

Intrusive Thoughts

Remember: intrusive thoughts are unwanted thoughts, images, or urges that pop into your mind and feel completely opposite to who you are. Almost everyone has them. They are not wishes, warnings, or plans, and they do not mean you are a bad person.

Common examples

- ☐ "What if I drop the baby?"
- ☐ Doubting your faith or blasphemous thoughts
- ☐ Urges to say something inappropriate
- ☐ A sudden image of a car accident
- ☐ "What if I left the stove on?"
- ☐ Fear you might hurt someone you love

Why they stick

The more a thought upsets you, the more your brain flags it as important, and the more it comes back. Fighting, analyzing, or seeking reassurance keeps the loop going.

The good news

Your distress is the sign: these thoughts horrify you *because* they go against your values. Thoughts are not actions, and having one doesn't make it true.

What helps

- 1 **Label it.** "That's an intrusive thought," not "I'm a terrible person."
- 2 **Let it be there.** Don't push it away or argue with it. Notice it like a car passing by.
- 3 **Skip the rituals.** Checking, praying the "right" way repeatedly, or asking for reassurance brings short relief but feeds the cycle.
- 4 **Return to the moment.** Go back to what you were doing, even while the thought lingers.

For faith-filled women: unwanted thoughts are not a measure of your faith or your heart. God knows the difference between a passing thought and who you are.

When to reach out: if thoughts take up hours of your day, or you're avoiding people, places, or tasks because of them, this may be OCD or perinatal OCD, which respond well to therapy (especially ERP). If you ever feel you might act on a thought, call or text 988.

"Casting down imaginations... and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

2 CORINTHIANS 10:5