

# Perry Noble's Overwhelmed book is dishonest and dangerous 47

Perry Noble has garnered himself a lot of [positive press](#) lately for his acknowledgement that he takes antidepressants to deal with his long-term depression. I assumed that the antidepressant news was a teaser for a more detailed account of his decision in the book.

Not so.

Perry Noble's book on dealing with depression contains not a single reference or acknowledgement to his decision to take antidepressant drugs. Amazon's "Look Inside" feature allows you to read excerpts from Noble's book, though it also lets you do word searches on the entire text, and shows a sentence or two surrounding those words. I did searches for words like *antidepressant*, *depression*, *medicine*, *prescription*, *doctor* and found nothing that indicated that Noble either considered or decided to start taking prescription medicine for his depression.



Perry Noble wants to teach you how to have good mental health

Wary that I might have missed something, I asked NewSpring's public relations director about it, and she confirmed that the *Overwhelmed* book does not mention Noble's antidepressant use.

This is an astonishing omission, especially knowing that Noble suffered severe depressive episodes *while he was writing the book* that necessitated consultations with his doctor who prescribed the pharmaceutical help that he needed.

Here's what he said in his [blog post](#), with emphasis added:

**As I began the writing process** the feelings of anxiety and worry began to slowly slither back into my life like a snake sneaking up on it's prey. I remember

writing a chapter in the book, driving home and having a panic attack in my living room.

About three days later I took my daughter to a restaurant for lunch and found myself feeling like I could not breathe and that the walls were closing in on me.

What was going on?

I thought I was done with this, that I had whipped it and that **I was going to be able to tell my story** and inspire other people to do the same.

But...that wasn't the case. Anxiety was a fight, and I was losing.

**I called my doctor** and we had a long talk about my options. He spoke to me honestly and openly about anti-depressants. When he first mentioned them I blew him off; after all, I had defeated this one time without the “drugs for weaklings” and figured I could do it again.

However, the anxiety in my life **continued to increase** to such an extent that I distinctly remember calling him one afternoon and telling him I could not take it anymore and that **I needed something to help me.**

I can honestly say that making the decision to **take an anti-depressant during this time period** in my life has been one of THE BEST decisions I have ever made.

It is obvious from this account that Noble began taking the antidepressants *while he was writing the book*. His depressive episodes were worsening as he was giving advice on how to deal with them. [As I've said before](#), I'm glad that Noble is getting professional medical help, so my criticism is not of him or others who rely on medication for mental health issues. The problem is that he *hides* the ultimate source of his help from readers of his book, and that is profoundly dishonest. How can he accept money from needy readers who expect his book to help them through their own depression when one of “THE BEST” decisions he has ever made is kept from them?

Not only that, but the advice in the book directly contradicts Noble's actions and words.

Compare:

### **Perry Noble's Overwhelmed Book**

Is there a way to reduce the stress and anxiety in our lives so we don't have to walk around in a medicated, zombie-like state of mind?

If that's the case for you [struggling with depression], I would simply encourage you to read your Bible.

If God can bring me through the three painful years of depression I went through, then God can bring you through whatever you're experiencing too.

### **Perry Noble's Real Life**

I also believe in the miracle of modern medicine and am very thankful for it. The brain is an organ in the body, just like the heart or lungs or the liver. If there was a pill I could take to make my heart, lungs, or liver more healthy but refused to, people would call me irresponsible. Why not apply that same logic to the brain?

The church has used, “pray and read your Bible more” as a “cure” for anxiety and depression for far too long.

I remember the very first time I ever had to deal with someone who told me they were struggling with anxiety and depression. I did not understand and could not relate—so, I told them what I thought was the typical “Christian” answer to all problems...they should pray more, read their Bible more and memorize more Scripture.

The book seems blissfully unaware of Noble’s actual life, though so does his recent preaching. NewSpring’s [summary](#) of his sermon last Sunday taught that “Healing will never be found in another ... pill,” yet his antidepressent [blog announcement](#) touted the healing power of pills:

[If] you went to the doctor and he said, “here is a pill you can take to fix the problem,” you would be considered negligent and insane for not taking the medicine.... If you would take a pill to cure the liver then why would you not do the same for the brain?

What makes *Overwhelmed* especially dishonest is that it’s based on Noble’s personal experience, so it doesn’t claim to be an objective or scholarly evaluation of the spiritual, physical and psychological aspects of depression. He tells us, “After a lot of prayer I decided to write a book about my battle and what I learned about Jesus and His faithfulness.”

Here’s the thing. Even while Noble was thinking most intently and clearly about what he understands about Jesus and his faithfulness as it relates to depression, that very thinking was insufficient to keep him stable. When you write a biographical advice book, the reader ought to be able to assume that the advice actually worked for the author. In

Noble's case, it didn't, yet he, his church, his publisher and his famous friends continue to promote it as a life-changing book. For example, [Noble quotes](#) Brian Houston's endorsement of the book:

My friend, Perry Noble, shares his honest struggle and ultimate victory over his battle with depression and anxiety; and I believe that because of his story, because of his relationship with Christ and because of the grace of God, you can see these principles bring freedom to every area of your life.

Mark Batterson also praised Noble's helpful honesty:

Perry Noble speaks openly and honestly about his battle with depression and how it IS possible to overcome in his book *Overwhelmed*. I've known Perry for some time and appreciate his willingness to be so open and honest in order to help see people find hope.

Maybe Houston and Batterson don't know that their praise is based on an incomplete truth, but Noble does. The advice in the book did not bring Noble victory over depression, which means that the principles in it are unlikely to bring anyone else freedom, either.

Integrity required that Noble should have called the publisher and told them that he needed to either cancel the book or rewrite it. At the end of one of his chapters, he imitates transparency by assuring the reader: "I need to be honest with you as I conclude this chapter. The battle over depression still rages in me at times." His honesty is selective. Transparency would have produced a sentence like, "I need to be honest with you as I conclude this chapter. Most of what I have said is horsefeathers. The battle over depression still rages in me at times, and when it does, I find it best to put this book down, see my doctor and take my medicine."

As part of his antidepressant blog post, Noble talks about how he sometimes felt suicidal, which means that he is intentionally marketing his story to other people who are suffering from similar self-destructive impulses. That's not something you take lightly. We're talking about life and death, yet he is inviting them to pay him for advice that he knows doesn't work. By Noble's [own standards](#), that's not just insane, it's

negligent.

In the last few weeks we've been dealing with publishing scandals that focused on actions that wasted a lot of money inflating pastors' egos and bank accounts.

*Overwhelmed* is a publishing scandal of a higher order, though. Noble and his publishers are selling advice that they know is incomplete and ineffective, and they're marketing it to people who are potentially suicidal. This is a book that can kill.

Noble ought to recall the book from stores and refuse to offer it for sale until he rewrites it to address the helpful role of medicine or adds a warning label to the cover. Something like,

**This book may be hazardous to your health, as it was to its author. If this advice doesn't work for you, as is likely, you should consult a medical professional who is qualified to help you.**