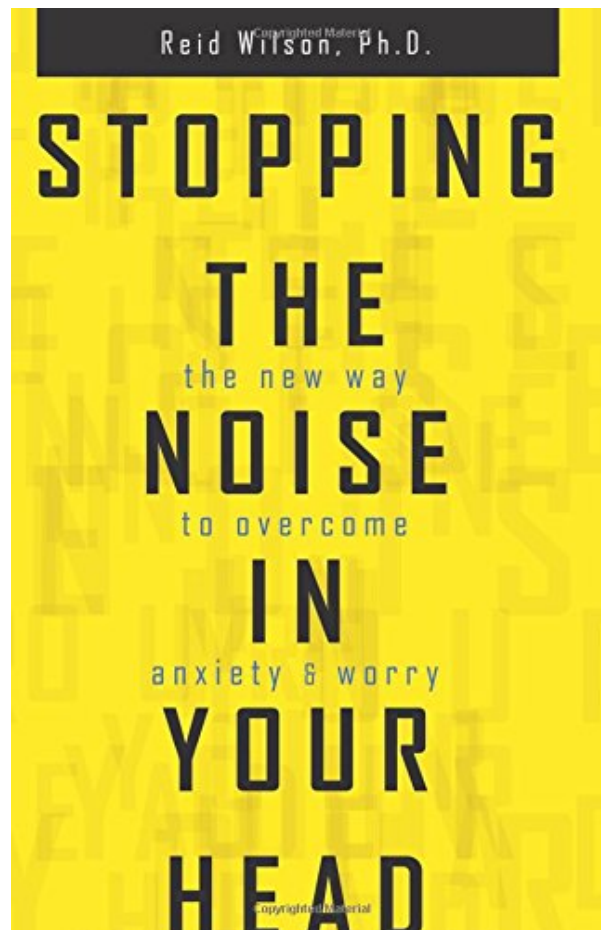


STOPPING THE NOISE IN YOUR HEAD BY REID WILSON



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STOPPING

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the new way

NOISE

to overcome

IN

anxiety & worry

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HEAD

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Two-Headed Worry

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Various resources helped produce the book you're holding in your hands?investments such as time, research, years of study and practice, drafts, proposals, and perhaps 4,000 cups of various forms of caffeine?and among all of those was worry. My worry shows up in one of two forms: either incredibly helpful . . . or dreadfully bothersome.

When I continually remind myself that I should be working on this project, and yet I don't set aside time to focus on it, I use up part of my consciousness fretting because I'm not getting around to the task. I experience a combination of guilt (that I'm not being productive enough) and worry (that I am making a mistake by not addressing the project at this very moment), both wrapped up in a tidy little package padded with a thick layer of self-criticism.

When the task is my writing, it sounds a bit like this: 'Geez, I gotta get focused on writing the book. I gotta be more efficient with my time. I gotta stop doing these little productive things and focus on the big productive stuff. And I gotta find a synonym for gotta.' And then, 'If I don't devote time and energy to this, it'll never get done. I waste so much time during the day. I need to start focusing. I should do all of these things today . . . simultaneously.' This is not a loud noise in my head, mind you. It's more like a kind of muttering. It gnaws away at me in the background and brings a taste of unhappiness into my mental palette each day.

Here's the other way my worry works, and this I highly recommend. The thought pops up again: 'I gotta get back to working on the book if I'm ever going to get it done.' But this time it's wired into my disposition about this project. It's important to me, I want to accomplish it, and I absolutely want to devote time in the immediate future to work on it. I can use that thought as a signal to move into action. Relatively quickly I shift into problem-solving mode: I decide when I'm going to set aside a chunk of time, and I literally mark off that half day or so in my calendar.

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Granted, worry isn't the only way I get myself to work. Lucky for me, most of the time I feel inspired about my day. I have interesting projects that motivate me, and I can keep my attention focused on the positive outcomes I want from my creative efforts. (The caffeine helps too.)

But juggling and prioritizing tasks is not smooth sailing for any of us. Worry helps us through the rough waters by motivating us to stay on task and solve problems both big and small in our lives. Very simply, I would not want to lose the benefits of worry. But I also don't want to kick around in the wading pool of worry. I want to dive into the deep end and tackle the real challenges in life.

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Some degree of worry is actually good for us, for it can help jump-start us out of our denial, and it can drive us to prioritize our tasks. Most important, worry is designed to be an initial response, as Step One in the problem-solving process. It should initiate our efforts to find solutions by triggering our analytic process: evaluating the current situation, generating response options, choosing among them, selecting one, and then implementing it. When this progression works well, we get to conclude our analysis with a message like, 'I'm worried about finishing this project, and now I'm going to take action. This is how I'm going to get it done?here's my plan.' See, that's the usefulness of worry.

We bastardize the process when we operate as though worry is the problem-solving process. We keep naming the problem over and over again without productively addressing solutions. We say, 'I've got to get this done. If I don't get it done, I'll be in trouble. I'm not sure I'm going to make it.' During stressful times?if our steady income seems threatened, if an unfamiliar physical symptom is persisting, if a son begins driving or a daughter begins dating?most of us fret a little too much. It's as though worry becomes our talisman to ward off the trouble, the mistakes, the dangers. We believe that if we can just worry enough, we will come up with ways to prevent the bad things from happening. We feel threatened, so we operate as though all this thinking will protect us from committing any errors of judgment, and that it will ensure we make the right choice. Then once we decide on a plan of action, we worry as a way to verify that it's the right action, which really becomes a process of second-guessing our decisions.

But we have it wrong. Worry isn't supposed to solve problems. Its job is to generate problems in the front of our minds so we know what to fix. And it causes us to think more about how things might go wrong than about how to correct difficulties. After all, one way to avoid trouble is to imagine ourselves in that trouble! Imagine you are late for an appointment and driving in a rush. As you approach the traffic light, it turns yellow. You momentarily consider taking the risk of running through the light, because that will save you precious minutes. Then up pops an image of things going really badly for you and others in the middle of that intersection. You immediately act on your instantaneous decision to stop. That's worry at its best.

What happens if we don't place our worries within the problem-solving process? When we start paying a high emotional cost for unnecessary worry, and when our worries pop up in our minds too frequently, then

those thoughts hurt us. Worry leads to anxiety. The more we worry, the more anxious we will become, whether it's about family, financial issues, work or school, or illness. If we don't address this type of worry and find ways to control it, we will continue to be anxious.

And worry will absolutely inhibit our performance. During any project, we should focus our attention on the task. But when our attention keeps getting redirected toward unhelpful worry, we become self-absorbed. 'How will I do? What if I fail? That will be too painful for me. Must avoid failure!' These are compelling thoughts, and anyone would have trouble disengaging from them. But if you want your inner resources available for the activities you value, you need to find a way.

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Of course, worry can be an important asset when it forces our attention on problem-solving. But anxious worrying can cause us to unnecessarily focus on threat, to retreat and avoid, and to seek reassurance and safety?which is no way to foster a life of growth and excitement. In his fifth published book, Dr. Reid Wilson proposes a groundbreaking, paradoxical approach to overcoming anxiety and worry by moving away from comfort, confidence, and security and willingly moving toward uncertainty, distress and discomfort. Through the use of unconventional strategies, readers will learn how to confront anxiety head-on and step forward into the face of threat. Drawing on a range of sources?from firefighters and fitness instructors to Sir Isaac Newton and Muhammad Ali?Stopping the Noise in Your Head demonstrates the importance of shifting our perspective and stepping toward our challenges in order to regain control of our lives.

- Sales Rank: #21236 in Books
- Published on: 2016-05-03
- Released on: 2016-05-03
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .80" h x 5.50" w x 8.40" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 384 pages

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Exposure Prevention with Excitement and Desire

By Nancy L.

This review is long due (well it can't be that long due if the book came out a month ago), long due in a way that it needs to be on the Amazon site visible to people who are suffering from anxiety and are contemplating to buy this or not. My best advice? **BUY THIS NOW, IN AUDIO FORMAT. RIGHT NOW.** I have been suffering from OCD since age of 17. I've been in inpatient programs, the one I went to was regarded as the best in America. I went through years of doing better, had some relapses, and then was able to pick myself back up every time using exposure exercises and the things I've learned from the program, without medications (I have tried 17 medications and none of them helped). In 2013, I had a major relapse and not even exposures were working and I went on the drug Memantine (the 18th drug I've tried) and it worked amazingly for 2.5 years. Unfortunately, this February of 2016, I have another major relapse. This time, I believe, the Memantine has "pooped out". I resumed the exposure exercises from 1 hour per day to two hours a day with no avail. I went to OCD support sites and people only responded with statements such as "you must be not doing exposures right" or "you are not working hard enough". I knew I was doing it right and I was working super hard because I was able to get out of all the prior relapses before 2013 doing

exposures. I was devastated and hopeless. Memantine and exposures were my only tools to beat OCD and neither of them were working. I have been following Dr. Reid's videos and books over the years and I've always gained insights from his work, and when I heard his new book was coming out, I placed an early kindle order before it even came out. By May, I got an email saying I can now have access to it. I was nervous, what if it's stuff I already knew? What if I'm wasting another \$14 on something I could have googled myself? Most importantly, am I going to be disappointed? I read the first 3 chapters on Kindle, and immediately, I bought the audio version so I could listen to it before bed, when my intrusive thoughts are the worst. Dr. Reid made it very easy to understand what are the steps to get out of the never-ending torture cycle. This book is not ERP-heavy like other OCD books, which works for me since exposures haven't work for me in the past few years. (worked for 10 years prior, and I have no idea why exposures stopped working) Instead, it really focuses more on moment-by-moment and constant vigilance in living with OCD. This book made me, someone with PURE O, who ruminates on every intrusive thoughts realize that no matter how much exposures I do, if I do not respond appropriately when an intrusive thought arise, then all exposures done will surely be wasted; and that's why exposures haven't been working, because I am not responding with the right tactics when thoughts arise. For people who are suffering Pure O, the VERY true exposures are done are when the intrusive thoughts hit. Exposures exercises are great, but scripts are written up; it's how you react when the intrusive thoughts hit that really matters. By responding correctly and using "right tactics", I can not explain it thoroughly here since it will take pages but you can buy the book and find out ', but I can briefly shorten it: Exposure response prevention is important, but without the right attitude and tactics, the feelings of uneasiness will linger. (Those with Pure O definitely know what I mean). After reading this book, I have come to believe that to beat OCD, it should be Exposure Response Prevention with Excitement and Desire, instead of just Exposure Response Prevention. I have went from ritualizing from every second of the day to only 1 hour a day from using what Dr. Reid suggested. All his suggestions are backed up my scientific studies. When you are like me and had nothing to lose, you will try anything. I trusted Dr. Reid and I followed what he suggested diligently and my decrease of hours in ritualizing is the result of reading/listening to this book. Even though I am just N=1, I am positive that this can help others. You can suffer less, "Exposure Prevention with Excitement and Desire", sounds bizarre but it will make sense after you are done with this book. Good luck. No one needs to suffer (that bad).

Addendum: This book is NOT specifically for just OCD, it covered different kinds of anxiety issues. My review made it seem it's only for OCD, it's not.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Highly recommended

By curtis3

Dr. Reid Wilson's book will help you to understand how anxiety works and will teach you strategies that when practiced, will help you to find freedom from anxiety.

Reading the book is like having Dr. Wilson as your personal coach. He will teach you 4 basic strategies: 1) learn how to tell the difference between good worry (signal) and worthless anxiety (Noise), 2) How to use a paradoxical mindset ("I want this") to shift your attitude toward your threats and doubts , 3) Stepping Forward into the challenge and 4) Be Cunning.

Each section is extremely helpful and will help you in its own right, but of course, you'll be the most prepared if you apply the wisdom of all 4.

Personally, I found the paradoxical mindset of "I want this", to be the most intriguing, difficult, but effective skill to practice. I guess it wouldn't be paradoxical if it was so obvious. Practicing "i want this" keeps me positive and helps me to keep from retreating in the face of uncertainty.

I highly recommend Stopping the Noise in Your Head. The concepts are simple but effective.

May everyone that works at being proficient with the knowledge contained in this book, find the freedom to get your life back.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

It's a slow read, a book that one would ...

By Amazon Customer

It's a slow read, a book that one would read a chapter at a time, and give yourself time to think about what you just read.

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Worry Works for Me

Where would we be without our worries? How would the dishes get done, children get fed, bills get paid? With all that we have going on in our lives, how would the floors get swept, homework get done, birthday cards get mailed on time? How would we get enough sleep each night unless we worried about not getting enough sleep?

Perhaps there's some truth in all that (save the bit about sleeping?I'm fairly certain worry won't help with that). Our worries serve a purpose in our daily lives. They aren't just instruments of torture.

I imagine when you purchased this book you assumed that I'm here to help you defeat and cast out your worries, to provide the tools you need to kick that worry addiction once and for all. But the truth is that worry and I have a love-hate relationship. Not unlike my relationship with chocolate-covered almonds

(dark). I've had to set some serious boundaries and limitations with these pleasures. The desire for almonds pops into my mind from time to time, and I have to respond. 'Look here,' I say in a stern voice, 'there is a time and a place for chocolate-covered almonds (dark), and right now, in the middle of a conference in Austria, is neither the time nor the place.'

When worry plays a role in helping us to solve our problems, it does a fantastic job. (Just like when the almond-to-dark-chocolate ratio is more like 3:1 than 1:1.) So I want you to love worry when it serves you. But when it becomes a bothersome noise in your head, it has no redeeming value and you need to kick it to the curb.

Two-Headed Worry

I have spent most of my thirty-five-year career working with anxious clients. When people ask what drew me to this field, one of my playful answers is, 'It takes one to treat one.' And I guess that's right. Although I have never had an anxiety disorder, I sure know how to worry. In fact, I am skilled at generating lots of bad feelings alongside many wonderful feelings. I can distinctly remember a moment in college when I concluded that I was likely to be a lifelong expert at generating worrisome thoughts. I figured that the best way to keep track of my own mental health was to make psychology my profession.

Various resources helped produce the book you're holding in your hands?investments such as time, research, years of study and practice, drafts, proposals, and perhaps 4,000 cups of various forms of caffeine?and among all of those was worry. My worry shows up in one of two forms: either incredibly helpful . . . or dreadfully bothersome.

When I continually remind myself that I should be working on this project, and yet I don't set aside time to focus on it, I use up part of my consciousness fretting because I'm not getting around to the task. I experience a combination of guilt (that I'm not being productive enough) and worry (that I am making a mistake by not addressing the project at this very moment), both wrapped up in a tidy little package padded with a thick layer of self-criticism.

When the task is my writing, it sounds a bit like this: 'Geez, I gotta get focused on writing the book. I gotta be more efficient with my time. I gotta stop doing these little productive things and focus on the big productive stuff. And I gotta find a synonym for gotta.' And then, 'If I don't devote time and energy to this, it'll never get done. I waste so much time during the day. I need to start focusing. I should do all of these things today . . . simultaneously.' This is not a loud noise in my head, mind you. It's more like a kind of muttering. It gnaws away at me in the background and brings a taste of unhappiness into my mental palette each day.

Here's the other way my worry works, and this I highly recommend. The thought pops up again: 'I gotta get back to working on the book if I'm ever going to get it done.' But this time it's wired into my disposition about this project. It's important to me, I want to accomplish it, and I absolutely want to devote time in the immediate future to work on it. I can use that thought as a signal to move into action. Relatively quickly I shift into problem-solving mode: I decide when I'm going to set aside a chunk of time, and I literally mark off that half day or so in my calendar.

Did you notice how I just said, 'Relatively quickly I shift into problem-solving mode'? That happens on a really, really good day. Usually it's somewhere between 'You'd better get back to work!' and 'I'll mark off some time soon.'

Granted, worry isn't the only way I get myself to work. Lucky for me, most of the time I feel inspired about my day. I have interesting projects that motivate me, and I can keep my attention focused on the positive

outcomes I want from my creative efforts. (The caffeine helps too.)

But juggling and prioritizing tasks is not smooth sailing for any of us. Worry helps us through the rough waters by motivating us to stay on task and solve problems both big and small in our lives. Very simply, I would not want to lose the benefits of worry. But I also don't want to kick around in the wading pool of worry. I want to dive into the deep end and tackle the real challenges in life.

How about you?

Worry Works

Worry, of course, has long been critical to our survival. Our cavemen ancestors who took leisurely strolls down by the stream, enjoying the pleasures of a beautiful fall morning, were eaten by the saber-toothed tigers (dinosaurs were mainly vegetarians). Their genes were lost. Our paranoid, there-could-be-danger-around-any-corner, defender-of-the-family-tribe ancestors lived to procreate, passing on to us that ever-present protective mode of worry.

Some degree of worry is actually good for us, for it can help jump-start us out of our denial, and it can drive us to prioritize our tasks. Most important, worry is designed to be an initial response, as Step One in the problem-solving process. It should initiate our efforts to find solutions by triggering our analytic process: evaluating the current situation, generating response options, choosing among them, selecting one, and then implementing it. When this progression works well, we get to conclude our analysis with a message like, 'I'm worried about finishing this project, and now I'm going to take action. This is how I'm going to get it done?here's my plan.' See, that's the usefulness of worry.

We bastardize the process when we operate as though worry is the problem-solving process. We keep naming the problem over and over again without productively addressing solutions. We say, 'I've got to get this done. If I don't get it done, I'll be in trouble. I'm not sure I'm going to make it.' During stressful times?if our steady income seems threatened, if an unfamiliar physical symptom is persisting, if a son begins driving or a daughter begins dating?most of us fret a little too much. It's as though worry becomes our talisman to ward off the trouble, the mistakes, the dangers. We believe that if we can just worry enough, we will come up with ways to prevent the bad things from happening. We feel threatened, so we operate as though all this thinking will protect us from committing any errors of judgment, and that it will ensure we make the right choice. Then once we decide on a plan of action, we worry as a way to verify that it's the right action, which really becomes a process of second-guessing our decisions.

But we have it wrong. Worry isn't supposed to solve problems. Its job is to generate problems in the front of our minds so we know what to fix. And it causes us to think more about how things might go wrong than about how to correct difficulties. After all, one way to avoid trouble is to imagine ourselves in that trouble! Imagine you are late for an appointment and driving in a rush. As you approach the traffic light, it turns yellow. You momentarily consider taking the risk of running through the light, because that will save you precious minutes. Then up pops an image of things going really badly for you and others in the middle of that intersection. You immediately act on your instantaneous decision to stop. That's worry at its best.

What happens if we don't place our worries within the problem-solving process? When we start paying a high emotional cost for unnecessary worry, and when our worries pop up in our minds too frequently, then those thoughts hurt us. Worry leads to anxiety. The more we worry, the more anxious we will become, whether it's about family, financial issues, work or school, or illness. If we don't address this type of worry and find ways to control it, we will continue to be anxious.

And worry will absolutely inhibit our performance. During any project, we should focus our attention on the

task. But when our attention keeps getting redirected toward unhelpful worry, we become self-absorbed. 'How will I do? What if I fail? That will be too painful for me. Must avoid failure!' These are compelling thoughts, and anyone would have trouble disengaging from them. But if you want your inner resources available for the activities you value, you need to find a way.

That's what this book is for. Yes, worry serves an essential function by helping us solve legitimate problems, and in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 we will discuss that. But through the rest of the book, we will look at times when anxious worrying disturbs us instead of helps us. We are going to study problematic worry and how we limit our successes in service of this dominant challenger. Then I will show you how to win that challenge.

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