

SOMETHING TO DO WITH MY STUTTERING  
(A WORK IN PROGRESS)

DAN NOVAK

## TOMIO OKAMURA, MORE THAN A STUTTERER

His name is Tomio Okamura. He was known in the Czech Republic mainly for his entrepreneurial activities (he opened up a Japanese shop and he also worked as a tour guide in Prague. Tomio is now very involved in politics.

He became a senator a few years ago, then he unsuccessfully ran for president and he also started a movement of direct democracy, which turned into a political party and was to many people's surprise voted into the Parliament. Tomio is known for his brutal honesty, not hiding from what he believes and stands for.

He never looks nervous, he's extremely confident - such to the point that he appears arrogant to many people. He speaks out against current pressing issues, things in the grey zone that populists don't dare speak about and is hated and accused by many for that. In the past, I could also see him in television as a entrepreneur-judge in the czech version of Dragon's Den.

Tomio is half Czech, half Japanese. He was raised partly in Japan and partly in the CR. He's a stranger for both countries and therefore not fully accepted by people, although now it's changed, obviously.

He spent a part of his childhood in children's home in the CR, because there was none to take care of him and his brother. He was ridiculed by his peers, he stuttered and he used to wet himself during sleep until the age of 12-13. He was a shy boy.

When he was around 15 years old, he worked in Japan as a garbage man, because his uncle figured that he wouldn't need to speak much. Then he worked for four years as a shop assistant in the cinema in some kind of a Japanese food stall. He had to shout at people to come and buy something (apparently, it was expected of people in

this business to be proactive and seek opportunities, otherwise he'd have been fired). Tomio was extremely active and therefore was very successful. He only wished that nobody would order one specific dish because he would be forced to say its price- which consisted of two g's and g's were impossible for him to say.

When he returned to the Czech Republic, he had an opportunity to teach Japanese. Someone called him if he could replace a tour guide that fell sick. He replied that he absolutely couldn't, because he didn't really know Prague. The vision of making the same amount of money in 8 hours as he used to make in a month was tempting and he accepted and bought a book about Prague to study. Obviously, he was very successful because people appreciated his honesty and effort to show them around.

That was the point in time when he realised he was accepted and that being half-half actually paid off for the first time. He felt respected. By the age of 20, his stuttering dissolved. He gained confidence by doing something - mostly believing in himself and focusing on running his business (tour guidance for the Japanese in Prague and then also founding and managing his own shop with Japanese food).

He took his mind off of his speech. He had to speak as a tour guide and he took it as a challenge, his actions proved him to be capable and therefore the momentum pushed him forward. His actions convinced his mind that he could do it.

And because he was so successful, he became confident, too. He became wealthy and then started engaging in politics. As you know, he has been very successful.

Hey everybody!

My name's Dan and I'm a 21 years old Czech dude. I'm just popping round your *neurosemanticsofstuttering* (Yahoo group) to say hello and looking forward to reading your posts and hopefully even discussing stuttering with you. As of right now, the forum looks very complicated to me and I don't understand it very well yet. I hope I'll soon get the gist of it.

I've only heard praise about this forum so I'm excited to dig through your valuable insights. But first, I'll have to deal with getting through to them hehe.

Anyways let's talk soon, dear fellows :) Dan

Hi, again!

Thank you all for your kind reactions. Judging from your quick replies, I think I'll like this forum. :)

Bob, I'll send you an email right away. I think we actually exchanged a few emails... maybe a year ago. I also bought your book "I Have a Voice" last year and have read exactly 47%. I haven't got back to it yet because it was very overwhelming for me.

Ruth, I've read a half of your book so far. I don't know why I stopped, probably started reading Bob's book at that point. I'm going to get into it again. There was some pure gold in those pages and I had to highlight many parts. I love your story of "getting into the flow" and I thoroughly enjoyed your description of how you journaled your thoughts and didn't block out anything but let it go like a river. I just loved it, thank you for sharing. And now I really want to pick your book back up again :)

Richard, just for the sake of people (and for the huge pain of typing accents and French letters on the Czech keyboard), who don't speak French, I'll ask you in English: In which part of Canada do you live? Montreal? Quebec? I would so love to visit Canada one day... and I will. When we learned about Quebec in high school, I fell in love. (Now I'm really hoping I haven't mistaken you for somebody else. I just have this feeling that you must be from Canada. Must have read it somewhere.)

ANOTHR EMAIL TO NEUROSEMANTICSOFSSTUTTERING, YAHOO GROUP

Hello. I've been thinking today.

I've been thinking about why I'm not competitive. This is what I think:

Because of my speech I felt as something less than other people. The way I reasoned went like this - "I'm not even able to handle my speech which is so effortless to other people, how could I ever compete with them and expect to win at something else if I fail at this so much?!"

I was playing it safe, I didn't want to lose, I didn't want to let myself down. I gave up before they could beat me.

I am not sure if I'm right about this, but these are just my thoughts from this morning. I think they're deeply ingrained beliefs that I've held onto ever since I was first put into such situations. I've never questioned them until now.

Were my arguments valid? Of course not! How can I possibly be comparing my speech with a game of some sort?

How can I think that I won't beat someone in a ping-pong game because they speak better than me?

How ludicrous is that?

What does my speech have to do with anything? (Well, it does if I let it become my identity...)  
That is such a self-defeating logic and therefore meaningless.

Next time I'm in a similar situation, I'll need to ask myself: "Why don't I want to compete with them? Do I have to shield myself from some pain? But wait... it's just a game."

Do I believe they're better than me?

If they are, they will prove it, but until then I can only assume, I can't know it.

Why would I want to put myself through this to see who wins?"

As I said, I'm not sure about this, but it's very likely that I've struck a chord there. Maybe just in part but hey - it's a start.

I ask fellow-stutterers: What about you?

Are you competitive?

If not, why not?

One explanation would go like "I'm just not competitive," which was my common response.

But I'm going deeper now to the question: "Why am I not competitive?"  
Dan

Dan:

Good thinking, Dan. You now have a real foot in the door. Everything you say makes perfect sense. John Harrison

## SOMETHING TO DO WITH MY SPEECH....

I've been looking into my own stuttering, and something just occurred to me and it may have something to do with my speech.

I remember how when I was a kid, my mother didn't like me being around her when she was vacuuming or wiping the floor. She didn't like the idea of me watching while she worked.

Now fast forward to the present.

I think I've just uncovered this lie. Let me explain.

We are now living in a house with a garden and we all often have a lot on our plates. My parents have always been really into gardening and they don't mind working all day long, making their garden look better.

Honestly, I don't care very much about it, but that's not the point I'm trying to make.

Working in the garden has always been an object of many heated discussions between me and my father. I'm always telling him that if he needs my help, I'll be there but I don't have time and I don't want to go to him and ask him each little thing he needs to get done. (You basically can't do anything without his permission around here - that's why I'd have to ask.) Well, he prefers it if I do it his way: When I am able to help, he wants me to go to him and tell him, then ask him what I can do.

This is a "servant or son dilemma". I prefer to be a son, which means

that I'm available but at the same time, I'm free to make my our decisions without my parents' judgement. A servant does what he's told. He has to earn favor and respect by working. He always does what is demanded from him and he always asks.

Why am I explaining all this? Because I believe it to be one of factors why I'm still not free. I don't struggle with this issue as much as I did before but still, it sometimes bothers me. Here are a few observations:

When I was around my working parents, I heard a judgmental voice in my head (not much different from the doubtful voice that takes pleasure in informing me about my speech) and it was basically projecting what THEY THINK about me. Hypersensitivity at its finest.

Following instructions in such simple and mundane things means to strengthen the 'servant' mindset. Choosing what I want to do is what a 'son' does.

It may be said that I'm selfish when I don't help, but honestly - to refuse to help AND to still feel good about myself sounds like heaven to me. What my usual experience was that when I did not cross every t and dot every i when it came to asking and being attentive to my parents' needs, I felt horrible. I felt that it was my obligation or I wouldn't be in favor.

Now here's a big one: my sister, who by the way does not stutter, apparently never had such thoughts. She sometimes helped, sometimes not, but she never went through the emotional hell of feeling unworthy if she didn't. She didn't feel condemned when she didn't do something or when she didn't offer help. That actually helped her be more useful to my parents because she didn't feel any

pressure. And what can come out a free environment when pressure is not felt? Freedom, getting stuff done, emotional freedom, freedom of thought, willingness...

I know that my father's opinion is probably never going to change, but I don't feel like I'm in the business of trying to change it. He may think I'm lazy but I know that I'm not. The challenge for me is to let it go. I may be considered to be a lazy bum, but the true freedom comes when I do not care about others' opinions of me...but to center on the way I "be"...not the way I'm perceived. Only then I'm free to express myself without restrictions which in this case to me means "to do or not do, based on my decision, without feeling under pressure and under other people's judgement, feeling like a king meanwhile".

You may see many things in common with stuttering so I thought I'd share it. It most probably has everything to do with it.

What are your thoughts? Anyone with similar experience and observations?

Dan

## WHY AM I FLUENT WHEN I AM ALONE AND STUTTER WHEN OTHERS ARE AROUND?

So you are able to speak fluently like a news presenter when you're alone and then, when someone walks in the room, you can't do it anymore?

When you really think about it, doesn't it seem odd to you?

Most of us are used to it, but it really seems ridiculous to me. Like... what happened to my ability to speak?

How did that person change me?

How could he or she affect me so much that they took away the gift of speech from me?

When I was away and my speech was relatively free for a period of time, I was thinking, "How could I have ever struggled with this word?! It's so simple to say it... this is so behind me." Speaking was effortless and it seemed ludicrous to put any kind of effort into it.

This is the kind of thinking I sometimes experience.

As if I found myself out of my usual way of thinking and took a really good look at how silly it is. To block at a specific consonant in a specific situation?

And to say it without any effort in a different one? Come on, that's just crazy!

You know what? I love thinking this way because that's how fluent people think (IF they think about it, because they usually don't... why would they?).

I was wondering if any of you sometimes think this way.

Those of you who still struggle with speech and those who don't anymore.

I'll be happy to read what you have to say about his. Dan

Dan

It's not odd once you understand what's happening. Would you find it strange if you believed that if you stutter or block, some mean sonofabitch would drive a nail through your hand. Of course not. You'd do what you could to avoid the pain. Well, this is what's going on when a person speaks just fine when they're alone but lock up like a drum when someone else walks in the room. It's not physical but psychic pain that scares us away. It's a fear of letting go and the imagined consequences (psychic death) of not "performing" correctly. John Harrison

It's sometimes funny how seriously we tend to take ourselves. Monitoring every single word and looking for major and minor disfluencies and then thinking, "oh no, I stuttered on this word, everybody noticed and I look like a fool." Well, newsflash: nobody cares! This is absolutely normal!

I'm sometimes very aware of how people talk and therefore I notice their setbacks. Some people stutter (repeat syllables etc.) more than others. And nobody cares, nobody even notices because it's considered normal.

This was brought to my attention by my friend that used to deal with similar issues and we chat on skype once week. I care too much about what people think. I don't usually stutter in an obvious way. It's subtle. People don't notice. Big blocks are an issue at times but most of the time they don't appear.

I realised that I actually like when someone stutters because of the lack of confidence in saying a particular word, lack of preparation, speaking too fast or too hesitantly... and I'm talking about otherwise fluent people. It simply means that they're human and that they aren't making a huge effort to communicate in a precise and clear manner as they would, say, in presentation. It's just who they are. And when I like them as a person, I find these little imperfections quite nice.

My speech has changed so much over the past few months and I don't know why. When I stop putting so much effort in speaking correctly, my speech sometimes get sloppy with lots of repetitive stuttering and other "mistakes" OR it gets so fluent that it flows like a river. That usually happens when I'm physically super-tired and relaxed and I don't have enough mental energy to care. Speaking is so much fun when that happens.

The problem is, however, when my speech is bumpy and not caring about doesn't seem to lead anywhere. That's something that I'm trying to figure out: what's different in my mindset when my speech is bumpy as opposed to when it's fluent and free.

In conclusion, I'm not sure about what's going on in me in these two different mindsets, but there's one thing that is absolutely clear: "Oh my God, I stuttered, people noticed, it's so embarrassing!" never helps and never is as big of a deal as it seems. They - don't - care! They have their own issues. This frees you to deal with yourself and your issues and so you don't have to care about other people.

Everybody sometimes stutters.

Dan, just thinking out loud here.

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## IT'S NOT ABOUT SPEECH

Hey,

It's been months since I last wrote here (I believe it was my story). One of the reason is that I'm not very comfortable with this platform, by which I mean communicating via emails instead of posting on a forum where everything is nice and tidy and there's no trouble finding topics.

Well, that's my little rant. Nothing against anybody, just speaking my mind. :)

Here's what I realized last Friday. I've read this before in some books, but now it makes sense to me:

**It is not about speech. Speech is just a symptom.** It is what we are forced to look at and try to change. Well, I believe that our efforts are misplaced. Speech is not what we should worry about when we know we can speak fluently in certain situations.

I was in a group setting where people were sharing, talking aloud. When I spoke, I had trouble speaking fluently. When I left, I was pondering why it was so. I actually didn't want to talk much, because I thought I'd stutter. I was in the stuttering mode. But what came first? Was it my speech that made me believe that I would stutter? Or was it my belief / attitude / mental mode that helped my blocking flourish? I believe it was the latter. My blocking was just a symptom of my faulty believing (and other cool things in the stuttering hexagon), nothing more. Just my body saying to me "something's wrong

with the way you think, because honestly: there's no reason why you should stutter."

This is a simple revelation and I'm sure that most of you already know this very well. I "knew" it too, but only now it's finally became real. :)

That's all, folks (for today).

Dan

Hi Dan,

I agree completely with your statement: "It's not about speech."

That is why we need to develop and expand our terminology. As I have often repeated I suggest.....Stuttering is a symptom of Stuttered Speech Syndrome.

To labour the point we need to change the use of stuttering as an iceberg metaphor when we are also calling the tip of the iceberg stuttering as well. That is the whole iceberg is being called by the same name as the tip. This is nonsensical!

I hope you and everyone else on this list agrees that it makes more sense to use Stuttered Speech Syndrome as an iceberg metaphor with stuttering at the tip and Social Anxiety Disorder (often driven by fear of stuttering) sitting below the water.

Cheers, DR. MARK IRWIN, AUSTRALIA

Hi!

I had this conversation with my friend. I'm going to call him Frank. He conquered his problem by following simple truth and logic. I hope you'll get something out of it as I did. I didn't correct my old grammar / spelling / ... mistakes, but you'll get the point. :)

**Dan:**

Frank, could you please write your story about how your speech became fluent? Im still thinking about this. I think it just boils down to stop caring about what other people think about me but..what to replace this with? I guess that the only major problems I have in life are tied directly to this. Anyways, it would be very helpful and encouraging if you wrote something about it. I really want to beat this thinking, man.

**Frank:**

Honestly bro, I probably won't write about my past speech and self-esteem problems.

I don't see it as necessary compared to just teaching people how to be as confident as I am.

And like I said before, it's all just a matter of practice. The more you practice, the more you test yourself, and make yourself stronger, the more you will find that you are more than able to naturally become an expert in the area that you struggle with.

**Dan:**

Im not really interested in learning about your past struggles and issues but rather in the journey out of them. What I have in mind is this: I had this issue so I did this, this and this for this period of time and after this amount of time it didn't even cross my mind: Practical advice is what Im looking for.

Advice as to “What do you mean by practice?” It's just about how to reprogram my mind. So you said that it's good to fast 30 minutes a day...is there anything else you did? You know..it's quite remarkable that you once lived in such a paralysing fear that you didn't even go to high school and now nobody could tell at all. I haven't experienced such a dramatic change so that's why I'm so curious...but if you don't want to share, it's ok, I just wanted you to know where I'm coming from.

**Frank:**

The way I've always done this is just teach people how to think for themselves, and question everything, especially themselves.

To clarify, and for future reference, whenever I say something like "people need to question themselves" what I mean is that people need to question what they currently believe about themselves, and only in a very positive light.

Below are a few common (random) thought processes that I would go through when I first started questioning myself in the way that I explained above:

I used to think that I'm not worth very much.

Why? How do I know that I'm not worth very much? Because other people tell me? Well, how do other people know this? If I'm getting this idea from other people, then where are other people getting it? Something's very wrong with this.

I used to think I'm not a great communicator, or at least, that I wouldn't be able to become a better communicator in the future.

But how do I know this? Am I sure? Am I sure that I'm sure? Why? How? Because it has been my experience in the past? But I don't live in the past anymore, I live in my present. If I live by that logic then I might as well never attempt anything new ever again. I might as well be dead. So that logic is self-defeating, and anything that is self-defeating is meaningless. And anything without meaning is worthless.

I used to think I would never amount to much.

How do I know know this? Where did I hear this from? How do I know that I'm not supposed to amount to much? What if all people, including myself were actually made to become the most? What if we were all born for greatness, but somewhere along the line, we just lost sight?

There are a lot of questions here, but it's far less complicated than it may appear. And the reason it's not complicated is because there is only one conclusion that has any value to it, and that is the conclusion with the highest benefit, both for me, you, and everyone that surrounds us, our friends, our family, and the whole world.

The only conclusion, the only "truth" that really matters, is the one that causes God's life to be born is us.

**Dan:**

So... when you understood your value and potential, you were able to communicate fluently?

**Frank:**

Yes. Because how we speak is directly connected to how we think.

**Dan:**

So when you were communicating after that, you weren't focusing on your speech at all? It became spontaneous and in accordance with the reality you had discovered? See... I'm reading a lot about this stuff and what I'm reading is lots of critiques about focusing on one's speech because it should be just natural and not conscious.

**Frank:**

Yeah, that's pretty much exactly what I did. I just trusted that my speech would naturally line up with my thinking as I used it more often.

**Dan:**

And how long did it take till it lined up?

**Frank:**

Not long at all. The exact time doesn't matter. I mean I wouldn't try to plan how you're going to do it, like I wouldn't try to organize it, like making plans about if or how "it should happen", I'd just start to focus on different things and let it work itself out.

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I think his stuttering dissolved in his late teen years or early twenties.. He's 25 now. I found this to be encouraging. I hope you do too. Take care. Dan

## MY CHANGING SPEECH

Hey, everybody,

I'd like to share with you what I've been experiencing for the past few months. Before that, both my fluent and blocking time periods were usually a few weeks long and I had no idea what was causing them. I would suddenly find myself blocking even though I was like the best orator the day before. It would drive me nuts (and I imagine that you have an idea what I mean).

Then I underwent some serious changes in my life.

I dropped out of university and started working in our family business and I also found myself in a relationship.

Now I'm getting to the interesting part: my speech undergoes rapid changes. It's finally more on the day to day, situation to situation basis. It gives me much more confidence to be able to figure out what causes blocking and what doesn't.

I don't feel so helpless.

Imagine this scenario: I'm very nervous and self-conscious before a date. I'm in blocking mode and I can't get out of it. As we talk, I somehow manage to switch modes and suddenly I speak like there's not a single problem in the world. I wasn't used to this kind of change. It was usually like: "Oh crap, now I'm in my 'bad season' and I need to give a presentation... why couldn't I give it the week before when I was fluent?!"

It felt as if it was all absolutely beyond my reach (which it wasn't but I didn't know that).

I still have better and worse days. But I feel much more empowered to turn it around... even though I don't know exactly what to do, I'm getting a clearer picture every single day. What I need to force myself

to do is just start jotting down every single variable that I believe is linked to speech - when I'm fluent and when I'm not. That might just do the trick to uncover those lying thoughts roaming around in my brain.

Anybody with a similar experience to mine? Any thoughts? I'd be happy to read what you have to say about that.

Dan

Hi,

John Harrison asked me: "Suppose you didn't have to worry about your speech at all and speaking is completely effortless for you?"

My answer is something like this: I would put a bit of acting in it to make a point, to be funny, to draw the attention of the person (or people) I'm talking to.

I'd like to really put myself in it,  
to vividly express emotions.

I would joke around a lot,  
play with the language.

That's what I have fun doing.

I do that a lot, actually.

Especially when my speech is (almost) effortless and I don't have to worry about it.

Oh, and I like making long pauses that surprise people.

It's sometimes humorous and it gets my point across better.

Dan:

Man, you've got the right idea. Now you just have to let yourself do a lot more of it. John

John,

Exactly. I usually communicate in such a way only when I feel confident and when speech isn't an issue. But I wonder how it would go if I forced myself to express myself regardless of my feelings and current self-image. Unrestricted by imagined and felt limitations. I often try to pull myself together to let the real Dan come out, because that dude is awesome and has no limitations in communication. I'm a huge fan.

Would you say that this quote, *"It is a law of the human mind that I can act myself into believing faster than I can believe myself into acting."* applies to this?

Dan

## BE WHO YOU ARE

Hi,

I have been reading 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' to gain more knowledge of soft skills. While I've been enjoying almost everything in the book so far, this quote in particular struck me as an epiphany. Well, more like a confirmation, actually.

This is what I've been thinking and doing. This is how I'm training myself to just be who I am and escaping the lie. I'm sure you'll find something for yourself in this quote:

"Whenever you go out of doors, draw the chin in, carry the crown of the head high, and fill the lungs to the utmost; drink in the sunshine; greet your friends with a smile, and put soul into every hand-clasp.

Do not fear being misunderstood; and never waste a moment thinking about your enemies. Try to fix firmly in your own mind what you would like to do, and then without violence of direction you will move straight to the goal.

Keep your mind on the great and splendid thing you would like to do; and then, as the days go gliding by, you will find yourself unconsciously seizing the opportunities that are required for the fulfillment of your desire, just as the coral insect takes from the running tide the elements that it needs. Picture in your mind the able, earnest, useful person you desire to be, and the thought that you hold is transforming you into that particular individual you so admire.

Preserve a right mental attitude--the attitude of courage, frankness and good cheer. All things come through desire and every sincere prayer is answered. We become like that on which our hearts are fixed.

Character is the result of two things, mental attitude, and the way we spend our time. It is what we think and what we do that make us who we are.

By laying hold on the forces of the universe, you are strong with them. And when you realize this, all else is easy, for in your arteries will course red corpuscles, and in your heart the determined resolution is born to do and to

be. Carry your chin in and the crown of your head high. We are gods in the chrysalis." Elbert Hubbard

What I'm getting out of it is this: cherish this inner core, who you actually ARE. You need to welcome this inner awesomeness because the truth is, regardless of who you THINK you are, who you actually ARE keeps on being who you are. Would an awesome person bow their head down in shame because they can't say a word? Heck no! They carry a crown on their head and to make sure it doesn't fall off, they need to stand and walk upright!

I could go on, but you get the idea. Once you've trained your mind to think in alignment with the truth, you're fine. And that's what I'm doing. :)

Dan

## WRITING MY OBSERVATIONS: AM I DOING IT RIGHT??

I think that it can't be done wrong if one is honest with himself/herself and writes out of the flow that Ruth talks about in *Speech is a river*. But I'm asking you, who consistently write down your observations concerning stuttering or life in general, to comment on this:

I started slowly just writing about some stuttering experiences. When I finished Ruth's book, I realized that I need to really get in the flow of things and just write, write and write whatever comes to mind.

I found myself writing not just about speech, because that's honestly not such a big deal to me now (which is why it's often difficult for me to stay motivated to dissolve blocking when I don't struggle with it so much) and there are other things on my mind.

I've been sort of bummed out lately because of something in my life and I felt sad. I haven't been feeling good. Naturally, that's what the Big Me wanted to write about and I couldn't stop my fingers. I just kept typing. I wrote down every single thought as it was flowing and flowing, until it stopped and I came into some sort of conclusion.

There's a thing I'm asking myself though... Whenever I feel sad because of something, I know that it's a matter of perspective I'm

approaching the situation from. So there's no use of pondering on it. I should rather shake it off and carry on, believe the best about the situation etc. Change my mind, so to speak.

However, by writing down these observations, I didn't feel any sort of relief, I just naturally started feeling sad because of re-living something hurtful and thinking about it. I noted my whole thought process that I undergo every time it is triggered by something. Emotions came back, perceptions, physiological responses. And it doesn't have anything to do with speech as I mentioned above. I was basically reminding myself of something bad and feeling a bit bad because of it.

You probably already know what I want to ask you about. Am I doing it right? Am I getting in touch with my feelings and letting them go by writing them so that I don't have to carry them around? Is this kind of approach going to help me? I know that right now I'm judging my observations, which is not right, but I'm new to this and I think it's better to be honest with you and to just ask. I'd be grateful if someone could share his thoughts on this. Thank you! Dan

Dan, keep writing and observing. Just keep going. Anna

Dan,

If I'm not mistaken, I remember that Ruth was doing her writing by hand. In this way, the pen held by her fingers at the end of her arm became an extension of her body.

You seem to type your "journal" presumably with a computer. The feeling and the messages conveyed risk not being as insightful as it

was for Ruth.

May be you should give a try in using no mechanical device to see if there is a difference.

Richard Parent

Richard:

Hmm, maybe I should give this a thought. I have a reason for not writing with my hand: I'm terrible at it. I don't like how it looks and it's very tiring. I don't see how I could get in the flow when I have to wait for my slow hand to write words. When I was very young, my teacher called me 'unique' because of it. Because not a single letter looked the same way twice. It's not that crazy but you get the picture.

I think I'll give it a shot though. If you say so...

Dan

DEAR DAN:

YOU WROTE:

“You probably already know what I want to ask you about. Am I doing it right? Am I getting in touch with my feelings and letting them go by writing them so that I don't have to carry them around? Is this kind of approach going to help me? I know that right now I'm judging my observations, which is not right, but I'm new to this and I think it's better to be honest with you and to just ask. I'd be grateful if someone could share his thoughts on this. Thank you!”

I'll just tell you how I write. When I am writing, it goes something like this....for example, suppose I have to do something for my health. So okay, I write that down. I've found out, for example, that I feel better when I don't eat more than a slice of bread a

day. So I write down my responses to that. Maybe I write: You feel much better when you eliminate gluten from your diet. So let's do that. And my feelings react....Never having bread makes me feel deprived. I can start dealing with gluten tomorrow. I made a pan of yummy rolls, and I want one today. So I agree that I feel better when I don't eat gluten....but I'll start that tomorrow. So then I write back.....no, I have to override your feelings....your likes and dislikes. I know you don't want to change. I know you love homemade fragrant bread. But you will love it tomorrow as much as you do today. What good does this kind of writing do? For one thing, when I write out my feelings I can see how resistant I am to change. I can see how I want to cater to my likes and dislikes (feelings). It's only when I see my reactions written down in black and white, that I can begin to see what is wrong. And only then can I do something about it.

So maybe when you are feeling down, as you suggested you feel lately, maybe you can say to yourself "everytime you begin to think of that situation, just stop it." So then you pick up a pen or go to the computer and write down your responses to that. "Well, I can't just stop, like that, like boom.... I can't do that." And you can see that you are talking to your beliefs about yourself....so you can continue the conversation: "You certainly can do that. It's very simple. Remember that you managed to do that a few days ago. You started to resent your mother and what she said to you and you commanded yourself 'Stop it, you are making yourself miserable. Stop it right now.' And you stopped it. So you can stop thinking of what is bothering you right away."

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Hi, Dan:

Dear Dan: I like what Anna said about "keep on writing" but I would add: "Keep on writing until something new appears on your page. And then keep on writing." The idea of NEW is important here. P. D. Ouspensky said something interesting on that score. He found the chief difficulty for most people is the

realization that if one goes deep enough within themselves they will discover NEWNESS....that is, things they have never heard before. They were no longer able to translate these new insights into their habitual language and strangely enough, this Newness happened at a time when they had ceased to hope and believe there might be anything new.

I seldom try to change my brain or manipulate my thoughts/beliefs. My main drive is to get in touch with what John calls the "it" and Bob calls "the place in the back of your mind" and Ouspensky calls "Newness."

This connection changes everything....and is definitely at the root of my freedom from stuttering. This connectedness is the state from which every new discovery in my life came to me. I find that this Inner "It" has a **mind of its own** separate from my conscious mind and I discover what it has to say when I write freely, without thought or plan.

It's the freshness of the info from this "it" that shocks me and confirms the fact that I'm grooving on the right track. Conversely, when everything I read on the paper I'm writing on is simply a rehash of stuff I've heard all my life, I become cynical.

I'll send you a sample of my writing that may give you an idea as to the way my writing takes form and how "something new" appears....and this "something new" is always so transformative I am never the same again. Ruth Mead

Ruth and Dan:

Ruth, what you described so eloquently is to me the essence of the work we do in NLP. The tools are different, but the desired outcome is very similar. It is not just about changing the belief or changing a behavior, it is about reaching that deeper part of you that suddenly brings forward Newness. You see a client's face light up, their whole demeanor changes and when they are out in the world they find it simply impossible to respond in the old way. I wish I would know a

way to bring people to this state faster than I am doing it now though.  
Anna

DAN: HERE IS THE SAMPLE I PROMISED YOU FROM MY WRITING...

*No matter that I had managed to work through many of my old rigid beliefs about stuttering during the previous two and a half months...still my speech hadn't dramatically improved and I was keenly disappointed with my progress and frantic regarding my stuttering. It was already late August and I took my writing to the balcony that overlooked the forest.*

*Not a leaf was stirring and it was extremely hot by Munich*

*standards. I had been rereading Abraham Maslow, in which he proposed: "Every problem is firmly rooted in a faulty view of reality."*

*So I wrote those words at the top of the page...and then continued to "doodle" as I do when I'm knee deep in understanding something complex, waiting for clarity.*

*Then I noticed something. My random scribbles seemed to be creating a pattern of some sort. I had drawn six or more wavy lines across the page, stacked one above the other, and in the margin I had drawn what appeared to be two or more cupped hands (shaped like parenthesis)...as if the hands were pushing the wavy lines. I had no idea what any of this meant until I absently wrote beneath the squiggling lines:*

*Speech is a river. Don't push the river.*

*And then pow...all hell broke loose: I got it! I absolutely got it! The meaning of those words came alive and blew my old way of thinking to smithereens in a mega-moment.*

*I ran into the living room from the balcony and back again, caught up in a frenzy of delight, grabbing a small umbrella holder, dizzily dancing it around and around the room, all the time squealing, "Speech is a river! It flows by itself. It happens on its own! No need to think about it! Or manufacture it! Or will it! Or work at it. Speech is a river! Life is a river. I am a river." And nothing could stop my celebration.*

*I had been given a powerful metaphor that pushed back against both everything I had been taught and what I had come to believe. Along with this new clarity came a state of inner calmness in which I*

*was finally able to trust the incredibly complex and competent ability of my brain and body to do its stuff without my conscious interference.*

*When I returned to the States, I started a car company. This required me to talk on the phone almost constantly and was a thrilling earth-shattering experience for me. Some of us get our thrills from public speaking. Personally I, who had never made a phone call before the age of thirty, literally got goose bumps from being able to speak on the phone fluently.*

*Now when I tell you "I was cured," I mean, "I never thought of the mechanics of speech again." Maybe my speech wasn't perfect but who was keeping score? Certainly not me. I was having the time of my life.*

*Dear Neurosemanticsofstuttering:*

It's sometimes funny how seriously we tend to take ourselves. Monitoring every single word and looking for major and minor disfluencies and then thinking, "oh no, I stuttered on this word, everybody noticed and I look like a fool." Well, newsflash: nobody cares! This is absolutely normal!

I'm sometimes very aware of how people talk and therefore I notice their setbacks. Some people stutter (repeat syllables etc.) more than others. And nobody cares, nobody even notices because it's considered normal.

This was brought to my attention by my friend that used to deal with similar issues and we chat on skype once week. I care too much about what people think. I don't usually stutter in an obvious way. It's subtle. People don't notice. Big blocks are an issue at times but most of the time they don't appear.

I realized that I actually like it when someone stutters due to lack of confidence in saying a particular word, or lack of preparation, or speaking too fast or too hesitantly... and I'm talking about otherwise fluent people. It simply means that they're human and that they aren't making a huge effort to communicate in a precise and clear manner as they would, say, in presentation. It's just who they are. And when I like them as a person, I find these little imperfections quite nice.

My speech has changed so much over the past few months and I don't know why. When I stop putting so much effort in speaking correctly, my speech sometimes get sloppy with lots of repetitive stuttering and other "mistakes" OR it gets so fluent that it flows like a river. That usually happens when I'm physically super-tired and relaxed and I don't have enough mental energy to care. Speaking is so much fun when that happens.

The problem is, however, when my speech is bumpy and even when I don't care....this "not caring" about doesn't seem to lead anywhere. That's something that I'm trying to figure out: what's different in my mindset when my speech is bumpy as opposed to when it's fluent and free.

In conclusion, I'm not sure about what's going on in with these two different mindsets, but there's one thing that is absolutely clear: "Oh my God, I stuttered, people noticed, it's so embarrassing!" never helps and never is as big of a deal as it seems.

The truth is: They - don't - care!

They have their own issues.

This frees you to deal with yourself and your issues and so you don't have

to care about other people.

Everybody sometimes stutters.

Dan