

## **OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE CHECKING**

*Free Your Mind From OCD*

**By Paul R. Munford, Ph.D.**

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### **CONQUERING THE FEAR THAT DRIVES COMPULSIVE CHECKING**

*New book by respected clinical psychologist helps readers reclaim their lives*

What if the driving force in your life was fear? Fear of doing something wrong. Fear of misspeaking. Fear of criticism or punishment.

Compulsive checkers suffer from a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder that causes them to repeatedly check objects such as doors, household appliance settings, and locks in order to avoid the perceived danger that they fear could result if they don't check. People with this condition can spend up to three hours every night checking and rechecking everything in their homes, worrying that their obsessional fears will come true.

In *Overcoming Compulsive Checking*, OCD specialist Dr. Paul Munford uses cognitive behavioral therapy to guide readers through learning to understand and identify their specific ritualistic compulsion, and to help them to train their brains to stop obsessing by embracing and experimenting with exposure to their fears. The book also discusses trouble shooting particularly difficult situations and educating family and friends on how to support them in maintaining their successes.

The message in *Overcoming Compulsive Checking* is that there is hope for those who are caught in the grip of OCD. Readers gain a better understanding of their condition and how to treat it, allowing them to move on with their lives.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Paul R. Munford, Ph.D.**, is a clinical psychologist and the executive director of the Anxiety Treatment Center of Northern California.

Dr. Munford is Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine where he teaches cognitive behavior therapy. He sits on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Obsessive Compulsive Foundation and is a member of the following organizations:

- o American Psychological Association
- o Anxiety Disorders Association of America
- o Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy
- o California Psychological Association

Dr. Munford resides in California.

**FOR A REVIEW COPY OR INTERVIEW REQUEST CONTACT:**

**Earlita Chenault @ tel. 510-652-0215, ext. 142 / E-mail: [earlita@newharbinger.com](mailto:earlita@newharbinger.com)**

## **SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DR. MUNFORD**

- How common is obsessive-compulsive disorder?
- What can set off a need to compulsively check ones surroundings?
- Compulsive checking is not just limited to checking things like locks or appliances, correct? What other types of compulsive checking are there?
- Is it always possible to treat OCD without medication?
- In the book, you say that the continuation and elimination of OCD symptoms are perfect examples of irony: could you explain why, and discuss the exposure, ritual prevention, and awareness (ERPA) exercises that are used in the book?
- Please explain the Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS).
- What is a “false fear blocker” and how does it work against recovery? What are the common forms of false fear blocking behavior?
- How does one determine if a person is recovered from an OCD? Is complete recovery possible?
- How often do relapses occur in the course of recovery?

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## Fact Check:

### You Can Have Full-Blown OCD and Not Be Compelled to Check Anything

Anything in your surroundings, that is. For some people the compulsive checking of OCD plays itself out solely on the mind's stage. Those with this form of the disorder engage in "thinking rituals" which spring from obsessive fears about doing something immoral, blasphemous, or careless. Ted, for example, was so frightened that he would molest a child that for hours after coming in contact with one he'd replay the experience over and over in his mind to reassure himself he had not done something awful. Some may be compelled to mentally see-saw between disturbing images and comforting ones. Religious obsessions, called *scrupulosity*, cause people to agonize about having had an immoral or blasphemous thought, which in turn leads them to compulsively utter silent prayers and devotional phrases or words.

It's easy to see how this form of compulsive checking can go unrecognized. You don't turn up late for work because you've had to check the stove for an hour before leaving the house and you're not getting up to wash your hands every ten minutes. But that doesn't make it any less devastating from those who suffer from it. Paul Munford, Ph.D., saw the effects of this form of OCD in his thirty-year clinical practice and it's why he addresses it in his new book, ***Overcoming Compulsive Checking: Free Your Mind from OCD***. A former director at the Partial Hospitalization Program at the Neuropsychiatric Institute of UCLA, Munford offers a lay-person's primer on OCD and research-proven plan for overcoming compulsive checking. Here's just some of what you'll find in his book.

- The latest theories about the causes of OCD. Did you know that in certain children OCD symptoms emerge or are worsened during a case of strep throat? Researchers speculate that this is because the antibodies that fight strep also attack nerve tissue in a certain area of the brain. These children also may develop tic symptoms. Scientists are also studying the roles that genetics, trauma, and brain chemistry play in its development.
- A complete program for ending compulsive checking. This includes exposure strategies that address specific forms checking rituals, which are drawn from Munford's extensive experience in treating those with OCD.
- Assurance that OCD is a disorder. In fact, it's an insidious one that plays cruel tricks on those with it. When it stokes irrational fears of hurting someone it can convince those with it that they must be monsters who are primed to cause tragedy and suffering to others.
- Tools to cope with the OCD-inspired mental health conditions. Those with OCD frequently suffer from anxiety, depression, and plummeting self-esteem. Munford offers an understanding of these conditions and solid strategies for coping with them.

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## PRAISE FOR PAUL R. MUNFORD

*“Munford has written a much needed book to help people who suffer from obsessive-compulsive checking. His many years of clinical experience in working with patients with OCD are apparent as he guides the reader to develop his or her own treatment program.”*

—**Gerald Tarlow, Ph.D.**, clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles, and director of psychological services at the UCLA Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder program

*“Finally! This is a simple and effective guide for anybody who suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder. Munford translates complex scientific discoveries into a step-by-step manual that will help you to get your life back.”*

—**Emanuel Maidenberg, Ph.D.**, assistant clinical professor in the Neuropsychiatric Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles

*“This book is invaluable to anyone who wants to stop checking and living with fear and avoidance. Not only does Munford explain clearly and crisply what exposure, ritual prevention, and awareness therapy is and how to use it to fight OCD, he also prepares readers for the inevitable pitfalls and roadblocks they will encounter and provides them with the tools and strengths need to surmount them.”*

—**Patricia B. Perkins, JD**, executive director of the Obsessive Compulsive Foundation

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