



# Exercise 1: Anticipatory Stress

Think of any commonly occurring negative scenario in which you often stutter. It could be anything - for example speaking with your client over the phone. Maybe you've spoken to your clients a few times before and whenever you talk to them you start stuttering because your clients make you feel negative.

I've had this many times.

In my job I had to deal with clients who basically had a very shitty attitude. They'd call me on the phone and spend 30 minutes just bashing my work for no reason other than to show who is superior.

It increased my stress levels and put me in a stuttering mode.

I felt anxiety anytime I even 'thought' about talking to my clients. This anxiety often lead to stuttering.

Because it had happened so many times in the past, I subconsciously expected this to happen in future as well.

This is an example of a negative future expectation.

I created the below process, a set of questions, to help erase negativity that affects me when my mind somehow seems to automatically drift into negative future scenarios.

Why our mind drifts into negative and not positive scenarios is something I'm still trying to find an answer to.

But for the time being it will help if for the time being we forget worrying about how and why our mind works the way it does..... But at the same time do our best to get rid of the negativity that comes along.

Whenever you find yourself feeling negative (depressed, frustrated etc.) about something you expect might happen in future, hold that thought in mind and ask yourself the following questions one by one.

Say the questions out loud or at least whisper them so you can hear them out for yourself. Make the questions real for you. If it still doesn't feel like real, just imagine your best friend asking you these questions. Now how would you answer these questions to your best friend? Exactly. That's how you need to respond to these questions. It's real. Very real.

The word “situation” or “scenario” in these questions is the situation/scenario that’s bothering you right now in your mind.

Just replace “this scenario” or “this situation” with whatever scenario that’s in your mind. You don’t have to put down the scenario in words – just think about the scenario.

Let’s begin.

Ask and answer.

Answers need to be direct and to the point – no ifs or buts or maybe.

Turn the page when you’re ready!

1. Can you say with 100% confidence what’s going to happen in future?
2. Can you say with 100% confidence that [this situation that you’re thinking about] is going to occur in future?
3. Are you SURE what’s going to happen in future?
4. Do you REALLY KNOW what’s going to happen in future?

5. Do you REALLY KNOW FOR SURE that [this situation] is exactly how it's going to occur and take place in future?

6. Can you pinpoint an imaginative situation [like the one you're thinking about] and say with 100% surety that that's what's going to happen in future?

7. Only God can say and predict with 100% accuracy about what's going to happen in future, right?

So... are you God?

8. Prophets were the only human beings who could say with pinpoint accuracy about something that's going to happen in future. And that also because God himself communicated this info to the prophets. We have a name for this kind of info; it's called "Prophecy" or "Prediction".

So.... are you one of the Prophets of God?

Can you really predict your own future?

9. So can you say it being One Hundred Percent sure that you know

EXACTLY what's going to happen in future with 100% pinpoint accuracy?

10. So can you point your finger at [this scenario] and say that it's exactly what's going to happen in future?

Do this exercise every day.

I use this technique not just for my stuttering but to abolish a whole lot of my other worries.

Do this exercise consistently for a few weeks - Then when you're actually in a situation where you start anticipating that you're going to stutter, you'll instantly recall that you need to do this exercise. But these actual speaking situations are usually very spontaneous and you won't have the luxury and time to going through the entire exercise mentally. But you won't need to. All you would need to do is ask yourself "Can I really predict this with 100% accuracy?".... And that will do the job. The exact wordings of these questions don't matter, the essence and meaning does.

# Exercise 2: Negative Belief Elimination Process

## **1. Get in touch with a belief.**

The easiest way to do that is to say the words of the belief out loud and notice how it feels. It will feel true or negative.

## **2. Find the events that lead to the belief.**

Ask yourself “What are the earliest experiences that led to my belief?”

## **3. Find alternative interpretations.**

Come up with 5-6 different ways to interpret those events that you can see now that you are older and have an adult’s perspective.

## **4. Realize you didn’t see the belief.**

It seemed as if you could see your belief when you saw the events. Notice that you can’t really see a belief. You can only see concrete events taking place. People saying and doing things. But you can’t see a sentence floating around anywhere.

## **5. Realize there is no interpretation that's inherent to the events.**

Notice that the interpretation existed only in you mind NOT in the events.

## **6. Check and double-check that the belief is gone.**

Say the words out loud again. Really look for the same feelings that were there before. If you can't find them, then the belief is gone.

## **Stuttering**

Here's how all this applies to stuttering...

"People don't understand what I say"

"People always misunderstand me"

"I better keep quiet than saying something wrong"

"It's difficult to explain things"

"I am not capable of easily saying what I want to say"

Read out each of the belief above out loud and see if you resonate with any of it. Do any of them feel true to you? You may logically not agree with any of them but deep in your gut do you feel it applies to you?

Do you secretly believe in them? When you read these statements loud, do you feel any feelings or emotions attached to it?

If yes, then you have the belief.

You could have some other beliefs related to speaking and stuttering, not necessarily same as mine.

The important point here to learn to identify these beliefs in yourself and write them down.

Alright, in the following few pages I'll pick one belief from the above list and show you how I eliminated it.

You can follow the same process for your own negative beliefs.

The belief I'll work on is: "It's difficult to explain things"

I'll use the 6-step process outlined above to get rid of the belief "It's difficult to explain things".

Let's begin:

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## **1. Get in touch with a belief.**

To get in touch with a belief, all you have to do is read the words out loud and see if you connect with it and whether it feels true deep in your heart.

So I read out aloud “It’s difficult to explain things” and it felt true, as if I had been subconsciously believing it for so many years.

## **2. Find the earliest events that lead to the belief.**

These kind of beliefs have their sources in our childhood interactions with parents.

As I began digging into my childhood memories, I remembered how my dad never took me seriously when I tried to explain something. He would shrug it off by laughing or smiling, making me think it’s so difficult to explain myself. In other cases, whenever I used to explain things to my dad, he used to show disinterest, which also made me feel that it’s not easy for me to explain things to people.

I also remembered that it was not that easy for my elder brother to talk to my dad. He’d always be misunderstood.

Looking at all this, I as a child concluded that “It’s difficult to explain things to people”.

So those were my earliest events in my life that lead me to belief “It’s difficult to explain things”.

### **3. Find alternative interpretations.**

My conclusion that “It’s difficult to explain things” was one way to explain the events that I saw around me.

But that was not THE only explanation.

There can be several other interpretations/meanings that could explain my earliest events just as well as my initial conclusion that “It’s difficult to explain things”.

For example, read the following alternate interpretations/meanings out loud. As you read them one by one, ask yourself “Don’t they explain the events perfectly well just as good as my initial interpretation?”

Alternate Meaning 1:

It’s not that it’s difficult to explain things to people. It can also mean that back then I was a kid and didn’t have enough vocabulary or ways to express my self. That’s why I couldn’t explain myself well. I

didn't mean that it will always be the case. As I grow older it would become much easier for me to be able to express myself.

(I imagined my childhood events and asked myself "Doesn't this interpretation explain the situation just as fine as my initial interpretation?" And the answer was YES)

Alternate Meaning 2:

My parents didn't have the proper communication skills needed, which is why they showed disinterest. It didn't mean that it's difficult to explain things to people. It only meant that my parents lacked communication skills. Probably if they showed more interest in what I had to say, I wouldn't have felt that it's difficult to explain things to people.

(Again, this explains the events just as well as my initial interpretation and Alternate Interpretation No 2)

Alternate Meaning 3:

Just because my parents didn't show interest in what I had to say, doesn't mean that no one will be interested in what I say. Or just because it was difficult for my parents to understand what I was saying, doesn't mean that will be the case with whomever I speak.

(Once again, even this interpretation explains my childhood events perfectly well)

What all this means is that “It’s difficult to explain things” was just one of the many possible meanings you could give the event.

#### **4. Realize you didn’t see the belief.**

It may seem like we SEE the meaning IN the events. But that’s not true. We only see the actions of people but the meaning/interpretation is something that WE create in our mind.

To make this real and clear, I ask myself “What do I really see out there?”

Answer: I see mom and dad no interested.

That’s it. That’s the only thing I actually see.

#### **5. Realize there is no interpretation that’s inherent to the events.**

It doesn’t have any inherent meaning or interpretation. My mind gave it the following meaning “It’s difficult to explain things” but I

just explained that the same event could be interpreted in several ways.

To make it more real and concrete, I imagine the childhood events again and this time I imagine that a friend of mine is there along with me too.

The moment I give the event the meaning “It’s difficult to explain things” my good friend whispers me in the ears “Just because your parents don’t show interest in what you say, doesn’t mean that no one will be interested in what you say”

How would that make me feel? Well I won’t feel the same way about those events would I.

## **6. Check and double-check that the belief is gone.**

I say the words out loud again. And this time I don’t have any feeling or sense of negativity attached to it :)

The internal resistance I had because of these belief is now gone.

# Exercise 4: Recreate Stuttering as a Game

It is possible to turn any stressful situation that causes you to stutter into a game. Here is a simple exercise that enable you to turn situations that previous caused stress and anxiety in you into a playful game. Doing so will eliminate the anxiety from the situation, thereby drastically reducing your chances of stuttering.

- First, choose a game that you enjoy playing. Close your eyes and imagine playing the game, be it a board game, a card game, or a sport. ... OK. Now imagine playing your best and losing. How do you feel? ... Now imagine playing your best and winning. How do you feel? ... Notice that a game, where winning or losing has no real meaning, can result in positive and negative emotions.
- Second, identify and then dissolve any meaning and unlearn any beliefs that you may have about situations in which you typically stutter. Use the belief elimination process from the previous exercise for this purpose.

- Third, create a speaking game. Make something that isn't inherently important, important, just because you say so. For example, saying the first word of a sentence without any stuttering. Do that for yourself right now. ... Make up the goal of the game, what it will take for you to "win" at the game.
- After you've defined the stutter game, ask yourself what does it mean if you win? ... If you lose? ... Notice that winning and losing have no inherent meaning. When you get that winning has no inherent meaning, you will not be attached to winning. The same with losing. And you can play full out in an attempt to win.
- Once you do that, imagine winning the game. ... How does it feel? ... Notice there is a positive emotion even though winning the game has no inherent meaning and you are not attached to winning

# Exercise 5: Speak Like You Sing

1. Think of a song that you like and normally find yourself singing or humming.
2. When you feel you're about to stutter, just think of beginning to sing this song!
3. No need to actually start singing, just pretend you're going to sing it.
4. And then continue with the word or the sentence that you were going to say.

What just happened here is that as you pretended or thought of singing, it activated the right hemisphere of your brain (the one used for singing).. And that made it easy for you to say the word that you were going to stutter on.