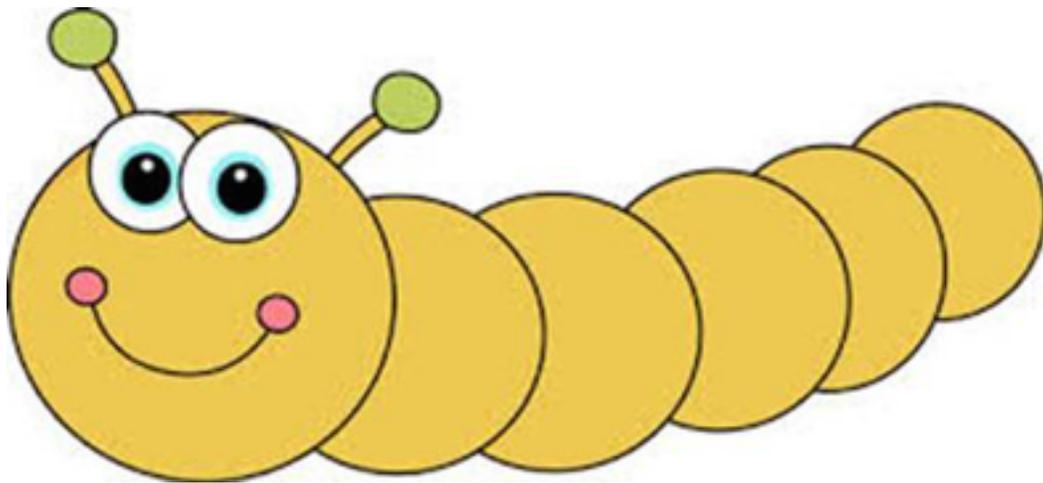


**GOLDY**

goes to

**BOUNTIFUL**



**A LITTLE BOOK ABOUT STUTTERING**

GOLDY GOES TO BOUNTIFUL  
A LITTLE STORY ABOUT STUTTERING

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This story is dedicated to Hazel Percy, who (as she writes in her online book on this website) is seeking the natural way to fluency. There are other names for “the natural spontaneous way to fluency”: the Zone, or Awareness, or self-actualization, or Zen, or Sabbath, or Spontaneity.....I could go on and on. In this small book I refer to this inner state of flow as “Bountiful” or “the top of the mountain.” And whether in speech or sports or writing or playing, one thing we agree on: this is a state in which the chattering mind is stilled and we act out of a new center. What others think about us no longer registers. We trust the natural part of ourselves to do what it does when it does it....relatively free of resistance.

I had been assembling Hazel’s emails to the Yahoo group “neurosemanticsofstuttering.com” in which she describes her journey to the Zone—and at the end of one of her entries, I felt one of my now-recognizable intuitive “tugs”, and this is the result of that.

I’m not even sure if it made sense to me when I first wrote it, but it doesn’t really matter. It was clear that this wasn’t about me, it was about Hazel’s trip to the top of the mountain, so I trust Hazel will understand it. Maybe you will “get it” also.

## GOLDY GOES TO BOUNTIFUL

It was a very special morning in early summer, warm and clear, with the wind stirring deliciously over the mountainside. Large round drops of dew shone like jewels on the leaves that formed the caterpillar's bed.

“Th-th-th-this is the d-d-d-d-d-day I begin my journey t-t-t-t-to the t-t-t-t-top of the mountain!” Goldy exulted, shaking herself into full wakefulness.

By this time she was chortling with glee, stretching her feelers, wiggling and squirming in the warmth of the morning sun.

“The s-s-s-s-sun never seemed so bright as it does this m-m-m-m-morning,” the caterpillar said aloud, dancing a little jig as she got ready to take her journey.

If you saw Goldy at that moment, I'm guessing you would think she looked like a tiny puddle of butter that had melted from being too long in the sun.

“Ooooh”, she mused softly to herself, “But it is not s-s-s-s-s-s-s-safe, this journey. If only my c-c-c-c-coat was not so very y-y-y-y-y-y-y-yellow....if it was only g-g-g-g-g-g-green, the color of the grass, or, ah, even b-b-b-b-b-b-b-brown.....because then I could hide among the trees. I'd be safe as I m-m-m-m-m-make my way to Bountiful.”

She could feel the cold clammy fear rising in her so she tried to be brave: “Ahhhh, well, it doesn't m-m-m-m-m-m-matter. I'm not afraid. I must have h-h-h-h-h-hope,” she whispered defiantly. “But I d-d-d-d-d-d-don't care!!!! I can't live like this any l-l-l-l-l-l-l-longer.”

You see, her journey didn't really begin that morning. Days before she began to feel helpless and hopeless and saw her life shrinking before her, growing smaller and smaller. She was afraid to talk to strangers. But that wasn't the worst part...she couldn't even speak to her parents and friends without struggling and pushing and forcing words that wouldn't come out right and sometimes wouldn't come out at *all*. Some laughed at her pitiful attempts to say what she wanted to say. But there was nothing she could do about it.

She had been to all the experts. “You need to think before you speak” they told her. “You need to relax.” “You need to control your stuttering before it becomes worse.” And especially: “You need to think of every word you say and every breath you breathe. Only then will you be free. You can DO it, Goldy!!”

But Goldy got worse. The harder she worked to speak well and control her stutter, the more she stuttered. The more she thought about speech, the more she stuttered.

“There h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-has to be another way!” said Goldy.

Her father assured her that one day she would find the path that would take her to the freedom she wanted.

What is the name of this place? Goldy asked her father.

“I call it Bountiful” he said.

“And how do I get there?” she asked.

“There are two paths” he began. “There is the natural way and the way of hard work and effort.”

“Hmmm”, said Goldy. “I don't think I understand that...”

“But I must warn you....there are those who reject both pathways on the grounds that no such place exists.”

And now Goldy wished she had paid more attention to what her father told her about the possibilities that now stood before her...because there, right *there* at that very moment, stood the grandest, highest mountain...pine trees flanking the lower slopes as the path wound upward, around and around the mountain as far as she could see. “It must mean that this place called B-B-B-B-B-B-Bountiful is up *there*....that place at the top of the mountain always covered with clouds,” she concluded, “and the only way to get there is to try, try, try with all my might.”

One priceless gift Goldy now possessed was purpose and intention. She was going to reach this free and happy place even if it killed her. And this inner resolve made her happy.

So the early days of her travel passed, one day after another. Others were on the path and if they passed her, they greeted each other and sometimes stopped to rest or chat. She felt during these weeks that everyone was headed upward, so she felt a strong sense of confidence and happiness.

One bright morning at the outset of the day's journey, she met a large gray caterpillar resting in the sun on a large rock by the side of the road, reading a book. She supposed he was a philosopher from his conversation and quickly sensed the depth of his wisdom and

experience. She was ready to stop a rest a while so she joined the philosopher on his rock that caught the patches of warm sunlight shining through the cool luscious thickets where oak trees formed a leafy roof high above them.

All in all, the first day in this part of the mountain was a remarkable summer day. The brook nearby babbled loudly and noises above them interrupted their conversation as eager throngs of birds, seeming to act upon some signal only birds know, broke into chattering and chirping and trilling.

Goldy told the philosopher of her hopes and dreams to reach the top of the mountain through effort and hard work. And the philosopher listened intently until he said “I notice the importance you give to the top of the mountain. Rather out of proportion, I would say.”

“Oh, you are r-r-r-r-right, Sir. I d-d-d-d-d-d-do long and ache for the top of the m-m-m-m-mountain...out of all p-p-p-p-proportion to anything else. But I n-n-n-n-n-know I can get there if I only t-t-t-t-t-try hard enough.”

“And how would you feel if what you live for was proven untrue?”

“Not all hopes fall by the w-w-w-w-w-wayside, Sir,” she countered. “Some hopes d-d-d-d-d-do come true.”

“Yes,” the philosopher sighed...then looked troubled. “The question might not be whether there is such a place or not.”

Goldy was puzzled....“What else could it p-p-p-p-p-possibly *be*?”

“Well.....,” he began slowly and thoughtfully, “what if this place is not a location at the top of the mountain....what if it is more?”

“M-m-m-m-m-m-more??” Goldy cried, “How could it possibly be m-m-m-m-m-m-m-more?”

“Just consider what I said” the philosopher said thoughtfully.

Even though Goldy wanted to dismiss what the philosopher was saying....her friend's words sounded mysterious and strange, like a riddle. And Goldy loved riddles.

Finally, Goldy asked “Why did you get off the path and settle down in this part of the mountain.”

“Ahhhhh, that! Well, I started out with great intentions” he said.... measuring, choosing words carefully. “Long ago I believed in Bountiful as fervently, as you do now.”

“You *did*? And *then* what happened?” Goldy wanted to know.

“It all came to nothing,” the philosopher answered. “*Nothing! Nothing at all!*”

“I don't understand”, Goldy answered.

“I found that no matter how hard I worked, it was physically impossible. And something else occurred to me...”

“You stopped believing that such a place exists?” Goldy interrupted.

“No, not at all” the philosopher said thoughtfully....“Well, it came very clear to me....the place I am seeking is not at the top of this *literal*

mountain. *The top of the mountain is only an IMAGE of the thing I am seeking!*”

Goldy couldn't understand and was now close to tears. “I feel s-s-s-s-s-s-split in two little pieces” she cried....”between staying here in my happy comfort.....and f-f-f-following this inner push I don't understand.”

She paused and then blurted urgently: “P-p-p-p-p-please come with me, Sir.”

“I am too old, too tired,” the philosopher answered, gently. “But I urge you to stay here with me in this part of the mountain...”

“W-w-w-w-w-w-what I hate is.....what I *really* hate is that I absolutely m-m-m-m-m-m-must find out for *m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-myself* what is really *there*.”

This was their parting conversation before she returned to the path before her.

## BACK TO THE PATH

Once she was back on the path, Goldy's old familiar “spunk” was gone. What had been clear and bright and certain at the beginning of her journey was now foggy and unclear. Even though she kept repeating “I can do it....all I need to do is try”, all her old enthusiasm was gone.

At that very moment. Goldy heard a whistle and a faint sound of chug-chugging up the hill. It was evening time and time for the mountain train to come through the mountains. She watched as the engine of the train went by and when it finally came to a grinding halt, she got onboard.

The train was at the bottom of a steep incline at that point. In a few hours she could feel the train shiver and shake and strain, to make it up that mountain. The engineer kept urging the engine onward, repeating the words, louder and louder: "I think I can. I think I can. I think I can. I think I can. I think I can."

This gave Goldy confidence. Even though the train kept heaving and moaning and chug-chugging, Goldy believed this positive attitude would get them to the top of the mountain. She repeated the mantra along with the engineer: "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can."

"I will just keep a smile on my face and *believe* we will make it to the top of the mountain, and we *will*. Yes, we *will!!!*"

But that's not what happened. What happened was that after hours and hours and hours of huffing and puffing, the train finally came to a screeching halt.

Goldy wouldn't get off the train. "It will start up again and take me to Bountiful!" Goldy insisted. Summer had faded into a rapturous fall. And for days and days she stayed on the stalled train, hoping and hoping.

Finally there was nothing else to do. Winter had come. She went back to the path and soon spotted a door to the right of the path and above the door hung a flower-bordered plaque, with the legend "Choose Camaraderie" painted on it. Thinking she could rest and warm herself there, she knocked at the door. When no one answered she entered and wandered down a long hall to a huge auditorium.

A huge striped black and gray wormlike creature was leading a large meeting but when he saw Goldy peek in the door, he yelled out a greeting.

“Come and join us!” the leader invited cordially.

Everyone in the audience turned around to get a look at Goldy.

“But you are in the m-m-m-middle of a m-m-m-m-meeting...” Goldy hesitated, embarrassed.

“Do you live in this part of the mountain?” asked the worm.

“No, I am t-t-t-t-t-traveling to the t-t-t-t-t-top of the m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-mountain. I was cold and stopped to rest,” Goldy answered.

Goldy could hear laughter in the room, and in her serious mood, the laughter sounded menacing. “We, all of us, were headed to the top of the mountain at various times in our lives, but now we meet here daily and encourage each other. This camaraderie is our top of the mountain,” the gray worm commented.

The whole room broke out in cheers as the worm continued: “Now that we have found each other, we see no need to find the top of the mountain. Camaraderie is all we seek.”

A huge chant went up in the audience as they cheered “C-A-M-A-R-A-D-E-R-I-E!” over and over again.

Goldy was trembling. “Could I also lose my love that still burns so brightly in me?” she asked herself. To the group she said confidently: “W-W-W-W-W-W-W-W-Well, I am going to reach B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-Bountiful no matter what. Life would have no m-m-m-m-m-m-meaning at all if I lived only for this....”

“Don't raise your voice at us!” the striped worm hissed, as the room erupted into jeers, name-calling, kicking and dirt slinging.

Goldy was frightened now and scurried out the door back to the path. She could feel the fresh air as she started to climb, air that seemed like the first whiffs of spring. But even though Spring was in the air, the path before her was still rocky, snow-covered, and treacherous.

Painfully she tried again and again to continue on the uneven path over lumps of rocks and clay and sand now covered with the crisp snow. Straight ahead she saw the shadows of the setting sun, very red and clear. Everything in that part of the mountain was completely still, as if she was the only living creature on the whole mountain.

As the moon began to rise higher and higher in the sky, the wind grew sharper and colder. Goldy shuddered, finally knowing she could not make it. All she felt was darkness and failure and misery. Even though she was half-way up the mountain, she had certainly reached rock bottom.

“I don't know the way to the t-t-t-t-top of the mountain”, she moaned. Hopelessly, she threw herself against the trunk of a small tree, wailing like her heart would break.

Spontaneously, as if by instinct, very slowly and painfully, she crept to the end of the branch of the small tree....as she mechanically began to thread, dark black threads, back and forth, up and down. The thread went down, then up, then sideways, then around, and around, and around...

The binding shell she had spun around herself made her, at last, her own prisoner. And she began to mourn in her own little prison, rocking back and forth in the wind like a very tiny hammock.

Worn out with grief and longing, she had one thought..."All that lives in me now is this letting go. I can't do this. I never could. There has to be another way, or I am lost."

Then everything disappeared into inky and total blackness.

When Goldy awoke, she felt nothing but softness. There was a gushing whirl and then it seemed as if the hammer of some Bright Spirit splintered and smashed the binding shell of her tiny cosmos, destroying it and leaving her *free*.

*Free! Free at last!!*

She lifted the wet gauzy limpness at each side of her, then wobbled drunkenly, as a child might do in stepping from a moving merry-go-round.

And then...then...she found herself gliding into the beckoning blue sky of the world in springtime, and yet it was the same world as before!

Soaring now, with butterfly faculties, she looked at the world with great curiosity and wonder and pleasure. The world was abuzz with a thousand secrets she had never sensed, filled with fragrant odors and budding daffodils.

Hungry for the sights and sounds of this new world, she sat on the branch of a tree, now beginning to bud and simply looked, then cocked her head to one side, listening.

"I'm back! I'm back!!!" Goldy called to no one in particular....and when she spoke, her speech sounded different to her....not solid anymore, but flowing and liquid.

“The world is still the same!.....only I am different!” she cried.

But wait...maybe I know what you're going to ask....you are going to ask what she found at the top of the mountain, right?

Well, she found she could fly to the top of the mountain any time she wished....and it was all she ever hoped for and more. But the real top of the mountain was *inside* her. She was filled with such freedom and spontaneity that she could only hazily remember her former days of effort and striving. She felt no fear. She felt brave and confident and grateful.

But she had not forgotten her former life.

Inevitably, in a moment of inspiration, the golden butterfly felt an urge to go back along the old pathway, to see her old friend, the philosopher. She flew to the babbling brook...but he was not there. She lit on the tree stump where they had enjoyed so many hours.....but he did not come to join her. The birds were chattering loudly overhead...but her old friend was nowhere to be found.

“Where *is* he? I can't *find* him! Where can he *be*?” she cried, disappointed.

At last, just as she started to fly away she noticed something that took her breath away....for there on one of the branches of their favorite tree was a cocoon that hadn't yet opened.

And there the golden butterfly stayed....and waited.

