Living with "maybe"

Answering OCD's doubts with "maybe" in place of reassurance.

OCD asks questions that cannot be answered with certainty, then demands that you answer them. Every reassuring reply invites another "but what if". The way out is to stop trying to answer, and to agree that you do not know.

Three kinds of reply

Reply	Example	What happens
Reassuring	"No, of course I locked it."	Relief for a moment, then "but are you sure?"
Arguing	"I checked twice, so it must be locked because..."	A long debate that OCD always wins
Agreeing with uncertainty	"Maybe I did, maybe I did not. I am not going to check."	Anxiety rises, then fades. OCD has nothing to push against.

Phrases to practise

- "Maybe, maybe not."
- "I cannot know for sure, and I am going to get on with my day."
- "That is possible. I will take the risk."
- "Thanks, mind. Noted."

Say them plainly. No sarcasm, no hidden reassurance, no checking to see if you feel better. Then turn back to what you were doing.

Try it

The doubt OCD brings me most often

My "maybe" statement for it

When I practised this, what happened to the urge?

This is hard at first. It gets easier quickly with repetition.

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