

I n t r o d u c t i o n

“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.”

— ROMANS 7:15 NIV

Escape from Neverland.

What are the nevers?

THE NEVERS are the things we thought we'd never do or never experience. They could be a situation you never thought you'd be in, or a place you never imagined you'd be. We've all got them.

You've most likely heard the phrase, “Never say never.” Have you said or thought that for yourself?

There are two types of Nevers. First are the good Nevers; the ones you'd like to put on your resume, the ones you've accomplished that make you feel proud and allow you to shine like a star. For example, you never thought that you'd graduate from a particular school with a 4.0 GPA, but you did! You never thought that you'd be hired for a particular position, but you were! Or, let's say you set out to run a marathon, never dreaming that you had what it takes to qualify for the Boston Marathon, but you did! These are good Nevers. With hard work, determination, and desire, we can accomplish the good Nevers, things that we thought were out of our reach, things we believed might be too good to be true, or that we were incapable of achieving. Accomplishing good Nevers brings us great satisfaction, joy, confidence, accolades, pride, excitement, and strength. We want to share these Nevers with others. They are empowering and can serve as platforms to achieve other great things. They are rewarding.

Then there are the other Nevers – the negative Nevers. These are ones you'd rather erase from your mind, press the delete button on, and run away from. You never thought that you'd get divorced, but you did. You never thought that you would get an abortion, but you did. You never thought you would become a victim of rape, but you were. You never dreamed that you would find yourself in an abusive relationship, but you're in one. You never thought that you would need to lose 200 lbs., but you do. You never thought that you'd be 45 years old and without a job, losing your home, and

drowning in debt, but you are. These are negative Nevers. They come with feelings of regret, embarrassment, insecurity, guilt, and shame. They can become stumbling blocks and obstacles in our lives. They are troubling.

The Nevers that we will focus on in this book are the ones that stem from our list of disappointments and mishaps; the “bad things” that we’d hoped not to experience, not to do; the negatives.

Where do the Nevers come from?

The Nevers don’t come out of nowhere. We’re all born into a family of some kind or another. Some of us are raised by our biological birth parents. Some of us are adopted. Stepparents or grandparents raise some of us. Whoever we’re raised by, whoever has the most impact in our lives – it could be older brothers and sisters, it could be pastors or teachers – in all cases we’re instructed on what to do and what not to do. We learn, gain knowledge, and are influenced by these people in our world.

As we grow up and move through our life, we form opinions, judgments, and certain ideas about what life should look like. These come from our influencers, our environment and, for many of us, from religion. We decide what we want to accomplish. We imagine the things we would like to do. We dream about who we want to be. We explore what kinds of lives we want to live. We make decisions along the way based upon these ideas, and determine what we will and will not do. At some point, these lists of do’s and don’ts, the will’s and won’ts, our ideas of what’s right and what’s wrong, start to create our list of Nevers.

Then the dreadful day comes where we accomplish or experience our first negative Never. We do something that we vowed, spoke, or committed that we would never do. Sometimes we can move past these Nevers, seemingly unaffected, but as we get older, our file folder labeled, “The things I never thought I would experience,” starts to get bigger.

With the bigger file folder comes a lot of lingering after-effects; negative feelings and negative thoughts, such as regret, embarrassment, fear, guilt, and insecurity, to name a few. These effects can cause us to start to believe lies about ourselves, such as: *I’m not good enough; I’m a bad person; I’m a loser; I must not be like other people because I keep doing things wrong; I am a failure.* The list of the destructive feelings we get from doing or experiencing the things we never thought we would, can be long.

Why is this a problem?

Our feelings effect our emotions, our emotions impact our thoughts, and our thoughts direct our attitude and our life direction. If our feelings about these experiences are destructive based on what we've come to believe, we are blinded and separated from the Truth about who God created us to be.

I can distinctly remember the first time I was dishonest and told a lie. Okay, this may not have been the very first time, but it's a time I clearly remember doing something that I never wanted to do.

I was in first grade. A classmate of mine dropped the string that belonged in the hood of her sweatshirt. I picked it up. I knew exactly whose it was and I knew the right thing to do; to give the string back to my classmate. But instead, I took the string, hid it in my cardboard school box, and proceeded to unravel it. As it was unraveled, it got "poufy." Towards the end of the day, my classmate was upset that she had lost her string, and the teacher asked the class if anyone had seen it. Everyone, including me, said "No." I lied! I had seen it, I had destroyed it and the evidence was in my cardboard pencil box.

I instantly knew that I had done something wrong, but I was fearful and didn't want anyone to know. Then the teacher asked everyone to open their backpacks and pencil boxes for her to check. POOF! There it came, popping out – and I was caught. I lied, I was dishonest, I was disrespectful to another person's property, and I was wrong.

The teacher disciplined me for that act and all the other students knew it. I had to sit inside for three days of recess. I can remember the kids looking through the window of my classroom while they were outside, at me inside. I felt shame. I felt embarrassment. I felt guilt. That was a Never accomplished; I'd never wanted to lie, but I had lied.

How did I deal with that? I can't remember. But I do know that I was not equipped. Every time I saw the classmate whom I had disrespected, or every time another schoolmate reminded me of the incident, I instantly felt terrible again. I wanted to hide. The lies I began to believe about myself were: *I am stupid; I am bad; I am not good enough.* The feelings I was left with were regret, shame, and embarrassment. Wow – that's a lot for one little 6-year-old girl!

I knew better, but we sometimes do the things that we don't want to do. This is just one small example of how our "Never" file folder starts to expand; it may seem trivial to you, but over time doing the Nevers, or getting to places you never planned on being, becomes more than just a laundry list of broken prohibitions because of the lingering effects they have on us.

How do the lingering effects of the Nevers manifest in our lives?

I wish there was one answer to this question – that would make it easy to overcome – but there is not; there are thousands!

A big brush-stroke picture includes effects like: insecurity, fear, people-pleasing, anger, depression, anxiety, feelings of not being good enough, believing you are undeserving, feeling that you're of less value than others, feeling insignificant, and needing constant approval from others. These are just some of the symptoms or manifestations of what the negative Nevers cause us.

Taking this one step further, for some people these feelings lead them to wanting to break away from the pain. Escaping leads to unhealthy coping mechanisms that can result in addictions such as eating disorders, excessive drinking of alcohol, or abusing drugs, both prescription and non-prescription, excessive shopping or spending, exercising too much, compulsive gambling, hoarding, compulsive lying, cutting, even working too much. This is a vicious cycle, because even if the addiction is removed, we still have the core issues, the painful feelings, and the raw emotions that we do not want to experience.

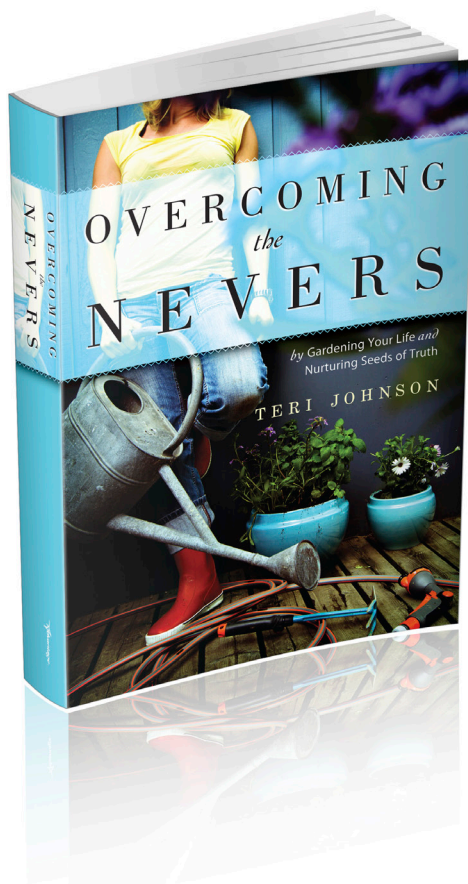
These issues are what lead us to live lives of discontentment and to suffer a restless desire or craving for something we do not have. Why? Because, we came to believe things about ourselves that were not true.

We must get to a point at which we can separate ourselves from the lingering after-effects. We need to decide to let go of the past hurts, regret, and pain that keep us stuck, that keep us circling the same issues. Shining the light on and uncovering the lies that are contained within our file folder of Nevers will bring healing to our wounds. We need to be set free; we need to experience freedom.

How do we experience freedom? I started to experience freedom while overcoming. It wasn't easy, I have to admit. But the joy and peace I have now far surpasses the work that it has taken me to get where I am today, and the work that I continue to do to sustain it.

Would you like to overcome and become who God created you to be? Do you have the desire to experience freedom? If so, walk with me. I am passionate about helping others and would be honored to share with you the tools that I've learned, and help you learn how to use them in your life to overcome the Nevers.

Discover truth. Embrace love. Experience joy.



Overcoming the Nevers is available on [Amazon](#) and all major online book retailers.

For more information, visit keepingitpersonal.com

