



The Man Who Couldn't Stop: OCD and the True Story of a Life Lost in Thought

By David Adam

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An intimate look at the power of intrusive thoughts, how our brains can turn against us, and living with obsessive compulsive disorder

Have you ever had a strange urge to jump from a tall building or steer your car into oncoming traffic? You are not alone. In this captivating fusion of science, history, and personal memoir, David Adam explores the weird thoughts that exist within every mind, and how they drive millions of us toward obsession and compulsion.

Adam, an editor at *Nature* and an accomplished science writer, has suffered from obsessive-compulsive disorder for twenty years, and *The Man Who Couldn't Stop* is his unflinchingly honest attempt to understand the condition and his experiences. What might lead an Ethiopian schoolgirl to eat a wall of her house, piece by piece, or a pair of brothers to die beneath an avalanche of household junk that they had compulsively hoarded? At what point does a harmless idea, a snowflake in a clear summer sky, become a blinding blizzard of unwanted thoughts? Drawing on the latest research on the brain, as well as historical accounts of patients and their treatments, this is a book that will challenge the way you think about what is normal and what is mental illness.

Told with fierce clarity, humor, and urgent lyricism, this extraordinary book is both the haunting story of a personal nightmare and a fascinating doorway into the darkest corners of our minds.

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Bibliography

- Rank: #224183 in eBooks
- Published on: 2015-01-20
- Released on: 2015-01-20
- Format: Kindle eBook



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Editorial Review

Review

“Adam is a companionable Virgil, guiding the reader through the hellish circles of the disorder, explaining scientific concepts in clear, nontechnical prose . . . For sufferers, the thirst for relief from intrusive thoughts and compulsions can be unending and, ultimately, unquenchable. David Adam's book should provide them with consolation (you are not alone) and hope (he's much better now)--and it provides all readers with a fascinating glimpse of an unusual but enduring form of psychopathology.” ?*Scott Stossel, The New York Times Book Review*

“Adam provides a compelling, often frightening, description of the havoc OCD can wreak. He also provides hope that while OCD can derail even the most placid life, it can be overcome.” ?*USA Today*

“[A] remarkable account of obsessive-compulsive disorder” ?*Seattle Times*

“[A] searing account . . . The mental-disorder memoir . . . has become its own genre, and works such as Elizabeth Wurtzel's *Prozac Nation*, Andrew Solomon's *The Noonday Demon* and most recently Scott Stossel's *My Age of Anxiety* set a high standard. In *The Man Who Couldn't Stop*, Adam more than meets it, writing with honesty, compassion and even humor about a malady so often stigmatized and caricatured.” ?*The Washington Post*

“A compelling portrait . . . This is the most comprehensive and compassionate book on OCD to date, and it offers hope that our thinking and behavior--both individual and collective--can change.” ?*Los Angeles Times*

“Part memoir, part exploration of the science behind OCD, *The Man Who Couldn't Stop* is an obsessive read and one with heart.” ?*People*

“With the wry wit of a natural storyteller and the mastery of a science writer at the top of his game, David Adam takes readers deep into the inner workings of the obsessive brain, hijacked by uncontrollable, unwanted thoughts. *The Man Who Couldn't Stop* is at once a fascinating exploration of the latest neuroscience, a rollicking history of the often truly misguided attempts to heal broken minds, and a courageous chronicle of Adam's own journey from shame and stigma to understanding and healing. A wholly unexpected, illuminating, and unforgettable book.” ?*Brigid Schulte, author of Overwhelmed: Work, Love and Play When No One Has the Time*

“The greatest strength of his book--part memoir, part scientific treatise on obsessive-compulsive disorder--is that it meets [people who call themselves "a little OCD"] on their level: "Imagine you can never turn it off." Adam's personal insights, and case studies from the famous (Winston Churchill, Nikola Tesla) to the obscure (an Ethiopian schoolgirl who ate a wall of mud bricks), make that feat of imagination both possible and painful.” ?*Mother Jones*

“An engrossing first-person study of obsessive-compulsive disorder from within and without . . . Well-researched, witty, honest and irreverent, Adam's account proves as irresistible as his subject.” ?*Kirkus (starred review)*

“Riveting, at times disturbing, but always enlightening . . . For all the impressive marshaling of information,

it is Adam's own story of his struggles with the condition . . . that is the most captivating aspect of this impressive work. Adam clearly shows both the devastating impact our thoughts can have when they turn against us, and how science is helping us fight back" ?*Booklist (starred review)*

"In a wide-reaching discussion that spans the spectrum of obsession, *Nature* editor David Adam strikes an impressive balance between humor and poignancy, and between entertaining and informing. Adam seamlessly moves between personal stories of his own struggles with OCD and case studies of other people with the disorder . . . while his smooth prose ensures an enjoyable read." ?*Publishers Weekly*

"[A] fascinating study of the living nightmare that is obsessive compulsive disorder . . . [David Adam] has written one of the best and most readable studies of a mental illness to have emerged in recent years . . . [*The Man Who Couldn't Stop* is] a wide-ranging exploration of the illness, looking at possible causes and cures. It takes in traditional psychiatry . . . , evolutionary psychology, genetics, aversion therapy, philosophy, social history, religion, neuroscience, anthropology and even zoology . . . An honest and open and, yes, maybe life-changing work." ?*Matt Haig, The Observer (London)*

"Adam, an award-winning science writer and editor at the journal *Nature*, is uniquely placed to examine the genetic, evolutionary, psychological, medical and 'just plain unfortunate' possible causes of OCD. He does so with vigour, sharp analysis, compassion and occasional humor . . . A clear-sighted and eminently accessible account . . . *The Man Who Couldn't Stop* is a fundamentally important book." ?*Helen Davis, The Sunday Times (London)*

"[An] engaging, exhaustively researched neuro memoir, a blend of brain science and personal history." ?*Melanie McGrath, Evening Standard*

"A captivating first-person account of how a blizzard of unwanted thoughts can become a personal nightmare. At times shocking, at times tragic, at times unbelievably funny, it is a wonderful read." ?*James Lloyd, BBC Focus*

"This blew me away. Stunning." ?*Ian Sample, The Guardian*

About the Author

David Adam is a writer and editor at *Nature*, the world's leading scientific journal. Before that he was a specialist correspondent for *The Guardian* for seven years, writing on science, medicine, and the environment. In 2006 his piece on carbon offsets was chosen by the Association of British Science Writers as the year's best newspaper feature on a science subject. He has reported from Antarctica, the Arctic, China, and the depths of the Amazon jungle.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Warren Matt:

Hey guys, do you desire to find a new book you just read? May be the book with the title *The Man Who Couldn't Stop: OCD and the True Story of a Life Lost in Thought* suitable to you? The book was written by renowned writer in this era. Typically the book *untitled The Man Who Couldn't Stop: OCD and the True Story of a Life Lost in Thought* is a single of several books in which everyone read now. This kind of book was inspired many people in the world. When you read this book you will enter the new dimensions that you

ever know prior to. The author explained their thought in the simple way, so all of people can easily to comprehend the core of this reserve. This book will give you a wide range of information about this world now. To help you see the represented of the world in this particular book.

Daniele Vaugh:

Reading a book tends to be new life style in this particular era globalization. With examining you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. Along with book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. A great deal of author can inspire their very own reader with their story or their experience. Not only the storyplot that share in the ebooks. But also they write about the ability about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your children, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors nowadays always try to improve their proficiency in writing, they also doing some study before they write for their book. One of them is this The Man Who Couldn't Stop: OCD and the True Story of a Life Lost in Thought.

Mildred McConkey:

Reading can called thoughts hangout, why? Because if you find yourself reading a book particularly book entitled The Man Who Couldn't Stop: OCD and the True Story of a Life Lost in Thought your thoughts will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging each and every word written in a book then become one web form conclusion and explanation that will maybe you never get ahead of. The The Man Who Couldn't Stop: OCD and the True Story of a Life Lost in Thought giving you an additional experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful data for your better life with this era. So now let us show you the relaxing pattern this is your body and mind will likely be pleased when you are finished examining it, like winning a casino game. Do you want to try this extraordinary investing spare time activity?

Charlsie Sprouse:

That book can make you to feel relax. This specific book The Man Who Couldn't Stop: OCD and the True Story of a Life Lost in Thought was colorful and of course has pictures on the website. As we know that book The Man Who Couldn't Stop: OCD and the True Story of a Life Lost in Thought has many kinds or genre. Start from kids until teens. For example Naruto or Private investigator Conan you can read and believe that you are the character on there. Therefore , not at all of book tend to be make you bored, any it can make you feel happy, fun and loosen up. Try to choose the best book in your case and try to like reading that.

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