

by Dr. Geo. W. Crane

The Worry Clinic

Ronnie's well-intentioned teacher is likely to make him a confirmed stutterer. And now his parents are helping "fix" the nuisance habit. So study this case carefully and the follow-up tomorrow, for I shall outline the psychiatric facts by which a stutterer can even cure himself.

CASE Q-431: Ronnie Z., aged 4, is a bright little boy. "But, Dr. Crane," his worried mother began, "Ronnie stutters!"

"He has attended nursery school the past six months. And his teacher is a very meticulous woman.

"So she noticed his stuttering and has urged us to correct it at once. "But despite the fact Ronnie's daddy and I try to

make him slow down in his speech and repeat his words more slowly, we seem to have made matters worse. So what else can we do?"

NATURAL STUTTERING
Stuttering is a normal and natural thing in pre-school children.

"For their "understanding" vocabulary then runs far ahead of their "speaking" vocabulary.

And that is not only natural among toddlers, but is likewise normal for adults who are learning a foreign language.

Your comprehension of words generally is more advanced than your ability to talk in that foreign tongue.

That's why college students may be able to read French or German rather fluently, yet still not be able to speak those languages well.

So you parents should ignore the stuttering of the toddler!

If you don't, and if you then make an issue of his stuttering, as Ronnie's teacher did, then you may "fix" that normal stuttering until it becomes an entrenched ABNORMAL speech habit.

Neurotic parents or teachers, who constantly shout "No, No, Ronnie," can thus produce a confirmed teen-age s utterer!

After a kindergarten child acquires a big enough speaking vocabulary to keep up with the swift flow of his ideas, then that pre-school stuttering should subside spontaneously.

But if misguided parents

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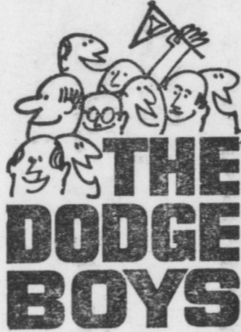
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"fix" that stuttering by making it an emotional complex, and the child then reaches the teens as a typical stutterer, then employ the following strategy:

1. Extrovert the child (and his neurotic parents) via the "Compliment Club" technique.

This turns his attention outward so he is less shy and self-analytical.

And it makes him more assured socially, for extroverts are more at home in social gatherings.

2. Then make a triangle as a pattern to illustrate the mechanics of stuttering.

The three corners of your triangle represent (a) Normal speaking situation, (b) While using English, (c) Talking to other human beings.

For those three elements were present when the stuttering pattern was first "set" or "fixed."

Alter any one of those three corners of the "Stutter Triangle" and you help free the stutterer from his slavery.

For example, let him indulge in ventriloquy or sing or read aloud, and you will alter (a). Or let him pitch his voice higher or lower.

Or, like Demosthenes, let him hold pebbles in his mouth or bite down on his tongue and hold it imprisoned between his jaw teeth as he starts to speak.

(Always write to Dr. Crane in care of this newspaper, enclosing a long stamped, addressed envelope and 20c to cover typing and printing costs when you send for one of his booklets.)

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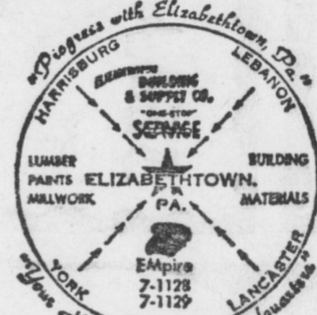
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