ignoring the ritualistic thoughts)

This may be as short as ten minutes – gradually increasing up to 1 hour. This system usually works, as the person is encouraged to "leave alone the obsessive thoughts" until the time is up – when they will be able to do what they wish with their habitual compulsions. Often the need to 'obsess' about something weakens at this point and the client is surprised by the lessening of the compulsion.

• **A reward system may also prove helpful**

Many other helpful techniques are available, which could not be covered in this article.

I would very much like to encourage sufferers that there is a way out if you really want to be free. A supportive counsellor needs to be found who will "stay with you" on your personal journey.

Rosemary Pavey

Britain on the Brink of Debt Explosion

Britons now collectively owe £1,000,000,000,000 (one-trillion pounds) which equals the total national debts for the entire continents of Africa, Asia and S. America! Three quarters of all European debt is in the UK.

A Treasury spokesman said: "The debt bubble facing the British public is awesome as the average adult in this country now owes more than £5,500 each (excluding mortgages)". Debt inclusive of mortgages, store cards and other unsecured loans is equivalent to every man, woman and child being in debt to the tune of £17,500 each.

But why are people so obsessed? Maybe it's because they want that new car, a bigger house, the designer clothes or the latest electronic gadget. For some it is a response to the pressure in their lives or as a result of unresolved insecurity. There is a lot of evidence to support the view that the more insecure a person feels the more likely they are to spend compulsively and be in debt.

In a recent survey 1 in 5 people admitted they would borrow to buy something straightaway rather than save up until they could afford it.

The effect of debt is like acid – it corrodes! A survey carried out for Relate showed that debt, not infidelity, was the main



cause of arguments in personal relationships and a major contributor to relationship breakdown.

In Swindon, the two Citizens Advice Bureaux dealt with 3,126 new debt clients in the last financial year, who between them had debts of just over £3.25 million. The north Swindon CAB reported that 35% of the people it sees want help with debt. There is clearly a need for

more help in working with the effects of debt in people's lives. This is why The Willows has set up a working group to relaunch the Debt Advice Service. This has already attracted support from GWR Radio, The Wiltshire and Swindon Community Trust and the John Paul Getty Jr. Foundation. Our aims are simple – to offer a free-of-charge Debt Advice Service to those wanting to deal with the symptoms of debt whether it is the result of 'money abuse' or the consequences of living in a consumer driven materialistic world without sufficient income to meet existing demands.

In response to Willows initiative, Michael Wilts M.P. stated that "The Willows provides help when people are at their most vulnerable, offering families and individuals counselling and training as well as support for churches. Any effort to extend such much needed services to include issues of debt is welcome".

Mike Marsh - Willows Debt Advice steering Group

If you would like to find out more about training to be a Debt Advice Worker or if you think the new service could help you when it is launched in early 2005, then please contact the Willows Counselling Service.

How many of us have heard more about the "don'ts" than the "dos"? I believe in the "don'ts" because I trust God's ethical boundaries and have experienced them to be good for me in the area of my sexual life and history. But, I also believe that God is for sex within His boundaries, and that He created and delights in pleasure.

Sexual pleasure comes from a safe and intimate relationship that is also confident to be creative and expressive with touch. How sad that the Hite survey reports that 60% of women find their men to be "lazy and unimaginative lovers". If a similar survey was done on men, I wonder what would be expressed? I believe we honour God and our marriage partners by investing effort, abandonment, fun and creativity into the sexual expression of our love for each other. It's O.K. to be "sexy" together!

A Call for Pure Fantasy

The mind is as much a sexual organ as the clitoris or the penis. Fantasy for Christians should not involve infidelity or using the opposite sex as objects. But there are many romantic images that can be used with purity. Fantasising can add much to your intimacy and pleasure together. Let's not be so focused on the fencing over which we do not want to trespass, that we lose the capacity to play in the field.

"All that I have and am, I give to You"

Asceticism in church history can leave us with an unconscious sense that relating to the mind or spirit is somehow "higher" than things of the flesh. But the truth is, we are called to love the whole person, which includes loving our partners and our own bodies. We need to find ways to express this: maybe through giving each other a massage or through creative pampering, and certainly through keeping our bodies clean and smelling if not of roses, then certainly of something



tempting! Find ways to make you partner feel good about their body, whatever their shape or size.

Our love-making is most fulfilling when it responds to the wholeness of who we are: emotions, thoughts, spirit and body. As we combine sensitivity to all these areas we find the greatest depth of intimacy and joy together.

The Hardest Call for Help

Something like two in every five women and about one third of men in all age groups experience some form of sexual dysfunction, ranging from lack of desire, to attaining or retaining an erection and reaching an orgasm. For others, there are orientation anxieties, or issues of past abuse affecting current experiences.

This can be the hardest call for help, but don't despair and give up. Help can be found. You are not the only one, and there are ways through. There are counsellors qualified specifically to help with sexual issues. Often church leaders can recommend Christian counsellors they know to be experienced in these areas. Alternatively, your G.P. may be able to refer you and your partner for Psychosexual counselling, which can usually be received on the N.H.S. "Relate" also offers sexual counselling.

There is so much that can't be covered in a short article, but if this has opened the door into that secret place of love-making with its joys and sometimes sorrows, then I am pleased. Let the wine of love ferment and grow richer through every season of marriage!

Margaret Ellis is a qualified Counsellor and Psychosexual Therapist. She started her career as a secondary school teacher, after which she led a church for a number of years. She is currently Director of Life Centre, a charity providing support for survivors of rape and

sexual abuse. She works as a face to face counsellor herself within Life Centre as well as overseeing the telephone counselling service they provide. She combines this work with providing Psychosexual Therapy within a clinic in the local hospital. Margaret is an experienced speaker and trainer.

See back page for details of Willows Workshop on Sexuality

This desire for meaning is the originating impulse of a story; human beings, faced with the experience of life, create stories to make sense of it.

Each of our lives can be thought of as a story, one that we are continually adjusting and changing as we incorporate new experiences. Our stories build our sense of self-identity and they express our sense of belonging to families and communities. They are also at the heart of why we do what we do.

Try this out

Ask a friend "Why are you doing that?" Question them about something that is important to them. The response they give will tell you part of their story.

The stories that we tell about ourselves are our ongoing stab at making sense of the world, and they express our deepest commitments and our passions.

When we go through a particularly difficult experience in life, like bereavement, or betrayal, making sense of it can be really hard and, for a time, we may feel quite lost.

In its Twelve Step Programme, Alcoholics Anonymous encourages each person to tell their story. It aims to support them as they rebuild their lives and find out who they are, and where they have been. This enables them to find meaning in their experiences and to make sense of the world again.

So why does this matter to us today?

Stories have traditionally been nurtured in the lives of families and local communities through face to face conversation. There is something deeply affirming, even about very simple encounters with people, as we share something about what is happening to us. The issue may be that this natural story sharing is declining in Western society, that we simply have less conversation with more and more time being spent passively in front of the television. Some of us are besieged by communication through email and telephone but, somehow this does not quite 'do the business' when compared with the deep level of affirmation that goes on face to face. On top of that, in such a mobile world, many people

we meet are complete strangers. We walk around the town in a sea of faces, who do not know us from Adam or Eve. That can be pleasant in one sense, but if that is all there is then we may soon begin to feel lost.

Aware of the difficulties people are experiencing today in constructing their own stories, one school of advertisers actually teaches manufacturers how to associate products with what people want to be. You want to be an outlaw? - Buy the Harley Davidson. Fancy yourself as a great lover? - The lady loves Milk Tray. Powerful isn't it? It clearly sells products, but it is also rather perverse when you realise that they are selling us a fantasy about ourselves, quite unconnected with the actual lives that we lead. Similarly we are bombarded with stories on film and TV. Of course every society has its way of telling and sharing a story and it has always been a rich part of human life, but have you thought about the diet of stories that we are currently watching? Stories may actually be one of the most important influences in shaping the way we see the world. What then do we make of our Hollywood diet or the never-ending stream of 'reality' TV shows? How are they affecting our view of the world?

If any of this is right, it suggests a response. The heart of our human life might be something to do with the way that we construct stories and live out of them.

One of the most pressing needs in our electronic world may be to recover places where we meet and share a story in some way or another.



I have experimented with having people round for an evening where we each bring a story to tell. We also have conversations to help people talk about issues in their community or the wider world. These are interspersed with times where people share from their own lives, offering their own stories related to the subject under discussion. To work like this seems to tap into the true passions and concerns of people, as though you are touching their lives.

Chris Sunderland

For more on this approach see www.agoraspace.org

Chris is an Anglican minister who spent most of the 90's as vicar of a tower block estate in inner-city Bristol. Convinced that the church has to re-imagine its interaction with society, he set out on the path that led to the founding of Agora, an organisation dedicated to creating new opportunities for public conversation, the building of trust and the seeking of vision.

Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Have you ever wondered why you get on well with some people and not others? Why, despite the best of intention or effort, you still cannot understand how some people think or work? Then the Myers Briggs Type Indicator could help you.

The analysis of a completed MBTI questionnaire will indicate your preferences, tendencies and characteristics. The combination of the four preference scales will indicate your Myers Briggs "type". These four scales are:

Extraversion (E) versus Intraversion (I)
Sensing (S) versus Intuition (N)
Thinking (T) versus Feeling (F)
Judging (J) versus Perceiving (P)

EXTRAVERSION and INTRAVERSION

Extraverts draw their energy from, and direct it to, the outer world of people and things. Their natural preference will be to 'talk out' problems and difficulties, learn by discussion or 'doing it' until they understand it. They may appear to be relaxed and more confident than their introvert counterpart but this is often because the E's 'thinking aloud' makes them more easily understood. E's speak, do, and jump first and then think about what they have said or done. They can be funny, witty and impulsive but it would be a mistake to assume they are shallow or insensitive. Extraverts seek variety and action in their work and are usually happy to be team-players.

In contrast, Intraverts draw their energy from their internal world of thought and reflection. They 'think through' problems, reflecting, meditating and mentally practicing before expressing an idea. They prefer to understand first and speak second. They may appear reserved when questioning and, to an E, subtle to the point of impenetrability. I's think before they say or do anything – and sometimes never say or do, but just think! If an Intravert is so focused on finding the solution and forgets to explain themselves, communication difficulties can arise. I's may appear deep and sensitive, but often have a sense of humour and can be outrageously spontaneous in the right environment.

SENSING and INTUITION

People with a Sensing preference will take in information via their five senses (sight, touch, sound, taste and smell). The focus of the Senser is reality – experience, history, data, facts and details – what actually 'is', right now, in the present. This makes them practical, 'hands on' people, who enjoy the present moment, happy to preserve or conserve, who are an essential part of any task-orientated team.

The Intuitive person takes in information via their 'sixth sense'. Their hunch, or intuition, their seeking of possibilities, or underlying inspiration, looks forward to what might be in the future. They are equally essential to the team by providing vision, by taking leaps and strides, and by skirting detail.

THINKING and FEELING

Thinking and Feeling are judging functions, rival instruments in the decision-making process. The Thinker remains detached, engaging in analytical problem solving, able to make decisions based on the logic of a situation. They may be perceived as cool, principled and, sometimes, impersonal, making decisions focused on things rather than people. They seek objective truth in an impartial way. Their emotional response is tempered and balanced by their preference for measuring issues before arriving at a decision.

Feelers make their decisions based on human values and needs, preferring to engage in situations in a democratic, personal and caring way, seeking harmony in decision making. They are usually facilitative, helping the whole team to keep engaged in the process. This focus on people involves the F's own emotional responses before they have even begun to weigh any situation. Their awareness of others' feelings means they will proceed with tact and discernment, seeking collective agreement for any decision.

JUDGEMENT and PERCEPTION

J's prefer to live their lives in a planned and orderly manner. They believe that life should be willed and understood so will usually stick to arrangements which they have made. When planning a day out, they will know their destination, time of arrival and when they will get home. When planning projects, they will have all the necessary information to hand before they start, and reach their goal with time to spare. They are decisive people who have settled opinions, and who enjoy pushing for closure in an organised and structured manner. They will usually be quite self-disciplined, able to handle deadlines, their lives under control with clear limits and categories.

However, to the Perceiver, planning is an anathema! They are spontaneous, regarding life as something to be experienced and understood. Their day out will consist of a vague destination, and they may never get there, preferring to stop on the way for something more interesting. Going home may be delayed by what there is to see and discover. Curiosity, flexibility and adaptability are the hallmarks of a P. Whilst meeting deadlines is possible, it will not be their focus as they enjoy the process of getting there, accommodating change and postponing decisions if necessary.

In Conclusion

Myers Briggs assumes that we all have a true type which is inborn. Many factors influence what 'type' each of us is. The environment in which we were raised, or in which we work, may inhibit or enhance the expression of our type. It is important to remember though, that life is a dynamic and all types bring equal gifts and are of equal value.



Linsi Simmons is a freelance consultant who works with church leaders and lectures in contemporary spirituality and is also a Myers Briggs Type Indicator Practitioner.

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Streams in the Desert

- Being Church in Contemporary Society

An exciting weekend residential event hosted by The Bible Society, for all who are serious about mission to culture.

26-28 November 2004, High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts.

As church members become increasingly involved in church leadership, this event provides an exciting opportunity to explore the rapidly changing cultural context in which we all operate and consider practical ways to engage with today's society. Find out more at www.biblesociety.org.uk/streams.



Myers Briggs Type Indicators Workshop

Willows are running a workshop on Myers Briggs Type Indicators on Saturday 20th November 2004. 9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. Gorse Hill Baptist Church, Cricklade Road, Swindon.

The workshop will be led by Linsi Simmons.

Cost £30.00

This day will take us on a journey of exploration of ourselves and others using the Myers Briggs method. The event is open to all kinds of people, makes no assumptions about faith and will be appreciated by those who have or have not done Myers Briggs before.

To book contact Mrs Avril Fray, Training Manager at Willows

Introduction to Pastoral Care

An Introduction to Pastoral Counselling Course is being planned for January 2005.

It will be held on twelve Wednesday evenings, during term time, at Gorse Hill Baptist Church in Swindon. This is a Level 1 Course in Christian Counselling (CTI/NOCN Introduction to Counselling Units) ACC recognition number T153-L1.

The cost of the course is £160.00

The following Workshops have been organised in conjunction with Hamhill and will take place at The Hamhill Centre of Christian Healing near Cirencester, Gloucester.

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|---------------|--|
| 23rd October | "Sexuality" Margaret Ellis |
| 13th November | "Key Considerations in Couples Work" Richard and Sally Worthing-Davies |
| 5th February | "Spiritual and Emotional Abuse" Roy Searle and Gayle-Anne Drury |

If you are interested in any of the above, please contact Avril Fray, Training Manager at Willows, by telephone or e-mail: training@willowscounselling.org.uk

The Willows
COUNSELLING SERVICE



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