

When There's No Time for OCD

I live an extremely fast-paced life that would fill my brain even if I didn't have obsessions to do so for me. I run businesses, am in a long-term relationship, as well I try to dedicate "free time" (in quotes not to annoy grammarians, but to call out the sick humor that I actually think I have that much free time) to art—along with being a businessperson I am a painter, musician, photographer, and other such things. I wake up at around three in the morning and don't stop until my body gives up around nine at night¹.

Focusing mostly on my work—which (surprise) I am obsessed with—speed is the main attribute of my success. Others may argue that one must balance speed with quality, good interpersonal skills, and a mix of a bunch of other... stuff... to be successful. No, I've been doing this for twenty years relying almost exclusively on speed alone. I work faster than pretty much anyone I have ever met. I don't mind patting myself on the back for this, because I know I've sacrificed things people hold sacrosanct. And I do not care. I go. And fast.

So let's move back to the first sentence of this article—my obsessions. My OCD. In the business world I live in there is very little room for mental disorders. In fact, it is often seen as a stigma, Now, as a mental health advocate, this disgusts me because I live with a disorder all day, every day. As well I feel [my OCD gives me a leg up in the professional world](#) at times, as much as *it is* also a drawback.

During a typical day, however, I often find myself battling with the time it will take to act on my OCD and perfect certain things—specifically organization—and the lack of time I have because work needs to get out the door. This is a true dilemma. I am in control of my professional life—I make the

decisions, I am my own boss². I am also the one *with* OCD and I live that life every second of the day.

So which part of my brain wins?

Well, it is more nuanced than either going with the OCD or going for speed. I have to have a system on top of my OCD-created system for allowing both to happen. This involves accepting mess in an organized way.

You know how every house has that drawer where the truly random items gathered throughout live end up? Some people call this a “junk drawer,” but I don’t like thinking of anything as junk—I am a recovering hoarder at heart. But we can call it the “mess drawer” for the sake of this article.

Most of my life takes place on a computer. Well, multiple computers—but all networked and pretty much a computing *system* all the same. I have a system of organizing all of my files and folders in a way where there is a folder called “_to_organize” and a folder called “_junk” in every area of concern on my computer³.

Once I was able to accept the existence of the “_to_organize” folder (it took some time), I actually found a middle ground in between reality and my OCD. That alone is a huge win, and rare. As my OCD is often controlled by a part of my brain I have no say in.

All of this falls within the realm of OCD. For certain a “_to_organize” folder is an offshoot of OCD. But what happens when I don’t have time for organizing even to that level? What happens when I need to deal with a true mess?

This often happens at rare times I am collaborating with someone directly. That is to say, they are not my subordinate or my client—we are working on the same thing (mostly code.) Well, I have a solution here as well! It’s called a temper

tantrum and it is what I do. Ok, it is only partially immature in its presentation, but this is where I have to become a dictator.

I have a strict methodology for how computer code should be written. I've yet to write this down for anyone to read—as it would come off as a bit crazy. I am very unorthodox when it comes to computer code—but I have my way I've taught myself since I was twelve years old, and you're not going to teach me any differently. And if we collaborate I am either going to have it my way, or I am going to get rather twitchy.

I realize that it is probably disappointing that I did not come up with a nice and tidy solution here. And for those with OCD, that this didn't lead to something that could be used for self-help. Sorry. This is how life is—when there is no avenue for my OCD, I am forced to try and—well—force it.

Often times I avoid these situations by never looking at any code I have assigned to others to write. I just give them specifications, what I need to connect their code to my code, and I leave their modules as-is far away from mine.

You will note I do not actually teach people how to work in the tech industry, how to code, and/or how to carry themselves as they grow from where I was to where I am now. No, I'd be a rather poor teacher in that respect.

What it comes down to is this, and it is not pretty. When there is no time for OCD, I find time for OCD.

¹ So I guess I do get sleep sometimes. That's good. [[BACK](#)]

² And a friggin' tough one at that. [[BACK](#)]

³ Oh, the underscore at the beginning—that is so it shows up first alphabetically. Sometimes I need to use multiple

underscores so certain things show up in better order when sorted alphabetically. Why computer folders can't have a "sort order" attribute I do not know—I did not invent computers. If I did... oh, that's completely for a discussion most likely outside of the scope of anything here. You'd probably have to [talk to me personally](#) about that. [[BACK](#)]