



HANDOUT-ABLE: A Letter to the Listener from a Stutterer

Hello sir or madam:

I have difficulty communicating due to stuttering; I currently exhibit a condition, which affects my ability to speak in the manner most people do. I ask that you keep the following in mind as we communicate:

- My stuttering pattern is due to how my brain works. I have techniques to help me communicate, and I use them every time I speak. I will need some considerations from you, however.
- What I say is important -- just like what you say is important.
- I need extra time and patience from you. I would do the same to you if you needed me to, just please let me know -- and I will do everything I can.
- It may take different types of avenues to have a message understood. This does not take away the value of the message, and it does not take away my value as a person.
- Everyone in their own way communicates differently, and every person has different needs that help with the process. My needs are just not as common as what you may see every day.
- I have a need to be heard. I have valuable messages to communicate.
- If you show me the time and consideration that I need so that I can effectively communicate with you, it will show me your integrity and compassion. It might be you someday. It might be someone you intensely care about someday. Keep this in mind please, as there may be challenges that come along; challenges are just another detour that will take us to where we need to go. I have information that will be helpful to you; I have beneficial information to contribute.
- Please try to not interrupt me, and I will try to not do the same with you. This includes when I am formulating a message, and in the middle of stuttering moments.
- Please give me time to use my strategies, and please do not speak for me or over me. Allow me the opportunity to apply what I have learned works best for me in moments of stuttering.
- There may be challenging situations that arise -- let me attempt to address it on my own first. I will let you know if I need an advocate for situations that I will have difficulty navigating.
- We all need help to different degrees sometimes. Please demonstrate compassion by putting yourself in my shoes -- and show me the respect you would desire. If you appreciate our interaction like it was you in this situation, it might open your eyes to something new.
- We may be different, but we can still communicate. If someone disrespects me, please speak up. I will do the same for you in any capacity I can.
- I understand that your attempts may not be perfect -- that is okay. Mine might not be either.
- Other tips that will help us communicate: _____

--Thank you, from a person who had difficulties with speaking, due to stuttering