

As good as it gets summary

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



As Good As It Gets, a movie about a man with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), has many interesting aspects to an abnormal psychology student. “

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is an anxiety disorder in which people have unwanted and repeated thoughts, feelings, ideas, sensations (obsessions), or behaviors that make them feel driven to do something (compulsions). ”

(Berger, 2012) There have been several unproven propositions as to what causes OCD including head injuries and infections.

Those who have obsessive-compulsive disorder have been known to obtain certain signs and symptoms. This including excessive counting, disturbance from germs, excessive validity checking of actions such as turning off the stove, and of course obsessions and compulsions that result in major distress of their life. (Berger) In the movie, As Good As It Gets, Melvin experiences all the above symptoms in addition to many more. Not only did Melvin turn the lock on the door five plus times every time he came in the door, he also flipped the light switch five plus times.

As far as Melvin's fear of germs, he was not at all fond of being touched by anyone and also did not trust to use silverware in restaurants. He would bring packaged plastic ware to use. When Melvin would wash his hands, he would use only hot water and only use a bar of soap for about 5 to 10 seconds. He would then throw the bar of soap away and retrieve a new one from his overly stocked medicine cabinet. His home was untouchably organized and he for the majority of the movie he wouldn't allow anyone other than himself to enter his home. Melvin did not take being interrupted lightly, especially while working.

He has no tolerance for people and didn't hide that aspect in any way. He said what was on his mind without hesitation or worry of upsetting anyone or hurting his or her feelings. Melvin ate at the same restaurant at the same time every day. He would then sit at the exact same table and demand to have the same waitress. If someone happened to be sitting at "his" table, he would, without a second thought, speak rudely to them until they left. He would position his plastic ware very specifically and had no patience towards the restaurant employees.

Some other obsessions/compulsions Melvin faced were that he avoided stepping on any cracks in his path including brick walkways and also while putting on his shoes he would tap each side of his shoes with each foot before putting them on. It's hard to say how Melvin "dealt with" his disorder. It was clear that he avoided socializing with those around him assuming because he did not want them to throw off his routine or interfere with his life and how he lived it. It could be that this is how he dealt with OCD.

Another possibility is that he simply followed his day-to-day routine to avoid change and that's what made his life easier. In fact, this is a major possibility as Melvin was receiving therapy but could not remain persistent in his appointments due to the fact that his therapy appointments messed up his daily routine. Melvin seemed to get by on the simple aspect of seeing his waitress everyday at the restaurant. Towards the end of the movie when Melvin had other people in his apartment it seemed to have set something off in him that caused him to act differently.

An example being: when he forgot to lock the door when he brought someone else into his apartment. When he went to leave his apartment and

noticed he had forgotten to lock the door, he was shocked. OCD has been linked biologically to “ abnormal functioning by specific regions of the brain. ” (Comer, 2013) The orbitofrontal cortex and the caudate nuclei are part of a brain circuit that takes sensory information beginning in the orbitofrontal cortex and where simple impulses derive and those impulses are sent to the caudate nuclei where they are filtered by importance (based on how powerful the impulse is).

If the impulses seem to be “ important” they are sent to the thalamus to be acted upon. (Comer) It is obvious that if the filter (the caudate nuclei) is not functioning properly then unnecessary impulses will be sent to the thalamus for further thinking and unnecessary actions will be made. Some antidepressant medications that increase serotonin activity have been found to improve cases of OCD. (Comer) People who develop OCD have been known to blame themselves for their compulsions, obsessions, and antagonizing thoughts.

They have anxiety caused by thinking something bad will happen if they don't perform these actions. People with OCD also experienced depression brought on by the constant thoughts and needing perfection. One form of treatment for this cognitive problem would be to attempt to neutralize the thoughts. Neutralizing is “ a person's attempt to eliminate unwanted thoughts by thinking or behaving in ways that put matters right internally, making up for the unacceptable thoughts. (Comer)

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is a very common anxiety disorder, which causes people to have repetitive unwanted thoughts and actions. It varies in its severity but in most cases it is treatable. The most popular forms and

most effective forms of treatment are medication and therapy. There are many theories on causal factors but none to be proven yet. References Berger, F. K. (2012, March 03). Obsessive-compulsive disorder. Retrieved from [www. ncbi. nlm. nih. gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) Comer, R. J. (2013). Abnormal psychology. (8th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers