



# The Imp of the Mind: Exploring the Silent Epidemic of Obsessive Bad Thoughts

By Lee Baer

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**A leading expert on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder explores the hidden epidemic that afflicts millions of Americans.**

In the first book to fully examine obsessive bad thoughts, Dr. Lee Baer combines the latest research with his own extensive experience in treating this widespread syndrome. Drawing on information ranging from new advances in brain technology to pervasive social taboos, Dr. Baer explores the root causes of bad thoughts, why they can spiral out of control, and how to recognize the crucial difference between harmless and dangerous bad thoughts.

An illuminating and accessible guide to the kinds of thoughts that create extreme fear, guilt, and worry, *The Imp of the Mind* provides concrete solutions to a tormenting and debilitating disorder. Including special sections on the prescription medications that have proven effective, it is "a beautifully written book that can be a great help to people who want to know what to do about obsessions" (Isaac Marks, M.D., author of *Living with Fear: Understanding and Coping with Anxiety*).

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## **The Imp of the Mind: Exploring the Silent Epidemic of Obsessive Bad Thoughts** By Lee Baer **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder, psychologist Baer (an associate professor at Harvard) turns the spotlight on a little-known but common form of obsession, "bad thoughts." According to Baer, these "intrusive" thoughts fall into a few basic types: violent, sexual and blasphemous words, and images of a religious nature. Borrowing from Edgar Allan Poe, Baer blames such mental torment on "the imp of the perverse," that little devil inhabiting all human minds, cross-culturally and across time, "who makes you think the most inappropriate thoughts at the most inappropriate times." For most people, the imp proves no more than a "fleeting annoyance" most of the time, but for Baer's patients, these impish thoughts create extreme fear, guilt and worry. Attempting to suppress them only makes them stronger, leading the afflicted to avoid places, people and situations that provoke them. A new mother who obsessively thinks about harming her infant, for example, may increasingly avoid daily caretaking activities. Tending to be perfectionist and "overly conscientious," these people are highly unlikely ever to act on their bad thoughts, Baer explains. The most successful treatment, he says, involves desensitizing individuals by increasingly (and safely) exposing them to the situations that provoke their "bad thoughts"; cognitive therapy is also helpful for many patients. Finally, such prescription drugs as serotonin reuptake inhibitors, like Prozac, have also proved highly effective in the treatment of this disorder. With an easy-to-read style, Baer offers a comprehensive and accessible look at this fascinating topic. (Jan. 15)

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Review

"One of the most creative and lucid thinkers in the area of OCD... A marvelous book for the millions who suffer from painful thoughts."—**Michael A. Jenike, M.D., professor of psychiatry, Harvard Medical School**

"Baer provides a compassionate and understanding voice for millions of people."—**Chicago Tribune**

### Praise for *Getting Control*

"One of the world's leading experts on obsessive-compulsive disorder and on methods of self-help. This excellent third edition includes recent advances in the assessment and treatment of this disorder. Sufferers, relatives, and friends can benefit greatly from reading this book."—**Isaac Marks, M.D., FRCPsych, author of *Living with Fear***

"Very few clinicians are as experienced as Dr. Baer in the treatment of OCD."—**Sabine Wilhelm, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School; director, OCD and Related Disorder Program, Massachusetts General Hospital**

About the Author

**Lee Baer, Ph.D.**, is an internationally recognized expert in the treatment of OCD and related disorders. Author of *Getting Control: Overcoming Your Obsessions and Compulsions* and *The Imp of the Mind*, Baer is an associate professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School and the director of research of the OCD unit at Massachusetts General Hospital as well as of the OCD Institute at McLean Hospital.

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