

In-Person Relapse Prevention Group Discussion Questions

July 2026 | River City OCD Clinic

From Manson's *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F**k*:

"We don't always control what happens to us. But we always control how we interpret what happens to us, as well as how we respond. Whether we consciously recognize it or not, we are always responsible for our experiences. It's impossible not to be. Choosing to not consciously interpret events in our lives is still an interpretation of the events of our lives. Choosing to not respond to the events in our lives is still a response to the events in our lives. Even if you get run over by a clown car and pissed on by a busload of schoolchildren, it's still your responsibility to interpret the meaning of the event and choose a response."

- Manson argues that even when we can't control what happens, we're still responsible for choosing our next step. When symptoms flare up or you have a difficult day, what helps you shift your focus from "*Why is this happening again?*" to "*What response would move me toward the life I want?*"
 - OCD often assigns a very specific meaning to thoughts or feelings (e.g., "*This thought means I'm dangerous,*" or "*This anxiety means something is wrong*"). How has your interpretation of intrusive thoughts changed since completing active treatment?
 - What meaning do you try to give them now?
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From Tolle's *The Power of Now*:

"Once a mind pattern, an emotion, or a reaction is there, accept it. You were not conscious enough to have a choice in the matter. That's not judgment, just a fact. If you had a choice, or realized that you do have a choice, would you choose suffering or joy, ease or unease, peace or conflict? Any such feeling I call negative, which simply means bad. Not in the sense that '*You shouldn't have done that,*' but just plain factual bad, like feeling sick in the stomach. It is certainly true that when you accept your resentment, moodiness, anger, and so on, you are no longer forced to act them out blindly, and you are less likely to project them onto others."

- Tolle suggests that our initial emotional reaction may happen automatically, but once we become aware of it, we have more choice in how we respond. How has recognizing the difference between your *first response* and your *second response* helped you maintain your recovery?
 - Accepting an emotion often gives us *more* freedom, not less. Can you think of a recent situation where acknowledging anxiety, frustration, or uncertainty actually made it easier to choose a response that aligned with your values?
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General Recovery Questions:

- What value-based "risks" have you taken since last month?
 - How did this affect your life and your OCD?
 - If you didn't take any this past month, what risks will you take for tomorrow?

For group discussion only. Please review at your own pace—there's no need to prepare "perfect" answers.