

## **Stuttering Exercises**

### **Introduction:**

A common experience in life among many of us is the necessity to do back exercises. The purpose in doing these exercises is to manage our back pain. To make us feel a bit better. It's not an attempt to completely fix the cause of our back pain. Perhaps something similar can be attempted, by doing some stuttering exercises, in order to see if these exercises can make us feel a bit better, when we speak with other people. These stuttering exercises are done by each person alone and in private. These exercises are not group exercises.

These exercises are open to every single member of the Canadian Stuttering Association, from those who suffer some effects from stuttering, all the way up to those who suffer the most extreme effects from stuttering.

To those of you who stutter, it is hoped that these stuttering exercises will help you feel somewhat better, when you speak with other people.

### **First Exercise: Doing a Look-in**

The first exercise starts, when each person who stutters sits down in a quiet place, by himself or herself, and asks what am I feeling at the moment? The idea is to separate out what we are thinking about, and to focus only on what we are now feeling. Avoiding using logic during this time will generally produce better results. What we are looking for, in particular, is to feel or make contact for the first time, with one of those deep feelings that we have deep down inside of us, one which we cannot presently identify, let alone feel or make contact with.

To start your stuttering exercises today, sit in a quiet place where you feel most comfortable and are not likely to fall asleep. Ask yourself "What am I feeling now?" And then try and let what is buried deep down inside of you speak to you.... Do your very best not to think.... Give room, to what is buried deep inside of you, to bubble up to the surface.... Just be there.... Be present to what is happening....

Falling asleep is not going to advance the process. This process is what might fairly be called a 'look-in'. The first thing you are likely to discover is that you find yourself thinking about this and that—usually something that has nothing to do with how you are feeling right now. Like almost non-stop. This non-stop thinking, however, interferes with the process of what you need to do today. Unfortunately, to do this exercise effectively, there is no choice but to persevere here. It will be frustrating to be sure. And so it will be a bit of a grind, where you will have little control over what is going through your head, to the point that, you can't speed up stopping your thinking, and you can't slow down your rapid thinking. No, you can only get in the way, if you try to do either.

You will need to spend some considerable amount of time doing this look-in. Whenever you choose to do this exercise, you will need about an hour. For it may take almost until the end of the hour, before you start to feel any significant benefit from what you are doing. Don't go beyond an hour, however, as doing that is likely to be counterproductive. With stuttering exercises, like any other exercise, there comes a time to say enough for today.

The first few times you try listening to yourself, you may find it is not working. This is the time, to pause and take stock. This is the time for you to start working on some guidelines, as to how to listen to yourself, which you best design for yourself, so that you can better hear what's going on deep down inside yourself. eg. 'Be open to finding anything' etc. This is an important part of the first stuttering exercise when you first start doing it. To finish working out a complete set of useful guidelines for yourself could take quite a while. But while you are working on these guidelines, you should continue

to do look-ins, as the one process helps the other. What you are doing here of course is learning how to listen to yourself. But this process of listening to yourself is used, at least for now, only as a means to a higher end, and that is, so you can feel a bit better when you speak with someone in a stuttering context. You can decide later for yourself, whether it would be useful for you to continue learning how to listen to yourself, within other contexts other than a stuttering context.

Somewhere in here, perhaps often, you may feel you want to give up. But if you persevere, at some point, it may hit you out of the blue that you are now on a *very* exciting journey. For if you persevere long enough, there is a real possibility that you will eventually discover something new and exciting, about how you are feeling deep down inside. And the more you are surprised by what you find, the more likely you are really on to something. When that happens, give a name to what you have discovered, a name that works best for you. There is no right or wrong name, just a name that you sense best identifies your newly discovered feeling.

This first exercise is far more difficult to do than the second and third exercises. And it takes much more time to do than either. But if the first exercise is not done effectively, no real benefit will be received from doing either the second or the third stuttering exercises.

Do look-ins, on as many days as you can, allowing for your busy schedule. One hour once during the day. The more often you do them, the more you will develop a good rhythm. A good rhythm increases the chance that they will be effective. The effectiveness of these stuttering exercises depends, on the bubbling up of that one feeling during a look-in, which is deeply intimately connected with how you feel when you stutter. The one which has been there for many years. Even if this feeling is a negative feeling, from your perspective it is *really good*, because you finally found it and felt it. And when you *really* feel it, you may be shocked at what you found. And when you find 'it', you will 'own' that very special feeling. It's *yours!*

"What am I feeling now?... a few pains in my tummy... waiting.... my deepest self is trying to be heard... I sense it now.... I am open to anything.... waiting.... it's about to happen...."

You have reached a very important place. Be open... be humble... The effectiveness of doing your next two stuttering exercises is to be decided here... right here... Your deepest Voice is dying to speak to you. After all, it is a part of you, just like the rest of you. But it is powerless to break through the clutter above. So give it a chance... And when it does finally break through... you will have no doubt at all... about who is speaking, and what your deepest Voice is saying.

### **Second Exercise: Verification Exercise # 1**

To do the second and third exercises effectively, you will need to completely *surrender* to what is likely to be more stuttering. And so you will need, at least for now, to stop substituting words in order to stop your stuttering.

Not every feeling you discover during a look-in is relevant. Some are not going to have anything to do with what you feel when you are stuttering. But other feelings may well be relevant. Especially any new feeling which you have found, which has anything to do with how you feel about yourself.

When you sense you have found a new feeling, that also might be felt whenever you stutter, the next step is for you to identify a circumstance when you are pretty sure you will stutter. When you arrive at that point, as you are about to speak, and then when you actually do speak, try and focus on

both, what you are about to say, and how you are feeling as you say it. If what you are feeling includes this newly discovered feeling, you will have verified that this new feeling is likely to be a regular part of what you feel whenever you stutter and probably has been for a long time.

But before you start the third exercise, you will need to have done the second exercise enough times, until you are now confident that your newly discovered feeling will be felt every time you stutter.

### **Third Exercise: Verification Exercise # 2**

At this point, you will need to sit down by yourself and assess what you have found. If no new feeling has bubbled up from within during your look-ins, which was subsequently verified during every time that you stuttered, you will have to go back to the drawing board. For there is no point in starting the third exercise, until you find such a feeling during the first two exercises.

This again is likely to be a time, when you may be tempted to abort the process. This is entirely your choice. You are in charge and only you are in charge of what you are doing. But it is possible that this setback might just be a hitch in the process. So, if you were to continue on, it's not impossible that you might still be able to discover something that you will never forget for the rest of your life.

If you choose to continue, the next step is to imagine what the exact opposite feeling might be, to what you recently found and named, during the first exercise, the look-in. Give that exact opposite feeling a name as well. Again there is no right or wrong name, just a name that you sense best identifies this exact opposite feeling.

Even though you are dealing with only a hypothetical feeling... you have now reached a very *precious* moment... For right here, you may be about to *unlock*, perhaps for the first time in your life, some of the feelings of love, which you have for yourself, which have been buried deep within you... *unfelt*... Tread softly... Tread humbly... if that happens, the sky's the limit...

From the point that you gave your hypothetical feeling a name, the verification process for the exact opposite feeling is pretty much the same, as it was in verifying the original feeling.

When you sense that the exact opposite feeling might also be felt during your stuttering, the next step is for you to identify a circumstance when you are pretty sure you will stutter. When you get to that point, as you are about to speak, and then when you actually do speak, try and focus on both, what you are about to say, and how you are feeling as you say it. If what you are feeling includes this exact opposite feeling, you will have verified that this exact opposite feeling too, is likely to be a regular part of what you feel whenever you stutter and probably has been for a long time. But once again, you may need to do this third exercise several times, before you will feel confident enough to be able to say that your newly discovered feeling will be felt every time you stutter.

### **Living with Stuttering Thereafter:**

Now that you have verified both feelings, whenever you find yourself facing a possibly difficult stuttering situation, just before you speak and when you speak, attempt to make contact with the one feeling and then the other feeling. Hopefully this will make you feel better, when you speak with other persons. Resort to these two newly discovered feelings can be done repeatedly and indefinitely.