

Four-Way Test Essay

961 Words

Have you ever caused harm to yourself or thought of yourself as 'mentally sick'? Well, neither have I. Unfortunately, many teens in recent years have begun to suffer from mental illnesses ranging from depression to anorexia. Unwittingly, I participated in a behavior that planted the seed of an unacceptable habit. Growing up without a father and an abusive mother caused me psychological trauma. I am diagnosed with trichotillomania, anxiety disorder, OCD, and depression. Trichotillomania is an OCD and anxiety linked disorder where the sufferer feels the need to pull bodily hair because of stress, anxiety, sadness, anger, excitement, loneliness, or frustration. Many times throughout my early childhood I would find myself thinking "Why did this happen? Why was I given this life? Why can't I be like everyone else?" but most of all "Why me?". After much thought on these concepts and a thorough review of the Four-Way Test questions, 'Is it the truth?', 'Is it fair to all concerned?', 'Will it build goodwill and better friendships?', and 'Will it be beneficial to all concerned?', I have realized that my conditions do not control me. I control them. This knowledge plays a crucial part of who I am today.

Is it the truth? In all sincerity, I feel that this made me stronger as an individual. Rather than hiding, I can now lift my head up without embarrassment. On the occasions in which someone asks me "Why?" or points out a missing section of hair, I can inform them about just what trichotillomania is. Once, a female peer asked me what had happened to a missing patch of eyelashes. I expressed to her how this ailment effects me. Another time, a male peer asked what was wrong with me and why I didn't "just stop". I was able to use this opportunity to explain what happened in my earlier childhood and described how it effects me to the present day. I used to consider my situation something that made me abnormal, irrational, or even insane. Now, I use it to familiarize others with this disorder and many more. I hope that by helping others

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understand this disease, I can shed a bit of light on what this illness is about and how it truly effects people in the real world.

Is it fair to all concerned? While I do educate others whenever I can, I do not put it on the table for everyone passing by to see. If a peer feels the need to ask about it, then I will gladly inform them! This can also help others to relate to me or to find me more approachable as a person. If I explain what is happening, then we can find similar aspects in both of our lives together. We could talk about certain aspects in our lives that only others who are going through the same circumstance understand. Doing this makes me more approachable because once I start to talk to them, I may seem friendly, have similar qualities as them, have a similar home life, or maybe they just need someone to talk to. It also raises awareness to those who choose to ask. I'd be giving a face, an image to these mental disorders. Being real with others is important also. Hiding behind a mask for an entire life is unhealthy. By showing my vulnerability, maybe whomever I'm talking to might just relax and forget the stress and struggle of being someone they are not for a little while.

Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Ironically, the force that used to drive people away, now makes me friends. I have made at least two friends because of their curiosity. One wanted to know why I pulled my eyelashes. I explained the psychological trauma of an abusive mother. We were then able to relate to each other with the subject of our abusive mothers. We would then go on to be the type of friends who told each other deeper secrets. The other related to me with the topic of depression and anxiety. She wanted to know why I had pulled them out approximately two days before a large test. I shared that I do it whenever I am under an extreme amount of anxiety. She understood how I felt and expressed how she deals with stress. This led to deep conversations of depression, home life, different disorders, and

heavier secrets. This was eventually one of the closest friendships that I have ever had. At times, we would confide in each other for mental support. I can now say that I have made five secure friends from trichotillomania.

Will it be beneficial to all concerned? Those who ask clearly have some variety of interest. I feel that those who ask, walk away from me with more insight on what is truly happening in the world. Trichotillomania is rare. Only 2% of the population is diagnosed each year. By seeing this in someone they know, they experience the feeling of growing up a little bit.

By dissecting the Four-Way Test questions as well as my own, I can come to resolve that trichotillomania does not make me abnormal. It does not make me a freak. It has made me build hope for myself and made me a stronger person. I realize that incorporating these questions into modern-day life can be difficult and trying. Yet, after evaluating what these questions mean in my personal life, I feel like my life has a deeper value than what I once thought. I can assure myself that these 'illnesses' don't make me any different from anyone else. They bring me closer to them. I believe that those who I have connected with over these disorders would gladly stand up to support me.