

A Cure for Stuttering?

By Clark M. Thomas

© August 26, 2020



The brave video appearance of 13-year-old Brayden Harrington at the 2020 Democratic Party virtual convention stood out among the many speeches.¹ He was universally praised by pundits across the political spectrum. Brayden suffers from stuttering, and he tries very hard to deal with it.

¹ <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/08/21/brayden-harrington-speech-biden-399784>

The reason he was featured is because Joe Biden encountered him on the campaign trail, and then shared with Brayden his own stuttering story and how he deals with it. It is easy for listeners to think stuttering may indicate incipient senility when a guy is in his seventies. In older children stuttering is a functional disease that is treated, but seldom fully cured by speech professionals.

I myself dealt with stuttering as an elementary school child; and I found an easy way to 99% cure myself of it. I will detail what I did below. None of my healing journey involved intervening professionals. I did it all myself. At that time it seemed to be "no big deal." My parents didn't press me, assuming that I would just "grow out of it." I was not quite Brayden's age when I figured out the simple key for me. That key was fortunate, as I was already too old for my problems to simply go away as I "grew out of it."

I trust this brief essay will give the approximately three million stutters in America (and as many as 70 million globally) a simple tool to banish their problem. Many parts of the world don't have any specialized speech therapists, so all the better for my simple therapy. Because I never talked with anybody else about what I had achieved, even including my family, I went ahead with my life as if nothing miraculous had happened. I put this natural cure so far behind my everyday consciousness that I did not seriously think about my stuttering history until I saw Brayden on TV.

There have been two additional discoveries in my life that were accidental, yet with significant potential for good:

First, I made a significant scientific discovery when I was five years old.² I didn't share what I had learned with any others, because I didn't have all the other elements necessary for the full discovery to be revealed until decades later. This footnoted full revelation is worthy of reading, especially in our evolving period

² <https://astronomy-links.net/FirstScientificExperiment.pdf>

of American culture when so many white people are trying to fully grasp why black lives matter.

Second, I accidentally made a major medical discovery in 2000 when my disabled (strokes) mother in a wheelchair had a feeding tube surgically introduced into her stomach, which quickly put her into a deadly spiral.³ At the time I didn't know that the medical profession didn't generally know how to prevent large numbers of associated deaths.

This hospital story shows that even one proof of concept can transform medical procedures. Out of one delicate person's crisis emerged an industry-wide change in procedures that have led to longer and better lives for untold thousands on feeding tubes.

It is possible that one stuttering person's common experience could also catalyze significant improvements in the lives of many others. That is the purpose and hope for this essay.

An Overview of Stuttering Treatments

After a review of what still constitutes standard treatment for juvenile stutterers, I provisionally conclude that the incurable verdict is based on wrong approaches to therapy.

For example, the venerable Mayo Clinic emphasizes a hard clinical approach to not curing these patients. They have found no medicine that works, and their semi-effective efforts at speech behavior modification miss the main point. Here is what they have to say on the matter.⁴

The NIH, in the form of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), has this to say.⁵

³ <https://astronomy-links.net/Hospital.Story.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/stuttering/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353577>

⁵ <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/search/site/stuttering>

Exactly 135 stuttering references are on this NIH site, and *not one* mentions the right therapy for a functional cure!

Nevertheless, a key aspect or trigger of stuttering is often mentioned: stress. Associated visceral tension is real, but not correctly defined for the right therapy.

There is in the literature too much emphasis on genetics, sexual differences, developmental differences, families who stutter, and workarounds such as speaking more slowly. These aspects are often elements in the overall pathology, but together these therapy "atoms" do not constitute the "molecule of cure."

The best link I have discovered approaches what needs to be done to transcend the problem. Here it is.⁶ It is from The Stuttering Foundation, of course.

Biden is an Unusual Case

The knowledge Joe Biden acquired for himself was very helpful for Brayden's televised speech, but this young man still stutters. Brayden could fairly well read the short speech he had prepared to endorse Joe, thanks to the technique his new friend had shared with him for making notations on his sheet. When you are just thirteen, stuttering can be cruel but endearing.

When you are seventy-seven, obvious public stuttering sets you up for seeming to be on the path to senile dementia. You may slow down your words, which opens you up to being charged as "sleepy." It can make you appear less intelligent and wise than you really are. If you pause or briefly hold your breath before or during speaking, that sets you up for suspicion of having a mini-stroke or TIA. You might overall appear less energetic and able to govern than you really are. Verbal bullies without souls will try to minimize you and your excellent qualities.

⁶ <https://www.stutteringhelp.org/overcoming-fear-and-tension-stuttering>

All such impressions are wrong, patronizing, and very unfair ageism. Joe just has partially controlled stuttering that in no way disqualifies him from being President. The stuttering King of England successfully gave a critical radio speech to his country, with a relaxed vocal cadence, during the darkest days of WWII.

In Biden's case, he has crafted the best workaround for his formal public speaking. His system of notations is a superb creation on his part. His greatest remaining challenge will come when he speaks without notes in debates against a bombastic liar.

A hidden reason for Joe Biden delivering the speech of his life in accepting his party's nomination was having the lifting force of awesome Kamala Harris as his partner on the ticket, and feeling her presence as a source of security going forward. There is an uptick in his energy after he joined with her. Less stress yields less tendency to stutter.

How I Learned To Permanently Stop Stuttering

I now reveal the very simple technique that I discovered to stop/cure my stuttering. This is something that can be done at any age by anybody, starting with middle childhood. It costs nothing, and does not involve chemicals or professionals who admit they can't cure stuttering.

I was a semi-precocious child with an older sister, and a dog who was my de facto brother. Our parents never divorced, and my father tried as best he could to be a good father and provider. However, let's just say he wasn't super warm and fuzzy; but my warm mother was just that for me. All in all, we were a fairly average white, middle-class, religious family in the Fifties.

Still, I occasionally felt tension, being sensitive. I did chew my finger nails, so I must have been working on coping that way. I thus will credit the general family stress as a likely trigger.

Our family drama was the same both before and after I found the simple solution. All people experience varying degrees of distress throughout life. Most people don't start stuttering in late childhood or early adulthood, short of brain injury or the like.

I really didn't like my tendency to stutter. It was not part of my emerging self-image. I was never penalized or bullied for this. I was my own critic. I tried on my own some of the ideas now popular, such as slowing cadence.

Nothing worked for me until I discovered one very simple thing that worked. Even that technique had to be repeated for a few weeks until my brain was permanently trained to not stutter.

The simple technique was to fully stop talking whenever I felt myself tensing up and preparing to stutter. Stopping includes not even trying to talk in my mind. With eyelids closed, breathing slowly and deeply helps release muscle and mental tension.

Whenever I was tense before talking, there was obviously no reason to stop mid-sentence. I only needed to sufficiently *pause before starting*.

It is easy to feel one's chest tense up, and that unique stressful tension apparently triggered much of my stuttering. Tense chest muscles may trigger tense vocal muscles. *By simply stopping all speech for a few seconds until the feeling of chest tension melted away, I was immediately thereafter able to talk normally at normal cadence.*

After first starting this protocol, whenever I got another bout of chest tension I waited for when it simply felt OK to proceed. I did the same thing every time, and got the same good results.

Initially, repeat tension appeared after a few minutes. After a few days and weeks the much less frequent bouts of speech tension melted away, and I was soon functionally cured. Thanks in so many ways to my brain itself.