



Tell Your Story – Angela Estimoff; Submission

Little bit about myself:

My Name is Angela Estimoff and I am 19 years of age, I live south of the river in Perth WA and I am currently a full time purchasing and production assistant and qualified in Human Resources which is very much a communicative industry which I thoroughly enjoy.

How I found out I had a communication issue

At the age of 3 when I started to speak, I obviously didn't know in myself that I had difficulty, but my parents picked it up and obviously were concerned if I would grow out of it or not. As I have grown up I've watched childhood videos of myself and, majority of the time you can't understand what I am saying because of how much I stuttered and repeated myself. But for as long as I can recall I have always known myself as having a difficulty saying what I want to say and substituting words so I can sound 'normal or fluent'

How has it impacted my life?

The impact of a communication disorder/ difficulty is enormous. Not only did it impact me severely in school but it still likes to challenge me now as a young adult. Imagine being that terrified of the telephone your whole life that you would never dare to answer it, nor even think about calling someone on the phone, not even to order a simple pizza. Being in a communicative industry, I am constantly on the phone and my fear has slowly worn off but I am constantly putting pressure on myself to sound fluent and like a normal fast speaking person; these days no one has time or patience to wait around not even to wait for a stutterer like myself to get their words out. Imagine walking into a lunch bar wanting a chicken and salad burger but always walking out with fries because it was easier to say and you got stuck on the words 'C'hicken and 'S'alad. This was a regular occurrence that affected me to the point where I no longer tried to say these words because I knew I couldn't and felt like a failure. But one of the main impacts that being a covert stutterer has had on my life was during primary and high school; when the class was reading aloud a novel, this was taken in turns. I remember the enormous fear, the sweaty hands, I often pretended to go to the bathroom before it was my turn but sometimes I knew I had to face the fact; and let me tell you it was frightening especially for me as I used to substitute the words I couldn't get out for similar meaning words that were more easier for me to say. Although when attempting this whilst the rest of the class were reading along they would pick up that I wasn't reading the printed words of the novel and would often correct me, it then became an embarrassment.

Simple words and simple communicative fluency that everyone else takes for granted is a struggle for us stutterers out there. We obviously want to speak up but we often don't simply because we can't.

If you have worked with a speech pathologist and how has helped

As a child I was put into smooth speech and also attended in 2005 A Murdoch University speak easy course that the current speech pathology students sat in and learnt from. It did help me with finding and learning new ways to help your speech smoother with 'beat talking' and 'airy talking'. Although these newly learnt innovations were not practised and applied everyday, which lead me to slip back to the usual pattern.

The Current Programme I am with is called the McGuire Programme which is a worldwide stuttering programme; I have been a Graduate of the course since March 2011. That first intensive 4 day course changed my life for the better; it brought me much confidence and fluency to the point where I made my first public speech, it was such a mind blowing experience. With the ongoing smaller support groups located in the main cities of Australia, the help and support is always there .The inspiration of the new students is truly amazing and brings me great joy to see them change and learn, it's definitely a true eye opener. I recommend this programme enormously and am thankful for the change and impact it has had on not only my life but the rest of us graduates.

Thank you.