

Life is a beautiful thing. This world itself is made up of billions of people who are unique due to their appearance, their mind, their soul, and their personal struggles. Don't you find it amazing how everyone is battling different wars, fighting different demons, and thinking their own cluster of personal thoughts? Through time a person will feel a bundle of emotions. Love. Hate. Happiness. Anger. Sadness. Joy.. I myself have felt all of those emotions, but the emotion I feel the most is anxiety. I have a lot of fears. I worry all the time. I get frustrated at my own mind. I cry over my obsessive thoughts. On the outside I look like a typical 18-year-old girl, but on the inside I'm a girl who has suffered with OCD and anxiety since the age of 10. I remember my first obsessive thought. I remember developing my first OCD ritual. I remember the first time I had an anxiety attack. In grade four my grandpa passed away. In grade four I started to get bullied about my weight. In grade four my family started to crumble because my uncle was a drug addict who poisoned my youth. I viewed my own family members as monsters. I was scared of everyone. I lost trust in people. I lost hope in myself. I would often panic and it felt like my stomach was in my throat all the time. Anxiety to me feels like a stomach filled with evil butterflies and a heart that has been turned up a few volts causing it to beat at a rapid pace. I hate anxiety attacks.. They scare me, I feel like I lose all self control and that I'm going to die which of course gives me more anxiety because I'm already one who fears death. With time, I realized that my OCD was a coping method to deal with my overwhelming anxious emotions. I developed habits such as counting numbers in my head, reading words backwards, touching surfaces/objects, and washing my hands constantly. I hated my OCD habits but at the same time I couldn't stop no matter where I was or who I was with. I hid my OCD well for so many years, I was embarrassed of it and didn't want anyone to think of me as a freak. I had been judged & bullied at such a young age that I didn't want to give anyone another reason to hurt me with their mean words. For a long time I was a fragile little girl who would cry herself to sleep at night because she was so sick of her anxious feelings. I hated the fact that my OCD and anxiety were taking over my childhood. I hated the fact that nobody not even my own mother could ever understand my mind thinking process or irrational logic. I would always find myself crying at the thought of knowing that my mind would never think normally. I just wanted all my obsessive thoughts to go away so I could know what it felt like to go a day without having the urge to touch things or count a certain amount of times or to wash my hands over and over even though there was nothing on them. "I just wanted to be normal". That is the sentence that I would constantly repeat to myself.. "I just want to be normal" .. "I just want to be normal". Years and years went by before my parents realized that I had a problem beyond more than just a silly habit and that I needed some form of help. At the age of 17 I attended my first therapy session. It was diagnosed that I did indeed have OCD and an anxiety disorder. I of course already was fully aware of this because I had been dealing with it for seven years. Through multiple therapy sessions I talked about my past and learned how to forgive people in my life who made me feel anxious. It felt like a weight had been lifted off my chest and for once in my life I could just breathe. With time and hard work and talking to my therapist, I have learned how to deal with my crazy beautiful mind. I am proud of my personal achievements and continue to improve myself as a person and as someone who struggles with OCD and anxiety. If I could go back in time, I would, because I would want to tell my 10 year old self that I'm not a freak and that I'm just a special kind of thinker and that is what makes me so unique. I used to be embarrassed of my OCD and I used to be a very anxious person but today, I am an 18-year-old girl who is proud of herself. I have learned to accept my flaws and to

deal with my personal struggles. OCD to me is a curse and a blessing. Yes my OCD drives me crazy, but at the same time, I obsess and obsess over things until I achieve them, which is a good thing because I am almost destined to reach my dreams due to always obsessing over them. My dream is to inspire people. I want to show people that it's okay if you're a different kind of thinker or learner and that if you have a barrier in your life like OCD or anxiety, that you can overcome it and learn ways to cope with it. I admit, sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night due to having an anxiety attack or sometimes I go back to my OCD habits but that's perfectly okay because Rome wasn't built in a day! You can't expect yourself to wake up 100% better. You have to work on yourself and never get discouraged no matter how many obstacles you have faced or may still have to face. Seven years of my life consisted of people making me feel worthless about myself. I will never let people make me feel like that again.. Because life is a beautiful thing. This world itself is made up of billions of people who are all unique due to their personal stories. My name is Alyssa, I'm an 18-year-old girl and this is my personal story on my journey of suffering with anxiety and OCD.