



Liz McIngvale

Adversity: Diagnosed with severe OCD in her teens

Advocacy: Created Peace of Mind Foundation to support others with OCD

“When you hear one person say you’ve changed their life, it makes you forget all the hard times involved.”

Liz McIngvale never wanted her Obsessive Compulsive Disorder to define who she is – but after appearances on CNN, “Dr. Phil,” “Good Morning America” and other TV shows, it was hard for her to avoid being identified by the condition. “At first, I wanted my story to help people. Then, oh boy, did they really want to follow me around? At times it was really difficult. To this day, if you Google my name, you can find my stories on OCD.” Those stories begin when Liz was 12 and exhibited her first contamination fears and ritual behaviors. She had fears about something bad happening to the ones she loved, of copying a friend by wearing the same outfit, and many more. She would ask her mother what she calls “bizarre” reassurance questions, touch items a certain number of times, wash her hands repeatedly and shower for hours – rituals that filled up 15 to 20 hours of her day. After returning from a seventh-grade camping trip – where her OCD became extremely apparent – Liz broke down and her mother, for the first time, realized the severity of her

OCD. They sought help, but Houston-area doctors said they had never seen as extreme of a case and deemed her condition too severe to be treated.

Liz and her family kept up the search for treatment, however, and at age 15 she found help at the Menninger Clinic, a residential treatment facility at the time located in Topeka, Kansas. There, she was surrounded by others with OCD, some with worse cases, some with different cases, but all of whom understood what she was going through. She was grateful for the treatment and the camaraderie, and it was then that her passion to help others with this illness began to be formed. Shortly after, while attending her first OCD conference, she saw how many people needed OCD treatment but didn’t have the available funds. She wanted to share her story and let them know they were not alone. At age 18, Liz became the national spokesperson for the IOCDF. She has since gone on to earn a master’s degree in Social Work from Loyola University of Chicago and is due to receive her doctorate from the University of Houston in late 2012. She currently is a licensed therapist in Texas and Pennsylvania. “For me, as much as it has been extremely difficult to go public about such a private matter – and to open up my life makes me vulnerable – the first email you get saying ‘You changed my life’ makes it all worth it.”

Advocacy Links

- [The International OCD Foundation](#)
- [Peace of Mind Foundation](#)
- [The OCD Challenge](#)
- [MHA Houston](#)

In the News

- [Good Morning America](#)
- [CNBC](#)
- [Scientific American](#)
- [Houston Chronicle](#)

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