

DON'T OVERLOOK THE SIMPLE THINGS

MY STUTTERING MINDSET

BY MARK MATTIX

ONE

Hello, my name is Mark.

I am reading John Harrison's, "Redefining Stuttering". So far it has offered amazing insight into the way I think about speaking. John also referred me to this group (yahoo neurosemanticsofstuttering group).

I recently started a new job and have been so busy lately but I really wanted to just say hello and introduce myself. If you've read the story of Monica trying to purchase salmon at the meat market in "Redefining Stuttering", this is the issue I have been facing.

I think too much about speaking and worry about stuttering or stammering and have word fears. I'm trying to remember when I first started having these thoughts and fears, I cannot remember having them before I was the age of 19, so about 7 years now of dealing with this.

I sat in on a business conference recently at my new job and felt absolutely terrified of having to speak. I sat and listened to the conversation and took notes, I don't

believe I was expected to really add anything to the conversation, as my manager realizes I am new to the field and learning a lot still.

Before the meeting I thought it would be so much worse but the meeting was actually very laid back and casual.

Is there anyone in this group that has experienced these feelings and gotten better at dealing with the fear?

John suggested the book, "Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway." I bought it and have also been reading when I can. Something they mention in the book is, how some people think there is going to be some sort of doomsday, when they will be put on the spot and fail miserably. I have noticed that I do this all the time!

It's become really hard to live with not being able to express myself the way I wish I could. This fear of stammering hinders me from meeting people and interacting with others.

I hate to think that people may think I want to be unsocial or perhaps I'm too prudish or egotistical to talk to them.

I have never dreamed about my speaking but last week I dreamed that I was having a conversation with some one and my speaking was fluent and I actually felt calm when talking. During the dream I felt so happy that I

was speaking without fearing or wondering what the other person was thinking of me. I hope that I can achieve this type of fluency and calmness when speaking. Thanks for reading, it's great to be in a place where I can talk about this....

TWO

So I've completed Redefining Stuttering, contacted Bob Bodenhamer who suggested that I read Linda Rounds book. I am only on about page 40 of Linda's book and I'm starting to process all this information.

Tonight these thoughts ran through my mind and I'm not sure where they came from but I grabbed my phone and took notes. I am quite shocked because I never realized these thoughts existed:

I see myself as a chameleon. I tend to be very fluent around people that are happy and kind. I can easily sense this in their voice and replicate those same emotions with ease and fluency.

In fact when I think about it, I have very few enemies because of this. I give people what they seek. I mirror their selves back and not myself. I transform my exterior self-image to match the image of the person I'm speaking to.

When I'm around a person who is monotone, this is hard for me. I get anxious. I think they may be disgruntled or not want to tolerate me and my potential block. I also worry that they see how nervous I am and will react to that and possibly attack me.

I feel the same anxiety when I'm speaking to someone who is talking about a subject I don't know much about. I want to converse with them about a topic they're passionate about but don't know what to say. Perhaps what I say will only sound stupid or not be worthy of adding to the conversation?

When this happens, my exterior starts to crumble.

I'm like a chameleon that cannot blend in with his surroundings. I feel vulnerable.

Around people of authority I'm expected to know something, I'm expected to sound professional too. When I go to answer the phone this sense of blending gets totally confused. Who is on the other line? Is the person unhappy, will they be in a rush and expect a quick and accurate response from me?

When someone is in the same room as me while answering the phone, how do I determine how to continue to blend with the person in the room and also with the person on the phone who is a complete mystery?

How can these "mystery callers" and the person in the room blend into my self (which is only capable of dealing with 1 person at a time?!)

How can I maintain happiness and emotion in my voice

to be fluent with a person in the room if the caller is monotone and angry?

If I answer the phone happily will they be pissed because I might sound happy, will they think I'm strange because I sound happy?

When a person of authority is in the same room when I answer the phone, what will they think? Did I answer the phone in a kind way? Would I sound like an airhead if I answered the phone in a happy tone or should I answer in a neutral professional tone? I'm lost and don't know how to sort these things out. I don't know which persona to use when speaking.

I would love to hear anyone's opinion! -Mark

THREE

I had a different type of experience today and thought I would share.

I was having a telephone conference with 2 other people at work today and I had the strangest experience of catching myself speaking fluently. Now this only occurred on 1 word that I tend to block on (utilization) but after I said the word fluently I thought to myself, whoa, what just happened? I didn't block!

Thinking back on the conversation, I felt somewhat comfortable. The voices of the people sounded friendly and I felt relaxed. At the time of speaking fluently, there were various things I wanted to ask, I was speaking about the current topic yet thinking about the next thing I wanted to mention.

Basically, I wasn't focused on my speech and I can't remember the last time that happened. It felt so strange that I could pronounce words without any hesitation and they came out fluently. I instantly realized what happened and I was taken back by it.

I feel like this experience was a reminder that blocking and being in a state of anxiety, doesn't have to be permanent. Once I learn how to let go completely, I'll be there! Mark

FOUR

Micha, Your post is making me think about "letting go."

I've always known that I have to just "let go" and quit thinking of what other people might think but I've never been able to do it.

I feel like there's an innate part of me that has to please everyone I come into contact with (I give them my power). I will catch myself thinking about everything I say before saying it. I worry about not sounding proper in the words I choose.

I know this will sound strange but have you ever tried "fooling yourself"?

Like when you mentioned you were thinking of what to say, like: "excuse me, can you change this bill for me?"

Have you ever had a thought like that and then just decided to go in a completely different direction when you actually said it?

It's like you're keeping your mind busy by thinking exactly what you're going to say but then at the very last second, you decide to go with something completely

different like, "Hi, could you break a \$20 for me"?

In my past experiences I usually hate interrupting someone if I see they are busy. The words, "excuse me" are sometimes hard to get out because I think, at this very instant, the person is going to break their thought process regarding what they are doing and put all of their attention on me.

In order to overcome this I'll let myself worry about not being able to say "excuse me" and instead say something like, "Hello, sorry to bother you..." It actually has been working for me lately when answering the phone. I'll worry about a specific thing I told myself I must say when answering the phone but instead answer with a different greeting.

This method of mine has temporarily relieved some stress but I still seek the ability to not have any thought, prior to speaking. Anna, from this forum recommended someone close to me and will be seeing them soon, hopefully for some NLP sessions! I've come to realize that I really don't have a blocking or stuttering problem I am just currently a PWB (Person who blocks).

What I mean by that is my issue with speaking isn't due to speaking, it's due to my thought process. Sometimes my blocking will show itself while I am writing by hand.

Example: sometimes when writing the number 7, I will

think, "Should I write this with a little line going downwards on the left hand side or should I just make the top a straight line?" When I have this thought it causes me to pause on the 7 and forces me to concentrate more when writing it, which usually causes me to write a really sloppy 7. The same thing happens when writing a w. I, for some reason, give conscious thought when writing the arches on the bottom, which results in a mess.

Letting go for me means to not give any thought to what I'm doing, to be carefree. If I could just trust this "frequency" that's already in tune with speaking and writing, I'd be ok. Instead my thoughts disrupt this frequency and it gets scrambled!

I'm trying to analyze why I feel like I need to have conscious thought when doing things and it's very hard to put into words. The only way I can think of how to describe it right now is, as a child I was taught to not use foul language. Even a word like, "sucks" was a naughty word to use!

Of course when I was away from my parents I would sometimes use a "foul" word here and there and I felt dirty! I felt like I was being very risqué, causing shock, with my language.

In the back of my mind I would think of my mom frowning at the words I'd use. There wasn't a doubt in

my mind that I was causing her some sort of awful sorrow and disappointment.

It's strange because that thought and feeling of being risqué or "living on the edge" always caused me to be conscious of the "foul" words I chose to use. That's almost the same feeling I get when, say, answering the phone. If I don't think about what I'm going to say and if I can pronounce it all correctly, I would be taking some sort of risk of letting someone down.

Letting go and not having a conscious thought would give me that "risqué, living on the edge" feeling.

Not sure if any of this makes sense but hopefully you get my point. -Mark

FIVE

This might be a bit off-topic of neurosemantics but I think this group will understand and be able to offer constructive advice.

My parents took me out of public school after the 5th grade and I was homeschooled until high school graduation.

My parents' reasoning for homeschooling my younger sister and myself was that their older daughter (my mom's step child) experienced more than she was comfortable with during Middle and High school, (typical peer pressures of life).

I'm sure that the idea of homeschooling was entirely my mother's, but my dad also seemed to accept and stand behind the idea.

I can remember both of my parents always telling my family: Two hours of homeschooling is equal to an entire day of learning at a public school, (I'm not sure what they based that on).

My parents did what they thought was best for their children. I have no doubt about that. Throughout the 6th-12th grade I never really gave it much thought as to how much (or little) I was actually learning.

My parents entered my sister and myself into an "umbrella school" which supposedly ensured that we were abiding by governmental schooling and testing standards.

I'm not sure how this actually worked because I can remember taking very similar final tests each year throughout high school. I attended a community college when I was 20. I was very nervous when I began, thinking I would be severely behind in academics compared to the other students.

I had to attend remedial math classes but (in hindsight) lucky for me this state of feeling anxious, of not being up to par with the other students, made me very ambitious to learn.

I'm almost 29 now and writing this makes me realize that attending community college drastically altered where my life was heading.

I don't blame my parents but they definitely deserve some of the blame due to the issues I face in life.

I worked with my father in a family business, which seemed to take precedence over school. I think back to my homeschool days and it all just seems a blur. To be honest, I feel like I dropped out of school after the 5th grade. Whatever I did learn was due to me researching

and reading on the Internet or from my studies with the community college.

I don't really know why I'm writing this but I feel enlightened to get it out. Sometimes the anxiety of not being as educated as others still bothers me. I do excel in some areas but I know there are others where I lack a great deal of knowledge, such as history and science.

If anyone could recommend their favorites books for these subjects I'd greatly appreciate it.

Writing this has given me an idea... perhaps I should teach computer classes to homeschooled children? This might help with my anxiety of public speaking, learn technical I.T. content even better for my career and most importantly, help a child that may be going through something similar.

Hmmmmmmmmmmmm....

Mark

SIX

Congratulations on your achievement Alan! I know it's what I have to do but I'm still in the process of learning how to let myself go.

I saw that link you shared of Ed Tate and I found it interesting that he claims to have a mild stutter and that he must tell himself to slow down at times. In my opinion he sounded like a fast fluent speaker! I wonder, do you think he'll always claim to have a mild stutter or will he, will we ever claim to be stutter/block free?

Do you think PWS will one day allow themselves to believe they are no longer a PWS? I sometimes feel like blocking is something I'm holding on to, and to stop I just have to let it all go. I can't be a person who mildly stutters or blocks I have to be a person who has overcome the damaging thoughts that lead to blocking.

I'm in no way trying to talk badly of Ed Tate but just wondering, do you think he's still holding on to some negative thoughts?

Just wanted to say Hi since it's been a while. I think my last e-mails here sounded a bit dire so I just wanted to let everyone know I'm fine, still struggling but working toward fluency every day! Mark

SEVEN

I recently bought Bob Bodenhamer's "I Have A Voice."

I'm on page 56 right now. I found the way we associate and disassociate in some situations very interesting! There was a part when he asked during the time of blocking what are we focused on?

I thought about a situation and said to myself: "My mind is focused on the other person's thoughts of me when speaking."

I believe the next paragraph said, "But Bob, I'm not focused on my speech, I'm focused on the other person listening to me! That's when I realized I am actually focused on myself, even though my thoughts we always about that person."

I thought of some other situations in my mind, like answering the phone at work. If I associate my thoughts in a first-person-view while I'm answering the phone I can feel those feelings of anxiety.

I even acted out the situation and realize I sound very down and monotone, like I'm depressed. Then when I disassociated from the situation I viewed it as a movie and saw myself happy and answering the telephone in a positive, happy kind of way.

So does this mean in order for me to be fluent I need to be happy?

I absolutely LOVE happy people. They lift my spirits and make me feel safe (and a lot easier to be fluent with) yet I feel COMPLETELY uncomfortable when I act happy. I feel ashamed! Almost like being happy is looked down upon by other people. Yet at the same time I think to myself, "If I could just be happy at work and enjoy my job and pursue things like I really want to, it would make me happy and probably make others happy too."

Why can't I be happy? I don't really have anything to be unhappy about. Mark

EIGHT

Hello Mark. Great name! My name is also Mark.

I'm not sure if my opinion will matter much to you, especially since I don't have a background in NLP and also because I am still dealing with blocking but... here I am giving my opinion anyway!

I sometimes wonder why God would give me this type of horrible quality of life, always feeling anxious and worrying about blocking, with very little of my life feeling relaxed when speaking.

The only answer is, it's what we've been dealt... It really friggin sucks sometimes but a lot of people deal with things that suck in life.

Some really good people that are really close to God will get cancer, they'll even recover and praise God for the miracle of healing to only later be diagnosed again and eventually pass away.

Maybe God has more difficult tests for people He has different plans for? I have no idea. We could contemplate the meaning of life and the existence of God until we both die, with probably no solid proof that would satisfy us.

The self-help books are wonderful and greatly insightful but reading a book isn't going to "fix" us, just like reading the Bible doesn't guarantee you'll go to Heaven and not reading the Bible doesn't mean you're doomed to hell. There are so many decisions in our lives that will take us on different paths, different outcomes of this life and the next.

I don't believe God will take away our problem, because if He would I don't believe we'd be dealing with it to begin with.

Like Bob suggested, WE have to GIVE IT. Whether you believe in God or not, I believe ultimately we'll be giving our problem away if we plan to no longer possess the problem, right?

I like how you said you would just like to shout from the rooftops, F**k this stutter, I think that's what you have to do. I think once we break out of this bondage we will see things more clearly, we'll see our faults and we'll be able to learn from the experience. Who knows, maybe then we'll even see the reason behind it all?

Stay strong and no matter who comes against you don't feel embarrassed or ashamed.

This is who we are and if someone else doesn't like us because we stuttered or blocked then we should probably feel sorry for their heartless, uncompassionate

soul.

I've thought about this taking on a role of someone else to not stutter or block before. It's sort of like when you sing and are completely fluent. I'm not sure if knowing the lyrics to the song made me fluent, it seems just by using a different tone of voice and knowing the audience expects you to put on a show, makes you change your mentality of yourself for a few minutes.

Every time I see Johnny Depp give an interview I always wonder if he deals with stuttering or anxiety. He is always so quiet during an interview or speech and doesn't seem to say a lot. Yet when he's playing a character, he's very distinct and uses a louder vocal voice when speaking. Mark

NINE

From Luis...(a friend in the group, followed by Mark's reply)

"Hello to everybody. I posted my first topic several months ago. I finally have found the right track to improve my blocking condition. I have read several books (John Harrison's book, I have a voice, Speech is a River, etc) which have helped me to understand what to do in order to correct this problem, and I think I have improved progressively.

I have another problem. I have a 14 years old son who also stutters, but his stuttering problem is not too evident because he holds back a lot, and the way to hide this problem is trying to avoid to speak.

He often speaks with short phrases or answers. The teachers report the same behavior in classes. Even though he has this problem, he normally achieves high scores. He is smart.

Even though we both know that each other blocks, we have never talked about this issue. Finally, I have decided to talk to him in order to start some kind of therapy and try to change his beliefs, perceptions, etc. about stuttering.

I plan to talk to him being supportive and informing him that stuttering is not caused by a physical anomaly but its caused by a group of wrong beliefs rooted in our minds, etcetera. I want him to watch "The King's Speech" movie.

This is how I plan to approach him. Please inform if I am correct or provide some advice

Thanks to everybody. Luis"

Mark answers Luis:

I would like to give my advice and also ask you a question.

I should also let you know that I don't have children of my own.

There are a lot of situations in my life (especially from being home-schooled) that I can think back on and wish that my parents were more open with me.

First my question: Why do you feel you can't speak to your child about stuttering?

I'm just curious because my father has so many reservations about things he'll talk to me about.

It was hard for me to see my father more open and talkative to my cousins than he was with me.

I know he loves me but I've never heard him say it. I just want to encourage you to be open with your son, I believe at 14 he's heard a lot already or he's perfectly capable of processing the information you tell him. I'm not saying to talk to him about every aspect of your personal life but feel more open to bring up topics like these. As Anna mentioned, he will eventually just seek advice from someone else.

My advice: If you want him to watch the King's Speech don't present it to him as a movie you want him to watch or a movie you think will help him with letting go of his holding back.

Tell him about the movie and why it was so empowering to you.

Suggest the film to him and let him decide to watch it.

Besides this movie though I think the best way to help your son is to open yourself up. Just spill everything about yourself and stuttering to him.

If your son doesn't seem to respond much perhaps he just wants to listen for now. In this case tell him why you think you stutter, what events may have led to you stuttering or holding back, how long you've suffered dealing with it, what you're trying to do to resolve it.

Don't think of the conversation as about your son, sit your son down and tell him you need to get something off your chest about yourself. I think it's ok and good to let your son see that you are human and also vulnerable. You need to open up completely with him before he's willing to do the same with you. The reason I'm giving this advice is because I think I would be living a dramatically different life now if my father did this with me years ago.

Take care and I wish you the best, -Mark

TEN

I find my fear of holding back ridiculous.

I can speak to myself without a problem or to people I trust, yet my fear of holding back causes me to hold back. For the past week I've been thinking a lot about this, about the idea of how ridiculous this seems, how I'm creating something out of nothing! I realized I've felt this same feeling before when I was a child, afraid of something lurking in the dark...

I will now share the conversation from these 2 roles of my current self (the adult, Dad) and myself from the early 1990s (the child, Son).

Any advice on how to support the child and eradicate his fear of the monster is greatly appreciated!

1. Understand your child's fears:

Child: Dad, I'm afraid that when I have to answer the phone or speak to someone in authority or even talk to family members that believe I'm very intelligent, they're going to laugh at me!

Adult: Why do you think these people will laugh at you?

Child: I think they're going to think I'm ignorant

or that talking to me is just a waste of their time. Anything I can tell them, they already know and most likely know so much more than I! Remember when someone said, "children are meant to be seen, not heard". I think they'll laugh when they realize how much of a fool I am! If I block when answering the phone or speaking to them this will make my ignorance so much more obvious! I must fight to hide any blocking as a last ditch effort in hopes they won't realize my true identity, the ignorant fool!

2. Talk to your child:

Adult: Son, I love you so much. I'm so sorry I've given you the idea that your opinion or things you have to say were so meaningless! Those words, a child is meant to be seen and not heard, those were words uttered by a fool! You have so much wisdom, love, laughter and life to share, it kills me to think that you're hiding these wonderful talents and values because you're afraid that no one wants to hear you! I understand now how you've created this monster, I understand the feeling that someone is going to jump out and devour you. I'm sorry I've led you to create this awful monster and now it's time for me to help you shine the light on the truth!

3. Helping the child overcome the fear:

Adult: Son, I want to help you eradicate this monster once and for all! I want you to understand that I support you first of all and that I'm here with you to

deal with this monster, you're not alone anymore! I want you to rest and be calm now, I will be with you when speaking to adults, people of authority or family that's correct in thinking you're intelligent. I'm going to help set an example for you that this monster you see doesn't exist.

When I answer the phone we won't be anxious in thinking our words don't want to be heard, instead we will think of how this person is calling us for help with something they don't understand or cannot achieve without our assistance.

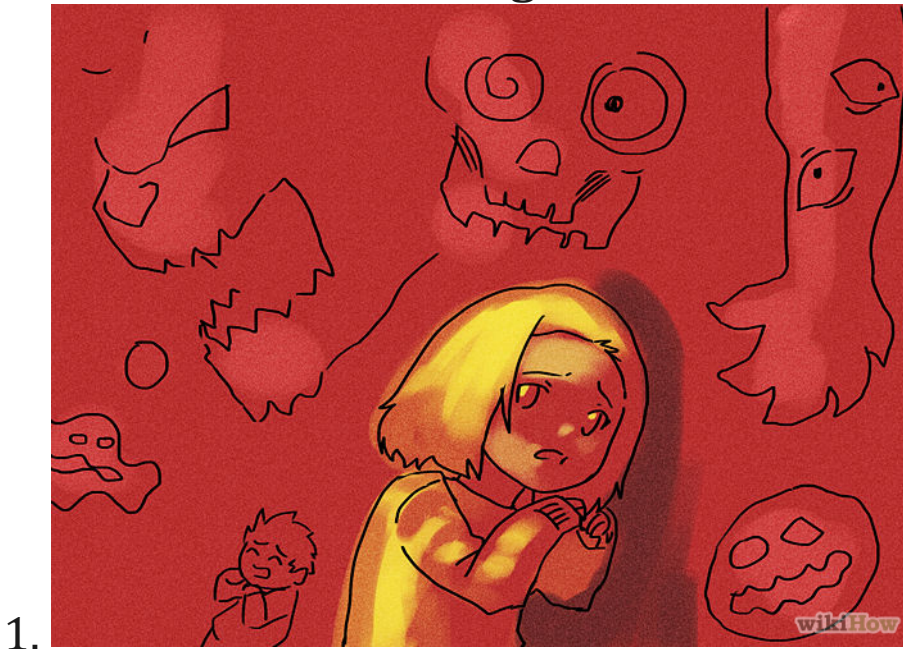
When speaking to the boss I'll think that we're speaking to him because he values our opinion, and trusts our opinion on what's best for the company, he likes us and appreciates our help, we won't think he's only there to condemn us. When we speak to family we'll feel the love they have for us, not the judgment the monster told you they had.

Adult: Most of all son, I want you to realize and take this message to heart, I understand your monster now. This monster is something you've created in your mind. It's something that doesn't really exist. I know how much you think it's there but be brave and shine the light into the darkness, you will see that the monster does not exist! I will always be here to comfort and support you, if you get scared again we will shine the light until the monster is gone for good!

When googling how to help a child with his fear of monsters, I found this in Wiki-Help:

When a child is tormented by fear of ghosts and monsters or anything evil, you can help the child overcome these fears. Be understanding, listen well and try the following suggestions to help your child move beyond the fear.

Part 1 of 3: Understanding the child's fear



1 Understand your child's fear. Young children are still discovering the world that they live in. Their imagination is developing and hence whatever they see/ hear in real life can result in formation of scary mental images. Thus, leading to a fear of darkness, imagining a monster in the dark room. Children become fearful at different ages, with different intensities and about different things. Therefore, there is no one best way to overcome fears. It has to be customized according to your child's developmental stage and his ability to handle stress.



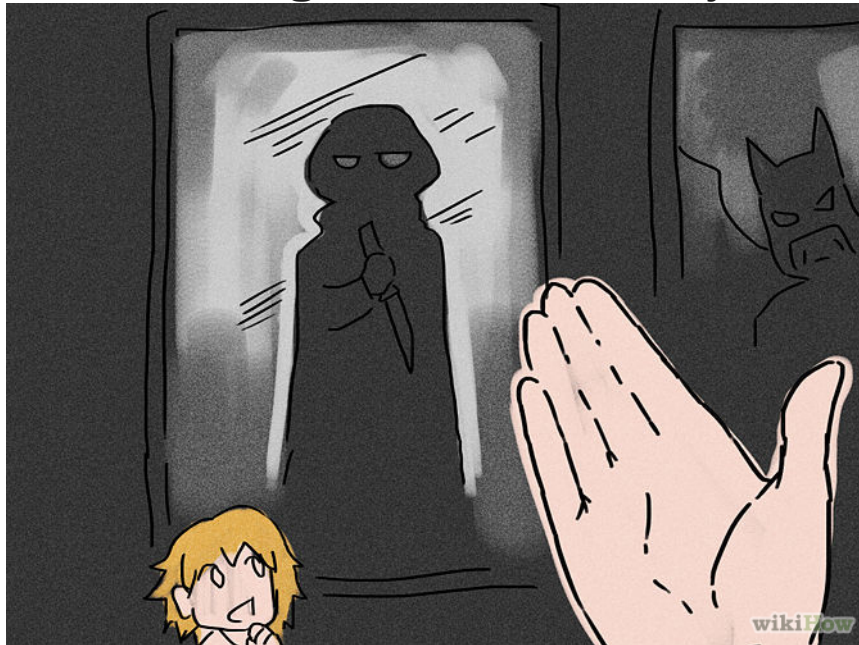
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2 Talk

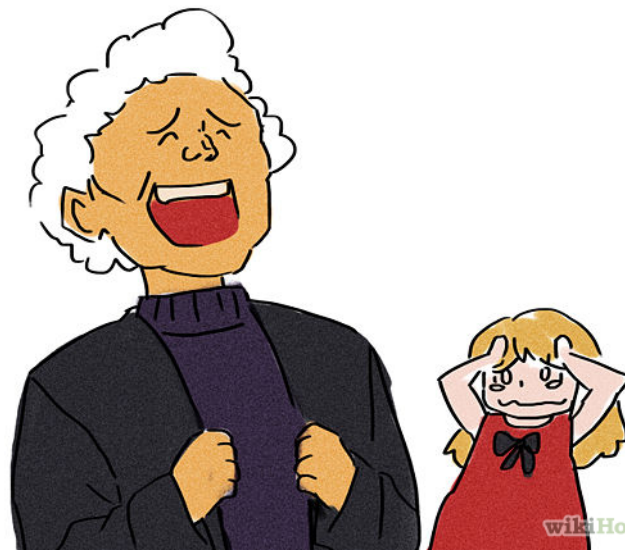
to your child. Talking to your child will definitely make him feel more comfortable. Let your child share his fear with you. Ask him to explain what is it that he is scared of and why? Let him explain how he felt. Show him your concern while he discusses his fear with you. Tell him how you were also scared of several things as a child. This

empathy will definitely strengthen your bond with your child as he starts believing that you care and are concerned about his feelings.

Part 2 of 3: Taking the fears seriously



1 Do not ignore your child's fear. If your child is scared of a particular relative, caregiver or a neighbour, do not ignore it or force the child to be with them. Instead, speak to your child about it and let him explain what makes that person fearful. Even if you think that the person is unlikely to cause any trouble to the child, do give your child some benefit of doubt.



2 Do not make fun of your child's fears. Making fun of a child's fear will not make him less fearful; instead, it will increase his anxiety and at the same time lower his self-esteem. This can lead to more intense problems like developing phobias (an advanced state of fear). The child can overcome his/her fear only with your love and care. Neglect will only develop negative feelings in the child.

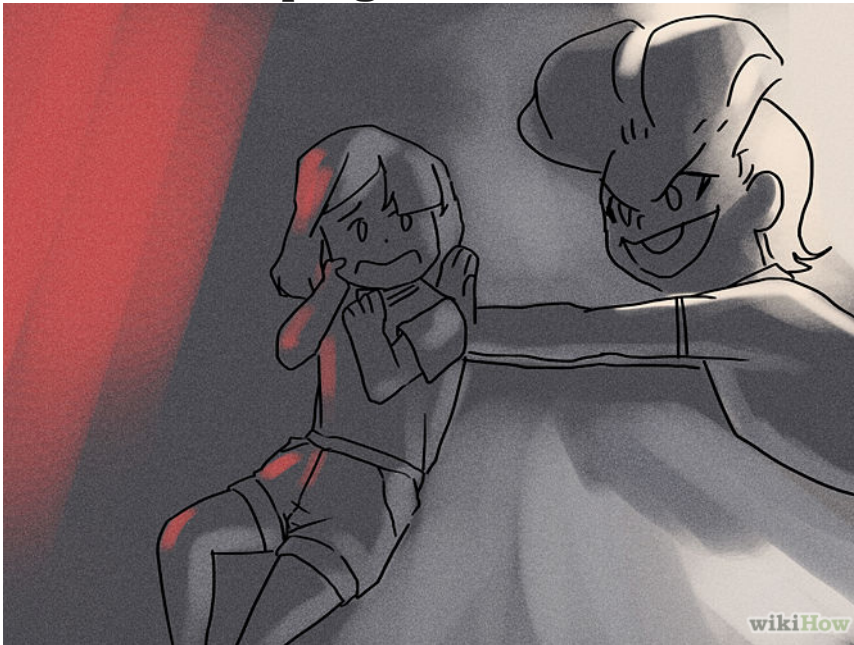


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3 Give

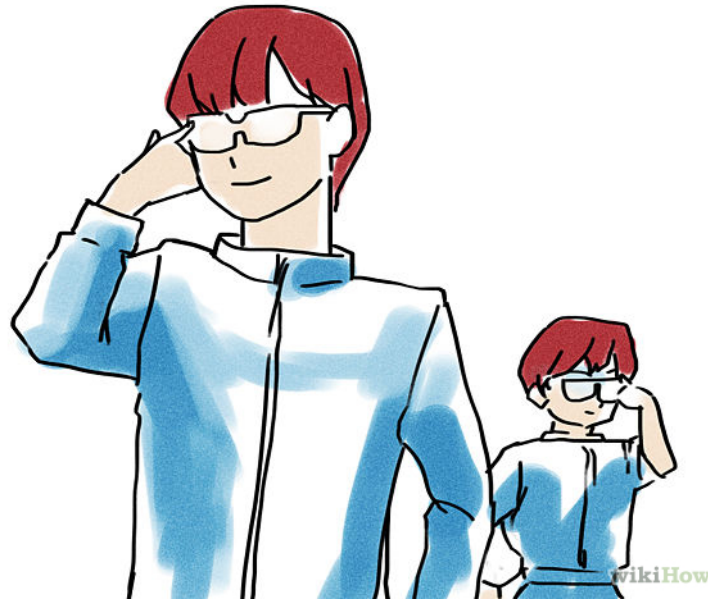
the right message. Don't send wrong messages to your child by saying things like: "Stop being a baby", "Don't be scared", "See, your friend is not scared", etc. This makes the child believe that it is wrong to be scared and he/she will stop sharing his fears with you. Tell your child that it's all right to be afraid. Also, explain him that it is okay to share his fear and to ask for help.

Part 3 of 3: Helping the child overcome the fear



1 Do not force your child to do something that he or she is scared of. Forcing the child is likely to worsen his or her fear. Just think how you would react if you were forced to hold a scary bug in your hand or to go bungee jumping. Allow your child to take his or her own time to adjust and overcome the fears. Support

your child with all the love and care that you can.

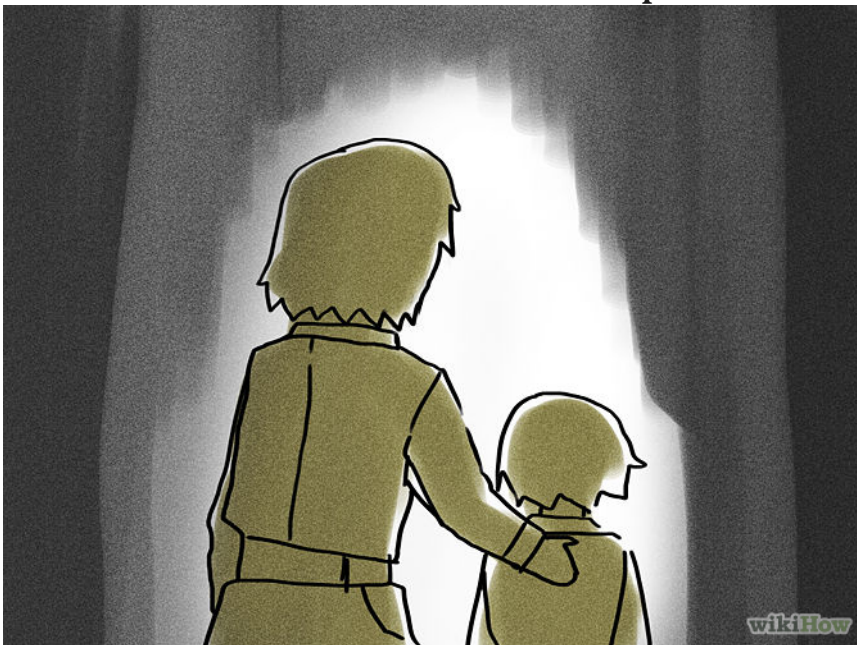


2 Model

being brave. Your child will always follow your actions. If you freak out at something, probably the child will also react in the same manner. Your child believes if something or someone is safe for you, it is safe for him too. Also, don't make your child scared by freaking out every time you feel that the child might hurt himself. Instead, just walk to him to assist him and explain what he should and shouldn't do for ensuring safety, in a calm manner.



3 Keep children away from fearful characters. A young child cannot differentiate between reality and fantasy. Children do get scared of the fantasy characters that they watch on TV. Turn off the scary TV shows. Also, let your child understand the difference between fantasy and reality by explaining to him how movies and cartoons are made in a simple manner.



4 Offer to

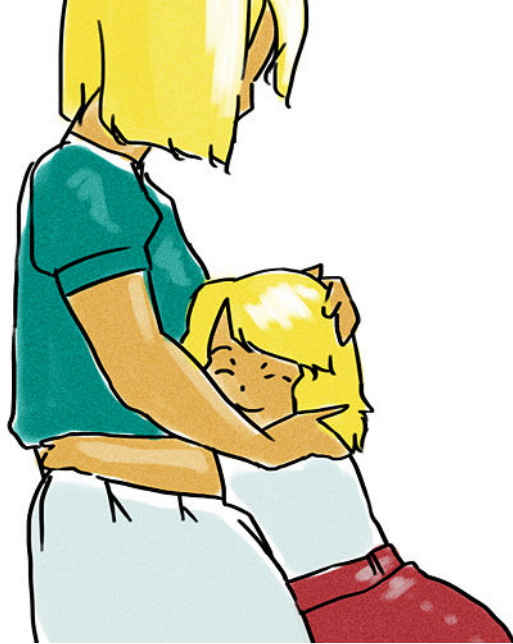
walk with the child through the house/room/area that the child associates fear with. Open all the doors, look under the bed; use light to show that nothing is there. If your child is frightened by sounds or shadowy images, discuss what could actually be causing these sounds in a non-judgmental way.

5 Use humor to defray the fear. Have the child describe to you the monster that he or she is imagining. Add silly things to that image, such as checkered underwear or a silly hat. Maybe you could pretend that this imaginary monster is asking to use the child's bathroom because he really, really has to go, or he is sad because he doesn't have many friends. Play on your child's empathy for it. This will humanize the image of the monster and make him more likeable and less scary.

- Fill a spray bottle with a mixture of water and some lavender or other aromatic oil. Stick a big label on it that says "Monster Spray" and tell your child that this will keep all monsters away because, not only are they afraid of water, but the sweet smell makes their nose itch. Spray a few spritzes into the air and assure your child that any monster would have to be crazy to come in here now.
- Put a dish by the door and fill it with a few candies, then tell your child that candy is a monster's favorite thing in the world but once they eat them they become soft and sweet, like

puppy dogs.

- Take a ball of yarn and lay a "monster barrier" around your child's bed. Tell your child that monsters can't cross that sort of barrier and if they try, they will go poof and are zapped away like magic.



wikiHow

6 Make

sure your child knows he or she is loved. Make it clear that you will always be there to protect your child.

Tips

- A nice cup of warm milk in a special teacup can help at night, add a tea bag that is not caffeine based, such as vanilla rooibos tea to make a nice flavor.
- You can put some lavender in a spray bottle. Spray this into the air and tell the child it will help to get rid of those negative things that are bothering them. Lavender is a very calming herb and will settle the

child. It is also an action that the child will see, and help calm them.

- Numerous books and movies are available about friendly ghosts and monsters.
- If your child is still scared, consider sitting in bed with them until they fall asleep.
- Read or watch some of these with your child to help them imagine non-threatening creatures that might visit their room at night.

Be very wary of letting a young child watch movies with a PG (parental guidance) rating. If the movie is PG, read why it is PG. If there are thematic/scary parts, do not let a fretful child watch until he or she is older. The site Common Sense Media can be helpful for finding reviews and getting advice from other parents. <http://www.wikihow.com/Help-Your-Child-Overcome-Fears>

ELEVEN

DEALING WITH DEATH

My grandmother died yesterday. I knew she would be passing soon, but it still hit me like a ton of bricks... She lived a wonderful 86 years and I got to spend 29 of them with her. We did a lot together, and had very similar interests, which created a strong bond. She used to always tell me I was her favorite Grandson and I believed her!

I feel like I need to say something about our time together at her service but the thoughts of blocking and stuttering are racing through the back of my mind. I know my Grandmother would appreciate me talking about her life and I would feel bad if I didn't.

I don't want to miss this opportunity from the fear of stuttering... any advice is much appreciated! Thank you!
Mark

Thank you all for the advice. I will think about this some more and decide what to do. Stuttering during my speech isn't at the forefront of my fear, I'm not used to opening up and telling people my feelings so that also makes me feel uncomfortable. The idea of stuttering is in the back of my mind but doesn't seem as scary as compared to just giving a typical speech about a topic to a group of people.

Mark

Thank you Bob for taking the time to send me this message, I appreciate it very much. She has been gone for a month now and I can note the different feelings I've had that you described. I will miss her deeply but I've accepted her passing. Hopefully it isn't too soon but I realize how lucky I was to have all the years with her. I'm glad she was able to pass peacefully.

There is one recent memory I have of her about 2 months before she passed that might be difficult to get over... She started crying because her mouth was dry and couldn't speak well. She was able to get the words out to ask the nurse if she was regressing, the nurse was positive with her but it pained me to see her upset at the fear of dying.

Thank you again, Bob. Mark

TWELVE

What many members of the group like about Mark is his transparency. Dr. Bob Bodenhamer, the originator of the group (*yahoo neurosemanticsofstuttering*) writes this:

“Mark:

Sorry to hear that you spent your weekend **depressing yourself**. What were you doing inside your head to depress yourself so badly that you spent the weekend in bed? How were you talking to yourself? No doubt you thought you were gaining something by laying there for two days. What could that have been? Well, did it work?

There is a better way.

Recall a time in your past when you were really happy... you were bubbling over. Your speech flowed like Ruth’s River. It was just grand being so happy.

Now “go be there, now”. What do I mean by that? Imagine yourself back in that moment of time. Be there present in your body looking through your eyes, seeing everyone around you and the things around you;

hear any sounds that may be there; feel that happiness that you are feeling; and, most importantly, talk to yourself and to others being there in that place of happiness.

You can go there anytime you choose to.

Practice with this.

Thanks for your transparency.

Bob”

Answer to Bob from Mark:

In my experience it's not possible for me to choose to be happy.

Like this past weekend I had an unusually strong bout of depression.

I literally stayed in my bed for the weekend.

I would *think* about getting up and doing something. But nothing seemed to matter.

I thought to myself: "I must just shake this and be happy" but physically my body felt drained.

I just didn't have the energy.

Choosing to be happy didn't work for me.

Bob, I will spend more time thinking about what you asked and think about reasons to be happy. Mark

THIRTEEN

When asked for a title for this ebook, Mark wrote:

“I've been thinking about my personal philosophy and it's hard for me to decide.

I think the most important advice I can give myself is not to overlook the simple things.

I also think that's a good way to live. I spend so much time worrying about maintaining a perfectly spoken, professional persona; I tend to overlook simple situations. I can make myself twist a situation that should be laid back and easy going into something fearful and be burdened with stress by it.

A few minutes ago I was looking through some Facebook photos my sister posted of her 2 children. My nephew was dressed in his Batman Halloween outfit with a tall stretched-out stance and the biggest smile!

It literally made me feel happy to see him exuding that much happiness.

In my free time I like to practice photography and part

of me wanted to look at the photo and critique the composition, and exposure of the image but i couldn't. All I could concentrate on is his happiness, I think back to how much happiness I've captured and it was never in a well composed, perfectly lighted photo, it's always in the candid spur of the moment shot.

No matter how well I may think I know a certain craft or how to perfect something, I need to realize that sometimes I need to let go and just let things flow! Sometimes the best things in life are simple, sometimes our greatest trials in life (like the fear of speaking) can be overcome by not always analyzing every situation but by just living in the moment and letting the situation flow.

So I think my philosophy in life would be 'Don't Overlook The Simple Things!' -Mark"